

The magazine of the
British Chamber of
Commerce in Japan

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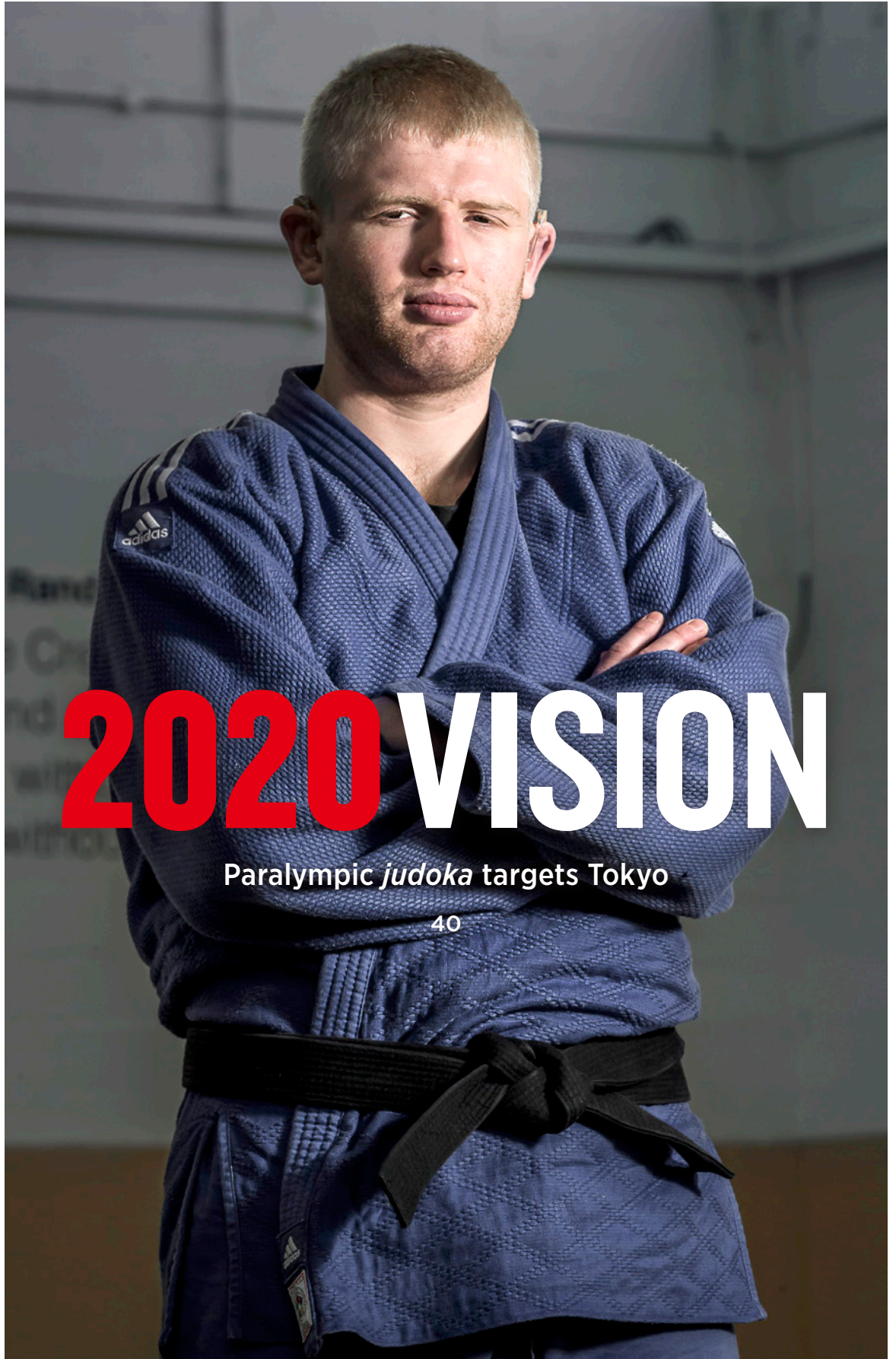
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Tokyo British Club

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Paralympic *judoka* targets Tokyo

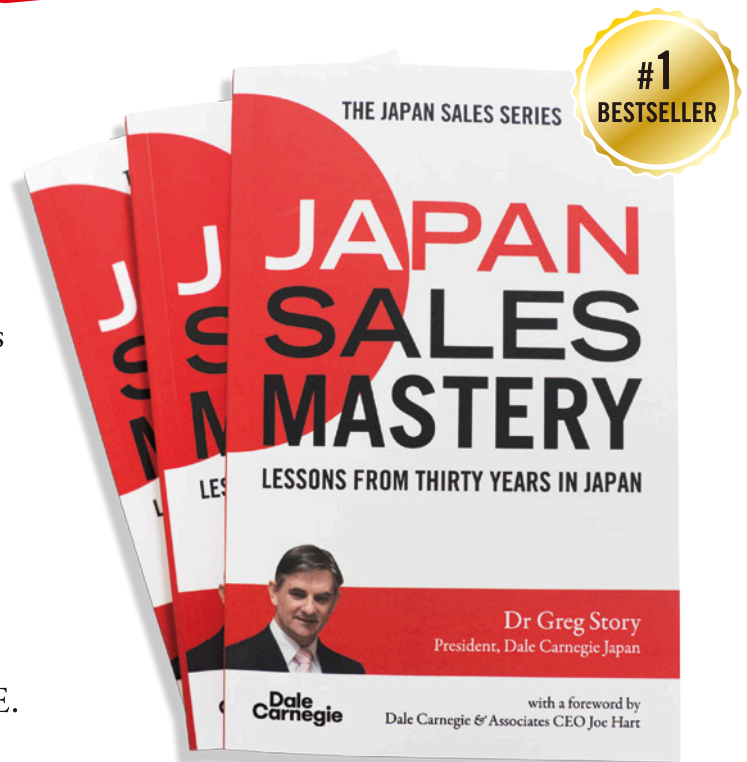
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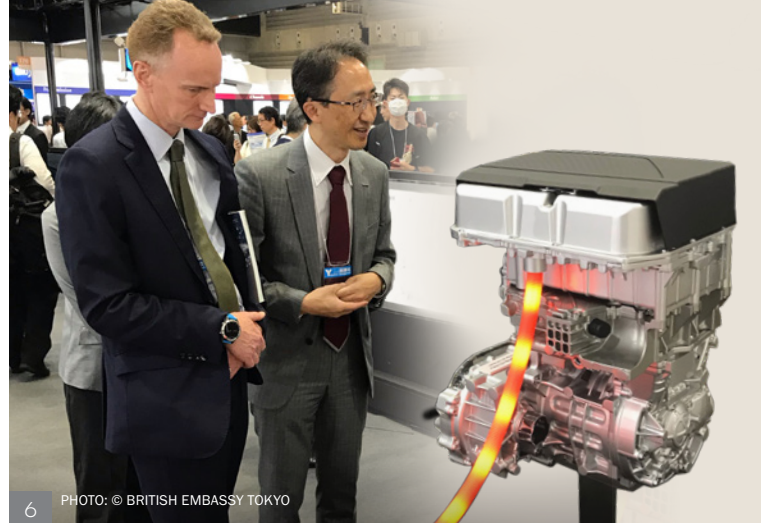
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The British Chamber of Commerce in Japan

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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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G20 comes to town

As does Shakespeare and Scottish jazz

BY PAUL MADDEN CMG
BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN
PHOTOS: © BRITISH EMBASSY TOKYO



Japan's G20 Presidency kicked off in earnest in May. Robert Goodwill, Minister of State at the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, was here for the G20 Agriculture Ministers' meeting in Niigata. I couldn't resist calling it a "goodwill visit".

In a single weekend in early June, we had the Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond attending the G20 Finance Ministers meeting in Fukuoka, as well as Trade Secretary Liam Fox at the gathering of G20 Trade Ministers and Department of Culture, Media & Sport Minister Margot James at the meeting of G20 Digital Ministers, both in Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture.

Then, on 28–29 June, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will host Theresa May and other world leaders for the G20 Summit in Osaka. That will be Xi Jinping's first visit to Japan as China's president. Given the current state of the international debate, there will be some delicate discussions on issues such as trade and climate change, where the UK and European partners are hoping to see ambitious outcomes.

At the end of May, US President Donald Trump became the first foreign leader to call on the new Emperor, and on 3 June he travelled to the UK for a three-day state visit. He didn't get to go to the sumo there, but did receive a welcome full of pageantry, including a State Banquet at Buckingham Palace.

Getting down to business

Another big theme in May was financial services, with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's Special Representative Viscount Trenchard in Tokyo again for a series of calls on business and government. I hosted him for a meeting with Hiroshi Nakaso, former deputy governor of the Bank of Japan who was recently appointed as Tokyo's new Deputy Mayor for Financial Services.

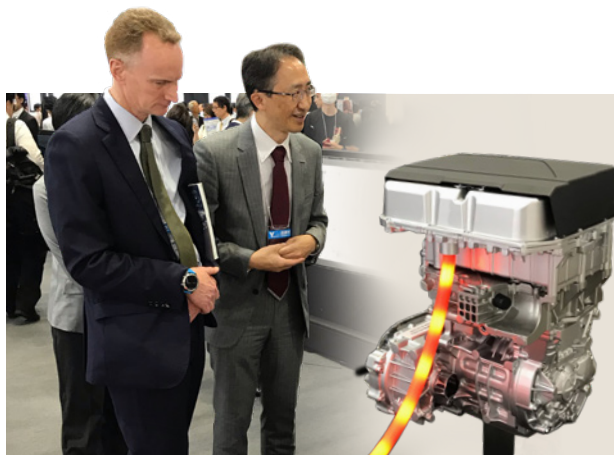
Later in the month, former Lord Mayor of the City of London Sir Roger Gifford was in town to front a seminar with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government on green finance. This is a fast-growing area with many opportunities for



I had a fascinating visit to Zojoji, near Tokyo Tower, to see a very interesting display of a large model of the original temple, which was destroyed in WWII, that had been sent to London for the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, and then gifted to the British Royal Family. It was returned to Japan in 2015 and reassembled by master craftsmen, and is on long-term display by permission of the Queen.

London and Tokyo to work even more closely together. I took Sir Roger to call on Governor Yuriko Koike, who is particularly interested in the Green Agenda. One of my predecessors, Sir David Wright GCMG LVO, who chairs City UK's Japan committee, also came through.

Mark Slaughter, director general at the Department for International Trade (DIT) who heads the UK's inward investment promotion work, visited Tokyo for a conference of DIT staff from across the region and to meet Japanese investors. He met some big manufacturing and financial services investors, and I also hosted an event with existing and potential capital investors who are showing a growing interest in UK infrastructure. This includes house-building, which is a big priority for the British government.



The automotive sector is one of Japan's most important industries. It is also a key link with the UK, given the substantial investment in Britain by Japanese carmakers. I attended the Japan Society of Automotive Engineers (JSAE) Congress in Yokohama, where I gave a speech at the UK pavilion, which was packed with cutting-edge technologies from the UK. It was fascinating to talk about the future of this industry, which is being revolutionised by new technologies, such as electronic vehicles as well as connected and autonomous driving. Changing cultural habits also play a role as more and more young people look to the sharing economy for transport rather than owning vehicles themselves.



