

The magazine of the  
British Chamber of  
Commerce in Japan

6  
A Royal Autumn

26  
Partners for Power

35  
Ten years of *ACUMEN*

# ACUMEN



## BRITISH<sup>20</sup><sub>19</sub> BUSINESS AWARDS

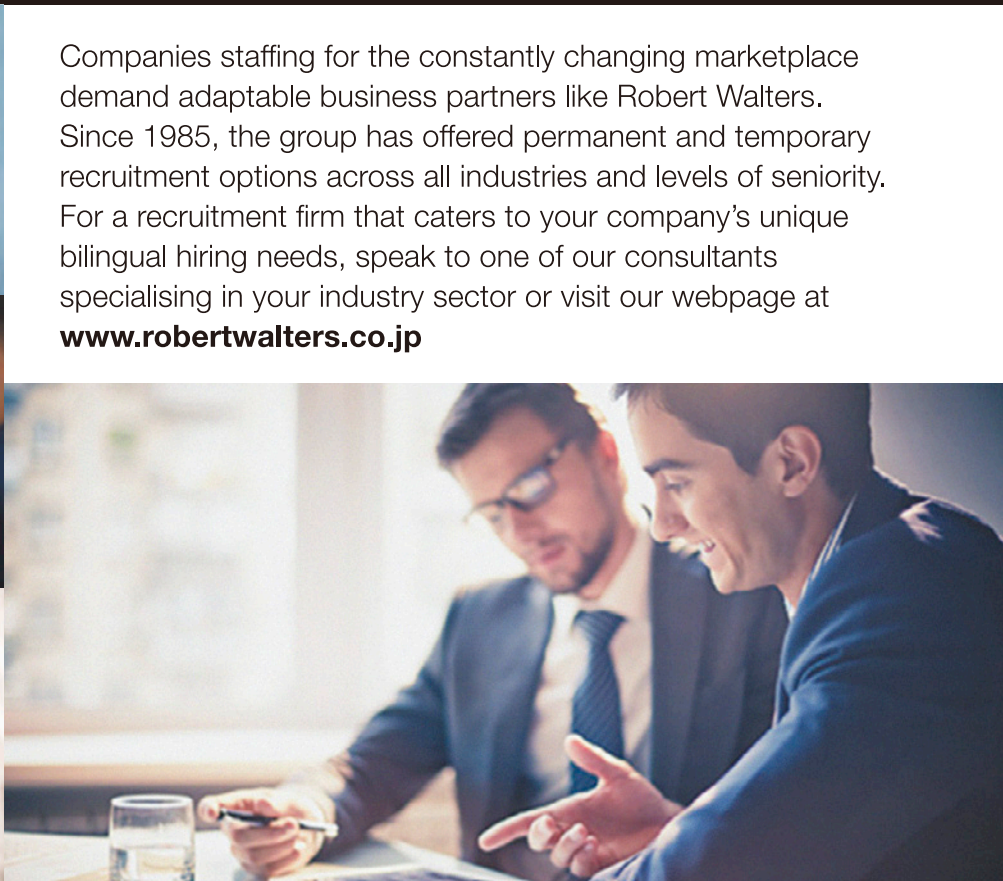
18





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# Nov/Dec 2019

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 11

6 DESPATCHES

## A royal autumn

PAUL MADDEN CMG  
BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

10 PUBLISHER

## Land of legends

SIMON FARRELL

12 MEDIA

## UK-Japan news

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Legacy and leverage

Building on a great year  
LORI HENDERSON MBE

17 PRESIDENT

## Teamwork, trust and success

DAVID BICKLE

18 BBA

## BCCJ 2019 British Business Awards

12th annual black-tie gala  
honours best bilateral links  
JULIAN RYALL

24 MARKET ENTRY

## A pint of your best ale, sir

Wimbledon brewer  
brings heritage to Japan  
C BRYAN JONES

26 ENERGY

## Partners for power

Bilateral ties boost  
access to energy  
JULIAN RYALL

32 RI AWARDS

## Human capital

RI awards top recruiter  
talent in Japan  
JOHN AMARI

35 ANNIVERSARY

## Ten years of ACUMEN

C BRYAN JONES

41 BEHIND THE MIC

## Alexandra Burke

Singer from the soul  
GUY PERRYMAN MBE

44 ARTS

## UK events in Japan (free tickets)

46 COMMUNITY

49 RWC

## Rugby World Cup 2019

Matches played 19 Oct-2 Nov

50 OPINION

## Proposing the three Ds ...

as strong candidates  
for the word of the year  
NORIKO HAMA



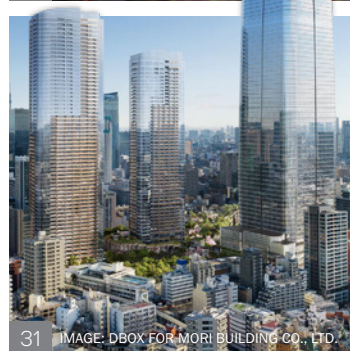
18 PHOTO: LIFE 14



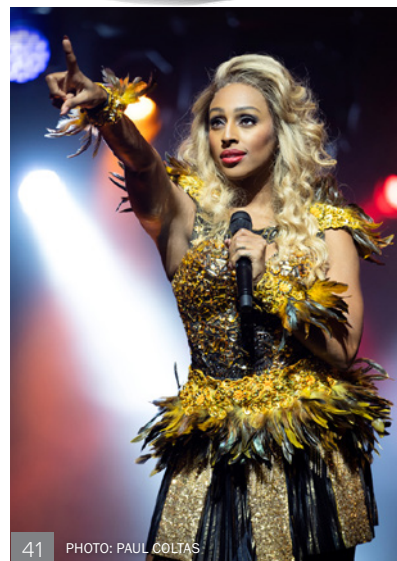
6 PHOTO: BRITISH EMBASSY TOKYO



12



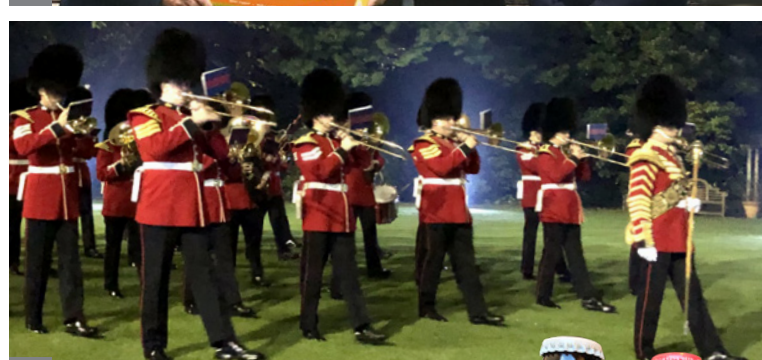
31 IMAGE: DBOX FOR MORI BUILDING CO., LTD.



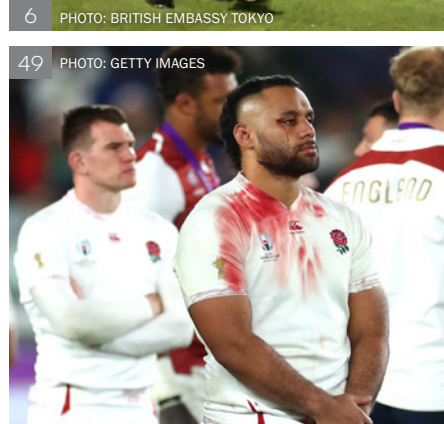
41 PHOTO: PAUL COLTAS



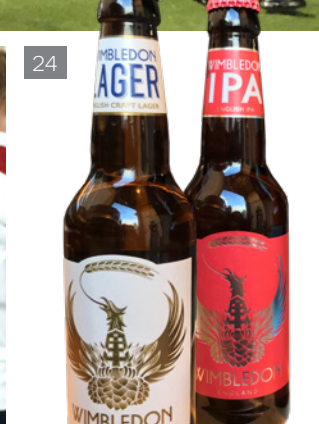
26



6 PHOTO: BRITISH EMBASSY TOKYO



49 PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



24



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# A royal autumn

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



Over the past few weeks, we have had their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales, the Princess Royal and the Duke of Sussex (Prince Harry) staying at our Residence. Normally, this sort of thing comes along very rarely in a posting, so to have them all in quick succession was a real privilege. They attracted huge coverage in both traditional and social media, and really drew attention to the UK.

## Ancient enthronement ceremony

Prince Charles was here for the Emperor's enthronement. There have only been three enthronement ceremonies in the past 100 years, so I felt very lucky that one happened on my watch. Dressed in white tie and tails, I accompanied His Royal Highness to the Imperial Palace to watch a ceremony rich in tradition and dignity. At one stage, it was so silent that the only sound you could hear was the swish of the silk kimonos gliding along the *tatami*-mat floors. I attended a banquet hosted by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe where, every time you turned around, another famous international Royal or politician hove into view.

In the run-up to the enthronement, I was privileged to be invited to attend the Kannamesai Festival at Ise Jingu Shrine, the most important annual event there, where the new rice harvest is offered to Amaterasu, the sun goddess. This year was particularly important as the first of the new Reiwa era. Their Imperial Majesties will visit the shrine in November after the Daijosai Great Thanksgiving Ceremony.

Prince Charles visited the Nezu Museum, taking in both the stunning Japanese garden and the Beautiful Lives exhibition, which features birds and flowers in Japanese and East-Asian Art. Then, at Zojoji Temple, he saw a large-scale model of the Taitoku-in (Shogun's Mausoleum) which had been gifted to the Royal Family after featuring at the Japan-British Exhibition of

1910 at White City, London. It was returned to Japan on loan in 2015 and is on public display.

On board HMS *Enterprise*, a Royal Navy hydrographic survey ship, at Harumi Pier Tokyo, he met leaders in campaigns to address climate change and tackle the problem of ocean plastics. He dropped into the Welsh training camp to wish the team good luck in their semi-final. I hosted a large reception for him in the Residence garden, where he met many people involved in the UK-Japan relationship—from sport and culture to government and business—and graciously took time to chat to all of them.



My garden was also the scene for a memorable performance by the Band of the Grenadier Guards, for Armed Forces Day. Many of our guests commented on how stirring it was to see them marching up and down the lawn in their splendid red uniforms and black bearskins.

Princess Anne was here mainly as patron of Scottish rugby, but also visited the equestrian facilities for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, as she is a member of the International Olympic Committee. She went down to Yokohama to attend a church service and lunch for the Mission to Seafarers, met volunteers with

the Riding for the Disabled Association, and laid a wreath at the Hodogaya War Cemetery.

## Typhoon havoc

During the Princess's visit, Japan was struck by Typhoon Hagibis. In Tokyo, we saw the force of the high winds and heavy rains, and some rugby was cancelled, but the worst effects were felt elsewhere. With so many British fans here for the rugby, the Embassy went into crisis watch mode. Although, tragically, about 90 people were killed, there were no British casualties.



This sort of thing comes along very rarely in a posting, so to have them all in quick succession was a real privilege.

#### A great festival of rugby

It was very exciting to have the Duke of Sussex in Japan for the Rugby World Cup final. Sadly, after a thrilling performance against New Zealand that raised all our expectations, South Africa proved just too strong for England. But what a wonderful six weeks of rugby we had seen. Japan proved a superb host, from the professional organisation to the *omotenashi* welcome from volunteers in cities all around the country. And the verve and energy with which the Japanese team played won them fans all around the world, not least the 60 million people—55% of Japan's population—who watched their last match. Huge numbers of British fans came for the tournament, including representatives from national and local government. Our consular awareness campaign and



deployments to the various Fanzones and stadia seemed to work well, and the World Cup passed off enjoyably and, mostly, without incident for our visitors.

#### Land of Hope and Glory

The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum is currently presenting a great exhibition entitled *Masterpieces of Impressionism* from the Courtauld Collection in London. It's a chance to see Manet's famous *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, which, I noticed for the first time, features on the counter a bottle of Bass beer, with its distinctive red triangle that, I subsequently learned, was Britain's first registered trademark. Catch it while you can—in the New Year it moves on to Nagoya and Kobe.

We attended the annual awards ceremony of the Praemium Imperiale, sometimes described as the Nobel Prize for culture. Lord Patten is one of the judges. This year, we were pleased to see British-Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum among the winners.

The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra brought the Proms to Japan for the first time. We attended a very memorable Last Night at the Orchard Hall at Bunkamura in Shibuya, where the entire audience was a sea of waving Union Jack *furoshiki*, as we all sang "Land of Hope and Glory" and, for a Japanese audience demographic who grew up with the Beatles, "Hey Jude". It felt like the climax to an extraordinarily hectic, exhausting, but memorable autumn.

