

Jane (Partridge) Whyman
(1973, 77)

I came to LIOJ in the summer of 1973 (I think) having met a previous teacher, Nora Larimer, in Bali the year before. I was only meant to stay for the summer taking part in the university student programme. I remember the exhausting heat and humidity. It was a wonderful place to work and we had such excellent conditions: teaching 4 days and 3 days off to relax and travel. It was strange being the only English person among lots of American university students. What fun everyone was. (I wonder what they are all doing now.) I stayed on for the rest of the year and as well as teaching at LIOJ taught at Soyo Koukou next door.

The culture shock of a 23-year-old English girl living with Americans! They couldn't believe I didn't know what a Big Mac was. Making 'granola,' like everyone's mother (apart from mine) used to make, under Mrs Harker's instructions in the large kitchen. Omelette with tomato sauce for breakfast. Mikan trees.

The caring, watchful eye of Mr and Mrs Harker. Climbing Mount Fuji in a typhoon. Three day weekends spent travelling. Long evenings spent bathing and chatting in the large *ofuro* in the basement of LIOJ. Drinking bottles of *umeshu*. Lively social evenings with the students when much beer was drunk and many songs sung. A nightclub in Tokyo where a student performed. Japanese and painting lessons in Odawara. Flower arranging lessons too. The fireworks and lanterns of the 'bon' festival. Odawara Castle. A Christmas spent skiing with the other teachers. A trip to Korea to renew my visa.

I remember most the friends made, Japanese and American, and the kindness of the Japanese family in Kyoto who took me into their home. I wonder what everyone is doing now and regret having lost touch.

I'm now married to Gil and live in London. We have three children, 22, 21 and 18. I work as a Bursar (School Business Manager I think it is called in America) in a local state primary school four days a week. I remember Japan fondly and often speak of the kindness of the Japanese people—something even now not understood by some even though the war was so long ago.

If you were at LIOJ with me I'd love to hear from you. My email address is janewhyman@hotmail.com.