

New Zealand China Friendship Society Inc. – Nelson Branch

President's Annual Report 7 February 2011

It is my pleasure to present this Annual Report for the Nelson Branch of the New Zealand China Friendship Society. 2011 marks twenty years since the inauguration of this branch of NZCFS in May 1991, although the first annual report was presented in 1993.

1 Membership

The membership is 54, which includes some corporation and schools memberships.

2 Branch Meetings

Seven meetings were held during 2010. These covered a wide range of topics which were appreciated by good attendances of members and their guests. After a brief general meeting, The Golden Bell restaurant delivers delicious food at 6 pm to the venue, and a presentation follows at 7 pm.

- **February 14: AGM and Chinese New Year Celebration** at Eastern Cuisine Restaurant in Richmond. 60 members and guests enjoyed the food and company.
- **March 20: Learning Chinese.** Keith Marshall, Nelson City CEO with his Chinese experiences working and learning language and customs.
- **May 14: Rewi Alley Recollections.** Philippa Reynolds, remembering her uncle and reporting on her trip to Beijing to collect The Top Ten Foreign Friends award on behalf of the Alley family.
- **June 12: How a Little Goes a Long Way.** Kathy Beatson, our Projects Liaison, with an illustrated talk on highlights of the 2009 Projects Tour.
- **August 13: Chinese Students in Nelson.** Nisa Rose, NMIT Overseas Student Pastoral Care Coordinator, with Chinese students talking about their lives in China and Nelson.
- **September 24: China 25 Years On.** Eric Livingston, National President, on his early associations with cattle breeding up to more recent experiences as NZCFS leader. Mooncakes were presented to mark the Mid-Autumn festival.
- **November 19: Sister City: Past, Present and Future.** Isabelle Jones covered the history, Bill Findlater, Dot Kettle and three society members reported on their August delegation to Huangshi's Anniversary Celebrations. This meeting was held in the City Council Chambers with guests Nelson's newly elected City Mayor and some councillors.

3 Nelson Executive Activities

Seven meetings were held to deal with Nelson and National matters including: Lobbying for government funding for projects in China, the Nelson Chinese Garden bridge, Sister City matters and the August delegation, National Conference reports, liaison with NMIT students, Nelson Multi-ethnic Council matters, the sister-city hospital and schools, the exchange teacher programme, as well as planning the general meetings. With Royden continuing as the National Treasurer we have a good connection and feedback concerning country-wide matters.

2009's Vice President, Ferry Van Mansum is overseas until later this year. Lillian Li and Ivan Kurtovic have returned to China for the birth of their baby and to continue their careers in Beijing. Sadly, we farewell Isabelle Jones who is retiring from the executive after nearly twenty years of extraordinary service in a wide range of roles. Her practical contributions and her wise counsel will be greatly missed.

An executive-led initiative in October saw us hosting a teacher from Beijing who observed for four weeks at Nelson Intermediate and one week at Nayland Primary. The principal of her school in Beijing is setting up a teacher exchange project for mutual benefits, arising from his previous training in New Zealand. Yu Hua, as the first exchangee, had a great time learning about education within the New Zealand system. We learnt a lot from her also, not the least of which was the preparation of steam buns and dumplings.

4 National Events

- National Conference in May was in Hamilton. The theme, 'Building Bridges' focused on local NZ-Chinese connections. Nelsonians attending were Royden Smith, Christine Ward and Bruce Ward.
- He Ming Qing Scholarship Fund continues its sponsorship of trainee nurses from rural China.. Di Madgin keeps us up-to-date with the scholar's progress and future plans. Nelson members contributed \$500 to this fund in 2010 and take a keen interest in the training programme.
- Projects Tour 2010: included Sally Warren. Sally took a quilt made by Christine Ward to the medical clinic in Songjiazhuang village. Kathy Beatson, our projects liaison, is working with Dave Bromwich to build up a Nelson Branch project involving us in contributing financially to the clinic in this remote village.
- Garden Tour 2010: This tour, led by Di Madgin and Bill Willmot, included Nelson member Philippa Reynolds and was voted an excellent experience.

5 Sister City Activities

The Nelson-Huangshi sister-city relationship received a boost this year with a delegation to Huangshi at the end of August. This was the 60-year anniversary of Huangshi's municipality and included a celebration of 3000 years of metallurgy in the district. The delegation was initiated by Barbara Markland, working with Xu Zugui of the Foreign Affairs Department of Huangshi Municipal Government. Barbara was unable to travel herself at this time but she completed every detail of the arrangements with her usual efficiency. The group was led by Bill Findlater (Nelson Regional Economic Development Agency) as the Mayor's representative. Dot Kettle (Nelson/Tasman Chamber of Commerce), branch president Christine, vice president Kathy and Bruce Ward completed the group. The delegation served to maintain and enhance links with Huangshi's government personnel, sister school, sister hospital and some industries. The sister hospital and sister school are both very keen to extend medical and educational exchanges.

Nelson Branch is grateful for annual grants from Nelson City Council to support our sister-city interactions.

6 Newsletters

June Clarke has continued to work with Royden Smith to produce our newsletters which are published prior to each general meeting. We all appreciate these informative, colourful and interesting documents.

7 Appreciations

I extend, on members' behalf, grateful thanks to the 2010 executive committee who have worked so well to ensure general meetings are enjoyable, companionable and informative. They also ensure that business matters get prompt and thoughtful attention. Our secretary, Barbara and our treasurer, Royden do everything with impressive willingness and competence. Our vice-presidents Kathy and June are guides and advisors of the highest calibre. The future absence of Isabelle from an official position will be keenly felt. We thank her most sincerely for her enormous contributions.

The wider membership has also contributed to the success of the past year in many ways. My personal thanks are due to all members and friends for your help and support in my first year in the role of president.

8 The Future

There is already an increased membership notified for 2011, and some great suggestions for innovative branch activities. Support for projects in rural China are being widened and fundraising for these will need to continue. As our population ages, we need to maintain links with younger families, with Chinese students and new immigrants in Nelson and with our personal contacts in China. One-to one connections are the most influential and powerful, and it is these that NZCFS must keep on developing and strengthening.

Christine Ward
President