

2007/2008 Calendar of Events and Council Meetings

| MONTH       | EVENT   | COUNCIL MEETINGS |
|-------------|---|------------------|
| <b>2007</b> |   |                  |
| Sep-07      | Monday 24th<br><b>Drinks Reception</b>            | Monday 3rd       |
| Oct-07      | Monday 29th                                       | Monday 1st       |
| Nov-07      | Monday 26th<br><b>Fundraiser for Scholarships</b> | Monday 5th       |
| <b>2008</b> |   |                  |
| Jan-08      | Monday 28th<br><b>Burns/Karaoke Night</b>         | Monday 7th       |
| Feb-08      | Monday 26th<br><b>Film Night &amp; Discussion</b> | Monday 4th       |
| Mar-08      | <b>Eating out event?</b>                          | Monday 3rd       |
| Apr-08      | Monday 28th<br><b>Cherry Blossom Fundraiser</b>   | Monday 7th       |
| May-08      | Saturday 27th<br><b>West Coast Japan Day</b>      | Monday 12th      |
| Jun-08      | <b>Garden Festival Involvement?</b><br><b>AGM</b> | Monday 2nd       |
| Jul-08      | <b>First Council Meeting of 2007/8</b>            | Monday 7th       |



**Japan Society of Scotland**  
**Newsletter**  
**Summer 2007**



Welcome to the summer 2007 newsletter for the Japan Society of Scotland. It is with great pleasure that I join the council as newsletter editor, relocating to Edinburgh after a two year stint on the JET programme in the little known and rather rural prefecture of Fukui.

During my time in Fukui I was co-editor of JETfuel - a magazine for English speakers in the area. My two years in Fukui were not only full of cultural exploration, but also adventures into the rural delights of the ken. I spent many wonderful days exploring the deserted mountain lakes in my kayak, cross country skiing across snow covered rice paddies (trying to keep up with my 12 year old students!) and walking through bamboo forests with *Shiro* – the school dog.

I am delighted to be able to maintain my links and interest in Japan by becoming the editor of the JSS newsletter.

**Sam Baldwin**

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We are always interested to receive any Japan-Scotland related news, articles and photographs.

Please email contributions to:  
[jssnewsletter@googlemail.com](mailto:jssnewsletter@googlemail.com)



**Walking *Shiro* the school dog over snow covered rice paddies, Ono, Fukui, Japan**

## OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

Honorary President - H.E. The Japanese Ambassador  
Honorary Vice - President - Consul-General of Japan Edinburgh  
Honorary Patron - Mr. James Howat (Order of the Rising Sun)  
Honorary Vice-Patron - Mr. James Wardrop  
Council Chairman - Rev. Professor Stuart D.B. Picken  
Hon. Secretary - Mr. Charles Edmond  
Hon. Treasurer - Mr. Ken Forman  
Membership Secretary - Mr. Tim Steward  
Newsletter Editor - Mr. Sam Baldwin  
JET Association Liaison - Ms. Janice Leary

### Council Members:

Mr. Geoff Goolnik  
Mr. Edward Blake  
Ms. Emi Sakamoto  
Ms. Saeko Yasaki  
Dr. Helen Parker  
Mrs. Morag Thomson

JSS Scottish Charity Number No SC 03709



## Scotland Serves up Japan's Famous Kobe Beef

Sushi restaurants and noodle bars are a common sight in Britain these days, but a restaurant in Scotland has now brought one of Japan's most renowned delicacies to our shores.

*The Grill On The Corner* on Bothwell Street, Glasgow, has recently started selling Japan's Kobe beef.

Kobe beef comes from Wagyu cattle, that are said to be hand massaged and fed on a diet that includes beer which gives the meat a deliciously rich flavour, tenderness, and fatty well-marbled texture, qualities enhanced by the traditional (and well guarded) methods of raising Kobe beef.

Now other establishments in Scotland are following The Grill's lead and are adding Kobe beef to their menus too.

But this Japanese delicacy doesn't come cheap - served simply with soy sauce and a wasabi potato mash, the meat sells at £44 for a portion - which weighs about 100g. However, despite the high price, the beef has been selling well to people who are keen to experience one of the food world's more exotic luxuries.



