

Kim Woodruff

Hello, my name is Kim Woodruff and I have recently taken over from Kornelia Achrafie as Programme Officer at the Japan Foundation London Language Centre. I studied Japanese and Linguistics at Edinburgh University, and after graduating I applied for the JET Programme and spent three years as a Co-ordinator for International Relations in Kagoshima, southern Japan. Before arriving here in September, I worked for a year as a Policy Advisor at the Department of Communities and Local Government.

My reasons for choosing to study Japanese were quite whimsical: my favourite band at the time was Pizzicato Five, and I thought it would be quite nice to understand what they were singing about. Although I admit the lyrics have not turned out to be as enlightening as I had been hoping, choosing to study Japanese has been one of the best decisions I've made, for many other reasons. It has allowed to get to know some amazing people, introduced me to a new culture, made me think a lot more about my own language and culture, and also led me to lots of new things I never knew existed, such as taiko drumming - which has now become my hobby.

I am delighted to be working at the JFLLC and to be supporting teachers and students of Japanese, so that more people can enjoy the same experiences that I have been lucky enough to have had. Dozo yoroshiku onegai shimasu!



Alastair Warner

Hi, I'm Alastair and I replaced Sophie Lane as Assistant Programme Officer at the JFLLC in August. I worked for GEOS Language School in Nagoya City and Gifu City for two years, after which I worked for a year at the British Council in London, and then completed a seven month placement teaching in a secondary school in Marseille, France.

I took English Literature at university, and really knew nothing about Japanese culture or language at all, until a friend of a friend went to Fukui Prefecture to teach in an English conversation school during my final year. I was keen to travel and work after graduation, and after reading the emails he sent home from Japan, I decided to look into going there myself. Three months after graduation I arrived in Japan with scant knowledge of the country and not a word of the language. It turned into a life-changing experience. Like Kim, the people I met there were amazing, and I also became a huge fan of Japanese food, which I continue to regularly enjoy in London.

I never had the opportunity to study Japanese before I went to Japan, and I therefore found the language very intimidating when I first arrived. Perhaps as a result I didn't really take advantage of the opportunity to become a competent speaker. I am really happy to be working at the JFLLC, where we are supporting teachers and students, and providing people with Japanese language skills which they can hopefully build on if they visit Japan. Dozo yoroshiku onegai itashimasu!

