

## Events in February

1	TH	
2	FR	
3	SA	10:00 JICA Desk 15:00 Kodomo Nihongo Hiroba
4	SU	Closed
5	MO	Closed
6	TU	
7	WE	
8	TH	
9	FR	
10	SA	10:00 FIND: English Conversation Club
11	SU	Closed (National Foundation Day)
12	MO	Closed
13	TU	
14	WE	
15	TH	
16	FR	
17	SA	14:00 Disaster Preparedness Workshop 15:00 Nihongo Kodomo Hiroba
18	SU	Closed
19	MO	Closed
20	TU	
21	WE	
22	TH	
23	FR	Closed (Emperor's Birthday)
24	SA	13:30 Newsletter Preparation
25	SU	Closed
26	MO	Closed
27	TU	
28	WE	
29	TH	

## Other Information

**#SamuraiAizu** Follow [@samuraizu\\_official](#) on Instagram to see the beauty of Aizu!  
Use #samuraizu and show off Aizu to the world!

### Snow Wonderland Aizu

**Feb 3-8 (Sat-Thu), 11 (Sun), 12 (Mon)**  
~17:30-20:30

**Place:** Tsuruga-jo Castle, Main Park (Honmaru)  
**Highlights:** This is a special event this year! You can enjoy the wintery atmosphere at Tsuruga-jo Castle. There will be special light ups and other things to do. Buy a ticket to head up the Tsuruga-jo Castle Tower after dark, and enjoy the Juraku stalls while getting the best view of the beautiful lit-up Castle!

**Tickets:** ¥1000 (Entrance to Tsuruga-jo Castle and 5x 100yen tickets for the Juraku Market)

**Special Offer! 50% off!**

Head into Tsuruga-jo Castle AND get 5x 100yen tickets for the Juraku market for **ONLY ¥500**  
Head over to the Castle during this event and tell them the keyword: **Kokusai Koryu Kyokai!** (International Association) to get your discount!  
(Limited to non-Japanese residents and visitors)



### 'Come On Spring!' Everyone's Art

Head over to the Aizu Keikodo for their Annual Citizen Art Exhibition. Enjoy handmade Hanging Hina Matsuri Dolls etc. made by people ranging from elementary school students to the elderly. This is a must see if you are in the area!

**Dates:** Feb 17th (Sat) - Feb 25th (Sun)  
**Time:** 10:00-17:00 (Last day until 15:00)

**Place:** City Learning Centre (Keikodo) Citizen Gallery (off the lobby)

**Cost:** Free!

**Contact:** Community Building Division (0242-38-2822)



### Call for Newsletter Volunteers!

Come help us fold, stamp, and pack our monthly publications for mailing! No need to sign up, just drop by if you can!

**Date:** February 24th, Saturday **Time:** 13:30~

**Place:** Aizu Wakamatsu International Association Office



### We're on Instagram!

Follow us for photos and news about our upcoming events!



AWIA\_PHOTO

<https://facebook.com/awiajp>



Visit our Facebook page for updates in multiple languages!



Use this QR Code and access our email form to sign-up for events

965-0871 Fukushima-ken, Aizu Wakamatsu-shi, Sakae-machi 2-14, Lion D'or Garden 5th Floor

TEL: (0242) 27-3703 | FAX: (0242) 27-3704 | EMAIL: [mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp) | SITE: <https://www.awia.jp>



## Association News

### FIND English Convo. Club

Why not come and speak English with people from all walks of life and maybe make some new friends? Everyone is welcome, no matter your English level.



\*Due to the nature of FIND, we ask that participants wear masks. Thank you for your understanding.\*

<b>When</b>	Saturday, <b>February 10</b> 10:00~11:30
<b>Place</b>	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
<b>Sign Up</b>	Contact <a href="mailto:mail@awia.jp">mail@awia.jp</a> by Friday, Feb 9th

### Disaster Preparedness Workshop

Are you prepared for disaster? Earthquake, fire, flood, landslide. Learn the Japanese you need to know in emergencies and about the hazards to watch out for in Aizu. You can even try some emergency food!  
All information will be presented in an easy to understand Japanese, with interpretation in English!



