

The magazine of the
British Chamber of
Commerce in Japan

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Energy market:
winds of change

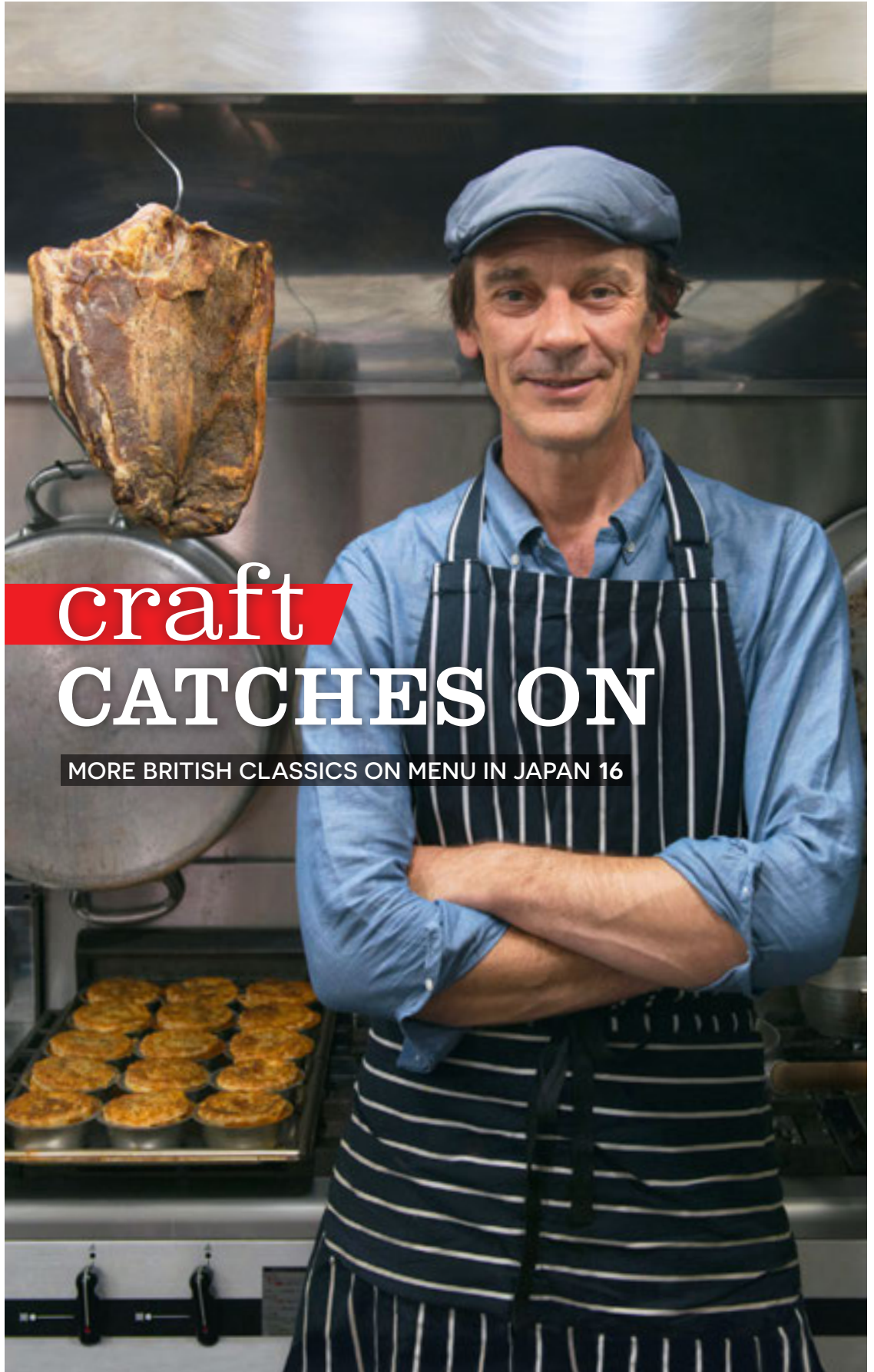
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at helm of firms

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of modern ruin

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August 2016

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 8

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

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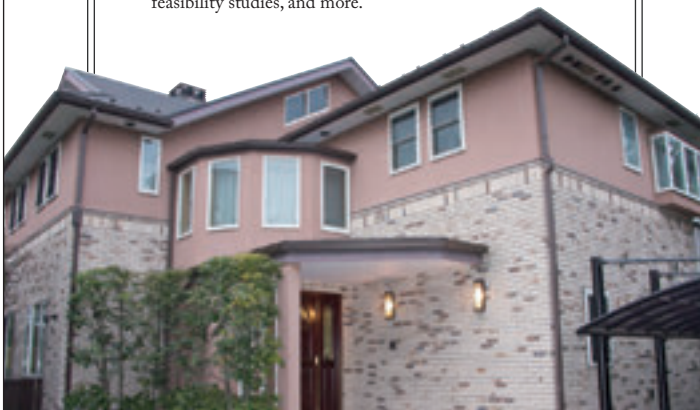


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Thank you

Farewell thoughts on UK–Japan ties

KATHRYN WORTLEY | kathryn@custom-media.com

In much of Japan, the sweltering heat and humidity of August usually causes residents to experience a decrease in appetite. But perhaps this issue will have readers salivating instead, as they read about the British food and drink it showcases.

In March, more than a dozen UK firms seeking a foothold in Japan showed their wares at Foodex, an international food and beverage exhibition in Chiba Prefecture. From sweet to savoury to alcoholic, the products were a hit with attendees, whose expectations were greatly exceeded (page 20).

Others working hard to change the perceptions of British cuisine are the food and drink artisans on page 16. Knowledgeable in authentic techniques and recipes, they are using their entrepreneurial skills to bring to Japan a taste of the UK.

These efforts build on the British Embassy Tokyo's campaign, A Taste of Britain. In September, embassy chef Frederik Walther is scheduled to showcase the best of the nation's cuisine at a British Fair in the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo. For details of the latest UK-related food and drink activity in Japan, visit: www.facebook.com/oishii-igirisu.

Know-how for Japan

Since the liberalisation of Japan's electricity market, in April 2016, opportunities have opened up for businesses. With experience gleaned from the domestic market, British firms are seeking to make their mark in Japan in smart energy technology, energy storage and renewables (page 26).

Similarly, in sport, UK entrepreneur Neil Levett is preparing to welcome experts with valuable global sporting event expertise to Yokohama, in September (page 22).

People insights

In our HR special, we explore innovations and issues in the field, including the role of modern HR and coaching (page 32), support for working mums (page 35) and new flexitime initiatives at Unilever that will allow staff to work anytime, anywhere (page 37).

Thanks and farewell

This issue is bittersweet as it is my last as editor. As I prepare to move on to pastures new, it is with delight that I look back on the past couple of years—26 issues published during my tenure.

Without a doubt, *BCCJ ACUMEN* would not be the relevant, thought-provoking and innovative publication it is without the unwavering backing of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ). I would like to thank the dynamic secretariat, dedicated volunteers and engaged membership for all they have done.

From big business to entrepreneurs and individuals, members are the backbone of *BCCJ ACUMEN*—and there has never been a shortage of interesting activities undertaken by them to feature in its pages.

The same can be said for those activities in the wider UK–Japan ecosystem. Commercial, political, academic and cultural bilateral ties are stronger than ever, reflected in the wealth of stories we have covered to date. My thanks to the British Embassy Tokyo and VisitBritain, as well as other organisations too numerous to mention, for their support.

It has been my absolute pleasure to get to know so many of you, the members. I hope the magazine continues to go from strength to strength, and I look forward to catching up again at BCCJ events in September. In the meantime, thanks again and all the best! 🇬🇧

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MEDIA

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Services deal signed for Wales nuclear plant



Horizon Nuclear Power and the Japan Atomic Power Company have struck a deal.

Horizon Nuclear Power, a British energy firm and subsidiary of Hitachi Ltd., and the Japan Atomic Power Company (JAPC) have signed a technical services contract for the proposed Wylfa Newydd nuclear power plant in North Wales, *World Nuclear News* reported on 7 July.

In the move, Horizon plans to use two advanced boiling water reactors, which would be the first to be used in the UK. The reactors are due to be completed at the end of 2017.

Mamoru Muramatsu, president of JAPC, said the work would utilise many years of operating experience—which began with its Tokai Nuclear Power Plant that was “introduced from the UK”—to “help ensure that Wylfa Newydd is built successfully”.

Softbank eyes tech firm

Britain’s arguably most successful technology firm, ARM Holdings, is to be sold to Softbank for £24.3bn, *The Guardian* reported on 18 July.

Through ownership of the Cambridge-based firm—whose microchips are used in more than 95% of smartphones—Softbank hopes to become a leader in the Internet of Things.

Philip Hammond, chancellor of the exchequer, said: “Just three weeks after the [EU membership] referendum decision, [the deal] shows that Britain has lost none of its allure to international investors”.

London, Tokyo markets akin

The behaviour of London financial markets is paralleling that of those in Tokyo, *The Financial Times Advisor* reported on 1 August.

Since the UK’s vote to leave the European Union on 23 June, the country’s overseas earners have flourished on the expectation that their revenues would be boosted by the fall of the pound. The correlation between the weaker UK currency relative to the US dollar and a stronger FTSE is nearly at a five-year high.

The situation is similar to that of Japan, where the Nikkei has an inverse relationship to the strength of the yen.

Envoys’ summer villa opens page from past

A renovated Meiji Era British Embassy villa in Oku-Nikko, Tochigi Prefecture, has been reopened to the public, *The Japan Times* reported on 30 June.

Built in 1896 by Sir Ernest Satow GCMG, a British diplomat and Japanologist, the wooden two-storey structure shows how life was for those British diplomats who spent their summers there.

At the opening ceremony, British Ambassador to Japan Tim Hitchens CMG LVO said that the villa represents the long-lasting friendship between Japan and the UK (page 48).



Dignitaries opened the villa at a ceremony in June.

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 Products | Fashion | People | Sport
 Travel | Food | Drink | Technology
 Science | Culture | Health | Energy
 Music | Motors | Politics | Charity

“British” band comes home



London-based rock band Bo Ningen, whose members are all Japanese musicians living in the UK, have drawn comparisons between both countries' music scenes after finally performing in their home country, *The Japan Times* reported on 10 July.

The quartet, which has gained critical acclaim in Japan and the UK, met in London nine years ago and consider themselves a London band.

“In Britain, the underground and mainstream are connected. I think the Japanese music scene and industry is very unique”, said singer and bassist Taigen Kawabe, pointing out that Japan, on the other hand, has a very isolated music scene.

Gong for Yamagata sake in London's global contest

Dewazakura Dewanosato has won first place in the sake category at the International Wine Challenge, one of the world's largest wine competitions, held in London, *Japan Today* reported on 10 July.

The sake was produced by Yamagata Prefecture's Dewazakura Sake Brewery Co., Ltd., which accepted the award for the second time. In 2008, the firm received the award for Dewazakura Ichiro.

The sake category was created in the international wine competition in 2007 and is now one of the largest sake contests outside Japan.

Sports media deal inked

Perform Group, a UK sport content and media group, has bought the broadcast rights for the J-League in a deal worth ¥200bn over the next 10 years, media reported in August.

Perform will be able to stream live all matches of the first, second and third leagues on its pay-per-view web platform and some satellite stations.

A statement on the deal noted that, “Perform Group distributes sports content in around 100 countries. It operates ePlayer, one of the world's biggest digital platforms for sports video, and has strength in program production and sports data analytics”.

New cricket town to host first regional cup

Sano, Tochigi Prefecture, is to host the first International Cricket Council East Asia-Pacific Cup, *The Guardian* reported on 29 July.

The move is, in part, thanks to Naoki Alex Miyaji, chief executive of the Japan Cricket Association, who fell in love with the game during summer holidays in the UK. Miyaji suggested turning Sano into a cricket town, a proposal with which local authorities and businesses agreed. It is now home to Japan's first dedicated cricket pitch to meet international standards.

Teams from Japan, China, South Korea and Hong Kong will take part in the competition, which is scheduled for November.



Crime novel runs for award

The Crime Writers' Association, founded in the UK in 1953, has shortlisted a Japanese crime novel for an International Dagger award for the first time, *The Japan Times* reported on 29 July.

The book, *Six Four*, by Tokyo-born mystery writer Hideo Yokoyama, was released to bookshops in the UK in March 2015.

The award recognises the best crime novel of the year that has been translated into English for publication in Britain, and will be announced on 11 October.

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LORI HENDERSON MBE

It's been six years since I attended my first British Business Awards (BBA), while being recruited for the job of executive director of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ). Over the past eight years, the BBA has become the jewel in our events crown, attracting 300 guests from the UK-Japan ecosystem.

Established in 2008, the awards celebrate the best of UK-Japan commercial relations by recognising excellence, and promoting success and innovation, across all industries. They also acclaim the important social contributions made by organisations through their commitment to community, ethical behaviour and sustainability.

This year, the BBA will be held on 11 November from 6:30–11:30pm at the Hilton Tokyo hotel in Shinjuku, where our guests can enjoy a glamorous black-tie gala dinner featuring a five-course Great British menu with accompanying wines by Berry Bros. & Rudd. Guests will also be treated to UK-Japan entertainment, the awards ceremony, and the opportunity to win a fantastic array of door prizes.

This year's BBA theme, "Drive", runs through all stages and components of the event, representing the pace, determination and progress demonstrated by all participating firms and individuals.

There are various ways for you and your firm to get involved.

Nominate!

Each year, BBA trophies are presented by the British ambassador to Japan to mark outstanding contributions over the past 12 months. Nominations for all categories are open to any eligible companies or individuals with relevant achievements. The deadline for 2016 nominations is 28 October at 5pm.

The 2016 BBA categories are: Company of the Year, Entrepreneur of the Year, UK-Japan Partnership, Community Contribution, Innovation and Person of the Year.

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- Media: Custom Media; *The Financial Times*; Guy Perryman

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The 2016 BBA is a fantastic platform for companies and individuals to gather, honour achievements and enjoy a great night in Tokyo, involving 70 companies, more than 30 nominees and six judges, including Eddie Jones, head coach of the England national rugby union team.

