

THE JOURNAL OF THE JAPAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTRE • LONDON  
FEATURING ASPECTS OF JAPANESE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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kawazu naku kamunabi  
kawa ni kage miete  
ima ka sakuramu  
yamabuki no hana

Yamabuki blossoms –  
Their golden petals  
mirrored  
In the crystal stream  
Of the river  
Where frogs in chorus sing.

## MYRIAD LEAVES

Myriad Leaves is the English-language title for the earliest collection of Japanese poetry. It contains 4,516 waka poems, the last of which is dated AD759. There is uncertainty over the intention of the title: it could mean either 'Collection of ten thousand leaves' or 'Collection for ten thousand generations'.

2003



Kamikochi - Nagano Prefecture



Lake Shinji - Matsue City  
Shimane Prefecture



Kairakuen -  
Ibaraki Prefecture



Nagoya Castle - Nagoya City  
Aichi Prefecture

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NEWS ROUND UP

NEWS ROUND UP

**Forest Environment Tax**

By Emma Roche

Interest in the environment is on the increase, to the extent that one might even claim that the 21st century is the century of the environment. A variety of organisations across Japan have started to question the post-industrial social system of large-scale production, large scale consumption and large-scale disposal; and have started considering a move to a more sustainable, simple, quality-driven cyclical society model.

Against this background, local authorities across Japan have been implementing policies which reassess the value and role of forests. There have been a variety of approaches, some local authorities have published information about forest conservation, and have linked environmental, forestry and town management-related policies; others have introduced new taxes to cultivate forests. Rivers often find their source in the forests, so it is impossible to separate the two. In this the century of the environment, the role of forests is under the spotlight.

In April of this year, the heavily forested Kochi Prefecture (84% of its land area is forested) on the island of Shikoku (the smallest of Japan's four main islands) implemented a new tax to preserve the forest environment.

