

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

No 1005 June 2010

NEXT BRANCH MEETING

Charmaine Pountney

Will speak on

"Visiting China: 1981 and 2009: Reflections"



Charmaine Pountney is a well-known educator and writer. After 10 years as principal of Auckland Girls' Grammar School, she became principal of Hamilton Teachers' College, led a merger between Hamilton Teachers' College and the University of Waikato, and became founding Dean and Principal of NZ's first fully professional School of Education there.

In 1992 she left the University, and, with her partner, Tanya Cumberland, established a diverse organic farm and business, earthtalk@awhitu, involving 500 plus visitors from New Zealand and beyond each year.

Continuing her passion for quality education in a variety of ways she has worked at every level of the system, including teaching in a post-graduate programme in School Leadership at the University of Auckland and in a Kura Kaupapa maori; rescuing a dead South Auckland college; writing a book on education *Learning Our Living*; worked as a consultant for schools, polytechnics and community organisations; and chairing a board of trustees.

She has also been active in community affairs - in the local Landcare Group, chairing the Franklin Arts, Culture and Libraries Trust, speaking to many organisations, and currently being a judge for the NZ Post Book Awards.

In 1981 she visited China on an NZCFS Teachers' Tour, and in 2009 she was a member of the NZCFS Prominent Persons' Delegation in August-September.

Sunday, 20 June 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

July 18, Sunday 2.30pm Peter Harris, former Director of the Asia 2000 Foundation, "China and Central Asia".

August 18, Wednesday 5.45pm Members' Presentation Evening

September 15, Wednesday 5.45pm HE Mr Michel Legras, Ambassador of France to New Zealand, "Some French Perceptions of China"

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, "Perspectives on Human Rights in China"



ALLAN LEVETT

With great sadness we note the passing of Allan Levett on June 2. Allan first joined the Society back in the seventies. He was a member of the Wellington Branch Committee and Editor of this newsletter since 2005, and Vice President from 2006–March 2010.

Allan was a person of nationally-recognised vision for a greater understanding of China and of the China/New Zealand relationship. He will be sadly missed.

Truly a man of "generous spirit and lively mind".

Our thoughts and prayers are with Vera and family at this sad time.

Allan at the 2008 China National Day Banquet

LAST MEETING

Report from Greg Ford

We were honoured with a fantastic presentation from Brian Moloughney, Professor and Head of the School of Languages and Cultures at Victoria University of Wellington. The topic of his talk was "China in World History."

The stage was set with a commentary on the opening ceremony of the recent Beijing Olympic games, where the 'Four great discoveries' (四大發明) of China's contribution to the world (Paper, Printing, The compass and Gunpowder) were emphasised. This can be seen as a desire to look back beyond the country's recent turbulence and struggle against Western imperialism to a time of great prosperity and cultural richness, "A shift from Mao to Confucius."

China has long been seen by Western scholars as languishing behind the West in all aspects of modernity. Only recently has revision of this essentially Eurocentric view begun. A quote from James Belich's new book *Replenishing the Earth* warrants consideration: 'China matched Europe in virtually every respect before 1800. It too had advanced mercantile capitalism, sophisticated and commercialized agriculture, proto-industrialization, active scholarship and print culture, large companies and concentrations of capital, and so on.' China's importance in world history is finally gaining recognition.

The commonly used historical categories of 'ancient, medieval and modern' fail to accurately capture the reality of non-European history. In the case of China, Professor Moloughney suggests the following periods: Archaic (c1953-1046BC), Classical (c1046-221BC), Imperial (c221BC-1911AD) and Post-Imperial (1911AD-Present day). The foundations of Chinese culture and civilization can be seen as forming during a relatively isolated period, from the archaic into the early imperial. "The basic pattern of Chinese political and social life was established before there was sustained engagement with other centres of culture and civilization."

China's contact with the wider world began in the early Imperial period with the spread of Buddhism from India. By the 7th century China's culture had become magnetic, drawing people from all over to cities such as Chang'an, which is estimated to have had a population of one million, 12% of which were foreign (At a time when Europe's largest city was Paris, with an estimated twenty thousand people). The next great transition, in the late 16th century, was the arrival of Matteo Ricci and his fellow Jesuits beginning a process that still continues.