The Japanese Parliament's rugby team, led by former Defense Minister Gen Nakatani, played a team comprising representatives from the British and other embassies. Everyone is getting in the mood for the Rugby World Cup.

Never promised you a rose garden

May is also the time of year for hosting summer Gala Parties for various UK-linked friendship organisations. HIH Princess Akiko graced the annual event for the Japan-British Society, which was attended by nearly 200 guests. My Residence gardens were looking beautiful. No sooner were the *sakura* blossoms over than the azaleas were out, and now the roses are particularly stunning, lending a real “English country garden” feel to the place.

The Japan Chevening Alumni Network invited me to their summer reunion. This is a scholarship named after the Foreign Secretary's country house in Kent, funded by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), which brings about 1,500 young people from all over the world to Britain every year on master's degree programmes. We try to talent-spot people who are going to go on to become leaders in their chosen fields and create enduring bonds of friendship with the UK. I always take a particular interest in this group, because, at an earlier stage in my career, when I was head of Public Diplomacy at the FCO, I was responsible for the Chevening programme.



All the world's a stage

It is always a privilege to enjoy some of the best of UK culture on display through the many British artists who tour Japan. Theatre is probably the least represented, because of the difficulties of an English language-based medium for many Japanese audiences. But, every year, the International Theatre Company London brings Shakespeare to theatres and university campuses around Japan. My wife Sarah and I were delighted to watch their rendition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which six actors play at least four roles each with great physicality and musicality—which the audience seemed to love. We also enjoyed a fantastic dance performance by James Pett and Travis Clausen-Knight, two young dancers who recently left Britain's Company Wayne McGregor to go solo. Chatting to them after the performance, they described their excitement at getting to dance on the unique stage of the Nogakudo—Noh Theatre—in Shibuya.

Given the current state of the international debate, there will be some delicate discussions [at the G20 Summit] on issues such as trade and climate change.

Sharing our values

In addition to all our work on business, foreign policy and security, we also have a lot of engagement with the Japanese government on the “values” agenda. We are working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to encourage high-level Japanese participation in the upcoming Global Conference for Media Freedom: London 2019, to be held in July, hosted by Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, and led by the UK and Canada.

And at the Embassy, we are developing plans to implement an FCO-wide commitment to phase out all avoidable single-use plastic from our operations by the end of 2020—a task that is not always easy here in a country which has made packaging an art form.

I also gave a speech about gender diversity in British politics to a Diet committee which had commissioned a study into how some European countries have been successful in getting more women into politics. Two female prime ministers is better than many countries have achieved, but we still have a long way to go. 🇬🇧



I also hosted a garden party for the Cambridge & Oxford Society. And, the house echoed with the sound of jazz, when representatives of the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra performed at a reception for the visiting chief executive of Scottish Enterprise, Steve Dunlop.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE QUEEN ON HER OFFICIAL 93RD BIRTHDAY
AND THE BIRTH OF ARCHIE HARRISON MOUNTBATTEN-WINDSOR



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Diversity in action and acronyms

LGBT and KIWL annual events raise profile and funds

SIMON FARRELL | simon@custom-media.com

While a dozen or so of us pampered expatriates were lucky guests of railway and hotel operator Tobu, which whisked us away in mid-June to Nikko—where we enjoyed the British Embassy Villa Memorial Park and other popular draws—a hardier group of volunteers was already halfway through its gruelling 500km, four-day cycle ride for charity.

Members of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) Executive Committee and Custom Media—publisher of *BCCJ ACUMEN*—were pleased to join both trips. We are very proud that, for the first time, one of our female employees—our excellent video producer, Miho Sainoki—was among the 43 riders with Knights in White Lycra (KIWL). Another KIWL first is that she is Malaysian.



Miho Sainoki training with KIWL in Okutama.

Miho's colleagues at Custom Media were very generous with cash sponsorship and lavished her with encouragement and praise. "I'm totally blown away by their support," she told me before leaving the office on her last day before the ride.

Russia, Serbia and Italy also debuted among the 14 nationalities this year, according to co-founder Rob Williams. He added that KIWL has so far raised about ¥9.6mn this year and a total of ¥61.6mn (that's nearly half a million quid!) since 2013 through sponsored rides, walks, barbecues, quizzes, futsal and other fun fundraisers. It's never too late to sponsor, though, and you can see how, why and where it goes at: www.kiwl.net

Flying the flag

Another group that seems to go from strength to strength every year is the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pride and social movements. You may have seen some extra colour flying on our front cover this month, six vivid stripes near the bottom left corner. I hear that this rainbow flag, which reflects the diversity of LGBT, is less widely recognized in Japan than in some other places, so we hope this helps improve that.

There are a number of rainbow flag versions, but I particularly like this one because the paint-brush style suggests to me "different strokes for different folks".

Why now? Well, although the 25th annual Tokyo Rainbow Pride Festival was held in late April, June is global LGBT Pride month to commemorate the 1969 Stonewall riots, widely considered the most important event to lead to the LGBT movement.

Homosexuality and same-gender partners have been accepted in Japan since ancient times and recent opinion polls have supported same-gender marriage. But as more companies here pledge support for LGBT, some employees still complain that they are scared to come out for fear

of ridicule or even discrimination by colleagues, clients or vendors.

We have reported in *ACUMEN* many times about how diversity and inclusion are not only morally right, but can only be good for business, innovation and many related themes. So let's wish the LGBT movement a happy birthday and hope it continues to change the face of the workplace and world. 🌈

Cor blimey

If you remember the Tokyo British Club, you must read page 32. Although I wasn't a member, I have fond memories of a few visits there in the late 1980s. I once enjoyed roast beef and warm beer there with an Anglophile colleague who had studied British literature but had not yet visited the UK. To enlighten her and satisfy my sentimental mood, I chose a classic video from their library: *Till Death Us Do Part*.

She was horrified. Referring to Alf Garnet, the bigoted character hated by anti-TV-filth campaigner Mary Whitehouse and played by Warren Mitchell, she asked me, "Do English people actually look and behave like that?" I can't remember my reply, but, last I heard, she never did get to London.



PHOTO: © LWT

Diversity and inclusion are not only morally right, but can only be good for business, innovation and many related themes.

MEDIA

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PHOTO: HITACHI RAIL EUROPE

LONDON ROLLS OUT AZUMA TRAINS

The first train in a new 65-strong fleet has been rolled out by London North Eastern Railway (LNER), according to a 14 May story in *The Guardian*. The Azuma high-speed train, manufactured by Hitachi, Ltd., will operate on the 300km stretch between London and Leeds.

The LNER plans to extend the Azuma services as far as Edinburgh by the end of this year. David Home, managing director of LNER, said the Azuma is “more reliable, stylish, environmentally friendly and accessible” than anything in the existing LNER fleet of 45 trains.

UK JOINS HUAWEI BAN

Amid the US-led investigation into Chinese tech giant Huawei, leading global carriers have suspended sales of the firm’s new 5G smartphone. According to a 22 May CNN story, the decision came soon after Google severed ties with Huawei.

Others are following suit, with EE and Vodafone—two of UK’s largest mobile networks—stopping sales over security concerns. Japan’s three largest carriers, NTT DoCoMo, KDDI and SoftBank have also taken measures.

TOKYO AWARDS MEDICAL HONOURS

Lord Ara Darzi of Denham, director of the Imperial College London’s Institute of Global Health Innovation, has received one of Japan’s most prestigious awards: the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon.

Professor Darzi, the college reported in a press announcement, was recognised for his global efforts in healthcare and significant contribution to UK-Japan relations in medicine, including patient safety. His dialogue with the government of Myanmar recently resulted in the release of two Reuters journalists.

PHOTO: THE ROYAL HORTICULTURE SOCIETY



BACK TO NATURE, JAPAN STYLE

The Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton, decorated a Japanese-inspired garden for the Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show 2019. The garden, entitled *Back to Nature* and co-designed by the Duchess with Andree Davies and Adam White, showcased elements of *shinrin-yoku*, the Japanese concept of forest bathing.

“She brought the concept to meetings, noting how office workers escape to the trees in Japan for lunchtime respite,” *The Huffington Post* reported on 20 May. For more highlights from the Chelsea Flower Show and three Japanese designers who won honours for their inspiring creations, see page 36.

BRITS WIN MEDALS IN YOKOHAMA

Commonwealth Games champion Jade Jones-Hall won the women’s World Paratriathlon Series in Yokohama. Jones-Hall finished 30 seconds ahead of the US’s Kendall Gretsche, the 2016 world champion. As the BBC reported on 18 May, Jones-Hall was not the only Brit to take home honours. Teammates Fran Brown and Claire Cashmore both left with medals. Brown won silver in the PTS2 race, and

Cashmore won silver in the PTS5 race. Meanwhile, Melissa Reid, who finished with bronze at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, took bronze here in the PTVI class. On the men’s side, Steve Crowley finished fifth in PTS4.

PHOTO: TOMAZ SILVA / AGÊNCIA BRASIL VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



NEWS BRIEFS

HOME BUILDERS IN JV

One of Japan’s largest builders has entered into a joint venture with government body Homes England and UK developer Urban Splash. About 300,000 new modular housing units are expected to be built in the next few years. (*The Financial Times*, 14 May)

WORLD FIRSTS FOR NEW LUSH TOKYO STORE

UK-based retailer Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics plans to open its Asia flagship store in Shinjuku this summer. It will be the largest Lush store outside the UK and the world’s first digital shopping experience. (*Japan Today*, 22 May)



NO MORE PAPER FORMS

The Home Office scrapped all landing cards for Japanese and international air and sea passengers as part of its new “e-gate” electronic logging system. The move extends e-gate services, previously open only to the European Economic Area, to all travellers. (BBC, 16 May)



“ The Home Office scrapped all landing cards for international air and sea passengers ”

LONDON HOSTS HUGE MANGA EXPO

As part of UK in Japan 2019–20, the British Museum unveiled the world’s largest manga exhibition outside Japan. Running until 26 August it showcases manga and anime history from 19th century drawings to Pokémon, created in 1996. (*The Independent*, 22 May)



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Collaborative growth

Use Member Gets Member to spur opportunities

LORI HENDERSON MBE

Being a member of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) has many benefits. You can attend a wide range of informative and interesting business-to-business events, enjoy promotional opportunities, receive useful market intelligence and gain enhanced access to key organisations and influential people. And, of course, you get *BCCJACUMEN* every month.

But perhaps the most powerful benefit of all is being plugged into the BCCJ membership network. Driven by some 1,000 professionals with a shared interest in promoting UK and Japan business relations, we are one of Japan's most genuinely active, useful and welcoming business communities.

Through the wider BCCJ ecosystem, membership also allows access to the British Embassy Tokyo and key policymakers in Japan. This includes leaders from trade and investment as well as political circles. It also provides opportunities to engage at a senior level with British and Japanese executives.

Every time we welcome a new member—whether a company or individual—the collective skills, experience and knowledge of our ecosystem grows a little bit more. And the more we grow our network, the stronger and more influential it will become.

Each member who introduces a new member—in any category—will receive 50% of the new member's first annual fee.

BCCJ in 2019

Currently, of our 200-plus member companies, about 90% are considered British. Of our 1,000 delegates, the split between Japanese and non-Japanese is roughly 50-50.

