

Regional Film Screening Event, Showroom Workstation, Sheffield

A regional film screening evening was held in Sheffield on 31 October as part of the JSPS 80th Anniversary Events in 2012. The event was jointly supported by the Japan Foundation, London and Mr. Ikuo Fukui, from the JSPS Fellows Plaza, Tokyo also attended. This was a special opportunity for JSPS London to work with the Japan Foundation and strengthen regional networks by meeting more JSPS Alumni and Japanese researchers based in the Midlands. 50 researchers from Sheffield and Leeds Universities attended, of these 6 are members of the UK-JSPS Alumni Association and 1 a member of the JSPS London association for Japanese Researchers Based in the UK (JBUK). This type of event was requested by UK-JSPS Alumni to be held in this region with both Sheffield and Leeds universities hosting a substantial number of Japanese researchers and they are also the largest institutions for Japan related studies in the UK.

The film screening event was presided over by UK-JSPS Alumnus Dr. Peter Matanle from Sheffield University and began with welcoming remarks from the Director of JSPS London, Professor Kozo Hiramatsu, Mr. Fukui from JSPS Tokyo and the Director-General of the Japan Foundation, London, Mr. Tsuyoshi Takahashi. Dr. Matanle then gave an introduction to the 2 films that followed about communities in the Tohoku region recovering from the March 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. To give both films context, Dr. Matanle's introduction included research results from his recent paper on the reconstruction of societies in Japan's shrinking regions. The 2 films shown were called "Setting Sail from the Ruins" about a fisherman from Ofunato in Iwate Prefecture overcoming very difficult trials to rebuild his business and the second film was called "Can You See Our Lights," about dispersed communities in Tohoku coming together with great spirit to hold their Summer festivals. In between the showing of these films a buffet reception took place to allow time for attendees to network. The event was brought to a close by Dr. Matanle leading a discussion with the audience about their response to the films. Both films invoked strong reactions from the audience. Those who shared their impressions felt the Japanese people should be at the centre of discussion of how and where their communities are rebuilt in the future. Others remarked how culture was a strong force in the identity of the Japanese people and it would give them strength to move forward. Everyone was united

in the hope for these communities in Tohoku to continue to recover and prosper.



Presentation from Dr Peter Matanle, Sheffield University



Audience discussion