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NZ China Friendship Soc.
Hibiscus Coast Branch
Friends News

朋友們消息

péng yǒu men xiāo xī

July 2008



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A letter from Queen Elizabeth I to “the Emperor of Cathay (China), 1602AD

When I (your editor) was a lad, I remember my father showing me a beautifully illuminated Elizabethan Charter. At the time he was County Archivist for Lancashire and, as far as I can remember, the ‘Charter’ had been found by a Lancashire farmer when his bran bin had collapsed, revealing its lining! The Charter, is on parchment, which perhaps explains its survival.

The Charter¹ is, in fact, a letter from Elizabeth to the Emperor of China asking for good treatment of George Waymouth, the captain of two small ships, sponsored by the East India Company, which set out from [Ratcliff](#), England, May 2, 1602, to [search for the North West Passage](#). On 28 June, he sighted land at 62° 30' N latitude (southern Baffin Island) but was forced offshore by fog. Bad weather and a mutiny dogged the expedition. On 26 July, Waymouth passed by Hudson Strait remarking on the strong easterly current, but was unable to enter it. After exploring part of the Labrador coast he headed home reaching Dartmouth on 5 September.

Presumably, George Waymouth brought Queen Elizabeth’s letter back with him, and somehow it ended up in the Lancashire farm’s bran bin... It can be consulted at the Lancashire County Record Office. Just how the letter ended up there is, at least to your editor, a mystery.

As for background, the Emperor of ‘Cathay’ (North China) at the time was Emperor Wan Li [of the Ming Dynasty]. He might have received Captain Waymouth (but see Note 2, below), if Waymouth had succeeded in reaching China. [This was a big call as the [North West passage](#), a sea route through the Arctic Ocean, along the northern coast of North America via waterways amidst the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and sought by explorers for centuries as a possible trade route, was first navigated by Roald Amundsen in 1903–1906. The Arctic pack ice prevents regular marine shipping throughout the year, but climate change is reducing the pack ice, and this Arctic shrinkage may eventually make the waterways more navigable].

The text of the letter follows:

The Elizabethan writer – presumably a ‘civil servant’, on behalf of the Queen, tended to be rather long winded.

Be warned, ... ‘u’ is used for ‘v’, but the spelling, while in places is somewhat different from our present spelling, is reasonably comprehensible. Abbreviations are used, for example: ‘Ma^{ts}’ – for Majesty’s. These do not, I hope, need clarification.

If this text proves too heavy for you, please go forward to ‘Note 1’, which is a modern version of the letter

¹ The document is presently archived in the [Lancashire Record Office](#), Preston, Lancashire, PR1 2RE, UK, under Reference No: DDSH 15/3



ELIZABETH BY THE GRACE OF GOD QUEEN of England, France and Ireland Defendor of the faith ets. To the great, mighty, and Invincible Emperour of Cathaia. greeting. Wee haue receaved Dyuers, and sundry relac~ons both by our owne Subiects, and by others, whoe haue visited some parts of your Ma^{ts} Empire, and Dominions, wherby they haue reported unto us as well your Inuincible greatness, as your kind vsage of Strangers, that resorte unto yo~r Kingdomes with trade of merchandise, w~ch hath wrought in us a desire, to fynd oute some neerer waye of passage by Seas from us, into your cuntrey, then the usuall frequented course that hitherto hath byn houlden by compassing the greatest part of the world, By which neerer passage, not only opportunity of entercourse of traffique of merchandize may be offred between y^e Subiects of both o^r Kingdomes, but also a mutuall league, and amity may growe, and be continued, between yo^r Ma^{ts} and us, or Cuntries, and Dominions being in their distance of scituations, not so farr remote, or severed, as they are estranged, and unknowen the one to the other, by reason of the long and tedious course of Navigacon hitherto used – from this party unto yo^r. To which ende wee have heretofore many yeares past, and at sundry tymes synce made choice of some of o^r Subiects, being a people by nature enclyned to great attempts, and to the discouery of Contries, and Kingdomes unknowen and sett them in hand wth the fynding out of some neerer passage by Seas into yo^r Ma^{ts} Contries, through the North. Or East parts of the World, wherin hitherto not preuayling, but some of their Ships neuer returning back agayne, nor being heard of synce their departure hence, & some of them retourning back agayne being hindered in their entended voyage by the frozen Seas, and intolerable cold of those Clymayes; wee haue yet once more of o^r earnest desire to try the uttermost y^t may be done to pforme at length a neerer discouery of yor Contrye, prepared and sett fourth two small Shippes under y^e direction of our Subiect & Seruant George Waymouth being y^e principall Pylott of this present voyage, a man for his knowledge & Experience in navigacon, specially chosen by us to this attempte, Whom if it shall please god so to prosper in his passage, y^t either he, or any of his company shall aryue in any port of your Kingdome, wee pray yo^r Ma^{tie} in fauor of us, who haue soe desired y^e attaining this meanes of accesse unto yo^u, & in regard of an enyerprize pformed by hym, & his company wth so great difficulty, & danger, y^t you will use them wth that regard y^t may gyue them encouragem^t to make this their newe discovered passage, w^{ch} hitherto hath not byn frequented, or knowne by any to become a usuall frequented trade from this pts of y^e world to yo^r Ma^{tie}. By w^{ch} meanes yor contry may hereafter be serued wth the natyue comodities of this parts of speciall seruice, & use both for yo^r Ma^{tie} and Subiects and by returne, and enterchange of your contrey comodities, wee & our Subiects may be furnished wth thinges of lyke seruice and use out of wch mutuall benefit amity, and frendshipe may growe, and be established between us, w^{ch} wee for our part will not lett hereby to offer unto you for the honorable report wch we haue heard of yo^r Ma^{tie} and because in yis first discouery of the waye to yo^r contrey, it