Many of our current members are interested in connecting with more Japanese businesses and individuals. Indeed, a balance of British and Japanese members will lead to a more stimulating network, a greater reciprocal understanding of business culture and the creation of more productive business and personal relationships for everyone. Diversity is the engine that powers opportunities and success.

Member Gets Member

For these reasons, we launched in 2016 the Member Gets Member (MGM) scheme. It is very simple: each member who introduces a new member—in any category—will receive 50% of the new member's first annual fee, in the form of BCCJ credits. This credit may be used against the cost of the existing member's membership fee or to cover event participation fees, such as a seat (or a table!) at the British Business Awards (happening this year on 8 November at Hotel Gajoen).

The objective of the MGM scheme is to foster a wider network, to increase expertise and knowledge throughout the BCCJ ecosystem, as well as to boost participation at BCCJ events—for the benefit for all members.

How to apply

To take advantage of the MGM scheme, pick up one of the bilingual MGM forms at a BCCJ event or ask the BCCJ office (info@bccjapan.com) to send you a form by email.

The prospective company or individual should fill out a few contact details, and the current member should validate the form by providing his or her signature. Then it is ready to submit to the BCCJ office—by hand, email or post.

Take a moment to think about the people and businesses you currently interact with on a day-to-day basis: your customers, business partners, suppliers and other vendors. Could any of them become valuable and active members of the BCCJ thanks to their interest in promoting UK-Japan business relations?

Please do help us to grow the chamber—and give back to your own business network—through the MGM. If you know a company that might be keen to join our vibrant and growing network of professionals, contact us at info@bccjapan.com 🇬🇧

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Do nothing

Why we must fight the trend of impatience

DAVID BICKLE | @BCCJ_President

We cannot be sure of the origin of the phrase “too much of a good thing,” but we do know that William Shakespeare alluded to the fact that it can be bad for you. Whilst the Bard was not thinking about technology when he wrote that, the words still ring true after 400 years.

We all know that rapid advancements in mobile digital communications and data processing enable us (if we are smart) to work faster, more flexibly and with greater productivity. At the same time, there is a growing realisation that the possibility of 24/7 connectivity is making society increasingly impatient for instant gratification and real-time responses. Without discipline, it is all too easy for mobile devices to disrupt the pace of our lives and the proportion of things such as adequate rest and play, required for a healthy lifestyle—both physically and mentally.

Downtime matters

Neuroscience has shown that when consciously idle our brains remain highly active. These subconscious processes, of which we are unaware, fire up different parts of our brain, including areas associated with creativity. For the processes to flourish, it is important to find time to do nothing. That is easier said than done in Japan, where the universal pressure on

24/7 connectivity is making society increasingly impatient for instant gratification and real-time responses.

modern workers to do more with less combines with a stubbornly persistent long-hours working culture.

Counterintuitively, it takes a surprising amount of effort to do nothing. Techniques are a matter of personal preference. Some people practice meditation and mindfulness, whilst others prefer to lose themselves among the shelves of a good bookshop—or of a bad one for that matter. Both have a rejuvenating effect that cannot be replicated by delving into an online archive!

Bias build-up

It was in this way that I stumbled across Daniel Kahneman’s book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, in which the Nobel Prize winner explains how people make decisions. Alarming, it is human nature to unconsciously allow our likes and dislikes to determine our beliefs about the world, causing us to make judgments and decisions based on emotion rather than reason.

Accordingly, when asked difficult questions about what we think about something, we tend to reply—unconsciously—with an answer to the much simpler question of how we feel about it. This makes us susceptible to media messaging and populism, and it is no coincidence that businesses, celebrities and political parties of all stripes allocate huge resources to public relations and communications campaigns.

Seeking statesmen

The same process contributes to self-sustaining event cascades, whereby inflamed biases lead to the polarisation of public opinion which, in turn, impacts the direction of policy. In this manner, we have seen traditionally dominant centrist parties lose ground in recent European Union elections for the European Parliament.

Kahneman advises that an understanding of psychology should inform the design of policies that combine expert knowledge with the public’s emotions and intuitions. Let us hope therefore that, in the realm of international relations, we will see expert politicians and bureaucrats demonstrate the leadership and statesmanship necessary to seek rational—albeit sometimes unpalatable—compromise before settling for damaging emotional entrenchment. 🌸



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CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER SETS AGENDA IN FUKUOKA

BY HM TREASURY

On 28–29 June, the leaders of the G20 will gather in Osaka as Japan hosts its first ever G20 Summit. The Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting, the Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and other ministerial meetings will also be held at eight locations throughout Japan. This press release was issued on 7 June by HM Treasury regarding the visit by Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond for the G20 Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting:

The digital revolution has transformed how we do business, but the international corporate tax system is outdated, the Chancellor will say during the meeting of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors. He will also outline the benefits brought by digitalisation to the UK economy and beyond, but warn that a plan needs to be agreed to tackle the way tech multi-nationals are taxed, because change is too slow.

Mr Hammond said:

"Britain's future outside the EU depends on the strong partnerships we build with our friends and neighbours across the world.

"In Japan, I will further strengthen our successful economic relationship by showcasing how we're embracing the new economy and champion our world-class expertise in tackling the challenges posed by the digital revolution. I will also meet with my G20 counterparts to reaffirm the need for global reform of the international corporate tax framework, to ensure it is fit for the future".

The Chancellor set out details in last year's Budget for a Digital Services Tax—a tax on the revenues of certain online business models. But he made clear then that an international agreement would be the best solution to ensure that digital platform businesses that generate substantial value in the UK pay their fair share of tax.

Alongside Japanese, Chinese, French, and American counterparts, the Chancellor will reaffirm the UK's commitment to reaching an international agreement on reforms to the international corporate tax framework for digital businesses.

Building on a recent report from the Global Infrastructure Hub—a G20 initiative—which noted

- Chancellor to push for international action on tax rules for the digital era and quality infrastructure investment.
- Global tax rules do not reflect the digital age, Chancellor to warn world leaders.
- Chancellor will also meet with the leaders of the Japanese Business Federation to discuss future opportunities for the UK–Japan relationship.

that the UK is a 'pioneer of project delivery globally', the Chancellor will also push for the adoption of a set of shared principles for global quality infrastructure investment. The G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment will support efforts to close the infrastructure financing gap and drive sustainable growth.

The Chancellor will also hold talks with Finance Ministers of some of the largest global economies, including for the first time India's new Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. They'll discuss the challenges facing the global economy and cooperation post-Brexit.

Finally, in Tokyo the Chancellor is also set to meet with senior figures in Keidanren (the Japanese Business Federation) and the CEOs of some of Japan's largest businesses and banks, including Masayoshi Son, Founder and CEO of SoftBank. They'll discuss how the UK will maintain and strengthen its future economic ties with Japan—the world's third largest economy—long after Brexit. 🇬🇧

Bilateral partners

Japan was the UK's fourth largest trading partner outside of the EU in 2018. Total trade in goods and services (i.e., exports plus imports) between the UK and Japan was £29.5bn by the end of Q4 2018, 8.5% more than 2017.

Keidanren

The largest and most influential Japanese business organisation, comprising 1,412 major companies, 109 industrial associations and 47 regional economic organisations.

Global Tax

The UK used its Presidency of the G8 in 2013 to initiate the first substantial renovation of the international tax standards in almost a century. The 'BEPS package' initiated then is a series of concrete measures to help countries tackle businesses shifting their profits around to limit their tax bills.

Infrastructure

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority, the UK's centre of expertise for the delivery of infrastructure and major projects, has provided support to over 60 governments on infrastructure planning and delivery, and is working to promote the G20 Principles for the Infrastructure Project Preparation Phase—a key element of quality infrastructure endorsed by the G20 in 2018.



Chancellor of the Exchequer
Philip Hammond

RENEWED RELATIONSHIP

Stronger UK–Japan defence ties

BY CAPTAIN PAUL CASSON, ROYAL NAVY, BRITISH DEFENCE ATTACHÉ TO JAPAN

The story of UK–Japan relations is a long one. The UK was one of the first countries—along with the Netherlands—to establish relations with Japan after it emerged from the isolation of the Edo period (1603–1867). During the Meiji Restoration that began in 1868, the UK became one of the key advisor nations to Japan, and the Anglo–Japanese Alliance (1902–1923) was modern Japan’s first pact with a great power. In 2013, celebrations marked the 400th anniversary of diplomatic links, highlighting how long we have known each other.

Minds alike

Despite being separated by great distance, we have some fundamental similarities. We are both constitutional monarchies, parliamentary democracies and island nations on the edge of continental neighbours. We are both fervent supporters of rules and systems that promote peace, security and prosperity, and we have a common ally in the United States.

It is therefore no surprise that Japan has looked to the UK for friendship in the military domain. The Royal Navy and Imperial Japanese Navy fought alongside each other in the Mediterranean during WWI, and there are other examples of a common history—the Japanese memorial ship *Mikasa* in Yokosuka being built in the UK in the late 1890s, for example.

There has been a resurgence of activity between British and Japanese forces, and a closer bond has developed between our defence ministries as well. While Japan and the United States have a rock-solid security alliance formed in the 1950s, Japan appears keen to strengthen its relationships with other global partners such as the UK. We have found an easy-to-work-with, like-minded defence partner in each other.

High-level planning

Some important meetings have served to underpin—and indeed endorse—this recent increase in activity. British Prime Minister Theresa May visited



Katsuaki Ono, senior director, chief of Tokyo Port Management Office, presents Royal Navy Commander Conor O'Neill with a gift on the arrival of HMS *Montrose* at Harumi Pier.

Our acquisition and defence industry communities have capitalised on a warming of relations.



HMS *Argyll* docked at Yokosuka

It is hoped the next 2+2 will be held later this year and will be held in Japan.
This is a strong priority for both administrations.

PHOTO: BLACKMANE MEDIA



The British Army and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force held joint exercises at Camp Fuji on 30 September–12 October.

Japan in August 2017. It was a very successful trip, particularly for defence. The UK and Japan agreed two joint declarations, one on defence and the other on prosperity. The Japan–UK Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation includes specifics pertaining to joint military exercises and building military capacity in other nations, as well as counterterrorism and cyber relationships. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited the UK on 10 January, and the defence dialogue was of significant importance to this visit, with both sides having much to discuss, including a new commitment to an infrastructure dialogue and many broader security issues, such as building capacity in other nations across the Indo-Pacific other than just Japan and the UK.

Supporting these prime-ministerial visits, there is also an annual meeting—called the 2+2—led by each nation’s foreign and defence ministers. The most recent 2+2 took place at the end of 2017 at the historic Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London. During that meeting, then-Japanese Minister of Defence Itsunori Onodera visited the

new Royal Navy aircraft carrier the HMS *Queen Elizabeth* alongside in Portsmouth and he was the first non-UK Minister to visit the ship. It is hoped the next 2+2 will be held later this year and will be held in Japan. This is a strong priority for both administrations.

Words in action

These meetings have been critical to providing the framework for a real advance in defence cooperation, and there has been some significant activity by the Royal Navy and British Army. Both have been increasingly active with their Japanese partners, strongly encouraged by the Japanese authorities. Per the specific initiative of then-Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson, the HMS *Sutherland*, a Type 23 or Duke-class anti-submarine-warfare specialist frigate, worked closely with its Japanese counterparts in Japanese waters. The *Sutherland* was the first Royal Navy warship to conduct operations in support of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) to enforce sanctions on North Korea.

