

Institution: SOAS University of London		
Unit of Assessment: 32 – Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: The Clove and the Shogun's Telescope 'Refocused': Bringing the History of Early British Trade with Japan to 21st-Century Audiences		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000–2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Timon Screech	Professor of the History of Art	1991–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1 August 2013–31 December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research at SOAS on the 17th-century origins of UK-Japan trade and diplomatic relations repositioned the quest for Japan at the centre of the East India Company's early activities and showed how important Japan was to English mercantile aspirations. The research helped to further understanding of early Japan-UK trade and diplomatic relations for a wider audience beyond academic circles; supported the revival of historical crafts, monuments and sites commemorating the origins of Japan-UK relationships; and encouraged Japanese and British cultural institutions to host events and exhibitions.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Knowledge of the 17th-century origins of UK-Japan trade and diplomatic relations, and of the role played by the East India Company (EIC), have been lost in time. Research carried out since 2000 by Timon Screech – Professor of the History of Art at SOAS – was the first body of work to place the quest for Japan at the centre of the EIC early activities – from the Company's foundation in 1600 – and hence at the centre of English trading history. The first EIC ship, The Clove, left England in spring 1611 and arrived in Japan on 11 June 1613.</p> <p>Screech's research was principally based on the enormous EIC archive in the British Library. He also used archives of relevant Livery Companies in the City of London, as well as published and unpublished documentation available only in Japanese. These materials disclosed how the EIC began to focus on Japan as a place of exchange for England's most famous product – woollen cloth – almost from the outset. Archival research revealed a set of errors that bred hopes of the EIC to acquire spices in exchange for woollen cloth. As Japan had cold winters and no sheep, they considered it ideal. From 1611, the EIC planned second-leg voyages, extending trips to the South-east Asian 'spice islands' – where warm woollens, of course, would not sell – towards Japan. However, period maps were incorrect in making Japan some 20 times too big, thus encouraging deluded hope in its market. Still, Japan mined silver, so the EIC envisaged a triangulation of English woollens to Japan, Japanese silver to the 'spice Islands' (where producers were accustomed to selling for silver), then spice back to London. A second error bred further false hope: Europeans believed a sea passage existed over Russia. The whole projected double voyage, they thought, should be rapid, obviating the need to go via Africa, and would be enormously lucrative [3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5].</p> <p>Screech's research also drew attention to the utterly forgotten, but crucial gift sent to the ruler of Japan (the Shogun) by the EIC, in the name of King James. This was a telescope – the first ever to leave Europe, and the first ever built as a royal presentation object (sadly it has since been lost). Screech's research set this event in the wider context of intellectual life of the period, highlighting English efforts to present themselves to the Japanese as an advanced nation, superior</p>		

to other European trading partners, such as the Iberians and the Dutch. Screech analysed how the EIC sought to face down competition from the Dutch and the Iberians by promoting the English Crown. The point of a telescope was to confound the Iberians in particular: Jesuit missionaries in Japan were valued, above all, for teaching astronomy. But they had no telescope and were still ignorant of Galileo's extraordinary findings through it. The English could steal a march, and present themselves as further ahead. The instrument was to tell the Japanese that the English alone could advance their understanding. The Clove departed Japan heading homewards in December 2013 and arrived safely with reciprocal gifts from the Shogun for King James – some of which have been preserved to this day [3.2].

At the time of the EIC arrival, Japan hosted more missionaries than any Asian country, other than Portuguese Goa. Historical data reveal that major moves against the Christians occurred in autumn–winter 1613–1614. Screech explored a causal link between those events and the arrival of the EIC ship [3.4]. No previous scholar had been able to account for the timing of Japan's decision to curtail then expel the missions after a century of permitting them, nor had they traced the fate of the consignment of items sent to King James by the Shogun. On its subsequent voyage to Japan, in 1614, Screech found that the EIC took some 100 oil paintings and many thousand printed pictures. Most of these followed up on the message of the telescope by promoting the English Crown, Church and supposedly forward-thinking English traits. Pictures illustrated the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, which were both taken as proof of God's preference for England over Spain and the Papacy [3.3, 3.5]. Screech argued that the importance of early English trade with Japan has been neglected because the whole venture was short-lived. After a decade of effort, the EIC pulled out. History is too often written from 'what worked', but this episode, albeit a 'failure', is not remotely negligible. It merits attention in the history of English then British trade, also of identity and nationhood, as well as the history of Japan, Japanese isolationism, and the history of Anglo-Japanese intellectual and commercial exchange. Screech's 2020 book [3.1] consolidates all his research on this subject.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

All outputs listed are peer-reviewed

3.1. Screech, T. (2020). *The Shogun's Silver Telescope: God, Art, and Money in the English Quest for Japan, 1600–1625*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780198832034.