Come join our workshop alongside Japanese members of your community and learn what you need to prepare/do in case of emergencies!

- **Date:** Feb 17th (Sat) 14:00-16:30
- **Place:** Keikodo Rm 1
- **Cost:** Free!
- **Limit:** 20 people
- **Sign-up:** Contact AWIA: ([mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)) by Feb 16th (Fri)



### AWIA Sports+ Mini Sports Day!

Join us for a variety of games! Try out some new games and compete in a low-stakes Sports Day with everyone! All games are good for beginners.

- **Date:** March 9th (Sat) 14:00~16:00
- **Place:** Kakujo Community Centre (1-47 Joto-machi)
- **Cost:** Free!
- **Limit:** 18 people
- **Age:** High School and up
- **Sign-up:** Contact AWIA: ([mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)) or Google Form
- **Bring:** **\*\*Inside Shoes\*\*** are a MUST. No Shoes, No Games! (Kakujo also requires masks in shared spaces)
- **Sign-up Deadline:** Mar 7th (Thu)

\*\*There are few parking spots at the Community Centre, so park somewhere nearby\*\*

#### Potential Games:

- Boccia (Bocce's cousin)
- Disgetter 9 (knock down 9 panels with a frisbee)
- And more!

Sports Sign-up here



### AtsuHana

AtsuHana, Japanese Conversation Club will be taking a break this month.

It will be back on **March 9th (Sat)** as usual.

Please check out next month's newsletter for more info!



会津若松市国際交流協会

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

TEL (0242) 27-3703

EMAIL: [mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)





## This Month in Aizu

### Aizu Painted Candle Festival

**Feb 9-10 (Fri-Sat) ~17:00-20:30**

**Place:** Tsuruga-jo Castle, Oyakuen

**Highlights:** Come see the Tsuruga-jo Castle grounds decorated by beautiful hand-painted candles. The theme this year is 'Lights for Peace.' The castle grounds will be covered in lanterns. You can only see this once a year! You can even enjoy the festival market!



**More Details:**  
<https://www.aizu.com/erousoku/program.html>

### Ouchijuku Snow Festival

**Feb 10-11 (Sat-Sun)**

**Place:** Shimogo-machi, Ouchijuku

**Highlights:** Enjoy lanterns made entirely out of snow, and try out some negisoba! Performances are happening all day with fireworks at 18:00 on Saturday. Check out the official website for detailed schedule and access information in ENGLISH!


**More Info:**  
<https://ouchi-juku.com/detail/622/news/event-152500.html>

### Tadami 51st Annual Snow Festival

**Feb 9-11 (Fri-Sun)**

**Place:** Near Tadami Station

**Highlights:** Enjoy the train ride out to Tadami on the reopened Tadami Line. Tadami has some of the deepest snow in Aizu, so check out the huge snow sculptures, fireworks, performances and more!



Fri: Pre-Fest, Sat+Sun: Main Festival

**More details:**  
<https://tadamisnowfes.com/>

**Access:** Train: Tadami Line(~2hrs 50mins from Wakamatsu Stn.)  
 Car: R252(~1hr 50mins from Aizuwakamatsu)

### NishiAizu Snow Festival

**Feb 10-11 (Sat-Sun)**

**Time:** Feb 10 (14:30-18:30), Feb 11 (10:00-15:00)

**Place:** NishiAizu Sayuri Park (Nishiaizu-machi, Tosejima nishibayashi otsu 2529-10)

**Highlights:** Stage performance and geta (wooden shoe) kicking contest! Enjoy this small town event! Want to try snow-trekking? There's a beginner friendly opportunity at this event. Only ¥3000! There will even be fireworks!