For a rundown of the benefits of nominating yourself, sponsoring the 2016 BBA, and / or securing a seat or corporate table, visit www.bccjapan.com or email info@bccjapan.com. We look forward to celebrating with you and your teams, on 11 November. 🇬🇧

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SPECIAL OFFERS TAP INTO PENSION PAYDAY



Ito Yokado are offering discounts to shoppers aged over 60.

With more than a quarter of Japan's population aged 65 or over, payday is increasingly considered to be not only the 25th of the month—the day when most employees receive their wages—but also the 15th of every even-numbered month, when the national pension system transfers funds to the accounts of pensioners.

This demographic change, reports the *Nikkei Marketing Journal* (4 July), is spurring more retailers to engage in commercial activities timed to correspond with the day seniors receive their disposable income. The commercial battle for pension money, dubbed *nenkin shosen*, has become one of the long-term survival strategies of supermarkets, department stores, chemists and other businesses. However, to keep things simple, many businesses are extending their special deals from the 25th of one month to the 15th of the next and, sometimes, even to other days as well.

On the 15th and 25th of every month, for example, Ito Yokado supermarkets offer a

5% discount to shoppers aged over 60 who make payments using nanaco prepaid IC cards. Similar deals are offered by Life Corporation, shops in the Arcs Group, and YorkMart—which offers one free home delivery each month.

Takashimaya department stores apply stamps to bonus cards for certain purchases made between the 15th and the 20th of each month. At branches of Tobu Department Store Co., Ltd., seniors making purchases totalling over ¥5,000 in the women's department receive a ¥1,000 gift voucher. And, at drugstores operated by Welcia Holdings, the 15th and 16th of each month have been designated Seniors' Day, when shoppers aged 65 and over are entitled to triple bonus T-Points.

To attract more seniors, Gusto, a chain of family restaurants operated by Skylark Group, has moved forward the release date of its Grand Menu of new offerings by one day, from the 16th of each month to the 15th.

Pensions are making a growing contribution to overall income. According to a survey of

people's basic living conditions conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the percentage of average household income obtained from public pensions has more than doubled over the past two decades. It reached 21% in 2014, up from 9.5% in 1995. There are about 30% more female than male seniors.

As the percentage of women who pay into the pension system through their employer is expected to continue rising, so also is their influence on marketing, as consumers with purchasing potential.

In fashion-related retailing, promotions aimed especially at seniors tend to turn off other shoppers and so are generally avoided. But even shops that do not go out of their way to appeal to the older age segment are aware of a spike in business around the 15th of even-numbered months.

Takashi Shiratsuchi, president of apparel retailer Mac-House Co. Ltd., was quoted by the *Nikkei Marketing Journal*, "It's clear that items do move on days of pension payouts".

INVENTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The 4 July issue of *Nikkei Business* features a special section titled “Japan’s inventive power is really fantastic.” Beneath the headline a sub-head reads, “Set for production: 18 items the world wants”.

In addition to offering new inventions, Japan also claims credit for creating instant coffee, the directional antenna, chain stores (developed by travelling merchants from Omi Province, today’s Shiga Prefecture) and fast food (offered by shops during the Edo Period [1603–1868]). According to the article, vehicle airbags were invented by Yasusaburo Kobori who worked for a Swedish firm 51 years ago, while the 3D printer was invented in the early 1980s by Hideo Kodama and later purchased by US firm Stratasys Ltd.

More recent major commercial successes can also trace their origin to Japan. A forerunner of robot vacuum cleaners was sold 37 years ago by Nintendo; a pioneer came up with an early version of the smartphone 17 years ago; Casio Computer Co., Ltd. introduced data terminals

that could be worn on the wrist 42 years ago; and a prototype concept for drones was introduced by Osaka-based Keyence Corporation 27 years ago.

Four factors are thought to discourage innovation. First, a system in which people who tend not to make new challenges are promoted; second, a corporate culture that balks at subordinates causing failures; third, the process of plan, do, check and act is totally dependent on the planning; and fourth, not devoting enough time to research.

What, then, do businesses need most to strengthen development? Four stumbling blocks need to be overcome. First, too much demand for quick results; second, an excessively adverse position to risk-taking; third, perfectionism; and fourth, the understanding that combination is not equal to innovation.

Nikkei Business listed 18 future products expected to emerge from Japan that are judged to be absolutely necessary. All represent huge

market potential, with the name of the key figure presently involved in parentheses.

- Brake on cars that will prevent drivers from stepping on the accelerator by accident (Naruse Machinery Co., Ltd.)
- Car that cannot be driven if the driver has been drinking (Tokyo Medical and Dental University)
- Car that detects if the driver is suffering emergency ill health (Omron Corporation)
- Stairs that prevent accidental falls (Sugihara Craft)
- Bathtub in which the bather cannot drown (National Institute of Advanced Science and Technology)
- Bicycles that won’t tip over (Aomori University of Health and Welfare)
- Airplanes that cannot crash (The University of Tokyo)
- Non-flammable houses (Asano Non-combustion Co., Ltd.)
- Completely automatic bathing machine (Handi Network International Co., Ltd.)

IOT HERALDS TOILET VACANCY CHECKER

Kansai-based IT firm, Kobe Digital Labo Inc., announced in June that it had developed an app by which office workers are able to use their computer or smartphone to verify when a toilet in the office is available.

As access to lavatories in office buildings increasingly features security systems, workers are required to use a pass or other form of ID to gain entry. Often a worker will leave their desk only to find all the toilets occupied. And that, the firm says, can be a source of unnecessary stress.

Its solution is to attach a specially developed sensor to each toilet door, and harness it to the Internet of Things, to enable people to check occupancy from their desk or workstation.

The accompanying photo shows a smartphone with a blue stripe across the centre, the symbol of a toilet and the words *kushitsu ari* (toilet vacant).

After three months of system tests at its office in Kobe’s Chuo Ward, the firm is planning to go public with the app in autumn. Corporate clients will no doubt welcome this high-tech means of relieving congestion.



A new sensor informs users of a toilet vacancy by smartphone.



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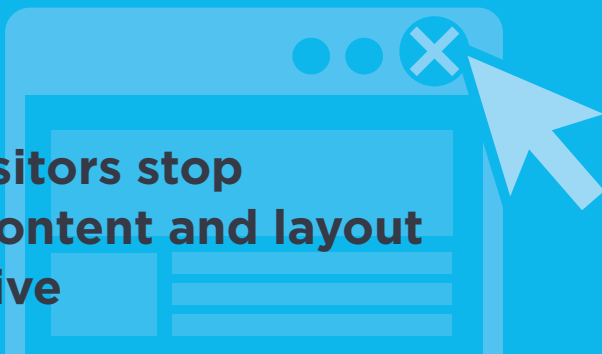
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DAVID BICKLE | @BCCJ_President

Former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson KG OBE is often cited as the source of the quote, “A week is a long time in politics”. He was also prime minister, in 1975, when the UK voted to remain a member of the European Economic Community—which became the European Community, in 1993.

Even he, however, may have been hard pushed to foresee the scale of change in the political landscape in the one month that has passed since the UK voted to leave the European Union. Theresa May is now the UK’s prime minister and, closer to home for those of us living in Japan, she is joined in the echelon of the world’s most powerful women by Yuriko Koike, the new governor of Tokyo.

Fresh approach

May has wasted no time in shaping UK government departments in order to tackle the challenges and opportunities ahead. Notable was the appointment of Greg Clark as the Secretary of State for the renamed Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

It is hoped that explicit reference to “industrial strategy” heralds a strengthening of long-term and mutually beneficial partnerships between government and business that will also benefit UK-Japan relations.

Japan visit

Many of the Japanese corporations that invest in the UK have demonstrated themselves to be responsible, reliable and loyal partners that have contributed greatly to the health and success of the UK economy. It is therefore fitting and welcome that Clark’s first overseas visit in his new role was to Japan. It demonstrates the importance of the relationship between Japan and the UK in terms of trade and investment.

The statement of clear policies for the development of business, and the articulation of equally clear strategies with which to achieve policy goals, will hopefully form a firm foundation for robust economic growth in the years ahead.

Sporting summer

August is traditionally a month in which people pause from the excitement of work to spend

time recharging their batteries travelling and relaxing with family and friends. For sports fans the world over, this month will provide welcome time to revel in the spectacle of the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and to savour the action and drama of competition between the world’s finest athletes.

For Japan, which will host the Rugby World Cup 2019, there is the added spice of sevens rugby taking its place on the Olympic stage. Record television audiences tuned in to watch Japan’s fixtures at last year’s Rugby World Cup, in England, and it is hoped that the Olympic coverage from Rio will further whet the appetite of the Japanese public to actively support these global sporting events.

Looking to 2020

At the closing ceremony of Rio 2016, on 21 August, acceptance of the Olympic flag by Koike will signal the passing of the baton to Japan. The race will then be well and truly on for Tokyo to ready itself to welcome the world in four years’ time. The prize for Japan—the honour and recognition of delivering the best Games in history—is immense. 🇯🇵

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Craft catches on

More British classics on menu in Japan

BY JULIAN RYALL



The Swan & Lion's speciality pies are made with British recipes. • PHOTO BY ALEXANDER TREVES

To sample the very best food and drink—full of flavour and a richness that is impossible to find in mass-produced, supermarket fare—you need an artisan. Fortunately, the craft food and drink movement is catching on in Japan—with some Britons in the vanguard.

Craft gin and ale, as well as Christmas puddings, mince pies, meat pies and preserves, are being made nationwide by Brits with a taste for the finer things. And not all of them expected to forge a career in the food and drink industry.

Ian Gibbins, for example, qualified as a solicitor in London before moving to Sydney, where he worked as a lawyer and executive producer in the film business. In 2010, “looking for a new adventure”, he moved to Japan. While continuing his film career, he decided to branch out in a decidedly different direction.

“The business started as a hobby”, Bristol-born Gibbins told *BCCJ ACUMEN*. “I quickly realised there was a lot of interest in British food from Japanese people—but also a lingering negative image.

“It became a goal to show Japanese that British food is not just fish and chips, and that modern British food can rival French, Italian and other cuisine”, he said.

Gibbins launched the Swan & Lion brand in November 2013, initially selling homemade chutneys, pickles and marmalade at weekend farmers’ markets. He then added traditional Christmas puddings and mince pies to the range, before the offerings were expanded to include British cakes and desserts and, subsequently, a range of gourmet meat pies.

Business was so good that Gibbins opened the Swan & Lion British Deli and Bakery in

Kudanminami, Chiyoda Ward, in November 2015. The shop offers takeout lunch-sets, meat pies, salads, cakes and a range of jarred products, which now includes the popular lemon curd and brandy butter.

Gibbins insists on using natural ingredients, adding no preservatives or colouring. He uses Japanese meat, vegetables and fruit, and all the butter comes from Hokkaido.

In addition to the shop, he participates in events and food fairs at Mitsukoshi and Isetan department stores, and provides private catering. Fellow British Chamber of Commerce in Japan member Berry Bros. & Rudd is his most regular client. He also teams up with firms such as Party Bus Tokyo to provide food for their customers’ trips around the capital.

The latest addition to the shop’s offerings is a “care package” delivered to expats at their offices.

PHOTO BY ALEXANDER TREVES



Offerings include homemade chutney and preserves.

“The majority of my customers are Japanese—people working in the locality—as well as Swan & Lion fans we have met at markets, department store events and so on, but the expat customer base is growing”, Gibbins said.

And he has significant future plans, such as developing business done via his Internet shop, offering a traditional British breakfast at the deli on Saturday mornings and opening a separate modern British casual dining restaurant.

Gibbins is optimistic about the outlook for offerings that, in the not-too-distant past, were looked at with caution.

“Some people need a nudge when they come across typical British fare”, he conceded. “But a surprising number do understand what British food is”.

Gin flavours impress

Elsewhere, the Number One Drinks Company Japan was set up in December 2014 by David Croll and Marcin Miller. They have been granted a distilling licence and are developing a gin at what is believed to be Japan’s first artisan gin distillery.

Located in Kyoto, the gin will use local ingredients mixed with British know-how. The first batch is expected to be launched in Japan in October 2016.

Asked the reason he is planning to produce Japan’s first craft gin brand, Croll was as clear as the spirit he so admires.

“First and foremost, all of the partners in the business absolutely love gin”, he told *BCCJACUMEN*.

“We all come from a whisky background, and it’s a little-known fact outside of the industry that most whisky people will start the evening with a G&T”.



Ian Gibbins, in his shop in Kudanminami, Chiyoda Ward. • PHOTO BY ALEXANDER TREVES

Croll has lived in Japan for more than 20 years. He set up Whisk-e Ltd., a firm that imports one of Scotland’s most famous products, and exports some of the finest whiskies produced in Japan.

But he believes that drinkers who enjoy premium-grade spirits can be tempted by something new.

“We believe there is huge potential here, and are already starting to see this with the rise in interest in some of the imported craft gins like Sipsmith”, he said.

Drinkers have, until now, largely been insensitive to brand, simply ordering a gin and tonic or a dry martini, with either gin or vodka. The trick, it seems, will be to educate minds and palates.

A name for the new gin has been selected and is to be announced in August, according to Croll. The name is expected to be one that has credibility in Gion, while being memorable in drinking establishments from Taipei to Tunbridge Wells to Cape Town and beyond.

“Consumers [in Japan] are just now at the start of a long and fascinating journey to discover the range of flavours and aromas available through the array of newer craft brands: a trend not dissimilar to that seen with craft beers and, more recently, craft sake”, Croll said.

The aim, he added, is to “make the best gin we possibly can—something that will be a match for anything already in the market.



David Croll’s gin underwent distilling tests in the UK.



