



Mark your calendar for these upcoming events & check the web for updates.

Autumn Sausage Sizzle

Sunday 16th September 1-4 pm
Australian Embassy Gardens
Please check Website for details
A fun time for the whole family

Thursday Coffee Morning

6th September, 4th October, 1st November, 6th December
Time: 10 - noon
Place: Oakwood Residence Roppongi T-cube. Level 22, 3-1-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku
Free for members; 2000 yen for non-members.
Enquires and RSVP to Anna Cock-Gibson annacock@hotmail.com
Enjoy coffee and conversation with Society members. Held monthly on the first Thursday.

Tokyo Bay Cruise

Thursday 23rd August
Details available soon

Melbourne Cup

Tuesday 6th November

Feature Article page 4: Interview with Australian Ambassador McLean

“The tremendously strong relationship between Australia and Japan is going ahead full steam both in the trade and economic sense and in areas such as cooperation on security matters.” Ambassador McLean





“Congratulations to all those who completed the Oxfam Trail walker event recently. Our Embassy liaison Damien Dunn and colleagues were second overall in a fabulous performance and were only beaten by team of professional athletes.”

Robert Quinlivan

President's Report

As we are experiencing the summer hiatus and await the onset of the rainy season, we've combined the June and July editions of the newsletter to try and provide a bit more content in what is often a light time for material.

Looking back at recent events, the barbecue was a fantastic night with a full house of 400 people and dry weather for a change. A big thanks to Australian Ambassador Murray McLean for opening up his backyard for the event and to the entire Embassy staff that helped us on the night. Also, thanks to our sponsors Allied Pickfords, ANZ Bank, ASIST Solutions, Boudoir, Coca-Cola Japan, Salt and Village Cellars for their valuable contributions. And finally special thanks to all those who volunteered and made the night such a roaring success.

Congratulations to all those who completed the Oxfam Trail walker event recently. Our Embassy liaison Damien Dunn and colleagues was second overall in a fabulous performance and were only beaten by team of professional athletes. Special mention also goes to the Antipodean Avenger ladies team who raised 197,000yen which made them the 28th highest fundraising team. The Avengers finished in 33hours 14 minutes and were the 39th overall team to finish (out of 90 who completed the course and many more that did not make it). They were the 5th women's team to finish.

The Rugby League State of Origin series has caused much joy for Queenslanders. Thanks to the Embassy Social Committee for inviting us into the Bunker Bar to enjoy a few cold Aussie beers and those delicious pies while watching the games.

At this time of year we often farewell some of our members who are leaving Tokyo on their way to new assignments. We hope you've enjoyed your time in Tokyo and at Society events - we hope to hear from you when you get settled in your new location.

Also, don't forget, as you travel around on summer holidays, make a few notes so that you can submit an article to the newsletter upon your return. We're particularly interested in Japan destinations, but are more than happy to hear about locations further afield. All contributions are welcome.

Enjoy your summer.
Cheers,

Rob

2006-7 Officers and Committee

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Robert Quinlivan

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Michael Marley

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Judy Taylor

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Robert Marshall,
Keren Miers
Kuniko Noguchi
Tracey Northcott,
Alison Quinlivan
Jodie Riley
Tony Scimonello

Annual Australia Society Barbeque, May 19th, 2007

David Taylor

In the lead-up to this year's annual barbeque at the Embassy Tracey Northcott (fearless leader) had been making regular sacrifices to any heathen god she could track down and Rob Quinlivan had filthy knees as a result of regular prayers to all denomination of God he could muster just to ensure fine weather for the event. Fortunately, they managed to endear themselves to the right one(s), because the weather was perfect (after the torrential stuff in the morning and the scudding showers all afternoon).|

All 400 tickets were sold a couple of days beforehand, and Cathy Edwards needed several fortifying drinks during the week while she furiously took orders, sent out tickets, and sorted out a waiting list for those who had been tardy in getting online to book.

Tony Scimonello and his team again put together the great food, in quantities to make the tables groan and to keep the populace full and satisfied. The tong-toilers under the able command of first-time BBQ-master Ashley Thredgold kept the perfectly-cooked meaty bits coming steadily, despite being almost permanently blinded by the smoke.

As ever, the Australian Embassy served the perfect venue for the barbeque, with the lush green lawn giving a very Aussie feel (well, pre-drought Aussie feel). The Embassy and its staff again proved to be perfect hosts, with a great deal of work being done in the preparation of the venue and cleanup after. Even when the BBQ smoke found its way into the embassy building and played havoc with smoke detectors the problem was attacked with minimal hassle. It was good to see several of them staying to enjoy the night.

Brad Holmes' duo again provided the party atmosphere with their great music. They probably played better this year because they weren't worrying about possible electrocution as they had last year with the heavy rain.

When the weather is good, this is my favourite Australia Society function. There are no posh frocks to organise and no ties to restrict breathing. Good food, good wine, good company in relaxed and very charming surroundings dressed in casual gear. If you didn't get there this year, make sure you get in early next year: it's a great start to summer.

