



## Ceremony to mark Newcastle University's membership of the Japan Foundation Sakura Network

Newcastle University has been invited to join the “Sakura Network”, a global Japanese language network which as of Sep 2016 has 287 members worldwide.



We are one of four leading HE institutions in the UK to have received this invitation-only membership bestowed to us by the Japan Foundation.

The Japanese studies of the School of Modern Languages has been engaging persistently in activities to enhance Japanese language education in the North of England, such as Japanese-language volunteer training, the expansion of Japanese-language resources in our Language Resource Centre, Language taster sessions at local popular culture events, and more.

Sakura Network (The JF Nihongo Network)

<https://www.jpf.go.jp/e/project/japanese/education/network/>



# I graduated!

Caitlin Rollison, Graduated 2017, Combined Honours BA  
(Japanese and Geography)

As a final year student at Newcastle I'll be graduating in June and heading back to Japan to start a new job as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) on the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET). As a CIR I'll be working in a small town in north-eastern Japan, helping with everything from translation and interpreting to teaching English to holding British cooking classes.

Founded in 1987, the JET Programme is a well-known destination for Japanese graduates, with over 50,000 participants over the programme's thirty years. It's easy to understand why JET is such a popular choice – its run by the Japanese government so job security is high, there are positions all over Japan, and it's a great opportunity to continue improving your Japanese while still having time to explore. Moreover, the salary is relatively high for a graduate career.



Most JET participants work in schools as teaching assistants, but if you can speak Japanese you have the option to apply for the CIR position. The CIR role is a great option for those who want to use their Japanese skills but aren't sure about the corporate sector, or for people like me who love doing a variety of different work. I was particularly interested in becoming a CIR as I did a joint degree in Geography and Japanese at Newcastle and I really wanted to combine my two subjects in my job.

The JET Programme is understandably pretty competitive and applying to be a CIR was probably the most difficult thing I've done at university. On top of a three month application process, the interview was entirely in Japanese and included a reading exam. Luckily, my teachers and Japanese friends at Newcastle spent weeks drilling me in how to answer interview questions in Japanese. Although it didn't feel like it at the time, the interview must have gone alright since I got the job, even if I did forget the interviewers' names.

Having had an amazing time on my Year Abroad in Japan and my three years at Newcastle, I'm looking forward to returning to Japan. After 4 years my Japanese is still far from perfect however, the JET Programme is a great opportunity to continue improving my Japanese and exploring Japan.



# I graduated!

Jazmin Mortimer, Graduated 2017, Linguistics with Japanese BA

There are few jobs these days where you need a specific degree title to get an interview. Obviously, if you want to be a doctor, probably best not to study a humanities subject. So when I am asked:



“Where will a degree with a Japanese language focus take you?”

it should really be phrased as:

“Where will a degree take you, and what doors will studying Japanese language open?”

For me, I'll be off to China with the British Council where I will be teaching English at a school in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province. My main motivation was that I wanted a job after graduating, but also a chance to experience living in another country. As Teaching English is an area I have some experience with, and China is a country that I know I like having visited a few times already. I have also studied Mandarin Chinese at Newcastle through the extra-curricular university wide language program (UWLP) which offers a lot of languages from beginner to advanced that anyone from any degree can sign up for as an evening class once a week.



The compulsory year abroad to Japan as part of my degree really opened my eyes to how small England really is, and working part-time during my year abroad, I was able to travel a lot within Japan too, and to surrounding countries like Korea, Taiwan, and China.

I applied through the British Council in early January, and the application process was simple enough. I am also taking interviews with Japanese companies in Japan via Skype, (and some in London!), and this has only been possible because of the high-level of Japanese language proficiency I have acquired in Japanese, thanks to the intensive course available at Newcastle University and the support of the Japanese teachers. The teachers send us internship and job related news throughout the year, as well as the Anglo-Japanese Society at Newcastle, who host useful events relating to looking for jobs in Japan.



# My study life at Newcastle University

Jillian Rochester, Linguistics with Japanese BA

Well, what can I say? I have finally finished my second year, and will soon be jetting off to the country of the wonderful language I have been studying for the last two years.



In these two years, I have found it both challenging and rewarding. Tackling a language which is seemingly the reverse order of everything in English is obviously not going to be an easy ride. However, the amount of support and resources here are enough to get you through it. With the language resource centre, and the amount of available staff, there is help for both the independent and dependent learner.

Though the thought of multiple tests per week may surprise you, or stimulate your flight response, it is actually very useful for constantly tracking your progress and keeping you on your toes. If I have to say one thing about this it would be that you always know how you are performing.

In my time I have befriended wonderful exchange students from Japan who have helped my Japanese and taught me things about their culture. This exchange also taught me things about my culture too: we generally do not rinse rice before cooking, and stabbing food with chopsticks is a no no - among other things.



During exam season in our first year, a few classmates and I threw a dinner party with some Japanese exchange students. We all cooked an authentic dish from our cultures, introduced it (in Japa-

nese), watched some anime, and then played a game in which the aim was to verbally aid your blindfolded partner in navigating around a room (in Japanese). This was in preparation for our speaking exam, and it worked well.