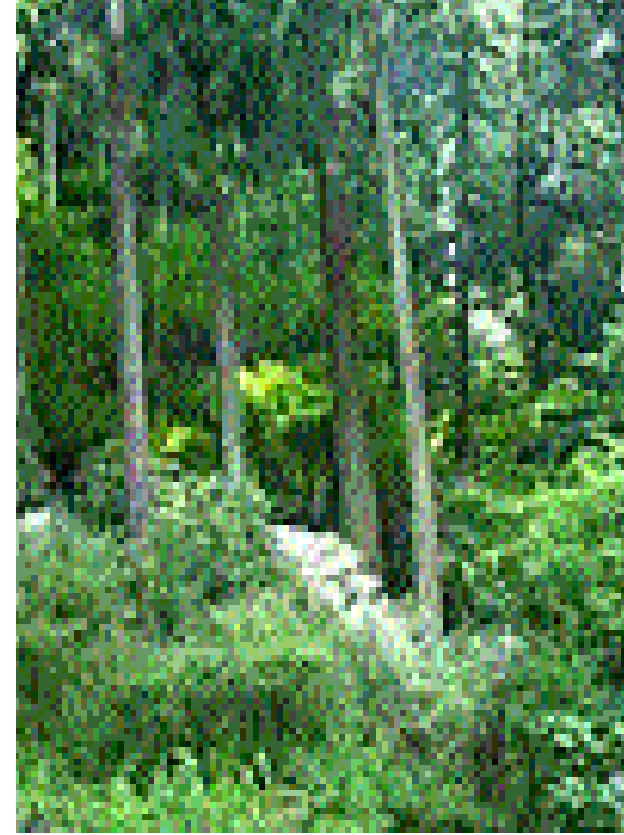
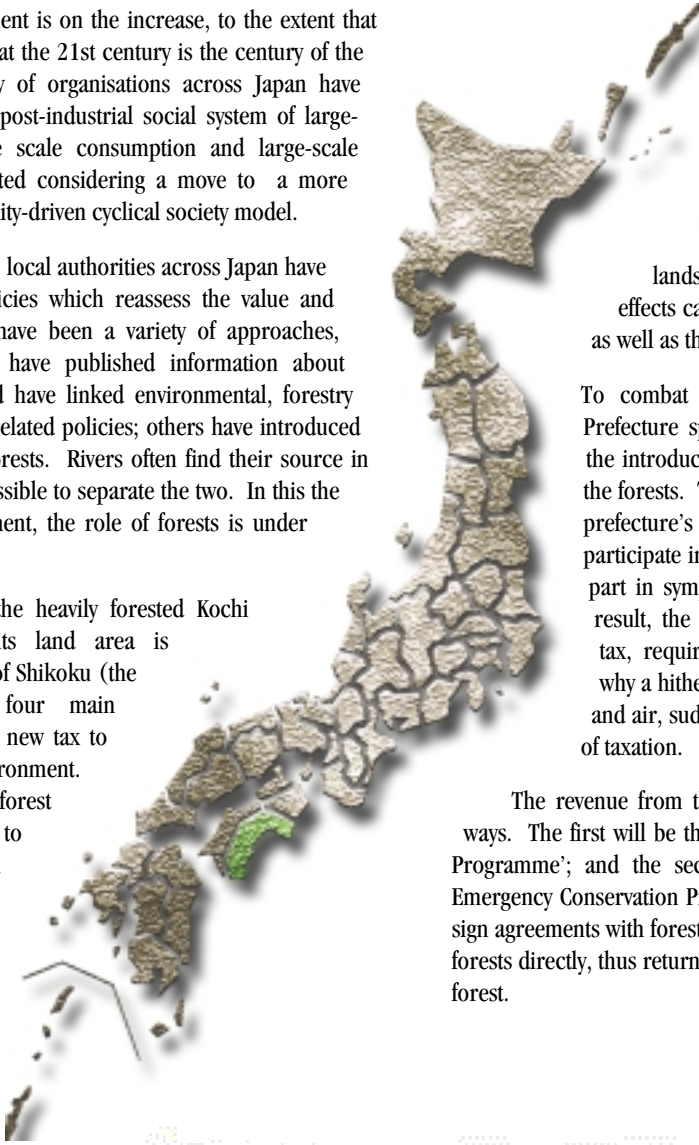
The goal of this 'forest environment tax' is to involve prefectural citizens in the preservation of the forests which perform a variety of public functions, such as water-source conservation.

Forests play a very important role in the environment, working to purify water and air, providing a home for a variety of ecosystems, absorbing CO2 from the atmosphere. The post-war demand for timber led to the over-logging of Kochi's mountain forests. Since then and in line with the national policy of increasing forests there has been uniform, large-scale tree-planting. However, the effects of an ageing society combined with the depopulation of rural areas, and the sinking price of timber, have meant that forest owners have lost

the will to manage their forests, so abandoned forests are increasing. Without active management and thinning, trees remain too close together, blocking out sun and preventing the growth of undergrowth. As a result, the ability to purify water is reduced and there is a greater risk of landslides. These and other negative side-effects can seriously impact on local ecosystems, as well as the living environment of local people.

To combat the devastation of its forests, Kochi Prefecture spent two years from 2001 considering the introduction of a new tax specifically to protect the forests. The deliberations were published on the prefecture's website, and citizens were invited to participate in the decision-making process by taking part in symposia and responding to surveys. The result, the introduction of the forest environment tax, required some explanation to citizens as to why a hitherto free resource, the forests, like water and air, suddenly needed to be paid for, in the form of taxation.

The revenue from this new tax will be spent in two main ways. The first will be the 'Citizens Participatory Forest Building Programme'; and the second will be the 'Forest Environment Emergency Conservation Programme', whereby the prefecture will sign agreements with forest landowners to allow it to go in and thin forests directly, thus returning it to a state closer to a mixed natural forest.