The Imperial period began around the time of the Roman Empire, but lasted until 1911. This amazing feat of imperial longevity, persisting through many changes in dynasty, is largely attributable to classical Chinese script. Unique in that it is non-alphabetic and holds both pictographic and phonetic components, the same written characters can be used and understood by diverse groups with mutually incomprehensible spoken languages. Analogous to this concept are the Arabic numerals 0 to 9, which are used the world over, despite the words for each number being different in each language. Supported by print culture and another great Chinese invention: the state examination the valuing of merit and intelligence, based on 'The Classics' (Those works selected by the Confucian school as central to culture and politics) provided the 'glue' which held the empire together for two thousand years. Indeed, Classical Chinese did not undergo a radical change until very recently, where there was a move towards vernacular language.

I will end with a quote from the Professor, which sums up nicely: "The success of China's experiment with bureaucratic empire, I think, is not unrelated to the re-emergence of a strong and successful China in the 21st century. The economic success that China has enjoyed over the past few decades is a result of good management, of a strong political culture, and China's historical experience can help explain that."

Copies of the text of Professor Moloughney's presentation, in electronic form, are available from Douglas Day at dwaday@xtra.co.nz

NEW MEMBER - A warm welcome to Dana Jackson.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - There are still a few overdue subscriptions outstanding. Please help the society by renewing as soon as possible.

RESIGNATION - Mary Busch regrets that due to other commitments she has had to tender her resignation from the Committee. We thank Mary for the work she put into the newsletter while on the Committee.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2010: "BUILDING BRIDGES" - HAMILTON 21 – 23 May, 2010

A good turnout of approximately 70 people had registered for the NZCFS 2010 Conference in Hamilton last month. The formalities had started well before most delegates arrived, with a National Executive Meeting on the Friday afternoon. This was followed by an informal ice-breaker evening where delegates could meet each other and renew old friendships. An early 9am start on Saturday morning wasn't enough to deter everyone from attending the welcoming speeches from the distinguished guests. The rest of the morning was filled with the formal presentations from Bill Wilmott, Richard Bedford and Alistair Shaw (via video). Saturday afternoon saw two more speakers, a panel discussion involving recent immigrants, and some delightful musical interludes. The day was capped off with a dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Sunday was an even earlier start with the AGM at 8:30am. The main thing to report from this is the newly elected Executive Committee, comprising President Eric Livingstone, NI Vice-President Dave Bromwich, SI Vice-President Trevor Linyard, Treasurer Royden Smith, Secretary Alistair Shaw, and Committee Members Margaret Cooper JP, Jenevere Foreman, Diana Madgin, Bernie Richmond, Sally Russell and Bill Willmott.

Finally, of interest to Wellington Branch members, is the confirmation that the next Annual Conference will be in Wellington, near the end of May 2011. Watch this space for further details.

For photos of the conference, see the three YouTube videos <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTA9Oh4eKRY>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTvgUbx8dE> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLF4rObq00A>.

YOUXIE VISITORS TO WELLINGTON – 24-25 MAY

Immediately after the conference, the two delegates from the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC, or Youxie for short) visited Wellington, via Tauranga. Unfortunately their flight from Tauranga on Monday afternoon was cancelled, and they did not arrive in Wellington until well into the evening. Their "welcome dinner" went ahead without them, and they enjoyed a morning sightseeing in Wellington before heading off to Timaru in the afternoon. Many thanks to Ben and Sadie for their hospitality, meeting the visitors at the airport, accommodating them for the night, and entertaining them on the Tuesday.

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

Please note that there is no meeting on Saturday, 5 June.

In total four sessions are left for this term. The themes are:

12 June - Dragon Boat Festival 端午节 with Zongzi Tasting 品尝粽子

19 June - Chinese name 中国姓名

26 June - Chinese Tea 中国茶

3 July - NZ at the Expo 世博会上的新西兰

For more information phone Ellen Yang (04) 473-7558 or email

mandarin.corner@gmail.com.



CHINESE FEATURE FILM - Thursday 17 June at 7:30pm (door closes at 7.45pm)

(Documentary Shanghai Expo Opening Ceremony screening at 6.30pm.)

Committee Room No. 1, Wellington City Council, 101 Wakefield St. *Gold coin entry*

The Volunteers (志愿者 Zhiyuan zhe)

Xiao Ran, a talented musician, is inspired by a news report on volunteering to visit a humble school in the countryside. Initially he found it hard to cope with the tough living and teaching conditions, but was deeply moved by the sincerity of the headmaster, the innocence of the young children and the dedication of the two real volunteer teachers. Eventually he forgoes the money-making plans of his boss, gains a peaceful heart and discovers the true meaning of life. 讲述青年学子放弃城市优越的生活和工作条件，志愿去西部地区支教故事。

Director: Pan Anzi; starring Tong Dawei and Yang Ruoxi. DVD 80 minutes, with English subtitles.

