The Japan Foundation and Victoria and Albert Museum Symposium:

Japanese Art Collections in the UK

21 March 2006
The Japan Foundation, London

List of Participants

Institution	Name
Victoria and Albert Museum	Gregory Irvine
Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery	Rebecca Hill
Brighton and Hove Museums	Stella Beddoe
Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery	Kate Newnham
British Museum	Tim Clark
Horniman Museum	Fiona Kerlogue
Liverpool Museum	Emma Martin
Maidstone Museum & Bentlif Art Gallery	Fiona Woolley
National Museum Wales	Andrew Renton
Oriental Museum, Durham	Kevin McLoughlin
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum	Shaun Garner
Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Culture	Nicole Rousmaniere
Ulster Museum	Winifred Glover
Japan Foundation	Junko Takekawa

Attendees:

Gregory Irvine (G.I.), Rebecca Hill (R.H.), Stella Beddoe (S.B.), Kate Newnham (K.N.), Tim Clark (T.C.), Fiona Kerlogue (F.K.), Emma Martin (E.M.), Fiona Wooley (F.W.), Andrew Renton (A.R.), Kevin McLoughlin (K.M.), Shaun Garner (S.G.), Nicole Rousmaniere (N.R.), Winifred Glover (W.G.), Junko Takekawa (J.T.)

J.T.: Thank you for coming to this symposium, 'Japanese Art Collections in the UK'. My name is Junko Takekawa, Senior Arts Programme Officer at the Japan Foundation, London. On behalf of the Japan Foundation, I would like to welcome you all here to Russell Square. I am sure many of you are aware of the Japan Foundation's activities. To be brief: the Japan Foundation was established in 1972 and is Japan's principal cultural agency for the promotion of Japanese culture overseas. We provide financial resources in the field of Japanese arts and culture, and also Japanese studies and Japanese language. In addition, we organise events such as this and tomorrow's seminar at which some of you will also be present.

For a long time we have been of the opinion that Japanese art collections are, despite their significance and, of course, the efforts that UK professionals have made, not properly valued and organised. Also there are some cases where Japanese art collections are not adequately displayed or cared for. From such concerns and because of our mission, today's symposium was planned. To get to know in depth what the state of Japanese art collections in the UK is like, and then to find out what we might be able to do to increase awareness and also the visibility of Japanese art collections. Subsequently, we would like to provide resources to others to facilitate their understanding of Japanese art and culture.

Today's symposium is, therefore, designed to offer a platform to express the views of UK professionals, and then to discuss how those Japanese art collections have been actually treated and should be treated, including how to share and disseminate information about Japanese art collections. I suspect most of you actually know each other through the Subject Specialist Network (SSN). You may think that such issues have already been raised but I would like you to take this opportunity to explore these issues once again and from a fresh perspective. Today's symposium is being held in collaboration with the Victoria and Albert Museum, and we are hugely indebted to Gregory for his insight and ideas. Thank you very much.

G.I.: I'd like to thank Junko and the Japan Foundation for organising this day, the timing of which has been fortunate. Junko and her previous director, Mr Kanno, came to see me some time ago to talk about this. It was extremely timely because it coincided with the publication of '*A Guide to Japanese Art Collections in the UK'* (published by The Japan Society).

It was quite an interesting venture and I stupidly volunteered to do it, as a member of The Japan Society's publication committee, thinking I would update the 1991 '*Guide to Japan in Britain and Ireland'*, and I was fortunate enough to break my leg and had three months off work. Otherwise, I probably wouldn't have finished it. But thanks to all of you who actually contributed to this because there were some very interesting discoveries.

There are over 150 collections in the UK that have Japanese objects of some importance and it varies. There are the huge national collections that you know about. What we did discover is, apart from in some of the larger museums, there are very active curators who are keen to promote Japan and its art but don't necessarily have the expertise. In many instances, when I

was asking what sort of collections they had, and they said, 'Well, we've got this but we don't actually know if it's Chinese or Japanese.' That was the process we had to go through. We discovered, for example, the Bury Museum (Bury Museum and Archives) who don't have a very extensive collection, they've only got a few *netsuke* – but said 'Oh yes, we've got this four metre tall bronze', and they sent me some photographs of it. It's an international exhibition piece, probably from Paris in 1900 but they had no idea about it. When they were rebuilding the museum they had to rebuild the museum around it; apparently it goes through two floors!

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) decided they were keen on promoting subject specialist networks (SSN), something the V&A has been keen on for many, many years. So last year, at extremely short notice, we had to get an application in. Now the V&A were already putting an application in, so I persuaded my friend and colleague, Shaun Garner of the Russell-Cotes Museum (Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum), to put an application in for an exploratory grant to launch a Japanese SSN. We got that, and quite a few of you here came to several of those meetings last year. We are waiting at the moment to hear whether there is going to be any implementation grant but there is no news yet.

But this is a good start. We've named the group JACUK – Japanese Art Collections in the UK. There are other means of distributing information about our collections. There's a fledgling group called ENJAC, European Network of Japanese Art Collections, which a couple of you here have been involved with. It seems to have gone very, very quiet. I did actually send out a couple of emails last week but I've had no response from anybody, from those who were supposed to be on the committee, so I don't know what's happening. The idea was that there was going to be a conference again this year and it's just not happening. The last conference was in Prague two years ago where we discussed sharing information via the web. Most of us came away with our heads hanging in despair because it was virtually impossible to share information amongst ourselves!

There's also the Japan Art History Forum (JAHF) that is another means of sharing out information. So that's the basic background to where we are today. We'll all go around the table, with hopefully a maximum of 10 minutes each, to talk about what's in our own collections, what we're doing with our own collections, and where our Japanese collections figure in the whole scheme of our museums. So, I'll launch straight into V&A.

The V&A was founded off the profits of the 1851 exhibition and we started collecting Japanese art in 1852 in fact. Currently we have in excess of 42,000 objects in the collection. Doing a very quick run on our database, I reckon we've somewhere between 1% and 2% of the collection on display. It's quite hard to break down objects, whole parts, whatever. But that figure in some ways is almost meaningless. For example, we have 50 *tsuba* on display, but we have a collection of 5,000 *tsuba*. So we must take these figures with a pinch of salt.

We're currently quite blessed with having a significant number of curators working on the collection. Myself, dealing primarily with metalwork, but also with sculpture, performance and other areas. My colleague, Rupert Faulkner, who deals with ceramics, contemporary and also our graphics collection. We have quite a strong print collection, about 28,000 prints and books. Very weak on paintings, good on Edo period lacquer. We've also got a substantial textile collection. The textile collection is looked after by Anna Jackson, although increasingly she has less time to work on her part of the collection as she now has taken on

the role of Deputy Keeper of the department and there's a lot more administration. We also have a part-time curator, Julia Hutt, who deals with the lacquer collection. We are also fortunate enough to have an assistant curator, Catherine David, who is with us on a five-year contract.

Now this is something that we are very much concerned about. With the V&A's assistant curator's programme everyone is taken on for a 5-year contract and after that, they go. So, there's a big problem with continuity of passed on knowledge in the collection. In fact, Catherine's got good Japanese language. She was a volunteer, I think, at the British Museum for a while. She is amazingly helpful, we're very lucky to have her, but when she goes, where do we go next? Indeed, when we go, who's going to take on our places? And I think this is something that is common throughout all museums.

How do we promote Japan? Well, we give lectures in the museum, outside of the museum, papers at conferences and symposia, and we have an active publications programme as well. We also are trying to put as much of our collection online as we can, there's a government requirement to do that, and every curator is expected to put 50-100 objects per year on line for public access. There's a slight problem in that our photographic department can't keep up with this. Currently we probably have about 500 objects on line, found with a simple search of 'Japan'.

We have an 'Opinions Day' on the first Tuesday of each month to deal with public enquiries. People bring in their family heirlooms, and we give them an opinion about what they might and might not be. We work actively with our Education Department, now named 'Learning and Interpretation'. We have teachers' days; we've produced a teacher's pack on the Toshiba Gallery of Japanese Art. We have an activity cart that goes around the museum and periodically plonks itself in the Toshiba Gallery. Over school holidays, children come in and have semi-supervised activities. They're free to roam around and certainly do roam around. Some days the floor is completely covered in children!

We have links to art schools. We have also arranged symposia and what are called study days. We're doing one in November of this year, to which some colleagues here will be kindly contributing. A spin off from that is going to be what the museum terms a 'small display' in the Toshiba Gallery of arts from the Meiji period, that's what the study day is about.

Now we have to bid within the museum for our own resources, to put on even a small display, even to change the displays in the Toshiba Gallery. That is because it will require input from conservators, from label producing and, for consistency and readability, all our labels are vetted by the Education Department. We have a fairly high reading age level, thank goodness. But we actually have to put bids in and they're not always successful.

We have had large exhibitions in the past and large exhibitions require substantial input, and we have to bid for that as well. I'm in the process of putting in a proposal as we are thinking of doing a joint venture with the Yokohama Museum over 2009/2010. Our Director of Exhibitions thinks it's quite good but it has to go through the whole process and then there's the question of funding.

We are always trying to keep Japan at a very high profile, and where we can't do individual exhibitions we try to ensure Japan is represented within our major exhibitions. Japan has

maintained a high profile in our recent exhibitions of Art Deco, Art Nouveau, and Arts and Crafts Exhibition. These exhibitions then go off on tour internationally.

Within the UK we are working in the regions; we are promoted through our regional development office. We've been helping out, sharing our expertise with other museums across the country. I've done projects with the Russell-Cotes Museum and the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro. I've been to look at the Liverpool collections. We have official partnerships with institutions like Sheffield, where we share exhibitions and tour V&A exhibitions there. Japan hasn't had a major profile in that area yet and again that's something we're working on. Internationally, we're trying to keep our Japan profile very high through our links to institutions like the Japan Foundation, obviously. But also through building up networks of museum colleagues throughout Japan.

Currently we are desperately trying to keep Japan high profile because India and China are the two areas into which we are making a major push. India is actually quite interesting. I've just recently come back from there, and was fortunate enough to work on the Japanese collection at the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay. This is a venture that we're trying to promote, links with museums in India. There's also the possibility of working with a museum in Hyderabad where again, interestingly, they have a large Japanese collection. So we're doing our bit to keep Japan very high profile.

Our major plans with regard to Japan are to redisplay Meiji material in November of this year, and the possible exhibition with Yokohama in 2010. And we're waiting to hear whether there will be yet another Japan related festival as they seem to come every ten years, and I know there's been preliminary talk on that but nothing concrete.

Right, I think I will pass over now to Rebecca Hill *(Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery)*.

R.H.: Hi, I'm here in the capacity of erstwhile keeper of art at the Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery. The majority of the collection at Blackburn was given as a bequest in the 1940s and it's about 1,000 Japanese prints with various representatives of the major artists, Utamaro, Hokusai and Hiroshige and so on. It has been added to in a haphazard way throughout time. There is some lacquer, a couple of *tsuba*, between 30 and 40 *netsuke* and *inro* with some bits of ceramics. There is no systematic collection policy to add to the collection, and it's been added to sort of very opportunistically when small bits of money have become available from our Friends' association. We've also collected some contemporary stuff. We've tried to keep it to works on paper and develop the print collection, so that's been the focus. On permanent display, there are about 50 prints in our permanent galleries. They are changed every year or so in theory but I don't think they've been changed for two years.

We curate temporary exhibitions such as Hiroshige's '*60 Odd Provinces'* and I've put some on this handout[1]. Also, my predecessor curated the '*53 stations of Tokaido Road'*, by Hiroshige, which we actually have a full set of, and of Hiroshige's *'60 Odd Provinces'* or thereabouts, normally touted as a full set. We've been touring those around other venues in the north west. That exhibition is going on show in Chester from 8 April to 18 June this year. We can provide interpretation and any links with regional providers of workshops, and that sort of thing. So we've been working closely with our colleagues in the north west.

The permanent galleries were redisplayed a few years ago, and the museum is currently

[1] See appendix 1.

undergoing a feasibility study to develop the whole lot of displays. I think the timescale of that is five to six years, so there are no current plans to redisplay, permanently, any of the Japanese collections. It seems that they are looking to raise the profile slightly of the collection in that but I think that it will stay at 50-100 prints on display at any one time. The reserve collection probably has just over 1,000 prints and there are probably 50,000 items in the collection, so it's 2% of the collection, and is probably represented on display in a similar proportion to other parts of the collection. The social history collection gets a lot more use, and a very large medieval manuscript collection that gets toured internationally. But I don't think any of our prints get sent internationally.

The level of use the collection gets is very much dependant on the staff member in post. So, in my job as Keeper of Art, I was also responsible for the Victorian collection, the medieval manuscripts, and 20th century prints. It's kind of really wide-ranging, and I was particularly interested in the Japanese prints, so I've done some work on them. I know my predecessor was as well, and she curated quite a few exhibitions of Japanese art. But before that, it very much depended on people's specialist interest areas. It's quite feasible that they could just be left for 10 years and not touched really, although the storage conditions are fine.

The collection was digitised three years ago, so there's about 500 of the prints available on line through the Cottontown website (www.cottontown.org) which is Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council's local history website. The main way we've been using our print collection is to try to secure funding for other projects relating to contemporary Japan. We've been very conscious that we're constantly pushing this kind of '*kimono* and *samurai*' image of Japan, and that perhaps there's a little bit more that we ought to be doing.

So, we used this collection to secure funding from the Millennium Commission to do a C21 project in 2005/2006, which was our yearlong Festival of Arts and Culture celebrating 21 countries in Asia, including Japan. The centrepiece of that was bringing over the third Fukuoka Triennial that was showing 50 contemporary artists from 21 different countries in Asia. As part of that, we got some money to bring Keisuke Yamaguchi and his assistant to do a residency for a month at Blackburn and that allowed people a chance to engage with contemporary Japanese art.

I also curated a show leading up to that with an artist called Chikako Maria Mori who was, well, who is working with paper in a more contemporary installation style. So, we did paper-making workshops. She was really keen to do origami workshops which I agreed to but now I slightly regret, since it was not really the thing we were aiming for in that it probably perpetuated yet another stereotype of Japanese culture. But she came to us for a week to install the exhibition, did these workshops, and was around in the gallery and spoke to people about her art.

This kind of project seems fairly typical of the way things are going in terms of funding. Activities and events will be project led, I think, since there is no core funding for this kind of thing. Exhibitions and events might be generated by the permanent collection. For instance had I still been there I was looking to do an exhibition on contemporary graphics, which would start with traditional Japanese prints (especially some of Hokusai's original '*manga*' which are in the Blackburn permanent collection), and move into sort of contemporary *manga*, and fairly obvious stuff but stuff that hasn't been done so far in Blackburn. I would have used the existing collection as a starting point and looked for external funding to develop this idea.

G.I.: Thank you very much. Now Stella Beddoe *(Brighton & Hove Museums)*.