Embargo operations in support of the UNSCR were also carried out by the Royal Navy Fleet Flagship, the HMS *Albion*, a major amphibious asset with a Company of Royal Marines on board. The *Albion* was a significant presence in Japanese waters for many months. She was also to take part in a detailed amphibious exercise on the beach at the Numazu training area in southwest Tokyo. Japanese marines from the newly formed Japanese Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade, together with Royal Marines, were to use the *Albion*’s landing craft for the exercise. Sadly, this drill had to be cancelled at the very last moment due to a typhoon.

Despite the cancellation, preparation for the exercise showed that the Japanese and British were capable of detailed joint planning processes between their maritime and land forces. It was a significant “first” for the Japanese to do this with a military other than that of the United States.



HMS *Montrose*

PHOTO: GROWN COPYRIGHT 2005



PHOTO: BLACKMANE MEDIA

British Army and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers conducted joint helicopter drills using a Japanese CH-47 Chinook.

Port of call

The *Albion* also spent time alongside Harumi Pier in Central Tokyo, where she conducted a major reception and was opened to visitors. Some 6,000 Tokyoites got the opportunity to visit the ship and see her capability, as well as to talk to her sailors and marines.

Another Duke-class frigate, the *HMS Argyll*, followed the *Albion* and conducted further UNSCR enforcement patrols. A holiday break alongside in Yokosuka, home to the US Navy's Seventh Fleet, meant that the *Argyll's* crew were treated to Christmas and New Year's Japanese style, with Kentucky Fried Chicken and sake! She then departed for home via further enforcement operations.

The last ship to visit was the *HMS Montrose*. She was undertaking a circumnavigation of the world and had arrived via a Pacific-Ocean transit that passed by the South Pacific islands. The route led

back to her forward deployed base in Bahrain via Singapore and the Indian Ocean, where she also conducted operational exercises with Japanese Self-Defense Force vessels. The *Montrose* was alongside Harumi Pier for nearly a week in March. As the *Albion* did, she opened up to visitors and another 6,000 people stopped by—no mean feat for a frigate-size ship!

Groundwork

The British Army and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) have also been hard at work. During October last year, the British Army deployed, with the strong support of the JGSDF, 63 members of the Honourable Artillery Company—the oldest formed military unit in the world—to the Sendai and Fuji exercise areas. There they conducted a detailed covert surveillance exercise with JGSDF troops. This was again a huge success, not just in the execution of the event, but also in the planning. Once again,

it showed how easy it is for our forces to plan and execute joint military operations. The British Army has extended an invitation to the JGSDF to visit the UK, and there is a strong desire from both sides to make these land exercises regular events.

Military visits have been the visible and dramatic evidence of our rapidly growing defence relationship, but there has also been much activity as we assist Japan with their security preparations for upcoming major events. Drawing from the UK's experience planning and delivering the hugely successful London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, we are helping Japan ensure success and security for the iconic Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Rugby World Cup 2019.

Our acquisition and defence industry communities have capitalised on a warming of relations. We now have a strong relationship in the field of technical collaboration. We are in the early stages of what is known as the Joint New Air-to-Air Missile



PHOTO: BRITISH EMBASSY TOKYO

HMS Albion visits Japan.

PHOTO: CROWN COPYRIGHT 2017



HMS Queen Elizabeth



PHOTO: ROYAL NAVY

Japanese sailors welcomed the HMS Montrose.

Programme (JNAAM), working together to assess the feasibility of a Japanese seeker on a European air-to-air missile fighter aircraft programmes. Our ability to share detail on technical and industrial collaboration is something that will underpin, in the future, our ability to work together. Common equipment will lead to common operating procedures and, ultimately, enhance our ability to promote “interoperability,” which is a signature of mature military forces that are confident in each other’s presence.

It is also interesting to note that the Japanese shipbuilder Japan Marine United Corporation (JMU), based in Yokohama, has been invited to bid on construction of two new British Future Solid Support ships to support the Royal Navy. The JMU bid will include significant levels of British input, notably the design support.

Safe tomorrow

Clearly it has been a successful couple of years. So, what of the future? The UK and Japan are set to cement our defence and security relationship, and our militaries will continue exercise planning and execution. Both our Prime Ministers have agreed that there is a need for an enhanced legal framework to support regular ship visits and joint exercises, and the UK is talking in some detail about making our naval presence more persistent. Perhaps the best indication and descriptor of our desire came from the UK Secretary of State for Defence at the recent Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. She stated, “And for Global Britain, that means, first and foremost, that we need to be

The business end
 Of further interest is the decision by the Japanese Ministry of Defense to procure the Rolls-Royce MT30 maritime propulsion Gas Turbine for the future Japanese frigates, building on the success of the earlier Spey engine which is widely used by the JMSDF. This engine is in wide international use and particularly with the US, Republic of Korea and Italian navies as well as the Royal Navy.

present. And that our presence must be persistent, not opportunistic. And that is why we have seen the Royal Navy maintain an almost unbroken presence in the region over the last 12 months. And why that will continue in the future, and will include our new flagship HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, in one of her first operational deployments in a couple of years’ time, and we will deepen relationships, and we will forge new ones”.

During 2018 and the start of 2019 we have seen some significant rekindling of the UK-Japan defence relationship. Indicators are that both sides want this to continue and improve further. In the year to come, we are likely to see more exercises and initiatives to learn from each other as both our nations do more to promote a rules-based international system, and look to deepen the security and stability that underpins this region’s prosperity. 🇬🇧



PHOTO: BRITISH EMBASSY TOKYO

HMS Albion

PEARSON, SALLY ARMY WIN AWARDS AT JMEC

BY JOHN AMARI



PHOTO: LIFE.14

Consultant Luis Costigan (left) and mentor Mitsuhiro Honda (right) with Team 4 members Harumi Oyama, Elliot Langston, Momoko Ozawa and Kyoko Nagano, who developed a strategy for the Salvation Army.

The annual Japan Market Expansion Competition (JMEC) held its awards ceremony on 5 June at Tokyo American Club, and this year there was a strong British presence.

A young British man, Elliot Langston, was among the high-flying participants. He and his peers on Team 4, who were tasked with developing a market expansion plan for the Salvation Army, received the “Tell It Like It Is” Award.

The award recognised their bold strategy of redefining the Salvation Army’s initial scope of work and proposing a feasible plan.

This was in line with JMEC’s aims: to enhance the business skills of emerging executives via intensive mentoring, lectures and feedback sessions with mentors and consultants, and to deliver hard-nosed yet actionable business plans to project clients.

Speaking to *ACUMEN*, Colonel Kenneth Maynor, a territorial commander in the Salvation Army, said: “We had the remarkable experience of bringing on a JMEC team of young professionals who were energising and really terrific to work with. They looked at our thrift store and bazaar operations, and gave us remarkable insights and great business strategies moving forward”.

Langston, a leader on Team 4, said: “The project that the Salvation Army proposed to us was very

This year there was a strong British presence, including the Salvation Army, who participated as a Project Client.

ambitious. As the project went on—and looking at how they could achieve their goal of expansion in Japan—we decided to do a deep dive into the organisation itself and reframe the scope of work”.

The business plan Team 4 proposed aims to strengthen the Salvation Army’s foundations in Japan, and to use that as a springboard for greater expansion. To that end, the proposal made efficiency and strategy recommendations—including suggestions on how the organisation can increase its visibility in Japan.

Saving souls

Established in London in 1865, the Salvation Army—a global charitable organisation as well as a Protestant denomination of the Christian church—was among 12 project clients to take part in this year’s JMEC competition.

For Maynor, participating in the programme was an opportunity to reassess the charity’s expansion

challenges in Japan and to open up new avenues for growth and engagement with the local community.

What are these challenges?

“Some of it relates to not telling the story of the Salvation Army’s work every day in a compelling way. The Salvation Army helps and supports thousands of people in Japan,” he explained. Every night, there are thousands of people who sleep under a Salvation Army roof, he pointed out.

“But I think most generations—particularly younger people—are not aware of that. So, the Salvation Army has had to take a deep look at how to share what we do so that people are aware of it, and to think about how they can realistically support the Salvation Army”.

Maynor has lived in Japan since 2016. However, the Salvation Army itself has had a footprint here for more than 125 years.

With headquarters in the Jimbocho area of Tokyo’s Chiyoda district, the organisation serves communities across Japan via its network of hospitals, grace homes and childcare centres.

“The Salvation Army in Japan has services from Hokkaido all the way down to Yahata, in Kyushu, and Takamatsu, in Kagawa. The organization provides housing and care for children ages two to 19, but really we care for people up to 104 years old. We provide childcare centres, grace homes, hospitals and specialised care for people who have been impacted by dementia”.

But the organisation has faced a challenge in explaining that value to the community in Japan. As a result, the Salvation Army had—up until the experience at JMEC—been at a loss as to how to re-engage with locals.

With greater transparency and a clearer engagement strategy than before, Maynor is upbeat that they can fully reconnect with the community, opening up local participation and volunteerism.

Top prize

The overall winner on the day was Team 12, who developed a market expansion strategy for Plugwise, an energy company from the Netherlands.

Now in its 25th year, JMEC—a six-month business-training programme focused on business plan design—is sponsored by 18 foreign chambers of commerce based in Japan. To date, the programme has delivered 252 business plans and graduated more than 1,300 participants from 55 countries.

How can individuals in Japan support the cause?
 “That’s a great question. I think it begins with good conversation—of finding a Salvation Army centre, going in and talking with a Salvation Army officer. There are many opportunities to volunteer.”

Career investment

For Langston, a recent graduate of the University of Kent, taking part in JMEC has been the best decision of his life and a ladder into the corporate world in Japan.

A self-sponsored participant, he is currently an assistant English language teacher in Tokyo, a member of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, better known as JET.

As a result of his experience in JMEC, he is set to transition into work this summer in Tokyo, and in an organisation that he became familiar with during the JMEC experience.

“Whilst it was pricey, I think it was worth every penny. This is one of the best choices I’ve ever made. In the lectures alone, I learned more than in entire modules in university”, he told *ACUMEN*.

Originally from Folkestone in Kent, Langston took on the JMEC challenge because of what it could mean for tomorrow. “I’ve always been interested in continued learning after college, and I thought it would be a great investment in my future. It has been very educational. And just writing the business plan itself is a really good, intense and hands-on experience”.

That is not to say it has not been challenging. Langston recalls evenings and weekends sacrificed for the programme, and weeks where he went without much sleep. And he did this while holding down a full-time job as an English teacher.

Despite the hardships, where there any highlights? “It’s hard to pick a specific moment. At the end of it, there was just this sense of fulfilment. So, for example, I volunteered to be team leader, and it was the first time I’d done any managerial or leadership task. Those are the kinds of skills I think I can use in the future”.

Langston heard about JMEC from a friend of a friend who is an alumnus of the competition. Would he recommend it to anyone? He would.

“If you are thinking of starting a career in Japan, the JMEC programme is a great first step; it’s a great boost towards building a network here in Tokyo. But it’s also really educational and challenging. From the people you work with and the clients you help, it challenges you on so many levels. If you can find a scholarship, go for it. But if you self-fund, it’s a really great investment. I really recommend it”.