Alex Davies, head distiller, Number One Drinks Company

>>

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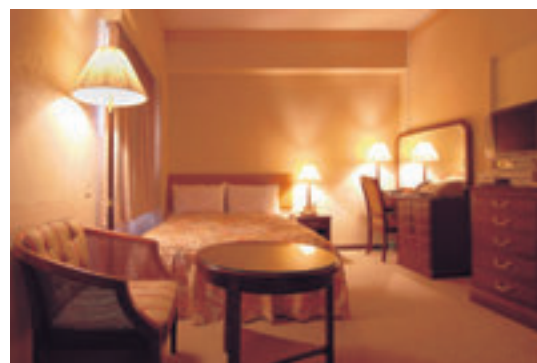
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| | Weekly | ¥7,200 ~ ¥8,900 | |
| | Monthly | ¥5,700 ~ ¥7,200 | |
| | Over 3 months | All year ¥5,130 ~ ¥6,480 | |
| Large Studio for 1 person (6 units) 25m ² | Daily | ¥11,100 ~ ¥11,500 | 10% Off from Feb. ~ Nov. rate |
| | Weekly | ¥9,600 ~ ¥9,950 | |
| | Monthly | ¥7,700 ~ ¥7,900 | |
| | Over 3 months | All year ¥6,930 ~ ¥7,110 | |

| Room types | Rate types | Feb. ~ Nov. | Dec. & Jan. |
|---|---------------|----------------------------------|--|
| One Bedroom Suite for 2 persons (8 units) 33~51m ² | Daily | ¥15,600 ~ ¥23,100 | 10% Off from Feb. ~ Nov. rate |
| | Weekly | ¥12,800 ~ ¥19,350 | |
| | Monthly | ¥10,300 ~ ¥16,500 | |
| | Over 3 months | All year ¥9,270 ~ ¥14,850 | |
| Two Bedroom Suite for 3 persons (1 unit) 72m ² | Daily | ¥29,200 | 10% Off from Feb. ~ Nov. rate |
| | Weekly | ¥24,300 | |
| | Monthly | ¥19,100 | |
| | Over 3 months | All year ¥17,190 | |



Baird Brewing Company is located in Shuzenji, in Shizuoka Prefecture.

“Having said that, we want to utilise local ingredients as much as that goal allows. For example, with the citrus elements, as well as by looking at imported oranges, lemons and limes, we will evaluate domestic [citrus] fruit like green and yellow *yuzu*, *sudachi*, *kabosu* and *hebesu*.”

“We have already done some tests at a friendly UK distillery using ingredients sourced in Kyoto, and the results were amazing,” Croll added. “The dilution water used to take the final gin down from distilled strength to bottling strength will come from a well in Fushimi, Kyoto’s sake-brewing quarter. I really can’t think of a better place to try to produce a high-quality Japanese spirit.”

More than simply creating a new gin, Croll and his team want to “make a product that the people of Kyoto can be proud of and feel is true to the values of their wonderful city”.

And, if Japan’s bar-visiting community catch on to the flavours and some of the 20mn annual visitors from abroad see it as a tasty souvenir to take home, then so much the better.

Before that happens, however, the finishing touches need to be applied: the master distiller arrived in January 2015, the first

still is in position and the licence has been granted. Now, the firm is working with a glass business in Osaka to create a distinctive bottle incorporating the embossed distillery logo. Gin test production is to commence in August.

“We are drawing inspiration from the incredible history of Kyoto and its combination of the traditional and the contemporary,” said Croll, who says his favourite use for gin is in the cocktail, Negroni. He did admit, however, that a classic dry martini might be the best way to savour gin’s flavour.

Craft beer appeals

In January 2016, Japan-based brewer Bryan Baird made a trip to Edinburgh to produce a special batch of Rising Sun Pale Ale for the Caledonian Brewery. The finished product was then sold exclusively at pubs in the J D Wetherspoon chain.

Baird had an early “flirtation” with beer during his university days in the US. Since arriving in Japan in 1989 to teach English, it has blossomed.

“The love affair moved to an even deeper level as I subsequently discovered the distinct and expressive flavours of beers that were

being crafted by the passionate artisans of the American microbrewery movement,” he said.

Inspired, Baird set up Baird Brewing Company in March 2000. The Numazu Fishmarket Taproom, in Shizuoka Prefecture, was opened four months later.

Since then—and despite a number of hurdles along the way—Baird Brewing has evolved into one of the largest craft breweries in Japan, and has earned a reputation for consistently high-quality ale.

Baird Brewing is also known for its variety, ranging from the snappy 5.5% Numazu Lager and fruity Wheat King Wit to the rich Red Rose Amber Ale and silky-smooth Kurofune Porter.

Growing demand and brand recognition has led to the opening of four additional taprooms, the most recent of which is the Baird Brewery Gardens Shuzenji. Located on the banks of the Kano River in Izu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, it opened in 2014. Facilities include a tasting room, an outdoor beer deck with spectacular views, gardens and an observation area where visitors can admire the next batch of ale being crafted. 🍷



The firm’s ales are popular.



Quality dried hops are used to make the products.



Bryan Baird, founder of Baird Brewing Company

UK FIRMS FLY FLAG AT FOODEX

Record number of British delegates

BY JULIAN RYALL

- More than 20 UK firms exhibited at Foodex 2016
- Image in Japan of British food and drink changing
- Attendees tastes samples, spoke to delegates, watched demos



Stacey Ward, founder of Mornington Crescent bakery and baking school, made desserts at Foodex 2016, in March.

More than 20 firms flew the flag for British cuisine at the Foodex 2016 international food and beverage exhibition in mid-March, with the attendants on the neighbouring French pavilion spotted more than once casting glances at displays of Scottish shortbread and salmon, jams, Welsh cheese, chocolate and—inevitably—craft beer.

The products came from the length and breadth of the British Isles, with the majority testing the waters of the Japanese market for the first time. And, given Japan's adoration of all things cute, having a larger-than-life Shaun the Sheep gambolling around the stands further helped to attract the crowds.

"I only started the business nine months ago and this is my first trip to Japan, but the reaction in the first two days of the show has been brilliant and I'm very optimistic about this market for us," said Robert Dark, director of Bath-based Buckingham Cakes.

"I started out in the Chinese market and, at the moment, it's all about promoting the Englishness of the product—its association with afternoon tea and so on—but the Japanese I have been speaking with really get that," he said.

The firm makes three types of traditional English fruitcake, including a version infused with whisky. The innovation is that each cake is vacuum packed in an airtight tin. Sealing the product means that, "when it is opened, it is as fresh as when it was baked," Dark told *BCCJ ACUMEN*. It has a shelf life of 15 months.

"We don't manufacture for the domestic UK market at all and I'm focused on more distant markets. I'll be in Singapore in a few weeks' time, and there is a lot of interest in Thailand and Malaysia—and we need to be able to deliver tip-top products in resistant packaging".

Dark agrees that much of his work at the moment is devoted to getting a sense

of the specific needs of the market. He was surprised to find that Chinese consumers were somewhat put off by the sweetness of the classic British fruitcake.

“But the Japanese love it”, he said, cutting some more sample slices to hand out to the constant flow of food industry representatives past his booth.

“Ideally, I’m here to find a Japanese partner who will be able to distribute our products in Japan, but we are a high-end brand and it will need to be someone who serves the premium stores, the top department stores and the gift stores”, he added. “I’ve met someone who meets those criteria and I’m very optimistic we can reach an agreement”.

The paperwork required by the Japanese government may take a little while to get sorted out, but Dark believes the first shipment could be on its way to Japan soon.

British Ambassador to Japan Tim Hitchens CMG LVO attended the Foodex exhibition on the opening day. He had welcomed the trade delegation to Japan with a reception at the British Embassy Tokyo the previous day, and expressed his delight at news that the UK delegation at the show was to be the largest to date.

“British food and drink are going well in Japan at the moment, and I believe the efforts of these companies have gone a long way to changing perceptions here about our cuisine”, he said.

At the pavilion, Vicky Miller of Eden Mill in Fife—Scotland’s only combined brewery



British sweets were shown at the Tokyo event.

and distillery—was busy pouring craft beers and samples of traditionally distilled gin for appreciative passers-by.

“We are here with The Craft Beer Clan of Scotland, who are helping us and more than 40 other craft beer breweries into overseas markets”, Miller told *BCCJACUMEN*. “We are very keen to have our brands available in Japan.

“This is our first time here, but it’s absolutely clear that the Japanese are on board with the craft beer movement. We have met a lot of people who have tried our beers and say it’s exactly what they want in their shops or bars”, she said.

“I think the gin market may be lagging behind a bit, but I hear that gin and tonic is

starting to take off”, she added. “It may be something of a new concept, but we feel that the classic G&T has spread beyond the expat community in this part of the world and is being taken up by local people—and we are keen to drive that”.

Visitors to the show, held at the Makuhari Messe international event complex east of Tokyo, were also treated to demonstrations of traditional British cake-making by Stacey Ward, founder of Mornington Crescent bakery and baking school in Minato Ward.

During one demonstration, she created an impressive Banoffee pie, which she followed up later in the day with a Battenberg cake.

“I have found that when Japanese people have an interest in something, they are completely into it heart and soul, and it’s the same with cake-making”, said Ward, who set up her firm in November 2013.

“I often have students come to me who have done all the research on a particular cake; they know more about the cake than most Brits do”, she said, adding that one student makes the trip from Okinawa while another regularly travels from Sendai in Miyagi Prefecture for the day.

“The reaction here today has been fantastic. I often get the sense that people are waiting to be disappointed by British food because of the reputation that we have; but I’ve seen here people being surprised at how much they have enjoyed the food on the British pavilion. Hopefully we’ve changed some perceptions today”.



Robert Dark of Buckingham Cakes • PHOTO: JULIAN RYALL



Vicky Miller of Eden Mill brewery and distillery in Scotland spoke to attendees.

SPORTS VENUES WITH LONGER LIFESPAN

Sustainable models for Rugby World Cup 2019, Tokyo 2020

BY MAXINE CHEYNEY

Taking on the world's largest sporting events is a feat that has, traditionally, required significant development and adjustment for the host nation. With Japan about to play host not only to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, but also to the Rugby World Cup 2019 and the Kansai World Masters Games 2021, one of the crucial

issues that needs to be tackled is providing venues for each.

On 27 July, Neil Levett, managing director of Alad Limited and publisher of the magazine *Panstadia & Arena Management*, spoke to members of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan. He outlined the models required in venue management and operation in Japan, and his plans to facilitate

idea sharing through Stadia & Arena Pacific 2016, a sports venue conference and exhibition to be held in September in Yokohama.

Looking at venue owners and operators in Japan, Levett hopes to involve British firms in imparting service knowledge from both the Games and other successful sporting events that have taken place in the UK.

- Plan to involve UK firms in conference in September 2016
- Japan sports venue reps visiting arenas worldwide for fact-finding
- Need for more income-generating models for venues

Japan context

"It may seem like a strange thing to say", said Levett, "but we came here [to host Stadia & Arena Pacific] predominantly because Japan has got a basketball league, successful three-tier football league, and baseball league, some with 50,000-seater or over audiences. That gives us a sustainable business model



The Olympic Stadium in London continues to be used after London 2012.

after the party of the Olympics has gone”.

With the government placing an emphasis on the development of the national sports industry, the time is ripe to begin building Japan’s sports venue capability, according to Levett. He said that interest in global arenas expressed by representatives from some of Japan’s top venues is evidence that things are changing in Japan.

For Levett, the core issue is re-assessment of the financial models: the necessary shift from a cost centre to a profit centre.

“Venue owners in Japan tend to be prefectures and local and national governments, whereas in the Western model there are more that are privately owned”, he said. There needs to be a move from a prefecture-based funding model to a revenue-generating model he added.

Venues such as the O2 in London are run along the lines of a revenue-generating model. With this model, “the venue operator would come in on behalf of the owner, prefecture or government to run the facility”, he explained, adding that there is a requirement for “venue based revenue, where we are actually sweating an asset”.

He gave the example of the Singapore Sports Hub, a public-private partnership (PPP) model and a venue that hosts a 56,000-seat football stadium, 12,000-seat arena, shopping centre, aquatic centre and facilities for other sports.

“Content is king”, Levett said. “You can either have an anchor-tenant, such as a football club or basketball club, or a more transient venue ... the Royal Albert Hall, with different performances and with a different finance model”.

Global talent

Levett hopes that inviting global stakeholders in the sports industry to share knowledge with Japanese



Shopping centre Westfield Stratford City draws visitors to the Olympic Stadium in Stratford, London.

delegates will lead to best-in-class management.

“It’s a real sharing exercise”, he said. He explained that UK Trade & Investment have organised “meet the buyer” sessions to match Japanese delegates with British firms in the hope of forming advantageous partnerships.

Levett selected West Ham United Football Club’s old stadium, The Boleyn Ground, as a prime example of the kind of transient venue model that Japan should look to adopt.

“It’s a typical model”, he said. “They have corporate hospitality; there’s restaurants, bars and meeting facilities”.

In addition, the stadium’s 80 corporate hospitality boxes, become hotel bedrooms on non-match days, he explained. This transforms the stadium into a meetings, incentives, conference and exhibitions venue.

Future-proofing global sporting event venues, to ensure that they do not simply become ghost

remnants of a great event, was also on the agenda. This could be achieved through use of the smart venue concept, which is similar to West Ham’s hotel model, Levett explained. The concept looks at sport as a focus for community development.

He compared the concept to that of a European market square, with businesses surrounding the trading area. The Olympic Stadium is next to Westfield Stratford City, one of the biggest shopping centres in Europe.

“You’re going to go to that area and spend a day there”, Levett said, pointing out the value of the location. For this idea to work in Japan, there is a need to switch to a PPP model, which has been successful in the Yokohama arena, he added.

Regional views

Japan’s population is heavily concentrated in the cities of Tokyo, Osaka and Yokohama, but the government wants to maintain its

regional and local population level. It then “needs to make sure that people out in the regions have got work”, Levett said.

One way of doing that is to look at the role facilities play in communities in these regions. Levett said that the Japan Sports Agency (JSA) is looking at models, such as that of Madison Square Garden in New York City. By doing this, said Levett, the JSA can understand “what they can do to replicate or better it”. In addition, “the UK has signed a memorandum of understanding with Japan to share best practice on the provision of security at major sporting events”, he said.

Get involved

Bringing together over 50 global industry experts and delegates, Stadia & Arena Pacific 2016 will explore topics such as the design and construction of sports venues, operations, technology and security.

Tours of the Yokohama Arena, Nissan Stadium and Yokohama International Swimming Pool are also in the programme. The exhibition will offer delegates the opportunity to meet leading product and service suppliers.

“The thirst for knowledge certainly exists”, Levett concluded. “There is the embryo of this happening in Japan; knowledge-sharing is coming through”.

“[Japan’s] thirst for knowledge [of sporting events] certainly exists”.

—Neil Levett





This garden in Moegi-no-Mura, Yamanashi Prefecture, was designed by Paul Smither.