The tax will be levied by adding an additional ¥500 (approximately £2.57) per capita to the existing prefectural resident's tax. The new tax should raise ¥140 million (approximately £745,000) a year. To ensure that the revenues collected are used for the specified purpose, a new 'Forest Environment Preservation Fund' will be established to allow clearer accounting. In principle, the tax will be levied for fifteen years from fiscal 2003, with a review after five years.

The aim of this new tax is to preserve the forests by raising awareness amongst citizens of the value and importance of our forests, and involving them in bearing the burden of costs involved. However, some voices have been raised in opposition on the grounds that it is hard to see where the taxation is being spent. So it is important that tax revenues are spent in an easily identifiable manner and any measures implemented are responsive to local needs.

Prefectural Governor, Daijiro Hashimoto, emphasises that, 'We chose this form of top-up taxation so that the burden would be spread widely but lightly across all citizens. The health of our forests is a concern that affects not just those living in rural areas, but also those living in urban areas. This is one step in the battle against the abandonment and devastation of forests nationwide. Citizens will be involved in the decision-making process, so I look forward to hearing about ideas as to how best we manage and use the tax.'

**Local Administration Records Enter The Digital Age**

By Emma Roche

Later this year, local administration records across Japan will be revolutionised by the introduction of a smartcard for residents. In Japan residents are required to register their details and those of their family at the local government office. There are a plethora of forms to fill out and records must be kept updated. This process must be repeated whenever they move house.

These records are used by the local authorities to maintain electoral registers, and to keep track of pension, social insurance and child allowance eligibility, and for a variety of other administrative purposes.

The first step towards issuing residents with smartcards was taken in August last year, when a network (Juki Net) linking local authorities and the main server at the Local Authorities Development Centre in Tokyo was established. Only four key pieces of personal data are stored on the national network: name, date of birth, gender and address. In addition a new 11-digit resident certificate code number will also be stored. This data will be enough to establish a person's identity, allowing speedier processing of applications, claims and enquiries, not just in their local municipal office, but in any municipal office across Japan.

The introduction of the Juki Net has not been universally welcomed. Citizens' groups and even some local authorities have expressed a number of concerns about network. These include doubts as to the security of the network, and fears that the information held on it might be misused by officials and even central government. Indeed a number of local authorities have gone so far as to either opt out of the system completely, or to register only those residents who have agreed to it. Central government insists that these security fears are unfounded and that local government employees found to be abusing the system will be heavily penalised. Another key criticism is that data privacy legislation that was due to be in place before the introduction of the system is still being debated in parliament.

From 25 August this year the first Juki Cards smartcards, officially called 'Basic Resident Cards' will be issued. These will contain an individual's information as held on the Juki Net, and it is hoped that they will speed up the handling of residents' administrative dealings with local authorities. There are also proposals that these cards will be used when using public facilities such as libraries and sports facilities.





**JLGC UPDATE**

**PFI PROJECT**

**Focus On Leeds**  
by Masayuki Sugino

**General View of Leeds**



Leeds is a diverse and growing city, which dominates the Yorkshire Region. The metropolitan area has a population approaching 740,000, and covers approximately 200 square miles. The City consists of a main urban area with a population of around half a million people, and an outer ring of small towns set in countryside, the majority of which is designated as Green Belt. In particular, the City has developed as a major retail centre, and has the second largest legal and financial sector in the country after London.

**Leeds 7 Schools PFI Project**

Leeds City Council (LCC) has many PFI projects and plans, ranging from the education sector to transportation with the "Super-Tram". Leeds 7 Schools PFI Project is just one of LCC's PFI scheme. As its name suggests, this project involves the rebuilding of two high schools, four primary schools, and the construction of one new primary school. We visited Spring Bank Primary School, one of the schools reconstructed under this contract, which re-opened in September 2002. Some 200 children attend the school at present. The services provided by the contractor to the school mainly include the following: design and construction of the building and provision of furniture and equipment; all maintenance of the interior and exterior of the building; and caretaking, cleaning, catering, security, and grounds maintenance.