Team 3 members Marisa Cassidy, Charlie Subramoney, Maria W. Domingo, Yoichiro Ishikawa with mentor Jay Johannesen, consultant Gareth Allen and representatives of Project Client Pearson PLC.

Language testing

London-based global education company Pearson PLC was a Project Client this year. They partnered with Team 3 for their Japan marketplace expansion plan, which took third place.

Pearson’s involvement in JMEC, however, goes deeper. As the UK’s largest awarding organisation for academic and vocational qualifications, as well as other learning programmes, Pearson—via the independent Pearson Assured certification—provides international benchmarks against which programmes such as JMEC can be audited for design, processes and delivery. For JMEC, the annually awarded certification ensures professionals attending the programme receive quality training every year.

Speaking to *ACUMEN* about the JMEC results, Pearson Qualifications & Assessment Director for Asia Stuart Connor said: “It’s a terrific achievement and we are extremely proud of the team for their efforts in taking what was a challenging brief and really delivering something insightful and creative that will help move our business forward, not just in Japan but globally.

“One of our largest and fastest-growing businesses is in English-language proficiency testing, using artificial intelligence to deliver fast and accurate test results and performance diagnostics. JMEC helped us research the Japanese market for language testing and what types of customer needs are currently unmet. Pearson has been supporting JMEC for five years as a sponsor, but it was great to be able to experience the value of the service as a client”.

JMEC WINNERS

FIRST Team 12—Project Client: Plugwise
 Mary Joy Tolentino, Keiko Muratani, Hiroyuki Kosuge, Masaomi Tsunoda
 (Mentor: Justin Dart; Consultant: Akira Havermans)

SECOND Team 6—Project Client: Palmetto Inoue
 Henriikka Saarela, Kyoko Kanuma, Sawako Kuboyama, Hidemitsu Asai
 (Mentor: Andrew Neuman; Consultant: Verna Holder)

THIRD Team 3—Project Client: Pearson
 Marisa Cassidy, Charlie Subramoney, Maria W. Domingo, Yoichiro Ishikawa
 (Mentor: Jay Johannesen; Consultant: Gareth Allen)

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WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN KEY PEOPLE QUIT?

BY DR GREG STORY



I once had the perfect team in business. I had spent years hiring well and really putting a lot into training everyone. I thought, “Finally, I have the perfect team.”

That wondrous situation probably lasted about six months before one of them quit. A client poached them from us. Why? Because we had done such a stupendously excellent job of training and developing them, they were considered highly, highly valuable by other firms. What does this tell us? That we will never create the perfect team—and even if we do, it won’t last, so get used to instability.

Whether it is a division within a large firm or a small one, there will always be key people. Sometimes they are in highly specialised roles, and it took years of investment in their training and qualifications to get them there. They are truly unique talents who are almost impossible to replace.

Hanging on

So, what do we do? We start treating these people like princes and princesses. We are very keen to ensure they stay with us, so we pander to their ego, keep giving them more money and cut them a lot of slack we don’t extend to others. As they begin to realise that they are so rare and valuable, their ego kicks into gear and they become entirely entitled and expectant. You can’t afford to replace them, so you just suck it up.

Usually, we come up with brilliant counter moves once they have quit. We start to create workarounds, we inject new processes into the system to cope, we start spending money to compensate for the loss. In retrospect, we would

We will never create the perfect team—and even if we do, it won’t last, so get used to instability.

have been better to do all this before they quit. We were busy though. We had hived off that bit of the responsibility to them so that we could concentrate on other tasks. Everything was working. “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” reigned supreme as the dominant ideology.

But there were warning signs we neglected to note on the way. We ignored them because we didn’t want to confront the possibility of disaster. We were very busy, you know.

Seeing the signs

So, in future what should we do? Once we feel we are tip-toeing around on egg shells with particular individuals who are deemed too valuable to lose, the alarm siren should sound in our heads. We should start thinking, “Uh oh, all of our eggs are congregating in the one basket here, and the consequent risk factor is major”. We need to start working on reducing our exposure to a meltdown of epic proportions.

The backup plan needs to get attention. We need to develop another capable individual who can slip into the position if the need arises. Funnily enough, often the superstar doesn’t want that. They only want one sun in the sky, so they use their position to block the development of a replace-

ment. They can’t find anyone who would be good to hire. They are too busy to look. They are too busy to train someone. None of the potential candidates are right for the job.

At the time, you yield to their superior knowledge or their qualifications and accept that what they are telling you is true. You are respectful of the superstar’s position. You never imagine there is a second agenda in play, and you are busy.

Preparing for change

Your superiors or your partners are constantly telling you that we need the superstar, so tread lightly, be careful, keep them engaged, don’t screw up. Your options suddenly look constricted. And, again, you are busy.

Ignore all that superstar smokescreen and do your own search for a candidate, because that is exactly what you will have to do anyway when the superstar quits. You may as well spend the time now, because pain today will be relief of pain tomorrow.

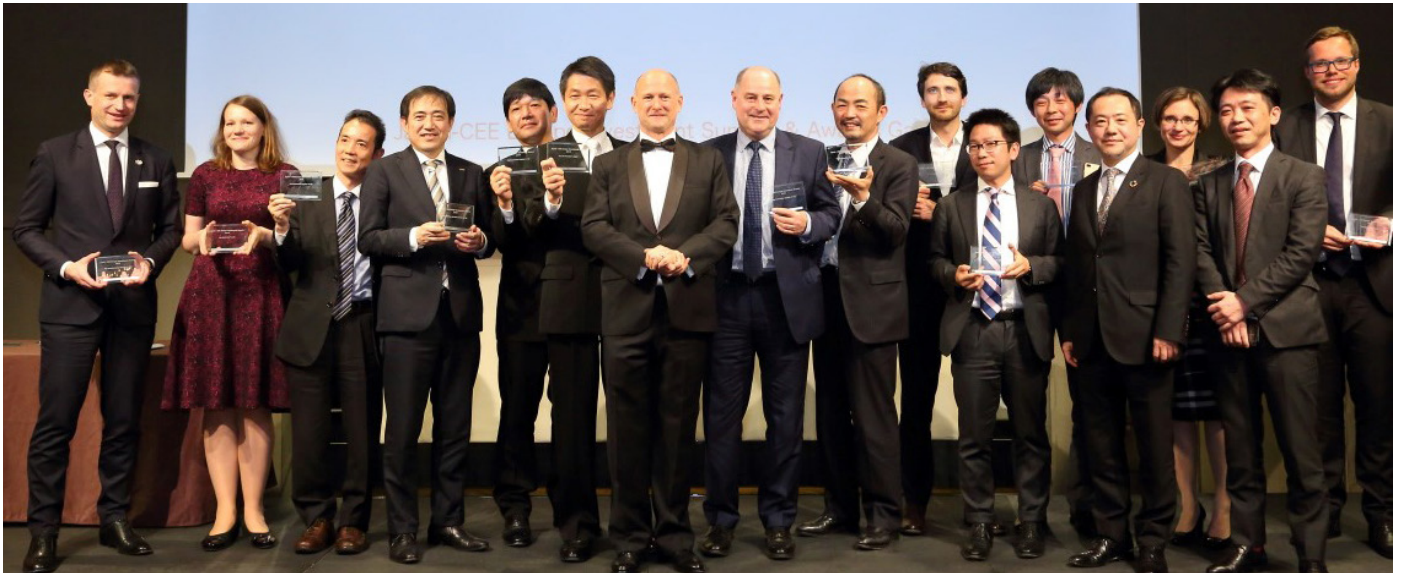
Bite the bullet. Don’t become a hostage to the superstar. Always work on devising a cunning plan in case you need to replace them. It means time out of your already super-busy schedule—and it probably requires unbudgeted monies—but get it organised and do it.

We cannot expect to realise the perfect team and keep them intact forever. Someone will poach them from us, or they will want to do their own thing because they are a genius. It is only a matter of when. We also know that experts can be hired in and budding experts can be developed over time. As soon as you hear the sound of egg shells cracking, get into action. 🇨🇦

BREXIT OPTION?

Event marks ties between
Japan and Central and Eastern Europe

BY ALEC JORDAN



In April, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made history by being the first Japanese prime minister to visit Slovakia. He was taking part in a summit with leaders from the Visegrád Group, which comprises the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland. According to a 26 April story in the *Nikkei Asian Review*, Abe met with Slovakian Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini and other members of the Visegrád Group. However, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán did not attend the meeting—he was at the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing.

Regional promise

Abe's presence and Orbán's absence point to two dynamics in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The first is China's considerable influence in the region. In 2016 and 2017, Beijing announced some \$9.4 billion in deals for 16 CEE nations. These were connected to China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to develop infrastructure and investment projects on a global scale.

The second dynamic is Japan's response to the inroads China is making in the region. While Japan cannot rival the financial might of China, it does have the potential to make its influence felt—both through international trade pacts such as the Japan-

CEE nations offer very promising business opportunities for firms in a wide variety of industries.

EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which went into effect in February, and by Japanese firms investing in the region.

CEE nations offer very promising business opportunities for firms in a wide variety of industries, from food and beverages to information technology. The combination of low costs, a highly skilled workforce and proximity to wealthier nations in the European Union make the CEE an appealing location for firms looking to open new European offices, planning to expand into new markets and eyeing mergers or acquisitions.

While firms in Western Europe have long recognised that the CEE offers ideal conditions for doing business, those in Japan have been a bit slower to invest in the region. But they are rapidly making up for lost time. Currently, there are about 1,000 Japanese firms in the CEE—operating in sectors such as automotive, manufacturing, business services and energy—and they employ more than 50,000 people. Japan is the third-largest foreign

investor in the CEE. Poland is the most popular location for investment, while countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic and Romania are also receiving a great deal of attention from Japanese firms.

First start

Against this economic and political backdrop, the first-annual Japan-CEE Investment Summit & Awards were held on 25 April at the Palace Hotel Tokyo.

Thom Barnhardt, founder of CEE Business Media and organiser of the event, has been running summit and awards events recognising US investment in Central Europe for the past eight years. He decided to launch the Japan edition of the event in response to two important developments:

- The Japan-EU EPA
- Brexit, which is leading some firms to open new offices in continental Europe

However, given that a move to Western Europe can be expensive, CEE nations have become competitive options. Barnhardt claimed that many Japanese firms that have been headquartered in Western Europe are moving their operations to CEE nations.



Yasuhide Nakayama, former state minister of foreign affairs

The summit portion of the event, which took place during the day, included:

- Political and economic briefings
- Discussions about opportunities afforded by the Japan–EU EPA
- Case studies about acquisitions of CEE-based firms by Japanese investors
- Talks on economic incentives in CEE countries and new regulations
- Cross-border Japan–CEE opportunities in fields such as IT, gaming and software development

The summit drew a diverse group of attendees, which included Japanese executives responsible for investment decisions in the region, executives from CEE businesses and ambassadors from several CEE nations.

Winners

Following the summit, the evening awards portion began with a networking reception where wines from Romania, which were supplied by Euro Asia Trading, were served.