As nature intends

Berkshire designer's strong business ethic

BY JULIAN RYALL

Paul Smither refuses to be rushed, won't use pesticides or fertilisers and insists that his clients take a long-term view of the horticultural projects they set him. It's an approach—coupled with the fact that he's an extremely talented designer with a deep respect for Japan's gardening traditions—that has placed him in demand in his adopted homeland.

In 2013, for example, the Berkshire-born gardener made it clear that he would only take on the design of a garden—intended to be part of the 30th National City Greening Fair in Tottori Prefecture—if it were to be retained after the event. The garden was to be alongside Koyama-ike, the largest pond in Japan.

Previous host cities had neglected, or removed entirely, gardens designed to encourage the spread of greenery in urban areas, but prefectural authorities in Tottori soon came around to Smither's way of thinking.

"After a garden has been laid out and prepared, I really like it to be left to its own devices," Smither told *BCCJ ACUMEN*.

The 46-year-old adopts a sustainable approach. "When I'm designing a garden, I always try to make sure that it blends in with the surrounding area and, wherever possible, I like to use big sweeps of nature," he said.

"No matter the style that I'm working in and what the client has requested, I never resort to artificial fertilisers or pesticides, basically because if you have the right plants for the right garden, then they don't need it," he added. "If you have the right place then plants will fight off any diseases and thrive".



One of 11 books written by Paul Smither.

Originally from Maidenhead, Smither spent as much time as possible outside when he was a child, allowing him to develop a deep interest in the natural world. From an early age, there was also a Japanese component to his fascination for the garden, as his aunt was head of the UK's National Bonsai Society.

"As a kid, I have very happy memories of her having plants everywhere, so I was always in that environment," he said.

Encouraged by his parents, Smither applied to a course run by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and began hands-on studies at the RHS Garden Wisley, in Surrey. After completing the two-year course, he moved to Longwood Gardens, Pennsylvania, in the US, for another year of getting his hands dirty.

A strong international student body that had been on his course at the RHS inspired his next move. "The students had all talked about their countries and the differences in gardening," he explained. "I wanted to go somewhere different and I was interested in Japanese plants.



British designer Paul Smither

When I was young, my father had given me a book of the work of [Katsushika] Hokusai, a wood-block artist, that included a picture of *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, with Mount Fuji in the background.”

Smither first arrived in Japan at the age of 19. He joined a landscape gardening business and only intended to stay for a short time.

“That soon changed because I really enjoyed it, right from the beginning,” he said. “For the first time, I tried to learn a new language and found that I could. I got into the culture, the lifestyle—and I was abroad, in a very different place”.

Smither subsequently worked in an orchid sanctuary on the Izu Peninsula and then in an English-style garden designed by the renowned landscaper John Brookes MBE, who has designed and built more than 1,000 gardens during his 60-year career to date.

The project required a lot of replanting and adhering to the original plan for the garden, so Smither decided he would rather “work for and by myself, instead of having to sort out other people’s problems”.

Based in the Yatsugatake mountain range of Yamanashi Prefecture, he set up Garden Rooms Co., Ltd. in 1995. Thanks to Smither’s reputation, the firm did not have long to wait before work came in.

The design and planting of a garden surrounding a large property in the town of Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture, led to word-of-mouth recommendations, as have projects undertaken for local governments.

The success of the garden design for Tottori was a factor in the decision by the City of Yokohama to contract Smither’s firm to rework the green spaces around the International Stadium Yokohama as part of the Yokka Fair to be held this autumn.

“I want to get people into gardens, so it is often best to keep things quite simple. I like secret gardens—the ones I used to enjoy myself as a kid—and I want them to be full of other sorts of life, like birds and insects, instead of just plants,” he said.

When the weather does not permit him to work outside, Smither fills his time by writing and illustrating books on gardening. His latest of 11 books, titled *When, why and how to prune?*, offers tips on techniques and timing.

As well as writing the text in Japanese, Smither is responsible for the book’s photos and dozens of intricate cartoon images that are dotted throughout.

“I really wanted to write a book on pruning because I see so many trees and shrubs [in Japan] that have been absolutely brutalised”, he said. “They may need work, but they don’t need that sort of treatment. I just want to show people what they can achieve by some careful pruning” 🌸

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WINDS OF CHANGE

Japan's energy shifts draw UK firms

BY JULIAN RYALL

- Lessons from UK energy market liberalisation to help Japan firms
- Energy storage one of UK's eight great technologies
- Japan wind energy market tipped to grow



A wide range of UK firms exhibited at World Smart Energy Week 2016, in Tokyo. • PHOTO: JULIAN RYALL

[The UK group attended] World Smart Energy Week 2016, a combination of no fewer than nine specialised energy exhibitions held at Tokyo Big Sight.

The first time that Chris Johnston visited Tokyo, he was horrified to find street lights on at 10am on a bright, sunny day. The lights, of a busy city street, were illuminating nothing and simply devouring energy, he said.

"It did catch me by surprise, especially because we always think of Japan as such a technologically advanced nation", Johnston, international business development manager of Telensa Ltd., told *BCCJ ACUMEN*.

Johnston's interest in the lighting of Japan's streets is a professional rather than passing one. His subsequent visit to Japan, for six days from late February 2016, was as part of a mission of British firms and research centres focused on the smart energy sector.

Comprising 12 firms and universities, the group's visit coincided with World Smart Energy Week 2016, a combination of no fewer than nine specialised energy exhibitions held at Tokyo

“In 2013, energy storage was identified by the government as one of the UK’s current eight great technologies”

Big Sight, including Wind Expo, the International Smart Grid Expo and Battery Japan.

Johnston’s firm, a recognised global leader in smart wireless street lighting, operates well over one million lights worldwide. He saw the mission as a springboard into Japan.

“I’m here to research the market and get a fuller understanding of who the main players are, how it operates and who we need to be speaking with,” he said.

On his first trip to Japan, Johnston held discussions with two firms, one of which was Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, Inc. In a country with 13mn street lights, he explained, there is “great potential” for Telensa.

“It’s surprising, but the majority of street lights in Japan are the old-fashioned and very inefficient sodium lamps, which use a lot of energy and cannot be easily adjusted,” he said. “Those lights are being replaced with LED lights, but it looks like that process will take some time yet”.

Telensa’s PLANet—public lighting area network—system is made up of three core parts: individual telecells that can be attached to new lamp posts or retrofitted to existing units, a base station with a range of around 10km, and a central control system from where an operator can adjust the lighting in a given area, on a specific street or even the light in one lamp.

One in every 10 of the street lights in the UK are connected to Telensa’s system, including every one in Birmingham.

Shifting to LED lights from the previous generation of sodium lamps immediately delivers an energy saving of 40–60%, said Johnston, but a dimming function available through PLANet provides significant additional savings, of as much as 35%.

Microchips in each light monitor the amount of energy being used and, when a light fails, it automatically registers at the central control. That, in turn, does away with the need for labour-intensive and costly manual examinations of every light.

“The system is dynamic, so we can dim the lighting in residential areas at the quietest periods,” he added. “We can also keep them on brighter in parts of cities with bars, restaurants and nightlife that goes on later”.

Cost assessments indicate that installing the system will pay for itself in as little as five years, with the return on investment over a 15-year period expected to be 500%.

One of the firms that turned down an initial approach from Telensa—citing the reason as the development of its own system—has since reached out and is keen to explore a possible working relationship with the Essex-based firm after its own efforts failed, said Johnston.

“There are some barriers that we would need to overcome before we could launch here, such as the radio frequencies that we use, but we see huge potential in Japan,” he added.

Smart energy and storage are important components of the British government’s economic and environmental plans, said Robin Grimes, chief scientific adviser to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, who took part in a day-long seminar

at the British Embassy Tokyo on 29 February.

“In 2013, energy storage was identified by the government as one of the UK’s current eight great technologies, in which the country has world-leading research and the potential to support UK growth,” Grimes said.

“Energy storage technologies are crucial in reducing carbon emissions and balancing out the variable production of electricity from wind and solar plants,” he added. “[Then-]Secretary of State Amber Rudd has said that storage represents a fantastic opportunity for the UK, and is a necessary partner of renewable generation to create a secure system”.

Since 2010, the Department of Energy & Climate Change, Innovate UK, Research Councils UK and the Energy Technologies Institute have committed more than £65mn to energy storage research, development and demonstration. >>



Moixa Technology creates energy storage products using a cloud platform.

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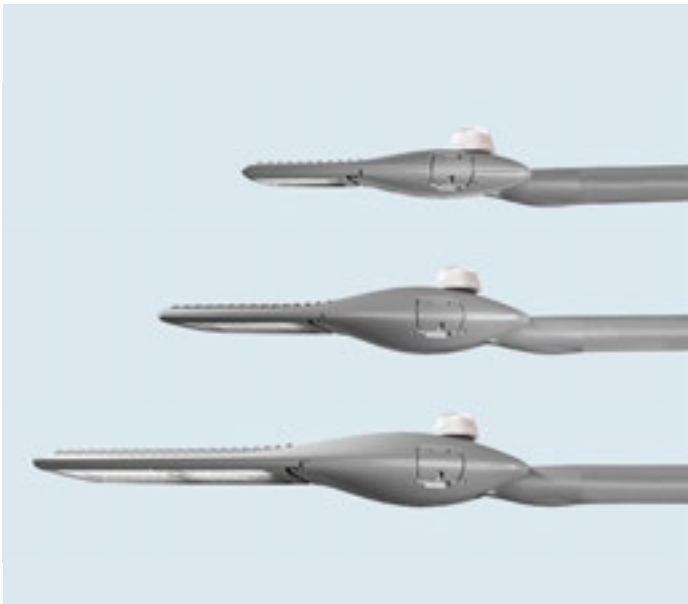
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Telensa Ltd.'s LED lights



SgurrEnergy's devices measure turbine wind speed and direction.

The knowledge and technologies that have been nurtured in Britain can help Japan's smart technology sector, Grimes pointed out, particularly in light of the fact that Japan's electricity market was liberalised in April 2016. The gas market is expected to follow suit in 2017.

"By the end of the 1990s, UK consumers were already choosing their own gas and power suppliers", Grimes said. "With many years of experience, the UK has gained a breadth of policy and commercial expertise which we are happy to offer as Japan embarks on a similar journey to fully liberalise its own markets".

Chris Wright, chief technology officer of Moixa Technology, agrees: "There is a lot of interest in Japan regarding what happened in the UK when we liberalised our energy markets, as this signifies a huge change for the industry here".

Moixa—which is behind the Maslow energy storage system and the GridShare virtual power plant cloud platform—is keen to share what it has learned with Japanese partners.

"We are at the cutting-edge in this sector in the UK and we are creating the next generation

"We expect the Japanese wind energy market to grow".

of energy storage products", said Wright, who displayed his firm's products and services at the Smart Grid Japan expo in January 2016.

"This sort of technology—gathering solar energy and then storing it so that it is available for the home at any time—is clearly valuable in a world in which renewable energies are uncontrollable, such as when the wind blows or when the sun shines", he said.

As well as providing users with the ability to use energy whenever they want, Moixa enables the user to trade energy through its GridShare control platform.

The initial interest in the firm's technology and services has been "very good", said Wright, "even though we are really just starting these conversations in Japan".

Moixa—whose corporate slogan is "The world just changed"—attracted a good deal of interest from Panasonic, itself a recognised world leader in terms of smart energy and storage systems. Officials of the firm, which has

constructed an entire smart community in Fujisawa, Kanagawa Prefecture, had many questions for Wright during the event, with the impact of deregulation an area of particular focus.

"This is a big, competitive market and, for companies that are not used to having to deal with new entrants—such as Softbank, which cannot be considered traditional energy providers—there are a lot of issues that need to be addressed", Wright said.

Moixa is seeking to form a partnership with a Japanese firm to bring its proven technology and know-how into the market, explained Wright, adding that the potential financial savings are proving eye-catching.

"We are a small company, but that makes us agile and enables us to be quick to develop and build new products", Wright said. "The energy industry used to move slowly, but recent changes have served as a serious wake-up call and we see that as an opportunity".

Another firm seeking to make inroads into Japan is SgurrEnergy, an engineering consultancy headquartered in Glasgow, Scotland. During the trade mission, the firm was keen to promote its advanced Galion light detection and ranging devices.

Designed to remotely measure wind speed and direction, Galion enables wind farm developers to get an accurate assessment of how much energy their equipment could generate when installed.

"We have consulted on 60% of Europe's offshore wind projects and we're actively targeting Japan because of the available opportunities", said David O'Hare, business development manager.

While the Japanese offshore wind market still has a way to go to fulfil its potential, O'Hare is confident that Wood Group firm SgurrEnergy will be able to provide its expertise and knowledge.

"We expect the Japanese wind energy market to grow and we want to be a part of that", he said. "We work with Japanese companies already, both in Japan and around the globe, and our track record and experience will help support the growing Japanese wind market". 🇬🇧

HOT SPOT



Why Oita Prefecture is a very special place

BY JOAN BAILEY

Clouds get snagged on the forested hills and mountains that run down to Japan's Seto Inland Sea as my plane approaches Oita Airport. Below, fishing boats dot the water and a ferry draws a white line across the bay. Although many places nationwide boast similar offerings to Oita Prefecture, it feels special.

Asami Kageura of the Oita Prefectural Tourism Board and David Bullington of the Kunisaki Tourism Association smile when I mention this at the airport. "I'm always learning something amazing," said Kageura, who was born and raised here.

Bullington nods. "The people here are so open," he said as we drive. "It's an exceptional place".

Kunisaki Peninsula

Our first stop, Kunisaki Peninsula, is just south of the airport but feels worlds away. Bypassed by train lines and highways, it's forested interior—

creased with mountains and valleys—remains much the same as it has always been.

"When our [temple's] founder, Ninmon, came here he felt something special," says Gojun Terada in the perfect English he gained during a three-year stay in the US. "So he built his temple here".

Terada is the 66th abbot and the fourth of his family to lead at Futago-ji. This grand temple in the mountains comprises several halls that house carvings of stone and of wood, nearly all of which are more than 1,000 years old. Wearing his priestly robes and *geta* (traditional wooden sandals), Terada climbs the moss-covered steps to Okuno-in, a temple cave where the walls are etched with ancient Buddhas.

