

New Zealand China Friendship Society Inc. – Nelson Branch

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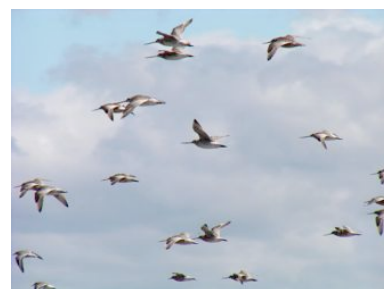
No. 4 - June, 2011

~ Next meeting ~

David Melville

NZ and China - a Feathered Friendship

Migratory Marvels of the Bar-tailed Godwit



Thousands of godwits spend southern Summers feeding on New Zealand's coastal wetlands, including the Waimea Estuary, Motueka Sandspit, and Farewell Spit. As the days shorten, they take to the air and head off to China and Siberia where they refuel before taking the shorter trip to their breeding grounds in Alaska. They fly back to us, non-stop, in mid September. Some specific birds have been known to be making these annual journeys for more than twenty years. Some of the birds, fitted with transmitters, have set records for the longest-ever feathered journeys. So the bar-tailed godwits are true New Zealand-China friendship links.

David Melville is a top-flight ornithologist (waderphile), focusing his field studies on the lives of these migratory marvels in New Zealand and China. Originally from the UK, David worked in Hong Kong for many years and contributed to the establishment of the famous Mai Po Nature Reserve, a World Wildlife Fund Project. Now resident in Dovedale, a significant part of David's yearly programme is spent studying the godwits here and in Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve on the Yellow Sea in north-east China. This year he spent March/April there, watching for the arrival of birds that had been banded or fitted with transmitters here. We are privileged to have this opportunity to learn about David's work which fosters New Zealand-China friendship in a different and fascinating way.

This would be an excellent opportunity to invite any friends who share an interest in this unique, world-of-nature story that is very much part of our regional heritage. As usual, Branch business will be dealt with prior to our meal costing \$12. Friends and visitors are welcome but please notify Barbara when you ring so that we have accurate numbers for the meal.

Friday 1 July .. Hearing House .. 5:30 pm

To arrange catering please ring:

Barbara Markland Ph. 544 4712 by Tuesday 28 June
or e-mail: erm@xtra.co.nz



LAST MEETING: Our last meeting was a delightful celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Nelson Branch. A big turnout of 43 members and guests were welcomed by President Christine Ward with a toast to friendship, and invited to partake of drinks and nibbles in honour of the Anniversary on 31 May.

Messages of congratulations from National President Eric Livingstone (see below) and Xu Zugui were read out and a toast made to Zugui and the people of Huangshi.

A very special part of the evening was the awarding of Life Membership to Beverley Brown. Isabelle Jones read the citation (see below), mentioning Beverley's 19-year association with the Branch and her contribution to NZCFS at both Branch and National levels. Beverley was part of the inaugural Mayoral delegation to Huangshi and has been fully involved in the Sister City link ever since. Beverley and Robin's three, very proud children attended the meeting to support their mother. A toast was then given to our Life Members: Robin and Beverley Brown and Isabelle Jones.

Our huge thanks go to those members who spoke so wonderfully well to the meeting, relating many fascinating anecdotes of their time in China: John Black, who trained in China as a practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Beverley Brown, Gail Collingwood, Isabelle Jones, Chris Mouter, Philip Woollaston, and Alison Roxburgh. Every speaker made an immensely interesting contribution to a great evening.

Items contributed by members were displayed on the sales table, with the more valuable being auctioned. Many happy purchasers helped us raise \$634.80 for our Project Fund, in particular to support the village of Songjiazhiang. 🌸

MESSAGE FROM NATIONAL PRESIDENT: "Greetings to Members of the Nelson Branch, NZCFS. On behalf of all your friends throughout our Society and in particular, of the National Executive, it gives me much pleasure indeed to heartily congratulate the Nelson Branch on its 20th anniversary celebrations. Your record of achievements and accomplishments over these twenty years in the cause of friendship with the peoples of China is outstanding and you should be rightly very proud.

When we think of the strong sister city bonds you have with Huangshi, the educational exchanges, the beautiful Chinese garden, of the delegations and visitors you have hosted, the delegations and tours of China you have sent members on, we feel you have more than exceeded the dreams and plans of your founders. This is evidenced by the fact you have achieved a high level of recognition amongst your community, schools and media that would be the envy of others.



We have always enjoyed those great National Conferences held in your friendly city, including the early morning walks along the river, and benefited from the experience and contributions your members have made to the Society nationally including National Life Member and National Past President Robin Brown, Past National Secretary Beverley Brown and of course current National Treasurer, Royden Smith, and there must be others also including all your Branch Presidents who served on National Executive.

To all our friends in Nelson, we salute you on your achievements and wish you all the very best for your celebrations. Ganbei!

Eric Livingstone, National President." 🌸

EARLY BRANCH HISTORY: Isabelle shared this information at the meeting, all taken from our written records.

