

# Activities of JSPS UK & ROI Alumni Association (2004-2024)

## [1] Outline

The JSPS UK and ROI(Republic of Ireland) Alumni Association has celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2024. The commemorative ceremony was held on 4th September at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, along with the 30th anniversary of JSPS London office.

The JSPS UK and ROI Alumni Association was established in 2003 by former fellows who had returned to the UK after conducting research in Japan funded by JSPS fellowship programmes. The first general meeting of the Alumni Association was held on 4th June 2004 at the Royal Society. In 2014, JSPS Tokyo Headquarter approved the membership of former JSPS fellows based in the Republic of Ireland, and the name of the association was subsequently changed to the JSP UK and ROI Alumni Association[1].

The Alumni Association is continuously expanding and currently has over 915 active members. With the support of an Executive Committee and Regional Managers, the Association works throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland with the following objectives: (1) building and maintaining academic links with Japan, (2) providing guidance to new fellows and supporting Japanese researchers working in the UK, (3) collaborating with academic and related institutions, (4) exchanging information among Alumni members, and (5) strengthening links between regional groups and Japan.

In particular, the annual Pre-departure Seminar has been held to prepare new fellows for their research experience in Japan. The Alumni Fellowship Evening allows members to network in a casual and relaxed atmosphere. Furthermore, the Bridge Fellowship (established in 2009) allows alumni members to take the opportunity to travel to Japan to maintain and strengthen research collaborations with Japanese researchers.



## [2-1] Record of Chairs and Co-Chairs

Position	Full Name	Title	Affiliation	Years Served
Founding Chair	Peter Sammonds	Prof.	Department of Earth Sciences, University College London	2004-2006
Co-Chair	Martyn Kingsbury	Prof.	Department of Education Imperial College London	2004-2006
Chair	Martyn Kingsbury	Prof.	Department of Education Imperial College London	2006-2014
Co-Chair	Hugo Dobson	Prof.	National Institute of Japanese Studies, University of Sheffield	2006-2010
Co-Chair	Ruth Goodridge	Prof.	Faculty of Engineering, University of Nottingham	2010-2014
Chair	Ruth Goodridge	Prof.	Faculty of Engineering, University of Nottingham	2014-2017
Co-Chair	John Fossey	Prof.	Department of Chemistry, University of Birmingham	2014-2017
Chair	John Fossey	Prof.	Department of Chemistry, University of Birmingham	2017-2022
Co-Chair	Andrew Quantock	Prof.	School of Optometry and Vision Sciences, Cardiff University	2017-2022

## [2-2] Current Executive Committee Members and Regional Managers

Position	Full Name	Title	Affiliation	Years Served
Chair	Andrew Quantock	Prof.	School of Optometry and Vision Sciences, Cardiff University	2022-
Co-Chair	Alessandra Devoto	Prof.	School of Biological Sciences, Royal Holloway, University of London	2022-
Executive Committee Associate	John Brazier	Dr.	School of Pharmacy, University of Reading	2014-
Executive Committee Associate	Chris Pearson	Dr.	STFC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory	2014-
Executive Committee Associate	Erica Baffelli	Prof.	School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, University of Manchester	2023-
Executive Committee Associate	Ekaterina Hertog	Prof.	Department of Sociology, University of Oxford	2023-

## Regional Managers

Region	Full Name	Title	Affiliation	Years Served
Wales	Keith Shore	Prof.	School of Electronic Engineering, Bangor University	2019-
Scotland	Miranda Anderson	Dr.	School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh	2017-
Northern Ireland	Davide Mariotti	Prof.	School of Engineering, Ulster University	2009-2024
Ireland	Emma Sokell	Prof.	School of Physics, University College Dublin	2009-

## [3] History of activities

### 1. Alumni Association Foundation General Meeting (June 2004)

The first Alumni Association General Meeting was held on Friday 4th June 2004 at the Royal Society Auditorium[2]. This meeting was attended by many alumni, including overseas fellows living in the UK. Director Kanaguchi of JSPS London began by explaining the background to the establishment of the Alumni Association, and reported that the president and four other members had been elected with the support of the majority of members. The new Chair, Prof. Peter Sammonds, acted as MC and there were greetings and presentations from the Alumni Association Executive Committee members and all the participants.



Fig. 1. Top left: Greetings from the new Chair, Prof. Peter Sammonds, Top right: Group photo in front of the Royal Society, Bottom left: JSPS fellows sharing their experiences..

## 2.Pre-departure Meeting (May 2005)

The first Pre-departure Meeting for the Summer Programme participants was held on Friday 20th May 2005 at the British Council UK, jointly organised by the JSPS London Office and the British Council Japan [3]. This meeting was initiated to deepen the participants' understanding of the programme and to provide a springboard for them to continue to actively engage in Japan-UK exchanges after they return to the UK.



Fig. 2. Left: Program overview, Right: Participants socializing.

## 3. Alumni Fellowship Evening (May 2005)

The first Alumni Fellowship Evening was held on Friday, 20th May 2005 at the Garelie Besson in London [3]. This meeting was held to provide an opportunity for researchers who have participated in JSPS programmes and those interested in Japan to exchange information about Japanese and British research, and to expand the Japanese and British research community in the UK. After an opening remarks by the Chair, Prof Sammonds, the Co-Chair, Prof Martyn Kingsbury shared his experiences in Japan.



Fig. 3. Left: Opening remarks by the Chair, Prof Sammonds, Right: Participants socializing.