"There is no square land," he explains with a gesture to the forest. "Our ancestors worked with nature".

A serene and subtle feeling accompanies those who spend time here, one that is

reminiscent of the mixture of Shintoism and Buddhism that is ingrained in every fibre of its esoteric culture.

The Kunisaki Peninsula will celebrate its 1,300-year anniversary in 2018, just four years after being named one of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

The peninsula's intricate irrigation system uses the natural environment to create a network of more than 1,000 irrigation ponds. This network provides water to farmers in numerous valleys.

A seven-year resident, Bullington is an enthusiastic proponent of his adopted home. He helps visitors organise accommodation, rent bicycles or trek along the Kunisaki Long Hiking Trail, a 137km course that visits some of the most spectacular and inspiring sights on the peninsula.

"There's something for everyone," he said with a smile.

Beppu is a city of hot springs.





The entrance to Futago-ji, a temple on Kunisaki Peninsula.



A local speciality is vegetables steamed using water from hot springs.

Beppu

“I had a tourist call me once and ask if there was a big fire here”, Kageura chuckles as we arrive in Beppu.

Indeed, great clouds of white steam billow up all along the winding streets of this *onsen* (hot spring) city. Visitors come, just as they have for centuries, to sit in the warm healing waters or marvel at the eight local *jigoku* (hells). The vivid waters that bubble and steam year-round are visual evidence of why Oita ranks first in Japan for renewable energy, and second globally to the US’s Yellowstone National Park for geothermal power.

At Yanagia, a 110-year-old building that, in 2014, was transformed into a hot spring inn, manager Akiko Goto helps us prepare fresh vegetables and meat for *jigokumushi* (hell-steamed food). She arranges them in baskets that will go on a stone range to which steam from a nearby hot spring is channelled.

“This gets one minute”, she says, turning a practiced eye on a basket of bean sprouts topped with thin slices of pork and slivers of ginger. The pumpkin needs 15 minutes, she adds.

“People stay at the Touji Inn, but cook their own food”, Kageura explains over lunch. “Steam was an easy choice; and it’s healthy”, she adds before biting into a steamed banana.

Mineral-rich waters are also beneficial to the body, but they’re not the only option. Sand bathing, which started during the Edo Period (1603–1868), is also popular.

“If your shoulders are sore—or you have a stiff neck—this takes care of it”, said a woman burying guests in damp, warm sand. Left with only their heads visible, they snooze or chat while the heat works its 15 minutes of magic.

“Now we know how our vegetables must have felt”, quips Kageura.

Yufuin

A town set at the base of twin-peaked Mount Yufu, Yufuin combines Kunisaki’s natural beauty with the bounty of Beppu’s mineral-rich *onsen* waters. In the midst of lush fields and forests, it brims with cafés, shops, museums and galleries. Visitors can ramble among centuries-old buildings between soaks or after hiking the peaks and plateaus of nearby Aso–Kuju National Park.

Yunotsubo Street, a winding lane that runs 1km, begins at Yufuin Station and is full of artful edible wonders. The Four Seasons Selection of gem-toned preserves and pickles are a feast for the eyes as well as the palate. Those with children in tow or who are children at heart in search of heartier fare will enjoy a stop at Snoopy Chaya—where everything from omelettes to dessert is graced by the famed beagle.

Onta pottery, Oita’s stoneware made by hand from local clays, can be found here alongside modern versions of other traditional crafts.

“On winter mornings there is often a mist rising from its surface that is quite beautiful”, explained Kageura when we reach Lake Kinrinko at Yunotubo’s far end. Fed by a hot spring and fresh mountain water, the small lake mesmerises visitors all year.

A few streets away is the forested *ryokan* (Japanese inn) complex of Sansou Murata, where we enjoy modern art at the Artegio museum and sample the adjoining restaurant’s famous roll cake with afternoon coffee. As we watch silver raindrops slip from the surrounding trees, my original hunch is confirmed. From temple caves to hells to heavenly cake, Oita certainly seems to be something very special. 🍷

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At the base of Mount Yufu, Yufuin has a wealth of natural beauty.

HR AT THE HELM OF FIRMS

Wider role needed for Womenomics to succeed

BY RICHARD SMART

When Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced his new cabinet, in August, it was again a primarily male affair. At a time when Abe has been discussing the empowerment of women, just three of the 19 ministers are female.

For Japan to gain a bigger voice in politics, boardrooms and other areas of society, women are going to have to do a lot of the work. In human resources, women from Japan and overseas are beginning to assert themselves in the business world, bringing new and innovative ideas to corporate Japan.

“For a long time, British and Western companies have been moving towards HR taking on a strategic business-partner role in organisations”, Mireille Watanabe Handover, partner at consultancy Lumina Learning Asia, told *BCCJ ACUMEN*. “HR in Japan is still lagging behind in this respect, partly due to a lack of real HR specialists. This means that they are less effective in developing the talent that the organisation needs”.

Her firm trains people to adapt their behaviour through role-play and other interactive exercises. The training is underpinned by psychometric tools that allow participants to gain a better idea of their strengths and where they could improve. While many clients have

“Many organisations now have a diversity and inclusion office within their HR department”.

—Mireille Watanabe Handover



embraced the training, Watanabe Handover points out that the conservative attitude of some HR departments can sometimes be a hurdle.

“Lumina Learning was founded in the UK around seven years ago, and many of our clients there have been attracted to our tools and offerings precisely because they are new and innovative,” she said. “Here, in Japan, companies can be much more cautious about trying out new methods, and so we need to provide a lot of evidence to prove their effectiveness”.

Masako Nemoto-Deacon, a Japanese national, also believes there is a lot that her country can learn from overseas practices.

“I started coaching in 1997, in the UK”, she told *BCCJ ACUMEN*. “It was an experience that opened my eyes, observing how the executives

were transformed after 2–3 days of workshops or coaching sessions”.

She decided that she would try to bring home some of the methods she had learned while in the UK. “As I had been working for a large Japanese company for six years before moving to the UK, I realised that Japanese people could be too conservative or follow old traditions and customs, which could limit them and restrict possibilities”, she said.

Working as a consultant through her business L.C.L., Nemoto-Deacon offers classes on personal development while focusing on helping working women.

“One of my corporate training courses is for empowering women”, she said. “This course suits female managers, junior managers and even benefits administrative staff. Women tend to underestimate themselves. They feel they are not capable to get roles or positions that their ability and skills qualify them for. Through coaching, they can find their own strength and uniqueness. They can gain self confidence and also find their own vision”.

Her clients include large general trading firms, as well as pharmaceutical and global manufacturing firms.

For Sarah Everitt Furuya, an associate facilitator and director of the Flourish

“Women tend to underestimate themselves ... Through coaching, they can find their own strength”.

—Masako Nemoto-Deacon



Leadership Programme at Impact Japan, HR has evolved in Japan with globalisation. Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) have become a larger part of everyday work for many firms, meaning HR has come to play a wider role in firms.

This is “helping Japanese talent be competitive once they reach executive level in multinationals”, Everitt Furuya told *BCCJ ACUMEN*. Impact puts “strong emphasis on the practice of leadership action, and challenges people to tackle real live issues in the moment”. Clients have reported that after taking courses, they have become more assertive in the workplace, helping to bring change that pushes business in the right direction.

All three executives agree that empowering women is a key factor in helping Japan improve its business practices, and that giving them more of a voice in the workplace is central to the mission of modern Japanese HR. They were also optimistic about the future of HR systems in Japan.

“HR has truly become a trusted partner in the business: a progressive and positive force in the development of strategy and business”, Everitt Furuya said.

“Japanese business is increasingly looking toward HR professionals as partners: to introduce innovative strategies, penetrate silos,

“Japanese business is increasingly looking toward HR professionals as partners”

—Sarah Everitt Furuya



manage M&A and its resulting needs, and create movement of talent to best serve the business, locally and internationally”, she added. “Japan is becoming increasingly competitive as a source of global talent, in partnership with companies like Impact”.

For Watanabe Handover, the real innovations are coming in areas that accommodate diversity. Japan is finally learning that some people cannot be in the office from 9am–5pm, as well as overtime hours and perhaps drinking and dining with colleagues a couple of times a week. That acceptance, she believes, will help inclusion.

“Companies in Japan are moving towards more diversity and flexibility in working systems

and, although progress sometimes feels very slow, I’m optimistic about the direction of travel”, she said. “Many organisations now have a diversity and inclusion office within their HR department and they are doing great work to support women in management, work-life balance and more inclusive [business] environments”.

That will benefit all, according to Nemoto-Deacon. “This is not about women; this is about organisational transformation”, she said. “As human beings, people can learn to see and respect other people without any preconceived perceptions or expectations: unconscious bias”. 🇯🇵


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LEADERS:
GET OFF THE CHEMS

BY DR GREG STORY
PRESIDENT, DALE CARNEGIE TRAINING JAPAN

Our cave-dwelling ancestor past is still with us today. Rather than sabre-tooth tigers though, we are reacting to anyone who argues with us or seeks to deny us what we want. The chemical cocktail in our bodies ignites passion, anger, mouth-before-brain outbursts, cursing, putdowns, sharp rebukes and killer comebacks. Fleet of foot, our reactions once saved us from being lunch for predators, but today that same nifty speed can get us into trouble with those around us.

Common sense is not common. Crystal-clear communication goes unheard. The obvious is not obvious. There are no shortages of things in our world that can set off a chemical chain reaction in us—which we can come to regret. The six-step devastation cycle plays out like this: event, interpretation, emotional response, physical response, attitudinal response and effect. Event triggers could be mistakes; the result of stupidity; something that was said, overheard or reported; interactions with others; or a business crisis.

Our speed is astounding. We react in a nanosecond but we regret at leisure. Once the chemicals kick in, we are off. So, to maintain control we need to stop the chain reaction before it ignites.

You normally imagine that leaders are in their positions because they can be in control and, therefore, trusted. Someone who can't control their emotions isn't usually someone we want running anything, let alone big corporations worth very large sums.

I was amazed to see one of the captains of industry being hostage to his chemicals. His curriculum vitae was perfect, a prince of the first water. Yet he would explode with instant white-hot rage when he didn't get the results he wanted and would viciously tear strips off the offending patsy. We learnt to sit to his right or

left at the end of the long meeting-room table, where it was hard to be seen. We observed that the innocent who sat opposite him got it between the eyes, every time.

I am sure we all have our war stories of demented leaders who couldn't control their emotions. Maybe sometimes, in extremis, we have joined them ourselves.

How do we keep the chemicals in check when we are tormented by people who don't do what they are supposed to do or when they are supposed to do it?

Five key steps

1. Recognise the response as chemically fuelled anger. When we know we have set off a chain reaction and the chemicals in the body have kicked in, we better understand that we have to take action to seize control back from the chemicals.
2. Suspend judgment, because we may not have enough facts yet. We may have been told a version of the events and there may be certain circumstances that would change our view. Before exploding, seek more data and insight—this will help us cool down a bit.
3. Don't attack the other person. None of us are perfect, so keep that in mind before we set forth with a tirade about their shortcomings. Remember that every person we meet is carrying a heavy personal load—which we don't know about. Who are we to assume we could do any better in their circumstances?

When faced with a killer issue, how we react is the real problem we need to solve.

4. Before we launch forth, inject a pause, followed by a cushion. A cushion is a short sentence that acts as a chemical breaker to allow us to regain control. We might say something neutral such as, "Well this issue is an important one". We neither agree nor disagree when using this statement, but we buy valuable time to remember to ask more about the background of the problem, rather than immediately verbally lacerating our interlocutor.
5. Walk away. If you feel uncontrollable molten lava about to start erupting out of your mouth, just say "excuse me" and add some physical and temporal distance to enhance your perspective on the lava trigger.

As ancient wisdom says, when faced with a killer issue, how we react is the real problem we need to solve.

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BABY STEPS BACK TO WORK FOR MUMS

How can firms support parents?

BY EAMON FLANAGAN
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES AND OFFICE SUPPORT
MICHAEL PAGE

Why do mums often find it hard to integrate into the workforce following maternity leave?

Many firms in Japan have taken a progressive approach by implementing new policies for working mums such as flexitime and work-from-home initiatives. However, in some instances these policies exist only in theory or are not enforced.

As in many other countries, authority rests with employees' direct manager rather than the HR department. From a cultural perspective, many Japanese are accustomed to working long hours to demonstrate commitment, leaving the workplace only after the boss does so.

Some firms have set working hours, with a finishing time of 4pm but most employees feel they are expected to work well past finishing time. Furthermore, when they look around and see most other employees staying late, they feel it's only natural to do so. Working environments like this lead to mums—who are generally the primary care giver—feeling guilty about having to leave the workplace at finishing time to pick up their children. To avoid this, HR departments have to work closely with senior management to educate them on the benefits of these policies to the overall business.

At Michael Page's Tokyo office there are six mums and 15 dads.

[In Japan,] authority rests with employees' direct manager rather than the HR department.

Initially, they were reluctant to take advantage of flexible work arrangements out of concern for how they would be viewed. But now, as a result of coaching, time management, remote access and, most important, the support of team members, they do. Now we are employing more working mums than ever.

It's critical to promote such flexitime programmes to potential employees; it should be part of recruiting efforts.

How can hiring managers and senior leadership be persuaded that working mums add value?

There are three main reasons to hire more women.

First, Japanese women are highly educated; nearly 300,000 women graduate from university every year.

Second, since half of all consumers are women, female employees can offer insights into how better to appeal to, and reach, them. For example, Panasonic Corporation released a successful line of beauty-care products designed by, and for, women. This has created an entirely new market for the firm.

Third, research shows that firms with more women in management tend to perform better than others. A recent study found Fortune 500 companies with the highest representation of women at board level performed significantly better than their peers, with a higher return on equity, sales and invested capital.

In Japan, the ratio of women in managerial positions in the private sector is 9.2%. The government initially set a target of 30% but has been slowly backtracking to a less ambitious target over the short term.

As for work-life balance, a recent survey by Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' Statistics Bureau found that about 26% of Japanese firms with over 1,000 staff have implemented flexitime. But, in firms with 100 staff or less, that drops to a mere 3%.

What can the government do to enforce or incentivise HR policies supporting working mums?