"It appears that before the establishment of the Branch, there were people in the district interested enough in China to become what were called "members-at-large" of the New Zealand China Friendship Society.

Prof. Bill Willmott, well known to many of us, was National President in 1991 and requested that the "members-at-large" arrange a meeting of interested persons and this was duly set up in Chez Eelco Gallery (per kind favour of the owner, Eelco Boswijk) for Tuesday 14 May at 7.30 pm. Twenty-one folk attended, including the Mayor, Peter Malone.

Bill gave a first hand report on China as it is today, and an update on the Rewi Alley Bailie Schools. In the latter part of the evening, after coffee, it was decided to form a Nelson Branch of the NZCFS. Arch Barclay, as Master of Ceremonies, called for nominations and John Penketh was elected unopposed as Chairman, Bryan James was to be Vice Chairman, and Alice and Graham Keen volunteered to be Secretary and Treasurer.

Subscriptions of \$2 each were collected from 12 of the 21 people present, though many had left before the election began. The Secretary was instructed to apply to the National Secretary for membership as a branch before the Society's National AGM. This would allow the Nelson President, John Penketh, to represent Nelson Branch rather than as a "member-at-large".


A letter from the National Secretary, Nancy Goddard, dated May 25th, acknowledged the application, saying that the matter would be considered at the National Executive meeting the night before the AGM and "You may rest assured that the Executive will welcome Nelson Branch with great pleasure" and it duly did - on May 31, 1991.

Here are a few snippets from the early meetings:

It was decided that the subscription for the rest of 1991 be increased to \$5 per person or family and that for the following year they be raised to \$10 per person or \$15 for a couple. A high rate of inflation!

At the July meeting, a collection was made for Flood Disaster Relief in China and \$65 was collected. During the evening a raffle was run, the prize being a cream sponge, raising \$10.60 for petty cash. John Penketh was selected to join the Society's Leaders' Delegation to visit China in 1992. Later that year, John, who had been the driving force in the Branch, left Nelson for Tauranga, but other people picked up his roles and, as you know, the Branch has continued to flourish.


Some of our present members are named in the 1991-92 reports: Gwenda and Dick Parker; Barbara Harford and Isabelle Jones who spoke on a recent trip to China; Jim Roxburgh as Vice President; Chris Mouter as President; Jean Paterson as Secretary; Beverley and Robin Brown, who along with Isabelle and Barbara, travelled on the Silk Road Tour. The comment by President John on that tour was: "Excellent! Four Nelson members on this tour and our branch receives \$100 for each of them - so eventually \$400 will be paid into our coffers". He was obviously very excited about this financial gain.


It says much about the success of the Branch when you see that so many of our members have continued to enjoy Branch activities over a 19-20 year span and we hope that all members will have the opportunity to do the same." 

HOMESTAY REQUEST FROM YOUR PRESIDENT CHRISTINE: Twice a year, I usually design and teach a three-week course in Christchurch on a joint venture between Beijing Aurora International Centre of Cultural and Educational Exchanges, and the Rewi Alley Chinese Academy in Christchurch. This year, although the Beijing Centre is keen to send a group, it is not possible to operate in Christchurch. I have been asked to set up a programme in Nelson for twelve teachers from Beijing and Nanjing in the first three weeks of August.

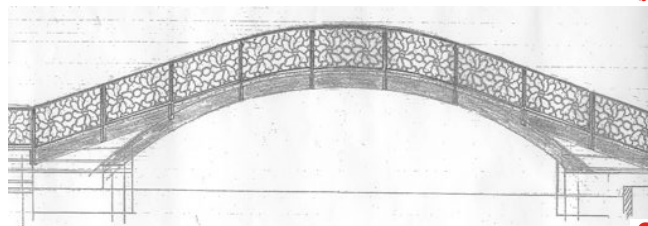
I will be presenting my teaching methods training course most days during the week, arranging school visits in the second week, and organising group outings on at least one day in the weekends. My course is related to education reform processes in China, where many education authorities are eager to find out about New Zealand teaching methods, especially concerning group work and creativity.

I am hoping that some members of Nelson Branch may be able to offer homestay hosting or assistance with weekend activities. The group pays \$30 per night per person for homestay. This is designed to cover food and some transport. It can be helpful for each home to have two visitors. They are mature professionals who take their learnings and friendships back to benefit their schools and communities.


If you think you can help with homestay, transport, or weekend activities, please call the Wards on 538 0344 or e-mail christine@brainward.com, or have a chat at our meeting on 1 July. 

NEW MEMBERS: We welcome Sue Truman, who is keen to teach in China, and are delighted to see Joan Skurr back at our meetings. 

CHINESE GARDEN BRIDGE: Many of you will have seen that considerable progress has been made on the bridge from the Queens Gardens to the Chinese Garden. Barbara Markland, our Sister City Coordinator, reports that the formal opening has been delayed until later in the year and discussions are under way to see if this might coincide with the arrival of a Sister City delegation from Huangshi.



