

THE CAPITAL CHINA LETTER

新中通訊



NEW ZEALAND CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY WELLINGTON BRANCH NEWSLETTER
12 Colchester Cres, Newlands, Wellington 6037. Website: www.nzchinasociety.org.nz

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NEXT BRANCH MEETING

Peter Harris
will speak on

"China and Central Asia: Issues and Prospects"



Peter Harris in Astana, Kazakhstan, with the Presidential Palace in the background

In March Peter Harris returned from a 15-month assignment in Kazakhstan, where he managed an aid project on civil society-government dialogue under contract to USAID.

Earlier, Peter was founding director of both the Asian Studies Institute at Victoria University of Wellington, and the Asia New Zealand Foundation (then Asia 2000). He also managed two other long-term USAID-funded projects, in Jakarta and Phnom Penh.

Before moving here in 1994 Peter represented the Ford Foundation in Beijing, was head of the BBC Chinese Service in London, and represented Oxfam GB in Cambodia and Orissa, India. In the late 1980s he was also head of Asia research at Amnesty International's Secretariat in London.

Peter has a BA Honours in Chinese and an M Phil in International Relations, both from Oxford University. He has published and broadcast widely on Chinese politics, culture and history. He lives with his family in Thorndon, email: peterharris@asia-mail.com

(The Central Asian Republics are the countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. They were constituent republics of the former USSR and all achieved independence in late 1991.)

Following the presentation by Peter Harris there will be a farewell event for Ambassador Zhang and his wife (see page 2)

Sunday, 18 July 2010, at 2.30 pm

Connolly Hall

Guildford Terrace, off Hill Street, Thorndon, Wellington.

(Car park up Guildford Tce beside Hall)

Followed by Afternoon Tea, gold coin appreciated

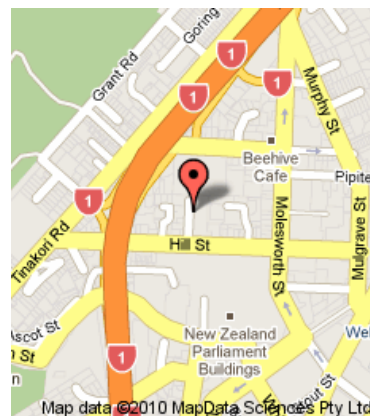
MEETING DATES FOR REST OF 2010

August 18, Wednesday 5.45pm Members' Presentation Evening with Mary Busch – "A Marsden School Visit to Xiamen"; Esther Fung – "The Chinese Garden in Wellington"; and Jason Young with participants from the China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL) in Beijing – "The Victoria University/CUPL Connection"

September 15, Wednesday 5.45pm HE Mr Michel Legras, Ambassador of France to New Zealand, "Some French Perceptions of China" (This will be a special "Bring a Guest" meeting for members. See details below.)

October 20, Wednesday 5.45pm Stuart Fergusson, Chairman New Zealand-China Trade Association, "The Misconceptions of the Difficulties in Trading with China"

November 17, Wednesday 5.45pm Michael Powles, former New Zealand Ambassador to China and to the United Nations, "Perspectives on Human Rights in China"



FAREWELL TO THE AMBASSADOR

We are sad to learn that Ambassador Zhang Limin and his wife Mrs Li Yajun complete their posting to New Zealand in August and return to Beijing. They have both contributed much in their time with us. There will be a special "farewell" event for the Ambassador and his wife, following the presentation by Peter Harris, at our next meeting on Sunday 18 July.

REPORT ON LAST MEETING – Greg Ford

In the company of her mother, an avid traveller, Charmaine Pountney visited China in 1981 on a teachers' tour organised by the NZCFS; in 2009 she visited once more, this time as part of the annual NZCFS Prominent Persons Delegation. An amazing person with an extensive list of credentials in education, environmentalism and literature, she shared with us her views and reflections on the changes in China, "A country of enormous achievement and extraordinary development."

This was a particularly insightful presentation, as developed sensitivities to issues of colonisation, tino rangatiratanga, feminism and environmentalism made for an interesting lens through which to see modern China.

The changes since 1981 in terms of architecture, infrastructure, and technology "were immediately apparent"; with carefully designed housing blocks, massive industrial blocks, high speed rail and opulent hotels. However, in between the skyscrapers and in rural areas, there still exists a China from 1981 and before: "Open fires around which neighbours gathered to cook, eat, play mah jong or cards; street stalls for food and clothing; and somewhat haphazard drainage and electrical wiring arrangements too." She also spoke briefly of the quite visible gap between rich and poor, which is now the largest it has ever been, and the social problems that this can create.