Japanese politicians have been debating day-care facilities with

- Flexitime programmes not well understood or accepted
- Promoting flexible working should be part of recruitment
- More firms are offering benefits for working mums

vigour since February 2016, when an angry blog post from a mum who failed to find a day-care place sparked a groundswell of public outrage.

Moreover, a recent poll by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare found that, while 93% of parents were able to find a day-care centre for their children, 58% said it was not the facility they wanted.

We are increasingly seeing firms that offer benefits for working parents. I am aware of some that have their own day-care facilities, for which working mums pay a substantially reduced rate. Others have cafeterias so that employees can quickly get meals in the office rather than preparing and eating breakfast or dinner at home. Some even have rest areas where employees can take a short nap.

Would more role models help, or is greater open debate needed?

I think we're beyond the stage of debate. The Japanese economy needs more workers and Japanese women are more than capable of filling the gap.

Japanese women are already prominent and influential in society, and they are just starting to leave their mark on the corporate sector. Some progressive firms have to start leading by example. Then, in a short time, many are likely to follow suit. 🇯🇵

IN SEARCH OF THE UNICORN



Finding an ideal candidate in the Japan market

BY LANIS YARZAB
MANAGING DIRECTOR, SPRING PROFESSIONAL

Within the recruitment industry, we use the metaphor of a unicorn to describe the perfect candidate for whom every client searches. Like the mythical creature believed to exist somewhere at the edge of the known Earth, there are days when this metaphor is quite representative of how it feels to receive the search criteria set out by clients.

Upon receiving this list, a big part of a consultant's job is to give the client some data to help them understand more about the reality of finding their ideal candidate. I am happy to share the story of a recent consultation.

I had a chance to sit down with one of our global clients while they visited Tokyo. We spoke about their frustrations when recruiting in Japan. They are a fast-growing, high-tech start-up, with a progressive culture heavily influenced by their headquarters. Their teams are young and dynamic; they support flexible work styles and diversity. Their chief executive said to me, "I understand the ageing population and we don't require that much English. We have a great company; how hard is it to find a good engineer?" We then walked through some of the numbers and looked at the reality of finding their "ideal" IT engineer.

We started by extrapolating some data from the Ministry of

Internal Affairs and Communications and the National Tax Agency, and then took the average percent of the population willing to change their jobs at any given time. The total number of IT engineers in Japan is just over 854,000, and those estimated to be mid- to senior-level engineers number 210,000. Of experienced engineers, about 23,000 are open to a job change across Japan.

As a second step, we started to factor in cultural fit, bearing in mind that the client is a young firm whose employees have varying degrees of English ability. Given that only 20% of the entire workforce in Japan is aged 25-34, how many of those 23,000 engineers would fit that profile? Turning to the factor of English capability, I reminded the client that Japan ranks 40th out of 48 nations for results on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC).

Finally, we looked at the technology this candidate would need: Ruby or Python, languages that have just started to become prevalent in Japan. Would their hard skills be strong enough to meet our client's expectations?

At this point we started to wonder how many IT engineers would remain in our candidate pool. Additionally, I pointed out the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare statistic showing there



Lanis Yarzab is managing director of Spring Professional.

are roughly two job openings for every IT applicant in Japan. With such a rare skill set demanded by the client, each candidate would certainly have more than two job postings for which they were qualified.

Despite the seemingly grim outlook, we concluded the conversation on a positive note. I related that it is not impossible to find a good candidate, but that the client needed to redefine their "must have" versus their "nice to have" criteria. I explained that working with a good recruitment partner is not about being able to find them a unicorn; it is most

important to communicate the real value an individual we represent can bring to a client's organisation, and to help clients determine the real cost of keeping a vacancy open.

At this point, we have found a few finalists who meet some of the original criteria set out by the IT client, but not necessarily what they originally targeted. The client is happy, as they feel they have options: one candidate may need some training and support while the other is at a higher skill level than expected. Most important, the client has found workable solutions. 🇬🇧

YOU GOTTA HAVE WAA

- Unilever staff can work from anywhere, anytime on weekdays
- System aims to improve productivity, work-life balance
- Some 140 firms have shown interest in the scheme

Cutting out the commute boosts morale ... and business

BY RICHARD SMART

Unilever Japan introduced a new human resources system, on 1 July, which allows staff to choose both when and where they work. Through the system, the firm says it aims to “improve productivity as well as facilitate a better work-life balance”.

Work from Anywhere and Anytime (WAA) allows staff to choose to work any hours between 6am and 9pm on weekdays to ply their trade, as long as they have received prior approval from a manager, and are not expected to do anything beyond the tasks set for them.

“We are creating a culture based on performance and results,” Unilever said.

Yuka Shimada, the firm’s director of HR and general affairs, said that beyond improvements in efficiency, the goal of the programme is to help Japan become a little more open and relaxed. “This is a new way of working because it will create a new future for this company—and for Japanese society,” she said.

Sparking interest

Since the launch, Unilever has received a number of enquiries from firms that want to know how the system works and whether it can be used by other businesses. Around 140 external parties of interest have attended sessions on WAA hosted by Unilever, to find out about the system.

“I am amazed by the positive reaction from the market and am sure this is clear proof that everyone likes to be trusted and given flexibility,” Shimada said. “I believe other companies can learn that doing is easier than anticipating; trusting people brings more benefit than managing them.”

Japan relevance

Systems such as WAA should be welcomed by all in Japan. The salaried worker sleeping at



Yuka Shimada of Unilever

his or her desk is no myth, and neither is doing overtime just to make sure he or she does not leave the office before the boss. This comes down, at least in part, to the nation’s strict HR systems.

Many offices have a punch-in system, whereby cards tell management who arrived and when, with punishments doled out for lateness. Long lines of workers waiting for proof of train delays are a regular feature of morning commutes, and do not boost morale.

“[Unilever is] creating a culture based on performance and results”.

A Randstad Workmonitor poll earlier this year found that only 43% of employees in Japan were either satisfied or very satisfied with their place of work, putting it rock bottom among the 34 nations surveyed.

Productivity statistics are as gloomy. In the service sector, which accounts for about three-quarters of the Japanese economy, productivity has declined since 2010, according to official statistics. It stood at 96.4 in May, in figures using average productivity in 2010 as a baseline of 100.

Changing mindsets

“Comments from employees have been all positive so far, though there are practical requests and issues that can be improved, such as technology,” Shimada said. Since the system began, around 70% of employees have used it. Around 55% of those have said that it has been a generally positive experience.

Technological issues aside, there is also the challenge of getting people to feel that going to the gym at midday or finishing up for the day at 3pm without having left the house will not be frowned upon.

“There may be some people who feel guilty about not being in the office but this is really a matter of mindset as well as the leadership of our managers,” Shimada said. “Our vision of implementing WAA is very clear and we will keep conveying a consistent message. Also, the board needs to lead by example and provide opportunities to change the mindset of managers by conducting training”.

Improvements may lead one day to a much stronger system for Unilever, which can help the firm boost productivity and raise job satisfaction. But Shimada has a bigger idea. “My hidden agenda is to eliminate rush hour commutes in Japan as they are killing people’s energy and motivation every morning,” she said. 🇯🇵

JAPAN'S GROWING JOB MARKET



Demand for bilingual professionals continues to increase

The effective job-opening-to-applicant ratio released by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare on 29 July was 1.37, a rise of 0.01 when compared to the previous month. The average ratio for the period from April to June was 1.36. In April, the effective job-opening-to-applicant ratio by actual place of work of the employee exceeded 1.0 for all prefectures for the first time since the calculation of the job-opening-to-application ratio commenced.

With tight labour conditions—amid a continuing labour shortage in Q2 of 2016—demand was prominent in industries such as accommodation, food and beverage services (18.0% increase), construction (7.4% increase) and medical and welfare (7.3% increase).

Firms that encountered difficulties in hiring fresh graduates have made the shift toward recruiting currently unemployed recent graduates with work experience, as well as experienced mid- to senior-level recruits. This shift is believed to have helped spur demand for human resources in the job-movers' market.

Sector focus

The effective job-opening-to-applicant ratio for permanent positions has also continued to rise (0.88), and demand for human resources for jobs in professional and technical occupations in particular is a growing trend.

Among the job categories, there is also increasing demand for professional and technical

positions including engineers in construction, civil projects or surveying (a ratio of 3.96), and information processing or communications (2.29).

IT specialists are required across a broad spectrum of industries. Personnel requests received by Robert Walters Japan reflect growing demand for experienced security and data specialists, as well as web engineers and digital marketing personnel.

The effective job-opening-to-applicant ratio has also remained high for sales jobs. The service sector is experiencing a continued labour shortage for jobs such as hospitality and waiting staff (3.43).

While orders have continued to pour in from the construction

industry based on demand related to the hosting of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, there is an increasing labour shortage. The job-opening-to-applicant ratio remains high across all job categories in the construction and mining sectors, including construction work for building frames (6.85).

Meanwhile, overall demand has remained low for administrative jobs such as general administration (0.28) and accounting-related administration (0.63). This is because demand for such personnel is on the decline amid the growing trend of substituting human labour with machinery and systems for monotonous and simple tasks. ❀

DAVID SWAN

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ROBERT WALTERS JAPAN AND KOREA

"Despite concerns for the impact of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union and market sentiment toward further yen appreciation among other issues, the job market is expected to continue booming on the back of positive factors such as Olympics-related demand and the increase in the number of foreign tourists coming to Japan. Demand for bilingual professionals with specific skills is also continuing to increase regardless of the industry or job category, making it even more difficult for corporations to secure this kind of talent.

"While job-opening-to-applicant ratio is on the rise in the professional and technical sectors, the low ratio for all administrative jobs including general administration, which is a high volume zone, stands out, marking a growing mismatch in the job market. However, even for workers in such sectors, enquiries have continued to pour in for bilingual professionals who are proficient in both Japanese and a foreign language, such as English. The number of job openings exceeds the number of applicants in this aspect, demonstrating a market that favours job-seekers".



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DINING DELIGHTS



Experience the city by the bay at Hilton Tokyo Odaiba

Tokyo is a vibrant city, particularly in summer. But, like all big cities, the best parts are often known only to locals and discerning visitors. Odaiba, situated on an island just across the bay from the city centre, offers panoramic views of the iconic Rainbow Bridge and the Tokyo skyline, which sparkles spectacularly at night. Central to the charm of Odaiba is the new Hilton Tokyo Odaiba, offering a cool summer escape experience from the hot Tokyo summer.

Odaiba is the location for the newest Hilton-branded hotel in Japan, Hilton Tokyo Odaiba, from where guests have the perfect jumping-off point for their Tokyo experience. With stunning panoramic views of Tokyo Bay and Rainbow Bridge, as well as easy access to the city by car, bus or train, all of the excitement of the metropolis is within reach. When you want to head back across the bay, Tokyo Station is only 24 minutes away from the Yurikamome Line's Daiba Station, just a one-minute walk from the hotel.

As summer fully grips the city, Hilton Tokyo Odaiba is orchestrating an amazing line-up for food lovers called "City Escape—Summer Dining Experience". It includes six key ports of call on your summer adventure: the sake garden, veranda, barbecue terrace, craft beer garden, seafood buffet, and dessert buffet.

Sakura (sake garden)

At this contemporary Japanese-style restaurant, you can take a journey through 20 varieties of artisan sake from around Japan. Choose a drinking cup from an eclectic selection, match the sake with Japanese-style tapas, and chill out to music in the lounge chairs.

Veranda (lounge and Champagne bar)

Need a break? Relax on the deck with free-flow Champagne and cool breezes while watching the colours of Tokyo transform as the sun sets. Feel the city stress drain away as you nibble on fresh seafood.

Ablaze (barbecue terrace)

Enjoy one of summer's great pastimes: the barbecue. Here you can cook your own BBQ over a smokeless German-made grill while enjoying cold beer, live music and a gentle wind from the sea.

Craft Beer Garden

For those who love carefully crafted brews, take in the summer-night breeze in this lush garden while enjoying 30 varieties centred on craft beers from Japan as well as Belgium, the country world-renowned for its mastery of the art.

Ocean Dining (seafood buffet)

Is there any better setting for enjoying seafood than a perfect vista of the water? Ocean Dining sets the mood with large windows that overlook Tokyo Bay. Lunch features a colourful seafood bar, while dinner offers many types of seafood prepared using low-temperature cooking methods and specially made equipment. The chef will even deliver paella to be prepared at each table.

Summer Snow (dessert buffet)

Snow falling in the middle of summer? Sounds curious, but it's all part of the special dessert offering at the Lounge and Champagne bar, Veranda. Experience the contrast of clear blue skies and a midsummer ocean while tasting cool and refreshing summertime desserts in a restaurant decorated like a world of white snow. ❄️



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Gunkanjima is located off the coast of Nagasaki Prefecture.
PHOTO: GUNKANJIMA CONCIERGE

JAPAN'S ISLE OF MODERN RUIN

Past and future of Gunkanjima

BY PETER TASKER

“The ideas that ruins invoke in me are grand. Everything comes to nothing, everything perishes, only the world remains, only time endures.”

—Denis Diderot,
from *The Salon of 1767*.

Hashima is a tiny island 2km off Nagasaki Prefecture, on the western flank of Kyushu. Just 480 metres in length and 160 metres across, it once housed a thriving mining community of 5,000 souls. In its early 1960s heyday, the island—nicknamed Gunkanjima, or Battleship Island, on account of its shape—boasted a population density nine times greater than that of metropolitan Tokyo, then the most densely populated city in the world.

Today Gunkanjima is uninhabited. The mining equipment and living quarters have been left to crumble and rust in the salty air. Winds gust through gaping windows and rubble-strewn alleys that once echoed with

children’s voices. In this modern-day Pompeii, some ghostly apartments still contain black-and-white TV sets, stopped clocks, bottles, cups and faded photos of forgotten stars.

The last miner downed tools just 42 years ago, but the place is already as defunct as the marble fragments that inspired French philosopher Denis Diderot (1713–84) and other thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries. In Japan and elsewhere, many industrial sites have been remade into business parks or housing developments, but once Gunkanjima’s coal became uncompetitive, the island was done. The facilities remain intact because it wasn’t worth demolishing them.

Recently, this thoroughly modern ruin has become a new tourist destination. In 2015, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization listed it as a World Heritage site, despite opposition from South Korea, which cited the forced labour of Korean nationals in the mines in the last years of World War II.

