



NZ China Friendship Society

Dunedin Branch

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2016

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

August meeting... The China Connection: Archaeology

A letter from the boy from Mosgiel...sit back, relax and enjoy this fascinating account

Reflecting on Dufu's poetry

Members update

Thank you to the 60 members who have joined or renewed their membership this year. A group of people with diverse interests but common interest in NZCFS. Your subs are welcome to help support our activities – language, understanding, friendship, projects, and the work of the national society of NZCFS.

Our July meeting, with 19 members and friends attending on a cold winter evening, was a warm and enthusiastic activity. Paul Wheeler's stunning photos and amusing anecdotes of last year's PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR were much enjoyed. He's off again this year, and several other members are heading to China in coming weeks also.

Branch President Paul Fawcett also gave us an update on the national society conference and activities.

Paul selected photos (from thousands) for his presentation. Three were in last month's newsletter. Here are four more. We were impressed by his eye for nature, and his sensitive insights into people.



Jiuzhaigou National Park



Tibetan Yak



Relaxation in Chengdhu



*Dufu's House,
Chengdu*

*See article on
Dufu's poetry
P.4*

Learn about Anne's involvement with exciting recent discoveries about Emperor Yu, the evidence of the legendary Xia dynasty and understanding the culture of the past; and how she inspires students in the work.

August Meeting

WED Aug 17

(note change, not 18th)

**Archaeology:
the China-
Dunedin
Connection
Speaker: Dr
Anne Ford,**



Department of Anthropology & Archaeology,
University of Otago

"Archaeology in the Middle Kingdom".

Anne will discuss her research on understanding how the first state level societies/dynasties developed along the Yellow River.

Anne has worked in Henan province and her postgrad students are currently working in China also.

**Venue: seminar room St John's
373 Highgate, Roslyn.**

A warm welcome and supper. 7.30pm



Emperor Yu



Some background reading – a recent article from China Daily on the top archaeological discoveries in China last year, commonly referred to as the "academy awards of Chinese archaeology".

http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2016-05/24/content_25445276.htm

**ANOTHER CHENGDU
CONNECTION – Sit back, relax and
enjoy this fascinating account from
Gavin Crombie**

It's a Long Way from Mosgiel to Chengdu.

Have you seen the flight of an eagle over the snow of Tibet, smelt the sweet smoke of rice straw curling in the stillness of the autumn, seen the rainbow aureole dancing in the clouds far below the summit of Mt. Emei, placed wooden twigs between the mountain and the rock to bridge the energy of Green Fortress Mountain? Have you seen tiny fields of golden rice alternated with the bright yellow flowers of rape and small plots of fruit trees? Have you heard the thunder of the mighty Min tamed and saddled like a wild mustang in the folds of Dujiangyan? Then you have seen the "Land of the Four Rivers" and you have seen heaven.

How do you get from a sleepy little town of 10,000 people, once famous for its amazing woollens, for cold frosty mornings and the nostalgia inducing smell of wood smoke spiralling over the town, to live in a hugely crowded city of 15 million and fall in love with it? Fall in

love with the gentle pace of life, the people, the food, the culture and the history.

When you stand in a field and consider that it has been continuously cultivated for 5,000 years, and you contemplate all the different lives of the people who were born, lived, worked and died and then laid their bones and their stories down into the earth, a sense of the worlds history creeps over you and gives you an insight into the journey of the human species.

They say that when one door closes another one opens – and so it was with me – a leather business I owned had collapsed leaving me bereft and poor – and wondering where to go next. China was just creeping into the consciousness of the world – still seen as a backward communist country – with lots of people, a long history and the export of a famous cuisine.

I had no capital, no experience and no clue – just a belief that China was a place I wanted to be to learn and to explore. And the door wasn't exactly wide open – getting to live in China at that time required you to be one of two things – a businessman sent there by a company (on an expat salary package that included huge loadings for 'hardship') or be a teacher – and without a fairy godmother, it was a teacher for me – a year spent in a kindergarten teaching little kids for the equivalent of \$200 NZD a MONTH.

I wasn't even supposed to go to Chengdu – I was signed up for a city in the north called Taiyuan – which I later learned was one of the most polluted cities in China – a coalmining, coal burning, steel making town with about as much character as a broken brick.

Chengdu was offered at the very last minute by the agency and it was the one place I really didn't want to go – chilli, chilli, chilli was the only word I knew about Chengdu and I didn't like chilli. Chilli on your cornflakes, chilli in your tea. Not for me.