DEVELOPMENTS AT THE NZ CONTEMPORARY CHINA RESEARCH CENTRE, VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

We are fortunate to have the NZ Contemporary China Research Centre located in Wellington and to benefit from the conferences, seminars and other activities organised by the Centre. From here on in "The Capital China Letter" we will keep you fully updated on what is happening there. Most events are open to the public.

The Wellington Branch was an early financial supporter of the China Centre and Douglas Day of our Newsletter Committee has regular meetings with Professor Xiaoming Huang, the Director of the Centre (pictured right).

Current developments initiated by the Centre, included on the website, are as follows : China Centre To Co-Host The Otago Foreign Policy School; Launch Of The China Scholars Network In New Zealand; Forum On NZ-China Free Trade Agreement Held In Shanghai; Partnership Formed With Fudan University's China Centre; Xiamen University Establishes New Zealand Research Centre. You are invited to access the NZCCRC website at www.victoria.ac.nz/ChinaResearchCentre/



WELLINGTON CHINESE GARDEN UPDATE

Mayor Kerry Prendergast will be visiting Wellington's sister cities Xiamen and Beijing, during her visit to China in June, and Memoranda of Understanding will be signed. Included in these agreements will be the sister cities' commitments of support and assistance for the Chinese Garden which is to be sited on Frank Kitts Park.

Experts from both Beijing and Xiamen have visited Wellington and contributed to the garden's design. A Chinese Garden Society representative, members of the design team and Council officers then went to China to quantify and look at the materials needed.

The Garden will be recognizably Chinese but at the same time it will tell the story of the Chinese in Wellington, their arrival, settlement and integration and contribution as a community to the development and progress of the city.

NZCFS Wellington Branch is a founding member of the Wellington Chinese Garden Society.

PENCARROW ROTARY SENDS 100 BOOKS TO XIAMEN CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY

The International Committee of the Rotary Club of Pencarrow, in Eastbourne (the Chair of the committee is Branch Member Michael Powles), has organised the collection of 100 good quality books about New Zealand for the Xiamen City Public Library. This follows a request from Xiamen for books for the New Zealand section of the City Library. The books are being air freighted to Xiamen courtesy of the Wellington City Council and will be presented to the Library by Mayor Kerry Prendergast when she visits Xiamen later this month.

BOOK CORNER (from Douglas Day)

Non Fiction

Philip Pan, "Out Of Mao's Shadow", Picador, 2009

In this paperback, political analyst Philip Pan talks of those pressing to establish democratic rights in China.

Fiction

Su Tong, "The Boat To Redemption" (Translated by Howard Goldblatt), Doubleday, 2010

Su Tong, who won last year's Man Asia literary prize with this novel, was a major voice in the avant garde movement that dominated the literary scene in China from the mid-1980s to the 1990s.

CHINESE CONSIDER SCHEME FOR WORLD'S BIGGEST DAM IN TIBET

Chinese lobbyists are calling for construction of the world's biggest dam on the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra River as part of a huge expansion of hydropower in the Himalayas. A 38-gigawatt plant is being considered, more than half as big again as the Three Gorges Dam. Given the huge expense, technical difficulties and political sensitivities of the scheme, it is far from certain of final approval. But Chinese hydro-engineers see it as the ultimate goal in a race with India to develop water resources in one of the planet's last remote regions.
(from "The Guardian Weekly" of 28.05.10)

SHOULD CHINA'S ONE-CHILD POLICY CONTINUE?

China currently faces sharply decreasing input into its labour force, a rapidly growing ageing population and an imbalance in male and female births.

At recent sessions of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), proposals were put forward to change the current one-child policy to a policy of "encouraging the birth of one child, allowing two children and forbidding three children."

This proposal is widely supported by the public.

NPC deputy He Youlin submitted a proposal during the NPC session to allow a couple to have two children, saying, "it's high time to change the current family planning policy" due to the occurrence of a number of new population-related problems such as accelerated growth of the ageing population, mounting pension payments, and the recently appearing "shortage of migrant workers." All of the problems are partly related to the one-child policy and, in the long term, these factors may affect economic growth, the deputy argued.

(Beijing Review 15.4.10)

BRINGING VISITORS TO OUR MEETINGS

With the quality of Guest Speaker we are attracting, members should feel free to bring visitors to our meetings at any time. This is a way of stimulating an increase in membership of the Branch. Your Newsletter Committee is working hard to have each issue of "The Capital China Letter" published on the first Monday of each month. This will give you plenty of notice to pass on to potential visitors.

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