

# New Zealand China Friendship Society Inc. – Nelson Branch

## President's Annual Report 9 March 2012

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report for the Nelson Branch of the NZ China Friendship Society. 2012 marks 21 years for our branch, 60 years since NZCFS was established nationally, 40 years since the New Zealand government recognised the People's Republic of China, and 70 years since Rewi Alley was instrumental in setting up the Shandan Baillie School. Certainly a year for celebrations!

### 1 Membership

The membership is rising, with 65 registered at present. This includes three life members, and several corporations and schools.

### 2 Branch Meetings

Seven meetings were held during 2011 and covered a wide variety of topics. Most meetings were held at Hearing House, except for the AGM at Chinese New Year and the final meeting of the year which was at the City Council Chambers. Attendance at most meetings is 30 to 40 members.

- **February 4: AGM and Chinese New Year Celebration** at Eastern Cuisine Restaurant in Richmond. 60 members and guests enjoyed the banquet, company, and a visiting pianist.
- **March 25: Projects Night.** Kathy Beatson gave a comprehensive overview of NZCFS projects in China. Sally Warren, shared her projects tour experiences taking us to the various projects she visited in October 2010, including Songjiazhuang Village in which we have a special interest.
- **May 13: Celebration of 20 years of Branch Activities.** In a party atmosphere, a number of original members and past office holders shared their memories. Beverley Brown was inducted as a Life Member for her long service and commitment to all aspects of the society, especially Nelson's Sister City. Sales tables of Chinese memorabilia contributed nicely to our projects funds.
- **July 1: The Godwits Story.** David Melville of Dovedale, gave us a great insight into the migratory marvels of the bartailed godwits, 'two legged tourists' travelling each year between our estuaries and the wetlands of the North China Sea.
- **August 19: Teachers from Beijing and Nanjing.** A group of 12 teachers from Beijing and Nanjing, were our guests, at the end of their three weeks in Nelson. They were on a teacher training course and were home-hosted by society members. They told us about their stay in Nelson, received their training certificates, and provided some hearty Chinese entertainment.
- **September 30: Family Stories:** The Alborn family of Riwaka, presented their fascinating story of their family life in Shanghai, accompanied by a superb series of family photographs. Brudvik Lindners shared their amazing story of their adoption of two Chinese girls into the US and then on to Nelson where they now live.
- **November 18: Ambassador Xu visits Nelson.** There were celebrations in Queens Garden in the afternoon when Mayor Miccio and Ambassador Xu opened the bridge to the Huangshi Chinese Garden. At our evening meeting in the Council Chambers, the Ambassador met local business people and spoke about past, present and future relationships between our two countries.

### 3 Nelson Executive Activities

Seven meetings were held to deal with local and national matters. We have appreciated our connections with and support from the Mayor and the City Council including their reserves advisor, and the Sister City Committee. We have also cemented connections with the Chinese Embassy in Wellington and the Consulate and Confucius Institute in Christchurch, NMIT staff and students, the Nelson Economic Development Agency, the Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce, NMIT staff and students, and the Nelson Multi-Ethnic Council. We continued our fund-raising for China projects and He Ming Qing Scholarships to train rural nurses in China, and initiated our own extra fundraising project for Songjiazhuang Village. We have worked at promoting Chinese language and culture in Nelson in various ways, including funding a Chinese translation for the Huangshi Garden Walk brochure which was first used during the Ambassador's visit.

This weekend's participation of the Confucius Institute in Nelson's Race Unity Day is a further example of our promotion of Chinese language and culture in our city.

#### **4 China Tours**

Nelson members have been stalwarts of the national tours programmes. Royden Smith was the leader of the China Discovery Tour in April, with Gwenda Parker, Philippa Reynolds and Mike Crampton participating. Philippa Reynolds also went on the 2011 Projects Tour which bravely included a visit to Tibetan Communities for the first time.

We were proud to nominate Anne Todd Lambie as Nelson's Prominent Person for the annual tour in October. Anne will tell us about her 'first-time' experiences at our April meeting.

Former Nelson Vice President Ferry van Mansum and wife Aukje are on a long tour at present. Under the auspices of NZCFS, they are teaching for the year at Hexi College, Gansu Province, creating another friendship bubble for the Nelson Branch.

#### **5 Sister City Activities**

Our co-ordinator, Barbara Markland will report on this, but there were two important highlights. In August we assisted the Chamber of Commerce with hosting a business delegation from Huangshi. This cemented friendships established over the years and further trade possibilities for Nelson Tasman will follow. The official opening of the bridge linking Queens Garden and the Huangshi Chinese Garden took place on November 18, providing a nice conclusion to the big garden project and a fitting grand symbol of sister city friendship links..

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

#### **6 Appreciations**

To our secretary Barbara Markland goes my grateful thanks for her impressive attention to the details of committee work, and her huge commitment to the sister city portfolio.

Treasurer Royden Smith continues to do a sterling job in managing our money in addition to serving in that role for the National Executive. He also produces the excellent newsletters keeping our membership well informed about local and national activities.

My thanks also go to the Vice Presidents and all of the executive who keep up the good work, often in spite of difficulties in our busy lives or those caused by sudden changes in arrangements.

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. I hope you have enjoyed your participation in our important friendships with Chinese people. It is clear that, even although we are so small, our friendship is valued within the economic and geographical hugeness of modern China. Many important developments do arise from this friendship, but person-to-person friendship must come first.

Christine Ward  
President