seemed to us not convenient to ymploy Shippes of that burthen w^{ch} might bring them any great quantity of or natyue comodities wherby they might be pestered, wee had resolue to use small shippes as fittest for an unkowen passage, laden for ye most part wth such necessaries, as were of use for their discouery,. It may please yo^r Ma^{tie} by the ptcukers of such things, as are brought in theis shippes to understand y^t of goods of those kyndes, or kingdome is able to furnish yo^r Ma^{tie} most amply & also of sundry other kynds of merchandize of like use, wherof it may please yo^r Ma^{tie} to be more ptcukerly enformed by the said George waymuth, & his company, of all wch upon signifcaco unto us by yo^r Ma^{tie} Lres (Ed. = Largesse?) to be returned by o^r said Subiect, your visiting of yo^r Kingdomes wth our shippes, & merchandize shalbe acceptable, & kindly receiued, wee will in the next fleet, wch wee shall send unto you, make it more fully appeare what use, & benefitt, or amity, & entercourse may bring yor Matie & contre. And in the meane tyme do commend yor Matie to the protection of the Eternall God, whose providence guideth, and pserueth all Kinges, and Kingdomes,. From our Royall Pallace of Greenwiche the fourthe of May ano Dni 1602 and of or Raigne 44

Elizabeth R



Notes:

1. Modern English version [by Teri Taylor]:

Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith to the great, mighty and invincible Emperor of Cathay, greetings.

We have received divers and sundry reports both by our own subjects and others, who have visited some parts of your Majesty's empire. They have told us of your greatness and your kind usage of strangers, who come to your kingdom with merchandise to trade.

This has encouraged us to find a shorter route by sea from us to your country than the usual course that involves encompassing the greatest part of the world.

This nearer passage may provide opportunity for trade between the subjects of both our countries and also amity may grow between us, due to the navigation of a closer route. With this in mind, we have many times in the past encouraged some of our pioneering subjects to find this nearer passage through the north. Some of their ships didn't return again and nothing was ever heard of them, presumably because of frozen seas and intolerable cold.

However, we wish to try again and have prepared and set forth two small ships under the direction of our subject, George Waymouth, employed as principal pilot for his knowledge and experience in navigation.

We hope your Majesty will look kindly on them and give them encouragement to make this new discovered passage, which hitherto has not be frequented or known as a usual trade route.

By this means our countries can exchange commodities for our mutual benefit and as a result, friendship may grow.

We decided for this first passage not to burden your Majesty with great quantities of commodities as the ships were venturing on a previously unknown route and would need such necessities as required for their discovery.

It may please your Majesty to observe, on the ships, samples available from our country of many diverse materials, which we can supply most amply and may it please your Majesty to enquire of the said George Waymouth what could be supplied by the next fleet.

In the meantime, we commend your Majesty to the protection of the Eternal God, who providence guides and supports all kings and kingdoms. From our Royal Palace of Greenwich, the fourth of May anno Domini, 1602, and the 44th year of our reign.

Elizabeth R

2. George Waymouth (c. 1585-c. 1612) was a native of Cockington, Devon, who spent his youth studying shipbuilding and mathematics. He suggested a possible route for the Northwest Passage to Asia and attempted to find it in 1602. Waymouth spent several months exploring Greenland until his crew mutinied and forced his return to England. In 1605 he discovered Virginia.

3. The Chinese Emperor in 1602 was the Ming Emperor, [Wanli](#) 萬曆. Even if George Waymouth had succeeded in reaching China, it is probable that the Emperor would not have received him! From 1600 until the end of his reign (1620), Wanli seldom attended to state affairs and for years at a time would refuse to receive his ministers or read any reports sent to him.

Intriguing questions about this story:

- ❖ How did such an impressive, important document end up lining a bran bin in Lancashire?
- ❖ Why did Elizabeth I send her envoy via the most dangerous albeit potentially shorter route to China?