**More Details:**  
<https://www.town.nishiaizu.fukushima.jp/site/kanko/6672.html>

### Showa-mura Snow Festival

**Feb 25 (Sun) 10:00-15:00**

**Place:** Michi no Eki, Karamushi Ori no Sato Showa

**Highlights:** Enjoy the traditional; take part in the tradition of snow bleaching the locally produced plant fibre cloth - Karamushi. Other festivities include a traditional performance, and tug-of-war in the snow. And you can take the opportunity to visit the Karamushi Museum and even make your own woven coaster using the karamushi plant fibres!

**More Details:**  
<https://showakanko.or.jp/events/snowfes39/>

**Access:** Shuttle Bus: Free  
 From Tajima Station: 9:50 (10:50 arrival at Festival)  
 Return: 13:40 (14:30 arrival at Tajima Stn.)  
 RESERVATION REQUIRED (open from Feb 1st-15th)  
 Contact: TEL: 0241-57-3700 (9:00-17:00)  
 First Come, First Served. Space Limited.

### City Newsletter: Get even more information!

Once a month, the City puts out a newsletter with important announcements, off-hours clinic information, and more! Key parts of the City Newsletter are translated into English and compiled together.



Check out this month's edition and past editions online here! →



**Get a paper copy mailed to you, for FREE!**

Contact AWIA at ([mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)) with your name and address to receive it every month.

To see the WHOLE Newsletter in Japanese or 9 other languages, including English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Spanish, and more, use the Catalog Pocket app. See it anywhere, anytime!

Catalog Pocket  
(Machine Translated)

## Member Spotlight



# Tom WILKINSON







*Since Tom moved to Aizu, he's joined in a lot of our events, including AtsuHana, FIND, and our Summer Night event last year! He even gave a speech at our Nihongo-de-Hanasou event in November. Tom was kind enough to tell us about himself and his home town of Olney, England.  
 Olney has some interesting history to it!*

My name is Tom Wilkinson, I'm a 28-year-old from the UK, and I have been living in Aizu since June last year! Aizuwakamatsu is my wife's hometown which is why I decided to move here from the UK (although I have lived in Japan - Shikoku and Tokyo - before). Since moving here, I have really enjoyed exploring the beautiful scenery and fascinating history around Fukushima. Today, however, I want to introduce my hometown back in England.



I come from a small town in the English countryside called Olney. If you were to imagine a traditional English countryside town, you would probably be imagining something very similar to Olney. There are many beautiful old houses, four different pubs, a market selling meat and vegetables every Thursday, and a lot of little shops full of interesting things.


Second, Olney is the home of the pancake race. The Olney Pancake Race is an annual event that takes place on Shrove Tuesday (about 40 days before Easter). During the race, women from the town dress in aprons and scarves and run a course through the town's streets while carrying a frying pan. In their frying pans, the participants must carry a pancake and flip that pancake at certain times. The challenge is to reach the finish line first without dropping the pancake. The winner of the race is traditionally awarded a kiss from the verger (church official) at the church door.



All across the UK, pancake race events are held on Shrove Tuesday, but Olney is the original race. In fact, the legend of the race dates back to the year 1445 (nearly 600 years ago)!

My wife told me I also have to mention that there are a lot of sheep. Apparently in Japan it is quite rare to see farm animals around the town. In my hometown, if you walk for about 5 minutes you can see hundreds of sheep, horses, cows, and even alpacas!

Olney is an old and historic town, with two big claims to fame. First, it is the place where the world-famous hymn 'Amazing Grace' was written and first performed. John Newton wrote the song while he was the head of the local church and published it in his book the Olney Hymns. Amazing Grace has now been sung by some of the most famous singers in the world and performed at very high-profile occasions.



According to the story, a woman in Olney was busy making pancakes when she heard the church bells ringing for Shrove Tuesday. Realizing that she was late for the church service, the woman ran to the church while still wearing her apron and carrying the frying pan and pancake.



Today, women from the town follow in her footsteps by running to the church in the same way! Men are not allowed to participate in the main race and you must live in the town to join.

Pancake races are an unusual tradition, but if you are ever in England in February maybe you will see people running through the streets with frying pans!

Thanks Tom!