What a busy year 2019 has been in Japan, and 2020 looks set to be equally active. Sarah and I, and the staff at the British Embassy Tokyo and the Consulate General Osaka, send all *ACUMEN* readers our best wishes for the Christmas season and a Happy New Year. 🇬🇧

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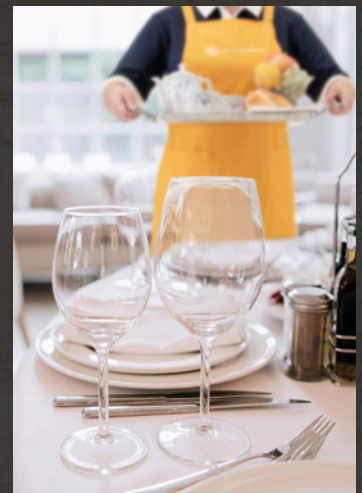


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# ROYAL VISITS

Prince Charles, Prince Harry, Princess Anne visit Japan

PHOTOS: BRITISH EMBASSY TOKYO





# Land of legends

SIMON FARRELL | [simon@custom-media.com](mailto:simon@custom-media.com)

**T**his month marks the 10th anniversary of *BCCJ ACUMEN*. It's been a memorable decade that we at Custom Media have thoroughly enjoyed, so forgive us while we blow our own trumpets on page 35 in a brief tribute to the magazine of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan and the UK community here.

Congratulations also to the winners of the 2019 British Business Awards, held in Tokyo on 8 November, and a huge thanks to the volunteers, sponsors and organisers who helped stage the successful annual gala. Please enjoy our full report on page 18.

## Lords, lamb and leeks

After the 50th anniversary of Aberfan on 21 October, someone said to me we don't give enough space in *ACUMEN* for Wales, so here goes: please turn to page 31 for an exclusive interview with the new Welsh principal of the British School in Tokyo and details about its innovative new campus. On page 50, we wonder what will happen to post-Brexit Wales. And having recently enjoyed the enlightening autobiographies of Lord Charles Brocket and fellow aristocrat Darius Guppy, I was intrigued to be invited to lunch with Welsh Peer "just call me Greg" Mostyn (page 46). I needn't have worried: down-to-earth 35-year-old multi-millionaire Lord Mostyn, oops, I mean Greg, supports Arsenal, plays snooker, is probably the only hereditary British peer who taught English conversation in Tokyo and speaks "half-decent" Japanese.

We met at a monthly speaker event of the Tokyo-based College Women's Association of Japan—whose multinational volunteers raise funds for scholarships and charities—both of us kindly invited by Luncheon Manager Ursula Bartlett, president of the St David's Society Japan.

The three rugby-loving travellers have asked me to express their deep gratitude to England Rugby, et al.

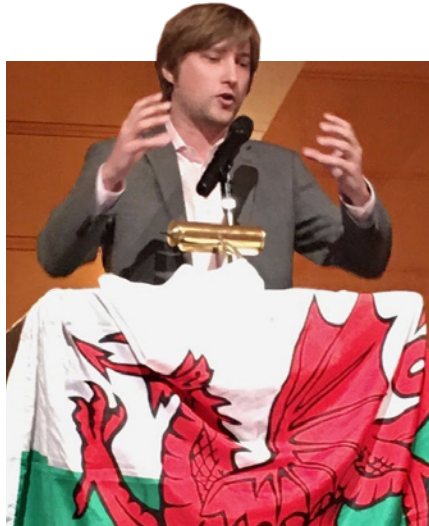


PHOTO: CUSTOM MEDIA

It's not every day I get mistaken for one of Britain's most eligible bachelors; a group of star-struck ladies at reception had presumed I was him because I was the only guest wearing a tie (Greg went Cool Biz). Once that was sorted, his speech revealed he had taken a real estate course on managing the vast Grade I-listed classical country pile he had inherited in his twenties and that Mostyn Hall often welcomes tourists from Japan and elsewhere to its 6,000 prime Welsh acres.

At the top of a 500-year-old family tree, self-effacing Greg has no time for sexism. Indeed, he believes that his great-great-great grandmother opened the world's first gallery devoted to women's art.

He took questions and spoke modestly, eloquently and too fast for some of the enamoured Americans in the audience about his charity work and family links to the War of the Roses (1455–1485), the English Civil War (1642–1651) and the building of Llandudno in north Wales. And he's no snowflake: unlike the often-perceived stereotypical posh classes, he'd rather watch football and have his mates around for beer and billiards than play the piano at home or politics in the House of Lords.

Could this be the new face of British aristocracy?

And just in: *National Geographic* has picked Wales (and Tohoku, Japan) among "the planet's six most exciting adventure destinations" for 2020: "Follow three new national touring routes, called the Wales Way, that showcase the best of this legend-filled land to get the blood pumping".

## And finally ...

With the Rugby World Cup 2019 over, here is the last (I promise) and most heart-warming chapter about dogged overlanders from the UK that we have followed on these pages since well before the September kick-off.

An off-road four-wheeler driven by Londoner John Richardson (below) broke down in Mongolia, forcing him to fly here ([gromottourii.blogspot.com](http://gromottourii.blogspot.com)). Undeterred by two creaky hip replacements, bureaucratic hassles and other joys of motoring, the 72-year-old chainsmoker teamed up here with the two owners of *Amber*, the Land Rover Defender converted



British Army ambulance driven all the way from Devon (<https://swinglowsweetchariot.blog>).

The three rugby fans enjoyed all the England matches, but couldn't find or afford tickets for the final against South Africa. Then an *ACUMEN* reader told the BBC, which interviewed two of them in Tokyo for the Friday night news. Ben Saunders, of England Rugby, saw it and soon messaged the ticketless trio as they stared morosely into their beer at a Tokyo bar just hours before kick-off—to offer them free seats at the final: “Your incredibly epic journey has been highlighted to us, and we wanted to thank you officially for your incredible support of the team over the past few months. A quite remarkable journey to have made in support of the team”.

Despite the anti-climactic final result, the three rugby-loving travellers have asked me to express their deep gratitude to England Rugby and everyone else who has welcomed or helped them during their amazing two months in Japan.



#### For NEDs, new and old

The *Financial Times* runs an intensive diploma course for senior leaders who are aspiring, new or existing NEDs—that's non-executive directors. After joining the half-day introduction in Tokyo last month (page 46), I am impressed enough to plug it. The challenging, mostly online courses start in March and September and includes

in-person time in Hong Kong. Whether motivated by pending retirement, extra cash, spare time or sharing their skills, graduates of the six-month postgraduate gig get a valuable qualification to help climb a rung above many other applicants for NED roles—in a country whose firms are, at long last, welcoming independent directors. Details: [chris.moon@ft.com](mailto:chris.moon@ft.com)



#### Global arts award

Congratulations to British-Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum on being awarded a Praemium Imperiale prize by the Japan Art Association in October. She is the first Briton for six years to win one of the five prestigious annual awards. According to the nomination, Hatoum's “poetic and political oeuvre is realised in a diverse and often unconventional range of media, including installation, sculpture, video, photography and works on paper”.

Her works have featured at the Tate Modern in London and she received the Hiroshima Art Prize in 2015.

Previous winners include huge global names in art (Anish Kapoor), architecture (Zaha Hadid), music (Plácido Domingo) and theatre & film (Francis Ford Coppola, Sophia Loren and Martin Scorsese). The last British laureate was sculptor Antony Gormley in 2013, preceded by actress Judi Dench (2011) and playwright Tom Stoppard (2009).

#### See you next year!

Custom Media wishes all our readers and friends a safe and pleasant seasonal break wherever you will be, and we look forward to bringing you the next issue of *ACUMEN* in January 2020. 🍀

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# MEDIA

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## PRINCE CHARLES IN VISIT TO TOKYO

At the behest of the British Government, and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, Prince Charles attended the enthronement ceremony of Naruhito, Japan’s 126th monarch. As reported by the website Royal.uk, the Prince of Wales spent 22–23 October touring the Nezu Museum, the training grounds for the Wales national rugby team at Chichibunomiya Rugby Stadium, the HMS *Enterprise* docked at Harumi Wharf in Tokyo Bay, Zojoji Temple and the Mitsukoshi Department Store for the Britain is GREAT campaign. He also visited the Ambassador’s Residence at the British Embassy Tokyo for a UK in JAPAN 2019–20 reception, and later joined Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s banquet at the Hotel New Otani (page 6).



PHOTO: BRITISH EMBASSY TOKYO

## BBC NAME #KUTOO AND SUMO STARS IN TOP 100

The Japanese founder of #kutoo, a hashtag movement supporting women forced to wear heels at work, is among the BBC’s list of the 100 most influential women of 2019. Yumi Ishikawa started the movement after complaining about her firm’s dress code on Twitter. Her story resonated with women throughout Japan and was shared more than 30,000 times.

The name is a reference to the #metoo movement and is a play on the Japanese words *kutsu* (shoes) and *kutsuu* (pain). In June, she submitted a petition with more than 20,000 signatures to Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Also on the list is Hiyori Kon, a 21-year-old sumo wrestler who was the subject of the 2018 award-winning documentary *Little Miss Sumo*. Japan still bars women from competing professionally in this national sport, and the BBC is honouring Kon for her efforts to change the rules and give women a voice in sumo.

## TMSO PLANS 2020 SCOTS GIG

The Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra (TMSO) is set to perform at the 2020 Edinburgh International Festival in Scotland, according to an 8 October article on the festival’s website. The announcement was made in Tokyo during the visit of Fiona Hyslop, Scotland’s Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs.

Running 7–31 August, the festival is was established in 1947 as a world class cultural event to bring together audiences and artists from around the world. It is also an international showcase for Scottish culture.

The appearance is motivated in part by the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games and the UK in JAPAN 2019–20 campaign. TMSO Music Director Kazushi Ono will conduct the programme, which will include *Cello Concerto No.1* by Saint-Saëns and Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique*. The occasion will coincide with the festival’s 55th anniversary.

## QUEER EYE BREAKS DOWN BARRIERS

Tan France, the English fashion designer and star of the Netflix series *Queer Eye*, went to Japan for the show's latest season. According to a 22 October story by the UK newspaper and website *Metro*, France and co-stars Bobby Berk, Jonathan Van Ness, Karamo Brown and Antoni Porowski thought the season to be a success, but admitted there were initial concerns about

cultural differences. Berk said he feared their affectionate personalities wouldn't connect well with a typically conservative society such as Japan, since "there's a huge language barrier, also a huge cultural barrier". Fortunately, that wasn't the case. "Very quickly, we realised that teaching people self-love, self-care and acceptance is universal".



## RECORD NUMBER OF UK TOURISTS VISIT JAPAN

British tourists are flocking to Japan despite the weakened sterling. According to a 24 October article on financial website *This is Money*, factors include the Rugby World Cup 2019 and recommendations in the *Long Haul Holiday Report 2019*, from the UK-based retail mail firm Post Office Ltd. The report cited Japan as the cheapest long-haul destination of the year. In September, there was a 233% rise in yen sales attributed to

tourists visiting to watch the matches. The lead-up to England's 26 October game with New Zealand at Yokohama Stadium also triggered a 492% increase in ticket sales from the UK to Tokyo, according to flight-booking website Skyscanner.



## NEWS BRIEFS

### HYSLOP PITCHES GLASGOW

Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop, met with executives from the Tokyo-based refrigeration firm Mayekawa Mfg. Co., Ltd. during her October visit to Japan to discuss the firm's first office in Glasgow, Scotland. She said that Glasgow would be the "perfect environment for continuous research and ground-breaking technology". Mayekawa expects the location to create 20 jobs over five years. (*Cooling Post*, 8 October)

### GREEN IS THE NEW BLACK



Transport for London will add the new electric taxi from Dynamo Motor Company to its fleet as part of its efforts to reduce carbon emissions. The fully electric taxi is based on the Nissan e-NV200. The Japanese automaker has been nudging businesses to adopt the e-NV200 as a commercial vehicle and taxi alternative globally. (*The Daily Mail*, 23 October)

### RUGBY SCHOOL TO EXPAND



Japan's first independent school from the UK will open in 2022. Peter Green, the current headmaster of the Rugby School, founded in its namesake town in Warwickshire, has announced a new sister location in Tokyo. Green said that, although the new school would adhere to the principles of Rugby School England, it would also be mindful of Japanese culture. (*Tes*, 24 October)



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## Legacy and leverage

Building on a great year

LORI HENDERSON MBE

The Rugby World Cup (RWC) 2019 has been deemed a huge success. In addition to the record-breaking 99.3% attendance across the tournament and 1.84mn tickets sold, World Rugby points to a domestic all-time-record television audience of 54.8mn for the exciting Japan vs. Scotland pool-phase match (which I had the chance to see in person, surrounded by Brave Blossom fans!).