#### 4. Alumni Association Event “Evening Lecture” in Edinburgh (March 2006)

The local alumni association in Scotland is also very active, and on Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2006, an alumni event, “Evening Lecture & Debate,” was held at The Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre in Edinburgh, where a lecture was given entitled “The Green Revolution in Africa.” After the lecture, a dinner was held, and there was a lively exchange of opinions among the more than 30 participants, including alumni association members, researchers and students from the Edinburgh area [4].



Fig. 4. Left: Participants listening intently to the lecture, Right: Panel discussion.

#### 5. FURUSATO Award (February 2008)

A new support scheme for alumni, the “FURUSATO Award”, was launched, with two applications opened in February and November 2008, and seven awardees were selected. The aim of this scheme is to contribute to maintaining and developing research linkages between Japan and the UK through JSPS fellowships, and alumni awardees were provided with funding for academic activities (such as travel expenses to Japan).



Fig. 5. FURUSATO Award Ceremony (awarded by Director Yuko Furukawa) (4<sup>th</sup> December 2009)[6].

### 6. Bridge Fellowship (November 2009)

JSPS Headquarters established the Bridge Fellowship, a support programme to JSPS Alumni Members in individual countries in November 2009 [7]. This programme provides researchers who have experienced research in Japan through JSPS fellowships with the opportunity to “revisit” Japan. There were differences between the Bridge Fellowship and the FURUSATO Award in JSPS London in terms of the number of applications per year, the support costs, and the number of days [8]. The FURUSATO Award was, however, discontinued in 2014, and was consolidated into the Bridge Fellowship.

### 7. Symposium Scheme (October 2010)

On Friday, 8th October 2010, JSPS London began accepting applications for the Japan-UK Symposium Scheme for 2011[9]. This scheme was launched by JSPS London as a new project in June 2009, and provides financial support for speakers’ travel expenses and symposium expenses for Japan-UK joint symposiums hosted by researchers from the Japanese Researchers Based in the UK (JBUK) and the JSPS Alumni Association. In addition, on Wednesday, 20th October in 2010, JSPS London held a Pre-departure Seminar for the awardees of this scheme.



Fig. 6. Left: Pre-departure Seminar participants, Right: Award ceremony (awarded by Director Kozo Hiramatsu).

### 8. Regional Alumni Meeting in Glasgow (June 2012)

As part of the JSPS 80th anniversary celebrations, a social event was held on 20 June 2012 at Stravaigin restaurant in Glasgow, bringing together alumni members and Japanese researchers in the UK [10]. The event was organised by Dr James Fountaine, Alumni Association Scottish Branch Manager, and participants enthusiastically exchanged ideas on JSPS promotion activities and building a network between Japanese and UK researchers.



Fig.7. Social event.

### 9. Alumni Association 10th Anniversary Event (November 2014)

On Monday, 24th November 2014, the JSPS London 20th Anniversary Ceremony and the JSPS Alumni Association 10th Anniversary Event were held at the Natural History Museum in London [11]. In the morning of the same day, the Pre-departure seminar was held at the same venue. At the Anniversary event, after greetings from the organizers and guests and related lectures, the Alumni Association Awards were presented to alumni members who had achieved outstanding results in the Bridge Fellowship and Symposium Scheme.



Fig. 8. Left: Participants in the Pre-departure meeting and the Anniversary event. Top left and right: Award ceremony (awarded by Director, Kunio Takeyasu).

### 10. Japan-UK Research Promotion Conference (November 2016)

On 16 November, the JSPS London Office held “Japan-UK Research Promotion Conference 2016” at the Embassy of Japan in the UK. This is a networking event held for members of the JSPS UK & ROI Alumni Association and the Japanese Researchers’ Network Based in the UK (JBUK). A total of 121 people, including members of the Alumni Association and JBUK, attended the conference, and 20 pre-selected researchers from each of the three fields of humanities & social sciences, science & engineering, and biology & medicine, totaling 60, gave presentations on their research. Afterwards, six people selected by vote of all participants gave presentations in the Cross Disciplinary Session, which was very lively. Based on these discussions, many examples of concrete research collaboration emerged, and this new initiative has shown a great success [12].



Fig.9. Left: Main guests and organisers. Middle: Director Nobuo Ueno, Right: Participants.



### 11. Professor John S. Fossey Memorial Symposium (March 2023)

A symposium in memory of Professor John S. Fossey (Department of Chemistry, University of Birmingham), former Chair of the JSPS Alumni Association, who passed away suddenly in April 2022 in his mid-40s, was held at the University of Birmingham on 29th and 30th March 2023. Prominent researchers from around the world, including Professor Osamu Kobayashi of the University of Tokyo, who was a close friend of Professor Fossey, gave presentations in memory of the professor. Prof. Naoto Kobayashi, Director of JSPS London, also delivered a speech of eulogy and gratitude to the professor [13].



Fig 10. Professor John S. Fossey Memorial Symposium (March 2023)

### 12. Alumni Association 20th Anniversary Event (September 2024)

In the afternoon of 4th September 2024, the JSPS London 30th Anniversary Ceremony and the JSPS Alumni Association 20th Anniversary Event were held at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, with approximately 100 people in attendance [14]. The Pre-departure seminar was also held at the same venue in the morning. The Anniversary event included greetings from the organizers and guests, research presentations by alumni members, and a panel discussion by speakers. The Alumni Association Awards were then presented to alumni members who have achieved outstanding results in the Bridge Fellowship and Symposium Scheme.



Fig. 11. Left: Group photo for the Anniversary event, Center and Right: Alumni Award Awardees.



**【References】**

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