Submitted to REF2021

3.2. Screech, T. (2013). 'James issei to Tokugawa Ieyasu, Hidetada to no kenjōbutsu kōkan: Eikoku shijō-hajime no aato ookushonn' [James I, Tokugawa Ieyasu and Hidetada: An exchange of gifts and Britain's first ever art auction]. *Kokka*, 1450. Article in Japanese, published in Japan's premier art-history journal. Article and abstract in English is available on request.

3.3. Screech, T. (2012). 'The Cargo of the New Year's Gift: Paintings from London for Asian Buyers, 1614'. In: L. Saurma, M. Juneja and A. Eisenbeiss, eds, *The Power of Things and the Flow of Cultural Transformations*. Frankfurt: Deutscher Kunstverlag, pp. 114–136. ISBN: 9783422069787. Available on request

3.4. Screech, T. (2012). 'The English and the Control of Christianity in the Early Edo Period'. *Japan Review*, 24, pp. 3–40. <https://doi.org/10.15055/00000182> Premier English-language Japanese studies journal.

3.5. Screech, T. (2005). "Pictures (the Most Part Bawdy)": The Anglo-Japanese Painting Trade in the Early 1600s'. *Art Bulletin*, 87(1), pp. 50–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043079.2005.10786228> Premier English-language Japanese art history journal.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

2013–2014 marked the 400th anniversary of the start of UK-Japan relations through the East India Company ventures. Although this might have been known by experts, Screech's work was the first to bring the matter to light outside a limited academic circle. Screech's work contributed to 1) raising awareness and understanding of early UK-Japanese trade and diplomatic relations across a wider range of interested parties; 2) the reviving of historical crafts, monuments and sites

commemorating the origins of Japan-UK relationships; and 3) creating a momentum for other cultural institutions in Japan and the UK to host related ongoing events and exhibitions.

Japan400: raising awareness and understanding of early UK-Japan trade and diplomatic relations

Inspired by Screech's work, Nicholas Maclean CMG – initiator of the Japan Exchange Teaching programme (JET) and coordinator of the 1981 Royal Academy's Great Japan Exhibition: Art of the Edo Period 1600–1868 – collaborated with Screech to form **Japan400** – an umbrella organization launched in January 2013 to coordinate a series of commemorative events in Japan and the UK. Maclean stated that 'it was through the interventions and published scholarship of Prof. Screech that I became aware of the importance of commemorating the 400th anniversary of Japan-British diplomatic, trade, cultural and scientific relations' [5.1]. Screech was invited to be historical advisor and co-chair, thus playing a crucial role in the organization's decision-making. Following gala launches in London and Tokyo in June 2013, Japan400 went on to host over 220 events across the UK and Japan over a period of 18 months spanning from the anniversary of the arrival in Japan of the first English ship, The Clove, in summer 1613, to its return home in December 1614 [5.1, 5.3, 5.12]. Events promoted educational exchange, and business, science and cultural ties between the 2 countries [5.2]. They ranged from high-profile gatherings targeting diplomatic and government officials and dignitaries, to events open to the general public. The British Ambassador to Japan, Sir Tim Hitchens, was closely involved, as was the Crown Prince of Japan (now HIH the Emperor), whom Screech was called to the Palace to brief in person. Hitchens indicated that while there was some awareness of the arrival of the English in 1613, 'it was Prof. Screech's scholarship that fully alerted us, and which gave us the factual basis on which to embark on the anniversary, and, I am sure to continue into 2020 and beyond' [5.4].

In the UK, Japan400 inspired the municipality of Medway, Kent to commemorate the anniversary too, since a Medway native, William Adams, was the first English person known to have landed in Japan – on a Dutch ship in 1600 – after which he became adviser to the Shogun and much helped the EIC after its arrival. In 2016, Medway organised their 'Will Adams Festival' under the banner of Japan400. Related was a cooperation with Kent's Maidstone Museum to host an exhibition of Japanese arts borrowed from Hirado, the region where the EIC ship had arrived. Sue Haydock – former Medway Major – expressed gratitude to Screech and Japan400, stating that 'Medway is a region with several social challenges, but in my view, Japan400 provided an immense and, also, a lasting fillip for the local population'. Haydock explains that several outreach activities in Medway schools involving 'several thousand pupils' [5.3] were organized, including talks, seminars and practical events such as a tea ceremony. In October 2013, inspired by Screech's work and Japan400, annual Japan Matsuri (festival) in Trafalgar Square also focused on the 400th anniversary of first official contacts between Japan and Britain. Attended by over 100,000 people, it was reviewed as a 'fantastic' and 'superb' day by the Japan Society [5.13]. based on Screech's research, on 21 September 2014 a tall ship was sailed into Plymouth harbour as part of a 5-day multi-event academic, cultural, social and enterprise festival billed 'Japan400Plymouth', marking the return of The Clove on 21 September 1614. The event was attended by approximately 12,000 local people [5.13].