But, that's where we went. Into an apartment with concrete floors, concrete walls, squatty potty and complete with its thriving family of species *rattus rattus*. Lovely.

But yet, what was missing in the physical it was made up for the spiritual – the sweet nature of the people, the absence (then) of a money orientated society with all its selfishness and greed. Its concentration on things that were subtle and refined. The hard work of the people and the general happiness of the population.

When you have nothing, apart from a state job, apartment, government assignment of every single thing you have, you have to find inside yourself a place where you are happy – a place where happiness transcends the physical and Chengdu was such a place.

Being free from so many of the societal pressures that people impose on themselves in a materialistic environment brought a different perspective on life and it was a happy perspective.

The night that I fell in love with China was the first Christmas I was there and the kindergarten celebrated the very first Christmas they had ever had, but not before roping me into the kitchen for three days of slavery trying to create a full blown Christmas dinner (roast meats and all the trimmings) with only a wok. I fell in love with China when, sitting outside in the cold misty evening one of the teachers started singing - singing as beautifully as a nightingale – and the faces of the children started beaming in delight and happiness and all was well in the world and I saw another way.

And I stayed and I am still here, on a journey that has and is changing my life. A journey that saw me witness first-hand the greatest transformation of a society in the history of mankind. A journey that is always moving and always changing – sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. The energy and pace of this huge shift in world affairs is like a butterfly emerging from the chrysalis.

China has stood up and is rocking the world in so many different ways – and I was here.

So what about this city of Chengdu?

Gavin's photos:



Con'd Page 7

A Chengdu Highlight:
DUFU's POETRY *A comment from
branch member Dr Haixin Jiang*

Du Fu (712-770), together with Li Bai, is regarded as one of China's greatest poets of the Tang dynasty. Du Fu was born to a minor scholar-official in Henan Province. His mother died while he was young, and an aunt helped raised him. Though he studied for the civil service exam to become a civil servant like his father, Du Fu failed to pass and spent many years traveling.

Du Fu suffered from the disasters of the notorious An Lushan Rebellion of 755, which lasted for nearly eight years and severely disrupted Chinese society. In those years, Du Fu wrote many poems about the events he witnessed and endured—famine, political unrest, and personal tragedy. In the last four years of the chaotic period, Du Fu and his family lived in Chengdu where he wrote over 200 poems describing his relatively happy life. His cottage in Chengdu was renovated and enlarged in his memory during the Ming and the Qing Dynasty, and is now a tourist attraction.



Over 1,500 poems by Du Fu are still in print. Almost all Chinese adults who received high school education are able to recite one or a few of his poems. Of his well-known poems, the *Jueju* that describes the view from his Chengdu cottage has recently circulated on many cell phones in China.

*“Two golden orioles sing in the green willows,
A row of white egrets against the blue sky.
The window frames the Western Mountain’s snow of a thousand years,
At the door is moored, from eastern Wu, a boat of ten thousand li.”*

The third line describes a sight, of which people in Chengdu could hardly catch a glimpse in their lifetime, although the Western Mountain, 5,000 meters high, is less than 80kms away from the city.

However, many got it at the beginning of July this year and excitedly grasped the moment with their cell phones and cameras. Excitedly, they put the photos on line (I received a number of them in those days). They commented: “Yes, we have seen what Du Fu saw daily over a thousand years ago!” “Du Fu did not exaggerate when he wrote that he saw from his window the snow-covered peak of the Western Mountain.”



Indeed, it is wonderfully cool for anyone amid huge crowds of a large city to see a snow-covered high mountain in the distance, especially while sticky with sweat as the temperature goes up to 40 degrees!

LOOKING AHEAD October 2017 THE NORTH WEST / SILK ROAD TOUR



NZCFS EXPLORE CHINA. THE NORTHWEST/SILK ROAD TOUR
October 2017, 21 Days in China

Xi'an to Kashgar
Explore the ancient historical civilisations and buried cities in the vast Xinjiang Province. Enjoy the culture of the Uighur and other peoples, and travel through dramatic landscapes as we journey east by train and coach along the Old Silk Road into Gansu. Follow the legacy of Rewi Alley and the Baile school he founded.