The Japan Rugby Football Union views the final—which attracted a record 70,103 spectators at Yokohama Stadium—as just the starting point for their ambitious 10-year growth plan, which includes revamping the domestic professional league.

On 8 November, after many months of preparation, we successfully delivered the 2019 British Business Awards (BBA). It is a genuine privilege to work with BCCJ members and friends across the industry spectrum to produce a memorable gala that showcases UK-Japan vibrancy, creativity and excellence. Thank you to everyone who made a contribution to this year's big celebration, and also to those who took the time to write afterwards. Your positive feedback means so much to our team! You'll find full coverage of this year's BBA starting on page 18.

### Rugby Alliance

Over the past 18 months, it's been a pleasure to co-create and work with the Rugby Alliance, a coalition of eight foreign chambers of commerce in Japan. We wrapped up this initiative on 14 November with a luncheon entitled Pass the Passion.

At the third of three joint events, we reviewed the outcomes and lessons learned from the RWC 2019, addressed matters ranging from accommodation, transportation, benefits to the local community, regional reception of inbound visitors and more. And with the RWC over, we are now looking ahead to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

### Climate crisis

If you want to protect your business in the long term, you have to take action on the climate". So said Jeremy Darroch, chief executive of television and media firm Sky, at the One Young World 2019 summit in London on 24 October. But how does the climate crisis actually connect to and impact your business and industry in Japan?

On the evening of 21 November, we hosted an interactive session at the BCCJ Hub as part of former US Vice-President Al Gore's Climate Reality Project "24 Hours of Action" global event to explore this topic and discuss the actions we can take collectively. It was a great opportunity for BCCJ

member firms to discuss with other attendees how climate change could impact business and share examples and ideas of what can be done to future-proof your operations.

### Education

In July, we launched the BCCJ's EduGroup on the back of our Education Roundtable held in January. On 10 December, we will host a follow-up session entitled The Future of Education in partnership with the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.

Much has been written about how schools need to prepare students for future employment landscapes and how to bestow the oft-quoted, elusive, yet coveted 21st-century skills needed for life beyond the classroom. Our session will explore what kind of education we would like to see for the next generation and, most importantly, how our firms can contribute to making a difference on the education landscape. We will consider what value we can offer schools and universities, how we can connect to share our expertise and how we can create a shared dialogue between academia and business in Japan.

Since this is the final issue of *ACUMEN* for 2019, allow me to wish you—on behalf of the BCCJ team—a wonderful festive season and best wishes for the year of the mouse! 🐭

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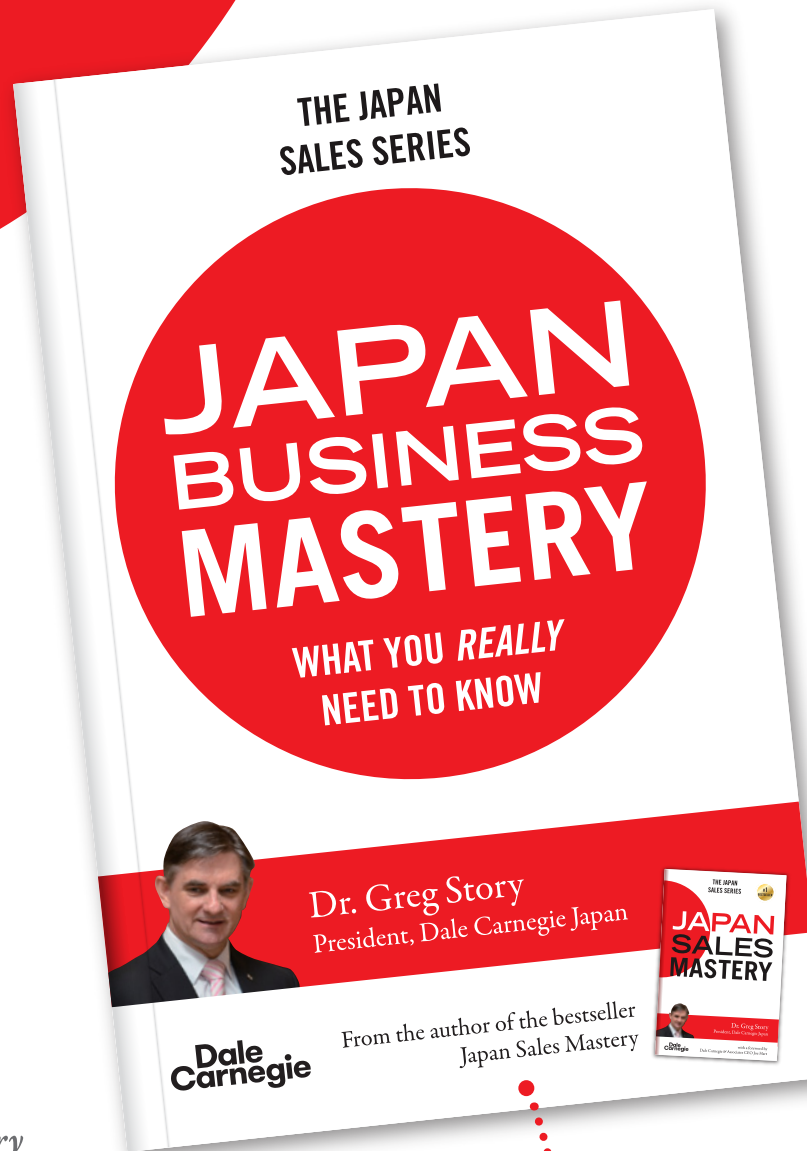
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## Teamwork, trust and success

DAVID BICKLE | @BCCJ\_President

**F**our years ago, after the England rugby team had been dumped unceremoniously out of the group stage of their own Rugby World Cup (RWC) and Scotland had come agonisingly close to advancing to the semi-finals, I had a chance to speak to guests at the 2015 British Business Awards (BBA) about the virtues of resilience and persistence.

Much has changed in the four years since—least of all the fortunes of those rugby teams. But some things have stayed reassuringly constant. First, the Japanese national team has continued to play a very entertaining and exciting brand of rugby. Second, as those of us fortunate to live in this country know well, the Japanese people extend a tremendously warm and hospitable welcome to visitors from around the world.

### Brave Blossoms

As a rugby fan, it is particularly pleasing to have witnessed the progress of the Japanese national team. Lifting off from the Brighton launchpad four years ago, when they achieved a dramatic RWC 2015 victory against the mighty South African Springboks, the Brave Blossoms have rapidly accelerated the development of their elite squad. This October, taking centre stage in front of record home crowds and television audiences, they reached escape velocity and broke away from the gravitational pull of rugby naysayers. Stunning the world (and

Japan–UK business has a major role to play in promoting partnership and collaboration between our two countries.

their opposition), they achieved a level of accuracy and fluidity that saw them play some of the most attractive attacking rugby of the RWC 2019. And, in the process, they earned their first-ever place in the knockout rounds.

### Lessons

The qualities of resilience and persistence, though, are not just about sport. They are mantras that many of us could benefit from incorporating into our business and personal lives. No more is this apparent than in the stoic example of those who suffered (and continue to suffer) devastating losses in the aftermath of Typhoon Hagibis. They have shown what it really means to be resilient, and as we celebrate the 2019 BBA winners this month, we should be mindful of how we can support those communities which show us daily what it means to stand strong in the face of adversity.

Just as sporting fortunes change, however, so do politics and international relations. Trust, in particular, that we frequently take for granted is ultimately fragile—hard won, yet easily lost. If

not nurtured, it can all too easily wither and die. I sincerely hope, therefore, that we in the business community, as members of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan, can collectively resolve to be resilient and persistent in protecting the trust that exists between Japan and the UK. Furthermore, I hope that we can continue developing and enhancing the existing levels of trust through partnership together.

### Teamwork

Once again, the superb breadth and quality of this year's BBA nominees has shown that Japan–UK business has a major role to play in promoting partnership and collaboration between our two countries. Like the best teams at the recent Japan RWC, higher performance can be attained when we work as a team, and so much more achieved for mutual benefit when we partner together—especially when that collaboration is between Japan and UK business.

I very much hope that we can carry these sentiments with us into the New Year, which will herald the start of another exciting period for Japan in the spotlight. Before that, however, I wish all chamber members a relaxing and enjoyable festive season with family and friends. May it be happy and healthy, and the prelude to a prosperous year ahead! 🇬🇧

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# BCCJ 2019 BRITISH BUSINESS AWARDS

12th annual black-tie gala honours best bilateral links

BY JULIAN RYALL

In a landmark year for UK–Japan relations, marked by a series of royal visits, deepening trade links and, unforgettably, the incredible roller-coaster ride of the Rugby World Cup 2019, Britain’s business community added to the revelries with the 12th annual British Business Awards.

The five winners announced on the night embraced entrepreneurship, the finance sector and partnership between the two nations, with AstraZeneca KK repeating its victory of last year by being selected as Company of the Year.

## Rugby lessons

Always a highlight of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) calendar, the awards were held this year in Meguro at the Hotel Gajoen Tokyo, just six days after the final match in a rugby tournament that many renowned names from the sport had acclaimed as unquestionably the best ever.

And while all the Home Nations had ultimately fallen short—in England’s case, agonisingly short

in the final against South Africa—the chamber, embassy and broader British community in Japan have a lot to be proud and optimistic about in the future, said BCCJ President David Bickle.

Four years after he addressed the chamber with England dumped out of the pool stages at its own Rugby World Cup, much has changed, he said—although some things remain the same.

“As rapidly as sporting fortunes change, so do politics and international relations. Trust, in parti-

cular, that we take for granted, needs to be carefully nurtured and protected. We must be resilient and persistent in protecting the trust between the UK and Japan, and must seek to further develop this trust further through partnership”.

Applauding all 32 nominees across the five award categories, he emphasised that “UK and Japanese business has a major role to play in promoting partnership and collaboration between our two countries”.

## BBA 5.0

The theme of this year’s awards was 5.0, building on the chamber’s purposes of innovation in the digital and technology spaces, responsible business, as well as diversity and inclusion—collectively known as the BCCJ 5.0 project.

The 300 or so guests were greeted with a reception featuring Merchant’s English sparkling wine, produced in Hampshire and generously provided by in-kind sponsor Berry Bros. & Rudd, and a selection of excellent craft beers poured by





gold sponsor Wimbledon Brewery. The firm is resurrecting a brand that was lost in the catastrophic Wimbledon Brewery fire of 1889 and is aiming to import its pale ale, IPA and award-winning lager in the near future.

And while nominees were attaching their rosettes and having their photos taken by photography studio and BBA in-kind sponsor LIFE.14, the string quartet Tacticart played a selection of classical numbers.

With Guy Perryman airborne and heading for Australia, emcee duties fell upon Madoka Kato, his long-term on-air partner, who kicked off the evening by introducing the Fabulous Sisters. A fusion dance group based in Tokyo, the 10 dancers who took to the stage were a fury of energy in scarlet and black dresses. It is not hard to see why they had been chosen to perform in London on the *Britain's Got Talent* television programme and in the youth finals of the US programme *World of Dance*.



## Winners

COMPANY OF THE YEAR  
**AstraZeneca K.K.**

ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR  
**Ryozan Park (Rachel Ferguson and Noritaka Takezawa)**

UK-JAPAN PARTNERSHIP  
**Marubeni Corporation and Azuri Technologies Ltd.**

POSITIVE IMPACT  
**Barclays Securities Japan Ltd.**

INNOVATION  
**EY Advisory & Consulting Co., Ltd.**

### Taste of success

After a short video looking forward to next year's Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which will feature five new sports, the meal was served to the sound of English pop classics, including Sade and Joe Jackson.

The autumnal cauliflower mousse, served with crab relish topped with caviar, was followed by an excellent Miyagi seafood medley marinated with yuzu dressing and topped with sour cream. Next



## The annual awards “show the depth and breadth of British companies that have built alliances with Japanese companies”

was a creamy green-pea soup with bacon frazzle, followed by a poached sea bream with white wine, tarragon sauce and crispy shallots. The Angus roast beef came with a mashed potato swirl and green pepper gravy, with the meal rounded off by meringue with wild winter berries and fresh cream and coffee.

### Surprise message

With the plates being cleared, BCCJ Executive Director Lori Henderson MBE confirmed that the six judges for this year’s awards had spent two weeks considering and independently scoring the nominees. The final result had been in the balance right up to 45 minutes before the dinner began as one of the judges had been tardy in returning their scores.

There was also a lengthy exchange of spoof opinions with the Queen via instant messaging. The monarch expressed her regret at not being able to attend the evening’s festivities and put Prime Minister Boris Johnson in his place.