*The new school building*

Payment to the contractor by LCC takes the form of a unitary charge paid quarterly for each year of the contract. This charge is for all services, not just construction. The school building is to be returned to LCC at the end of the contract period of 28 years. Central Government provides revenue support for this PFI project by issuing National Credit Approval which amounts to £45.2m.

**Spring Bank Primary School**

You can still see the former school building standing opposite the new one, because it is registered as a listed building and therefore has to be preserved with its present external appearance. For this reason LCC now plans to sell this building to a developer, so that it can be converted into apartments.



*The former Spring Bank Primary School building will be converted into flats*

Before moving to the new building, the students had endured poor conditions which were not conducive to studying as the former building was so old that parts of the roof were almost crumbling, and some children were obliged to study in prefabricated classrooms.

Due to its relatively small size, you can notice some innovative facilities around the site. For instance, they have space for a

playground on the roof of the building, and another outdoor playground which has been covered with artificial turf. Compared with natural grass it has the great advantage of being easy to maintain. In addition, the yard is well drained since a large quantity of sand has been put under the turf. A design firm from the Council's contractual partner is responsible for this ingenious plan, and Council representatives admitted that previously, when

LCC was directly responsible for constructing schools without the PFI system, they would have paved the playground with asphalt.

However, the school authority is not completely satisfied with all the new facilities. A library located below the rooftop playground is seemingly very nice, but because of an inefficient heating system the children have no choice but to read books at an uncomfortably cold room temperature. In situations such as this, i.e., when they are unhappy with the services provided by the contractor, the authority can contact them using a 24-hour helpline service. All communications are recorded by a computer, and deductions are made from the LCC's payments according to how serious the problems are, and how and when the contractor resolves the situation. With the heating problem in the library, the contractor has so far failed to find a satisfactory solution. The contractor must therefore expect a substantial cut of the unitary charge to be paid by LCC.

Before visiting Spring Bank Primary School we had difficulties in understanding the finer details of the PFI system, mainly because the system is so complicated. Thanks to the school authority and persons concerned we were able to not only grasp the facts about PFI, but also experience its workings firsthand.

Last but not least, Spring Bank Primary School's new building itself is very simple compared to new school buildings in Japan. We have to admit however, that the level of facilities provided is quite sufficient for children to study, and we were very impressed by the pupils who learn and play in this new school building.

**U P D A T E**  
**Research: Local Authority in Germany**  
Tatsuya Hitomi

For our research topic, Mr. Suzuki and I chose to prepare a Country Report about the local authority system in Germany. There are still very few general reports about this subject in Japan, even at CLAIR (the Tokyo headquarters for JLGC). We experienced some difficulties in producing this report as we were hampered by our lack of German language skills, and by the fact that the German system is made up of 16 autonomous regions, or Lander. However, we were fortunate enough to be able to visit Land offices and other local authority organisations in four Lander: Nordrhein – Westfalen, Bayern, Bremen and Brandenburg. Thanks to our kind and hospitable hosts, we were able to gather a great deal of useful information. We managed to produce our three-hundred page report just in time for the deadline (three days before our return to Japan!).

About ten years have passed since re-unification, and the framework of municipalities in Germany is changing dynamically in terms of reinforcement of the autonomy and accountability to the resident. For example, many municipalities in former West Germany have adopted the elected mayor system. On the other hand, a lot of small municipalities in former East Germany have faced the historical stream of the consolidation of municipalities. What's more, discussions have been held between the central government, the Lander and municipalities on what the finance resource for municipalities should be.

These issues are interesting to the local authorities in Japan, because Japanese local authorities face the same problems; the financial crisis, the improvement of accountability to citizens and the strengthening of municipal autonomy. We hope that our research will encourage some municipalities to take the first step towards improvement. In particular, we would be delighted if municipalities, both those that approve and those that disapprove of consolidation, take interest in the current situation of the consolidation of municipalities in former East Germany.