As ever, we need to thank all the sponsors who donated goods, services and door prizes for the evening. We really couldn't put on this event for the price without their ongoing support. Also thanks to all those who helped set up, prepare and cook food, and clear up afterwards. It's always more enjoyable when you have a hand in delivering the event.

See you next year.



Ceremonial lighting of the charcoal: 4:30pm 19th May, 2007. The fuzziness is caused by the heat from the BBQs, not the beer.

“As ever, the Australian Embassy served the perfect venue for the barbeque, with the lush green lawn giving a very Aussie feel (well, pre-drought Aussie feel). The Embassy and its staff again proved to be perfect hosts..”

Interview with Australian Ambassador Murray McLean

The Australian Ambassador to Japan, Murray McLean, was interviewed for the Australia Society newsletter on 15th June by the Embassy Consul and Liaison to the Australia Society, Tokyo, Damien Dunn.



Ambassador McLean has been the Australian Ambassador to Japan since November 2004. Immediately prior to the appointment in Japan he was Deputy Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra. Ambassador McLean has represented the Australian Government on a number of appointments in China for a total of 15 years. He has studied Mandarin at Hong Kong University. He has also held posts in Singapore and Washington DC.

Australian Society: *How do you find living in Japan?*

Ambassador McLean: I enjoy it immensely. Japanese people are very courteous and well-disposed to foreigners, especially Australians, and I've enjoyed visiting outside Tokyo either through my work trips or on private travel. I've been genuinely impressed with the civility of Japanese people, who manage to live cheek by jowl yet still respect each other's right to space and privacy. The great variety of food is also a bonus!

“The key challenge is to convince Japanese negotiators that a free trade agreement (FTA) between Australia and Japan would be a positive stimulus for the trade and economic relationship for both countries. “

AS: *You spent a fair bit of your overseas career in China- what are the similarities and differences with Japan?*

AM: I enjoyed the time I spent living in China as well as other parts of Asia (including Singapore and Hong Kong). Many facets of Chinese culture have found their way to Japan – not least of which is the written language and cultural traditions, such as the folk festivals. I'm therefore familiar with a number of important parts of Japanese life just as I became accustomed to them during my time in China.

Japan is a more developed and westernised country in many ways, but China has many aspects which appeal to foreigners, including the cuisine in all its varieties and the hustle and bustle of the country and its people.

AS: *What are the challenges ahead for the Australia-Japan relationship?*

AM: The tremendously strong relationship between Australia and Japan is going ahead full steam both in the trade and economic sense and in areas such as cooperation on security matters. The key challenge is to convince Japanese negotiators that a free trade agreement (FTA) between Australia and Japan would be a positive stimulus for the trade and economic relationship for both countries. We have a lot in common as parliamentary democracies with our systems governed by the rule of law and that makes it straightforward for us to grow together in security cooperation over the coming years.

A general challenge which Australia faces is ensuring that Japan and Japanese people recognise Australia as a country that is of long-term importance to it in trade, politics and security as well as one that is attractive in the short-term for tourism and education. It is something all of us need to work on constantly.

AS: *How do you spend your time socially?*

AM: My working week is often a 24-7 affair, but I am pretty religious about getting a game of golf in on the weekends. Not even these golf games are always purely recreational! Golf also enables me to meet key business and political leaders in a relaxed setting.

Otherwise, I enjoy looking for Japanese crafts and antiques or driving to one of the many locations around Tokyo where it's possible to spend a few days enjoying local culture and the wonderful scenery.

“Get out and about in Tokyo and the rest of Japan to appreciate the wonderful cultural and scenic attractions of the country. “

AS: *What are the day-to-day tasks of an Ambassador?*

AM: My responsibilities are many and varied but generally include representing the Australian government's position on a diverse range of subjects to Japanese business leaders and politicians. On any given day, I may be discussing climate change in the morning, access for Australian agricultural products in the afternoon and security cooperation in Iraq or promoting Australian wine in the evening.

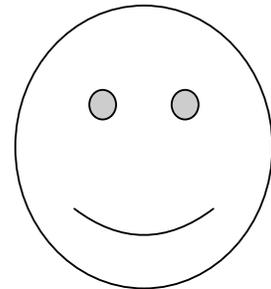
In addition, I oversee the management of the Embassy, which includes a group of 40 Australians and their families sent to Japan from various government departments. I also host a number of functions for politicians and other visitors so that they can meet Japanese counterparts or lobby Japanese officials on issues such as the FTA.

AS: *What advice would you have to Australians moving to Japan for the first time?*

AM: Get out and about in Tokyo and the rest of Japan to appreciate the wonderful cultural and scenic attractions of the country. Australians can hold their heads high in Japan because we are generally very well respected and regarded as down to earth and friendly – something I know all Australians in Tokyo contribute to in their own way, in their own work and social environments.