**Kobe cattle are said to be hand massaged, and fed a diet that includes beer**

Those not willing to shell out the best part of £50 for a taste of this luxurious beef can opt for the more affordable priced Kobe Burger, on The Grill's menu for a reasonable £16.95.

## About Kobe Beef

It is the even distribution of the meat's high fat content and the marbling that makes Kobe Beef so sought-after, and which has led to it being dubbed 'white steak' in some quarters.

In these health-conscious times, meat that contains a large proportion of fat might not seem desirable, but its fans claim that because wagyu has a high percentage of monounsaturated fat, as opposed to the saturated variety, it is actually good for you. A claim I'm not personally convinced by!

Health considerations aside, it is the unique marbling of wagyu beef that makes it literally melt in the mouth.

Wagyu's characteristics mean that it has to be prepared in a different way from other beef.

No oil is needed in the cooking process, and it takes just two minutes to sear and serve the meat. Ironically, Japan now imports around 30% of its beef from Australia and the US.



## The Scottish Samurai; Glover House News

Glover House in Aberdeen was the home of Thomas Blake Glover ((1838-1911), The "Scottish Samurai", who was one of the founders of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd in Nagasaki, Japan. The house Thomas built for his parents was given by Mitsubishi in 1997 to the Thomas Blake Glover Trust and has been restored to its former Victorian splendour with many original details and features.

Thomas Blake Glover's family lived at Bridge of Don from 1849, moving to this house in 1864.

Thomas Blake Glover is today revered in the land of the rising sun, as being one of the founders of modern Japan. He had a crucial role in the industrialisation of Japan and in the introduction of Western developments in manufacturing, while helping to overthrow the Shogun and restoring the rightful heir to the Imperial Throne. His personal life may also have provided the basis for the Madam Butterfly story, immortalised in the opera by Puccini.

The house has been recreated as Glover would have known it in the 1860s, and a guided tour will help you to explore Glover's story. Visitors will see an authentic Victorian Parlour, Dining Room, Bedroom and Victorian Kitchen, as well as admiring Samurai armour and other Japanese memorabilia.

Glover House was gifted by Mitsubishi Co to the Grampian Japan Trust in 1987, and it is now managed by Aberdeen City Council with the support of the City Growth Fund Energising Aberdeen.

2007 hours of opening are Thursday through to Monday, 11am to 4 pm (closed Tuesday and Wednesday). Other times by arrangement

Admission is £3 for adults, £2 for children and other concessions and a family group (2 adults, 2 children) is £7.

There is some parking at the house and limited disabled access. First Bus route no 1 (Red Line) from Aberdeen City Centre to Danestone stops just outside the gate.



Statue of Thomas Blake Glover in Glover Garden, Nagasaki, Japan

## Message from the Consul General

### Mr Shuhei Takahashi

Since my arrival in Scotland back in September 2004, I have felt most fortunate to live and work in a country with such a strong affinity and connection to Japan.

Due to my love of history, I have thoroughly enjoyed researching the historical link between our two countries and the essential role Scotland and its people played in the modernisation of Japan.

I know you will be very familiar with the names of Thomas Blake Glover, William Burton, and Professor Henry Dyer, amongst others. However, I was delighted to discover that these historical figures continue to play a vital part in the promotion of Scottish and Japanese relations today.

During my time as Consul General, I have been honoured to participate in a number of events celebrating the achievements of these individuals thus helping to introduce them to a whole new audience.

In September 2006, there were several events held in Aberdeen and Edinburgh in recognition of the contribution made by William Burton to the modernisation of Japan's water supply system in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Last June, the Consulate General of Japan co-hosted a reception at the Scottish Parliament



with Mr Alex Johnstone MSP, to commemorate the life and work of Thomas Blake Glover, and through the course of my tenure there have been many lectures on the link between Scotland and Japan by Professor Kita from Soka University.

These are certainly encouraging signs that the special connection between our two countries continues to strengthen over time and with these solid foundations, I believe we can only serve to increase mutual understanding.