S.B.: Hello, apologies to begin with, as I'm Keeper of Decorative Art (British and European) deputising for my colleague, Sara Posey, Keeper of World Art. She was unable to come at the last minute, so I was given the opportunity to come instead. So, I speak from a position of ignorance but possibly with a slightly different slant on our Japanese collections. They are very small and have been acquired in a rather ad hoc fashion from the late 19th century onward, and are spread between our collections of Fine Art, where we have a small number of high quality prints (perhaps only 100 or so), and World Art which accounts for items that are probably more social history-orientated or have, perhaps, a religious significance.

At the same time a number of Japanese ceramics, in particular, and some metalwork found their way into the Decorative Art collections, mainly through connoisseur collections of the 19th century, including that of one of our founding fathers, Henry Willett. He is best known for pictures we no longer have which he had to sell during his own lifetime and are in collections around the world, and for his collection of English pottery which tells the history of the English people through their pots. He was also something of a jackdaw collector, and acquired some fascinating ceramic items, largely from his own period, (the mid to late 19th century), and metalwork, including a group of Japanese iron tea kettles, one of which is illustrated in the guide. Among other Decorative Art items are some oversized Satsuma jars with lids that look like little wrestlers. We have a small number of bronze sculptures, probably a couple of dozen at most, lacquer work, carved ivory figures and *okimono* and decorated ostrich eggs, the sort of items which would have gone into cabinets of curiosities, I suspect.

Most important to me, however, are the 20th century Japanese designers, whose work has been so influential on European decorative art and design. As a curator of an important collection of European 20th century decorative art and design, the influence of Japan is absolutely central to the development of style and technological innovation through the 20th century. There were Japanese lacquer masters, such as Sugawara who taught people like Eileen Gray and Jean Dunand in Paris, and potters like Hamada who, with Bernard Leach initiated the studio pottery movement in this country. But there are also important contemporary Japanese designers of, for example, furniture . In our permanent displays, we have items of furniture designed by Sori Yanagi – his iconic butterfly stool of 1954 is particularly unusual since there was no tradition of seat furniture in Japan. Also pieces by Shiro Kuramata, Masanori Umeda and Azumi, who are now central to the global design industry. We also have examples in our collections of contemporary couturiers like Issey Miyaki, Yoji Yamamoto, Rei Kawakubo (of Comme des Garçons), and Junya Watanabe, who are leading world fashion designers.

There is, unfortunately, rather less opportunity to show other items from our Japanese collections. Before the Lottery funded redevelopment (we re-opened in 2002) we used to have a 'History of Ceramics' gallery, where we looked at the development of world ceramics and the achievements of the distant past in the Far East. Such a gallery no longer exists, so that particular platform for showing Japanese ceramics is no longer available. From time to time woodcut prints from our fine art collection figure in thematic exhibitions which take place in our print gallery. Occasionally in the past I've done tiny displays on a shoestring budget, such as the art of Japanese packaging demonstrating wrappings, baskets, boxes, and so on, that had been borrowed or donated, and these were of great interest. But this was before our major redevelopment and it's taken a great deal of time for the dust to settle. I'd

like to undertake further initiatives, also to extend the links with contemporary Japanese designers in our contemporary collections. I hope that I have the opportunity to do more of this, as well as showing some more of our historic collections. Thank you.

G.I.: Thank you very much. Now Kate Newnham *(Bristol's City Museum and Art Gallery)*.

K.N.: The Bristol City Art Gallery opened in 1905, complementing an existing museum that had opened in 1872. They were originally housed in two separate buildings but after bomb damage during the Second World War, they merged into one. So, we've got an art gallery and a museum all crammed into one building which is lovely and encyclopaedic and somewhat eccentric at times! The Eastern Art collection is one of nine curatorial departments. So there are other departments such as natural history, geology, fine art, etc.

The Eastern Art collection has about 6,000 pieces from China, Japan, India, the Islamic world and the range of other countries round about. It's staffed by one curator, me at the moment. In 1998 the collection was given designated status by the Museums and Galleries Commission as being of outstanding national importance, particularly for its Chinese collection that is its main strength. It has a very good collection of Chinese ceramics, Chinese glass, unusually, both of which came in the late 1940s. There are about 1,000 items from Japan, 500 woodblock prints, 300 *netsuke*, 100 sword fittings, roughly, and various ceramics, textiles in addition.

Probably, like many of the regional museums, the collection mirrors the taste of late 19th century and 20th century collectors. I think during the first half of the 20th century the collection grew up quite haphazardly; there was no particular policy in collecting Japanese items. The first acquisition was in 1894, *"an old satin damask from Edo"*, but I've yet to discover it. The first purchase of *netsuke* was in 1906. Throughout the 1930s there were acquisitions such as sword fittings, that kind of thing. But most of the collection, most of the Japanese prints certainly, were acquired after the Second World War under the arts curator, who was later the director, a very lively Austrian man called Hans Schumart who had quite a world view of art. He wanted Bristol not to be a provincial museum but to stand on the world stage. He started buying quite vigorously. He bought at public sales; he cultivated local collectors, quite a few of whom were linked to Bristol University. There was an elderly professor, Hyatt Baker another professor who lived locally who had worked at Cambridge, Professor Crundall Punnett, whose first collection formed the nucleus of the Fitzwilliam museum. So, I think his tastes are probably reflected in the Fitzwilliam but also in Bristol. When old Professor Punnett decided to sell, he agreed to sell to the Bristol museum.

The print collection is strong in artists of the 18th century, such as Kiyomitsu, Harunobu and Shunsho. Then as far as the 19th century goes, Hiroshige and Hokusai, but it includes some rarities such as Kunyoshi's *The Night Attack*, 1830-35; some playbills, two of which recently toured to Japan with the British Museum's *'Kabuki Heroes'* (*'Kabuki Heroes on the Osaka Stage 1780-1830')* show. As far as *netsuke* go, we have about 280 given by a lady called Mrs Cook-Hurle, who was a pioneer of mental health but who was a member of the Fry's Chocolate family, so there's an industrial link.

There has always been a blurring of lines in Bristol, and I suspect in other places as well, as to what is art and what is ethnography, and some of the Japanese collection has languished in the ethnography collections. It's still in the ethnography stores. That's quite an interesting issue for us. [*Laughter*]

G.I.: We've got some ethnographers up in arms!

K.N.: Only joking! The Eastern Art Department has existed since 1965 and I think the curator that was appointed went around all the stores and tried to find out what was Japanese. A strange thing happened at about the same time. During the 1960s the stores were so full, that they decided to de-accession quite a lot. They de-accessioned about 150 so-called, 'low quality' Asian items, particularly the metalwork. I'm very upset about that, since it actually included six Japanese armours and we didn't have Japanese armour for quite a long time. But one ended up at the Horniman (Horniman Museum) and another at the British Museum. So, at least they ended up somewhere which is good. As far as contemporary collecting goes, I'd love to do more. I bought a collection of about 20 contemporary prints for an exhibition we ran in 2001, and a couple of Hamada ceramics recently. I suppose the issues are the time it takes to research acquisitions, the space needed to keep them, and the time to make the funding bids.

As far as what we've got on display goes, we're currently re-displaying the gallery where most of the Japanese material was on display, so at the moment we've got very few pieces on display, a couple of bronze censers and a loan collection of Kakiemon porcelain, so that's less than 1% of the collection. As everyone will know, because Japanese prints are light-sensitive, we can't have them on display all the time and that's sometimes hard because people don't understand, so we're looking towards putting more on display. Hopefully in the next five to ten years we will begin to refurbish a new eastern art gallery at Bristol. But I think like everywhere, like Gregory was mentioning, we're bidding internally against the exciting geology shows, for example, or the fine arts shows. We're also thinking a lot about our local audiences, and that's very important because we are a local authority-funded museum. We are much more likely to get the okay to do a show about India than we are about Japanese art, as we have to appeal to our local audiences. About 6-7% of Bristol comes from a minority ethnic background, particularly Chinese and South Asian.

We sell three postcards in our shop with Japanese items on them. That is a good way to increase access, to increase merchandise. In the past six years, we've had two temporary exhibitions of Japanese material, one show of contemporary Japanese prints and another of *ukiyo-e* prints from the museum's collection. As far as education goes, we've had programmes of workshops for schools, (papermaking, printmaking), a teachers' training week run in conjunction with Japan 21 and a haiku poet in residence for a week working with about 300 visitors.

So to conclude, I think the main issues for us for the Japanese collection are internal bidding within the museum against other departments for the shows and resources, such as conservation, and the fact that much of our material is light-sensitive. Another thing is having access to the latest books; we find it hard to keep our library up to date, so it's hard to know the latest research. Then it's simply my time, pitted against the other aspects of the collection. Thanks very much.

G.I.: Thanks very much. Now, Tim Clark *(The British Museum)*.

T.C.: I'm very pleased to be here and to speak to you all. From my point of view the timing couldn't be better because we are presently engaged in a major reinstallation of our Japanese display at the British Museum, which we hope to re-open in September[2]. We want to make

[2] See appendix 2.

the best use possible of the collections we have, to serve as many types of visitor as possible. The aim is to work on several levels at once, to stretch the chronology as much as possible, to bring the contemporary into the old, make people think about continuity. To emphasise the Japanese links to East Asia historically, and with the rest of the world. This has not been done so much in the past, to explore the crossovers, etc. Supported by the Hirayama studio, there has been ongoing conservation and repair of Asian works on paper and silk. We've heard mention today of the problems surrounding the exposure of parts of our collection to light. We aim to have a permanently rotating display that changes every few months. The themes remain the same but the works rotate. The motivation is to get more of the collection on display.

Since last year, there has been a dedicated Interpretation Section in the British Museum's Education Department, working with curators to clarify messages. It has been exciting. We have also had help from outside; for example Simon Kaner and Nicole Rousmaniere of SISJAC (Sainsbury Institute of Japanese Arts and Cultures) and Angus Lockyer of SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) helped me to flesh out basic ideas.

I won't labour at detail but page two of the handout lists how the display will be, with a diagram on the final page[3]. We have three rooms, two large and a smaller gallery at the back. The display will be chronological, with room one representing the prehistory to 1603, room two is the Edo period to 1853, the arrival of Perry, and the final display is 1853 to the present day. Working with the interpretive team, we are trying to get broad sections that will hopefully be quite easily intelligible to a general audience. And within those broader sections to tell some much more specific stories, and I see this gallery as a series of stories. We asked the public recently what they think about the displays, and found that a very effective method of getting across what we want to tell is to focus on key objects within the story. The principle is that somebody's attention is drawn to the object that is iconic in some way, which sticks in imagination and tells a story that has a better chance of getting across. The display is not a history book; it's a whole different kind of emphasis as there are many other places one can find out information. What one can't find elsewhere is these key objects that excite the imagination. That might sound like re-inventing the wheel, and I sometimes think we are re-inventing the wheel, but I think it will, in this way, be very different from traditional labels and panels. But it is still very much work in progress.

Finally, to take you very briefly through the plan of the gallery *(see appendix 3)*. In the first room, Prehistory to 1600, reading the diagram from the bottom upwards, you come in the gallery at the bottom of the diagram, on the left hand side there is information on early cultures which takes us through prehistory to the wonderful collections of the Tomb Cultures brought back by William Gowland, telling the story, really, as far as the introduction of Buddhism. Then across the room on the other side, a great sweep of what we're calling the 'religious traditions' and, again, it's largely chronological, but it's taking you through the important strands – Esoteric Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, *Kami* worship, through to Zen and finally Christianity. So the information on the traditional division of Japanese history into various periods, we don't want to over-emphasise that, but we are more interested in the broader topics for a general public, including a large and obviously international audience.

The second room, as I said, is essentially the Edo period and the big binary division here is internal Japan and external Japan. The Edo period is sometimes characterised as a 'closed

[3] See appendix 3.

period', that's true to an extent but it's a kind of permeable closedness. The relations with outside world were closely monitored. The right hand side of the room we have called the 'outside world', and we've quite systematically gone through the four main external relationships between Japan and the outside world during this period. First of all, is Korea – the relationship with the Choson kingdom which is the only formal interstate relations that Japan has in this period. The second is the relationship with the kingdom of the Ryukyus (modern Okinawa). That's semi-state relations but the Ryukyus were conquered by Satsuma in 1610, so they are, dare I say it, in a somewhat less than advantageous position than the Koreans, diplomatically speaking. The third big division are the trade relations through Nagasaki – with Chinese merchants and the Dutch East India Company. So, it's not an interstate relation, it's a trade relation. And finally to the Matsumae fief in the north, the relationship with the Ainu.

One big development at the British Museum has been the dismemberment of the ethnographic department, the re-ordering of the world into geographic divisions, and the forming of a new department of Africa, Oceania and America. The large Asian ethnographic collection has come under the stewardship of the Asian department. So one part of the exhibition deals with Japan's external relations. On the other side of the room the contrast is shown, really, between what one might call the elite, the *samurai* and the court, and the townspeople. The townspeople take us to the floating world of urban pleasures, by which we mean prints, paintings and decorative arts.

Finally, moving upstairs, the story from the opening of Japan in 1853 to the present day. Here it is formed into three major thematic divisions, taking the story from the macro level down to the personal level. Starting with the national and international picture, it's really the first hundred years from the opening of Japan through the American occupation, 1853 – 1952. Telling that story through a series of themes. The second section, called 'City and Country', bringing it down from the international/national picture to the level of the city – urbanisation, modernisation, inevitably a story that is dominated by Tokyo. We also want to talk about the major cities of western Japan, Kyoto, Osaka, and a section on rural idylls interfaced with the economy of the rest of Japan. Finally, something we're calling the 'expressive self'. Again, a series of themes that take us to the 21st century, in how personal experience has been expressed by artists in a variety of ways. Within that section, the wonderful world of *manga* because I very much see *manga* as a medium rather than a message – you can tell anything through *manga*. But *manga* is a way of opening up personal space, a way of exploring the imagination, fantasy. I believe I have exceeded my 10 minutes!

G.I.: Is the 'outside world' the only area where ethnographic material is to be displayed? Or are you planning to include other parts of what we would classify as ethnography within this scheme here?

T.C.: The big ethnographic collections that relate to Japan are the Ainu collections. When we present the Ainu items in the middle room, yes, we will present artefacts made by the Ainu themselves, some spectacular things, but also painted images of the Ainu by the Japanese. As the Ainu didn't paint images of themselves. This is one of the cases where I'd like to include some contemporary Ainu objects. To bring it really up to date and make the point that the Ainu always quite rightly insist on – that their's is a living culture with a tradition.

G.I.: Thank you very much. We will now pass on to Emma Martin *(World Museum, Liverpool)*.