### Diplomatic dialogue

The awards, designed by Scottish-born artist Kate Thomson of the Ukishima Sculpture Studio, were presented by Her Majesty’s Ambassador Paul Madden CMG. He opened by saying that he wished he could be celebrating an England victory in the Rugby World Cup, but underlined, once again, what a “fantastic *omotenashi* welcome” Japan had rolled out, as well as the impressive performances of so many nations on the pitch.

The ambassador said he had encountered countless British fans—including some dressed as knights and others in pith helmets—and enjoyed the visit of no fewer than three members of the British Royal Family in recent weeks (page 6).

In October, Princess Anne toured the venue that will host the dressage events at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and Prince Charles attended the subsequent enthronement ceremonies for Emperor Naruhito. Prince Harry arrived on 2 November to watch the Rugby World Cup final.

“At times, it felt like I was running an exclusive Airbnb for the Royal Family,” the ambassador joked.

He said the annual awards “show the depth and breadth of British companies that have built alliances with Japanese companies and, as I have said before, everyone who has been nominated is already a winner”.

### Innovation

The first award of the evening was for Innovation, with EY Advisory & Consulting Co., Ltd. recognised for successfully launching an innovation and emerging technology centre called wavespace. The centre has already run more than 250 innovation and transformation workshops, generating new ideas, technologies and achieving transformations among a number of businesses.

### Entrepreneur

The title of Entrepreneur of the Year went to Rachel and Noritaka Takezawa who, in 2012, set up Ryozan Park to be an international community committed to achieving work-life balance, diversity, gender equality and entrepreneurship through village-style interaction. Today, they are the only firm in Tokyo that offers integrated accommodation, offices and childcare services.



**UK-Japan Partnership**

In the competition for the year’s top example of UK-Japan Partnership, Marubeni Corporation and Azuri Technologies Ltd. (page 26) beat off challenges from five other well-qualified business alliances. Marubeni has invested a sizeable amount of the \$26mn raised by the UK-based off-grid solar innovator to provide millions in Africa with access to affordable and clean energy through its pay-as-you-go solar power systems for homes.

**Positive impact**

Barclays Securities Japan Ltd. was recognised with the Positive Impact award for its contribution to raising awareness of some of the most pressing environmental and social issues facing our society, such as ocean pollution and food waste.

**Company of the Year**

As is traditional, the final award of the evening was for Company of the Year and celebrates firms that have “shown excellence and innovation across all aspects of their organisation in Japan, demonstrating

outstanding achievements in the past 12 months.” AstraZeneca KK has delivered four innovative new treatments that combat medical complaints which were not previously being addressed in Japan, making it the fastest-growing here.

Accepting the award, Stefan Woxström, president of Japan operations, said part of the secret behind the success this year and last year is, “We have stopped focusing on the medicine and we are now focusing on the patient”.

AstraZeneca, he said, is “interested in the patient’s journey,” how they handle their illness and how the firm can make that easier.

“We have grown by 30% this year, which is far faster than anyone else,” he said. “We are on the right track by focusing on the patient, not the product”.

The awards were followed by a number of party games for a selection of stunning prizes provided by BCCJ member firms, including stays at some of the best hotels, guided hikes with Walk Japan and business class flights to the UK with British Airways.

The evening ended with a *nijikai* after party that continued until midnight. 🇬🇧



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A number of firms also donated a selection of prizes for the raffle and goody bags.

**Judges**



**NATALIE BLACK**  
HM Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific at the UK Government



**MAGNUS HANSSON**  
Chief executive of Jaguar Land Rover Japan



**YURIKO KOTANI**  
Award-winning Japanese UK-based comedian



**MARIKO MCTIER**  
Co-founder and director at Social Innovation Japan



**MIKE SHARROCK**  
Chief executive of the British Paralympics Association



**HARU TSUYUKUBO**  
President of Rolls-Royce Japan Co., Ltd.

Results were decided after combining scores from six independent judges.





# A PINT OF YOUR BEST ALE, SIR

Wimbledon brewer brings heritage to Japan

BY C BRYAN JONES

**O**n January 2, 1889, a fire broke out in the tallest building in Wimbledon. The five-storey tower, built by William Quartermaine, was home to the Wimbledon Brewery, and its destruction brought an end to a business that was started in 1832 by William Cook.

Today, the rich brewing heritage of the Wimbledon area—as well as the firm that once stood in Wimbledon High Street where the old fire station can still be found—is being guarded and advanced by Mark Gordon and his team, which includes 50-year industry veteran Derek Prentice as master brewer.

Gordon, who has a strong connection and affinity with Japan stemming from the 23 years he spent working for Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation Europe Limited in London, re-established the Wimbledon Brewery in 2014. His ambition is to brew internationally renowned, beautifully crafted English beer using the best English traditions and ingredients. In that he has succeeded—Wimbledon has received many international honours, including the top prizes in cask and ale categories at this year's International Brewing Awards.

Now, Gordon is preparing to enter the Japanese market, and *ACUMEN* caught up with him ahead of the British Business Awards (BBA)—of which Wimbledon Brewery was a Gold sponsor—to find out more about the plans and the challenges.

## Eyeing Japan

"When I left the bank to set up the brewery five years ago, I always targeted Japan as my first export market," Gordon said. "One reason for that is obviously my own affinity with Japan and all things Japanese, but also—looking at the brand and the way Wimbledon and Brand GB are recognised in Japan—there is real enthusiasm for craftsmanship here".

Gordon was in Tokyo on 5–8 November for a first round of meetings with various potential partners and other stakeholders about a 2020 launch. So far, things look promising, he said.



Master brewer Derek Prentice (left) and head brewer Charlie Long

Looking at the brand and the way Wimbledon and Brand GB are recognised in Japan, there is real enthusiasm for craftsmanship here.

"The idea is we launch in May of next year alongside three tennis championships—possibly at the embassy to give it a bit of fanfare—and then see where it takes us.

"We're also having conversations about potentially opening a bar in Tokyo. We think that there's an opportunity there as well. We feel there's actually nothing quite like what we have in mind in the city at the moment—which is unusual, because you can get anything you want in Tokyo. That would help with the brand and also be a sort of standalone British business".

Gordon knows that getting attention and securing shelf space in Japan won't be easy. "It's a very crowded market, and access to that market is controlled by the big Japanese brewers," he said.

"Especially in Japan, where the contracts are quite strong, people are not going to deviate from that supply contract. So, you're looking for

independents, and that's what we'll do. It is very hard to be independent and prosper. BrewDog have done very well. They've had huge access to funding. We don't have that advantage, so, we just have to work on strength of brand and strength of product, really—which is why having our own bar will, I think, give us something as a focal point and we can build out from there".

## Changing market

One of the challenges Wimbledon has seen in the UK is that consumers are spoilt for choice. "If you go back 15 years, there were only six breweries in London. Now there are over 100," Gordon said. "Ten years ago, if somebody said to me, 'Well, what do you drink?' I would've said 'I drink Guinness and I drink bitter'. Now, most people—me included—like a pale ale, like an IPA. It's more a smorgasbord than hanging your hat on a particular brand or a particular style. The range is phenomenal".

With the pub market saturated, Gordon has turned more towards hotels, restaurants and specific retailers, such as Marks & Spencer and Waitrose & Partners, to build a high-end experience around his beers.

"Wimbledon, as a brand, is certainly premium. It's certainly not edgy. When it comes to British



brewing and craft brewing in London, things are very edgy, very bohemian. We are not that style of brewery. So, if you know if you want the more craft-orientated flavours, then that's not us".

For UK beers to find success on the global market, Gordon thinks they must do something that the country's brewers have not done particularly well to date. Citing Budweiser and Corona, US and Mexican brands with wide international appeal, he said: "The Brits, we don't have that; and it's the flavour profiles that have been the problem. Ninety percent of the world's beer drinkers want a lager, but we've no real lager tradition—till now, with Wimbledon lager".

That could bode well for introducing Wimbledon to the Japanese palate, which trends towards lagers. Gordon sees Wimbledon Gold, a lagered golden Helles-style beer overlaid with a blend of classic and contemporary German hop varieties, as an ideal starting point.

"The flagship beer for us will be our lager, which is a multi-award-winning, dry brew that is slightly different to what is on offer in the Japanese market at the moment. It has been universally enjoyed so far. We need to get it in front of a lot more people to know whether that's the case across the country, but that's the one we'll back".

### Storytellers

Finding the right style of beer isn't the only key to successful market entry. A number of food and beverage firms have told *ACUMEN* that the Japanese love of story is an important inroad when building a brand here, and Gordon confirmed that.

"People are more interested in the provenance. Who made it? What's the story? Where does it come from? No one knows who's brewing Asahi or Budweiser. They should care about that sort of stuff".

Fortunately, many Japanese consumers do care about those things, and Wimbledon has a compelling story, encapsulated in its logo that combines the five-storey tower, a barley sheaf, and the phoenix, that fiery bird of myth that represents rebirth.

And the story stretches much farther back into Wimbledon's long brewing history, which extends to the Middle Ages, when Merton Priory was brewing on the same site where Gordon's brewery now stands.



The human element is also important, and Gordon's comment about consumers not knowing who is making the beer they are drinking reflects a shift being seen globally—one that is driving the craft beer movement. More and more, consumers want to feel a personal connection with the artisans who are making what they see as, well, art.

It's also easy to put a face to Wimbledon's beers. Head Brewer Derek Prentice has proven his skills in producing British beer through his work with some of London's most famous breweries, including:

- Fuller Smith & Turner's in Chiswick
- Young's in Wandsworth since 1831
- Truman's in East London since 1666

A Diploma Master Brewer and fellow of the Institute of Brewing and Distilling, Prentice was awarded the British Guild of Beer Writers Brewer of the Year in 2013 and received the Society of Independent Brewers Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014.

This combination of compelling story and proven craftsmanship give Wimbledon a strong foundation for appealing to Japanese beer lovers. And there is even potential appeal for tourism. The tours and courses in beer-making on offer at the brewery could entice Japanese enthusiasts to visit the UK to live the story.



Sharing a toast with Gordon at the BBA on 8 November.

### Building inroads

Japan is already showing an increased interest in the UK market, although, "interestingly, there aren't many British beers on the shelf in Japan. You don't see them. I think that may change," he noted.

Big Japanese brewers have been making acquisitions in the UK. In one of the biggest deals of the year, Asahi Group Holdings Ltd. purchased Fuller Smith & Turner's brewing business for £250mn in January.

"Fuller's is a mid-sized family brewery in London. Their main brand in the UK—and probably the most exportable, certainly in terms of its name—is London Pride. Its flavour profile is more traditional English, so I'm not sure how far that's going to go. But I'm sure Asahi are working on British brands that will work in Japan," Gordon said.

"And Kirin bought a small craft brewery called Fourpure, I think mainly for the UK market to help get in their other brands. So there is this interest from the big Japanese brewers. And I think that will help us if we start to see a few more British brands coming through and studying the market".

The Fourpure acquisition was made in July 2018 through Lion Pty Limited, the Australian subsidiary of Kirin Holdings Company, Limited.

### Rebirth

With interest pouring in both directions, the future looks bright for UK beer in Japan and for Wimbledon's market entry. The reason the original brewery burned down, Gordon explained, is that it was winter, and the horse-drawn fire engine couldn't get up the hill. That was a challenge that could not be overcome, but fortune should favour Wimbledon this time around.

"It would be a real triumph for me if that long held ambition of exporting the beer to Japan comes to fruition," Gordon said, as he mentioned the wonderful opportunity presented by being a sponsor of this year's BBA. "To be here now, post Rugby World Cup, is wonderful—especially as Japan has shown itself to be an amazing host through its running of the World Cup, which it has been universally praised for. It is a good time to arrive. And then they get the opportunity to show off again next year with the Olympics—another sporting connection which will help our brands. I hope we can do something and make a success of it here". 🇬🇧



# PARTNERS FOR POWER

Bilateral ties boost access to energy

BY JULIAN RYALL

From left: British Ambassador to Japan Paul Madden, Azuri Chief Executive Simon Brausfield-Garth and Yoshiaki Yokota, chief operating officer of Marubeni's Power Business Division

Over the past decade, the evidence of inexorable climate change has become more obvious and the warnings that far, far worse is still to come more strident, say experts. Around the globe, every aspect of our lives will be increasingly affected by higher temperatures, elevated sea levels and more extreme weather events, the consequences of which include greater food insecurity and threats to human health.

The health of the business world is also at stake. Earlier this year, the Bank of England released a study examining the risks that climate change poses to the entire global financial system. The

report concludes that severe weather events such as flooding, drought and storms will inevitably impact the insurance and banking sectors, with a knock-on effect disrupting everything from consumer spending to property values.