Over the last few years, I have also been greatly heartened to see that the Japan Society of Scotland is continuing to flourish, 20 years after its inception.

With the growing number of Japanese societies such as the Japanese Residents Association, the Aberdeen Friends of Japan, the university societies of Edinburgh, Glasgow and St.

Andrews, and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, I very much hope that the Japan Society of Scotland will assume a central and active role in bringing these separate groups together. Such co-operation could see the promotion of Japan in Scotland greatly enhanced.

I am also confident the Consulate General of Japan will continue to have a good relationship with the Japan Society of Scotland for many more years to come and together we can promote and deepen the friendship that exists between Scotland and Japan.



## The Gallery

1

Mr. Tomoyuki Naoi, personal chef of the Consul General demonstrates the making of sushi at last year's opening event in September 2006 at the Prestonfield House Hotel.

Interpreting is Suzie Huggins, former PA to the Consul General.



2

The Consul General and Mrs. Takahashi with the Chairman, Dr. Picken and Mrs. Picken at the 20th Anniversary Dinner at the Dunblane Hydro in October 2006.



3

The Japan-Scotland Society from Japan made a visit to Scotland during 2006 and travelled extensively around the country. The group of 20 members had a happy tour and were entertained by the Consul General at his residence in Edinburgh. On the right is the Director, Mr. Takeru Sato.

cooperation and support, for use of the basement facilities on more than one occasion. Helen Parker hosted most of the Council Meetings at Buccleugh Place, and Morag Thomson kindly hosted the meeting at which the presentations were made. To the many others who helped in various ways, I offer my thanks. As Chairman, I would like to thank everyone for their support in the

past, and sincerely ask for continued help in the year ahead. We need to raise the profile of the Society and to awaken people to the centrality of Japan-Scotland relations as a cornerstone of international business relations based on a truly global strategy.

**Rev. Professor Stuart D.B. Picken**



## Sad Farewells

Oliver Maclauchlan, a founding member of the Society, who had a long interest in East Asia, and Ian Harkness, a Council member for many years and Chairman from 2003 until 2006 both passed away quite unexpectedly this year.

Oliver was present at the Anniversary Dinner, and Ian attended a special Council Meeting to receive Honorary Membership and a symbolic gift from the Society for his years of service. Both will be deeply missed. Our thoughts are with their nearest and dearest at this time, and we wish them all comfort and blessing.

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Edinburgh. It was suggested that for the 2008 event, the Society should co-operate. The Society is now committed to help at the event.

In keeping with the perceived need to re-launch the society the Council elected to devise a new logo that was unveiled at the Anniversary Dinner. Unfortunately the logo had to be abandoned when it was decreed by the Lord Lyon that it defaced the national flag and did not comply with the prescribed rules for the use of heraldic symbols.

The penalty for such an offence is high and the cost of legalizing an approved form was to be



Japanese.

A scholarship programme seemed the most obvious and beneficial, and therefore the Society calendar for the year 2007-8 will include two major fund-raising events. Armed with the logo and the pamphlet, the Council agreed further that the Chairman should approach Japanese and Scottish companies for their help with the scholarship programme. This campaign is scheduled to begin in Autumn.

4

It has been a difficult year in some ways, but Japan Day 2006 at Moray House Edinburgh, was also rewarding. We are most grateful to Consul General Takayoshi for his

at the AGM.

Finally, but of great importance, is a new vision for the Society that the Council felt was needed. In keeping with the status of the Society as a registered charity, it was resolved to start a scholarship fund that would help to assist one or two students from Scotland each year to study in Japan, and in particular, Japanese language.

With the almost irrational preoccupation with China and the closure of Japanese Studies at Stirling University, the need was felt for more encouragement and support to be given to the study of Japan and

4  
A fine collection of origami at Japan Day 2006, Moray House Edinburgh.



5

The Society dinner.



6

Children having fun with sumo costumes at Japan Day.



