

# HIMEJI CIR NEWSLETTER

Hello! In this edition of the Himeji CIR Newsletter you can find the English version of the Himeji Workplace Explorer series! This time I visited Himeji Castle, so please give it a read!

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## About Me

Hello! My name is Cessan Smith and I am the fifth Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in Himeji City. I was born in Scotland but lived in Australia for seven years.  
よろしくお願ひします！

## What is a CIR?

A Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) is a position on the JET Programme that involves providing international expertise in a local government office. My everyday work involves translation, interpreting as well as holding cultural exchange events in Himeji.





# スコットランドの **ことば**

## 1. Banter (バンター) 面白い話・面白く話す

バンターは少し説明しにくいですが、遊んで会話するという意味です。人をからかう意味もありますが、これは人傷つけるためではなく、楽しさの一部です。

例文

He's got good banter

彼の話は面白い



## 2. Keek (キーク) 覗く

キークは英語のpeek (ピーク) とほぼ一緒です。スコットランドで、「Have a」は〇〇「してみよう」という意味があり、「覗いてみて」と言いたかったら「Have a keek」と言います。



例文

Let's play hide and seek, remember no keeking!

かくれんぼしよう、のぞかないでね!

## 3. Skint (スキント) 金欠

お金がない時はつらいですね。スコットランドでお金がない時に「I'm skint」と言います。やりたことがあるのに、お金がない場合はよく「I'm too skint」と言います。

例文

I can't go to karaoke tonight, I'm too skint

金欠すぎて今夜カラオケに行けません。



言葉の話じゃないですが、日本人はお金がないとき、親指と人差し指を合わせるジェスチャーをしますね。初めて見たとき、完全に「OK」( )と同じ意味だと思っていたので、かなり混乱しました。



# International Exchange Spring Festival

## Arts & Crafts Kids Event



### 国際交流スプリング フェスティバル

今年のスプリングフェスティバルは昨年同様、数多くのイベントやパネル展示が行われました。姫路市内の国際交流登録団体がイベントを開催しています。ご参加いただいた皆様、ありがとうございました！

### 工作キッズイベント

フェスティバルの一環として、工作キッズイベントを開催しました。ハイランド・カウ、ネッシー、スコットランドの国獣であるユニコーンなど、スコットランドにまつわる動物や伝説の生き物を制作しました！

### Spring Festival

This year's spring festival was filled with just as many events and panels as last year. These events are held by international exchange organizations located within Himeji City. Thank you to everyone who came along!

### Arts & Crafts Kids Event

As part of the Spring Festival, I held an arts & crafts kids event where we made animals and mythical creatures related to Scotland, such as the highland cow, Loch Ness Monster and Scotland's national symbol, the unicorn!



Himeji Castle

# Himeji Workplace Explorer!

Hey there!

I'm Cessan, the CIR in Himeji City. In this series, I visit tourist spots around Himeji City and spend half a day learning about the work being done there. Last time, I visited the Himeji City Museum of Literature and the Himeji City Aquarium. If you haven't read those articles yet, please check out the previous issues of the Himeji CIR Newsletter or read the Japanese versions on the official Himeji City note account!

Now, when it comes to Himeji City tourist spots, Himeji Castle is a must-see. As part of my duties as a CIR, I have accompanied sister castle representatives to Himeji Castle on numerous occasions.

In short, I've visited Himeji Castle dozens of times. This time, I went to talk with the staff working at the entrance ticket gates of the castle accompanied by the director of the Himeji Castle Operations Office which handles ticket sales and assistance in and around the castle.

Okay, let's go!



<Himeji Castle - West Side>

On November 18th, a chilly autumn day, I headed over to the Himeji Castle Management Office. While the management office is run by the city, the day-to-day operations of the castle are led by a private company.

The director of the operations office was very cheerful and approachable, so my usual shy nervousness went away rather quickly. The staff members are divided into three types, distinguishable by their coat colors. Pink coats are concierges, blue are guide staff, and black are safety management staff. It's like a Power Rangers team.



*<Concierge wearing a pink coat>*

Simply put, the concierge's job involves using their language skills to assist visitors with buying tickets and reserving a castle guide. Staff at the information center near the entrance and the ticket gates rotate every 15 minutes to maintain focus.



<Himeji Castle Information Center>

Honestly, I thought it looked like a lot of work having to organize the lines of waiting customers and handing out all those pamphlets. Occasionally, the city-run management office would get calls from foreigners, and if it was too hard to understand, a concierge would get called in to help. The concierge then gets to dash into the office like superman, and coolly whisper "There is no elevator, sorry." into the receiver. What shocked me most was how incredibly energetic the staff were. When I asked, "What's the most interesting part of this job?" everyone answered in a way that sounded straight out of Shonen Jump manga: "I get along so well with my colleagues, that it's an absolute joy to work here every day." When I followed up with, "Doesn't guiding visitors around all day and helping people who get lost ever get boring?" they replied, "Not at all," explaining that helping people itself is enjoyable.



<Customers coming in one after another>

Even with the crowds of visitors from overtourism, most staff members don't seem to mind. In fact, everyone said the busiest times were actually the *most* fun. Time flies by at the speed of light, and it's certainly more enjoyable than days with fewer visitors. Moreover, most staff care more about maintaining the peace than how many visitors they have on a given day. If a fight between tour guides suddenly breaks out, it can become a huge problem. As long as things are peaceful, they can work happily, and some even said they if they could, they'd continue doing this job forever.

Most of the pink and blue (castle guide) teams that day were foreigners, from Korea, China, Taiwan, and France. They were able to handle various languages including English and Japanese at once. I wondered if they intentionally hired people from different countries, but apparently everyone applied through normal online job sites.

Everyone's Japanese was near-perfect. As an amateur, I felt definitely felt envious. While I was talking with a Taiwanese staff member, a visitor approached and asked who built Himeji Castle? The staff member calmly explained the castle's history in fluent Japanese. When the visitor praised their Japanese skills, they looked genuinely pleased. It seems they always feel happy when visitors compliment them or say "thank you."

Nowhere in the job requirements did it mention liking or disliking castles. Yet, I heard that staff naturally grow to love them. Some even developed a passion for Japanese castles and started visiting others on their travels. When I asked, "Compared to other castles, what makes Himeji Castle special?" one replied, "Well, old buildings often have old restrooms too, but Himeji Castle's restrooms are relatively new and clean." What a wonderful castle indeed.

Then, it was time to say goodbye, and I left Himeji Castle. The staff waved to me near the entrance. With the setting sun behind them, they looked almost sparkling (okay, that's a lie, but doesn't it feel like the perfect ending?).

Thank you so much for reading to the end! Until next time.