

~ Introduction of CIR ~

Hello! My name is Alex Heuvel and I have been working as Coordinator of International Relations in the Community Development Support Division of the town hall since August. I am 31 years old, and before coming to Nanao I studied French and Japanese at Cardiff University in Wales. This is not the first time I have spent time living in Japan, having previously lived in Kutchan, Hokkaido and Tokyo for 6 months each. I spent the winter of 2019 in Kutchan, working as a baker in the morning, and as a ski/snowboard instructor in the afternoon. It was this experience that sparked my interest in Japan, and when I returned to the UK, I started studying Japanese in my spare time, hoping to return to Japan to study it full time. However, when the Corona Pandemic made travel impossible, I eventually decided to study in Cardiff instead. As part of my studies, I spent 6 months in Japan, where I studied at Waseda University in Tokyo, learning as much as I could about Japanese culture, and in particular, Taiko drums!



**View of Mount Yotei,
Hokkaido**

Ystradfellte Waterfalls



Summit of Pen y Fan



During my time in Wales, I lived in town called Merthyr Tydfil, nestled in the valleys of south Wales and surrounded by beautiful nature spots. The mountains there are very rocky, and they have no trees, so they look very different to the ones here in Nanao! There are also many waterfalls in the area, as Wales receives a lot of rain every year (Cardiff is the wettest city in the UK!). If you can put up with the rain, the temperature remains fairly cool all year round, so you can go hiking and enjoy Wales' natural beauty at any time of year!

Other than hiking, I enjoy snowboarding and bouldering in my free time, but while I'm in Japan, I would love to try out some traditional activities like calligraphy or Kyudo, or perhaps join a Taiko group! I am also a keen (but amateur) cook so I'm hoping to learn to make some Japanese dishes once I feel a little less lost looking around the supermarket! I'm looking forward to getting to know everyone so if you see me around town feel free to stop me for a chat!



Snowboarding in the Sun