**U P D A T E**  
**Focus on Irish Reform**  
Toshihisa Hasegawa

The local government system in the Republic of Ireland was established in 1898 when the whole of Ireland was ruled by Britain. Although Southern Ireland gained independence from Britain in 1937 the system was not reformed. At that time local government bodies were still regarded as part of the central government, and they carried out some functions normally expected of central government.

In the 1990's this all changed. First, the theory of ultra vires was altered and more discretion was given to local government bodies. Second, the function and organisation of local government bodies was stipulated in 1998 for the first time. Since then, reforms of the local government system have been carried out very quickly. For example, strategic policy committees and corporate policy groups were formed in county and city councils, allowing members of local government bodies to focus on making policies, and increasing the efficiency of local government management.

I believe that local government bodies in Ireland now have the same power and functions as most of their equivalents in other advanced nations. In the future I imagine they will have more discretion and freedom in terms of finance management under a system of directly-elected mayors. I hope that the Japan Local Government Centre will continue to follow reforms of the local government system in Ireland.

**U P D A T E**  
**Research into Austrian Local Government**  
Irmelind Kirchner

Research into local government structures in Austria is ongoing, and this year we are making a concerted effort toward finalising the project for publication next spring. Like so many other European countries, local government in Austria is undergoing changes, and in many



*Linz City, Professor Wolny with Director Ando and Irmelind Kirchner*

aspects it is looking towards its neighbour Germany, with which it shares a number of features. Two visits to Austria have already taken place. In March, Director Ando and I visited the federal state of Upper Austria, the city of Linz and a subordinated administrative unit, Freistadt, as well as the Federal Ministry of Finance and a joint research and consulting organisation of local government, the KDZ. Our enquiries were particularly concerned with understanding the structure of local government finance and recent experiences with the system of directly elected mayors, which have been introduced in most federal states from the nineties onwards, and the efforts at modernising the structures of working. The city of Linz in particular has transformed its traditional bureaucratic structures into citizen-oriented, streamlined operating units, and has been especially successful at separating out services which can be run on economic principles, such as transport and water. In June, Mr. Ando, Mr. Kato and I undertook a further trip, this time concentrating on the western part of Austria, visiting the federal states of Vorarlberg and Tyrol, as well as the city of Innsbruck.



*Linz Market Place*



## LONG-TERM TRAINEE REPORT

## Local Government Employee Overseas Assistance Programme 2002

by Takashi Nakayama

I have not long finished participating in the Local Government Employee Overseas Assistance Programme 2002, which is sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Post and Telecommunications and the Japan Local Government Centre (JLGC). This programme consists of a period of study at a private English school in London, and a training programme which is provided jointly by the English for International Students Unit of the Japan Centre, and the Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) at Birmingham University.

I will start off by mentioning the advantages of this programme. Firstly, I studied at Birmingham University, which has 23,000 international students, and have been living in University accommodation. This allowed me to gain a sense of the international feeling and values in Birmingham through conversation with many other students from all over the world. Secondly, I gained an understanding of the framework of the UK administrative system during an intensive two-and-a-half-week course for Japanese local government officers, run by INLOGOV in October. Thirdly, I was lucky enough to have placements with local authorities in the West Midlands region over a period of two months. Through these placements, not only was I able to study the administrative system in the UK, and in particular my research topic, but I also gained precious first-hand experience and insights into the day-to-day work of local authorities, for example the attitudes towards their job of UK local government officers.

In particular I would like to focus on my training placement training at Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council in January 2003. Walsall MBC has been having a difficult time since last autumn because the result of its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) was poor in every field including education, social service, environment, and housing. CPA is a new evaluation system which emerged after Best Value. As a result, the chief executive and some senior staff were dismissed, and central government intervened directly in reforming the administration. Central government appointed Mr. Michael Frater who was chief executive of Telford and Wrekin Council as Acting Chief Executive. Fortunately, although he is extremely busy supervising the reform project, I had an opportunity to talk with him. Despite the upheavals it seemed to me that all staff in the civic centre, especially in the personnel service unit to which I was attached, were working diligently and enthusiastically.