### Prime partner

Japan recognises the importance of swift and effective action if we are to avoid some of the doomsday scenarios that have been postulated by the most pessimistic of forecasters. In September, Minister of the Environment Shinjiro Koizumi (left) said he would work hard to shift the nation to increased use of renewable energies, adding that the world needs to make the fight against climate change “sexy” and “fun”.

Britain and Japan have united in the fight to limit and, ultimately, reverse the effects of climate change on society, both in business initiatives and academia.

“I would argue that there are major threats from climate change, but also opportunities for forward-thinking firms,” said

Andy Cundy, a professor at the School of Ocean and Earth Science at the University of Southampton.



“We are seeing a necessary shift—driven by an increased understanding of the urgent threats posed by climate change—towards low-carbon economies and societies,” he told *ACUMEN*. “For many firms, business as usual is not a sustainable long-term position, and the most successful firms will be the ones that adapt to, and innovate in, this new low-carbon business framework”.

Perhaps of most serious concern are agriculture and food supply, with many regions already experiencing challenges to food production and security due to climate change.

Cundy applauds the efforts of governments to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. These efforts include those stemming from the 2016 Paris Agreement, in which 196 nations agreed to the aim of limiting temperature rises to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. He admits, however, that such targets are “challenging” and were not helped when the US announced in 2017 that it was withdrawing from the treaty.

But much is still in the hands of firms.

“Industry and business can play a major role, by developing and adopting new low-carbon processes, practices and technologies, including those which remove or sequester carbon dioxide



## Britain and Japan have united in the fight to limit and, ultimately, reverse the effects of climate change on society.

from the atmosphere,” he said. “There is a real business opportunity for those firms that can innovate in this field, via renewable energy technologies, food technologies, greener urban infrastructure, carbon capture and other areas”.

### Bilateral business

Cundy is part of the Research and Education Network for Knowledge Economy Initiatives (RENKEI), which was established in April 2018 and brings together experts from 12 universities in the UK and Japan to strengthen knowledge exchanges and collaboration.

The group’s first research workshop on collaboration to combat climate change was held in Tokyo last November, and Newcastle University is hosting the follow-up event in December.

To focus discussion, RENKEI researchers have identified key areas of risk or that require further development:

- Flooding and water shortages
- Human health
- Food production and security
- Resilience in urban areas
- Ecosystem adaptation
- Low-carbon societies and green infrastructure

Yasuto Tachikawa, a professor in the Graduate School of Engineering at Kyoto University, will be taking part in the discussions and is particularly interested in sharing information on limiting flooding due to climate change.

The typhoons that have caused damage across Japan this autumn are an opportunity to study the impact of global warming up close, he said. The lessons from such disasters are often applicable around the world, and the data is of great interest to risk assessment firms and insurers.

### Innovate and invest

As Cundy points out, climate change offers opportunities for firms with innovative ideas and approaches. Plenty of British firms have those attributes and are increasingly partnering with large—and wealthy—Japanese corporations that are looking for partners.

In June, UK off-grid solar innovator Azuri Technologies announced an investment of \$26mn. Led by Japan’s Marubeni Corporation, the injection of funds will permit the Cambridge-based firm to help millions in Africa without access to affordable, clean energy through its pay-as-you-go solar home systems.

“Marubeni is a Global Fortune 500 firm with a strong track record of innovative energy in Africa,” said Azuri Chief Executive Simon Bransfield-Garth. “The investment from Marubeni combines the innovation from Azuri with the strength of a major corporate to accelerate the growth of off-grid energy.”



“The Japanese government is actively promoting partnerships to access the huge but largely under-served markets in Africa,” he said. “Marubeni is both an investor and a strategic partner for Azuri. The investment is being used to accelerate growth in Africa, to develop new technologies and to access new markets”.

Azuri has offices in Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, with its solar-based systems enabling households and rural businesses that are not connected to the power grid to benefit from modern conveniences—from electric lights to internet access via smartphones.

### Improved access

Similarly, London-headquartered Bboxx announced in August the completion of a new round of funding led by Mitsubishi Corporation that netted \$50mn. Co-founder and Chief Technology Innovation Officer Chris Baker-Brian described the Japanese conglomerate as the clear choice due to its extensive reach as well as sector-specific and technological expertise.

In collaboration with Mitsubishi’s energy division, the Power Solution Group, Bboxx aims to expand operations from its current base of 12 countries in Africa and Asia. The British firm manufactures, distributes and finances innovative plug-and-play solar-power systems to improve energy access in the developing world. To date, nearly 300,000 Bboxx products have been sold worldwide.

And Baker-Brian is optimistic that more opportunities for UK-Japan collaboration will be forthcoming.

“We have seen both access to technology businesses and Japanese investment in the UK tech sector improve recently. Japan sees the UK as an exciting investment destination for technology businesses, given the talent in London, particularly within software development.

“We have equally witnessed increased interest by the Japanese government and Japanese firms in investing across a range of industries in Africa. This is largely driven by the number of untapped opportunities on the [African] continent, as well as competition with the likes of China for investment”.

Through Mitsubishi, Bboxx is in conversation about projects with other firms, such as specialists



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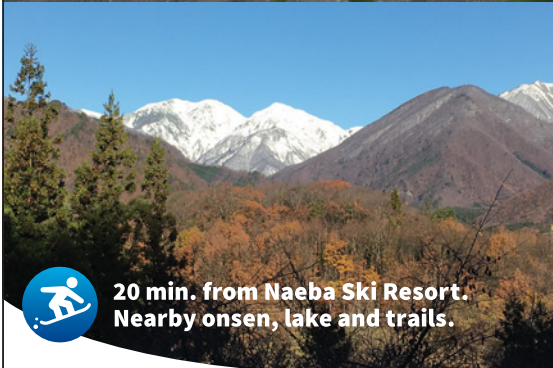
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## We strongly believe that a partnership model is crucial to truly unlock the potential that access to energy can generate.



The Moixa Smart Battery for homes

in lithium battery technology. Equally, they are increasing cooperation with the Japanese government as Tokyo looks to boost its exposure to businesses in Africa.

“We strongly believe that a partnership model is crucial to truly unlock the potential that access to energy can generate, and have worked with heads of governments, investors and existing utility providers to date,” Baker-Brian added. “Our partnership with Mitsubishi will help grow our global footprint by opening up new markets and further develop our product range. It is fuelling our mission to use technology to unlock potential and transform millions of lives worldwide”

### Japan bound

Other British firms are—perhaps surprisingly—bringing their energy solutions to Japan.

“For our technology—innovative energy tech—Japan actually looks to the UK and, in particular, to tech start-ups which are building some amazing technology to enable the new energy business models,” said Chris Wright, co-founder and chief technology officer of London-based Moixa Energy Holdings Ltd.



“They see that the deregulation of the UK energy market has driven a lot of innovation, and they hope to learn from this”.

Moixa is leading the way in bringing cutting-edge technology, such as artificial intelligence, to the energy space and developing systems that enable customers to spend less on energy. “That makes Moixa very attractive to firms looking to deliver better services to their customers,” Wright said. “To date, we have partnered in Japan with Itochu, Honda and Hitachi, brands which massively accelerate our ability to expand in Japan.

“We have a clear vision that we find resonates with customers, which drives how we build things. We believe that by adding intelligence to batteries, the world can live on sun and wind alone”.

Origami Energy Ltd. also has ambitions in the Japan market. “Japanese firms are looking at the UK and working with UK energy firms as they see this as a test-bed for how the Japanese market will evolve,” said Dominic Fava, head of marketing and propositions for the firm, which has its head office in Cambridge.

“There are many similarities between the firms, although perhaps the key differentiation is that the UK market started to liberalise decades ago, whereas the Japanese market is now starting to change.

“We are excited about the Japanese energy market because of the similarities to the UK, including low levels of interconnection with other markets and growing renewables capacity”.

Origami is signing multi-million-pound contracts with the UK subsidiaries of Japanese firms to demonstrate how their software and technology platform can be exported to Japan. One of those deals is with SmartestEnergy Ltd., a subsidiary of Marubeni Europe plc, while one of Origami’s major investors, Aggreko, is already a major player in Japan after helping to power events such as the recent Rugby World Cup 2019.

“Our technology is architected for global deployment, built with the security and scalability that large energy firms need,” said Fava. “It provides the versatility that energy firms need to stay ahead of their competition and the change that’s taking place in their markets”.

Thanks to the connections and collaboration between British and Japanese businesses and academia, a future in which renewable energies help to reduce the stresses on our planet would appear to be bright. 🌱



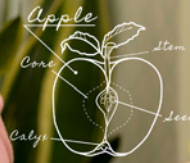
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# INNOVATION AND TRADITION

New head, new campus for the British School in Tokyo

BY C BRYAN JONES



IMAGE: DBOX FOR MORI BUILDING CO., LTD.

As the British School in Tokyo (BST) prepares for its new campus at the heart of Mori Building Co., Ltd.'s massive Toranomom-Azabudai development, the long-time anchor of Tokyo's educational landscape also welcomes a new leader.

Wales native Paul Tough has come aboard as principal, bringing 20 years of experience in Asia to BST. He comes to Japan from Hong Kong, where he was deputy head of West Island School for eight years followed by five years as head of Discovery Bay International School.

In the excitement of the transition and news of the Azabudai project, *ACUMEN* sat down with Tough at BST's Shibuya campus to find out what the changes mean for the school and its students.

## Why is a British education attractive in Japan?

I certainly think parents in Japan see a British education as a mark of quality, and we have that pursuit of excellence in everything that we do. We're trying to ensure that we retain that element of Britishness but also connect with the context and the culture around us. The demographics of the school are changing, and we now have a higher proportion of families which are bicultural. Rather than being here for a short time, they see Japan as home. We shape our education to this, whether through our language provision, various outdoor activities that have cultural exchanges or other programmes. That is a strong part of the school and one that I think parents are attracted to in particular.

## How will the Azabudai location affect this?

It's interesting in terms of the connections that we have with a variety of institutions and businesses. We're connected with 60-70 organisations, and I can only see that our position in Azabudai will be highlighted by this. We have very strong partnerships with other educational institutions in Tokyo, including Shibuya Kyoiku Gakuen and

Showa Women's University. Without their support, the school wouldn't be able to take advantage of this position now. It has very much been a partnership with them to get the school to this stage. And now we're entering into partnership with a third ally, essentially, with Mori Building. So, we are really intertwined with the educational landscape of Tokyo, but also the business landscape.

## How did the arrangement with Mori come about?

It's certainly been going on for a number of years. The Board of Trustees and previous principal Brian Christian were involved in those negotiations for five or six years. I think being chosen is a testament to the reputation of this school, as well as the hard work and visionary thinking of the board and friends of the school.

## How will the new facility benefit BST?

In terms of scale, it's going to be significant. In the centre of the city, we will have a space the design of which has been driven by a particular approach to teaching and learning. The design is driven by a pedagogical philosophy and approach—particularly one where children are inquiring and investigating. The spaces are flexible—walls are able to be collapsed—allowing for different types of activities and group sizes. Yes, it's a pretty building, but, inside, a lot of thought has been given to the appropriateness of the spaces for the children and the age groups that we have there.

It's also a very airy, bright environment. There's a lot of glass inside, so you can see into the different areas. And it's responsive and flexible to the changing needs of education. We can better help children develop transferable skills by working collaboratively, working in teams and using technology in a judicious fashion.

## How does the project's nature focus benefit BST?

Even though we will be right in the heart of the city, the way that the school has been designed

is very much with a sense of the outdoors. Each floor has a significant outdoor space—built into a balcony area—which will allow the children to get outside and run around.

The outdoor and garden areas will support the forest and beach approaches to primary education. This is something that we're looking to develop quite explicitly, and also to align that with principles of Reggio Emilia and inquiry-based learning. The idea is that the children will have access to outdoor areas as an extension of their learning environment, creating an almost continuous learning space. These are not just gardens and places where they can go and sit down, they are areas for learning and investigation, areas where they can get dirty and build things and create.

## Did architect Thomas Heatherwick and BST work together on planning?

Yes, during the initial planning and the initial brainstorming, the school shared what was wanted, elements such as flexibility and open spaces. So, they were able to build something which combined the overall aesthetic with the actual functionality, in terms of impact for learning. That was all part of the original brief.

