

New Zealand China Friendship Society Inc. – Nelson Branch

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~ November meeting ~
**~ The Cultural Revolution
 through English eyes ~**
 Friday 25 November, 5:30 p.m.



Dr Rose Kerr and husband Steven leave their UK home in November to spend the summer months in Nelson. She is Honorary Associate of the Needham Research Institute in Cambridge after retiring as keeper of the Far Eastern Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum. She teaches and lectures internationally and is the author and contributor to 20 books on Asian art. She is an Honorary Citizen of Jingdezhen, the 'Porcelain Capital' where ceramics have a 1,700 year history. She holds many roles as an expert advisor in Chinese arts and museums in the UK and in China.

But, Dr Kerr will not be speaking about ceramics . . .

The story that she has for us on our last meeting of the year is a uniquely personal one of her time as a student in China during the last year of the Cultural Revolution 1975/76. She went to China, along with a small group of British graduates, to study Chinese language and culture and became involved with the happenings of that year as it played out for university students . . .

You can hear this fascinating story at Hearing House, 354 Trafalgar Square (next to Synagogue Lane). The will be a short business meeting at 5.30 pm and a shared meal costing \$12 from the Nelson Oriental Restaurant. Visitors are welcome.

To arrange catering, please ring:
Barbara Markland, ph. 544 4712 by Tuesday, 22 November
text: 021 447 180 e-mail: erm@xtra.co.nz

Last meeting - All those present enjoyed a real bonus with two superb presentations. Before dinner, Jordan Lankshear provided a fascinating insight into his quick trip to Huangshi with Ferry van Mansum and Bill Findlater for the official opening of the Nelson Garden. Jordan has been a Nelson City Council Youth Council member and his enthusiasm for sister city links is infectious. He is to be congratulated on his success at the recent Nelson College Senior Prizegiving - the Sisley Davidson Memorial Scholarship – Community Service Award, the Environment Leadership Award and the Scobie & Elizabeth McKenzie Scholarship - and we wish him well as he heads off to university.

After dinner, Jeanette Jones gave a wonderful presentation on her recent trip to China with husband Tony. Not only has Jeanette taught herself Chinese, but she has established close contacts with many Chinese friends in Shanghai, Huangshi and Guizhou Province through her use of the Chinese social media platforms, WeChat and QQ. We were able to see several of these delightful friends in their homes and businesses and observe how wonderfully well Jeanette and Tony were hosted throughout their time there - especially all the food! It was a special opportunity to see the strength of her Chinese friendships and to receive updates on some of our Nelson visitors. Thanks, Jeanette.

- Royden Smith

Opening of Nelson Garden in Huangshi – President Ferry has written a report of the event which he and Jordan and Bill Findlater attended in Huangshi. This was as a result of an invitation to Nelson City from the Huangshi Municipal Committee for a delegation to attend the opening of the Garden and Mineral Expo in September.

In the 63 ha park are 40 gardens representing the districts, businesses, educational institutes and sister cities of Huangshi. The gardens range from classical Chinese to very modern; all looked very impressive. And then to realise that only last year November the whole area was just mud! A large complex has been developed to house the display and sales force for many minerals, for Huangshi is regarded as the birthplace of Chinese bronze culture.



His report is available on the NZCFS web-site as <http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/27936/opening-of-the-nelson-garden-in-huangshi-our-sister-city/>

He Ming Qing Scholarship Fund – Nelson Executive have decided to halt further payments to the Fund until a long-term plan is available and we are sure the current HMQ Scholarship Fund reserves are going to be spent in a way that reflects the spirit of the Fund. There is a considerable amount of money available but, at present, no continuing nursing student. Both current scholars will have graduated by now but, at last contact, had not received exam results and could not apply for positions.

The He Ming Qing committee is working on a long term plan to find worthy applicants for the HMQ fund.

Haley farewell – As mentioned in last newsletter, our MLA Haley is departing in December and we intend to have a Christmas themed barbeque party for her (weather permitting) as we did for Gina, last year. This will be at the covered barbeque area off Bisley Walk at Tahunanui Beach, December 17 (Saturday) at 4:30 p.m. This is a pot-luck affair; bring barbeque food and your own plates, cutlery, and glasses.



How Rewi Alley helped hide 10,000 workers – While the factories set up by the Chinese Industrial Co-operative to combat the Japanese invasion of China were often small and usually mobile, there remains one site which was neither, and was never bombed. The NZCFS web-site has an article about caves in Baoji, Shaanxi province, which allowed 10 000 workers to operate underground. The article is <http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/27930/how-rewi-alley-helped-hide-10000-workers/>

The Porcelain Thief – Another article on the NZCFS web-site (nzchinasociety.org.nz) is a review of the book *The Porcelain Thief: Searching the Middle Kingdom for Buried China*, by Huan Hsu. This is the story of a Chinese-American journalist who travels throughout mainland China and Taiwan in search of his family's hidden treasure and comes to understand his ancestry as he never has before. The book has had good reviews, and the Wall Street Journal has a fuller review [here](#).