## Japanese Gardeners and Other Species

By Ken Forman  
(Treasurer, Japan Society of Scotland)

Last autumn I became a tour guide for a time. I had already visited Japan many times on short business trips and tagged on whatever tourist activities I could fit in. Last year, I fulfilled a promise to my wife, Helen, to take her on holiday there to show her round some of the places I had visited. It was also an opportunity for me to appreciate some of the local culture in more relaxing circumstances than I had been able to in the past.

Helen's passion is gardening so we planned the trip to be able to visit as many of the Japanese gardens open to the public as we could and to collect some seeds which we hope to germinate and eventually recreate part of Japan in our own garden.

We spent about a week and a half in Tokyo and about a week touring the country using a JR rail pass. Helen accuses me of working her too hard during our holiday but we did manage to see a lot, although by the end we were both beginning to suffer from over-exposure to Japanese culture. We were certainly beginning to find it hard to remember where all our seeds had



come from, as we collected a good selection almost every day.

During my business visits, I had been aware of a distinctly different culture in Japan but it was masked to some extent by a veneer of Western culture. On this visit, I became aware that the veneer is really quite thin and that just below the surface traditional Japanese culture is alive and well.

There were three features that particularly struck us about Japan – friendliness, efficiency and trustworthiness. We rarely had to stand still on the pavement for more than a few seconds before someone would approach us to ask if we needed any help. Sometimes, these were foreigners like ourselves – the culture is clearly infectious!

I had experienced Japanese efficiency before, so was taking it more for granted but Helen was really overwhelmed. From the moment we came into the arrivals hall at Narita and throughout our holiday she was continually impressed with the way everything works so smoothly in Japan. Her views in the first fifteen minutes were influenced by being able to walk almost straight on to the limousine bus that took us right to the hotel. I, on the other hand was panicking as I knew that if we missed that one we would have to wait almost three hours for the next one!

was also well represented at the lecture given by HE Ambassador Nogami on November 20th and at other events hosted by the Edinburgh University Business School.

The events of 2007 made it very much a year of culture. Again by courtesy of the Consul General, a pleasant evening of sake and haiku was enjoyed by almost 30 members.

Edinburgh University was host to a *Bunraku* event that the Society supported both financially and through attendance.

The Japanese Residents' Association held a Japan Day on the theme of "Kimono Mackintosh" on March 18th in Glasgow, and the JET Association ceilidh was held also in Glasgow on March 25th.

During the year, various events were held at different locations involving Meiji Period (1868-1912) Scots who in some way contributed to Japan's modernisation process, namely Messrs. Burton, Brunton and Glover. The anniversary of Glover's birth was celebrated in the Scottish Parliament, while another major event took place in the City Chambers in Aberdeen.

This was followed on April 12th by the opening of Thomas Glover House in Aberdeen. The Society was represented at all these events by the Chairman or by members of the Council. A planned

business event to be held in Aberdeen in May had to be rescheduled for September, and it will go ahead once time and place have been agreed.

The Council met on the first or second Monday of every month from July to June. After a great deal of difficulty in arranging a suitable time, the Council made presentations of Honorary Membership along with a modest inscribed gift to Ian Harkness for his

work as Chairman, and to Jim Roy for 20 years of sterling service as Treasurer.

Sadly Ian passed away rather suddenly not long after. His funeral was well attended by members of the Council which marked his passing with a minute of silence at the first Council Meeting thereafter.



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The final meeting of the present year, held on June 4 was preoccupied with future planning, and a draft of the 2007-8 programme was produced. It is hoped that other events might be held in the Glasgow area also or indeed wherever there is sufficient interest. The Council felt that to be the Japan Society of Scotland a wider view of the country must be taken and that it should not confine itself to the Central Belt or the East Coast.

The Consul-General organized a stand at the Gardening Scotland 2007 event at the Royal Highland Centre,



## REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2006-7

### Rev. Professor Stuart D.B. Picken

As I stated in the letter inviting members to renew their support of the Society, this year has been a year of transition and rebuilding.

After the AGM last year, the Council had to deal with a number of important issues, not least of all replacing those members who had stepped down. Fortunately, some new faces were forthcoming. Charles Edmond joined and became the Honorary Secretary and two Japanese members, Ms. Emi Sakamoto and Ms. Saeko Yasaki volunteered their services.