- End -

A Warm Welcome to 50 new members:



Bernd & Ulla Krause
Katsuhiko & Kimiyo Kawaminami
Jennifer Lee
Alison & Trevor Reynolds
Tim & Kaori Barnstable
John & Chiharu Kirch
Michael Jaehrling & Jean Ting
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Fiona & Graeme Dixon
Yoshimasa Kobayashi
Janis Malin
Beth & Dan Wheeler
Jason Hardy
Rohan & Emi Gillett
Elena Nazvanova
Emmie Osawa
Brendan Delahunty

June Coffee Morning

Former Australia Society committee member Janet Wainwright was a surprise attendee at the June coffee morning at the Oakwood Roppongi T-Cube and we were delighted to see her during a short holiday in Tokyo from her home in Adelaide. Thanks once again to Debbie Sorkin from Sirva Relocation for stopping by, and a warm welcome to new member Jean Ting, who recently arrived in Tokyo from Osaka. Following a summer break, the next coffee morning will be on Thursday September 7.



L-R: Jean Ting, Anna Cock Gibson & Lorraine Weyman



L-R: Debbie Sorkin, Janet Wainwright & Mary Hanami



Enjoy making friends and greeting new arrivals to Tokyo.

Coffee Morning

1st Thursday of most months, 10 am - noon
Oakwood Residence Roppongi T-Cube, level 22
FREE to members!
RSVP to Anna Cock Gibson
annacock@hotmail.com



Namboku line, Roppongi Ichome station. T-Cube is above the station. Enter on 1st floor and take elevator to level 22.



“There are several different outdoor baths in a garden in the gender-segregated facilities, and a communal, yukata-on foot bath where couples like to cuddle up on little benches while soaking their feet.”

Soaking in Edo Culture

Kristen McQuillin

Odaiba isn't the desert of commercialism it used to be. Now there's an oasis of commercialism, too! If you're not a fan of shopping malls, Oedo Onsen Monogatari is probably the best thing about Odaiba. It's an onsen theme park decked out in Old Edo style.

Its set up for tour groups and parties, as you can tell from the bus parking out front and the large bank of shoe lockers in the lobby, but individuals and small groups are welcome, too.

Upon entering, you choose a yukata from a range of styles and head into a changing room to shed your outdoor clothes. Your locker key is also your bar-coded wallet, so you won't have to carry any money with you while you bathe or enjoy the many entertainments inside.

In your yukata you can stroll through Hirokoji, the communal shopping and dining area, where you may see a magician doing small magic or enjoy a free performance in the enormous tatami room at the end of the “street.” There are all sorts of food stalls and restaurants and plenty of omiyagi.

The baths are located off Hirokoji, and there are several different tubs to enjoy, including a gold-colored bath that was tapped from an actual hot spring under Tokyo Bay. The other baths are simply heated, mineralised water but that doesn't make them any less relaxing.

There are several different outdoor baths in a garden in the gender-segregated facilities, and a communal, yukata-on foot bath where couples like to cuddle up on little benches while soaking their feet.



For an extra fee, you can mellow out under hot sand or on a rock slab. There are massage services and beauty treatments all available at the swipe of your locker key. The extras can add up if you aren't paying attention.

There were quite a few foreigners bathing, some without good bathing manners, others more in line with Japanese etiquette. Bus tours came and went while my friends and I slowly soaked and unwound.

.....continued next page

“Persons with tattoos are asked to refrain from using the facilities” but on a slow Tuesday morning, nobody was too fussed with my wrist tattoo and I saw another gaijin woman with a back tattoo. Your mileage may vary, of course.

Oedo Onsen Mongatari: Hours: 11 am – 9 am (open all night!) - Admission fee: 1,500 – 3,000 yen + extras - Closest station: Telecom Center station, Yurikamome line

Doctor Fish Are a Turkish Delight

Kristen McQuillin

“My unpedicured, mistreated feet attracted perhaps 50-60 fish. The 20- something Japanese girl sitting across from me had a dozen, at most. As fish food goes, skin's definitely “age before beauty.”

When I was a kid, the fish in the local pond nibbled my toes if I stuck my feet in and kept still. I never imagined that 30 years later, I'd consider it a beauty treatment! But Doctor Fish are a growing phenomenon in Japan, having come here from natural hot springs in Turkey where they are used to ease the symptoms of various skin ailments.

Sticking your feet into a pool of fish is, at first, extremely weird. The little black fish, who are starving and desperate to eat, swarm over to check out your feet and ankles. They find the roughest, driest bits and nibble away. The worse your skin, the more the fish will love you.

My unpedicured, mistreated feet attracted perhaps 50-60 fish. The 20- something Japanese girl sitting across from me had a dozen, at most. As fish food goes, skin's definitely “age before beauty.”

After an initial giggle and a moment of “Euw!” I settled into the experience and the fishes' biting felt like a tingle of electricity. My friends and I carried on a normal conversation while the fish feasted. In fifteen minutes, our time was up.

And my feet were smooth. My callouses seemed smaller, and all those crunchy bits on the heel had been smoothed away. The skin was pink and fresh. Along my rough old shins, there was a line of demarcation for at least a week until the freshly revealed new skin weathered a bit.

You can try Doctor Fish for yourself at Oedo Onsen Monogatari. 15 minutes will set you back 1,500 yen. At AquaPlaz in Ekoda, you can have 20 minutes of fish therapy plus coffee and cheesecake for 2,400 yen. A full list of treatment centers in Japan can be found at www.dr-fish.jp (Japanese).

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