From Executive, November

- The first meeting next year is the AGM. We will be looking for new members. We are also aware of the National Executive desire to have young Chinese included on local Executives.
- President Ferry attending the National Executive was asked to question plans for the new national website and express our considerable concern at the proposed commercialisation of the Society.
- We have also asked for an improvement in communication, probably in the form of a report from the President, between the national body and its branches as it is felt this has been lacking recently.
- Helene Wong, who has written a book about being Chinese in New Zealand, is being approached to speak at a meeting next year. There may also be a 'book club', for those interested, to read and discuss her book. Lori will mention these ideas at next meeting.
- An inventory of all items belonging to the branch is to be prepared.

New Treasurer needed – Royden Smith, who has done many years excellent service as branch treasurer, has stated that he does not intend to continue in that role. It is, therefore, necessary to find a new treasurer. This is an important function and we need to try to get an appropriate person. If you are prepared to take this on, or know someone who might, please contact President Ferry. Royden assures us that it is not difficult ...

From other branches – Dunedin branch newsletter has an article from Marc Schallenberg who was on the NZCFS Environment Delegation tour of China. He reports on their visits and some impressions. The same newsletter has news of the prestigious China Friendship Award recently given to Dunedin scientist and branch member Dr Ian Hall. These are given for "outstanding contribution" to China's economic and social progress. Dr Hall has worked largely in Tibet.

Find the newsletter at <http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/NOVEMBER-2016-Dunedin-Branch-NZCFS-Newsletter.pdf>

Next year dates – The AGM will be held February 12 at Eastern Cuisine in Richmond as usual. Chinese New Year is actually January 28, but the New Zealand holidays Nelson Anniversary Day (January 30) and Waitangi Day (February 6) have led to the later than usual scheduling of our AGM.

The first general meeting will be March 31.

The November meeting will be the last for 2016, this is the last newsletter for 2016. Next year the Chinese calendar says farewell to the monkey and welcome to the rooster.

Wishing you and your whanau a happy and refreshing holiday period for Christmas and New Year.



Rewi Alley poem of the month

2017 is a year of celebration of milestones in the life of that 'ordinary kiwi bloke' who became a 'treasure of China'. Rewi Alley's 60 years in China had many phases, and much of that history is known and celebrated in various parts of China but is generally unknown in New Zealand. An aim of NZCFS this year is to give more publicity to the many aspects Rewi Alley's 60 years of inspirational revolutionary work in China.

One focus of Rewi's work in Gansu was related to regeneration of agricultural enterprise connected with water supplies and reforestation. Model programmes were set up in the desert area around Sandan vocational training school in the time when Rewi was headmaster (1945-51). Gung Ho co-operatives in other provinces were also reforesting as adjuncts or extensions to their industrial work.

Christine Ward read the following poem at Nelson's October meeting, and it is worth publishing for others to appreciate the way it reflects Rewi's passion for the natural renewal of the land and forest, and the importance of human assistance to speed up those processes. The title, *Beyond the withered oak ten thousand saplings grow*, is a quote from the T'ang Dynasty poet Liu Yu-Hsi. In his poem, Rewi writes about the natural spread of oak trees, but there are deeper meanings perhaps. This poem seems to encapsulate his hopes and dreams for the future of the countryside, where the young people, having struggled and endured through the bad times are strengthened for their place in the new China.

Beyond the withered oak
ten thousand saplings grow,
their number rising swiftly to be
ten million, and then on until
at last the land changes again
with all its hills and streams
made work with man as part
of one great symphony.

an ancient oak that down
through the generations has stood
sheltering children at play,
lovers at evening, where too
the disinherited have crouched
staring with bloodshot eyes
out on flood and famine; here
at times rebels were hung from
its branches; at others soldiers
of the revolution halted a while
to rest; one revolution crushed,
another rising, until with the logic
of revolutions victory came at last.

now new trees spread out away beyond
the old, light glinting from slender
trunks, young branches with twigs raised
to the sun; young, but already have they
come through dry summers that scorch and burn,
and the bitter winds of winters
that blast, bend, but cannot break, simply
making them each spring more green again.

This has been scanned from p 11 of a book of Rewi Alley poems called *Beyond the withered oak, ten thousand saplings grow*. The poems were selected by H Winston Rhodes, University of Canterbury and printed by Caxton Press with a preface by Rewi Alley signed *Peking, Spring 1962*. This book covers a period when Rewi was travelling and writing in China from his home in Beijing, and ends with *Autobiography 11*, dated on his 60th birthday December 2nd 1957.