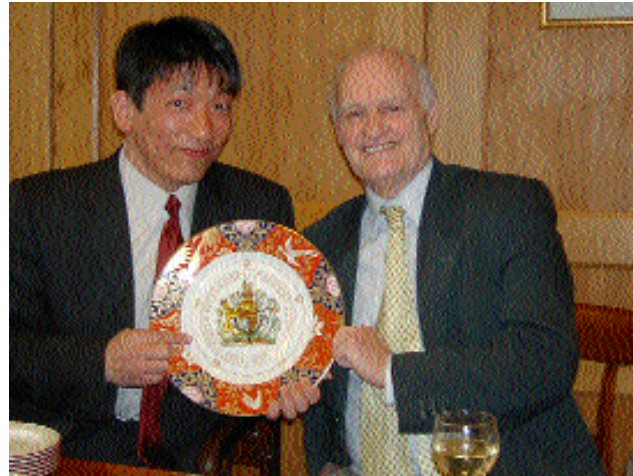
My second training placement was with Worcestershire County Council, which is in a rural area of the West Midlands region. I was allowed to attend many meetings and lectures during my time here. Visiting the council in session was a particularly wonderful experience for me.

Finally, I would like to highlight my particular research topic, the personnel management system in the UK, particularly 'job-sharing'. Traditionally, the idea of 'job-sharing' has contributed towards the maintenance and creation of employment. However, it is still not popular in either the public or private sectors in Japan. A recent survey carried out by central government shows that only 5% of companies have a system of job-sharing, one factor being the Japanese tradition of lifetime employment. It appears, however, that many local authorities in the UK welcome job-sharing and other flexible working patterns. Local government personnel management in the UK is quite different from that of Japan. Namely, it is often managed by a contract of several years in contrast to lifetime employment as in Japan. That is to say that there is fluidity and movement of labour in the UK. Moreover, surprisingly, the ratio of part-time workers to the total number of workers is extremely high compared with Japan; around 40% in the UK and 10% in Japan. It can be said that there are some advantages to introducing job-sharing to Japan's personnel

management in terms of a golden opportunity to renew the out-of-date personnel management system and employment system in Japan. I feel strongly that there are many ideas we could learn from the UK personnel management system. To this end I also undertook further research into the issue through a placement with Worcestershire County Council.

I would like to close by mentioning some of my impressions of my time in England. The world cup football championship 2002 was held in Japan and South Korea. There is no doubt that football is one of the most popular sports in the world. Although I didn't go to Japan and South Korea I saw many enthusiastic supporters crowded in front of televisions across Birmingham. Also there were a great number of celebrations across the UK in 2002 because of the Golden Jubilee. Additionally I can hardly forget the many warning messages I received most months from the Japanese embassy in London, as a result of the widespread threat of terrorism which shook the world after September 11th 2001. Moreover, and something which has never happened in Japan and which had not occurred in the UK for the last 25 years, fire strikes took place. Negotiations for a pay-increase were prolonged and are still not completely resolved as I write. Finally, the search for weapons of mass-destruction in Iraq by UN inspectors, and the role played by the UK government also made a significant impression on me.

All that remains is for me to express my deepest gratitude to all those involved in organising and facilitating this programme. It was an extremely worthwhile opportunity for me, and I sincerely hope that the programme will continue and develop in the future, allowing many more local government officers from Japan to take part.



Mr. Nakayama with Dr H. G. Lord, Leader of Worcestershire County Council

## VIEWPOINT

## Visit to Leicester City Council - Regeneration

Toru Yamaguchi

Regeneration has recently become a subject of keen interest in Japan, and we have had many visitors from Japan who are curious to see how it is succeeding. As you might know, the Japanese economy has not been good, which is causing consumers to avoid shopping, particularly in town centres. Also many large shopping centres have been built in the suburbs, encouraging people to migrate away from town centres to the suburbs. This is a big problem for town centres. Many people have lost their jobs, people who cannot drive have lost accessible shopping facilities, and cities have lost their cultural and historic centres.