The JET Association of former teachers in Japanese High Schools became involved by sending representatives to each Council meeting to explore possible ways of working together as latterly did the Japanese Residents' Association.

The Council reciprocated with support for the JETA at their ceilidh in Glasgow with quite a few members attending.

The year's programme was fairly full, although one event planned for the Scottish Parliament could not be



renew my acquaintance with him after so many years.

On November 27th, the University of Edinburgh David Hume Tower was the venue for an illustrated talk on *Anime*, a distinctive genre of Japanese visual media.

Of great interest to everyone was some early black and white footage of animated film made during World War II depicting Japanese soldiers as cute little bears parachuting into Singapore.

All events in 2006 were well supported. The Council and Society

held on account of the elections in May. We began in September with the sushi-making event by courtesy of Consul General Takahashi and his chef, at the Prestonfield Hotel in Edinburgh.

October saw our 20th anniversary dinner at the Dunblane Hydro that was a landmark in the Society's history. Several founding members were present, including Oliver Maclauchlan, formerly headmaster of Balwearie High School, one of the two schools in which the pilot programme of Japanese language education was started in 1987. Sadly it was to be his last event.

However, I was personally very happy to

I have always known that crime in Japan is much lower than in our country but we came across examples of behaviour that people here would not even think about. Both were in Nikko, a major tourist destination about two hours northwest of Tokyo.

We stopped to look in to an antique shop (although it is fair to say it was more like a bric-a-brac shop). There was no sign of anyone in the shop and the sliding door was closed but unlocked. The place was full of small objects most of which could not be seen from the outside so I opened the door and went in for a good look round.

I must have been in there for at least ten minutes but in that time I saw nobody. As it was, I did not find anything I wanted to buy anyway but it would have been possible to make off with a load of stuff. In the evening we walked

past a vegetable shop we had passed earlier in the day. It was clearly closed but there were still racks of vegetables on display outside (and no, I do not think they were plastic, or if they were, they would have been worth more than the real thing!).

While we were in Tokyo we stayed in two different hotels – one was a modern hotel in Shibuya, appealing to a relatively young clientele. The other was a more traditional hotel in Uchisaiwacho with a more serene ambience. Staying in each of them was both comfortable and enjoyable but they offered very different experiences. For me, this is

best captured by their wake-up calls. In each, the phone rings at the predetermined time. In Shibuya, a shrill female voice at the other end intones "Time to get up!" At the other hotel a calming voice, also female, waxes lyrical: "Good morning! This is your wake up call. The staff of the Imperial Hotel hopes that you had a pleasant rest and we wish you a very good day." It's almost worth setting the alarm for several different times!

We lost count of the number of gardens we visited. Some were attached to old houses where today the garden is the only attraction but most were included in the grounds of a temple or shrine. While Helen was studying the plants in the various gardens, I was observing the gardeners. And there were plenty to observe! In Japan, they tend to work in



groups – several times we came across up to ten gardeners weeding a small section. As one might expect this is a meticulous process involving crouching down and picking out weeds individually. We even saw one gardener perched on a ladder resting on the bottom of a pond, cutting off individual pine needles from a tree. Helen was attracted by their hats designed for protection from the sun and managed to find a shop selling them so this summer she will be out there weeding away in Japanese style. We also saw one gardener wearing an incense burner slung over his shoulder – I suspect to try to keep biting insects

at bay, something we could do with in our garden at times!

There are many insects in Japan, including some beautifully coloured butterflies. One of the benefits of visiting gardens and taking a close interest in the plants was that we were also able to see some of these. One of the most unusual for me was a mantis which looked very like ET, the alien in the film.

Insect collecting is a popular hobby amongst Japanese schoolboys and we saw one group on a school outing with something that looked like a scorpion. By contrast, there are very few animals either wild or farmed in the Japanese countryside. It took a while for us to realise it but after several train journeys, Helen observed that she had not seen any cows or sheep. Again it is something that I had got used to over the years, but I'm still not sure why it is the case. Perhaps it is that the economics of animal farming are against it or the climate and soil are more suited to cropping. Certainly the traditional diet in Japan contains less meat than in our country. Part of the explanation too is that we were in the wrong part of Japan for I have seen cowherds in Hokkaido.