During the reception, Yasuhide Nakayama, former state minister of foreign affairs and member of the House of Representatives, gave a short speech before the toast. He expressed his hope that Japanese investors would not focus solely on China and South-East Asia, but also on the CEE region.

Taking the nation of Croatia, with its strength in engineering and aviation, as an example, he lauded the CEE's reputation for technical prowess. And addressing the long-standing ties between Japan and the CEE, Nakayama said, "We are very geopolitically far away, but we have a long history [together] and we are proud of that history."

The event then moved to a multi-course dinner, which was complemented by more Romanian wines as well as sparkling sake provided by Hakkaisan.

Midway through the dinner, the awards were announced. The masters of ceremony for this portion of the event were Barnhardt and GR Japan's Mina Takahashi.

Some 49 Japanese firms were shortlisted in nine categories, and the group was quite impressive in its own right: they account for more than \$15 billion in foreign direct investment into CEE nations. In total, 24 awards were given, chosen by a 19-member VIP panel.

The evening was a lively affair, and attendees stayed for some time after the last awards were announced to mingle and chat. Contacted after the event, Barnhardt said that he was very happy with both the turnout and the support for the inaugural event. "We were very pleased with year one! More than 120 top executives attended, which was a bit more than we expected. We were particularly honoured to have the support of [the Japan External Trade Organization], and commercial counsellors from across the CEE," he told *ACUMEN*. "We were also glad to see the enthusiasm from Japanese investors already present in the CEE. They deserve these awards for their substantial investments in the region!"

Looking ahead

Although ties have already been developed between Japan and the CEE, Barnhardt believes

that events such as his can deepen the connections by educating both CEE and Japanese firms.

He has specific plans to boost awareness before next year's event. "CEE firms largely are unaware of the opportunities in Japan, and especially mid-market Japanese firms are not yet present in the CEE. In 2020, we will have three or four Japanese cities supporting the event, by promoting this to their mid-sized and smaller firms." Two of the first cities that Barnhardt has in mind are Osaka and Nagoya.

In addition to the presence of cities other than Tokyo at the event next year, Barnhardt is hoping that—given the number of UK firms that have invested in the CEE region—there will be a showing of representatives from the UK at the second Japan–CEE Summit & Awards, which will be held on 23 April, 2020. 🌸



ACUMEN Publisher Simon Farrell presents an award to Fujitsu's Masaki Okabe for Top Business Services Investors.

WINNERS

Top CEE Investors in Japan

Comarch SA
ESET, spol. s r.o.
RTB House

Top Automotive Investors in the CEE

Magyar Suzuki Corporation
Toyota Motor Manufacturing Poland Sp. z o.o.

Top Automotive Supplier Investors

Mabuchi Motor Co. Ltd.
NSG (Pilkington Automotive Poland Sp. z o.o.)
Sohbi Craft Poland

Top Financial Services Investors

Mizuho Bank, Ltd.
ORIX Corporation

Top Manufacturing Investors

Bridgestone Sp. z o.o.
Nidec Corporation
TDK Electronics Hungary Ltd. (EPCOS)

Top Business Services Investors

FUJIFILM Europe Business Service Sp. z o.o.
Fujitsu Global Delivery Center Poland
Takeda SCE Sp. z o.o.

Top M&A Deals in the CEE

Asahi buys five Eastern European beer brands for €7.3 billion
Daikin completes AHT acquisition
Kansai Paint acquisition of Helios Coatings Group (Slovenia)

Top Infrastructure Investors

ITOCHU Corporation (Serbia)
Marubeni Corporation

Top CSR Initiatives in the CEE

Bridgestone Sp. z o.o.
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ALAN BOOTH: CORPSING AS OTHELLO

And some words from *Hamlet*

BY TIMOTHY HARRIS



Following Paul McCarthy's review of *The Great Stage of Fools* in the May issue of *BCCJ ACUMEN*, Timothy Harris writes this epilogue in memory of the writer of the book, his great friend and fellow actor, Alan Booth.

When Alan Booth died in 1993, the manuscript of his second major book, *Looking for the Lost*, was more or less ready, and after some difficulty we managed to get it published. But I wanted also to publish a selection of his shorter writings about Japan, since I thought they contained some of his best writing. It proved almost impossible to find a publisher for *This Great Stage of Fools* at that time and later, and this is why this beautifully written book was published around the 25th anniversary of his death.

Inspiring relationship

Alan was a remarkable person, filled with irrepressible energy, enthusiasm, generosity and humour. We worked together for a number of years—not only within the relationship of editor and contributor, but as performers, putting on readings of the poetry of Blake, Yeats, Hardy, Hopkins, Milton and Shakespeare.

Alan was a trained actor and a gifted director. At the University of Birmingham, he had directed a number of plays, one of which, his production of the bad quarto of *Hamlet*, was praised in the local and national press (by no less a critic than Harold Hobson), and went on to win the first prize in a European students' drama competition. So, it was not easy for me to stand up to him on stage. But we would have a glass of red wine each just before

every performance to settle nerves—mine more than his—and then go on stage.

Memorable moment

We found that we were able to play off each other well, and at times Alan would quite unpredictably switch into one of his strange moods—they occurred both on and off stage—in which he became possessed by a near preternatural energy and quickness of wit. Once this happened when we were performing the temptation scenes in *Othello*, which we ran together. Alan was Iago, and I was Othello. We got to the speech when Iago speaks of sharing a bed with Cassio:

*In sleep I heard him say 'Sweet Desdemona,
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves';
And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
Cry out, 'Sweet creature!' and then kiss me hard,
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots
That grew upon my lips, then laid his leg
Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd...*

Alan tore into this speech with a lecherous and comic intensity that he had never used before. I started "corpsing," which is actor's slang for collapsing into uncontrollable giggles on stage, and, naturally, panicking at the same time. Finally, I slapped both hands over my face and hoped that my heaving shoulders would be taken as a sign of strong and painful emotion, and that I should be able to recover myself before Othello's next line came. I was able—thank whatever—to do this. And, it seems, none of the audience recognised what was really happening on stage, for, about 30 years later,

at the publication party for *The Great Stage of Fools*, someone came up to me and said he had witnessed this performance and had found it riveting and extraordinarily moving.

Well, here to finish are some words from *Hamlet* that I think are applicable to Alan:

*He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.* 🍷



This Great Stage of Fools:
An anthology of uncollected writings

By Alan Booth
Edited by Timothy Harris

With a foreword by Timothy Harris and
an afterword by Karel van Wolferen

Published by Bright Wave Media, Yokohama

Best bought directly from the publisher at
brightwavemedia.com/booth.html
or the Tsutaya book shop in Daikanyama.

Alan was a remarkable person, filled with irrepressible energy, enthusiasm, generosity and humour.



PHOTOS: SQUEEZE/STYLOROUGE

GLENN TILBROOK OF SQUEEZE

Cool times from south-east London

BY GUY PERRYMAN MBE

British rock band Squeeze emerged from the London new wave movement of the late 1970s and had almost instant success. Arguably their greatest triumph was their second album *Cool for Cats*, released in 1979. With an album and song title like that, plus songs such as “Slap and Tickle” and “Up the Junction,” the band came with a cheeky British sense of humour.

But they also crafted more heartfelt gems, for example “Tempted” and “Another Nail In My Heart,” and core members Glenn Tilbrook and Chris Difford have been hailed as two of pop’s finest songwriters—Tilbrook creating the melodies and Difford handling lyrics.

I met up with Tilbrook backstage in Tokyo the last time the band toured Japan and talked with him about their songwriting.

Storytellers

“Chris and I have been working together since we were in our teens. We have a very strong commitment to, and interest in, writing, and I think it’s something that’s ongoing,” Tilbrook told me. “I had one time when I hit a dry period in my songwriting in the ’80s for a couple of years but, ever since then, it’s never happened. I wouldn’t say it’s easy to write, but what it is easy to do is to judge what we do—and to know what’s good and what’s not good. It feels a fairly natural process”.

I’ve always found Squeeze songs cinematic and visual. I wondered if that is intentional?

“I think Chris is a great storyteller, and I think some of the best Squeeze songs just conjure up a mood and a set of images and a cast of characters who sometimes are real. And if they’re not real, they seem real and they’re identifiable,” Tilbrook said. “One of the things about our writing is we write about where we’re from. That’s where most things spring from, and I think that gives it its character”.

London calling

Tilbrook was born and raised in the south-east London district of Woolwich, and Squeeze songs are infused with a London vibe. “Up the Junction,” for example, refers to Clapham Junction, and “Cool for Cats” is about youthful good times in the city.

“That came from a bunch of people that we were hanging about with at the time, and being young lads as we were,” Tilbrook recalled. “It was a different time, I think—less advanced than today and somewhat simpler. Not always with great attitudes, but we had a lot of fun, and that song really—every time I hear it—just sums up that period of time to me”.

Fastforward

Indeed, these are different times. So, I asked Tilbrook how Squeeze remain relevant in the 21st century?

“That’s not really for me to say, but what I do know is that Squeeze are producing some of the best songs we have ever produced. *Cradle to the Grave* is one of our strongest records, and I’m very proud of it. But, it’s up to other people to decide where it fits”.



Released in 2015, *Cradle to the Grave* features songs used for the BBC TV drama of the same name, a programme about the life of fellow south-east Londoner Danny Baker, who is a comedian, writer and broadcaster.

Tilbrook explained: “Here’s how it worked. We were writing for the programme, but not specifically to scenes. Our remit was pretty wide, but I think the interesting thing it did for our writing was to actually—I’m not someone who’s sentimental about the past at all—but it actually ignited a certain sense of going back to where we started with our writing. I think some of the songs sound like they could be from Squeeze’s first time ‘round, and, indeed, a couple of them are. A song like “Happy Days,” for instance, we wrote when we were 17.”

Private scribes

I asked if Tilbrook and Difford write together?

“The writing process is always very private. Chris and I rarely work together. We work separately. I changed my studio about 10 years ago because I got sick of making records by myself. I have a studio now where we can all play together, and that actually really comes across in the record. I learnt about doing that when we re-recorded a number of our early songs and I thought, you know, it really wasn’t very complicated. We used to stand around in the studio and work out arrangements, and then get a take of that. So, I’ve started doing that again and it makes for a far more lively record than getting everything perfect.”

Writing is a very personal pursuit, and I always wonder how songwriters feel about having their diaries revealed to the public.

“Well, I think what it is, it’s a great outlet for anyone who writes or wants to show or convey something about their life—or hide something about their life. I don’t know. Whatever it is, it’s a



Glenn Tilbrook (centre) with (from left) Stephen Large, Yolanda Charles, Steve Smith, Chris Difford and Simon Hanson

great vehicle for expression and that’s what all art is about, is trying to express something that will mean something to someone or mean something to you, and will, eventually, mean something to someone else.”

Evolving sound

Music is a very powerful force in Tilbrook’s life. He acknowledges the special times of the early days of Squeeze, but is not sitting around wallowing in the past.

“Music constantly changes my life, and I don’t think I’ll ever experience the same sort of thrill and

rush that I had in my teens for music. But there is stuff that I hear that absolutely blows me away as an artist. There’re all sorts of things that spark me off and keep me very interested in what I do. It’s a living art form, it’s the best fun in the world. It’s not a bad job at all!” he added laughing.