## How are you keeping up with technology?

It will be a campus which will allow for one-to-one devices to be used in a mobile form right through. We won't necessarily have fixed desktop computers. The children will have access to mobile devices which can be used in a formal setting in the classroom but also outside, in the communal areas of the school. And there is flexibility to use things such as the walls more dynamically. Rather than just having them to hang a board on, there are walls that can be written on, and the glass partitions between certain things can also be written on and wiped off at the end of the day. We're making the best use of the facility for learning in every way possible. 🇬🇧



# HUMAN CAPITAL

RI awards top recruiter talent in Japan

TEXT BY JOHN AMARI  
PHOTOS BY LIFE.14

On 25 October, leading human resources firms from around Japan gathered at the Hotel Gajoen Tokyo to celebrate the annual Recruitment International Awards (RI Awards), which recognises innovation and best practice among firms in the human capital industry.

A number of firms with a strong footprint in the UK—including Morgan McKinley, Robert Walters Group and SThree plc—attended the black-tie gala.

Eighteen prizes were up for grabs and winners each walked away with a coveted RI Trophy: an iconic, R-shaped award in eye-catching purple and gold gongs.

## British winner

Morgan McKinley—the first of three winning firms with a UK connection—was named Banking & Finance Recruitment Company of the Year, an award open to firms that have achieved impressive results in those sectors over the past three years.

Results mean more than billings. It includes showing how your firm has built a solid rapport with clients, how strong future prospects are and what really sets it apart.

Speaking to *ACUMEN*, Lionel Kaidatzis, managing director at Morgan McKinley, said: “We view the Recruitment International event as

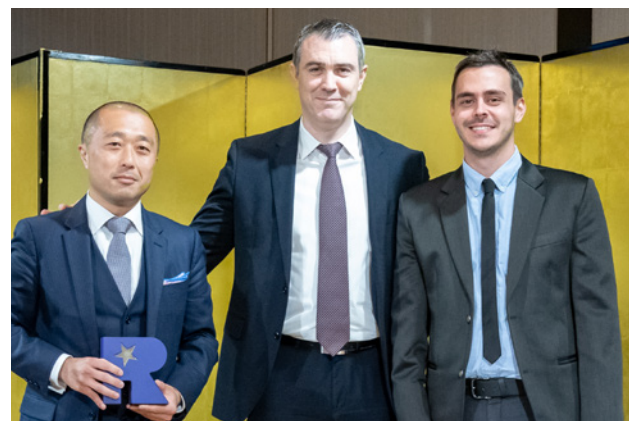
being the most prestigious awards ceremony in our industry. To have won the Banking & Finance Recruitment Company of the Year award for the third time in five years is truly something that we are immensely proud of. This award is a testament to our excellent people, who are unrelenting in their dedication and commitment to delivering for our valued clients and candidates”

## UK origin

The second British-affiliated firm to be recognised was SThree K.K. The London-headquartered firm won two awards on the night: Best Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiative and Growth Company of the Year.

As a member of the judging panel noted, “This company has an incredible CSR programme running throughout its business, which has, in fact, already helped thousands of disadvantaged people”

“We will continue to tirelessly support both the recruitment activities of our clients ... and the professionals who are taking on the challenge of further advancing their careers”







In line with its areas of focus, which include human capital sourcing in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, SThree's CSR initiatives have included campaigns to raise funds for the African Science Academy, an all-girls high school with a focus on STEM established in 2016 in Accra, Ghana.

Speaking about SThree, another judge said, "This company achieved growth right across the board, lifting turnover, profits and headcount".

Grant Habgood, managing director at SThree, said: "We were elated to win both these awards. This year, as a business locally, we have made a concerted effort with CSR, holding more events and raising more awareness than ever before. And Growth Company of the Year is a nice reward for our fantastic team who are working extremely hard to position ourselves as leaders within the markets we recruit for".

From 2018 to 2019, SThree nearly doubled its headcount, growing from about 30 employees last year to nearly 60 this year.

**Double winner**

Robert Walters Japan K.K. was also a double award-winner on the night. The UK-headquartered consultancy took home Specialist Recruitment

Company of the Year and Best Large Recruitment Company of the Year honours.

A judge said: "This company has a focus on building long-term, high-quality relationships with clients and candidates centred on trust and loyalty".

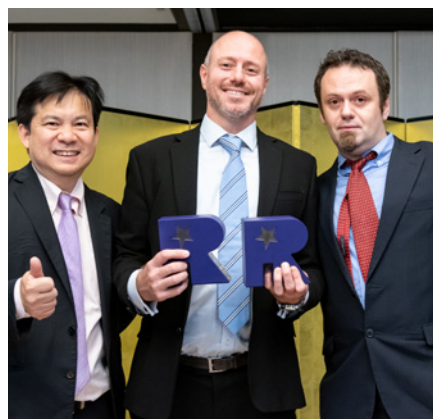
In receiving the prizes, Jeremy Sampson, managing director at Robert Walters Japan, said: "We are honoured to receive these two awards, as I believe these serve as a well-deserved recognition of our employees' daily efforts. We will continue to tirelessly support both the recruitment activities of our clients, who place us in a high degree of trust, and the professionals who are taking on the challenge of further advancing their careers".

**Looking ahead**

This year's RI Awards were co-hosted by Surrey-based recruitment firm TALiNT International and Tokyo-based multimedia agency Custom Media K.K., publishers of ACUMEN.

David Head, director at TALiNT International, and Jody Pang, strategic account director at Custom Media, were the masters of ceremony.

The RI Awards are held around the world, including in the United Arab Emirates, Australia and the UK. Next year's RI Awards in Japan will also take place in October. 🌸



**2019 RI Award Winners**

**Banking & Finance Recruitment Company of the Year**  
Morgan McKinley

**IT & Technology Recruitment Company of the Year**  
RGF Executive Search

**Healthcare & Life Sciences Recruitment Company of the Year**  
Apex K.K.

**Technical & Industrial Recruitment Company of the Year**  
RGF Professional Recruitment

**Executive Search Company of the Year**  
Boyd & Moore Executive Search K.K.

**Best RPO Provider**  
Boyd & Moore Executive Search K.K.

**Best CSR Initiative**  
SThree K.K.

**Diversity & Inclusion Champion**  
JAC Recruitment

**Growth Company of the Year**  
SThree K.K.

**Specialist Recruitment Company of the Year**  
Robert Walters Japan K.K.

**Recruitment Company to Work For Small**  
Apex Inc

**Recruitment Company to Work For Medium**  
Morgan McKinley

**Recruitment Company to Work For Large**  
Robert Walters Japan K.K.

**Outstanding HR & Recruitment Professional of the Year**  
Victor Nwakanma  
Boyd & Moore Executive Search K.K.

**Best Newcomer—The Rising Star**  
Evander Group K.K.

**Business Leader of the Year**  
Robin Doenicke  
Zensho Agency Inc.

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# TEN YEARS OF ACUMEN

BY C BRYAN JONES

A decade has passed since British business in Japan first came to life on the pages of *ACUMEN*. What began in November 2009 as a bimonthly publication quickly found a strong following, and soon members of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) were receiving a monthly collection of reports and features. It was an unexpectedly fast turn of events for Simon Farrell and Robert Heldt, co-founders of Custom Media K.K., publisher of *ACUMEN*.



“Our original plan was simply to publish an authoritative, business-only magazine for BCCJ members,” recalls Heldt. “My main fear was whether there were enough stories about the UK in Japan to fill pages, but those doubts soon went”

Interest grew rapidly. And as ideas and support flooded in from writers, members and others, *ACUMEN* quietly evolved into a magazine for the entire British community and Anglophiles in Japan. The focus expanded to also showcase other elements of British lifestyle, such as culture, sport and people. “Our brief is still very much business focused though,” Farrell said. “Nowadays, the challenge is finding enough space for the many interesting, useful, inspirational, revealing or otherwise deserving stories that cross my desk”

## Key events

There have been so many big moments in UK–Japan relations over the past 10 years, it can be difficult to keep track. That’s where *ACUMEN* excels, as a journal of business and culture. Which stories stand out to the publishers?

“There are too many to list, but the exclusive interview that Olympus whistleblower Michael Woodford gave us just before he was sacked as president and fled Japan stands out,” said Farrell.

Heldt looked back at one of most trying times for the country. “Our coverage of the chamber’s efforts to help the people affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011 was very important to me.” He also cited solo global rower Sarah Outen as well as Paralympians Maya Nakanishi and Andy Barrow for inspiration, and Timothy Berners-Lee, inventor of the internet, for brains.

Farrell said that, for personal satisfaction, “the first interview with Hans Dietmar Schweisgut as head of the Delegation of the European Union to Japan, which beat to the mark even the magazine closest to his organisation” was a true highlight. “Other personal favourites include features on high-performance niche British cars and motorbikes, pitching the Eurofighter Typhoon to Tokyo and HMS *Daring* on her visit here,” he added.

## Future forward

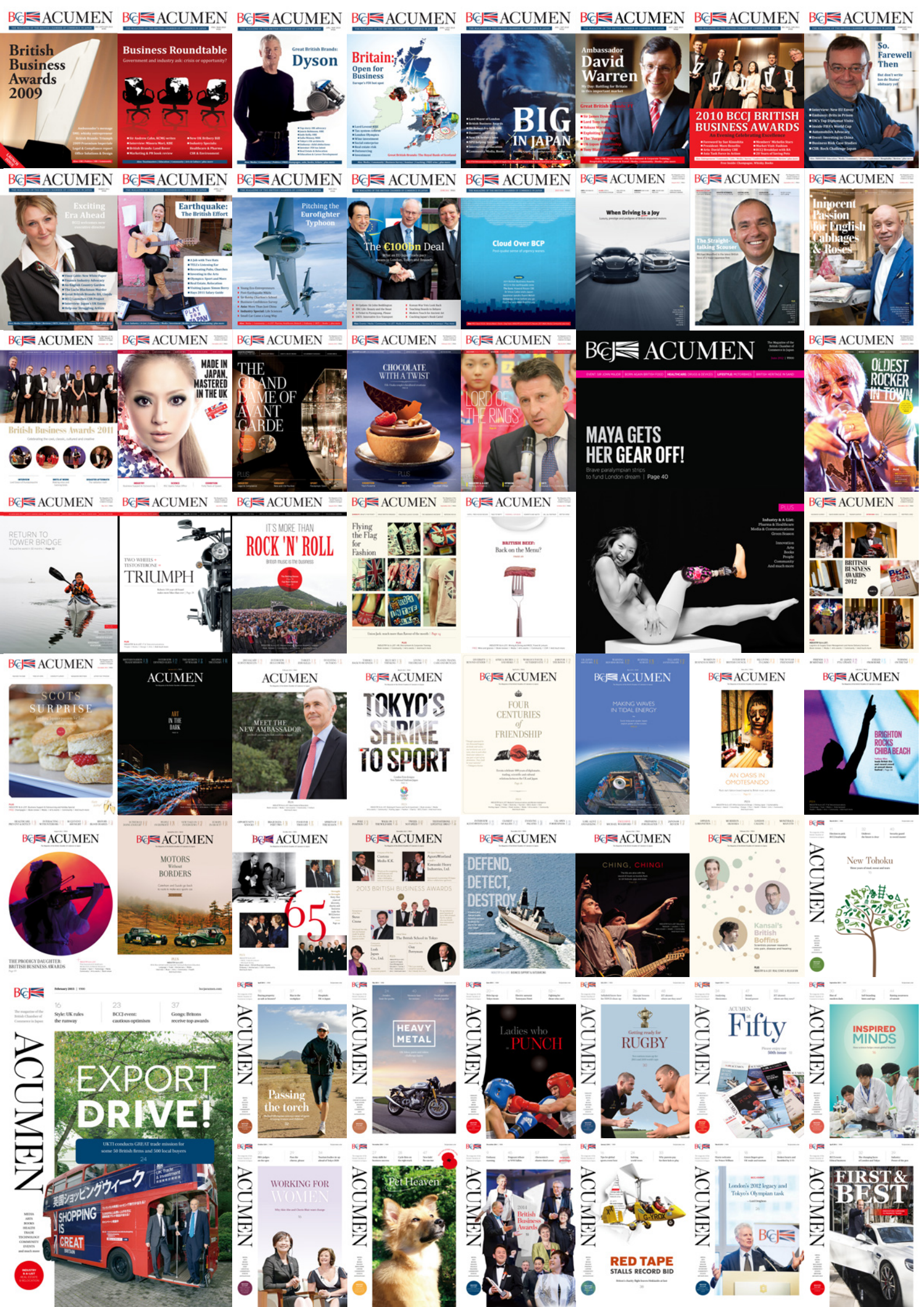
Where does *ACUMEN* go from here? With Brexit on the horizon, bilateral relations will be more