Highlights include:

Xi'an

- Terracotta warriors
- History Museum

Xinjiang

- Kashgar animal market
- Karez underground irrigation site, old Jiaohe ruins - oldest preserved earthen city, bazaar, Turpan
- Buddhist caves, Kuqa
- Cross the Taklamakan Desert
- Hoten jade carving factory

Gansu

- Dunhuang Buddhist Grottos and Crescent Moon Lake, sand dunes
- Zhangye Danxia landscape
- Visit Shandan Baile School and legacies of Rewi Alley
- Lanzhou City University, Yellow River Park

A full itinerary will become available later.
Fully escorted, 4-star twin-share accommodation.
All inclusive indicative price \$8,500 (subject to currency exchange), includes domestic flights in NZ, all meals, etc., (excludes Chinese visa and insurances).

www.nzchinasociety.org.nz

For expression of interest and further enquiry, contact tours@nzcfs.org.nz

See the full itinerary here:

<http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/24383/nzcf-s-explore-china-the-northwestsilk-road-tour-october-2017-21-days-in-china/>

MANDARIN CLASS starting 17 August

Interested in learning Mandarin? Beginner class or intermediate conversation class. Contact Martha now about a second course later in the year.

"Please send me info about the NZCFS Mandarin Course" (for those not at school or University Mandarin course).

Send to the Course Facilitator, Dunedin NZCFS Branch member Martha Bell:

bell3patman@orcon.net.nz 021 067 1858

MEMBERS News...

Branch President Paul Fawcett... gives a talk (Aug 3)

"Manchuria – Past, present and Future" and the work of NZCFS..to Dunedin South Rotary Club;

...and he is soon off to a Pharmaceutical conference in Lanzhou.

NEW ZEALAND CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

"Building New Friendships on Solid Foundations"

Learn more about the aims of NZCFS, its history, its current projects

<http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/>

For information about the Dunedin Branch NZCFS Contact:

President Paul Fawcett
paul.fawcett@otago.ac.nz

Treasurer Vivienne Child
vivholmes1@gmail.com 027 2808860

Secretary Colin Child
cchild@clear.net.nz 021 02222 679

SOCIAL MEDIA OF DUNEDIN

NZCFS Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/nzcfsdunedin>

WeChat: 444858620



Twitter <https://twitter.com/nzchinasociety> to receive instant notification of NZCFS National News, Project Updates and more.



...con'd from the boy from Mosgiel:

So what about this city of Chengdu?

Situated approximately 2 hours flying from everywhere – Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Kathmandu and Macau – it is located at the bottom of a basin created when an ancient sea was driven up by India hitting the Asian continent. The basin is fine but the inversion layer over the city is not – creating a windless, sunless and often times polluted environment. Chengdu gets less sun than London – and believe it or not the people are happy with that – the lack of sun protects the skin and people of sixty look forty and people of eighty look sixty.

Chengdu sits 60 kms from the bottom of the Himalayan Plateau, where the land rises up dramatically into soaring mountains and fast flowing rivers.

It is a considered China's 5th or 4th most important city depending on who you talk you.

And Chengdu likes to think of itself as a Tier 1.5 City. It is the political and financial centre of the entire South West of China and is capital of the province Sichuan ('Four Rivers'). Sichuan used to have around 120 million people until Chongqing was separated from Sichuan in the late 90's and formed a separate municipality taking with it 30 million people – including the four poorest counties in Sichuan.

The current population of Sichuan is now around 87 million give or take a few and is still the most populous province in China. Sichuan was one the 'Three Kingdoms' in Chinese history – then called the Kingdom of Shu – and has always been the 'first to rebel and the last to come to heel' in the long dynastic history of China, which exemplifies the peppery character of the people

The city was the base of the Southern Silk Road where the caravans would start in their immensely long journey to the west – with items produced in the city ending up as fashion statements for the rich of Rome and was also the base of the Tea Road that wound its way from the nearby town of Ya'an to the very heart of Tibet and on to India.

The latter road exists today – a narrow stone trail which wends through the most mountainous terrain in the world to support the tea trade between Tibet and even India for the past 2,000 years. In fact, Meng Ding Mountain, a mere 50 minutes' drive from the centre of Chengdu, was where the first person (a monk) looked at a tea bush and decided it would make a decent cuppa. The rest is history.

There are literally thousands of local tea varieties in Chengdu served in pleasant parks usually sited beside the river where local people while away the hours in pleasant

conversation and the ubiquitous game of 'Ma Jiang' (Mah Jong).

