

## JAPAN MATSURI 2010 (18<sup>th</sup> September)



The first large-scale urban matsuri took place in London's historic Spitalfields Market in September 2009. Previously Matsuri had taken place in Hyde Park (1991 & 2001) but this was the first time a Japanese community celebration was held in the middle of a thriving modern mixed commercial and residential area. 2009 Japan Matsuri was a vibrant and colourful occasion, which attracted some 35,000 visitors (young and old, Japanese and non-Japanese) and much media coverage including internet blog posts and streamed video.

### THE VENUE

There has been a market at Spitalfields since the 13th century and the area soon became the commercial centre of London with a rapidly changing population as communities came to Britain from Europe over the centuries.

Hammerson plc, which manages the present day Spitalfields Traders' Market, is committed to developing links with and making the site accessible to both the local resident and business communities. Situated a stone's throw from Liverpool Street Station, the market has many Japanese corporate neighbours and was a natural choice when the organisers sought a venue for the ambitious new festival. Links with the City of London are stronger than ever, with Michael Bear, Regeneration Director at Hammerson plc, set to become Lord Mayor of London from November 2010.

### THE ORGANISERS

Japan Matsuri is at heart a community project. It is an event where members of the Japanese community in London can celebrate and enjoy food, music and dance with their friends and neighbours of all nationalities, in a similar way to a local festival in Japan. Everyone has a stake in the event: Japanese businesses each provide financial and volunteer support; Japanese traders and restaurants share their wares; Japanese performers young and old, give of their skills.

The organisers' work is to bring all the various strands together and to provide the vision and the administrative back up to realise the event. The lead is taken by the Japan Society and Japanese Residents' Association together with support from the Embassy of Japan, Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Nippon Club.

## JAPAN MATSURI 2009

- 35,000 visitors (mostly from greater London and the home counties)
- an estimated 40% of visitors were Japanese
- all ages: babies, young children, teenagers, adults, pensioners
- 72 stalls
- 28 performers and groups
- over 10 participatory activities for all the family
- local restaurants reported double the normal Saturday revenue, local cafés and pubs drafted in extra help when flooded with customers
- 45,000 unique visitors to the Japan Matsuri website, including 11,000 in the final two days
- over 1,400 members of the Japan Matsuri Facebook group
- Nodojiman contest broadcast on JSTV throughout Europe, in full and repeated in segments
- coverage on morning and evening NHK news in Japan
- reviews, photographs and videos on many independent websites (eg YouTube, Flickr, The Londonist, personal blogs etc)



## JAPAN MATSURI 2009 USEFUL LINKS

- video (courtesy of Don Productions)  
<http://www.youtube.com/v/YLnIwYX2EJA&hl=en&fs=1%22>
- website  
<http://www.japanmatsuri.com>
- photograph selection  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/japansocietylondon/>