The island’s photogenic quality has already been noticed by film-makers. In 2012 it was used as the model for the Dead City, the villain’s lair in the 007 film, *Skyfall*. Three years later, it became the setting for *Attack on Titan*, a film based on a dystopian Japanese manga that has sold over 50mn copies.

Ambition and fortitude

Gunkanjima is well worth visiting for anyone interested in modern Japanese history, particularly the breakneck industrialisation of the early 20th century. Even now, the ambition and prowess of the unknown architects and engineers are breathtaking, as is the fortitude of the community for whom the wind-and-wave battered island became a multi-storey



Many of the buildings have been taken over by nature. • PHOTO: GUNKANJIMA CONCIERGE



Much of the island is in severe decay. • PHOTO BY PETER TASKER



Miners worked in heat of 40°C. • PHOTO: GUNKANJIMA CONCIERGE

hometown, where people were born and brought up, spent their working lives and died.

Coal was discovered on the island's surface in 1810 and exploited by the dominant Saga clan. But it was not until the closing decades of the 19th century that Japan's ravenous appetite for coking coal, the basic fuel of the fast-expanding steel industry, justified opening shafts into the seabed. Brought under the control of the Mitsubishi Group, the island's area had to be expanded threefold to accommodate the people and machinery necessary for large-scale extraction. The Gunkanjima we see today is largely an artificial creation.

Erosion-resistant stone, imported from China, protected the facilities from the elements. Without these sea walls, life—and profit—would have been impossible. Even so, there were occasions when typhoon-driven waves crashed onto the island, causing widespread flooding, especially in lower-level apartments facing the sea. Needless to say the mining firm's top executives lived on the highest floors. It was, in every sense, a vertical society.

In its time, Gunkanjima represented modernity and leading-edge technology. An undersea cable brought electricity to the island in 1907. Japan's first reinforced concrete apartment block was built there in 1916. The island had its own schools, a beauty salon, top-class medical facilities, a pachinko parlour, even a love hotel for amorous couples. The cinema, opened in 1927, is a pile of rubble now, but the gate of a Shinto shrine still perches on the island's highest point. The only amenity lacking was a crematorium. The dead were taken to a facility on a larger neighbouring island and came back as ashes.

At peak production the miners dug half a million tonnes of coal a year—a modest amount compared with that dug from super pits in the UK—but impressive for such a confined area. The deepest seams were 1,000 metres below sea level and the longest tunnels stretched 2km.

Conditions were gruelling. The elevator that took the miners down to the lower depths was an open-sided cage that plunged 600 pitch-black metres in 80 seconds. Shifts were eight–10 hours in sweltering heat of 40°C, with up to 90% humidity. Just getting to the coalface could take over an hour. For ordinary workers—as opposed to the management, who had a supply of fresh water brought in from the mainland—baths were of treated seawater.

Yet there were compensations. Wages were double and triple the national average. Rent was free and electricity fees minimal. The standard of living can be gauged from the consumer goods left to moulder in the apartments: elaborate hi-fi sets, bulky fridges and washing machines. An undersea phone cable was laid as early as 1938, and by the 1960s the roofs were forests of TV aerials.

Gunkanjima was known as “the island without greenery”, but the residents imported soil from the mainland and created rooftop gardens. As in any Japanese community there were regular festivals at the shrine. Professional entertainers would come to give concerts and there were bars for the miners to relax in after their shifts were over.

Gunkanjima lives on

Why was the island abandoned so suddenly? The standard reason is the energy revolution—which led to the replacement of coal by imported oil—although that seems an

inadequate explanation given that Gunkanjima supplied coking coal. Furthermore, the closure came shortly after the first oil shock sent oil prices soaring. Most unusually, the mine was still profitable when it closed.

Then, as now, Japan's energy policy was in the hands of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (formerly the Ministry of International Trade and Industry). Decisions could be highly political, such as the choice of an outmoded US nuclear reactor for Fukushima in 1969, a time of worsening trade friction. Still, small-scale deep mining had no future in Japan. Gunkanjima was never going to make it into the 21st century as a functioning mine. After 80 years of operation it had done its job.

Now it has secured a brand-new job, in the heritage business. When Diderot wrote about ruins, he took it for granted they were the ancient remnants of bygone civilisations. It would not have occurred to him to apply the term to constructions in use within living memory. It is a defining feature of our time that it produces ruins of many kinds—architectural, technological and social—as a matter of course. Disruption, discontinuity and obsolescence are baked in the cake.

In that sense, Gunkanjima is not the anomalous leftover of a vanished era, but a perfect symbol of today's world, with its insatiable appetite for novelty and blindness to what is lost. It is also a useful reminder that everything familiar to us will one day be obsolescent too, ourselves included. As British art critic Dr Brian Dillon writes in *A Short History of Decay*, “the ruin is a fragment with a future; it will live on without us.” 🇬🇧

COOL TRADITION

Nihonbashi Summer Experience



PHOTOS BY ANTONY TRAN

Enjoy summer to the fullest in Nihonbashi. July marked the kickoff of ECO EDO Nihonbashi 2016, an opportunity to experience *omotenashi* (spirit of hospitality) and travel back to a time when Tokyo and nature were intertwined.

To celebrate the first week of the event, Mitsui Fudosan Co., Ltd. invited seven families to explore the COREDO Muromachi Nihonbashi area and its rich connection to Japanese culture.

To begin the tour, guests selected *yukata* (light kimono worn during hot months) and learned the traditional way to dress for the summer. This change of clothing swept them away to a cooler place, and set the stage for their visit to the watery world of Art Aquarium.

An immersive spectacle of light and sound, Art Aquarium brings the Japanese love of goldfish to life. In days of old, Japanese believed that simply viewing them had a cooling effect on the body, making it a way to ease the burden of the summer heat.

“I thought it was beautiful and that it was very amazing how they could put fish into beautiful tanks and create art out of it,” said one guest, aged 10.

Guests also visited the Fukutoku Shrine, which dates back to the Jogan Era (859–876). It was rebuilt in 2014 by Mitsui Fudosan as part of the Nihonbashi Revitalization Plan.

The tour then continued at the HAKUZA NIHONBASHI shop, where guests learned about gold leaf, and at Ninben, where children

tried their hand at shaving dried bonito to make *kezuribushi*, the flakes that form the basis for many Japanese soups. These flakes were tasted by everyone, to great acclaim: “I think it’s a very nice flavour—a very refined one”.

After the culinary adventure, guests traded the soothing *yukata* for their clothes and returned to the world of modern Tokyo. “It was an absolutely amazing exhibition,” said one adult guest.

If you would like to dive into tradition this summer, the refreshing experience of ECO EDO Nihonbashi 2016 will be running until 25 September. Those wearing *yukata* or showing a ticket stub from Art Aquarium can receive special bonuses, such as free drinks and summer gifts. To find participating shops, follow the relaxing sound of the goldfish wind chimes. 🐟



The Nihonbashi Summer Experience package includes *yukata* dressing, goldfish-themed treats, priority admission to Art Aquarium, and a gourmet tour of 10 shops in the COREDO Muromachi complex.

The experience starts at 10am and is available on Saturdays and Sundays on 23 July–28 August. The cost is ¥10,800 per person for those aged 13 and over and ¥8,100 for children aged 4–12. It is free for children aged three and under.

www.facebook.com/nihonbashi.information

www.nihonbashi-info.jp/omotenashi

www.artaquarium.jp/en

Manchester to return art to Hiroshima

A-bomb survivors' work shows human spirit

BY MYRIAM WHITE
PHOTOS COURTESY OF MICHAEL STEVENSON

Paintings by young people who survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, in 1945, are to be returned to Japan after being displayed for decades in Manchester (page 49).

Pupils of the Methodist Girls' High School in Hiroshima—which was destroyed in the blast of 6 August—created the art in the 1950s after the school was relocated.

When the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization recognised art as a means of fostering international understanding, the Hiroshima Collection was taken to the US by Dr Takuo Matsumoto, the school's principal and one of only five teachers who survived the bombing.

While at the event, Matsumoto gifted the paintings to Prue Wallis-Myers, a teacher from England who passed them to current custodian and art education expert Michael Stevenson.

In addition to being used as an educational resource at events for teachers and students in the north-west of England, the collection was exhibited at the House of Lords and the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation in London on the 70th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, in 2015.

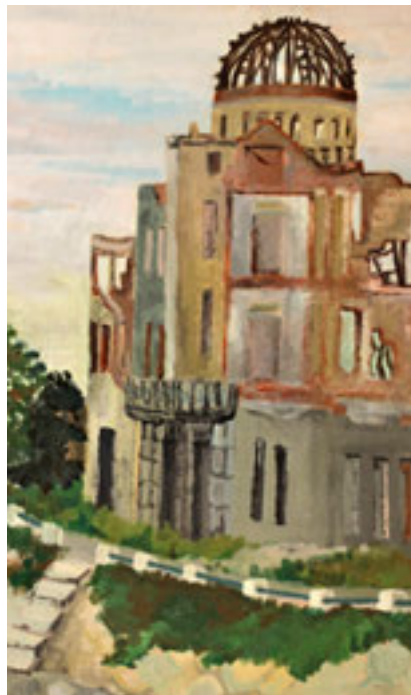
Now the art is due to make a further impact in Japan.

"I believe that the paintings should be appreciated not simply as beautiful objects, but for the lessons they contain about the wonderful resilience of the human spirit expressed in art by young people", said Stevenson. "For that reason they deserve to be conserved for future generations to appreciate, and Hiroshima is the right place for that to happen".

Lord Mayor of Manchester Carl Austin-Behan said the collection was being returned to Hiroshima with Manchester's message of "thanks, appreciation and friendship".

"Despite being created by pupils who experienced such horror, the images portrayed are remarkably positive", he explained. "For decades the Hiroshima collection has inspired hundreds of teachers and students across the north-west of England with their message of harmony and co-operation".

Manchester is a vice-president city of Mayors for Peace, a programme to promote the solidarity of cities toward abolition of nuclear weapons. More than 7,000 cities in 161 countries and regions are registered members. 🇬🇧



Clockwise: *The A-bomb Dome*, *Pine Trees and a Lantern* and *Room in a Japanese House*

ARTS

UK EVENTS IN JAPAN

COMPILED BY
KIYOKO MORITA

1 UNTIL 11 OCTOBER

The Peter Rabbit Exhibition

This year marks 150 years since the birth of Beatrix Potter, the English writer, illustrator and conservationist best known for her children's books featuring animals. Her original picture-book prints, sketches and personal items, most of which have never been exhibited to the public, will be on display.

PHOTO: WATERCOLOUR ILLUSTRATION FROM *THE TALE OF BENJAMIN BUNNY* BY BEATRIX POTTER. NATIONAL TRUST

Bunkamura, the Museum

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2 27 AUGUST- 4 SEPTEMBER

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone in Concert

At this special performance, the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra will perform the entire score of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the hit film based on the novel of

the same name by British novelist, screenwriter and film producer

J K Rowling.

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3 4-25 SEPTEMBER

Cressida

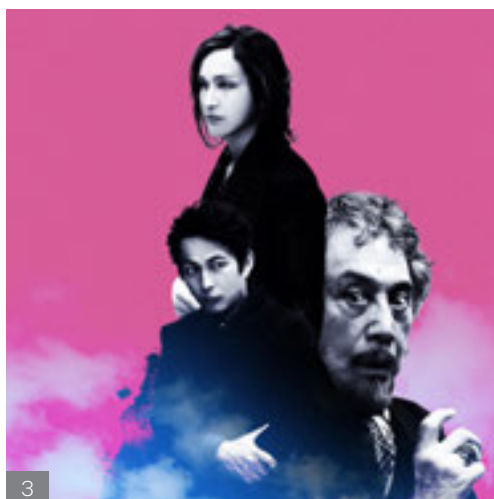
Written and directed by British dramatist Nicholas Wright, this play—to be performed in Japanese—is set in London, in the 1630s when women were not allowed to perform on stage. *Cressida* follows the adventure of John Shank, an actor who runs an organisation that fulfils the roles of talent agency, boarding house and stage school for the boys who fill these roles for women.

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4

◦ To apply for free tickets or gifts, please send an email with your name, address and telephone number by 31 August to: coordinator@custom-media.com. Winners will be picked at random.

4 5-7 SEPTEMBER

Detour

This concert is the first for English musician, singer-songwriter and record producer Elvis Costello since the release of his memoir, *Unfaithful Music & Disappearing Ink*. He will perform with guitar and piano in front of a screen, on which family photos, mysteries and mottoes will be displayed.

PHOTO: JAMES OMARA

5 September
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 Kita-ku, Osaka
 7pm (doors open 6:30pm)
 6-7 September
**Showa Women's University
 Hitomi Memorial Hall (Tokyo)**
 1-7-57 Taishido
 Setagaya-ku, Tokyo
 6:30pm (doors open 6pm)
 Adults: from ¥9,000
 »[www.smash-jpn.com/
 live/?id=2489](http://www.smash-jpn.com/live/?id=2489)
 03-3444-6751



5

5 14-25 SEPTEMBER

Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty

Directed and choreographed by award-winning Sir Matthew Bourne OBE, this timeless classic has been reworked, with a gothic twist. The traditional fairytale of good versus evil is turned upside-down, creating a supernatural love story.

Tokyu Theatre Orb
 Shibuya Hikarie 11F
 2-21-1 Shibuya
 Shibuya-ku, Tokyo
 Various show times
 Adults: from ¥5,500
 »[www.theatre-orb.com/english/
 lineup/20160914.html](http://www.theatre-orb.com/english/lineup/20160914.html)
 03-3490-4949

6 FROM 17 SEPTEMBER

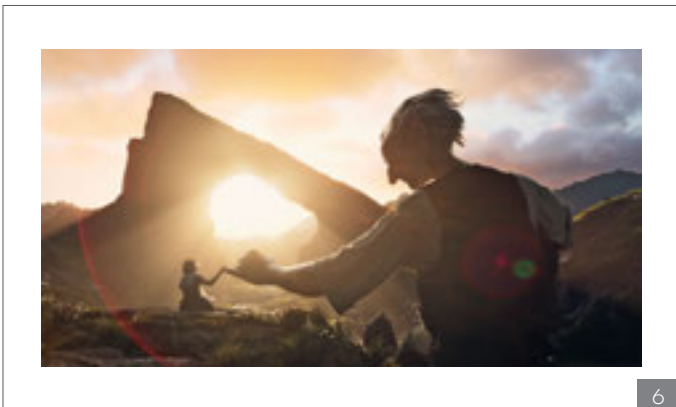
The BFG

A heart-warming fantasy, this film is based on the book of the same name by Welsh novelist Roald Dahl (1916-90), whose books have sold over 200mn copies worldwide. The children's adventure charts the story of Sophie, who encounters a big friendly giant.
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Toho Cinemas Nichigeki
 (among other locations)
 2-5-1 Yurakucho
 Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
 Various show times
 Adults: from ¥1,800
 03-3574-1131

◦ Free gift

We are giving away two plastic jars related to this film.



