Japan Society North West

Newsletter No 1
June 2004

We're Off And Running

Welcome to the first Newsletter of the **Japan Society North West** – the successor Society to the UK Japan Society of the North West. While many of you have been loyal members of the former Society for many years, some of you are entirely new to the Society and for you a little bit of background to the Society may not go amiss.

The UK Japan Society of the North West was founded in 1996 to provide a regional forum for companies with business interests in Japan. The need and support for such a forum has steadily declined while interest in all aspects of Japanese culture has grown. The new Society, born out of the old, reflects this shift in interest towards culture and the individual and away from, but not to the exclusion of, corporate members whose participation and continued support we greatly value.

Thus in spring 2004 a small number of British and Japanese residents of the North West got together to form the **Japan Society North West**. We aim to provide a forum for the understanding and appreciation of Japan, its people, culture and language to all living in the region.

The official formation of the Society took place at its first General Meeting, held on 6th May at the New Samsi Restaurant in Manchester. At that meeting the Constitution of the Society was adopted and the following were appointed to the Committee:

Chairman:	Ian Munro
Vice-Chairman:	Scott Baron
Secretary:	David Woolf
Treasurer:	David Willis
Membership Secretary:	Neil Willis
Members:	Cathy Peel
	Akiko Urushibata
	Azumi Willis

Membership

We hope that all members, both Corporate and Individual, of the former Society will renew their subscription to the new Society. If you were the nominated Representative Member of a Corporate Member you will find the necessary paperwork enclosed with this mailing. If you were a member through your organisation's membership of the Society, please be aware that you can continue in membership either through your organisation's renewal of its membership or by yourself using the Application Form in the Promotional Leaflet. If you were an Individual Member we would be grateful if you could complete the Application Form in the Promotional Leaflet and return it to our Membership Secretary with your subscription. Whatever your category of membership, please be sure to tell us your email address as this will be our main means of communication.

Tell A Friend

We need to grow the membership base of the Society: with more members we can bring you even better events and spread the costs of running the Society over more members – thus making membership even better value. So you will find a few extra copies of the Promotional Leaflet in this mailing: please pass these on to friends and colleagues who may be interested in what the Society has to offer.

Support from the Japanese Embassy

The Embassy of Japan is very keen that the North West should continue to have an active Japan Society. Indeed it is unthinkable, given the history of the relationship between this region and Japan, that it should not! Through First Secretary Masaya Otsuka, the Embassy is providing promotional support at CF04 in Warrington in just a few days and is advising and facilitating in a number of ways to help the Society to grow. We are very grateful to the Embassy and Otsuka-san in particular.

Society's Events Programme

The Committee has been busy since 6th May putting together a varied programme of events: we hope that you will find several of interest to you. A full list of events currently being organised is in the enclosed Promotional Leaflet: full details will be sent to you well in advance of each event. Highlights this year undoubtedly include:

- An Aikido demonstration in September (date to be arranged) by the Komyokan Aikido Association in Birkenhead. Aikido is a system of self-defence in which the momentum and strength of the attacker is used against him. The teachings of Sokaku Takeda were systematised by Morihei Ueshiba into modern Aikido.

- A visit on October 23rd to Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery which holds a remarkable collection of Japanese artefacts, but especially woodblock prints, "ukiyo-e". As well as being able to view the items in the permanent exhibition, we will be taken behind the scenes for a private visit to see the large collection to which members of the public do not normally have access.

Regional Events

Most Japan-related events take place in London and the South East. Japan-related events in the North West are few and far between: even more reason for an active Japan Society in the region! We hope to keep you informed of Japan-related events that you can visit in the region. Unfortunately there is no single source of information about these – so even the Society has difficulty in getting information. Here are some that we have found out about; the information is provided in good faith, but we advise you to check with the venue before you set off!

Now	30 August	***A Secret History of Clay: from Gauguin to Gormley.*** From the beginning of the 20th Century to the present day; Japanese artists featured include Isamu Noguchi and Sekine Nobuo.	Tate Liverpool. www.tate.org.uk/liverpool

Now	21 Nov	***Through the Surface.*** 14 of the most innovative textile artists in the UK & Japan touring venues in the UK and then to Kyoto.	Details on: www.throughthesurface.surrart.ac.uk
25 June	27 June	***Culture Fest 04.*** Many events and performances including Mugenkyo, Europe's foremost exponent of Japanese drumming. The group was established in 1994 on their return to Britain after two years of intensive training on the west coast of Japan under Taiko master Masaaki Kurumaya.	Parr Hall & Pyramid Centre, Warrington, Cheshire. 01925 442345
30 June		***Bradford Contemporary Connections 2.*** *Featuring Kazuo Fukushima's Requiem & Dai Fujikura's Ophelia.*	University of Bradford, Chelsham Building, Gallery 2. 01274 233191
1 July		***UK-Japan Business Seminar.***	Sheffield Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Thomas Ward Suite. Gill Watts 01142 012578. gwatts@syitc.com
30 July	1 Aug	**International Symposium.** ***Re-politicising the Kyoto School as philosophy.***	Nottingham University. Dr C S Goto-Jones. 01159 515937 chris.s.jones@nottingham.ac.uk
1 Sept	10 Sept	***Annual Conference of the British Association for Japanese Studies***	Breton Hall, Wakefield. Lynn Baird. 01206 872543 bajs@bajs.org.uk
6 Sept	8 Sept	***BAJS Joint East Asian Studies Conference. Dynamic East Asia: Past & Present.***	bajs@bajs.org.uk www.bajs.org.uk/index.htm
18 Sept	28 Nov	***Takashi Murakami at the 2004 Liverpool Bienale.*** Artist Murakami has been invited to create a new work for the Liverpool Biennale's showpiece 2004 International Exhibition.	info@biennal.org.uk www.biennal.org.uk
Sept.	Dec.	***Japan Season.*** Films and other Japanese productions.	Details as Culture Fest 04 above.
11 Oct	17 Oct	***Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival.*** The only documentary film and television festival in the UK. Includes at least 5 Japanese documentary films.	Sheffield's Showroom. www.sidf.co.uk

And Finally

If you would like to help to run the Society, if you can offer a specific event or if you would just like to feed in your ideas, please contact us through the Secretary David Woolf at davenann@btinternet.com or the Membership Secretary Neil Willis at neildwillis@hotmail.com Please put "JSNW" in the subject box of your email.

We hope to see you soon at a Society event!