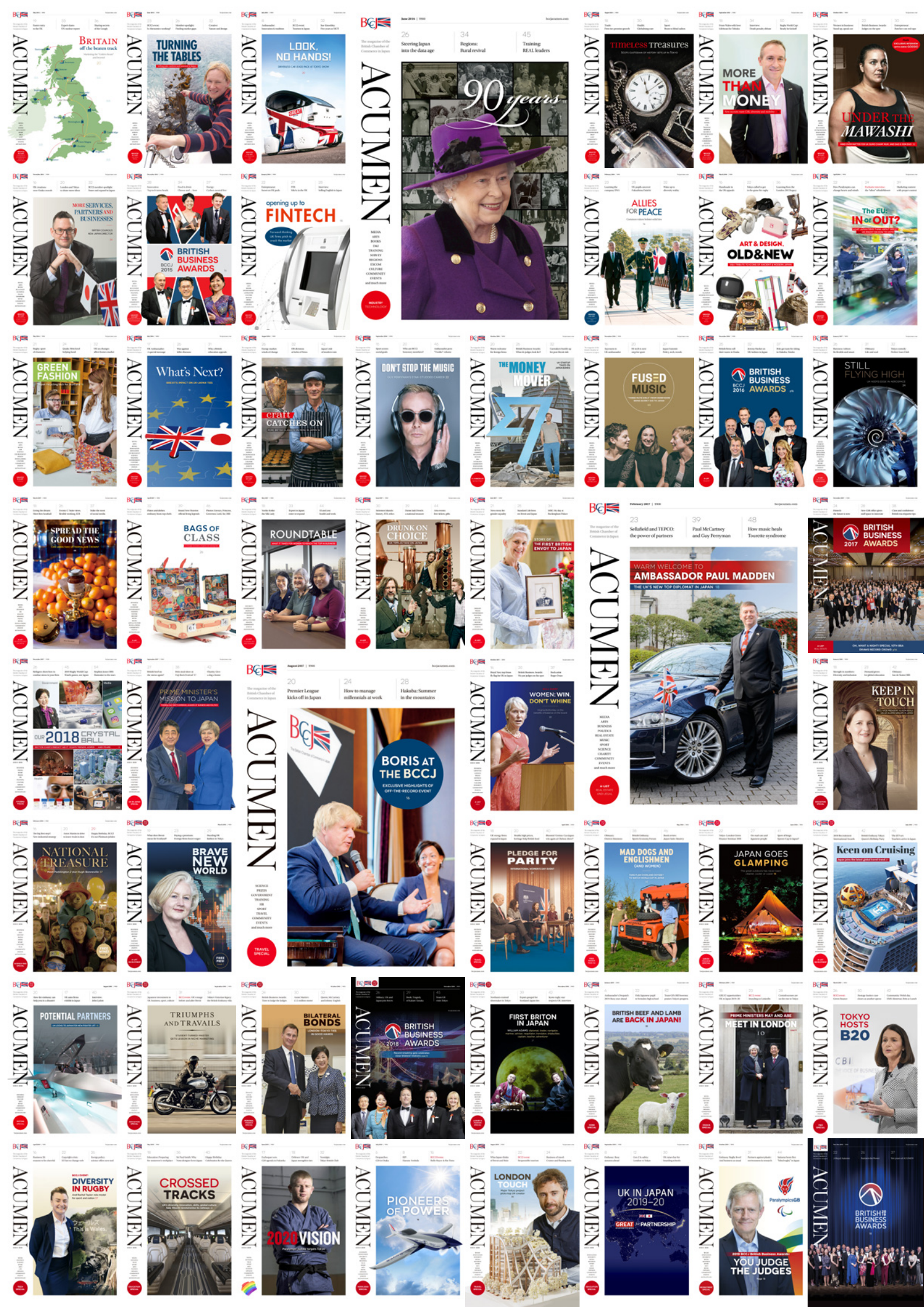
important than ever—particularly in the business world. With the BCCJ’s 5.0 initiative fully in motion and a vibrant UK community spanning the chamber, British Embassy Tokyo, world-class firms and an exciting social scene, the future looks bright.

“Every old-hand or insider here who I ask agrees that bilateral ties have never been better,” said Farrell. “I see no reason—including Brexit—that the relationship shouldn’t grow even stronger. Education, for example, is a major investment for schools and parents, expatriate, local or mixed. So, with a new and highly innovative British School in Tokyo campus set to open at a very prestigious location (page 31) and multiple campuses of the elite 450-year-old Rugby School (page 13)—the first independent UK school in Japan—slated for 2022, it is difficult to argue against a rosy long-term future. And if you look at the British Business Awards, every year has a healthy set of worthy nominations for the coveted UK–Japan Partnership gong”.

As publisher, Farrell is certain that the BCCJ’s publication will remain indispensable. “*ACUMEN* will be there to cover developments with more depth than other media because we are better placed to understand this increasingly important relationship in the worlds of business, culture and lifestyle—and sport, of course. Our contacts and knowhow are deeply embedded in the right places and committed to the UK–Japan relationship; and that is our unique strength.” 🇬🇧

Our contacts and knowhow are deeply embedded in the right places and committed to the UK–Japan relationship; and that is our unique strength.







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# ALEXANDRA BURKE

Singer from the soul

BY GUY PERRYMAN MBE



PHOTO: PAUL COLLINS

Alexandra Burke is a bright star rising in London's West End theatre world, and she brought her vivacious personality to my live morning radio show for an interview while in Tokyo. Burke was here for the Japan run of *The Bodyguard*—a musical based on the blockbuster Hollywood movie of the same name, starring Whitney Houston.

"I'm so happy to be here, it's so overwhelming, because never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that I'd come to Tokyo," she told me.

Then she added a comment I frequently get from British visitors who discover that flying eastwards is more of a challenge for the body clock.

"The jet lag's real. I have no idea what time it is, what day it is, but I'm smiling from ear to ear because I'm so happy to be here".

As Burke is on stage in the evenings, but we were having this conversation in the morning, I wondered what is her regular morning routine?

"I like going to the gym in the mornings. I missed it today, because the jet lag told me to stay in bed, which I think was definitely sensible," she said. "But in the mornings, I like to meditate when I get up. It helps set the day straight for me and start the day right, really. I always pray in the mornings as well, and make sure I check in with my family. That's the most important thing for me—wherever I am in the world—to make sure they're all okay and to send them a quick text in the family group".

## Family matters

Burke's love of family popped up a few times in our conversation. In particular, she praised her mother, Melissa Bell, for giving her the gift of a spectacular voice and introducing her to music. Bell was a member of the legendary British group Soul II Soul from the early 1990s until her death in 2017 from kidney failure at the age of 53.

Burke referenced her mother while talking about *The Bodyguard*'s most iconic musical number, "I Will Always Love You," Whitney Houston's signature song penned by Dolly Parton.

Her almost instant stardom opened doors and music offers, including London's West End.

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“This song, in particular, was my mum’s favourite. That’s why, every time I sing it, it reminds me of my mum. She used to sing this to me when I was a child, so it’s a deep connection for me.”

And as Burke continued, I learned that the link with Houston runs deep, too.

“I’m a massive fan. My mum used to be her backing singer, so there’s a massive connection with Whitney and my family. When she was in the UK, my mum used to sing for her. Because my mum was in Soul II Soul, music runs in my blood. I was born to be part of music in some kind of way. I’m just really happy that I can sing, because my mum gave me that talent. And, really, it’s all because of my mum. I look up to her and she’s the reason I wanted to be a singer. I’m just very grateful.”

#### Up to the challenge

While we were on the air playing “I Will Always Love You,” Burke shared her thoughts about singing such a well-known and vocally challenging song.

“I get so nervous. I mean, literally, I’ve got butterflies in my stomach right now listening to it. I’m always in my head going, ‘Don’t push, don’t push.’ I’ve got “I Will Always Love You” at the end of act 2,” she said. “Don’t push, don’t push—because that’s the one song that everyone goes, ‘Okay, when’s it coming, when’s it coming?’ And you want to do it justice. You know what I mean? I’m nervous now just talking about it!” she said with a big, hearty laugh.

Burke’s passion for music has always been with her, but her appreciation of musical theatre came a little later.

“I have always been a music lover but have been a musical lover only the past few years, to be honest with you. I mean, I never grew up going to musicals. The first musical I ever saw was *The Lion King*, and that made me understand that there are so many people in theatre, and the work and commitment they have to put into it doing eight shows a week. I took my hat off to them.”

Burke found musical fame, as many young singers do today, by winning the fifth series of the British talent show *The X Factor* in 2008. Her almost instant stardom opened doors and music offers, including London’s West End, as she recalls.

“I got asked to do *The Bodyguard* way back when, and I actually wasn’t ready for it. So, I turned

it down. I wasn’t in the right frame of mind. I was only 23 when I was offered the role to open in the West End,” she said. “It was a massive opportunity that I turned down, but, here I am now, five years later, still doing it. And, I got to close it in the West End. That was a dream for me.”

She credits the show for giving her a great love of musical theatre.

“Now, I’m just obsessed. I’ve done other shows since then—I’ve done *Chess*, *Sister Act*, *Chicago*—and I feel so blessed to be able to say I’ve done these kind of roles because I’m not trained in musical theatre at all. I just go with the flow, take direction and try my best.”

#### Power of music

With her generous spirit and desire to share her enthusiasm for theatre, Burke invited me and my radio team on a backstage tour after a performance of *The Bodyguard* at Theatre Orb in Tokyo. Having been a fan of musical theatre from a very early age, thanks to my parent’s involvement in the genre, I was delighted. We talked about the current boom in musical theatre and what makes *The Bodyguard*, in particular, so special.

“I think, for me, when you walk into a theatre, you don’t get many shows where you get all ages that come and see it. This is the one show that I think definitely does that. This show has already toured twice and been an amazing success.

There’s a reason for that: the music. You walk in, you get a great storyline, you get some amazing performances from people including all the ensemble, everyone that’s dancing, everyone that’s rejoicing, singing and acting, everything about it is so special. I know that it’s my face on the poster but there are a team of people here that make this show what it is, it’s a massive effort and you see that when you come and see the show because it’s remarkable.”

Burke also enthused about the power of music.

“There’s nothing else in the world that I’d rather do more. It has to be in the music industry, because I love music so much. I appreciate every single genre of music. They connect the world in so many ways. Music is the one thing for me that connects everyone, because you’re never too far from someone who loves what you love as well. I just think it’s a very powerful force in our world for sure.”

Our conversation ends as it started: talking about Burke’s joy of visiting Japan. I had to ask if she likes karaoke?

“Do you know, when I go to karaoke, I sing really badly. I love karaoke, and the thing is—as a singer—you don’t want to go to karaoke and start really singing, because that’s just not nice to anyone, really. So, I pretend that I’m a really bad singer and it’s great fun. It’s really funny and I love it. We’ll go next week!” 🇯🇵



Music is the one thing for me that connects everyone

PHOTO: PAUL COULTAS

# ARTS

## UK CULTURE IN JAPAN

COMPILED BY:

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### 1 UNTIL 15 DECEMBER

#### *Parabola of Pre-Raphaelitism*

Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood revolutionised British art. Founded in 1848 by Rossetti and fellow avant-garde artists, such as William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais, the group advocated realism, intense colour and complexity. This exhibition in Osaka highlights 150 Pre-Raphaelite paintings, tapestries and more from private and museum collections in the UK and US.

ARTWORK: © MORRIS & CO., 1883, *STRAWBERRY THIEF*  
TULLIE HOUSE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, CARLISLE

#### Abeno Harukas Art Museum

Abeno Harukas 16F, 1-1-43 Abenosuji, Abeno-ku, Osaka 545-0052

Price: ¥500–1,500

06-4399-9050 | <https://prb2019.jp>

☉ **FREE TICKETS:** We have **five pairs of free tickets** for this event.



### 2 6–12 DECEMBER

#### *Frankenstein*

English writer Nick Dear's stage adaption of Mary Shelley's famous novel will be presented in the comfort of a Japanese cinema. Starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller, *Frankenstein* premiered at the Royal National Theatre in 2011. Both leads received the Oliver Award and London Evening Standard Award.

PHOTO: CATHERINE ASHMORE

#### Sapporo Cinema Frontier

JR Tower Stellar Place 7F

2, Kita-5 Nishi, Chuo-ku, Sapporo, Hokkaido 060-0005

Price: ¥3,000 | Students: ¥2,500

011-209-5400 | [www.cinemafreedom.net](http://www.cinemafreedom.net)



### 3 UNTIL 20 JANUARY

#### *Impressionism and Beyond—*

#### *Master Paintings from the Yoshino Gypsum Collection*

This exhibition features 72 curated works from the world-renowned Yoshino Gypsum Collection that showcase pastels from several 19th-century masters of impressionism, including Monet, Chagall and British artist Sisley, who called France home. Also of note are the landscapes of Picasso rarely seen anywhere else.