After the 18-month Japan400 period (June 2013–December 2014), the Japan400 website, which had received tens of thousands of hits, was archived. Japan400 was revived in May 2020 for the 400th anniversary of the death of William Adams on 16 May 1620. All other associated public events to commemorate Adams' death were postponed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including a day-long symposium and briefing on Adams for British business and educational leaders at the Tokyo Club (Tokyo), scheduled for May and sponsored by members of the British Chamber of Commerce. In addition, Hirado City had planned to spruce up Adam's gravesite and create a new park to surround it and unveil this with a commemoration event. In London, the Japanese Embassy was due to co-host with Japan400 a day-long symposium about Adams leading to the anniversary of his death. A commemorative evening of music and poetry was also scheduled to be held at St Dunstan's Church, Stepney. Furthermore, the first exhibition of Japanese art from the UK Royal Collection was scheduled from 1 June at the Queen's Picture Gallery, which would refer to Adam's death anniversary. Nonetheless, in December 2020, in an event hosted by the British Ambassador, a large permanent monument commissioned with funds

from the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan was unveiled on the grounds of the British Embassy in Tokyo, after the larger ceremony planned for 16 May 2020 was cancelled [5.7c].

Keeping memory alive: reviving historical crafts, monuments and sites

Building upon the project's research findings on the original telescope presented to the Shogun, Japan400 secured funding from the British Chamber of Commerce in Tokyo (BBCJ) for a new British-made telescope to be donated to the City of Shizuoka in summer 2014, for the 401st anniversary, and kept at Sunpu Castle, where the original had been presented in 1613 [5.2]. The new telescope was hand-crafted in Wales by manufacturer I.R. Poyser and, before sending to Japan in summer 2013, it was displayed at Hatfield house (built in 1611, as The Clove sailed), at the White Tower of the Tower of London (where the reciprocal presents sent in thanks for the telescope are still housed), and at the Banqueting House in Whitehall (built for King James). The instrument was then shipped to the British embassy in Tokyo where Screech and the Ambassador showed it to the Crown Prince of Japan (now HIH the Emperor), after which it toured various cities to promote the 400th anniversary, drawing significant crowds [5.6a and b]. The telescope was finally presented to the City of Shizuoka at a ceremony attended by the Prefectural Governor and Japanese VIPs, locals and approximately 250 school children [5.7]. It was then put on permanent display in the Castle, thanks to which the number of visitors increased significantly. Data show that in September 2014 (just before the ceremony) there were 3,302 admissions; in October 2014, they leapt to 25,104. In 2015, total admissions rose to 67,826 against 36,654 for all 2013; in 2016 and 2017 they decreased but remained higher than pre-telescope, with over 47,000 admission each year [5.8a]. Robin Maynard, life-time honorary member of the BCCJ, praised Screech's research as 'imperative' for this important nationwide initiative [5.2].

Screech's work on the importance of the EIC trade mission to Japan prompted Japan400 to invest in 3 other important permanent commemorative pieces in the UK. The first was restoration of the baroque grave of Sir Thomas Smythe, first Governor of the EIC who sent the telescope to Japan, at Sutton-at-Hone (Kent). The second was the restoration of the grave of the English voyage leader, John Saris, in Fulham Parish Church. A survey for the proposed works was conducted [5.15]. Japan400 also commissioned a new memorial for the chief English merchant in Japan, Richard Cocks, who died at sea on his return home, and placed in his baptismal church in Stafford. Japan400 raised funds and covered the cost of these works.

Building on the momentum: impact on other institutions in Japan and the UK

Japan400 created a momentum which led other cultural institutions in the UK and Japan to host related events and exhibitions – some of which became permanent. As revealed by Screech's research, the Shogun's reciprocal gift for King James included a sumptuous suit of armour, which has ever since been in The Tower of London. Thanks to Japan400, this object was redisplayed with improved explanations [5.2]. The Shogun's mausoleum, Kuno-zan, just outside the city of Shizuoka, reconfigured its museum in 2013 to coincide with Japan400, and invited Screech to deliver a public lecture (in Japanese) to 250 people. The museum installed a permanent exhibit marking the opening of trade with England, including a facsimile commissioned by the museum of the document granting the English trading rights, the original being kept at the Bodleian Library, Oxford (which displayed it for Japan400 in 2013). Kuno-zan museum reported a major increase in visitor numbers: 2013 was indeed the first year in which numbers topped 410,000, and exceeded 420,000 in 2014. In 2015, numbers dropped to about 380,000 per year, but still higher than prior to 2013 [5.8b]. The museum commissioned a second high-grade facsimile of the trading permit for donation to the British Embassy in Tokyo, where it is displayed in the entrance hall. The city of Shizuoka also held a cultural festival in 2015 called 'Ieyasu400', to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the death of the Shogun who received the telescope, with Screech advising. That same year, Shizuoka approved the construction of a new Museum of History and Culture due to open in 2021 and to make full mention of the history of early British-Japan relations, including the gift of the telescope [5.9].