In 1981, Ms Pountney was impressed by the remarkable progress made in gender equity. One of the highlights on the 2009 trip was a visit to the former home of Madam Soong Ching Ling, and the new museum which celebrates her life and work. Through her and others (like our own Rewi Alley), the early Communist movement made a commitment to the well-being of women and children and the education and health of working people. On the streets and in the media however, Westernisation and the associated sexualisation of women and girls were apparent, with skimpy skirts and cosmetics endemic. More importantly; though most of the local guides were young intelligent women, most national and provincial officials were older men. The ambitious young women spoken with were aware of a glass ceiling in their organizations, but still hoped to break through to higher positions.

In 1981, Rewi Alley spoke of his anxiety at the denuding of forested areas, and consequent erosion. From the early model of: "Development and industrialization at all costs" there has since been a shift towards better environmental planning and energy efficiency. Zhou Wei Ping, an official with whom the group met, explained that the current target for reforestation is 2% per year up to a total of 20% of land area in China. Ms Pountney remarked "I was very aware of forestry projects: small trees being planted everywhere on earlier barren land, parks under half-finished motorways, tree-margins on every new road, and tree nurseries around towns and villages."

The group visited TISCO - the Taiyuan Iron and Steel Company which has won UN awards for good environmental practice. The complex is ten square kilometres in area, all without visible smog belching forth, as Ms Pountney remarked "A lesson for Glenbrook Steel Mill in my neighbourhood!"

She also spoke briefly of improvements in religious freedom, at least with regards to Buddhism, with many people worshipping and young couples seeking blessings.

There has certainly been a great deal of change in the last thirty years, and many changes are still occurring, Ms Pountney concludes with a positive note: "The issues faced by China are enormous - but so are the resources of intellect, passion and commitment: the people of China."

NEW MEMBERS - A warm welcome to Anne Henderson, former Manawatu Branch President, who has moved down from Palmerston North and to Bernard Banks.

MANDARIN CORNER 汉语角 3.15pm - 4.30pm Saturdays during school terms

Victoria University of Wellington, Seminar Room, 20 Kelburn Parade. Gold coin donation. Open to all ages, all levels. One to one or small groups.

There are 3 sessions in July:

3 July - NZ at the Expo 世博会上的新西兰

24 July - Chinese Medicine - Healthcare 中华医药 - 保健有方

31 July - Chinese Seal 中国印章

For more information phone Ellen Yang (04) 473-7558 or email mandarin.corner@gmail.com.



CHINESE FEATURE FILM - Thursday 8 July at 7:30pm (door closes at 7.45pm)

Committee Room No. 1, Wellington City Council, 101 Wakefield St. (Documentary Shanghai Expo Opening Ceremony - *firework and music fountain show* will be screening at 7.00pm) *Gold coin entry.*

The Last Headwoman (绝代 Juedai)

This is the legendary story about inter-tribal revenge feuds amongst the Yi minority in Yunnan, S.W China, around 1911 and how Yi Lan, who lost her own mother in a revenge killing, became the most influential chieftain in Yi history by her bravery in calling for reconciliation, thus bringing peace to warring tribes.

Director: Jin Shen, Chen Mingxin. Starring: Song Xiaoning, Jin Song.

DVD 85 minutes; in Modern Standard Chinese with English subtitles.

CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE LAUNCHED

Victoria University officially launched the world's newest Confucius Institute in the presence of the Vice President of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Xi Jinping on Saturday June 19 at the InterContinental Hotel in Wellington.

"The launch of the Confucius Institute at Victoria University is another milestone in education and cultural exchange and cooperation between China and New Zealand," said Vice President Xi Jinping (pictured speaking at the launch).

Confucius Institutes are not-for-profit centres within foreign universities designed to support the teaching of Chinese language and culture. They operate in partnership with a Chinese university and are financially supported by the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), part of the Chinese Ministry of Education. Victoria University's Confucius Institute will be a joint venture with Xiamen University. NZCFS (Wellington) was represented at the launch.

(Note: The first Confucius Institute was established in Seoul, Korea, in November 2004. There are now Institutes in 88 countries.)



SLEEPING BEAUTY

Largely closed to the public for more than 80 years, the imperial garden in Beijing's Forbidden City is in the midst of a painstaking makeover. The garden's 27 buildings and pavilions, as well as its rockeries and ancient trees, are being restored by a rare partnership between the Palace Museum, which since 1925 has been responsible for the Forbidden City, and a foreign NGO, the New York-based World Monuments Fund. Reviving the garden will take nearly two decades and it is not expected to be completed until 2019.....