E.M.: Hello, I'm from the Liverpool Museum, now called the World Museum. We are the only national museum in England outside London. I've got a similar story to tell as Kate from Bristol, in that we are a port city, considered to be one of the great port cities of the 19th century, from which came its wealth and particularly its collections. The Japanese collections really started in mid 19th century to the late 19th century with the opening of Japan. China trade ships were bringing Japanese material into Liverpool. There was a great interest, fascination with Japanese art at that time. Liverpool was the home of the first regional Asian art society, Japanese ambassadors visited Liverpool to set up ceremonial links with the city, and there were also Asian exhibitions held at various points around the city. In addition, private collectors opening their own museums to the general public. Within that came a number of collectors who were interested in Japanese art.

There's one particular character, James Lord Bowes, who was known as 'Japanese' Bowes. He was fascinated by Japan. It is very unlikely he visited Japan. He had Japanese friends and became very involved in the promotion of Japanese art and culture in Liverpool. Built himself quite an interesting collection of mainly export ware which was quite unfashionable at the time. He did some questionable research which was trashed by a number of other scholars. So he was quite an interesting character. He opened his home to the public as a Japanese exhibition which attracted thousands of people a day. He held a very popular event, something called the 'Japanese Fancy Fayre' in 1891, looking to promote Japanese art and culture. He was an interesting guy. He died in 1899 and unfortunately his collection was dispersed. The V&A didn't want it as it was out of fashion at the time.

G.I.: We have one piece.

E.M.: We have 30 pieces but they are very disparate, and they don't tell the story of this particular man and what he tried to do. But the foundations of the Japanese art collection in Liverpool were formed during this very active period. We have records of fairly substantial Japanese items coming into the collection at that time. In around 1910 material from the Ainu came into the collection, including some ethnographic material as well. These were the foundations. There was a major catastrophe at the museum in 1941 that altered the whole development of Liverpool museum. There was a great fire, an incendiary bomb fell on the adjoining library. It destroyed the museum and much of the collections it held. We think that all the early collections that came in the very active period of the late 19th century were destroyed. We still have the Ainu materials, thankfully, but all else was destroyed.

The fire brought the museum to the public's attention. Two collectors decided to bequeath their collections because of the fire. One of them was Randal Hibbert, who collected arms and armour in the late 19th to early 20th century. What is particularly interesting is that basically the arms, swords, the blades and all the fittings remained untouched from their export in the late 19th century, so they're a wonderful record of what Victorian taste was and certainly reflect the interest in arms and armoury at that time. The other contrasting collection we have is from Fred W Mayor. He, again, had some arms but he was particularly interested in late 19th century export lacquer and metal ware. We have some really stunning examples of metal ware and also lacquer. It wasn't particularly popular at the time and his collecting was purely of his own taste. But it forms an interesting picture of what people in Liverpool in the late 19th and early 20th century were collecting.

In terms of numbers, we have 2,750 Japan related pieces, ranging from the 14th to the late

20th century. There is a good range of material but, because of the Hibbert collection, our strongest area is arms and armour. We have, I think, 113 swords of all types and sizes, mounted and unmounted, some rare examples of blades. In particular, 13 full or partial *samurai* armour, bows and arrows, a whole range of decorative material, and some really quite fantastic examples of export *tsuba*, never used on the swords but collected by Victorians. We have quite a large collection, some of which is on display. We're very poor on ceramics and textiles. We have 150 prints but the collection is quite skewed to arms and armour.

In terms of display, we just opened a new gallery last year called 'World Cultures'. This shows 1,600 of our 40,000 ethnographic artefacts. The Asian collection makes up 15,000 of those 40,000 where the Japanese collection is well represented. We have displays that try to show the 'Liverpoolness' of the ethnographic collections, and also look at the key theme of 'trade and encounter'. So we look at the way that different cultures, different countries have interacted with each other, the exchange of beliefs, ideas and goods as well. This is the key theme that runs throughout the gallery.

In terms of the Japan collections, Gregory came to have a look at the collection before we started the process of putting the gallery together. It was obvious to Gregory that there were a number of key areas. We decided to focus on the two collectors; to contrast, in the space, these two men and what they were collecting, and how it was representative of Victorian taste at the time. We also look at the trade aspects, the key maritime families in Liverpool, what they were collecting, inevitably including Japanese material. We look at the stereotypes of the merchants and traders bringing back items. So we look at those issues of representation, not only of westerners looking at Asian peoples, but of Asian people looking at the West. It's very similar to what the V&A did a few years ago, looking at cross-cultural representations. The Japan collections display make up 7-8% of our collection, so we have about 200 items on display but there are 50 *tsuba* on display and 50 *netsuke*, so it's not really representative of the collection. We don't have any of our Ainu items on display which is a great regret. This is something I think we have a potential to develop in the future.

Our education program includes a hands-on centre which is attached to the World Cultures gallery, where we do all sorts of activities with school groups and family groups and is free. We are developing Japanese story telling. It's a new venture and it's not like anything we've had before, so we're trying to gauge how our visitors use it. We also have an auditorium in there, where our Learning Department give a demonstration on *samurai* armour once a week. A key sub-theme in our displays is the *samurai*. We have a replica suit of armour that a member of the audience wears. It is extremely popular. I am looking to put together a more wide ranging programme which is less stereotypical.

We have a new gallery opening. One of the new dimensions is that the conservation centre has an exhibition space in the new gallery called 'Reveal' which looks at conservation techniques. You can just see a little photograph in the packet here of an item we have, the *Buddha of Infinite Light*[4]. The conservation department have recreated the Buddha as it was first made, have removed additional decoration that was added to it. They have recreated the jewellery, re-painted it, and created a 3D virtual model which visitors can virtually touch. It's quite an exciting interpretive model. We hope to use that within our main galleries as well. Things like *netsuke* are very small and behind the glass but if we could figure out a way to handle these things, it would be quite exciting.

[4] See appendix 4.

We have a very active contemporary collecting programme but this doesn't concentrate on Japan at the minute. And there's only one curator of the Asian collections, and that's me, as well as heading up the department, and my own area of research is India. So, there is no active research on the collection at the minute, although I do think that contemporary collecting is possibly a way forward but we need research, and getting those contacts and links. We are promoting our Japanese collections but in a limited way at the moment.

G.I.: And now on to Fiona Kerlogue *(Horniman Museum)*.

F.K.: Much of what other people have said resonated with my own position, especially some of Emma Martin's comments. I am from the Horniman Museum and I am responsible for the Horniman's anthropology collections from the whole of Asia and Europe. My area of expertise is actually South East Asia. I am currently exploring our Japanese collection with enthusiasm but time and manpower are both short.

The Museum was founded on the collections of Frederick Horniman, the son of a tea merchant. He started collecting in the 1850s and the museum was first opened in 1890, at which time it was divided into two sections – art and nature, and there was a curator for each. Richard Quick, who was a Japan enthusiast, curated the art section. In the early days Japan was very much seen as an important part of the collection. There are a number of items from Japan, including religious figures, fishing equipment. It was clear that the word 'art' was taken to mean anything man-made. There was no list of the collections at the beginning and our earliest records are the annual reports, and then we only really know what was added to the collections.

Between 1890-1898 this included two 5 foot high Japanese cloisonné vases, temple bells, bronze mirrors, ceramics, a fire pump, six spears. The gifts included a sword, a collection of Japanese idols, vases, a Japanese umbrella, and two Japanese matchlock guns. So these were the kinds of things coming in. Purchases included a magnificent Japanese shrine that was brought from Japan in 1892 and bought from Lord Connemara, and this was set up in the main entrance hall. In 1894 a reception was given for The Japan Society, attended by quite a number of people, and there were Japanese lanterns all over the garden. The curator gave a number of lectures on Japan and Japanese art, illustrated by slides taken from specimens in the museum. In 1895 Frederick Horniman spent two and a half weeks in Japan, and his impressions published in a local newspaper.

In 1898 the museum was closed and new building put up, and it is at this point that a full list of contents was made. Problems of documentation are apparent. Items were numbered from 1-500 and then they started at one again. Some items seem to have been removed to Horniman's house because of confusion over ownership. Acquisition sources were often not noted. The list refers to some Japanese material not mentioned in the reports such as some ceramics, a sword and 21 Japanese heads bought in 1895 from a dealer in Falmouth! We think these were model heads; we certainly don't have all of them now. In 1901 the new building was presented to the London County Council *'as a free gift to the people forever'*. From this point new acquisitions were recorded in the register. Again not all objects were physically numbered but the register was kept reasonably well.

Then next major event was the appointment of an anthropologist, Alfred Haddon, as advisory curator. He soon fell out with Quick. A new curator was appointed who was a protégé of Haddon. Horniman was advised to turn his museum into an anthropology museum. This is

reflected in the arrangement of the museum and the objects collected, which were obtained for their anthropological interest. All of our Japanese collection is regarded as anthropological, and not just the Ainu material.

The first guide to the Museum's collections was published in 1904, and it reveals the way that items were classified according to function and viewed in relation to the development of technology. This arrangement as to function was in keeping with the anthropological perspective. However, it didn't allow the visitor to develop a sense of culture as a complex of its own. So, for example, in the carving section there was a large Japanese inlaid tray amongst carvings from Norway, West Africa, India, Burma and Germany. Under weaponry, only guns are mentioned under Japan. Under religion there are numerous religious images from Japan. There's also a particular strength in musical instruments. In the transport display, Japan was represented by 'jinrickshaws'. Under toys and games, the guide refers to *'battledores from Japan and Mandingoland, West Africa'*!

The collections grew and they continued to grow. In 1909 the museum received a bequest including 75 ivory carvings from Japan, and in 1910 around 35 items were acquired from the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition, which were mainly Ainu items. In 1911 Charles Lund presented a gift of a number of Japanese items.

During the pre-war period the register was very well kept but again it seems that some of the items were not numbered and we are still trying to match them up. Catalogue cards from that period were brief and many appear to be missing. However, between 1938 and 1946 the register itself was more or less abandoned and there are no catalogue cards. So we just have text saying, for example, *'various items received from Mrs Jones'* that is not very helpful. However, in 1947 a new curator was appointed and documentation has been well recorded since then, apart from a glitch in the early 1950s.

In 1965 the museum acquired a collection of around 75 items from the Church Missionary Society, again chiefly of ethnographic interest. These collections generally give insights into the life of ordinary Japanese people, although some items in this collection are Ainu materials.

We have about 80,000 items in the museum's anthropology collections, around 2,500 are of Japan, we think. We have very limited display space and only a few are on display. These include a very fine lacquer screen depicting scenes from the life of Shinran, carved in Kyoto by Masatoshi; a book of tattoo designs acquired in 1914 with other tattooing material from the collection of Henry Ling Roth; a large gilt seated Buddha image with body auriole; a smaller gilt shrine containing a Buddha image with two attendants; four bronze censers and a number of Noh theatre masks, dating from between the 17th and 20th centuries, including several carved for the museum by a master carver in 1983. These are displayed in the museum's Centenary Gallery that recounts the history of the museum's collections in relation to changing anthropological perspectives over the last century. There are also a few items from the anthropological collections on display in the Music Gallery, including a set of dolls for the annual Girls' Festival. The Musical Instruments Department also has some 300 or so Japanese items, of which approximately 10% are on display in the Music Gallery.

There are about 104 Japanese items in the Handling Collection in the Education Department, currently not much used, although a session is currently being prepared based on this Japanese material. There are two copies of Bunraku puppets used in the puppetry session,

and there is a *kimono* in the dressing up box. The Education Department also include the Bunraku puppet on display in the Centenary Gallery as part of a museum trail.

Japan is currently receiving special attention at the museum, as we are planning a textile exhibition to open in April next year. I am also trying to address the whole collection of Japanese material in the anthropology collection in the run up to this exhibition. We recently won grants from the Daiwa Foundation (Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation) and the Sasakawa Foundation (Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation) to help us in this endeavour. The first is to bring two Japanese curators for a month each this summer to help with the interpretation of the material, and to help produce a catalogue for the exhibition that we will put on the web. I have two students from the University of Amsterdam also helping with preparatory work. We are going to Japan in May to collect for the textile exhibition, and to take contextualising photos and video. We are hoping to run a programme of events to coincide with the exhibition. However the main issue, which I'm sure you've guessed, is that there are literally hundreds of unidentified items in our collection, and that's the main problem we face.

G.I.: Thanks very much, Fiona. And now on to Fiona Woolley *(Maidstone Museum & Bentlif Art Gallery)*.

F.W.: Hello, my name is Fiona Woolley and I've been at Maidstone Museum & Bentlif Art Galley for two and a half years, and as the Keeper of Fine & Applied Art for just over 6 months. I look after 12 collections in Fine Art and amongst them is Japanese Art. In the Japanese collection there are approximately 3,000 items comprising of Japanese prints, scrolls, drawings, swords and sword furniture, lacquer ware, *inro*, metalwork, bronzes, *netsuke,* ceramics, arms and armour. The collection is supported by an old library of 200-250 books, dating from the late 19th century to the early 1960s. There is a permanent gallery dedicated to Japanese art, with a comprehensive display. The gallery has been a permanent feature in the museum since 1923 and was paid for by Lord and Lady Bearsted, to showcase their son Walter Samuel's generous bequest. Before that time, as I understand it, there were ceramics on display from the Henry Marsham collections which was bequeathed in 1908. The bulk of our Japanese collections have been acquired through the bequests from the two collectors.

The profile of the collection could be higher. I don't believe it to be that well-known. It covers the Edo and Meiji periods, there is a little from the 20th century included, and we don't have the budget to buy new material.

Our problems are similar to what Fiona [Kerlogue] has just described. Poor documentation hampers access as the records are sometimes very scant. We're in a situation where we have everything, or we hope we have everything, on catalogue index cards, but as you go through them while auditing you find anomalies. The stores cause a problem as like in other museums, they are full with little space available in which to work. We have started to digitise the collections and that began last September. We started with the photography of the Japanese prints, which has fed into an exhibition which opened on March 10th. There are now 63 prints on temporary display.

We're hoping to update all the records for the Japanese collections; we see this as a priority. By having photographs done, updating the catalogue cards, and transferring the information into a database, we hope to raise the profile and increase access to information on the collection, eventually making the records and images available on the web.

We're limited in expertise and I'm not a specialist, so I have to read up a lot and ask for advice. We also don't have a budget for conservation and during our audits we are becoming aware of items that will require work. But that's going to be an area we will have to fund raise for.

With regards to education, we've just recruited a new Audit Development Officer who started in January. There's so much that has to be done with education and access. With the Japanese material, we will be looking to set up a loan box. We're also looking to cement links with the local university, the University College for the Creative Arts, which has bases in Rochester, Maidstone, Canterbury, Epsom and Farnham. We are currently working with one student who is developing some work on Japanese prints.

With regard to the web, there is a little piece of information about the collections on our website at the moment. In the summer, hopefully with more money that's coming in April, we will be able to publish photographs of the Japanese collections, in particular the prints on the web. This will form the basis/template to build upon for the rest of the collections in the museum.

G.I.: Great. Thank you very much indeed, and now to Andrew Renton *(Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales)*.