The research also showed that lacquerware – a traditional Japanese craft – was brought back from Japan in 1614 and auctioned in London's first ever art auction in December 1614. Christies Auctioneers held a 400th Anniversary Lacquer Auction in December 2014, under the Japan400

umbrella. The Associate Director of Japanese art at Christies, explained how they 'used Professor Screech scholarly discovery concerning the [1614] sale to hold an online auction of Japanese works of art . . . which we deliberately timed to coincide with the Japan400 events occurring in December 2014.' The director added that '[t]he sale attracted much attention resulting in a strong result of 73% of lots sold' [5.10]. The East India Company – which was re-founded in London in 2010 – sponsored many Japan400 events and branded some of its products as 400th Anniversary items, including gold and silver coins [5.11b and c]. The gold coin sold out. Also notable was an historic ceremony in the White Tower of the Tower of London on 6 December 2013, to commemorate the home voyage of The Clove from Japan in December 1613 [5.11a]. In sum, thanks to Screech's ground-breaking research, the 400th anniversary was a fillip for UK-Japan relations generally, and the long-forgotten events of 1613–1614 are now permanent features of our understanding on the period, including as part of a tourist programme promoted by the Telegraph [5.14].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1. Letter from Co-chair of Japan400, Nicolas Maclean, CBE, Jan 2019
- 5.2. Letter from Robin Maynard, OBE, lifetime honorary member BCCJ, Aug 2018
- 5.3. Letter from Sue Haydock, ex-Mayor of Medway, Jan 2019
- 5.4. Letter from British Ambassador to Japan of the period, Sir Timothy Hitchens, Aug 2018
- 5.5. Welcome to Japan400 (project website home page, 2015) <http://japan400.org>
- 5.6. Impact of telescope; a) 'The Japan400 Telescope' I.R. Poyser, August 2014 <https://irpoyser.co.uk/the-japan400-telescope/>; b) The return of Japan's lost telescope after 400 years - Sean Curtin (Editor, Japan Society Review and Director, Japan Matsuri), August 2014: <http://www.irpoyser.co.uk/wp-content/themes/brasstelescopes/file/J400-The-Return-of-Japans-Lost-Telescope-after-Four-Hundred-Years.pdf>
- 5.7. Impact on business ties; a) Letter from the Head of British Chamber of Commerce in Japan, David Bickle, Jan 2019; b) Japan400 helped business, human ties – Acumen, Jan 2014: <https://bcciacumen.com/japan400-helped-business-human-ties/>; c) William Adam's Memorial – Acumen, Jan 2021
- 5.8. Visitor data from Japanese tourist institutions a) Visitor data from Sunpu Castle in Shizuoka (Japanese, with notes in English); b) Visitor data from Shogun's mausoleum museum, Kuno-zan (Japanese)
- 5.9. a) Letter from Head of Tourism and Exchange, City Hall, City of Shizuoka (Japanese); b) English translation.
- 5.10. Letter from Associate Director Japanese Art, Christies Auction House, Jan 2019
- 5.11. Impact of commemorative coin; a) Head of Tokugawa Family marks 400th Anniversary of sailing from Japan of first British ship to visit – Japan400 website, Dec 2013: <http://japan400.com/head-of-tokugawa-family-marks-400th-anniversary-of-sailing-from-japan-of-first-british-ship-to-visit/>; b) 2013 400th Anniversary of Japan – British Relations Gold proof coin – The East India Company: <https://www.theeastindiacompany.com/products/2013-400th-anniversary-of-japan-british-relations-gold-proof-coin/>; c) 2013 400th Anniversary of Japan – British Relations Fine Silver Coin – The East India Company: <https://www.theeastindiacompany.com/products/2013-400th-anniversary-of-japan-british-relations-fine-silver-coin/>
- 5.12. PDF of 'The Japan Matsuri 2013 Review' – Sean Curtin, The Japan Society of the UK,
- 5.13. Letter from Dr Darren J. Aoki, Lecturer in World History Humanities and Performing Arts – History, Plymouth University, Mar 2020
- 5.14. Japan: 400 years in a fascinating land – The Telegraph, 5 Sept 2013: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/asia/japan/articles/Japan-400-years-in-a-fascinating-land/>
- 5.15. Condition report and proposals for the conservation and re-location of the memorial ledger stone to John Saris.