ARTWORK: ALFRED SISLEY *ROW OF POPLARS AT MORET* 1888 OIL ON CANVAS 54.0×73.0 CM

#### Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, Tokyo

2-6-2 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0005

Price: ¥500–1,700

81-3-5777-8600 | [www.mimt.jp/english](http://www.mimt.jp/english)

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[coordinator@custom-media.com](mailto:coordinator@custom-media.com)

Winners will be picked at random.



4



5

## 4 26 AND 27 NOVEMBER

### Mura Masa

Guernsey-born Alex Crossan, better known by his stage name Mura Masa, has been selling out concerts and topping charts since debuting on the electronic music scene in 2015. Hot on the heels of his new single, “I Don’t Think I Can Do This Again,” the Grammy Award-winning producer will perform in Osaka and Tokyo during his two-day visit to Japan.

#### Namba Hatch (26 November)

1-3-1 Minatomachi, Naniwa-ku, Osaka 556-0017

Price: ¥6,800

06-4397-0572 | [www.namba-hatch.com](http://www.namba-hatch.com)

#### Zepp Divercity Tokyo (27 November)

1-1-10 Aomi, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-0064

Price: ¥6,800–7,500

03-3527-5256

[www.zepp.co.jp/hall/divercity](http://www.zepp.co.jp/hall/divercity)

## 5 11 DECEMBER

### Nilüfer Yanya

The power of online distribution helped Nilüfer Yanya launch her career from her home in Chelsea, London. In 2019, she released her debut album, *Miss Universe*, to critical acclaim on SoundCloud. Yanya’s music is notable for the way it shifts among musical and lyrical styles, such as indie rock, soul and jazz.

#### Shibuya WWW X

13-17 Udagawacho 2F, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

Price: ¥5,800

03-3444-6751 | [smash-jpn.com](http://smash-jpn.com)

👁️ **FREE TICKETS:** We have **two pair of free tickets** for this event.



6

## 6 FROM 13 DECEMBER

### Sorry We Missed You

In this new story from British director Ken Loach and screenwriter Paul Laverty, Kris Hitchen plays a self-employed franchise-owner living in Newcastle upon Tyne with his wife (Debbie Honeywood). The film has earned favourable reviews and acclaim for its commentary on labour market exploitation, and won the Audience Award for Best European Film at the 2019 San Sebastián International Film Festival in Spain.

PHOTO: JOSS BARRATT, SIXTEEN FILMS 2019

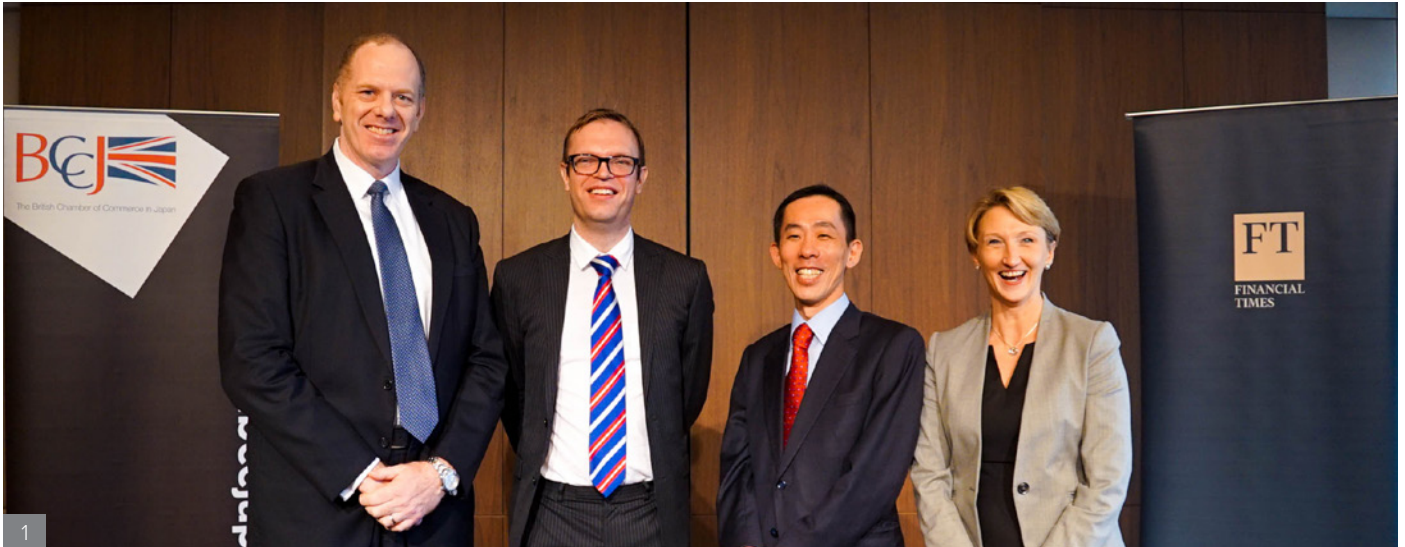
© SIXTEEN SWMY LIMITED, WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS, LES FILMS DU FLEUVE, BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION, FRANCE 2 CINÉMA AND THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE 2019

#### Human Trust Cinema Yurakucho

2-7-1 Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0006

Price: ¥1,000–1,800

03-6259-8608 | [https://ttcg.jp/human\\_yurakucho](https://ttcg.jp/human_yurakucho)



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2



3

## UK-JAPAN EVENTS

**1** From left: British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) President David Bickle, *Financial Times* Tokyo Bureau Chief Robin Harding, Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Public Affairs and Director of Global Communications in the Japanese Prime Minister's Office Tomoaki Ishigaki and BCCJ Executive Director Lori Henderson MBE hosted Tokyo Calling: How Japan Communicates with the World at the Grand Hyatt Tokyo on 18 October.

**2** From left: Custom Media Publisher Simon Farrell, St David's Society Japan President Ursula Bartlett-Imadegawa, Lord Gregory Mostyn and Yoko Kobori, senior Wales affairs officer at the Welsh Government office in Japan. Lord Mostyn spoke at the monthly meeting of the College Women's Association of Japan at Tokyo American Club on 6 November (page 10).

**3** Leo Lewis, Tokyo correspondent for the *Financial Times*, spoke at the paper's So You Want to be a NED? workshop at the Clifford Chance office in Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo on 31 October (page 11).

**4** Members of the Custom Media team with David Head, director of TALiNT International (top, second left), at the Recruitment International Awards at Hotel Gajoen Tokyo on 25 October. PHOTO: LIFE.14



5 Zensho Agency, Inc. President and Chief Culture Officer Robin Doenicke (left) receives the RI Award for Business Leader of the Year from Custom Media co-founder Simon Farrell. PHOTO: LIFE.14

6 A slightly wet start to the British School in Tokyo (BST) Secondary Inter-House Sports Day on 17 October didn't dampen spirits nor stop anyone from joining in the fun and cheering friends on.

7 An outstanding show of musicianship was on display at BST's Advanced Musicians' Recital at L'Atelier in Shibuya on 30 October.

8 Cartan McLaughlin (left), chief executive of Nihon Tech Solutions Co., Ltd. Japan and its sister company, Nihon Cyber Defence Co., Ltd. with Stephen Platt, chairman and chief executive of KYC Global Technologies. Platt spoke at an event marking the launch of their products into the Japanese market at Akasaka Intercity AIR on 16 October.

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

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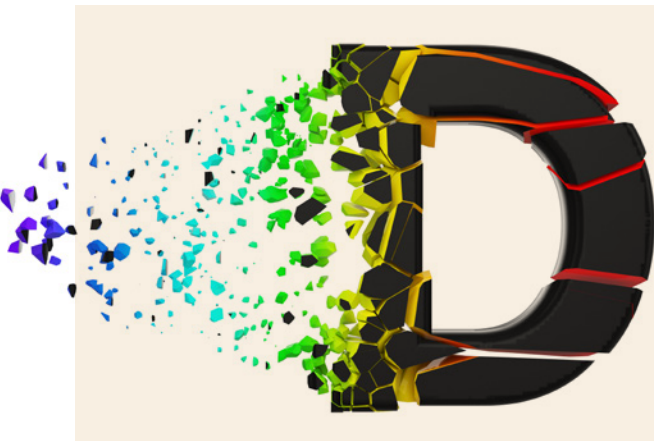


# RUGBY WORLD CUP 2019

Matches played 19 Oct–2 Nov

PHOTOS BY DAVID RAMOS, CLIVE ROSE, FRANCOIS NEL, WARREN LITTLE, CLIVE ROSE AND RICHARD HEATHCOTE—WORLD RUGBY VIA GETTY IMAGES





# PROPOSING THE THREE Ds ...

as strong candidates for the word of the year

BY NORIKO HAMA

This is the season in Japan when the quest for the word of the year begins in earnest. No doubt some rugby terms will find their way onto the shortlist this year. Maybe even Brexit.

For myself, I feel that the first place ought to be awarded to the letter D. I know that D is not a word, but never mind. The letter has been quite ubiquitous throughout the year, in ways that seem to symbolise very well what kind of year this has been.

## Falling apart

In reflection of the kind of things that have been going on around the world, three words beginning with D most especially have stood out:

- Deglobalisation
- Decoupling
- Disintegration

To my mind, these three D-words represent the happenings of 2019. Deglobalisation entered the global lexicon around the beginning of this year. Up to a point, people seemed to accept quite unquestioningly that globalisation was a river of no return. But now, everyone talks and writes about deglobalisation as though it had become an unavoidable fate of the human race. What with all the cries of “my country first” cropping up everywhere and unilateralism running rampant, the loss of conviction in one-way globalisation does not really come as a surprise.

It is a worrying development, nonetheless. There is bad globalisation and good globalisation. Bad globalisation leads to exploitation of the weak and the small. Good globalisation leads to

inclusiveness, sharing and caring across borders. For people to turn their backs on the latter—as if there was no alternative—would be an altogether sad and foolish thing for the human race.

Decoupling is the talk of the town concerning the US and China. At one point, the pair were being talked about as “Chimerica,” because their two economies had become so intensely linked through supply chains and market access. But now, that relationship is in peril. Although trade tensions seem to be abating somewhat, techno-wars and export bans are still wedging Chimerica apart. A clean or rather messy break is still very much on the cards.

## Disunited Kingdom

The other decoupling that we are focused on is, of course, Brexit. Never has the world seen a more baffling divorce process. How much uglier and sillier will the process become? Will it somehow manage to end up becoming an amicable one? Will the divorce actually happen at all?

Turning to the third D-word—disintegration—the question about Brexit, if and when it happens, is whether it will bring about the disintegration of the United Kingdom as we know it. Will Northern Ireland decide to leave the UK and become part of the Republic of Ireland? Will Scotland hold another referendum and walk away from Great Britain? What would Wales do in that eventuality?

Another internal disintegration threat seems to be rearing its sinister head in Germany, even as the country in November celebrates the 30th anniversary of the coming down of the Berlin Wall. Disillusioned East Germans claim they are still being treated as second-class citizens. They are starting to question the value of democracy. They

have become doubtful of the power of liberal societies to deliver the security and happiness that they seek. “It wasn’t supposed to be like this” seems to be the sentiment that many in the five East German states are sharing. As a result, they are increasingly voting for the ultra-right Alternative for Germany party in local elections. German reunification was a miracle come true. It is so much to be hoped that a counter-miracle in the form of German disintegration does not come about.

Internal disintegration is arguably a more realistic possibility in Spain, where separatist Catalans are seeking the opportunity of another referendum on independence. And in Italy, a north-south break is an ever-rumbling leitmotif.

It should be noted that even Japan is not totally immune to the potential of internal rupture. The Tohoku region, comprising prefectures to the north-east of Tokyo on the Japanese mainland, found themselves on the wrong side of the civil war that led to the creation of the Meiji government. With considerable good reason, they felt cheated and tricked into becoming the rebels standing in the way of progress.

The sentiment lives to this day. The people of Fukushima and elsewhere in the Tohoku region openly expressed displeasure with the lavish celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration put on last year by the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. For them, the days leading up to 1868 were a time of bloodshed and tragedy. There is nothing for them to celebrate in that piece of history. It does not help at all that Abe’s constituency exists in the prefecture of Yamaguchi, which played a central part in the creation of the Meiji political regime.

And Okinawans watch with keen interest how the Catalan independence movement is playing out. Should internal disintegration start to look like a worldwide phenomenon, might it serve to activate Japan’s own lines of division within? ❀

The question about Brexit, if and when it happens, is whether it will bring about the disintegration of the United Kingdom as we know it.

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