

Queen Elizabeth II's birthday

Queen enters 60th year of reign

David Warren
BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

I am delighted to have been asked to provide a message for The Japan Times to mark the official birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



In 2011, Her Majesty The Queen has entered the 60th year of her reign, which began when she succeeded her father, King George VI, in February 1952. She has been a constant presence, much loved and respected, in the lives of the overwhelming majority of Britons alive today. At the age of 85, her keen sense of duty and absolute commitment to her responsibilities as queen have won her the admiration of millions of people across the world. She is our second longest serving sovereign. When she came to the throne in 1952, her first prime minister (of the 12 who have served in that office during her reign) was Sir Winston Churchill. She is of course also queen of 15 other Commonwealth States, all of which will be marking this anniversary in their own way.

2011 has been a memorable year for the United Kingdom and our Royal Family. The wedding of Her Majesty's grandson His Royal Highness Prince William to Catherine Middleton on April 29 was a wonderful celebration for the whole country, displaying not only the splendor of a traditional national event, but the enthusiasm and creativity of modern Britain. One mil-

lion people in London that day enjoyed the event, and I know that many millions more outside the United Kingdom enjoyed watching it live on television, including millions of people in Japan.

But Her Majesty has continued to work as hard as ever since that event. Her historic visit to Ireland in May, the first by a British monarch since Ireland became a republic in 1922, saw an acknowledgement of the sometimes difficult history between our two countries, but the importance of understanding the enormously close ties between us that make us much more than just neighbors. The warm welcome from the Irish government and the Irish people, and the tribute to those brave individuals who have successfully worked for the cause of peace in Ireland over the last 30 years, in Northern Ireland particularly, was plain for all to see.

In the next 12 months, Her Majesty will look forward to a year of continuing celebrations, beginning with her Diamond Jubilee, celebrating 60 years on the throne, and in July 2012, the opening of the London Olympics, a celebration that the United Kingdom will share with the whole world. The Olympics are of course a festival of sport but also an opportunity to display the diversity of modern British life. They have been designed to provide a lasting legacy for the Olympic Park's host community of Stratford in East London — the most diverse in Europe, with over 300 languages spoken. The park itself, which is the largest of its kind to open in Europe for generations, will become the



Centerpiece: The Olympic Stadium rises in the Stratford district of London ahead of next year's Summer Olympics. The park where it stands will be named after the queen in 2013. AP

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in 2013, providing new homes, parkland and sports facilities for the local communities, for generations to come.

I am always touched by the extraordinarily warm sentiments I hear expressed all the time in Japan about Her Majesty The Queen and other members of the Royal Family. I know that it has been an enormously difficult and traumatic year for everyone in Japan, with the disaster of the Great East Japan Earthquake in March and the horrific loss of life in the subsequent tsunami, coupled with the problems at the Fukushima nuclear power plant. Her Majesty's message of condolence to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Akihito conveyed the profound condolences of the people

of Britain, as well as our deep admiration for the courage and dignity with which the Japanese people have responded to these terrible events. British Prime Minister David Cameron said when he signed the Book of Condolence at the Japanese Embassy in London on March 22, "We know that Japan will recover and we will be with you all the way." Three months after the disaster, visitors from Britain and friends of Japan in the United Kingdom remain keen to be of whatever help they can in the process of recovery and reconstruction, and to help in the task of encouraging the resumption of business and other contact with Japan, so that the strong partnerships in so many areas of our activity — business, science, culture, education and

human exchanges — can resume and flourish. As we celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's official birthday, we know that that is the major task to which we have to turn our efforts over the coming year.

I am delighted that our celebrations this year and next in the U.K. will provide an opportunity for people around the world to enjoy "The Best of Britain." The strength of our relationship with Japan, nurtured over many years, remains of enormous importance to us. Her Majesty The Queen embodies the values of dedication, hard work and commitment to duty, which are the values both our countries share. I am very pleased to be able to provide this message of appreciation on her 85th birthday.



Still active: Queen Elizabeth II watches the June 4 Derby at Epsom Downs Racecourse in Epsom, England, where her colt Carlton House finishes third. AFP-JIJI



Royal fans: Spectators wave the Union Jack on the wedding day of the queen's grandson Prince William and Catherine Middleton on April 29 in London. AP



Historic: Queen Elizabeth II lays a wreath at the War Memorial Gardens in Dublin on May 18 during the first visit by a British monarch to Ireland since it became a republic in 1922. AFP-JIJI

Japan-U.K. higher education collaboration

The United Kingdom and Japan have excellent relations across a broad front. One particular area currently under the spotlight is the higher education (HE) sector, where internationalization is accelerating in both countries.

The British Council is the U.K.'s international cultural relations organization. Supporting HE collaboration between universities in Japan and the U.K. is a key area of our activity, as it enables each university sector to achieve more together than it could separately. The nature of such collaboration continues to evolve and so we are working to develop a platform and framework that will support the emergence of long-term partnerships and dialogue in these new areas.

The British Council in Japan has worked closely with U.K. policymakers and university leaders in both countries over the last 10 years and a number of sustainable partnerships have developed as a result. However, traditional models of collaboration have tended to focus on individual ties between

particular researchers and institutions. There is an increasing need in both countries for a new framework that will facilitate long-term sustainable partnerships at the institutional level and inspire dialogue between the HE sectors of our two countries. We foresee universities playing a more active role at the heart of the Japan-U.K. relationship: working together to create a new set of values that will incorporate solutions to the challenges facing not only the HE sector, but also the business sector and global society at large.

A significant step forward in the realization of the new Japan-U.K. HE framework occurred in March at the Japan-U.K. sessions during Going Global, an international education conference organized by the British Council in Hong Kong. The sessions were attended by David Willetts, minister for universities and science, and 16 senior university and industry leaders from Japan and the U.K. Participants agreed to take the initiative to move the Japan-U.K. relationship forward

and mapped out the three main areas of the framework.

First, a key area of Japan-U.K. HE collaboration will be the identification of new modes of partnerships working between university and industry, and the development of a system to encourage technology and knowledge exchange between the two. Both countries also recognize the importance of educating global personnel at all levels of university education, so creating wider and more cross-border experiences for students will form the second area of the framework. The third area of importance is to develop bilateral programs in the area of the universities' social engagement, including community building, regeneration and social mobility. Increasingly, universities in both countries are expected to respond to the needs of society and to show how they are educating students to make such contributions.

At the British Council in Japan, we plan to organize several pilot programs this year. One of the major events, held in partnership

with the British Embassy's science and innovation team in Tokyo, will bring together a group of U.K. and Japanese universities to enhance bilateral ties and identify good practice in university-industry collaboration. We also intend to develop further programs to encourage and support Japanese students and U.K. students to study in each other's countries, as we believe that the mobility of individuals is at the heart of international cooperation and understanding.

Japan and the U.K. both recognize that we are the two of the world's major knowledge economies and that our young people need to become a part of not just national but also global society. By working together, we hope that this new partnership between the HE sector, industry and governments will become a model for the rest of the world and provide shared solutions for some of the global challenges we all face.

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