And, finally, being so closely associated with London, I asked Tilbrook where he would take a fan from Japan if they popped over to see him?

“I’d take them out in south-east London. That’s my manor. I’d take them around some of the pubs in Charlton and Greenwich and Deptford, and I’d show them a good time!” 🍀

Tilbrook was born and raised in the south-east London district of Woolwich, and Squeeze songs are infused with a London vibe.



REMEMBER TOKYO BRITISH CLUB?

Founders reflect on expat haunt of bygone age

BY JULIAN RYALL

To open and operate The Tokyo British Club was, Yukihiro Imadegawa freely admits, an extraordinary labour of love.

From endless planning sessions before the club could open its doors to the legal minefield that surrounds the establishment of a bar in Tokyo and the import of British beer, staffing headaches and late-night phone calls to his home asking him to intervene in some situation or other, the project was an unending undertaking.

When it eventually came time to shut the club, he had to ensure that the appropriate legal procedures were carried out and contributed his own money to partially reimburse the creditors pro rata. Still, Yukihiro and his wife, Ursula Bartlett-Imadegawa, president of the St David's Society Japan, much prefer to focus on the happier moments.

Best of times

The memories that linger longest, they say, are always the happiest ones. There come to mind Yukihiro performing an impromptu operatic rendition from Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, family Christmas celebrations, an appearance by oh-so-British comedian Frank Muir CBE (1949–98), as well as a children's Easter party that had so much chocolate that it ended with the parents sitting at the bar drinking Champagne and eating shards of Easter eggs.

But the very best part of the 10-year adventure, the couple told *ACUMEN*, was simply being able to meet up with old friends in the bar and to make new acquaintances.

"The idea for The Tokyo British Club came out of a summer postcard that I sent in July 1985 to Adrian Jenkyns, then the head of International Computers here in Tokyo," said Imadegawa, a lawyer and founder of the Imadegawa Law Office.

"On the postcard I wrote that I missed British beer and wondered if there was any way we could solve that problem," he explained, adding that while British pubs and Irish bars are two-a-penny in virtually every Japanese city today, 30 years ago there were none, even in Tokyo.

Jenkyns, who was also a founder of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan, was unsurprisingly enthusiastic about the plan. So, the two men, Ursula and 10 other prominent British businesspeople—including Arthur Hawtin, Ann and Peter Liver, Peter Bainbridge and Frank Moorhead—formed a steering committee and set about the laborious process of creating a club from the ground up.



The video library



Gathering at the bar.

Love for Britain

Imadegawa can trace his interest in British culture—including beer—back to his time as an undergraduate at the University of Tokyo. During the student riots of 1968–69, lecture rooms were often locked, so he spent time in the university library and started to study English conversation.

Later, through a group of mutual friends, he met Ursula, who is originally from Cardiff but had come to Japan due to her interest in *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints and batik dyeing. Later, she developed a love for Japanese ceramics while teaching art at the International School of the Sacred Heart in Hiroo.

Married in 1978, the Bartlett-Imadegawas enjoyed Tokyo’s social scene, but Yukihiro missed some specialities that he had acquired a taste for during visits to Britain. This triggered the initial postcard to Adrian Jenkyns.

Excited about their new venture, weekends were spent brainstorming just what would be required and where the club might be situated. That research showed a members-only club was the most feasible option to keep prices lower for drinks that needed to be imported from the UK.

An extensive search for the ideal location eventually took them to a multi-level property to the east of Ebisu Station, before the Yebisu Garden Place complex was developed. The club was on the second floor and the basement level served as a theatre that was available for the club to book. The uppermost floor was an apartment for the owner of the building.

Open for business

The opening party was held in spring 1986—less than 12 months after the idea had first been aired—and was a memorable evening.

“It was a Friday night and we had been there the day before putting the finishing touches to everything, but I had a commitment with some of my students earlier in the evening and I couldn’t get there at the start,” said Ursula. “But I do recall it being a glorious atmosphere and that it went on until quite late the following morning”

The club was cosy and welcoming, with sofas and easy chairs as well as the traditional requirements of a pub, such as a dartboard. The kitchen soon earned a firm following for its roast dinners and for being able to cater to major events, such as Christmas parties, charity events and live music performances.

On occasions, British bangers or clotted cream brought in from the UK would find their way onto the menu as a treat.

The national societies of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland regularly utilised the premises for their functions and national nights, such as the annual St David’s Welsh Society, while it also hosted the Eye Mate Charity Christmas concert, involving the British ambassador to Japan at the time, Sir John Whitehead GCMG CVO, and the choral society of the British Embassy Tokyo.

Another popular event was the St Dwynwen’s night disco—the Welsh version of St Valentine’s—which falls in late January. “We were very proactive

about getting the name out and encouraging people to come to the club, but, looking back, it is clear that it did consume us for a while,” said Ursula, who recalls serving behind the bar while pregnant with her son, Yoshihiro, who was born in 1986 and is today a solicitor in London. The couple’s daughter, Rhyannon, is a journalist for the *Nikkei* newspaper in London.

At its peak, The Tokyo British Club had about 300 members, including Prince and Princess Takamado and then-British Ambassador to Japan Sir John Boyd KCMG.

Changing times

The popularity of the British-style drinking establishments that it pioneered in Japan may also, however, have been one of the factors behind its closure. Ebisu, Shibuya and other nearby districts have all seen the arrival of pubs selling Kilkeny, Bass as well as fish and chips, which all ate into the club’s uniqueness.

With family life taking up more of their time, the Bartlett-Imadegawas became less involved with day-to-day running of the club. And, when membership began to drop off, bills went unpaid for a while and debts replaced profit.

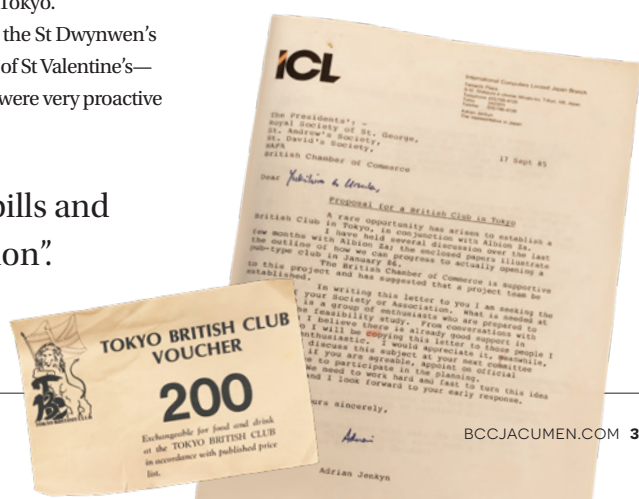
“For the first two or three years, everyone kept a close eye on things and it all went very smoothly,” said Yukihiro. “But then, suddenly, the club could not pay its bills and I was asked to step in and handle the situation”.

Ultimately, Yukihiro had to ask the other governors to chip in to cover the club’s debts, and he ended up partially paying off the debt pro rata with his own money.

“It was always very lively, and I do miss the conversations that we had around that bar—even if they were everyday things like our experiences at university or which British television programmes we missed,” said Ursula.

“We loved it though, and did and do miss it” 🍀

“But then, suddenly, the club could not pay its bills and I was asked to step in and handle the situation”.



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PHOTO: FRANK BRANGWYN, *PORTRAIT OF MR. KOJIRO MATSUKATA* (1916), THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WESTERN ART, TOKYO (DONATED BY THE HEIRS OF MR. KOJIRO MATSUKATA)

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DEVILS (DETAIL), 2017. © OLIVER BEER. PHOTO BY STEPHEN WHITE. COLLECTION OF MUSEUM VOORLINDEN. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC.



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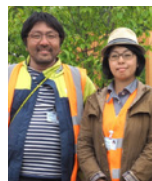
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Based on the idea of switching off as a way of relieving the stress of life in modern cities, this garden returns us to nature with a feeling of openness. A two-storey structure with a sedum-covered roof houses a tea room with glass walls and shower room. Outside, twin waterfalls, a pond and flowers reflect the changing scenery and new perspectives.



Gold medal winner

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POETRY IN MOTION

Musical with Welsh and Scottish roots prepares for Tokyo world premiere

BY MEGAN CASSON

The adaptation of a book for theatre has brought us some widely applauded productions. About to make their mark on Tokyo's musical theatre scene is *Disturbance*, a UK-born musical which will premiere on 2 July for a three-day run.

Adapted from a book of poems of the same name, this stage work by The Disturbance Project touches on tragedy and loss in a seemingly normal family. Thrice nominated for a Pushcart Prize—an American literary honour—author Ivy Alvarez will be visiting Japan for the first time for the world premiere.

Backed by Britain

Alvarez previously studied in Wales and received two grants from the British government, both of which helped her develop *Disturbance*. A 2005 residency at Hawthornden, a castle in Scotland, provided a peaceful setting in which Alvarez could write. And, in 2017, Literature Wales, a charity devoted to the development of Welsh literature, enabled her to attend a writing residency at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Ireland.

The poetry is based on a true story about domestic violence, which resulted in a tragic murder-suicide. The book contains poems written from the perspective of the many people involved in the case—from the husband, wife and child as victims, all the way to the coroner, journalists and estate agents heavily involved after the incident. Approaching the tragedy from these different angles, the poetry portrays the width and depth to which this incident spread.

The Disturbance Project

The musical, adapted and directed by Tokyo-based actress-director Rachel Walzer, is produced by Tony Award winner Mark Ferris, who also composed the music. In an interview with *ACUMEN*, Ferris explained how the project came together very organically.

The poetry is based on a true story about domestic violence, which resulted in a tragic murder-suicide.

"I was working on a project with another poet who recommended I meet Ivy. I bought her book, which is a spectacular presentation of a story, and I started speaking with her. She indicated an interest in having her work adapted from an anthology of poetry to a musical performance," he said.

The missing link was a director. Ferris had previously lived in Japan for 18 years and knows the local theatre community well. "I thought back to Rachel, whom I have known for many years. She bought the book in December, and then boldly decided to 'put something in the calendar'. By January, we had 2-4 July booked for performance."

As musical theatre can be dominated by revival stories, *Disturbance* proves interesting in that it is a new work. "In arts, we can tell stories by reviving existing works; but I think that it is bold to create a new work," Ferris said.

Poetic performance

When discussing the music, Ferris touched on the process of turning poetry into music. Alvarez's poetry was seemingly well suited for adaptation. "It is free verse—as opposed to other forms, which are more consistent in meter. That creates both opportunities and challenges".

But the subject matter—family murder and suicide—presented challenges when balancing the darkness and the light. "The poems are not all equally bleak. They vary, and some are relatively light. So that was an opportunity to make it a bit playful, to create a balance in the overall presentation," he added.

Ferris' career in musical theatre is impressive. He has worked on Broadway and won the prestigious Tony Award for *Once on This Island*, which took 2018 honours for Best Revival of a Musical.

Reflecting on this experience, he shared his thoughts on how music can add to a production. "Music and melody are more easily memorised



than the spoken word, so you have the opportunity to take things out of performances," he said. "Music also affords an opportunity for a co-presentation. Think of a choir, think of 60 voices singing the same melody—they are all expressing the same thing together. But then harmonies allow them to do different things in a way that is beautiful and effective".