A.R.: We've got a small collection of Japanese objects, about 370 items altogether. They sit within the art collections which total about 42,000 items. So, in the general scheme of things they do not have very high profile, especially as there has been no curatorial expertise in our history for it.

The Japanese collection doesn't really have a distinct identity. It came to us in various ways and routes. Some of the material that we've got came to us through the interest of local collectors, prints, a few things like that. We've also got a number of things which document the specific relationship between certain Welsh people and the Japanese. Of the 370 items, about 250 of these are woodblock prints from the 1730s to the end of the 19th century. We've got a number of tea ceremony items which I'll talk about in some more detail in a moment. We've got porcelain and pottery from the 17th to the 20th century, some pieces of lacquer, ivory, some miscellaneous objects including some *tsuba,* a cloisonné enamel vase which was presented to the Secretary of State for Wales in 1976. There are also some other things that have come to us. Two dolls, some baskets, that sort of thing. It doesn't really hang together as a coherent collection.

The Museum was founded by royal charter in 1907, built on the Cardiff Free Museum and Library which was founded in 1862, and we first opened to the public in 1922. The earliest Japanese material that came into the museum was acquired in 1915, and it's possibly the most interesting area of the collection. And it's the only example of collecting Japanese objects to represent Japanese culture. This is a collection of 52 items acquired by Bernard Leach, whose uncle was the founding director of the National Museum of Wales, Dr William Evans Hoyle.

Leach was in Japan between 1909 and 1920. Between 1913 and 1915 he brought together a collection of objects for the National Museum of Wales, in correspondence with his uncle, saying this would be of particular interest. Although Hoyle was a natural scientist and not

especially interested in Japanese things, he was persuaded to go along with this and fund future purchases. Leach was motivated by a number of factors, and particularly the headlong industrialisation that was going on in Japan at the time. He was fearful of old Japan being thrown out in the process. So the collection of tea items and some prints, lacquer and textiles was seen as a way of bringing to the West an understanding about traditional Japan.

So what we have is a tea ceremony setting with a range of tea bowls. It's the whole thing from the *tatami* mat to the kettle to the slop bowl, all the objects, the more ephemeral things like the tea whisk, etc. Unfortunately the stove from the tea set was broken in transit, so we don't have that any more. Leach was very concerned that this be presented in the right way so he took advice from his contacts in Japan, from experts, and he took photographs of the tea collection in use in Japan. He wrote detailed letters to Hoyle explaining what Japanese aesthetics were all about, and also very detailed instructions about how it was all to be displayed. A roll of green Japanese silk was meant to be set out on the shelves, to set the objects on. He was very clear that the prints should be framed simply and not with any ornate gilt frames.

It's a very interesting document, not just about the Japanese tea ceremony but about Leach himself. This is what is most interesting to us. It shows him using the museum as a proselytising tool. It's interesting, also, in that this collection languished in museum stores unrecognised until a few years ago. As part of research for the Museum's Japan 2001 exhibition, it came to light that this collection of Japanese objects that we've got was linked to this correspondence. One thing we do need now is an expert view on what these objects are. Leach said what he thought they were but it is important for us to know how good his understanding was.

In 1924 Leach's friend, Tsurunosuke Matsubayashi, visited him in St Ives and rebuilt his kiln. Afterwards, Leach asked him to come to Cardiff to set out the objects in the authentic way. We have no evidence of what he actually did. There is an amusing account by Michael Cardew of him performing a tea ceremony on his way to Cardiff in the grand drawing room at Coleshill, the 17th century house in Berkshire of Leach's student, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie.

Now, apart from that, we have got prints that came from various sources, for example the artist T. H. Thomas, Fanny Logan Williams. 57 prints were given for circulation to educational institutions in Wales by Winifred Coombe Tennant, the suffragette. Miss Elizabeth Hughes, another interesting character, was a pioneer of women's education who held a chair at the Women's University in Japan shortly after 1901, and while she was there she collected a few objects.

Briefly, we've also acquired Japanese porcelain as a part of our vast collection of primarily European porcelain. We've got odd things like a cup and saucer from the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. In terms of contemporary collecting, we don't actively collect Japanese things. We do actively collect craft and in that respect we have some items that reflect the ongoing relationship between Japan and Britain – pots by Hamada, a couple of pots by Takeshi Yasuda who works in Bath. Last year we acquired metalwork by Junko Mori and Hiroshi Suzuki. We are interested in that aspect of Japan.

Although I've said that we've never had curatorial expertise on Japan, so the collection really hasn't ever been researched until recently. In 2001 we had help with our woodblock prints

from Alfred Haft who did research on our 19th century actor prints. We're currently rethinking our art galleries, and we think this is an opportunity to rethink or re-represent our Japanese collection.

In terms of the educational use of the collection, with Japan 2001 we did a number of activities, the usual things – tea ceremonies, origami, flower arranging. Since then, we haven't really followed that up. We haven't really maintained momentum. Given that there is a significant local Japanese population, some 2,000 in Wales, we feel that there is a duty there. We've got six items on display at the moment which represents a figure of about 1.5% of the total.

G.I.: Thank you very much. We'll pass straight over to Shaun Garner *(Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum)*.

S.G.: The Russell-Cotes Museum is a late Victorian villa in Bournemouth that contains objects from throughout the world. Among some 85,000 objects, 10,000 are ethnographic. Of that 2,500 are from Japan. The collection was formed in 1885 after our founders went to Japan on a detour for what became a seven-week shopping tour. On their return, they set up a Japanese drawing room that was actually the first museum in Bournemouth. They printed invitations and souvenirs for guests, amongst whom were Lord and Lady Salisbury. They employed an artist called John Thomas to decorate the room. John Thomas produced a portfolio of Japanese sketches based on the *manga* of Hokusai and Hiroshige in the early 1870s. Thomas went on to decorate the rest of the hotel for them. The garden also incorporated lots of Japanese designs and boasted cloud clipped hedges, *torii* with gilded ornamental dragons at the top, stone lanterns, a garden with two bridges and waterfalls, a 'Mikado's Grotto', etc. Then in 1897 they decided to build themselves a villa in the grounds of the hotel, where they created another Japanese garden, and carried the designs into the house. The stained glass, murals, covings all had Japanese elements to them. In 1920 they created the Mikado's room. Oliver Thomas decorated this. What he did was copy items from a book, objects from the collection, and painted the Emperor and Empress of Japan from photographs presented to them by the Chevalier Lanciarez when in Tokyo. The covings in the Mikado room were strewn with lanterns and *keman*. The inside was so crammed with objects they couldn't open the door at the public opening in 1921, as a suit of armour had fallen over. So they sent a boy attendant to climb out on the canopy to break in through a window.

The first curator was Richard Quick, appointed in 1921. He came from Bristol, and had known Russell-Cotes probably since 1892, as they were both involved in the Japan Society. He had been back to Bournemouth with the friends of Bristol Museum and had given lectures at the Royal Bath Hotel. He was appointed because of this connection. The first thing he did was an acquisition register based on an inventory of the previous year, and there was also an insurance inventory from 1907 which was quite detailed, and that showed items which were now missing.

William Sutherland gave us a collection of lacquer, both good and bad. It was offered first to the V&A who took the best pieces, and rejected the lacquer process set, said to be the finest example in Europe and contains 38 *sake* cups at different stages of production, tools and ingredients. Richard Quick produced the first catalogue in 1931. The Japanese collection lost impetus after Quick's retirement in 1932 as the next curator had more of an interest in modern art. By 1960 a lot of the collection had been sold off, as it was languishing in a warehouse. We lost six to seven suits of armour and hundreds of weapons through these sales

and I hope to trace them and bring them back into the collection.

There was an exhibition on *netsuke* in the 1990s in collaboration with Cartwright Hall in Bradford. In 1998 we started a project to refurbish the museum, so no work was done on the Japanese collection until we re-opened in 2001, unfortunately missing out on the national celebrations that year. For the last five or six years I have been concentrating on the Japanese collection. For over 10ears we have been working with specialist colleagues from the V&A, primarily Gregory, who carried out surveys on parts of the collection.

Two years ago we worked on a Japanese metal work exhibition – *'Well Hammered – The Art of Japanese Metalwork'*, opened by the Minister Plenipotentiary, Mr. Seiji Kojima, in the presence of the Duke of Gloucester, Patron of the Japan Society. I'm currently working on a new exhibition for 2007, *'Through Blue Eyes – Victorian Travellers in Japan'*, which is the 120th anniversary of the first museum in Bournemouth, *'The Japanese Drawing Room'*, to bring together all of the original items remaining in the collection from our founder's collection.

Going back to the overall Japanese collection, a lot of the items that were brought back from Japan in 1885 were ephemeral and included *hashi bukuro* from Kyoto, a ladle from the temple at Nikko, prayers from temples, and a gamecock's tail from Kobe. Most of the collection belongs to the Meiji period and a few Edo. We've recently acquired some early 20th century lacquer, a set of commemorative *sake* cups from the Russo-Japanese war. We have around 2,500 items, as I said before, and there are around 350 items on display and these are in the Mikado room, Japanese Gallery and around the house. The range of material includes lacquer, arms and armour, prints, books, oil paintings, *netsuke*, textiles, newspapers and photographs. We've recently discovered a handkerchief made from a mulberry tree, brought back by an officer from the United States, with unfortunately no date.

We've raised the whole profile of the collection in the last few years, and the learning team are now basing an interactive series on the Japanese collection. We've had events about twice a year for the last five years. A recent initiative is to put the Russell-Cotes trip in 1885 into *manga*; we're working with a Japanese artist in Japan. It includes them buying things in shops and bazaars and is called *'The Japanese Drawing Room – Victorian Travellers in Japan'* and will be released in May.

G.I.: Thank you very much. Now on to Kevin McLoughlin *(Oriental Museum, Durham)*.

K.M.: For those of you who don't know the Oriental Museum in Durham, we're one of two university museums at the University of Durham. We are rather short-staffed as we have only two curators. I should mention that I am a Chinese specialist, although I do deal with the South East, Central, and South Asian collections and as well. The Oriental Museum opened in 1960. Prior to that the collections, which were later the nucleus of the Oriental Museum, were housed throughout the University as well as used as teaching collections in the adjacent School of Oriental Studies. In addition, once the museum opened in 1960, it quickly grew with quite a few acquisitions made through donations, bequests, acquisitions and so on. The material in the Japanese collections came from private individuals and other institutions such as the Wellcome Institute, the Ashmolean Museum, and we've also had funding provided by the National Arts Collection Fund.

In terms of the type of collection we have, it is from quite a wide historical period but most is concentrated in the Edo and Meiji periods. In material terms, the collection is quite diverse,

showing a range of techniques and materials including textiles, arms and armour, ceramics, prints, *inro, netsuke, tsuba.* There are also other items like domestic shrines, furniture, lacquer ware, paintings, dolls, statues, games and gaming, bronze temple bells, coins, and a large collection of lantern-slides from the late 19th to the 20th century.

In terms of size, I did a relatively quick check of our database before coming here and there are approximately 1,600 plus Japanese objects, and that's out of a collection of somewhere between 25,000-30,000 objects. Of that Japanese collection, I'd estimate there is 10% on display.

Our displays are not terribly effective. There isn't any overarching narrative, nor is any historical or social context given. The objects aren't presented in a coherent context. For instance we have groups of *inro* and weapons side by side, so it's rather a smorgasbord, if you like.

There are plans to redisplay this year and for the reinterpretation of the Japanese collections. I should point out, as I mentioned before, that there are only two curatorial staff, and we are extremely busy. What we do runs the full range of administration, exhibition planning, giving talks, documentation of all sorts, dealing with public queries, staff management and so on. What I anticipate for later in this year though is to begin to redisplay the Chinese collection, and then broaden this out to the Japanese and South East Asian collections.

If none of you have actually visited the museum, it's not terribly attractive. It's very much a modernist block designed in 1950s and because it's built on a hillside, the interior space isn't very flexible, as it is in the form of a succession of descending tiers, so there isn't much flexibility for redisplay. Because of staff changes, I've been in this post for two years and the other curator for one year, so there's a rather disjointed impression created by the displays, the result of different curatorial hands at work at different times. I should also point out that our budget is very limited too.

I'd say that the Japanese collections, along with the Chinese and Egyptian collections, are the most important. The Chinese collection, in particular, is the largest; it's about 10,000 items. The Egyptian collection is also very large. The Japanese collection probably takes up 10% of overall display space. It is extensively used in education at all levels. Large numbers of school groups utilise the wood block prints, the textiles, and the general displays.

One of the main things I do is to deal with the University Museum web pages. There is a plan, which is now rather advanced, in the coming weeks and months to redo our web pages. I envisage that the Japanese collections will get extensive display when this is done. I think I'll stop there because time is pressing.

G.I.: That's good, thank you very much indeed. I think we can agree that the commonalities coming out are the constraints of time and resources. The challenge is how we can possibly continue to work together to continue to raise profile.

J.T.: If you haven't done so already, could each of you say something about the priority of the Japanese collection within the whole collection?

G.I.: My general feeling is that the priority, and you'll correct me if I'm wrong, in general seems to rely on the enthusiasm of the individual curator. I think that, although our thrust is in

different directions, I mentioned China and India being the two main areas, and think it isn't entirely philanthropic gestures pushing towards China and India but that these are the two emerging economies. Not to infer in any way that Japan has had its day but we have been aware that Japan is suffering economic recessions, and we see in China and India the two main areas. I think it is very much up to us, therefore, to raise Japan's profile. It's all on a different level. The British Museum is very lucky in that they have a huge Japanese gallery and things have been set up very beautifully. Do you still have research fund set up?

T.C.: The cultural exchange fund, yes.

G.I.: Yes. So there are certain research funds. But we all, and some of us mentioned this, we are all bidding internally against other colleagues who are also working in different areas. The British Museum have a priority at the moment for redisplaying their galleries. It is up to the rest of us to push, to raise it.

E.M.: There are other priorities for us. Education, family learning, other ethnic groups in area. We don't have a Japanese community in Liverpool. It will never be a priority in Liverpool but perhaps collectively.

G.I.: I didn't mention that at the V&A we have South Asian and Chinese community liaison officers who are actively pushing and promoting, working with their community. Of course we should include Japan to be inclusive but the Japanese community in this country tends to be rather transitory. When events happen you seem to discover that there are a lot of Japanese living here. But there is no community in the way that you have it with the Chinese or South Asian community.

K.N.: On a more optimistic note, I found that compared with the back up that exists for the Chinese collections, there is huge back up for the Japanese collections. For example with the funding bodies, the Japan Foundation, the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation for example – those do exist. There is also the work that has been done over the last 15 years in Japanese education by Japan 21. There isn't anything like this on the Chinese side. I think that we're starting in a very good position and there is a lot of work we can build on.

S.B.: Regarding priorities, as several other people have commented, we are all subject to political constraints. Some of us come from local authority museums, some from national museums, some from university museums who all have different priorities to address. The perceived 'importance' of the collection [in terms of size and quality] in comparison with the rest of the collections is influential. Of course we all have a remit now to address the concerns of the local community and minority ethnic communities in particular.