My colleague, Mr Sugino, and I are researching regeneration in the UK. Britain has a long history of successful regeneration. We think the reason for this success is partnership. With support from the government, rather than acting under compulsion from the government, local authorities are responding to local demands by working closely with local citizens.

In Japan, however, we have only a few examples of the partnership system. This means that local governments have to do many things towards regeneration. Because local governments do everything, citizens are not involved and so do not take an interest or pride in their towns. The result is that these towns cannot become sustainable cities. And also due to economic problems, local governments' budgets are simply not sufficient to implement such products. From our experiences here in the UK it is clear that Japan needs a good partnership system.

We decided to visit Leicester City Council because Leicester City Centre was nominated for an Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) annual Award in 2002. It was nominated for a number of ongoing initiatives targeting social and maintenance problems to improve the quality and awareness of the public realm. So it seemed an ideal opportunity for us to understand the relationship between the public and private sectors for regeneration.

Leicester city has a unique history. It prospered from the textile industry, and the influx of immigrant workers. It consequently now has a large ethnic minority population, which gives Leicester its unique atmosphere. Before achieving this, it strived for economic development in the 80's, and in the 90's the focus was on sustainable development. Now in the 21st century, the aim is to develop the area according to citizens' wishes. This is a key lesson for us to take back to Japan. We have to develop our regions taking account of the views of residents.

There are a dizzying number of partnerships and initiatives taking place in Leicester. The heart of them, the city centre management, was established in 2000. Town Centre Management and City Centre Management are both very popular public/private voluntary sector

partnerships in the UK. They create action plans and work to support the council. Other key partners in Leicester's regeneration are The Leicester Regeneration Company, Leicester Promotions and Leicestershire Economic Partnership. The Leicester Regeneration Company is a national urban regeneration company and they work with Roger Tym & Partners. They make master plans, most of which are reflected in the city council's local plans. Their remit includes big projects such as moving the location of the station, and the amazing National Space Centre which we visited. Leicester Promotions works to involve residents, and Leicestershire Economic Partnership, which is supported by EMDA, focuses on neighbourhood renewal.

Most partnerships involve residents. Of course, not all residents are interested in town management. What we learned from speaking to people in Leicester is that local authorities shouldn't undertake too many projects themselves, but rather allow the residents to come up with and run projects. Thus the local authorities take on more of a supporting role. Local authorities do

their best to identify residents' ideas and potential. This is something we still need to learn about. However we still have a question. Voter turnout in the UK is lower than that in Japan, yet residents still participate in these partnerships. Why? Is it because of their business interests, for reasons of culture or history?

During our visit, we had a chance to meet and talk with the Leicester & Leicestershire Japan Society. They support Japanese people who live in Leicestershire. Leicester is keen to continue its good relationship with Japan.

There is not enough space for me to write about everything we learned in Leicester, but before I close I would like to convey our thanks to all those who helped us during our visit. We hope to take our research back to Japan so that we may benefit from the experiences of those in Leicester. Thank you again.

Photographs kindly provided by Leicester City Council



The National Space Centre



The Apex Building

## JLGC UPDATE

## "jiko-sh kai"

New Staff from JLGC London Introduce Themselves

**Hiroake Takeuchi**

Hello everyone.

My name is Hiroaki Takeuchi, and I come from Aichi prefecture in Japan. Aichi is located in central Japan facing the Pacific Ocean, and has a population of about seven million. The first World Exposition of the 21st century will be held in Aichi in 2005, in preparation for which a new airport is being built

there now.

I was born in Aichi and have lived there for almost fifty years. This is my first experience of living in a foreign country. I want to learn about UK local government and to experience as much as possible. I hope that I will acquire an international way of thinking during my stay in London.