The city is renowned for its beautiful girls and spicy food – there is a name for the local girls: "la mei" – created by the characters for 'chilli & little sister' and basically means that the girls are both beautiful and hot tempered. It is said that when you marry a local girl you will spend half your time in heaven. The equivalent nickname for the men of Chengdu is 'soft ear' – from having it pulled into obedience. There is rarely any doubt as to who is the boss in a Chengdu family.

Chengdu is arguably the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world – with evidence of human habitation going back some 14,000 years at the spot where the Fu and the Nan rivers join after encircling the inner ring of the city. These two rivers have formed a natural barrier for the entire history of Chengdu and the inner banks of the rivers were the site of the city walls for thousands of years. This gave the city a defensible perimeter which ensured its survival through the turbulent times in Chinese history. The flowers growing on the walls gave Chengdu its local nickname the 'Hibiscus City'. The literal translation of the name Chengdu means Perfect Metropolis.

The city has a recognisable history of at least 3,500 years but recent excavations at the JinSha site in Chengdu have turned up the foundations of wooden houses dating back an incredible 5,000 years ago. The nearby site of San Xin Dui goes back even further archaeologically and is considered a parallel civilisation to that of the Yellow River.

Chengdu is a very manageable city – with the urban zone containing the population of New Zealand (4 million people) within the circle

created by the Third Ring Road – which is a meagre 50 kms in circumference – making it only 15kms across – imagine the population of New Zealand living in a circle 15kms wide. The remainder of the population live in the satellite towns that surround the city proper but coming under the administration of the Chengdu government. Even though the city proper seems to be concentrated in a small area the city is not as noticeably crowded as Shanghai and Beijing because the wide boulevards and tree lined streets make the city seem more spacious than it is.

The city is home to 42 fully accredited Universities and 660 tertiary establishments, with 1.5 million students at any one time and forms the anchor point for China's 'Silicon Valley'. Sichuan became the province chosen after the Second World War to host the 'Third Line' strategy. This strategy was based on the fact that the penetration inland by the Japanese was halted by the mountains surrounding the entire province. The 3rd Line policy called for all strategic industry including relevant educational and research institutes to be placed where they could not easily overrun in the event of a future invasion, and has left the area surrounding Chengdu the premier area for scientific research, technology development and strategic manufacturing. As such Chengdu boxes far above its weight in achievement.

The city of Chengdu has long been a leading city for technological innovation in the history of the world. By creating Dujiangyan, the world's longest continuously used irrigation system built in 256 BC and still in use today, the city became a beacon for progress.

Here the world's first paper money was introduced in 960 AD, here the first savings-and-loan bank was created and here, also, the

first known example of press block printing was invented.

Right here in Chengdu the world's oldest formally organized school was set up—and here, today, some 22 centuries later, that same school is still accepting and teaching pupils. Here the world's first pharmacopoeia was written, along with the world's earliest example of poetry.

Contrary to what most Westerners believe, the world's first gas well was dug in Chengdu, in 61 BC, to provide gas for cooking and lighting. And did I mention that in Chengdu the first silk was woven, the first example of lacquer created, the first wheelbarrow, the repeating crossbow and the first foot-driven loom invented?

Poetry, literature, music and art all flourished for thousands of years in this ancient city of history, culture, and science.

These days the city is aiming to become the 'greenest' city in China. Massive trees appear overnight lining streets and the median strips on the major roads wouldn't look out of place in a botanical garden. Coupled with the greening program huge strides have been made in relocating pollution generating industry with the aim to bring the city back to the pristine pre-industrial air it used to enjoy.

The people in Chengdu are considered to be quite unique in China – relaxed and dedicated to a lifestyle that involves lots of eating activities – both outside and in the home and a friendly relaxed way of going about things. Wander down any street at 6pm and the restaurants are full of laughing joking people enjoying the local addiction – a Chengdu hotpot – a huge bowl of steaming chilli and spice laced broth into which various identifiable and unidentifiable delicacies are cooked. The

hotpot lends itself to communal eating and forms the bedrock of the eating lifestyle that people enjoy in Chengdu – there is a special face reserved for when you are being served ducks intestines, pigs stomach, chicken feet, gizzards, and other assorted niceties cooked in the most unimaginably hot liquid – and that face perhaps gave rise to the myth of inscrutability of the Chinese face.