G.I.: There is a lack of specialist curators. One way we can push ahead is in fact to build on the work and identify the objects that are available. Emma, you mentioned that I went up to Liverpool a few years ago. If I were to come up now, I would do it all differently. It is then down to our time. We are restricted. I do work at the V&A sometimes! There is lots going on at V&A, we do have government restrictions imposed. We have got to get these objects on line. The whip was being cracked last year, 'you haven't met your quota!'. Sorry, Tim, you wanted to say something?

T.C.: I just wanted to reiterate the amount of back up we do get from Japan. Scholars in Japan are passionate about their individual subjects and would love nothing better than to take a trip

over to Cardiff or Durham, if it was something that could be channelled into their expertise. They often give this knowledge and experience for free, and are often travelling here anyway.

F.W.: We are looking to play on our strengths, though we don't have a large local Japanese audience, we have strengths in the collection. Yesterday we put in a National Lottery Fund bid to redo the display areas in the entrance to the museum. This will mean that the Japanese display areas will be closed and moved. They will be relocated upstairs and provide us with the opportunity to redisplay the material.

G.I.: I think that there is no denying that there is in this country a huge interest in Japan. It has been going in 10 year cycles, recently. The first one I worked on was the 1981 exhibition, then 1991, 2001. What was fascinating was that at those times, the interest in Japan really peaked but it was really obvious that it went into a dive afterwards. It took a lot of effort on our part to keep that interest going. There was a feeling that Japan's had its festival, let's move on to something else now. Yes, of course it has, but we have got to keep it going. I think it comes down to individual enthusiasm. I was meeting with our director the other day, and talking about pushing China, pushing India, and all the rest of it, and I mentioned some of the things we are doing with Japan. This meeting coincided with the publication on where the most successful exhibitions of all time have been, and where have they been? In Japan. So we need to keep the interest going. Don't despair. Generally speaking, with the exception of big projects, Japan does not feature significantly in what museums are doing at the moment. And everyone is vying to get their own key area forward.

S.G.: I have actually been told I am spending too much time on the Japanese collections. This is in the face of the fact that every time I put on an event it is very successful. It is popular with everyone, from all parts of the community. The last event attracted six to seven times our normal visitor levels. I don't understand why they are not giving me the funding or time to deal with this, increasing the number of visitors being one of their main priorities.

G.I.: We need to look at the audience more widely. In my recent meeting with our director of exhibitions, she said we have long wanted to do a martial arts exhibition. Well, how does that fit with our ethos of social inclusion? She said, well, we don't get enough young white males in. I had never really thought of that. So, we need to broaden our social inclusion, not just our ethnic minorities, to the local audience that we just don't get through the doors. And we can do it!

There is definitely a problem with nomenclature. It is not Japanese antiquities but Japanese art and culture, including *anime*, and *manga*. We need to broaden things out. There's been enough of the whole *geisha* theme.

S.G.: During May, we're in Museum and Galleries month, the theme this year is Past Present and Future and is looking at comics in general. Comic Expo has given us a free stall and have subsidised tickets to bring artists and writers over from Japan.

J.T.: I think we have to be careful. *Manga* may become stereotypical if we use it too much.

G.I.: We need guidance from organisations like the Japan Foundation, the Japanese Embassy. When we've asked for help in promoting, we're told that, 'We have boxes for *kimono*, etc.' I think the Japanese side needs to consider how and what they want to promote. We still don't have a balance.

G.I.: Let's move on with the presentation both on SISJAC and the Japanese collections at the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, by Nicole Rousmaniere.

N.R.: I will try to do this quickly and I apologise for using PowerPoint[5]. I am Director of the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, and I am also standing in today for Amanda Geitner, Keeper of the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts (SCVA), and I thought images might help explain the holdings and physical display area of the SCVA. Amanda wanted to be here today but the SCVA is being completely renewed, a very large undertaking, and will open on May 20th. I'm sure she would have given a better presentation, but I will do my best and then relay back to her any questions or comments. You'll notice that our names both contain 'Sainsbury'. We have the same patrons and work together as sister organisations. Hopefully this will become clearer in my presentation.

I'd like to start with the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts. SCVA is the vision of Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury. Sir Robert sadly died in 2000, but Lady Sainsbury is still going strong at 94 and is active in to an extent collecting and visiting the Centre. The collection is, therefore, growing modestly. The Sainsburys began to collect from 1930s onwards. Starting from Epstein and with a modernist agenda, they moved to collect objects from places such as Papua New Guinea, Africa, and the Americas, along with contemporary art and craft, and were very close to certain artists like Henry Moore and Francis Bacon. From the 1960s they began to collect Japanese art. Although Japanese objects were acquired at a slow pace in the 1970s, it's only really in the 1990s to early 2000s that the Japanese holding has more than doubled.

The building that houses the SCVA is essentially in two sections: the main building which was commissioned in the 1970s from Norman Foster, once of his first large public buildings. The Sainsburys commissioned Lord Foster again to build an addition, the Crescent Wing, in 1991, and asked him yet again in 2004 to link the two buildings and renew the physical plant of the two buildings. The newly integrated SCVA will open this year on 20th May. It is probably relatively unusual for the same architect to visit a building three times. The SCVA is important not just for its holdings but also for the building itself and the way these objects are displayed in the building.

The permanent gallery space is 1,200 square metres; the temporary gallery space is 700 square metres. The SCVA is located just outside of Norwich's city centre on the campus of the University of East Anglia, and is very much a university museum. The SCVA has even done a project with the Oriental Museum, Durham. The SCVA receives 40,000 visitors a year, 10,000 of which are youth. One of the focuses of the SCVA is on youth and on educational programmes that accompany the physical display.

The Japanese collection numbers under one tenth of the total number of objects and is rather an unusual Japanese collection for Britain. In some ways it resembles the British Museum's collection but on a small scale, with strengths not represented in the British Museum. Its strengths are in archaeology. This is a 7th century sword pommel. Archaeological and religious objects take pride of place in the SCVA Japanese collection. There are no export items that would have been used in international trade. There are no wood block prints. The SCVA lacquer, which has quite a few high quality pieces, contains no export lacquer. What they do have is quite a good collection of *negoro* ware and *maki-e* from the medieval period. There are 20-25 Japanese paintings which range from religious subjects (Shinto and

[5] See appendix 5 for a copy of the presentation.

Buddhist) to scholar amateur examples, such as Ike no Taiga. Shinto and Buddhist sculpture is well represented. Basically, the collection is very strong in prehistory and religious art.

This is how the gallery looked before the renewal and it may look somewhat similar after May. Basically there is no predetermined walking plan that a visitor must follow. The visitor is free to view what they want in any juxtaposition the want, or follow one of several paths. This view is of the permanent gallery. Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury felt strongly that objects should be allowed to speak for themselves. There is an educational programme but no emphasis on didactic labels. Labels in general are kept to essential information, with discrete maps. There are key objects and 'Objects of the Month'. Visitors are to experience the art objects on their own terms as fully as possible.

The Japan collection used to be rather peripheral and was placed on the mezzanine but as the Japanese collections have grown, and some very important pieces have been added. The collection as a whole now will be moved down to the main area, with appropriate gallery space. Everything that can be put on display without damage (not painting of lacquer) is exhibited; most of the Sainsbury collection is always on display. The emphasis is to get objects out on view and to have people to experience them. To that end, there's a very successful website with thumbnail pictures of the objects.

I have brought down nine copies of the *'25 Years Celebration of the SCVA'* that they kindly supplied me. Sainsbury collected objects form the bulk of the SCVA collection but they aren't the only objects in the collection. The main part of the collection is, of course, the objects that the Sainsburys collected themselves with a little help or advice from curators. In addition to the Sainsbury objects, there is the Anderson collection of Art Nouveau and the University collection of abstract art and architecture. In addition there's a conservation programme. Gifts and loans if appropriate are also received. For example, Sir Hugh and Lady Cortazzi are planning to loan with possible intent to donate a collection of 20th century Japanese ceramics by Tatsuzo Shimaoka.

The Sainsbury Institute, which I direct, was initiated in 1998 when the Sainsburys sold a Modigliani painting they had collected at the start of their marriage and the proceeds formed the foundation of our Japanese Institute, SISJAC. The Institute is located in the Cathedral Close in the centre of Norwich, about 4 kilometres from the Sainsbury Centre. Our remit is to act as an enabling institution. For example, today I was hearing a lot of talk of what certain collections are, what type of Japanese collections are present in the UK, and I feel that perhaps the Sainsbury Institute could help somehow in facilitating, as Tim said, for Japanese specialists to come and look at collections.

Beyond that role and our educational platform, we house our own small collection. Sir Hugh Cortazzi has been very generous and has donated a large number of rare books, prints and historical maps, both of Japan by western sources and by Japanese. I have a list here of his rare map collection that has been complied by our librarian, Akira Hirano. We have also created a high resolution database of the maps that can be accessed from the web site. This was completed with the help of Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, with whom we have a cooperative agreement. Anyone can come to our Institute from Monday to Friday 9-5 and access our materials.

As we are a bit far from most interested parties, being located in Norwich, we are trying to use the web. We also have a large lending library to institutions not individuals, and we lend

throughout Europe. We have about 22,000 volumes, mostly in Japanese, and a large number of exhibition catalogues. Currently we're focusing on archaeological reports and exhibition catalogues as the main component of the library, as these items are under represented in major UK library collections. But we also have certain rare books. In addition, we have part of the Bernard Leach book collection that is partially annotated by his hand.

We have a number of different book collections that have been assembled through donations mostly from Japan. Because of this there are a number of holes and a lot of challenges in front of us. We are very keen on working with other institutions and groups, and right now we have been focusing on joint projects with the British Museum, and particularly through the auspices of Hiromi Uchida. We conduct joint conferences and symposia. We are a bit unusual in that we're not a standard museum but we do work with the Sainsbury Centre. One of our future projects is to hold a major figurine exhibition, examining Jomon figurines in Japan, and prehistoric figurines in Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo. We want to look at Japanese prehistory in juxtaposition with Balkan prehistory. We are attempting not to look at Japan in isolation but rather in context, in order to bring the study of its objects to life. Thank you very much!

G.I.: Thank you very much. We round off with Winifred Glover.

W.G.: First of all I would like to thank the Japan Foundation for their invitation to the Symposium and for a very nice lunch. The Ulster Museum's Japanese collection is probably the smallest in the room so I will pass round a few photographs as I talk. The collection comes from four departments in the Museum: the Art Department, the Geology Department, the Zoology Department and the Ethnography Department, of which I am Curator. The entire holding is approximately 360 objects but, although small in number, there are always some Japanese objects on display.

How we acquired the objects is a mixture of purchase and donation over the years. Possibly the earliest purchase was a Japanese palanquin bought from a London dealer in 1891. You may know that the Ulster Museum is about to undertake a huge refurbishment programme starting in August of this year, so we are under considerable pressure at the moment. During the period of closure we are having an extensive outreach programme so people do not forget us. Part of this programme involves travelling exhibitions from the Museum's collections. I have put together a Japanese one mixing items from the Art and Ethnographic Departments. I have called it *'Japan in Belfast'* and it was first shown in the Ulster Museum in response to a request from the Japan Society of Northern Ireland. They approached me to see if they could look at the Japanese objects we had in store. Our collections store was not suitable for large numbers of people so I said I would put on an exhibition for their members.

The exhibition was a mixture of woodblock prints and ceramics from the Art Department and objects from the Ethnographic collection. This was extremely popular and when it ended its run I was approached by other local museums who wanted to show it in their locality. It is now going to be part of the travelling exhibition programme and is scheduled to commence in 2007, although before that date it will be shown in the Down County Museum. Other venues on our list are Carrickfergus Museum and the Armagh County Museum, and there is interest from other venues. Our designer, Gerry Watters, is working on a flyer to accompany the exhibition.

The Collection, though small, gets an amazing amount of interest. Gregory has mentioned the interest in *samurai* armour from martial arts enthusiasts and I have a constant stream of students. The boys want to look at the armour and swords, and the girls want to look at the decorative objects. So young people have a keen interest in Japanese art and culture.

I will describe some of the items in the collection and how we acquired them. One of the photographs being passed round is of our Japanese lantern[6]. It is almost 5 metres high and is a replica of the bronze lantern from the Temple of the Four Saints in Osaka. The temple was founded in 593 AD by Prince Shotoku, Japan's first great patron of Buddhism. The original lantern was dedicated to the Buddha in 1274AD and this date is on the replica. This lantern, however, was cast by the bronze smith Seibei Tanaka some time during the Tokugawa Era,1603-1867. The following inscriptions on it are Koryosan, the name of the Buddhist temple from which the lantern came and the name Yamamoto town which was probably a small religious centre where the Koryosan temple was situated. The lantern was bought for the museum in the 1950s by a former Director of the Museum, Wilfred A. Seaby. He was a noted numismatist and expert in Irish silver and long case clocks but had a keen interest in many aspects of the museum's collections. The lantern was purchased from the Estate of Milne Barbour of Conway House, Dunmurry, outside Belfast. Milne Barbour was a wealthy linen and thread manufacturer, one of many in the Belfast region.

Around the same time we were given a temple bell by Charles W. Black. A visiting Japanese scholar told us that the bronze smith was Harima no Kama Fujiwara Masanaga. The bell had the date 1690, in the Genroku Era ,1680-1709AD, but it may have been cast later. Shortly after their acquisition the lantern and bell were placed on permanent display outisde the Museum building, where they have attracted a great deal of attention from Japanese visitors and the general public.

The next photograph which I have circulated shows a gold embroidered crane on a very beautiful wedding *kimono* of cream silk lined with scarlet. This was given by H. A. Mason, President of the International Lions, to whom it had been presented on a world tour in 1980. The detail of the gold-embroidered crane was used as a cover illustration on the *International Museums Diary* in 2004 because the theme that year was animals and birds in art. The *kimono* will be included in the travelling exhibition.

We have a large ivory statuette, *okimono*, of a basket seller by the carver Toshimasa, famous for carving *netsuke*. By 1890 he began to carve much larger items for the European market. The statuette is 30cm high and was a private donation.

Another fine carving, although on a much smaller scale, is of a Japanese comb maker seated at his workbench surrounded by his tools. The carving is signed with the name Kanatada.

There are forty bone and ivory *netsuke* and three of the ivory examples are signed. We have also nine vegetable ivory *netsuke* with grotesque faces. These appeared in a previous exhibition called *'Nature's Bounty'* which included museum objects made from animal, vegetable and mineral materials. The ivory and bone *netsuke* were donated in 1906 by W. T. Braithwaite but we have no information on him.

[6] See appendix 6.