Restorers have yet to work out how visitors to the Forbidden City will enjoy the finished project, as the garden was not designed to cater for large numbers of people. The visitor must wend his way through massive stone grottoes that reveal a childlike love of little hiding places, where the emperor was able to enjoy a rare sense of detachment from the courtly world around him with its cavernous official buildings and vast retinues.....



(from "The Economist" of May 22nd 2010)

CHINESE SENIOR COMMUNITY POT-LUCK DINNER

Sunday 8 August 2010 1pm - 3pm Newtown Community Centre (corner of Colombo & Rintoul Streets). Bring a plate of food to share with the members and other friends (All welcome)

Local Chinese restaurants will present their special dishes. Plus lucky draw and performances to entertain.

Organiser: Jupin Zhou

RSVP by Sunday 1 August: 970-7568 (Can take message), juping@paradise.net.nz

NEW ZEALAND CHINESE ASSOCIATION - Congratulations to NZCA on their 75th anniversary. A table of Wellington branch members joined in at the celebration dinner on 19 June at the Grand Century Restaurant.

SHANGHAI WORLD EXPO DELEGATION

Eight Wellington branch members are amongst the group of 12 departing for Shanghai on 5th July as guests of the Shanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. We wish them a happy trip.

BRING A GUEST SPECIAL MEETING

To celebrate the arrival of Spring, a special "Bring A Guest" meeting is being planned for the evening of Wednesday September 15 when the French Ambassador – a China specialist – is the Guest Speaker. The object of the evening is for as many members as possible to bring a guest with them. This guest could be a person who may be interested in the activities of the Society; hopefully a potential new member.

As well as the presentation from His Excellency Mr Michel Legras, we will be arranging special displays for the evening, membership application forms will be available and the Chinese Embassy is being contacted to provide takeaway materials. There will be raffles for special prizes of high value (including a prize from France), and an optional Chinese buffet meal will be provided at the end.

It is expected that our numbers will be considerably more than usual. For this reason it will be necessary for members and their guests to be registered prior to the event. Keep the evening of Wednesday September 15 clear for yourself and start thinking of your guest(s) right now!

(Note: Your Committee has decided that we will not hold a China National Day Banquet this year, but rather include another meeting with an interesting Guest Speaker)

ASIA:NZ ESTABLISHES YOUNG LEADERS EXCHANGE WITH CHINESE PARTNER

Asia:NZ has entered into a partnership with the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) to run a Sino-New Zealand Youth Exchange programme. Exchanges will enable select young leaders of both countries to pay mutual visits and build long-term partnerships to promote communication among future leaders of both countries.

Five members of the Asia:NZ Young Leaders Network took part in the [inaugural exchange](#) in October 2009 travelling to China to undertake a programme of meetings, briefings and activities. A [reciprocal visit](#) to New Zealand by five Chinese young leaders took place in early June 2010 hosted by Asia:NZ. The Chinese group was made up of delegates from China's Social Security Fund, China National Water Resource Department, State Foreign Administration the CPAFFC.



Mme Li Xiaolin and Hon Philip Burdon
establish Sino NZ Young Leaders
Exchange in Auckland

This programme is a joint initiative with the CPAFFC following the appointment to the Asia:NZ board of honorary advisers of Mme Li Xiaolin who is Vice President of CPAFFC. Mme Li is on the delegation accompanying the Vice President of China, Xi Jinping, in his current visit to New Zealand. She will take the opportunity to sign an exchange of letters acknowledging the Sino-New Zealand Youth Exchange programme with the Asia:NZ Chairman, Hon Philip Burdon.

(from Asia:NZ Online 22.6.10 www.asianz.org.nz)

NEW RIVAL FOR RICE IN CHINA - THE POTATO

Although China's main carbohydrate staple crop has long been rice, it is looking at an unlikely foodstuff for maintaining national growth and social harmony: the potato. The Chinese government has begun to advance research, production and training related to the potato, and the hopes are high that it could help alleviate poverty and serve as a defence against famine "Potatoes have so much potential here," said Xie Kaiyun of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences. "Rice, wheat, corn - we've gone about as far as we can go with them. But not the potato."

(from "The Guardian Weekly" of 25 June 2010)

BOOK CORNER (from Douglas Day)

Non Fiction

"National Geographic Atlas of China", National Geographic Society, 2008

With this resource, National Geographic presents an in-depth portrait of China, profiled in hundreds of maps, charts, graphs, essays and photos.

Fiction

"The Poems of Mao Zedong", University of California Press, 2010

As well as a calligrapher, Mao was a poet of grace and simplicity.

The poems in this publication (from the 1963 Beijing edition) are translated and introduced by Willis Barnstone.

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