Choosing Japan

With the production's world premiere fast approaching, Ferris commented on the choice to host the first performance in Tokyo. "I like the fact we are doing it in Japan, because it feels like a neutral venue," he said. "We feel that, in the world of musical theatre, there is space for something that is intense and differentiated. Japan is a sophisticated theatrical market, with interesting people who invest in theatre. Thanks to Rachel, we know a little bit about the area".

Disturbance's predicted success is not just limited to Tokyo. "This is a premiere that we will workshop and develop further. I am having discussions with theatre companies in San Diego, Australia, New Zealand and, later, New York". 🌸

SPECIAL OFFER

The first five *ACUMEN* readers to email info@thedisturbanceproject.com will receive **50% OFF** a pair of tickets. Join us in celebrating the British roots of this special story. www.disturbancethemusical.com



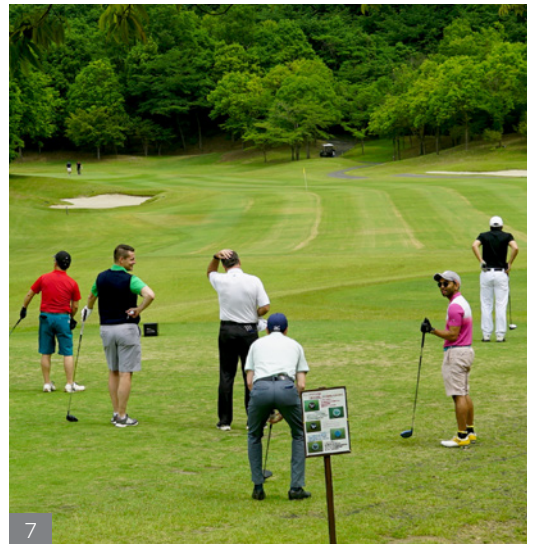
UK-JAPAN EVENTS

1 Rio Tinto Chief Executive Jean-Sébastien Jacques spoke at the luncheon “Disruption, expectation and complexity: the 21st-century business imperative” on 5 June at Roppongi Hills Club. The event was co-hosted by the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) and the Australian and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Japan.

2 Comprising eight foreign chambers of commerce in Japan, the Rugby Alliance holds monthly meetings at the office of the Rugby World Cup 2019 Organising Committee in Kasumigaokamachi, Shinjuku Ward. Among the delegates in April were (second left) BCCJ Executive Director Lori Henderson MBE and (second right) Custom Media and BCCJ ACUMEN Publisher Simon Farrell.

3 The Tokyo Metropolitan Government hosted the 2019 Urban 20 (U20) Tokyo Mayors Summit on 20–22 May. The U20 issued a communiqué as a message to the G20 on the issues of climate action and sustainable economic growth, as well as social inclusion and integration. London is one of the 26 U20 cities and a sister city to Tokyo.

4 Jaguar Land Rover Japan Ltd. Chief Executive Magnus Hansson spoke at the BCCJ event “Driving ACES—Panel discussion with Volvo and Jaguar Land Rover,” held at the Embassy of Sweden on 21 May.



5 British School in Tokyo (BST) Reception children enjoyed learning outside and building their strength at Meiji-jingu Gaien's Niko Niko Park in Tokyo on 21 May.

6 Year 4 students at the BST enjoyed visiting Lake Yamanaka, where they took part in activities such as crafting, orienteering, sketching Mount Fuji and creating insect habitats on 8-10 May.

7 The annual BCCJ Cup welcomed about 60 members and golfers from its wider network for a leisurely day on the beautiful Jack Nicklaus-designed course at the Gold Tochigi President's Country Club on 31 May.

8 England took silver at the HSBC Kitakyushu Sevens at Mikuni World Stadium on 21 April, falling 7-5 to Canada. It was the lowest-scoring final in HSBC World Rugby Women's Sevens Series history.

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

2020 VISION

Paralympic *judoka* targets Tokyo

BY JULIAN RYALL



If Chris Skelley qualifies to represent Great Britain at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, he will have a significant advantage over most of the other British athletes coming to Japan. This is the home of judo, his chosen sport, and he has been here eight times already to train and fight.

And now, ranked number two in the world in the under-100kg class for visually impaired *judoka*, Skelley says he intends to reverse the “heartbreak” he felt at the conclusion of the Rio 2016 Paralympics, where he finished fifth.

Road from Rio

“It seems a long time ago already, and it was the best two weeks of my life,” he told *ACUMEN*.

“I have never experienced anything quite like it before and—touch wood—Tokyo 2020 is going to be even better.

“I came in fifth in 2016, and I gave it everything I had,” he said. “But it was heart-breaking. I had put in so much time and effort with my coach in order to go and get a medal, but then I lost.

“I came off the mats and I tried to do an interview straight away, but everything they teach us in the media training sessions went completely out the window.

“There was too much emotion and it all just came out,” he said. “I was crying live on television, and it was embarrassing. But that experience has given me new resolve for the next one.”

Now 26, Skelley is originally from Kingston upon Hull, in East Yorkshire, and was a keen athlete and rugby player as a youth, representing the Hull Ionians in his teenage years. He started judo at the age of five and was part of the England squad when his eyesight began to fail.

Diagnosed with ocular albinism, a genetic condition that results in the loss of pigmentation in the iris, Skelley was forced to give up his job as a mechanic. He began to direct his energies increasingly to judo and was brought onto the Great Britain visually impaired judo team. Competing in the under-100kg category, he won three bronze medals in the under-20 age group at the National Championships between 2010 and 2013 before lifting gold when he represented England in the Scottish Open.

Going abroad

Representing Britain at the International Blind Sports Federation’s European Judo Championship in Portugal in December 2015, Skelley narrowly

missed out in the semi-final to a last-second throw by Russia’s Abdula Kuramagomedov, the current world champion, and had to settle for bronze.

After the disappointment of Rio, Skelley had his best-ever World Championships, taking another bronze in Portugal last November. But now, his target is very much qualifying for Tokyo and delivering a medal-winning performance.

“We have been putting in a lot of time at the gym to keep topping ourselves up and to keep challenging ourselves,” said Skelley after a two-hour sparring session in the judo halls at International Budo University. The private university, in the town of Katsuura, Chiba Prefecture, offers a specialised curriculum based on Japanese martial arts.

“For me, it’s really good to come to Japan to train, to get a fresh perspective. And obviously judo is a massive sport here, so it’s great to have this opportunity”.

Path to victory

Perhaps surprisingly, Japan’s Paralympic *judoka* are not among the strongest in the world, with fighters from Russia and South Korea among those who

Skelley knows he will have to beat if he wants to triumph in Tokyo.

No matter the amount of training that goes into honing a *judoka*’s skills ahead of a tournament, Skelley knows that the outcome of his bout in the biggest sporting tournament in the world will come down to the events of just a few minutes on the day when he takes to the mats.

“If I qualify—and that is my priority at the moment—then it all comes down to what happens on the day,” he said. “As I saw in Rio, there are no certainties in judo, and if the other guy is simply having a better day than I am, then he is going to beat me.

“This is such an unpredictable sport, but I’m training hard and I am very hopeful that I can qualify,” he said. “And then the aim is to win a medal in Tokyo”.

Skelley’s family were in Rio to cheer him on, and they have promised to do the same in Tokyo in 2020. “They’re always there for me; they give me all the support in the world,” he said. And this time, he hopes that when he hugs them beside the mats it will be tears of joy that they share. 🇬🇧



He started judo at the age of five and was part of the England squad when his eyesight began to fail.

PHOTOS: ONEJITION



PHOTO: THE WHITE HOUSE (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

He came, he saw (sumo) and then what? This remains to be discovered in the coming days and months. In any event, US President Donald Trump’s fanfare-filled and highly visible state visits to Japan and the UK are over.

The Japan visit reminded me of a discovery I made last October about this man’s abilities. He may be controversial, he may be offensive, he may be simply too embarrassing to keep watching for too long. He may be a whole lot of things that the world could do without. Yet, there is one thing for which he deserves credit: his unifying power. I realised this during the final class of a course, entitled “Making Sense of the Global Economy”, that I taught overseas students last autumn.

Humorous moments

For all my courses at Doshisha University, the final class is always a comedy show. I divide my students into groups of three or four. I then give these groups a common theme for a comedy skit, which they must perform in front of each other and anybody else who wants to come along and be a part of the audience. After all, Doshisha University is in Kyoto, which is a part of the Kansai region. And Kansai is the undisputed Land of the Laugh in Japan. This surely makes it inevitable that an element of humour should enter into the education that goes on in our classrooms.

The performances have become increasingly well attended. I may have to start issuing tickets before long.

(De)globalisation

For last October’s show, the common theme was “To be or not to be: Globalisation vs. Deglobalisation”. To be both funny and relevant at the same time on this issue is no easy task. However, the students rose to the occasion with immense energy

and some fairly deep thinking. The performances were most entertaining as well as highly enlightening. One of those enlightenments was the fact of Donald Trump’s ability to bring people together.

Seven groups got on stage on the day. Five were deglobalists. They wanted to stop globalisation in its tracks because it brought nothing but misery to the well-meaning masses.

One group set their scene in a five-star restaurant in an undisclosed, exclusive location where discrimination of all kinds ran rampant. Another featured a “Barbecue Chicken King” somewhere on the African continent who gets crushed by gigantic global opponents. Yet another told the tale of a highly dubious magical mystery drugstore selling potions claiming to upgrade your global competitive skills. The indictments against globalisation were many and varied.

Meanwhile, the two groups championing globalisation were remarkably similar in their approach. One told a story of Donald Trump vs. the media. The other set Donald Trump against a group of globally minded states. Both groups had Donald Trump pelting down the “America first” unilateralist track. On the other side of the confrontation, both media outlets and globalist states displayed incredible unity in their effort to stop Mr Trump and bring him back into the global community.

Unity

Media is normally fiercely competitive, and can all too easily descend into tribal warfare. But not when confronting Donald Trump. On stage, against Donald Trump, the journalists’ solidarity was perfect and collective wisdom shone most eloquently. Countries are essentially preoccupied with the national interest. To that

extent, they are not much different from Mr Trump, really. He just says it more unpleasantly, abusively and inelegantly.

But my students on stage showed the audience how the presence of a common enemy—one of the Donald Trump variety—can put the pursuit of narrow-minded self-interest on hold. The globalist nations’ harmony was quite exquisite as they collectively attempted to lure Mr Trump into their community. In sweet unison, they sang in praise of a caring and sharing global society. It was almost as though the arrival of Donald Trump had served to make nations realise, for the first time, how globalisation can actually work to make the world a better place—so long as they are prepared to unite in support of each other.

Gift in disguise?

Watching these performances, I began to have a funny feeling about Mr Trump. Could he conceivably be a gift from heaven? Could he have been heaven sent to bring people closer together across borders, to form bonds of solidarity against divisiveness and confrontation? Could he be the perfect example of what not to do and how not to do it, one that people can learn from so as to make a success of globalisation rather than deglobalising into confrontational chaos?

He certainly seems to have had that effect on the two groups who opted to support a global view against a deglobal one. The arguments that the journalists and national representatives put forward before the belligerent Mr Trump were really most convincing, and indeed quite moving. Could it be that Mr Trump is also equipped with the ability to bring out the best in everybody else besides himself? What a revelation. 🍀



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