6



UK-Japan events

1 | BCCJ EVENT

David Bickle, British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) president, with Lord Mayor of the City of London Alderman Jeffrey Mountevans (left), who spoke at a BCCJ event on the future prospects of the city, on 14 July.

2 | BCCJ EVENT

Lori Henderson MBE, BCCJ executive director, with Neil Levett, managing director of Alad Limited, who spoke at an event organised by the BCCJ's Global Sporting Events Champions Network, on 27 July (page 22).

3 | BCCJ SOCIAL

BCCJ interns Eduardo Pabon (left) and Luis Wenhammer with Sanae Samata, BCCJ operations manager, at the Great British Pool Party hosted by the Hilton Tokyo Bay, on 21 July.

4 | BCCJ SOCIAL

BCCJ members and guests enjoyed networking and socialising at the Great British Pool Party.

5 | EMBASSY

British Ambassador to Japan Tim Hitchens CMG LVO and his wife Sara, a counsellor and psychotherapist, at the opening of a former British embassy villa in Oku-Nikko, Tochigi Prefecture, in June (page 8).



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6 | FOOD AND DRINK

Takeharu Nakajima of the Welsh Government Japan office gave a speech at Wonderland Wales, an event promoting Welsh beer and rarebit, in Chiyoda Ward, on 30 June.

7 | FOOD AND DRINK

Tamao Sako (right), founder of The British Pudding, explained how to make Welsh rarebit and offered samples for tasting at the event.

8 | ART

Lord Mayor of Manchester Carl Austin-Behan and Michael Stevenson, art custodian, show art by A-bomb survivors that is to be returned to Hiroshima after being in Manchester for decades, on 12 July (page 45).

9 | SOCIAL

Custom Media, publisher of *BCCJACUMEN*, held its summer party on a bus in central Tokyo, on 15 July.



Ruined Shoes

Name: Kray Meh
Origin: Myanmar

17

Donated by Refugee,
or You can Donate to Refugee.

Kray Meh only had these shoes when she reached Thailand, along with a set of clothes. Forced to run for being from a minority group, she could not return home to collect any of her other items, as she found out her family was killed right after she escaped. Kray Meh donated these shoes to highlight the plight of millions of refugees like her.

Find the collection at
refugeemuseum.org
An initiative funded by
private donations.



The Refugee Collection



JAPAN ENVOYS



First-hand know-how helps start-up, exchange

BY FIONA PELHAM

I applied to be an assistant language teacher on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme because a friend did. I knew nothing about the culture or language, other than what I had learnt preparing for my interview.

During my first month in Japan, I stood on my tatami matting in my unfurnished apartment and realised that I was not just surviving in this unknown territory of a new job, home, language, friends and country, but enjoying it.

Spending 1999 working in the town of Makuhari, Chiba Prefecture, shaped my future. For it was then that I developed the ability to be comfortable with the unknown and the determination to be understood, traits that are so important for an entrepreneur.

I'm often told that my facial expressions are easy to read. I believe that comes from my experience communicating gratitude, enthusiasm and other emotions through facial expressions rather than Japanese—a language I could not speak during my first few months in Japan.

As my new world changed from being exhilaratingly scary to highly intriguing, I created a routine. It included Japanese lessons, *taiko* drumming class, Japanese painting classes and being a volunteer leader with the local group of Brownies, part of the World Association of Girl Guides and

Now in its 30th year, the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme has welcomed more than 62,000 people from 65 countries to deliver grassroots international exchange between Japan and other nations.

This column features former JET Programme participants who keep the idea of fostering mutual understanding firmly at heart.

Girl Scouts. In reality, it was like being a Brownie again, because my limited language skills meant I couldn't teach activities or answer questions. Instead, the Brownies taught me origami, how to cook Japanese food and the name of every insect a seven-year-old should know.

The generosity and openness of the Japanese people left an incredible impression on me.

When I returned to the UK, I started work in London. I volunteered on JET Programme interviews, during which I would answer applicants' questions about Japanese culture and lifestyle. This proved the perfect role for me because I couldn't stop telling everyone how great Japan is.

This experience led to the opportunity to meet Junichiro

Koizumi, then-prime minister, while he was on a visit to London, in 2002, to talk about the role that programme participants have as ambassadors of Japan.

In 2004, I launched my own business, with a vision to create a sustainable event industry by enabling every meeting, festival or sporting event to have a positive environmental and social impact. This led me to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the world's largest developer of voluntary international standards, for which I chaired a management standard ISO 20121 committee.

The creation of ISO 20121 involved more than 30 countries, including Japan, and was inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. An ISO

representative said he had never known such an active contribution from a Japan delegation.

I hope that by constantly exchanging *aisatsu* (greetings) with the Japanese delegates, I helped break down communication barriers that can have an impact on the success of delegates' interactions. Perhaps my enthusiasm to communicate, even with limited language skills, gave the Japanese delegates confidence to speak English. My cultural understanding of Japan—that only the experience of living in the country can bring—was also helpful.

A few months ago I was in Japan to visit a chapter of Meeting Professionals International, a membership organisation for professional meeting planners, of which I am international chair in 2016. During my stay, I also worked with a team who are providing workshops to help Japan become a leading sustainable event destination in the lead-up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The JET Programme really delivers on the lifelong cultural connection it promises to its wide-eyed new arrivals. I don't know if former participants or the Japanese community will ever know the extent of the impact they have on each other, but it is a privilege to have experienced such a special relationship first hand. 🇯🇵



Fiona Pelham (left) with the Japan chapter of Meeting Professionals International



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CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE



A world divided

BY IAN DE STAINS OBE

In July, what is believed to be the hottest land temperature in history (roughly 54°C)—aside from the hotly debated record of 56.7 degrees Celsius held by Death Valley in the US—was recorded in Kuwait and Iraq. Moreover, official figures show that June marks the 14th straight month of global record temperatures, and is also the hottest registered since records began in 1880. There is no reason to believe this trend has not continued to date.

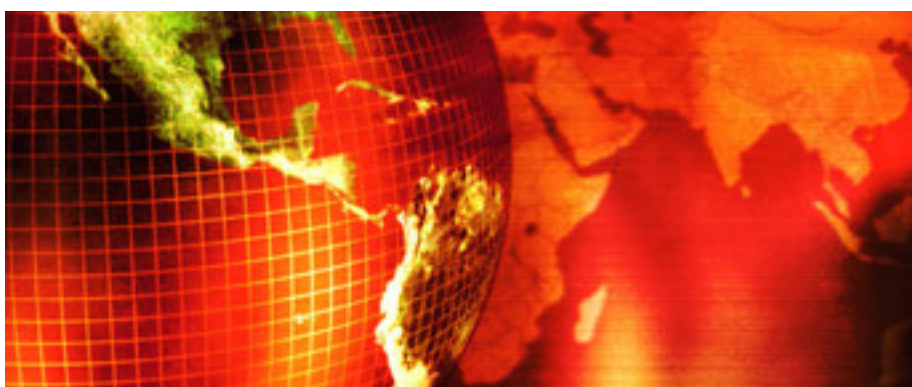
Meanwhile, the UK saw the wettest June ever. Other parts of Europe, notably France, suffered severe flooding, while California still labours under drought conditions, with forest fires a major concern.

In Japan, officials are warning that the Kanto region faces a serious drought this summer, with dam levels at their lowest in a quarter of a century due to a lack of rainfall and an unusually low snowfall last winter. Already there is a 10% restriction on water intake for six prefectures around the Tone River and a 20% restriction for those drawing water from the Watarase River.

While this may not have an immediate impact on domestic households, further restrictions can't be ruled out. At restrictions of 33% there would be consequences for many communities.

What's behind all of this is climate change, much of which is brought about by global warming, which in turn is due, in great part, to our continued use of fossil fuels and the subsequent creation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

This has caused alarming changes in the weather across the globe with hitherto predictable patterns thrown into disarray. One example is what is happening to the South-East Asian monsoons.



A recent study published in the journal *Science Advances* helps to explain the changes in ocean temperatures near the equator. As The Associated Press reports, the study focuses on a body called the Indo-Pacific Warm Pool. It spans the eastern Indian Ocean to the western Pacific and has some of the world's warmest seawaters.

Scientists have known for some time that this has an influence on India's monsoon rains. They also know that the pool has been expanding and warming for decades, which has already resulted in a rise in sea level around some Asian islands. What they didn't know until recently was just why the pool was changing. The study has brought answers; it appears that increasing levels of greenhouse gases and other atmospheric pollutants are the dominant cause.

Action to take

Though there are still those who deny a direct connection between global warming and climate change, there is no doubt that those who make the connection are in the great majority. In Paris, in December 2015, no fewer than 195 nations agreed to reduce greenhouse gases. People all over the world have turned out to demonstrate their anti-fossil fuel sentiments, with even the Pope calling for action.

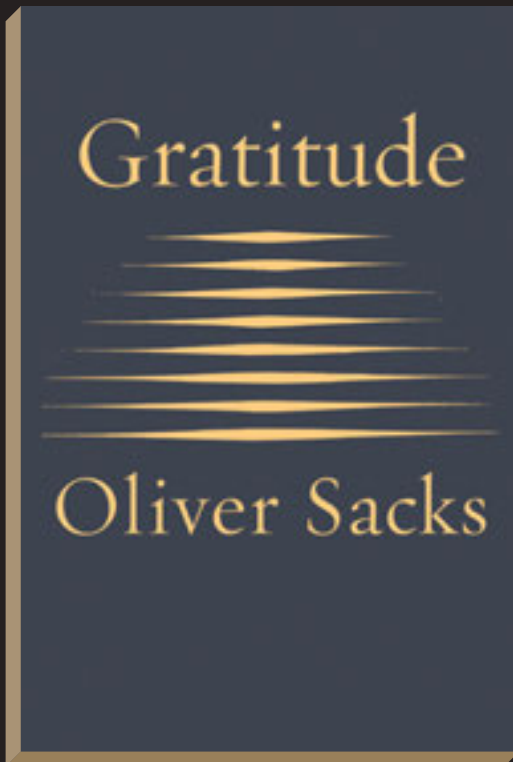
This is all well and good. The problem is that, along with an increase in the number of those who believe action is needed to combat climate change, there is greater disagreement about the steps that are needed. There is no united position on the battle.

For example, there is no agreement over whether nuclear plants should be part of the approach to reduce greenhouse gases. A lot of nervousness about the technology exists, and was fed by the 2011 disaster at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant. Still, supporters point out that nuclear plants produce enormous amounts of energy without producing the carbon dioxide that results from burning coal or natural gas.

Natural gas has been touted as a "bridge" to renewable fuels as it produces less carbon dioxide than coal, for example. However, the technology used to extract the natural gas—fracking—is controversial because, among other environmental impacts, it often results in a leakage of methane, itself a greenhouse gas.

While the consensus appears to be that climate change is a reality, it seems the jury is still firmly out when it comes to deciding how to tackle it. The question remains, how long will it take? Many experts believe that time is running out if we are to avert a complete catastrophe. 🇬🇧

BCCJ ACUMEN has one copy of this book to give away. To apply, please send an email by 31 August to: editor@custom-media.com. The winner will be picked at random.



Alfred A Knopf
£9.98

Face to face with dying

Reflections without self-pity

Oliver Sacks CBE (1933–2015) was a British neurologist and writer who spent most of his professional life in the US. He held numerous clinical positions but was perhaps best known for his books, many of which were best-selling collections of case histories.

One of his first major publications, *Awakenings*, was adapted into an Academy Award-nominated film of the same name, starring Robin Williams and Robert De Niro. One of his best-known pieces, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, was the basis for an opera by Michael Nyman.

Sacks received the CBE for services to literature in the 2008 Queen's Birthday Honours, and *The New York Times* dubbed him the "poet laureate of contemporary medicine". It is not difficult to see why. He writes with such clarity and compassion. Furthermore, in describing his patients' conditions, he often manages to illuminate how the healthy brain deals with perception, memory and individuality. His writing is almost always intensely personal.

Nowhere is that more true than in the volume under review. This slender book—of fewer than 50 pages—contains four short essays, meditations if you will, on ageing as well as facing illness and death. That said, there is nothing at all self-indulgent or depressing about what Sacks has to say. According to the inscription: "I am now face to face with dying, but I am not finished with living".

The first essay, "Mercury", was written in one sitting just days before his 80th birthday.

It celebrates the pleasures of old age: a time of leisure and freedom, freed from the factitious urgencies of earlier days, free to explore whatever I wish and to bind the thoughts and feelings of a lifetime together". He concludes the essay with one simple thought: "I am looking forward to being 80".

Less than two years later Sacks learned that a rare form of melanoma, which had been discovered in one of his eyes in 2005, had metastasised to his liver. The prognosis was not good. His doctors thought he might have only six months to live. Within a few days he had finished the second of the essays included in the book. "My Own Life" captures with great clarity Sacks's feelings of appreciation for a life well lived. Yet again there is not a hint of self-pity.

Following surgery in 2015, he enjoyed a period of relative good health and wrote a number of essays for various publications, including the third piece in this collection. "My Periodic Table" is a reflection on his lifelong love for the periodic table of chemical elements as well as on his own mortality.

The final essay, "Sabbath", is perhaps the most personal of all. It was published just two weeks before his death, in August 2015. In it, he writes: "I find my thoughts drifting to the Sabbath, the day of rest, the seventh day of the week, and perhaps the seventh day of one's life as well, when one can feel that one's work is done, and one may, in good conscience, rest". 🇬🇧

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