I have already mentioned that in 1891 the museum purchased a very fine palanquin from a London antique dealer. It is black lacquer with gold leaf decoration and gilt metal fittings and the interior has floral watercolours. The crest is of the Matsumae family who were in control of the southern part of Hokkaido. Gregory's colleague, Rupert Faulkner, was kind enough to comment on it.

There are two complete and one almost complete suit of *samurai* armour. One is very decorative and it too was purchased from the Milne Barbour Estate. Another, probably much earlier in date, is much plainer in style. It is of black lacquered metal and it was donated in 1900 by the antiquarian Canon John Grainger, who gave his entire collection of Irish antiquities and a great variety of other objects in the year he died. This suit went on loan to a mini *matsuri* organised in 2005 by the Japan society of Northern Ireland in Carrickfergus Museum. The same suit had previously been part of an exhibition called *'Canon John Grainger, Country Rector, Magpie Collector'*. The exhibition was accompanied by a booklet and it toured all over the north of Ireland and a few places in the south as well.

Additional specimens are several good Japanese swords and five in poor condition which were donated in 1905 from the Earl of Dudley. There is a nice lacquer tea bowl and four bronze and silver mirrors and some soapstone plates. The Geology Department has 100 items which include some rare crystals and a large quartz crystal ball which is on constant display. The Zoology Department has 100 shells which were purchased in 1970.

In the Art Department there are 50 ceramics. A porcelain plate, two stone tea jars, Satsuma ware vases and an incense burner are just some of these. A small selection of cloisonné vases and plates, and a very fine porcelain dish painted with ships and merchants which was acquired with the assistance of the National Art Collections Fund are other examples. The Costume section has some modern designer outfits such as Miyake. Although we do not have an active policy of acquiring Japanese artefacts some are purchased from time to time such as a very fine contemporary green glass bowl.

G.I.: Yes, you have this weird and wonderful piece of glass. [*Indicated picture*] Was this an act of acquisition?

W.G.: Yes. We don't actively purchase things but we do purchase from time to time.

G.I.: Well, thank you all very much. A few notes that I've been making. You've all got the list of possible topics of discussion – reinterpreting our collections, constraints of time, funding, priority, etc.

J.T.: How popular is the Japanese collection in your regions? How do you actually assess this? If you don't have data a rough impression would be fine.

G.I.: From our point of view, certain aspects are always popular. Textiles are always very popular, *kimono*, swords and armour, and, of course, we get enquiries of prints but people are always asking to see the same prints.

R.H.: We have got a lot of scholarly interest in our prints and as others here have said, people are learning Japanese more as well, with sixth forms and schools teaching GCSE Japanese. People speaking Japanese in Lancashire accents! I think they are quite popular but more in terms of reinforcing the stereotyped image. I am speculating but people tend to like the same things over and over. Just different versions of 19th century Japan.

S.B.: It's only very recently that there have been evaluations [formal assessments] on what people like best about the displays at Brighton and Hove. I can only say that Japanese material has usually been shown integrated with other material in thematic displays, so it's very difficult to assess. When I did the small display on Japanese packaging design, it generated a lot of interest amongst our visitors, but I have no hard evidence to prove it, just good feedback.

K.N.: I think whenever anyone does a temporary exhibition, there is a lot of interest. If Japan was on the national curriculum a bit more strongly, that would encourage more school groups to focus on that. When we do a show or a demonstration, particularly of martial arts, then it is very popular.

T.C.: I do have some statistics. We did a special exhibition called '*Kabuki Heroes on the Osaka Stage 1780-1830'*. It was a paying exhibition and 10,000 people came to see that. The '*Samurai to Manga'* exhibition was up for two months around Christmas and New Year, and 73,000 people came. That was right next to the entrance to the museum, so you had a captive audience. Nevertheless they did make an effort to go into that display. The general reaction was very positive, people wanted to see more. We run a students' room in parallel with the Japanese gallery. In a normal year 300-400 people use that room, including groups from London University.

Also, since last year we've been running part of the Club Taishikan Programme, organised jointly with the Embassy of Japan, which brings school groups to the Japanese study room. As part of the re-installation of the Japanese collection this summer, we will be rolling out new programmes we've never used, including object handling and 'eye-opener tours', which are public tours of the core areas of the museum displays. And as there hasn't been a permanent display for Japan in the past, this will be a new offering.

E.M.: We have no evaluation of our new displays, as it hasn't been open for a year yet. It's difficult to say but, before we opened, there was some evaluation done on the Treasure House Theatre and the programmes that go on in there about *samurai* – this came out very high. So there is interest, but no hard figures, though.

F.K.: The objects that are on display aren't in a dedicated Japan section, so we don't really know how popular the Japanese collection is. When we get enquiries to see Japanese objects that are in the stores, as Gregory says, they tend to focus on weaponry and textiles.

F.W.: We haven't done any general evaluation of the gallery. There is a permanent gallery and people are generally surprised to see Japanese collections in Maidstone. The gallery is used for activities with the public, i.e., jewellery making. Usually art activities are based there. We're looking to develop more art programmes, especially with adult learners and students at A level.

A.K.: We don't really have much to go on with the exhibition of the prints and the tea objects that we did in 2001. I don't have the statistics but the evaluation was very popular. We were wondering whether that was because the prints we had were predominantly 19th century actors' prints. It was successful in getting interest from the local Japanese community. The Welsh Development Agency was also interested in it through the Japan 2001 festival. They brought visiting Japanese business groups to see collections in the store. So, there has been some basic profile raising but we haven't been able to sustain it.

S.G.: We actually conducted a survey amongst schoolchildren late last year about what was their favourite object in the whole museum. The Japanese collection got 75% of the votes. This was based on particular objects chosen by them and the three most popular objects were a silver elephant by Yoshizane Nakagawa. The second was a suit of armour and the third was swords. We also have visitor books throughout the museum, and all the comments in the Japanese gallery were very supportive. Some were surprised that the collection is in Bournemouth and some, including local councillors, assumed the collections came from the V&A! We had to point out to them that this is a Bournemouth collection.

Events and workshops are always oversubscribed and people always demand more but we can't do more due to lack of resources. Art classes regularly use the exhibition gallery '*Well Hammered*', and it is used every week. Academic interest has grown in last 10 years, and since Greg got involved it's picked up a lot. The first person was a professor from Kyoto who came to look at 15 Noh masks.

G.I.: What was the knock-on effect of the teacher training you had?

S.G.: Yes, they all came down for a teacher-training day. They chose objects from the exhibition '*Well Hammered*', a half dozen or so, and then tried to show how they could be related to the national curriculum. This did result in some spin-off school visits.

K.M.: We've had two Japanese themed exhibitions over last few years. Both were very popular. In addition, our closest neighbour in Durham is Teikyo University, and we do a year-round set of workshops with them which are very popular and frequently over subscribed. We do have visitor response forms but it's up to the visitor to fill these in. There is nothing in the way of evaluation as regards the Japanese collection particularly. During term time we have school groups in during the day, and they are very interested in the Japanese collections. I don't know if that's to do with the displays themselves or because of people's preconceptions. As I mentioned earlier, our displays are representative of our collection rather than Japanese culture as a whole. Nevertheless, they seem to be very popular.

N.R.: Perhaps Amanda would say something different but from my perspective, what seems very popular is when the SCVA holds contemporary Japanese art exhibitions, and recently there have been two exhibitions on fibre art that have travelled to a few places such as Bristol. They have been incredibly popular. You can see how contemporary art and material art and crafts and their manifestations have a real resonance for contemporary British viewers. In the permanent displays, the objects that seem to receive the most interest are the sculpture. The Shinto sculptures especially. Recently a new acquisition is a Kamakura period *jizo* with everything intact, and it has been very popular. It will soon have pride of place, possibly near a Picasso.

What Amanda has done that has really helped draw the attention of viewers is to highlight an object of the month. When the object is from Japan, there is a great deal of attention on that object. For the Sainsbury Institute, what we feel has been incredibly effective is our third Thursday lecture series. We had 130 people for last Thursday's talk on Ainu period collections in Europe. The lectures are free and there is wine afterwards, and people stay and talk. I think this has managed to create a Japanese presence or an interest in Japanese art, and they have become more involved.

W.G.: As I have said, our collection arouses a lot of interest even though it is so small. When I display objects I mention how they happen to be in the Museum's collections. There is

always a great deal of interest from art students, whether from schools or art colleges. The Museum's Education Department encourages pupils to look at Japanese art and design. The Museum also runs a series of Sunday afternoon events in the winter months. There was one last year on Japanese packaging and this was very popular. I think there is quite an interest in many aspects of Japanese culture in Belfast, although there is not a large Japanese community.

The Queen's Film Theatre, which is very near the Museum, runs a series of foreign language films and Japanese films feature regularly, whether older films such as *'The Seven Samurai'* or more recent ones such as *'Battle Royale'*. There is a great interest among younger people in *manga*, *samurai* armour and war gaming, and while we would not wish to concentrate solely on these, they form a gateway to a more general interest in Japanese culture. Any exhibition in which we feature Japanese objects is always very popular.

G.I.: Assessment is always very difficult, especially when the collections are mixed in. It will be interesting to see from our websites what the response is to Japanese items. Everyone's web site works in a different way. We've talked about sharing information, we've all talked about databases, we've all got them; we can barely use them to talk to ourselves, let alone to other people. Perhaps we can use them as a portal to lead to other areas, to other sites. In that way I think we could start to do an assessment as to where Japan stands within the museum.

I think that the web is very much the way to go to raise the profile of our collections.

K.N.: Something else we discussed is the teaching about Japanese art and culture, or lack of it, in British universities. For example, at Bristol University we've got a very good History of Art Department but it is focused entirely on Western art, so the university library mirrors that. But, I'm sure, in the future I'd like to work with them to branch out into non-Western art. I don't know if anyone else around the country faces this issue?

G.I.: It's an issue in Durham; the Japanese Department has been closed up!

K.M.: They *[our collections]* were originally teaching collections but that role has atrophied in recent decades, perhaps because of the research interests of the East Asian Department, and there isn't a History of Art Department to use them. As a result the majority of the work we do is with archaeologists and anthropologists.

G.I.: Tim, do you have formal links with SOAS?

T.C.: I think you could say we do. Certainly in the last few years the MA and BA programme students from SOAS have been coming on a weekly basis. The lecturers say that much to their chagrin, the viewing sessions get top marks, more so than the lecturers. I think there's potential there.

G.I.: We have links with all sorts of groups. We try to give specific objects to the Learning and Interpretation Department and get more and more people in to handle the collections, such as art schools. We have links, for example, with Wimbledon Art School. We also have an annual event called 'Inspired By' where people in further education take an object from the V&A's collection and create something inspired by that object. I'd say that Japan features very, very highly in that. Some people are inspired by looking at the object behind the glass, and some have had more initiative and have actually come to us themselves without it having

been advertised widely that you can actually come and handle the objects! People are scared of doing it. This is a bit of a barrier to break down.

R.H.: As someone responsible for a large collection, I was wary of promoting access, just the logistics of time constraints. In theory I think that's a great idea, in practice it's difficult. Obviously, if people approach you.

G.I.: Well, yes, but not at the drop of a hat! We've had people turn up at short notice and say, 'I've come to see this' 'Oh have you!' 'I've come all the way from Japan!' It is a question of logistics.

F.W.: Some people don't know what they want to see. They might say, 'I'd like to see more of the Japanese prints,' well we have 700! It's difficult to deal with this type of enquiry. There's usually one person looking after a collection, and we have problems with people dropping in unannounced who may want to see something in the reserve collection.

J.T.: It's an issue of reconstructing permanent collections. I dropped in to Bristol's City Museum and Art Gallery for the dragon exhibition. I didn't expect to see a lot of Japanese objects but I was surprised to see well-integrated Japanese objects with the Chinese objects. I don't think people were expecting it. In the *'International Arts and Crafts'* exhibition at the V&A Japanese objects were part of it. I'm sure that the audience was pleasantly surprised to find the fine Japanese objects as part of the exhibition. I think that's the way to present Japanese art, in a broader context.

G.I.: Yes, those of us who have Japanese galleries are very lucky to have them but showing Japan contextually is the way many of us are moving forward. Showing Japan in context, not in isolation.

T.C.: Just to take it back a bit, I think the message from around the room is the interest in contemporary Japan. The more efforts expended in that direction, the more payback there will be. Most people live in the present. The way to overcome prejudged outcomes is through contemporary experience. Particularly with young people, that's going to be the way in for them. So, the *'Samurai to Manga'* exhibition which is a very small display, it is essentially viewed as connecting the past with the present. We got a lot of positive response. It connects into helping people to explore their preconceived notions, meeting them halfway if you like. So, yes there are *samurai* in *manga* in Japan but perhaps they have more historical depth than you may be aware of.

G.I.: It's difficult to do in a static display. We've thought of putting some kind of interactive display in the Toshiba Gallery, some moving images into displays. Is that something you're thinking of in your new displays?

T.C.: It doesn't have an audio-visual aspect at all at the moment; it will have an interactive aspect in object handling. But actually it is a permanently rotating display.

S.B.: I was very interested to hear what Nicole said about the labelling at the Sainsbury Centre, having minimal labelling, and getting people to engage with the objects. In theory, I'm all for it but how can you engage with an object from such a different culture without some information?

N.R.: It is really interesting, and this is where it would have been good to have Amanda here today. They are rethinking it; they are still keeping with minimal labelling but they are starting to put a map in that doesn't stand out, if you want it it's there, with a minimal explanation. It is not in every little area where a cultural group is placed because cultural groups are permeable; they bridge onto each other and walk into each other although they are in a general area. What they're doing to address the issue of labelling is to get an expert to write a very simple 250 word explanation on what this specific object means. Just so people could carry that, get it at the front for free.

S.B.: Have they considered acoustic guides?

N.R.: They do, they have David Attenborough. He's fantastic and it is extremely very popular. That was a recent thing because Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury felt the objects really spoke to them and they want the people to see the objects first, and not to see them through text. They look first, get excited, and then want to know more. We give them tools to go and learn more, with the library right there.

S.G.: I'd agree with that. It was the same with '*Well Hammered*'. We have numbers on the objects, and then people could go look at the detailed handlist to find out about the objects, and no one has complained about that. I'd much rather people look at the objects. Part of the problem was that the labels were so big. I think there is a danger that people can get addicted to the labels, they look only at the labels, not the objects. I think it is better if they look at the object first and try to make up their own minds as to what this object might be, then look at labels.

F.W.: At Maidstone we do the same thing but we have had complaints about that! People want to see the labels next to the objects because they don't know what they're looking at otherwise. It depends on what type of visitor you have! I personally believe it looks a lot better without large labels. The whole idea of a Japanese style of display is that the objects have space and are allowed to speak for themselves.

N.R.: Tim, weren't you saying there's been some research at the British Museum on panels?

T.C.: The recent evidence is that wall panels, distant from objects, are not much read by our public. This came as something of a shock to someone who very carefully drafted 180 words on this and that! What came out was that 83% of visitors would not read the wall panels.