**Toru Ageta**

Before I came to London, my English teacher from England told me that the Japanese should try to protect their historical

sites. When I arrived in London, I finally understood what he meant. Lots of buildings of architectural or historic interest are protected, and the sights of Central London are marvellous! Japanese towns used to have their own individual character, with their own sites of interest. However, they're losing their

originality as a result of continuous developments. I'd like to know for future reference how cities in the U.K. protect historical buildings and the brilliant huge parks.

**Daiki Kato**

My first impression of London is that it is a very cosmopolitan city. When I walk in the streets and the parks, I pass people from all over the world. Since arriving in London, my colleagues and I have enjoyed exploring London, visiting museums, seeing musicals and enjoying walks in London's green parks. I think that there is nowhere like London in Japan, and that it is easy for foreigners to live here.

The passion for sport here, particularly football, is amazing. When I go to a football match, I am always very impressed by the passion and fervour of the local supporters. During my stay in London, I hope to gain an understanding of how English people think, and to have a wide variety of experiences. I'm looking forward to sharing my experiences and the knowledge I gained here with the young people of my home town when I return to Japan. I am sure that I will return to Japan with a strong affection for, and with pride in my knowledge of, the UK.

**Sonya Harding**

I joined the JLGC in March after returning from Japan in December 2002. I worked on the JET programme for 2 years in Ishikawa Ken. I then moved to Tokyo and worked for a Fair Trade organisation. I am delighted to work at the JLGC and pursue my love of Japan. In addition to the administrative duties of the office I am involved with the Long Term Seminar participants, JETAA liaison and Myriad Leaves.

**Andrew Stevens**

I have found myself working at the Japan Local Government Centre after almost three years working for Lewisham Council, the last year being spent working as a political assistant/press officer in the team of the council's first directly elected mayor. While there, I worked on the country's first housing and cultural regeneration commissions, as well as the plans and campaign for the

introduction of an elected mayor. I have also worked as a consultant for organisations concerned with planning and regeneration. Prior to this, I worked in the civil service on education issues. Before leaving to attend the University of Teesside and subsequently Goldsmiths College (where I studied journalism, political science and public policy at Diploma, BSc and MA levels) I worked for two local authorities in the Northeast of England. My policy interests/experience is in new forms of political management of local government and urban affairs (housing, planning and transport).

**Angela Harkness Robertson**

The day after graduating from Edinburgh University, I got on a plane and went to work in Tonami City, Toyama, on the JET Programme. When my three years were up, I moved to Tokyo, where I worked for two and a half years in publishing, then for four happy years at a very large advertising agency, as well as doing a bit of media-related freelance work. I returned to the UK in October 2002, and was delighted to start work at the JLGC in June 2003. The

reverse culture-shock is finally easing, but I shall always miss the Japanese lifestyle; particularly the food, the service, and a transport system that works.

**Yoshiyuki Kirino**

I am very grateful for the opportunity to work in London, and am sure that it will be an extremely valuable experience for me. Since arriving in London, I have been impressed by the number of large, beautiful parks there is, even though London is such a big city. In such pleasant surroundings, I am eager to learn about foreign local government systems, cultures, customs and languages during my two years here in London. I hope I may count on your cooperation and support.

**Hitomi Tashori**

I was seconded here from Hiroshima Prefectural Government. I am really glad to be back here because I really enjoyed it when I was here as a language student.

I am really excited to work for JLGC. I hope to collect useful information about local government systems in the UK that will prove invaluable once I return to Japan.

I am also eager to enjoy UK culture that is very different from Japanese culture, improve my English skills (of course!), and visit as many countries as possible to broaden my horizons!



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The JLGC is the UK office of CLAIR - the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations.

Founded in 1988, CLAIR is a joint organisation representing Japan's 47 prefectures, 12 designated cities and 3,232 municipalities.



AICHI



AKITA



AOMORI



CHIBA



EHIME



FUKUI



FUKUOKA



FUKUSHIMA



GIFU