





In 1888 the North West of England was honoured by the appointment of Liverpool wool Merchant James Lord Bowes as the first foreign-born Honorary Consul of the Japanese Empire in the United Kingdom. His collection of Japanese art works grew so extensively that it numbered well over two thousand pieces and, two years later, he constructed a large private museum of Japanese art in the grounds of his home, Streatlam Tower, in Princes Road.

Bowes opened the museum to the public to benefit the church and orphanage charities he supported in Liverpool, and published several books on Japanese art which are still being printed and which stand as part of the foundations of Western understanding of Japanese art.

Did you know?

-  That Japanese Samurai once walked the streets of Liverpool?
-  That a Prime Minister of Japan once did 'work experience' in an office in Dale Street, which is still there today?
-  That, in 1888, Liverpool wool broker and self-made millionaire James Lord Bowes became the first foreign-born Imperial Japanese Consul in Great Britain?
-  That Victorian Liverpool boasted the only Japanese art museum in the Western world and that the building which housed its treasures still survives in the heart of Toxteth, sandwiched between a church and a synagogue?

One of Liverpool's principal 'movers and shakers' at a time when the city was the second most important port of the greatest empire in history, James Lord Bowes, or 'Japanese Bowes' as he was nicknamed by Liverpoolians, has long been forgotten by his adopted city. Successful businessman, a leader of commercial Liverpool, art collector and patron of the arts, author, authority on Japan and its art, and generous philanthropist, 'Renaissance Man' Bowes was all of these things and more.

These, and other fascinating revelations, have now been brought together in this carefully researched and comprehensive account by local historian and Japanophile, L.S. Smith. The book is profusely illustrated with over 120 colour and black and white images, many reproduced here for the first time.



Author L.S. Smith

Described by many authors since that time as the man who did the most to promote Anglo Japanese relations between ordinary people in the 19th century, Bowes became acquainted with many of the great names of Japan in his time including Marquis Ito Hirobumi, Viscount Aoki Shuzo and Count Kato Takaaki. There is even evidence that he became known to Tokugawa Yoshinobu – the last Shogun, and he received personal gifts from the Emperor Meiji.

The Japanese Consul is the first, and only authorised, biography of James Lord Bowes. It is available from the website £9.99 post free in the UK.

<http://liverpoolhistorypress.co.uk/thejapaneseconsu.html>