We were both impressed by the number of different uses that are found for bamboo. There certainly is plenty of it growing in Japan and it grows very



quickly so I can see why it is used. I had come across bamboo scaffolding before, not just in Japan, but throughout Asia but this time we saw it used in outdoor lighting, various types of fencing, drinking cups, dessert forks and chopstick holders to name but a few. After a time it became a kind of challenge for us to discover what other uses were made of it. Since returning from Japan, we have bought a couple of bamboo plants but I suspect it will be few years before we are harvesting.

In the course of our holiday we visited quite a few temples and shrines. Compared with religious buildings in our country, Japan's seem to have much more vibrancy. People of all ages visit them regularly to seek favourable outcomes to life's challenges (often quite mundane ones). Temples are run on business lines finding a ready market for spiritual help in the form of tablets invoking help in passing a driving test or in securing successful medical treatment. Japanese people seem to be quite superstitious.

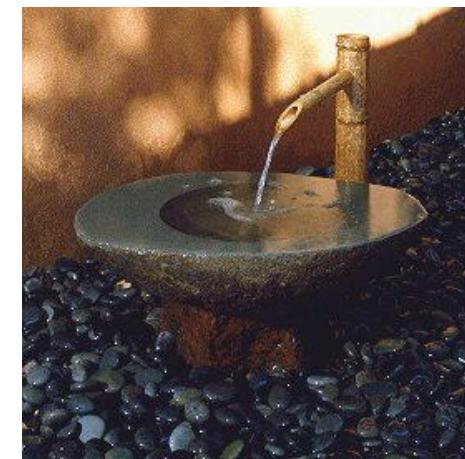
We were lucky enough to experience life in a Tokyo suburb when we descended on a Japanese friend for a couple of days. On strolling through the area the calm was disturbed by a loud voice coming from what sounded like a tannoy system. My friend told me that it was a neighbourhood system making an announcement for all children to return to their homes since it was 5pm.

Being Japan, it seemed to work. Certainly there was no reminder later! I never did discover whether the announcement is made at the same time every day or whether it varies with the season. On another day while we were on walkabout, we saw a small van being driven slowly around the narrow streets with a loudspeaker attached to its roof and the driver making announcements to the residents. My friend told me that this was the recycling collection. In Japan, people like to replace their household goods more often than we do and will often have goods to sell. There is effectively a reverse distribution system in which these goods are collected by door-to-door buyers and brought to a central facility where they are then redistributed.

There is an active second-hand market in Japan for a variety of household goods. A new law however threatens to destroy it as it will become illegal to sell used electrical goods without having them certified as satisfying safety standards which is an expensive process. (Late news – apparently the government, in the face of severe lobbying has agreed to postpone indefinitely the implementation of this law).

My friend lives in a modern house built in the garden of his mother's house – quite a common arrangement in Japan. His mother occupied an old wooden house built in the traditional style. They share what remains of the garden, with

my friend using it to practice his golf shots – also quite common for Japanese businessmen! They have a very old Japanese pine bonsai and a large tree which they described as a 'monkey slipping tree' because of its particularly smooth bark. Although taking a keen interest in gardening and particularly proud of the delphiniums which had grown from seed we had given her earlier, my friend's wife confessed to hiring a gardener twice a year to spend a week on 'tidying it up'. I have visions of this person painstakingly removing weeds and pruning their shrubs etc.



Like all good things our holiday drew to a close and I was able to pack away my tour guide uniform for another year. On our last evening in Tokyo we were privileged to be entertained by our sister society, the Japan Scotland Society and we enjoyed a wonderful time meeting some of the members interspersed with musical interludes performed by an accomplished *clarsach* player. Although we achieved a lot in the time we were in Japan there is much that we were unable to fit in.

Japan is full of surprises and we would thoroughly recommend anyone who is interested in the country and its people to make a visit. Who knows, we may even see you there when we return for another dip into its culture at some stage.