F.K.: But there are people who are very interested and read every word. I worry that some museums are saying nobody reads the panels and then you're leaving all of those really interested people out if we take the panels away.

T.C.: I don't think we're thinking of abandoning them entirely. It's just thinking about if you want to get across some kind of message, what's the most effective way of doing it? The responses to the evaluations we're doing is, as we said before, that it is the objects foremost that attract the interest, and the information put near them stands the best chance to get read. It's just pure mechanics. So what we're working towards is that for each of the stories in the Japanese exhibition, we are trying to find one key object that will draw one's attention and will somehow represent that story. Perhaps trying to group objects and labels. Then we get questions of contextualisation of placing objects together that weren't used together.

J.T.: The Sainsbury policy of objects speaking for themselves is interesting. But I wonder whether, with the exception of material that is going to be very relevant to the display, if they understand the social context, i.e., why something was made, would the experience be enhanced?

G.I.: It depends on the physical way you display it. We have loads of objects in our silver galleries and it works very well. One level says what it is, second how it is made, and third the context in which it was made, what it was used for, etc. That's a bit of a luxury and it doesn't work for all displays.

N.R.: Just to clarify, we do have labels! But they are cleaned down to dates, proper title and when accessioned. But there is more information available in the gallery, not interfering with the object.

T.C.: Surely as technology moves on you will be able to pipe the extremely detailed information anywhere you want it. In fact, quite soon you'll be able to type a code into your mobile phone and the database for the museum will tell you everything you want, even more! The issue isn't access to information – it's information overload. It's not just one message you're looking to get across; you're opening as many different stories for as many people.

S.B.: Is there perceived to be a gap between what we think is important and what the visitor wants to learn?

G.I.: The things we produced for online went to editors and were reduced to nothing so the feedback online was, 'this is rubbish, we want more info.' Perhaps that's because on line people are actively looking for something, not drifting in a museum.

F.W.: I'm also discovering that having produced tiered labels, and graphic panels, etc for our recent temporary exhibition that people won't read text, and they're asking for guided tours! We don't have the facilities to provide that. They *[our visitors]* just want something to impart information, like TV, just passively, rather than bothering to read.

S.G.: I find that audio guides are popular but they require a lot of work. It is impossible to do it for every object. Also, it is a very costly service to provide. Our manager last year was going to withdraw it immediately. We complained that you can't withdraw it as it's providing a service. You can't withdraw it just because it costs money.

K.N.: In the south west at the moment, the museum is doing research into E-learning. It's doing a pilot programme with 11-14 year olds and their teachers. It's researching a selected number of items that can be put into learning packages for this age group. It is difficult to get groups of students in these year groups out into museums. I would like to look into developing a leaning package on Japanese art as a result of this programme. In consultation, teachers have said that even though Japan didn't feature specifically in their curriculum for art teaching, 'World Art' did. So I thought, hooray, we can fit some Japanese art into that!

G.I.: I wonder if initiatives like that could come from a central source to draw on all of our resources. Between all of our collections we could tell great stories. Perhaps we could look less in isolation. I don't feel, speaking from a V&A position, it was something we could do, or Japan 21, or even the Japan Foundation. If your head office in Tokyo were really sold on the idea of promoting Japanese art and culture through our museum collections, something like this would be an excellent way to do it.

J.T.: People have spoken about a lack of resources which I assume means a lack of funding. What are the other obstacles in getting together and promoting Japanese art collections?

G.I.: I had great difficulties in getting information from some sources. There were some who didn't see it was worth promoting their Japanese collections at all. Where places didn't provide info, I had to go to information that was published. It was difficult to make people aware that to make their Japanese collections more popular was better for them. But I almost feel that there needs to be some kind of outside co-ordination. We're all doing our individual research into our audience, trying to link to government targets, to our local authority targets, what we're told we have to do. To think outside those restrictions is often difficult.

J.T.: I think that the one thing we need to talk about is raising awareness of Japanese art. What is needed?

W.G.: In our Museum, and I don't know how it works in other museums, we find that a lot of our exhibitions are connected to the school curriculum. Why is some aspect of Japanese culture not on the curriculum?

S.G.: Ours was, with Japan 21. We showed how Japanese objects could be used in maths, geography, in science, in literature.

K.N.: But they're thinking very laterally, doing work for the teachers that they don't have time to do themselves.

E.M.: I think we need an external advocate to institutions that have no interest in the Japanese collections at present. Perhaps an education programme to fit in with key partners, partnerships with regions, other museums, as these are key indicators within the organisation. It could be somebody offering a package, fully formed, to be used by different partners. I think for my organisation that would be great. Something that would be there, ready to go, and our organisation wouldn't have to put too many resources into it. We need the help to devise these programmes

G.I.: We're all doing it to some extent. Tim, you have the link to the Japanese Embassy. We've got our Learning and Interpretation Department, we've all got handling collections.

T.C.: Like Rebecca said earlier, a portal to show us what's available already. That's the key thing, and it wouldn't be all that difficult for the Japan Foundation or the Embassy. An attractive web presence.

T.C.: Obviously it would have to be someone with the resources to update it. I think there's a chance to reach a lot of people on an on-going basis. No organisation will object to having a link put on from a portal. That's our lifeblood these days.

G.I.: One of the conclusions that came out of JACUK was to have this portal. The V&A apparently has the capacity to do it but will insist on using V&A branding, which people weren't terribly happy about. It will need to be more neutral. Someone like the Japan Foundation or the Japanese Embassy. I would have thought that the Japan Foundation would have been a great source. This is something I thought the head office would be interested in. We need a neutral portal that doesn't have one collection only on it.

N.R.: It's important to have a presence in regional areas and for regional museums. How do you also reach, for example, East Anglia or have a presence there? If there was a portal, it might be interesting to have a map. You press on East Anglia or you press on Wales, etc., and then opportunities and locations show up. So not just names but also locations.

S.G.: Just to say, the cost of the website would be £15,000-25,000 to set up, and the whole point would be that its upkeep was done by the individual members themselves. We're all very busy. I would have thought that half an hour's training would suffice. Put in a few words about the current collections, etc. The design should enable each of us to update our own collections. So it's just a case of the cost of the original design and the hosting.

G.I.: I have now set up the JACUK list server and will be contacting all of you to see if you'd be happy to go on it. We can at least start sharing info on this. If you could let me know afterwards.

K.N.: At Japan 21, when they had a week's training for secondary teachers in Bristol, they had teachers write activities based on the Bristol collection. They collected all that information together on a CD. Something like that could form a nucleus of ideas for teachers which could be added on to.

G.I.: I think linking to education is the way to go. It's where all the thrust from government is coming from. It is persuading our education authorities that Japan is important, and then the bigger problem of raising Japan's profile within the Education Department. It's a bit of a struggle because at the moment they are pushing China and South East Asia.

K.N.: Maybe training days for them *[museum education departments]* would be a good idea? To get them excited.

G.I.: Kate, do you want to mention something about hubs?

K.N.: A report was done, called 'Renaissance in the Regions', looking into regional museums and their situation in England, and looking at the fact that many museums are funded by local authorities, and that many museums come quite a way down the council's priority list. The government, as a result, two years ago, gave large pots of money to three areas of England – the south west, the north west and the north east around Newcastle, for the first generation hubs. Within the south west, there were five museums who were the lead members of that hub. In the first instance, the government money went to building up capacity in those five museums, then looking into how those museums could help other museums in the region in terms of expertise and conservation advice. March this year is the end of the first funding phase of that, and then we go into another two year funding phase.

S.B.: We're part of the south east hub that covers the area from Oxford down to Kent, funded by Renaissance in the Regions.

S.G.: In the south west hub there are five museums with Bristol as the lead, Bournemouth, Truro, Plymouth and Exeter – and all five of those have Japanese collections, which is coincidental, but it does mean we could look into a project.

G.I.: To have all the hubs cooperating to promote Japanese collections?

S.G.: We've got 'hub-caps', which are our specialist groups [*laughter*]; I know it's terrible. We didn't come up with that title. There were a few of those that have gone by the wayside and

didn't seem to work. Kate and I were on the 'World Cultures hub-cap' in which Japan was represented. They're basically networks for curators to share expertise.

G.I.: All of these, and JACUK as well, rely on people being willing to put in the time above and beyond the normal work. Lots of initiatives run out of steam. I mean, this discussion was supposed to happen six months ago. I haven't had the time to do it. How this is going to get up and running I don't know. It requires a lot of energy. When they're having enough trouble in their own institutions, it's very hard which is why I think we need an external group to guide, control and focus us.

S.B.: One of the problems is that recent government initiative in setting up hubs and the disbursement of money courtesy of the Renaissance in the Regions programme has resulted in major support for education departments, which have expanded greatly, but not for curatorial departments. There are fewer curators than before, many on short contracts. Much as we'd like to spread the good news, there's still only one or one and a half of us in each large subject area. One ray of hope is that our Renaissance money, which starts to arrive in greater quantities next year (April 2007), will go to blitzing the documentation on our collections. Even those designated collections have fallen behind as far as being updated on a collections management database and being put on the web. As that programme rolls out, I hope things will start to get better. The first of our collections to go online was our fine art easel paintings. Instead of providing an answer to many of our general enquiries, it doubled the number as people became aware of what we hold. They suddenly become aware of what's there which has been hitherto hidden.

G.I.: Who is going to do it, as there is a lack of expertise? My director says that all this outreach that I'm doing is all very fine and wonderful but when are we going to start charging for your time? I can't keep on going out. We've come up with all sorts of ideas, but implementation is going to be difficult.

S.G.: Our website isn't maintained. The person who was responsible left last year and has not been replaced. And it's a very old system that requires someone with computer system language knowledge to input information.

J.T.: It looks bad if a website isn't maintained. It requires time to maintain a website and we would also need to look at the cost.

S.G.: The website we were discussing before would be self-maintaining. Each member will update their own section. If there is an event that is time based, when the date has expired it gets archived automatically, though it is retrievable. These issues would be dealt with in programming up front.

E.M.: We are just launching the Museum Ethnographers Group (MEG) website. We've just done some trials and it has worked brilliantly. Very easy to use. We've been trialling it with committee members and it has been working well. It does sort things that have gone past date and works very well.

G.I.: Maybe you could raise some revenue through marketing it!

E.M.: We are. We're just about to spend £2,000 on marketing it.

J.T.: How was that possible financially?

E.M.: Through a SSN implementation grant of £30,000. Part of it was to do a survey of the ethnographic collections in the country, the 17 largest collections. We had researchers go out and look at various collections to try to get information together. There was a lot of work getting info together but now it will all be on the web site. You only have to go there to see who's in what organisation, what conferences are on, what collections they've got, what programmes they're doing, and we're going to add to that in all sorts of different ways.

G.I.: Are you going to use same system for the Himalaya group?

E.M.: That's going to be slightly different, that's going to be far more visual.

G.I.: I was just thinking, if we've got all these things that work why are we re-inventing the wheel?

F.K.: If you're looking for a body that could host a portal, I am the secretary of the Association of South East Asian Studies UK, which is obviously not relevant, but it's funded. The British Academy gives regular funding every year to maintain the website and I have proposed that the Association web site should actually have links to the South East Asia Museum Collections. Presumably there has to be a Japanese society that is regarded as the learned society for Japanese studies by the British Academy. Is there not a research association for Japanese Studies?

K.N.: The Japan Society publishes their proceedings. They're quite learned. There is the British Association of Japanese Studies as well.

F.K.: The question is finding out who is paid to maintain their website.

G.I.: Well, I think having established 150 collections in this country, with more than half a million objects, there is a case for raising our profile within BAJS. Quite how we do that I don't know but that would be an idea.

In summary, we're all keen on a website, we think that is probably one direction we can go in. I suppose the big question is what is our ultimate aim?

S.G.: To spread Japanese culture.

E.M.: Whom are we aiming at as well, who's our target audience? Audiences in most museums are normally family audiences. Speaking only for myself, our core audience is our family audience and it seems that it would go down very well, we would get support from within our organisation for our school audiences.

S.G.: This is audience development then, for those people who haven't already got an interest in Japan, how to make Japan more accessible.

K.M.: I'd like to get more Japanese people involved.

G.I.: I think there are several things; one is to increase our own target audience, to get more people involved. That can be done through real visits or actually virtual visits. At the V&A we are starting to count virtual web visits. I have asked if we can we count the visits into different areas of the site. We even have a Chinese language visitors website. So, developing and broadening our existing building space, raising the profile of our Japanese collections nationally and internationally, and as a result of that making those collections more widely

known; what would the end result be? Fiona mentioned getting more Japanese over. Tim said that Japanese visitors were dying to come over to work on those collections. How could we make this work, how could such a site be actively promoted, how do we get our Japanese audience heightened?

By promoting Japanese culture to people in this country, it's actually not a huge leap to promoting our Japanese collections worldwide. To be perfectly frank, part of my brief is to make the V&A collections more widely known. I want people in Japan, when thinking of museums in the UK, I don't want them to think only of the British Museum or even just the V&A, even though it is my mission in life to raise the V&A's profile. I think it is part of our remit to make our Japanese collections more widely known in Japan. I want to create interest worldwide. We spoke about putting on *samurai* exhibitions and getting young white men through the door. Raising the profile of our collections will have the effect of making the Japanese know wherever they go, throughout the UK; they will be able to see Japanese art and, through that, getting them interested in British culture.

J.T.: I'm just wondering whether Japanese scholars in Japan know much about your collections? How much information is available, I mean, how many works have been documented?

(The reaction of several participants suggested that documentation is certainly an issue)

S.G.: You know we have been saying that to raise the profile, we need resources increased for curatorial staff. We can all raise the profile; we just need to know what we're talking about first. In most cases, even getting a number of the items in a collection is an estimate, let alone identifying them! We've probably looked at 10-15% of the total number and that's over a 10-15 year period!

K.N.: Speaking from my point of view, if I had 10 up-to-date new books on Japanese prints that would be a great start. Most of what we have is from the 1960s. That would be a very practical step forward for me. Also a step forward would be to get our Japanese prints digitised. Perhaps 50 are digitised now but we have 500 in the collection.

G.I.: The V&A has just finished a programme where we've digitised all 28,000 prints and put them online, in co-operation with Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. We're also using all the data they've got, and we talking about how to transform that data. I don't see why we couldn't, through sharing this information, let Ritsumeikan know that there are 1,000 prints in Blackburn, there's 500 prints in Bristol. It might be worth their while in coming over and doing a tour of the UK because part of their remit is the promotion of Japanese prints.

R.H.: Ours are digitised but the time consuming thing is getting the information to go with it. We have about half of them, 500 images, online, but no info to go with them.

G.I.: There's a huge body of students at Ritsumeikan set up with pizzas and beer, and they just input all the information. It's part of the remit of their courses. It's brilliant! This an example of something we are doing which may have a knock-on effect. I do know they (Ritsumeikan) are doing other collections. I know they have approached the British Museum but they wouldn't do it for copyright reasons. We (V&A) allowed them to do it because we have use of it. We've made it available publicly. It's raising the profile of our collections.