The letter found its way back to England when George Waymouth's fleet returned there, following his having failed to find the Northwest Passage, and his crew having mutinied when in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. But how it ended up lining a bran bin in Lancashire remains a mystery

The second question is perhaps more easily answered. At that time, the obvious route for a small English fleet was via India and the Malacca Strait. However, the Portuguese who had already established a trading port, Macao, in Southern China, effectively blocked this and also the Dutch had established a significant footing in Indonesia and the Philippines.

It seems likely that Elizabeth wished her envoy to steal a march on the Portuguese and the Dutch by arriving from a completely surprising direction, without having any confrontation with ships of either of these two nations.

Teaching English in China

Teaching English in China

Would you like to do something very different from what your friends would think of doing?

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- which may not come your way again.



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You will be teaching spoken English, as we “speak” it in New Zealand. You will have accommodation supplied. And [with some contracts] your airfares paid for.



You will get to travel and visit some of the oldest historical sites and cities in the world. You will go into small villages and towns and meet the local community and learn how they live.

We now have firm contacts in China that we are working with to enable all contracts and arrangements to be finalized long before you leave for China.

We will help you obtain the necessary Work Permits that are required for you to teach in China

We make all flight arrangements for you from your nearest airport in New Zealand (or wherever), to your school in China

For further information and answers to your many questions:

Contact us:

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Membership News

Our present membership stands at 22, comprising (14 families; 2 Corporate/Instl.; and 6 individual).

At the last committee meetings plans were discussed regarding our hosting the National Conference next year. This will be held the 3rd weekend in May, Fri 15th –Sun 17th. National President, when he visited Rhyl Jansen July 19th, approved the use of the Community Hall in Orewa. Various preparatory tasks were distributed between the committee members.

Next Committee Meeting: To be held at Trish & Dicky Hutching's, **12 Millennial Way, Orewa, 4th Sept. at 2p.m.**

Programme

The Beijing Photo Exhibition originally planned for this August, has unfortunately been cancelled due to budget constraints.

The talk by HE Ambassador of PRC, Zhang Yuanyuan, has been cancelled as HE is in the process of leaving NZ. His next posting is believed to be in Brussels

September: Speaker from:

1. NZ Earthquake Engineers group.
2. Bryan Bell-Syer – a retired Engineer who has recently been visiting China.
3. The Olympics - ask travel agents if they know of people who are going to the Olympics who could give a talk.

October: Chinese Banquet at The Pines, Orewa

November: The Olympics - Barbara Kendall?

January 09: BBQ on the beach?

Further possibilities are not in date order as the details have yet to be established:

- Visit to Hamilton Museum to view reputed "Ancient Chinese junk" relic, discovered at Kawhia
- Talk by Dr Richard Grant:
An introduction to the **Asia:New Zealand Foundation**, and comment on some of the recent changes taking place in the Asian regional environment.

Forthcoming Events

最新動態

2008 (7th) New Zealand Chinese Arts Exhibition

Presented by: Pacific Culture and Arts Exchange Centre and The-Edge

3 August – 24 August

Art Gallery, Aotea Centre

Admission: Free

Statues: Coming Up

Dinner function to celebrate of Opening 2008 Beijing Olympic Games

Date: 8 August at 7:00pm at Ocean City Restaurant, VIPs speakers, Cultural Performance. \$300/table for 12 persons.

(10th) Moon Festival and China 59th National Day Concert

7 Sept, 2008 at 3:00pm

ASb Theatre of Aotea Centre, overseas and local Chinese performances, tickets for sale from The-Edge Ticket outlets

Chongqing Cultural Week,

Date: 7-13 Sept,

Photography Exhibition at Air NZ Foyer, level 5 of Aotea Centre, 30 mins program specially made by Chongqing TV from 6:00-6:30pm on Triangle TV.

2008 Young Chinese Artists Art Exhibition

Presented by: Pacific Culture and Arts Exchange Centre The-Edge

Date: 1 November – 21 November

Opening Date & Time: @ 5:00-7:00pm on 1 November

Open to Public: 2 November – 21 November
Art Gallery, Aotea Centre.

Admission: Free

Statues: Coming Up

Event Name: 2008 (2nd) "Songs from Home Town" Concert

Presented by: Pacific Culture and Arts Exchange Centre & The-Edge

29 November 2008

Time: 7:00pm

ASB Theatre, Aotea Centre

Admission: Tickets for Sale

Statues: Coming Up

2008 (3rd) Korean film Festival in New Zealand

Presented by: New Zealand Korean Cinema Trust

1 December – 4 December (Tentative)

Time: To be determined

SKYCITY Rialto Cinemas (Tentative)

Admission: Tickets for Sale

Statuses: Coming Up

2009 First Night Auckland Celebration

Presented by: The-Edge

31 December 2008

Time: 6:00pm on 31 December 2009 –

2:00am on 1 January 2010

Aotea Centre, Auckland City

Admission: Free

Statuses: Coming Up