

# *Voice! from Alumni member*

## Vol.11 Associate Professor, Emma Sokell



Assoc. Prof. Emma Sokell, John Neary (adjunct Professor UCD, retired Ambassador of Ireland to Japan), Professor Nobuo Ueno (Director JSPS London), Polly Watson (International Programme Coordinator, JSPS London), Dr. Naonori Kodate (Chair UCD Japan) at the UCD Japan Fair October 2017. Photo Hugo O'Donnell.

Associate Professor Emma Sokell at University College Dublin, Ireland, an active member of JSPS Alumni Association of the UK and ROI (Republic of Ireland) tells her experiences as a JSPS Fellow and Alumni member. Please have a look at her experiences below.

This time twenty years ago I was living in Tokyo and just over half way into my JSPS post-doctoral fellowship. I was based in the Institute for Laser Science at the University of Electrocommunications (Dentsudai now UEC) in Chofu, which is 20 kilometers west of Shinjuku. I set out to Tokyo having lived and worked in Manchester for 5 years and I distinctly recall the realization of the enormity of the step I was taking that accompanied the arrival of the plane ticket in the post. My host group, headed by Professor Shunsuke Ohtani, was the Tokyo Electron Beam Ion Trap (EBIT) group and the fellowship represented an opportunity to study the time reversal of processes that had formed the core of my PhD in Manchester. As it turned out, I ended up looking at different but related processes but it is certainly fair to say that the scientific

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### Biography

Jan 2005-present	Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor, School of Physics, UCD
March -July 2012	Visiting Professor, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan
Sep 2001-Dec 2004	College Lecturer, Physics, UCD
Sep 99 -Aug 2001	Assistant College Lecturer, Physics, UCD
Dec 98-Aug 99	Centre International des Etudiants et Stagiaires(CIES) fellowship, CAR Laboratoire, IRSAMC, Université Paul Sabatier, Toulouse.
Aug 97-Dec 98	Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Postdoctoral Fellowship Institute for Laser Science, University of Electro-Communications, Tokyo.
Oct 95 -Aug 97	Post-Doctoral Research Assistant Manchester University.

experience available at Dentsudai was available at very few locations in the world. The Tokyo EBIT was newer than others in existence at the time and named YEBISU (Young Electron Beam Ion Source Unit), after the only Japanese domestic god to be one of the seven dieties of good luck. Perhaps more importantly YEBISU is also a popular brand of beer in Japan and the name provided an excuse to share a beer with visitors to the group.

In addition to the scientific opportunities afforded by the JSPS fellowship, I was fortunate enough to meet and be tutored in Japanese (covered as part of the JSPS scheme) by a fantastic teacher who remains a good friend. As it turned out, it was this lady who introduced me to New Grange, one of the most famous visitor sites in Ireland, where I subsequently ended up.

After another short term fellowship in France, I was lucky enough to secure a permanent academic position in the School of Physics at University College Dublin, less than 1 year after completing my fellowship in Japan. I am certain that the breadth of experience that I had accrued through the fellowship opportunities (including in no small part the JSPS one) helped enormously in securing the position. I continued to collaborate with the group in Tokyo after settling in Ireland and was also able to build up a network of other contacts in Japan through links established by other members of the group in UCD. JSPS funded myself (Bridge Scholarship) and the leader of the group Professor Gerry O'Sullivan to visit Japan and together with colleagues in Utsunomiya University and the National Institute for Fusion Science (NIFS) in Japan a very productive research collaboration emerged, focusing on source development for EUV Lithography and subsequently soft x-ray generation. A semester (April 2012) as a visiting professor at Sophia University (invitation from Prof. Yoshiro Azuma) helped me further maintain these links and also strengthen ones with researchers at Tokyo Metropolitan University. By this time the group at UEC was led by Nobuyuki Nakamura, who was a post-doc in Professor Ohtani's group when

I first visited Japan.

More recently, our UCD/Japan network benefitted from funding from Science Foundation Ireland via the International Strategic Partnership (ISCA) scheme and we were able to organise a number of workshops in UCD for Irish and Japanese scientists, focused on EUV Lithography, but ranging across a range of research topics of common interest. Participants at the 2016 workshop were lucky enough to be addressed by the Japanese Ambassador Miyoshi and a number of us were honoured to be invited for dinner at her residence in Dublin.

I am presently involved in the UCD Japan Group, which formed in 2016, in part motivated by the celebration of 60 years of Irish/Japanese diplomatic relations. The group acts to highlight and support links between UCD and our various partners in Japan, including the embassy, enterprises and research funding organisations. The group is a cross-disciplinary all-university unit, consisting of academic and professional staff with student representatives. In 2017 the group organised a UCD Japan Fair and staff from the JSPS London Office visited UCD to raise awareness of research opportunities (picture).

## JSPS Alumni Association of the UK and the Republic of Ireland (RoI)

### Please join the JSPS Alumni Association of the UK and the Republic of Ireland (RoI)!

As a former JSPS Fellow, we would like to ask you to join the JSPS Alumni Association of the UK and the Republic of Ireland (RoI). Our Alumni Association was established in 2003 and carries out a number of activities throughout the UK and RoI with numerous benefits for members. One of them is "The JSPS London Symposium and Seminar Scheme." The aim of this scheme is to provide support for members holding a symposium or seminar and to create high quality collaboration in cutting edge/ internationally competitive areas at institutional or departmental level between research institutions in the UK or RoI and Japan. Under this scheme, JSPS London will partially support the following matters\*:

\*The detailed support is subject to change.

1

Costs for inviting symposium/ seminar speakers from Japan

2

Costs for hiring a venue, printing materials, advertising and so on\*

3

Strategic support to help advertise and organise the event.

The application details of this scheme will automatically be e mailed to registered Alumni members during our next call. For further information please contact JSPS London by email at [enquire@jps.org](mailto:enquire@jps.org). Again, this is exclusively open to the JSPS Alumni members. So why not join us today?

**JSPS**  **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**  
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