The reward comes when I find myself able to communicate with other Japanese speakers; when I no longer panic when I find anime or a TV show without subtitles...when I find fewer red marks on my sakubun. It takes time, but what great achievement doesn't?

At the end of each year the Anglo-Japanese Society throws a boat party, at which you can eat, drink, drink, drink, dance and be merry. Or in my case, confuse an actual youtuber doing an interview for a cos play and wind up being interviewed in both English and Japanese.



A brilliant year it has been, and I enjoyed it so much that if someone offered me money to do it all again...I'd think about it.

# My study life at Newcastle University

Roberta Destro, Modern Language and Business Studies BA

Looking back at the past two years I have spent studying Japanese, I'm astonished by how much I have learned and how much more confident I feel in my everyday life.

I'm not naive, Japanese IS brutal and more often than not I found myself quite envious of some friends of mine who study French or Spanish, especially during exam period. They have less contact hours per week and the workload level tends to be pretty different than mine.

However, I believe that in the end surviving four grueling years of Japanese study will give me major bragging rights, so I'm just being patient and waiting for that moment to come. After all, being able to speak a European language is nice enough, but confidently speaking with those around you in such an uncommon language is a lot cooler.

Anyway, I have to say I was never alone in this adventure.

I can say I have wonderful teachers who are always ready to help and encourage us poor unfortunate souls. They may be slightly crazy at times, but always in the best way possible.

My classmates are also unique, but I really wasn't expecting anything different. We're all slightly insane, so we fit together just perfectly.

Studying Japanese helped me find a lot of friends from different countries. I've had the chance to meet Japanese exchange students and learn more

about their life and culture. They are wonderful people and being able to say even just a few words in their language opens doors to a new world.

All in all, I believe I'll never regret deciding to study Japanese, and I'm looking forward to the years to come.



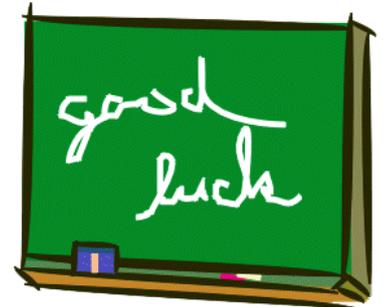
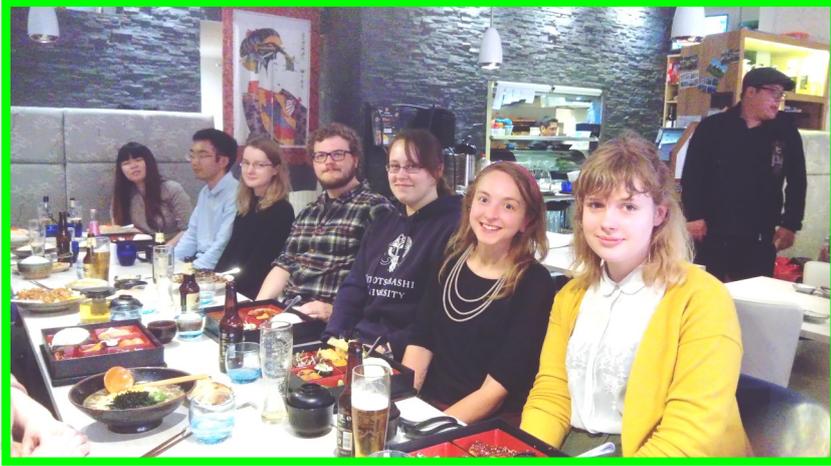
# Japanese Culture Event held in Carlisle

Josie Alderton, Volunteer for Sakura Network

A wonderful Event to promote Japanese culture was held at Tullie House museum in Carlisle last Sunday afternoon (2nd of July). Many people attended and enjoyed the opportunity to experience aspects of Japanese everyday life such as simple language phrases for introducing themselves, the Hiragana and Katakana writing systems, and origami. Also available for the children were Kimono for them to be able to dress in these traditional garments. A special demonstration of calligraphy was well attended with members of the audience able to ask questions and request pieces of the artwork to take home. The highlight of the afternoon was the formal Way of Tea, or tea ceremony, in which members of the audience were able to participate. It was especially interesting to see the traditional equipment such as the Chagama being used. Many Japanese and non-Japanese taking part in the activities or just taking an interest in the event were dressed in kimono. It was a very well received program and the visitors expressed their appreciation for the hard work and stylish presentation of the entire experience. It is hoped the event could become a popular and well supported annual occasion.



# Graduate Meal Out Photos June 2017



# Japanese Language Taster Session at SunnyCon 2017

Ugochukwu Benson and Phil Harris, students studying Japanese and Chelsea Proud, a graduate student of BA in Japanese Studies entertained Anime fans with their Japanese language taster session during the annual popular culture event, SunnyCon at St James' Park on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2017. Over fifty people attended the session.



## Contact us

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