When I arrived at the beginning of the 90's Chengdu was a sleepy provincial 'town'. It had a population of only 3 million in the city itself – no migrant workers or farmers allowed thank you. It is now a modern city of massive high-rise buildings incredibly modern infrastructure built over the incredibly short period of only 20 years. I wish however they would finish the double line subway station which is being built right outside our bedroom window – I am assured our house value will rocket and we will be showered with wealth when it is finished and I await that day with eagerness and enthusiasm.

Chengdu has gone from one building over 7 storeys tall in 1994, when I arrived, to a place where now there are literally hundreds of buildings of anywhere between 20 to 70 storeys tall, including the largest single structure building in the world – equivalent to a mere 20 Sydney Opera Houses or 3 Pentagons.

Fortunately, none of these new buildings fell over in the May 2008 devastating 8.0 earthquake which saw an official count of 97,000 people lose their lives in this tragic event, particularly in the more mountainous areas close to Chengdu – and regrettably the real figure is probably unfortunately much higher as reckoned by some observers.

During that period the local people displayed incredible fortitude, bravery and kindness in assisting those people who were badly affected in the earthquake and I would say that they gave the world a masterclass in dealing with tragedy and disaster. Not for nothing did the city rightly earn its reputation for being 'shaken but not stirred'.

No article about Chengdu could possibly be complete without a nod in the direction of the Panda – some people think I look like a panda and after a night in a Karaoke Bar with a group of business people the dark circles under my eyes would probably agree with them.

Chengdu is the home of the Panda – the symbol of mankind's need to preserve what is unique in the world before it is lost. It's what brings millions and millions of tourists to Chengdu every year and makes Chengdu the third most popular tourist destination in China – see a lazy sleeping animal sitting up a tree in the most uncomfortable poses known to man. If you want to see them move you better get up early because these creatures don't like activity past 8am.

Chengdu Research Breeding Centre has had the world's highest achievement in preserving and increasing the panda population with around 12-20 baby pandas being born each year. The Research Centre is an incredible place to visit when the baby pandas enter the 'nursery' playground which allows the public to see the baby pandas playing in the playground that wouldn't be out of place in a kindergarten. And the babies are what makes the panda so loved

around the world.



Within no more than 2 hours' drive of Chengdu there is every kind of scenery that most people travel long distances to enjoy – magnificent towering mountains, rushing rivers, wilderness, forests, and crystal clear lakes. It's like the Southern Alps or the Swiss Alps only with higher mountains.

In addition, there is the vast history to explore, the incredible tastes and smells of the local cuisine, the relaxed atmosphere of the locals and the tangible feel of an ancient culture pervading the city.

Combined with the modern infrastructure - every 5-star hotel worth its salt is now in Chengdu - pleasant surroundings and the absolute safety of the city, Chengdu is a city that has gone unnoticed by the majority of the world and earns its name: China's Best Kept Secret.

There is local saying in Chengdu that once a young person comes to Chengdu they never want to leave and I was young once and I never wanted to leave – so here I am, a million miles away from Mosgiel.

Gavin Crombie August 2016

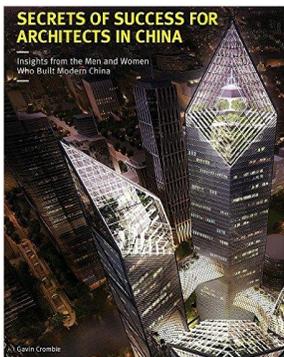
Gavin Crombie

In 2012 Crombie was appointed to the New Zealand Trade and Enterprise Department (NZTE) as a 'Beachheads Advisor'

But his Amazon biography shows more of the man behind the name

https://www.amazon.com/Gavin-Crombie/e/B00N5TPMM/ref=ntt_dp_epwbk_0

Gavin's Publications include: July 2016

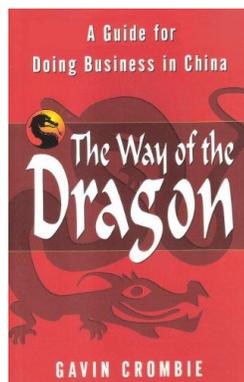


https://www.amazon.com/Secrets-Success-Architecture-China-Insights/dp/0994581505/ref=sr_1_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1469437889&sr=1-3&keywords=gavin+crombie

His 2005 book: *The Way of the Dragon: A Guide for Australians Doing Business in China.*

2nd edition being released this month

Amazon kindle



<https://www.amazon.com/Way-Dragon-Gavin-Crombie-ebook/dp/B008SNLTB0>

and the new book he is in the middle of writing is *The Dragon Flies* - which is *the new rules for doing business in China.*