K.N.: Is that site searchable in English as well as Japanese?

G.I.: Yes, so that's been a great resource. Our collection, we have very basic records online. We are all expected to put 100-150 records online each year, but we can't get our photographic department to keep up with the information. With you *[R.H.]* it's the other way around; they have the images but no info. I don't think any of us are in the situation where we can say, yes, all of our collections are online. What we can do is put a link to our own websites, explaining to people how they can find out what is actually available at the moment.

S.G.: What we want is an overview, maybe one or two selected pieces and examples of what's available. Not images of each.

G.I.: A brief thing like, 'Here are our museums, here are our collections'. Whack it on and then put the link to our individual museum.

R.H.: And featuring special exhibitions?

G.I.: We could use a system that archives exhibitions and events once they've finished; it's not impossible. But I do think we need someone outside focussing us and providing the incentive for us to do it.

J.T.: Practically and financially I don't believe this is something the Japan Foundation could do alone. If there is anything to be done, we will need to collaborate with a British organisation or foundation.

G.I.: We're all hoping for MLA implementation funding.

S.G.: You know what we were talking before about doing work in sharing exhibitions and things. Is there, for those interested, funding to pay for an expert to work on one particular aspect of the collection, say, prints, to catalogue all of the prints in JACUK which would then form an exhibition or a catalogue, or an online resource? A pilot on a small scale. As a group we may be able to find funding within each organisation, plus get a grant.

W.G.: Several years ago, a young Mexican called Miguel Gleason visited the museum, photographing and collecting information on Mexican artefacts in the collection. He had previously visited museums in France and was now doing the same in the British Isles. His funding came from the British Mexican Society and several other companies. He had letters of introduction from both the Mexican and British Embassies and had been allowed by all the museums to film without charge in return for a copy of the finished DVD. It is an overview of Mexican collections in the United Kingdom. Even though it is not an academic production, the people speaking on the DVD are museum professionals or other academics talking about key objects in museum collections or key aspects of Mexican art and culture. Would there be a possibility of something similar happening with Japanese collections in the British Isles?

J.T.: For your information, in the past we have given our support to the National Museums of Scotland, in order for Japanese experts to come from Tokyo to go to the museum and help on their collection of Ainu objects, the Monroe collection. They checked and catalogued the objects in the collection. It is a shame that Jane (Jane Wilkinson) is not here to explain how it was done. It took a few years to complete as the experts could only visit the museum for a short period each time but I think that they did a brilliant job. If it is done, it has to be done properly by professionals.

G.I.: I was thinking of this group, Edo no Monozukuri, who gave a presentation in Prague. They came to look at all objects of the Edo period in European museums.

K.N.: All wild and wonderful things that people had kind of forgotten about, like medical dolls, and all sorts of funny things that didn't fit into your average sort of collections – swords, prints and ceramics.

G.I.: But that was half cock. They spent half an hour at the V&A and went off on tangents! So, I'm sorry, I'm slightly wary of getting people over to do these things. I'm not sure the time and effort to help them will necessarily produce results.

W.G.: Maybe I should send you a copy of this Mexican DVD to see what you think of it. He explained that he was not an expert.

G.I.: Then you're on dangerous ground of things being catalogued incorrectly.

W.G.: He did not catalogue them. The professional people he talked to told him of the strengths of the collections.

F.K.: We're getting, hopefully, two curators from Japan to go through the collection. What I'm planning to do is to produce a list of objects that are problematic or are interesting. Kenji Yoshida came over from the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka and told me that one of the first objects I showed him was from the 17th century, something I'd had no idea about! Our problem is in attracting people to come and do this for us. It seems to be that the people that are good at this need a personal connection somewhere along the line. The only application from a Japanese person was someone who knew someone who I know and she needed a lot of encouragement to apply. It is a problem, and I was surprised when Tim said there were lots of Japanese scholars who want to help.

G.I.: There probably are but the perverse problem with Japanese scholars is that they are too focused. They are so specialised. Throughout the UK, the extent of the collection is such that you would probably need 10 Japanese specialists to come and search the collections, which is an absolute non-starter.

J.T.: I think it's not difficult for the V&A and the British Museum to attract Japanese scholars but in the other areas? Regional museums are not known outside the UK, correct me if I'm wrong, but that's my impression. Even if you live in the UK, how often do you actually visit regional museums? Also people from outside the UK, they tend to stay in London.

G.I.: This is a problem here too. I've never even been to Maidstone!

S.G.: In Asian art week in November they sometimes advertise events in museums outside of London, and we go in.

G.I.: That's a good point, if everyone could think of doing something for early November.

J.T.: Therefore it's important that national institutions such as the V&A and the British Museum share their resources. If they know Japanese scholars, to get them to go around other places!

W.G.: What about an exchange with Japanese curators?

G.I.: We don't have formal exchanges with Japan but we have got exchanges with the Met. With Japan it would be very interesting.

S.G.: Is there any mileage in us taking the initiative in relative specialists going around different museums but buying that time in? We can use British curators in the first instance, and where we've got the gaps we could bring in internationals, so it would be cheaper, instead of paying for someone to come from Japan.

R.H.: Buying in time?

S.G.: To pay for someone to come from Japan would cost us more than paying for someone from the UK. Maybe someone from the universities? To buy time for them to go around?

E.M.: The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) have just started up a museum and university network. MEG recently added its comments to a consultation document from AHRC, to see how universities could work together with museums on projects. Some examples we offered included workshops looking at how researchers can work with museum collections. MEG put in the idea of exchanges of knowledge between curators and universities. We don't know when or if that money will appear but there is a lot of interest in it.

G.I.: We are one of the seven museums who have university status. So, in fact, there should be somebody, the head of our Research Department, to see if that could be done.

S.G.: There must also be retired scholars as well?

G.I.: There's Victor Harris. He's doing exactly that, doing work all over the place.

K.N.: At the moment in Bristol we are working on our Chinese glass collection. As part of that Rose Kerr, who used to head the Far Eastern Department at the V&A, looked through the collection again and reattributed dates. We bought in a certain amount of her time for that. That's worked out well.

S.G.: That's the same thing we did with Gregory.

G.I.: When I did it with the Russell-Cotes, I had to clear it with the museum, it wasn't done on official Museum time and I had to take annual leave to do it. Other projects that we've done together have been on a rather informal basis. Our regional office is actually concerned about how much of my time is being used, and they are looking into cross-charging for my time. These things are not without costs. You can't have curators spending half of their time at other museums.

S.G.: That's what I said about the grant funding. We could pay someone to, say, take a month or two months off and we keep it within the network.

F.W.: Didn't they do that with sharing skills in the old MGC (Museums & Galleries Commission)?

G.I.: The final point on here [*indicating meeting agenda*] is the possibility of organising a touring exhibition of Japanese art, thereby raising profile very significantly. Touring in Japan?

J.T.: Well, every museum seems to have a different type of collection, some seem very sketchy, some specialised. How could they be shared on a touring basis? Winifred has organised it once.

W.G.: Our touring exhibition started off by popular demand and people were really enthusiastic, and it turned out to be a good idea. This symposium seems to be about two different things. On one hand we (museums) are looking to improve the profile of our Japanese collections internationally, and on the other, the Japan Foundation wants to increase the international understanding of Japanese culture. They are not mutually exclusive but they are different. I do think touring exhibitions are very popular but also difficult, as many objects are very delicate. If you are touring exhibitions which are mixed, it is difficult. In Northern Ireland most people's perspective of Japanese culture is the fascinating mix of delicacy and strength. This is what fascinates people. I think if you have an exhibition which incorporates this mixture, it would be extremely popular.

G.I.: Do you feel the exhibition would have to be quite focussed on one theme, or on Japanese art more broadly?

W.G.: If you kept it something quite simple like '*Japanese Treasures'* or '*Treasures of Old Japan'* – I know it's not original. We had an exhibition from the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin on Hiroshige prints which was very popular but that was very specific. But if you plan a large touring exhibition, it would need to include more than just prints and be very varied. Then you attract a wide range of people interested in different aspects of Japanese culture.

G.I.: My feeling is that it needs to be something that people can latch on to.

S.B.: To tour the UK or Japan?

G.I.: To tour the UK.

S.G.: One of the ideas we discussed when we first looked at setting up the SSN was a touring exhibition. We considered it using *'Well Hammered'* as an example and it was suggested that each museum would add elements of its own collection. Some on the existing themes or adding themes to it. The problem with this is how do we provide the right cases or find the gallery space? Different museums have to go through a whole procedure before they can do an exhibition. It may be quite difficult. If we originated one as a group and planned it well in advance, three to five years in advance. We will have to think that far ahead to secure funding and resources. It will cost, just insurance, cases and transport alone.

W.G.: What about a virtual exhibition?

S.G.: This is what we looked at with the web site. We can still do it but I think we have to plan it well in advance. What if there is an exhibition on pieces that were made for the international exhibitions?

G.I.: There aren't enough.

F.K.: I was thinking just on a very small scale, like the iconic items at the British Museum. The British Museum sends very exciting, very iconic objects around on tour to various museums. This year it's the jade terrapin, they are making a case for it, so it comes with its own case. Although it's only one object, you can programme things around it. This might be a way to

raise the profile of Japan in museums. Either persuade the British Museum to send an interesting Japanese object, or maybe the V&A?

S.G.: What if each member of JACUK selected three iconic objects, just three, that could be enough to get 'The Best of…'.

F.K.: The reason that one object works is that we all have the space for one.

W.G.: And it's much cheaper to move one.

G.I.: And insure one.

E.M.: And it highlights the objects that we have in our collections that are Japanese. We could have an iconic object in our foyer, and then a panel saying 'Go and see the other Japanese objects we have'. However, it doesn't answer a lot of the other problems.

S.G.: We wouldn't need to host it at every venue. Maybe just one per region.

R.H.: What came out of the discussion before is the practicality of promoting and programming that sort of thing.

A.K.: Something like an exhibition is something that you have the energy and resources to do once but to tour it, more than one object.

S.G.: What about an exchange? We all exchange one object for a period of a few months. We mention where it came from, with a summary of other objects in that museum's collection. Every few months you rotate items from different museums. Each museum gets to advertise an object from a different museum. That would be cheap, there would only be one case in each gallery. You send the case with it.

J.T.: The loaned objects, however many of them there are, could also highlight where they come from and would hopefully raise awareness of the regional museums that hold Japanese collections.

G.I.: Sending cases may be a problem in some institutions with fixed galleries. It will also increase cost because you are also transporting the case as well as the object. We've all got cases in the gallery.

F.K.: Ours are full!

E.M.: Also, regional museums have to meet national museum showing standards. This can be really tough.

F.K.: This is why the terrapin has its own case!

R.H.: Isn't there a government indemnity?

S.G.: I had huge problems getting the armour back from the Royal Armoury, who borrowed it in 1966. I had all the photos and documentation. They sent up a national security advisor who said that we didn't meet government standards and that the object was worth £12,000. I mean, there are objects you can put in your pocket that are worth more! And it was probably ours!

E.M.: We lent Chester some Japanese objects for an exhibition but it was a nightmare trying to get cases for them, getting them up to specification.

R.H.: Lending on a tiered system[7]!

G.I.: In principle it's a good idea. My personal idea is that the virtual aspect of the collections is the line of least resistance.

S.G.: 'Visiting Objects' or something. In this case, real objects. One item moving around. Bath is looking into borrowing a reduced form of '*Well Hammered'*, and we're considering it.

G.I.: I think you have to consider that if you are reducing an existing themed display, is it watering down the concepts behind it? Will the concepts transfer well to another institution? Are we any nearer a resolution?

S.G.: What's the general feeling?

K.N.: I think if you want to really raise the profile of Japan, in a city like Bristol, we need to fill up our temporary exhibition gallery with stunning objects, having posters and banners outside the museum, make it the focus of all our education efforts for the season but with only one object, that would be hard when we have so few Japanese objects on display.

F.K.: I agree but our temporary gallery is booked up for years to come. Maybe we should ask the British Museum to make the next object a Japanese one, if it's a project that's happening anyway.

E.M.: The British Museum does do touring exhibitions also. They make all-singing all-dancing exhibitions that they tour around. Maybe we could push them in the right direction to do a Japanese touring exhibition. It's more long-term but it might be something to suggest.

S.G.: The movement of framed prints is a lot less costly. They don't go into cases, they are in their frames which go into a case which goes into transit.

G.I.: You've got too many conservation issues with prints. The compounded display time. We have lent things to Japan and only let them be shown in three out of six venues.

F.W.: We're looking to tour our Japanese print exhibition; it's something our manager is very keen on. There are 63 prints available initially and we will be adding more. Hirers can then take some or part of the touring exhibition.

S.G.: It could be the same exhibition theme but local objects from the host museums could supplement them.

G.I.: I think we need to wait to see about implementation grants from MLA to take our web presence any further. We probably need to expand JACUK, and can get details from Junko to send information about that. I still don't think we've reached a resolution on touring an exhibition.

[7] The idea of a 'tiered system' came from discussions about the difficulties local and regional museums can face when borrowing from national museums due to strict criteria regarding security and conservation. With a 'tiered system' perhaps national museums could lend to other nationals and similarly local government museums would lend to other similar museums. This may not be necessary in practice since most musuems know who they can and can not lend to/borrow from.

J.T.: I notice that every institution seems to have a different kind of agenda.

R.H.: I think we have different groups of agendas. I do wonder if this is very helpful. Perhaps we need to get together in smaller groups, regionally, the local authority museums to get together, etc. We may have more similar practical aims.

G.I.: What about the idea of an external organisation co-ordinating?

J.T.: The purpose of this session was to discover the needs of each museum and also examine what we may be able to do in the future. I am glad to hear so many ideas to raise the profile of Japan and Japanese art.

G.I.: We need to firm up our own internal UK links and be aware of what each other is doing before we do anything ambitious. The last meeting we had of the fledgling specialist subject group was nine months ago, and we haven't progressed much further as we don't have the funding for it. There is still a long way to go. The goal was to keep Japan's profile high in the UK, and I hope you can see that this is something that is very much a goal. As Rebecca quite rightly points out, we all have different goals, different time pressures.

S.G.: If we could talk just about a virtual exhibition. Can we look at funding to use The Japan Foundation web site to place a 'three best items' exhibition, and we can gauge from the web counts how popular it is?

G.I.: If you *[J.T.]* could write up a brief summary of today's events on your web page and Shaun suggests we could each send you three items, and we take a short bit of text, I can work on the text, with links to our own individual museums, I think that would be a good result from this meeting. An appendix of 50 words on each museum and their collections. It's a start.

J.T.: We can certainly consider it.

G.I.: Anyway, I would like to thank Junko for all of her work, The Japan Foundation for hosting this day, and all of you for coming! And I look forward to seeing some of you tomorrow night!