NZCFS PROJECTS AND TIBETAN COMMUNITIES TOUR: There has been a lot of interest, but it is not yet too late to join this year's Projects Tour. For expressions of interest, please contact Dave Bromwich at dbchinz@xtra.co.nz or see: <http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/5335/nzcfs-projects-and-tibetan-communities-tour-2011/>

Please remember to advertise the tour to all your family, friends and colleagues - those Nelsonians who have been on previous Projects and Communities Tours will very happily endorse them. Have a chat to Sally, Kathy or Royden. 

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2011: President Christine Ward and Kathy Beatson (as your Nelson Branch delegates), along with Royden Smith as National Treasurer, attended the very successful national Conference and AGM in Wellington during the last weekend of May. A full report is in the new-look National Notebook, which will be sent separately, and on our website at: <http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/5801/nzcfs-2011-national-conference-reports/>

Many of the excellent speeches and presentations are available on the website and the Nelsonians present particularly recommend the speech by the Mr Cheng Lei, Chargé d'Affaires, PRC Embassy, which is available at:

<http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/0915ChengLei.pdf> 

LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD: A very special part of the 20th anniversary meeting was the presentation of Life Membership of the Nelson Branch to **Beverley Brown**. Beverley's citation, researched and read by Isabelle Jones, clearly shows the breadth and depth of her involvement in our Branch over many years:



"The Nelson Branch of the New Zealand China Friendship Society has much pleasure in conferring Life Membership on Beverley Brown in recognition of her outstanding service over the last 19 years.

After making the decision to travel on the Society's Silk Road Tour in 1992, Beverley, along with her husband Robin, joined the branch that year. Always fully supportive of Robin and his participation in Society activities, Beverley has also been keenly involved as an individual, at both local and national levels.

In 1994, as Branch numbers increased, meetings were moved from private homes to the Stoke Methodist Lounge and meals were introduced as part of the evening's programme. Beverley became the Meals Co-ordinator and efficiently carried out this role for six years. Along with the meal organisation, she began to build up a variety of utensils and kitchenware, laying the foundation for a meeting format we still follow today.

Beverley held the position of Branch Treasurer in 2001/2002, then continued as a member of the Executive Committee for another four years. She has generously shared her experiences as a speaker at Branch meetings, and has represented the Branch at orientation activities at the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology.

Beverley was one of the first advocates for the establishment of a Sister City relationship, a process that began in 1992, and developed through 1993-1994 with discussions at a Mayoral level. In 1994, she was a member of the inaugural Mayoral Delegation to Huangshi and in the following year was part of the subcommittee which arranged the successful reciprocal visit of the Huangshi Mayoral Delegation that culminated in the signing of a formal Sister City Agreement between the two cities. With a strong interest in Huangshi and its people, Beverley travelled to our Sister City on several occasions for personal visits and as a member of Nelson delegations. She and Robin are highly regarded and respected by a wide group of people in Huangshi and their visits have hugely strengthened the tie between the cities.

Beverley's commitment to the Sister City relationship saw her being closely involved in the organisation of many subsequent sister city exchanges, and hospitality at the Brown's home was always generously offered to our visitors. She was an exceptional hostess throughout this time, providing accommodation, meals, transport, and the unique opportunity to experience family life in Nelson. Individuals and groups were always warmly welcomed, some arriving at her home with very little notice. Xu Zugui, Huangshi's exchange liaison officer, still fondly refers to Beverley as his Nelson mother.

The establishment of the Chinese Garden in Nelson was another major project that Beverley has been closely associated with since the inception of the idea in 2000. A member of the initial sub-committee, she has keenly followed the progress of the Garden and is looking forward to its completion this year with the addition of the bridge linking it to the Queen's Garden.

Beverley has also taken a keen interest in activities at a National level, attending several South Island Regional Meetings and National Conferences as Nelson's delegate. In 2001, she was on the organising committee for the National Conference hosted by Nelson and the next year held the position of National Secretary. In recognition of her outstanding service to the Society, Beverley was awarded the Distinguished Service Award at the Christchurch Conference in 2005.

Today, Beverley, in making you a Life Member, we acknowledge your commitment, your dependability, your enthusiasm, and the invaluable contribution you have made to the growth and development of the Nelson Branch of the New Zealand China Friendship Society."



PUBLIC SMOKING BAN: China, the world's largest cigarette market, has banned its estimated 300 million smokers from lighting up in public places in a bid to reduce deaths from tobacco use. The Ministry of Health prohibited smoking in enclosed public spaces including hotels, restaurants, bars, cinemas, game parlours, parks, exhibition halls, terminals and public transportation vehicles, the China News Service reported. Diseases related to smoking kill a million people a year ... and more than half of Chinese men and 2.4 percent of women smoke. The ban requires operators of public venues to prominently exhibit "No Smoking" signs and to encourage their employees to ask people not to smoke. Fines or punishment for breaking the ban aren't prescribed by the new rules. Some critics accuse China of doing too little to discourage smoking because the state owns lucrative cigarette makers.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-05-01/china-home-to-300-million-smokers-starts-public-smoking-ban.html>



NEXT BRANCH MEETING: For your calendar, our next Branch Meeting in 2011 - Friday, 19 August.

