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No. 6 – July 2018



July Meeting **Robert's First Taste of China**



Friday, July 27, 5:30 p.m.

Hearing House

Robert van Trierum has recently been on his first trip to China, a trip with a bit of a difference. Not only was he going to China for the first time, he was also going to meet the parents of his partner, Susie, for the first time.

Robert says:

“Susie and I went to China at the beginning of this year. This was the first time for me going to China. I was full of worries about meeting her parents. All I knew about China was mainly from media along with different languages and cultures and lots of things done in different ways.

The trip was full of excitement mainly because of Susie. Lots of interesting events happened during my trip, including meeting Susie’s family. During my journey I enjoyed listening and observing the way Susie’s family and friends interacted with me. Then I realised that language is not a barrier to stop me communicating back to her family and friends.

I will talk about my experience of this trip and more in my presentation.”



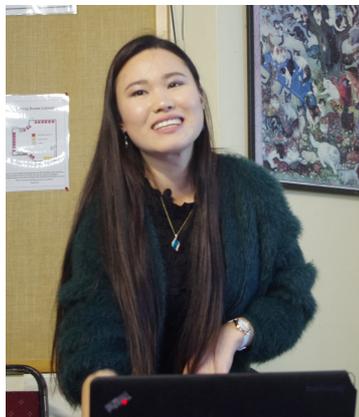
The meeting will be at the usual place, Hearing House, 354 Trafalgar Square (next to Synagogue Lane). We start the meeting at 5:30, a catered meal arrives at 6p.m. and the guest speaker may begin after 6:45 p.m. Visitors are welcome.

If you wish to have the catered meal it costs \$12. Pay cash at the meeting or by Internet banking to NZCFS Nelson, a/c 03-0703-0369680-00, use your name as reference, and contact Barbara Markland as below.

**To arrange catering, please contact Barbara Markland
 by Monday, 23 July
 ph. (03)544 4712 text: 021 447 180 e-mail: erm@xtra.co.nz
 Please make sure she knows you are coming!**

Last meeting – MLAs Annie and Sophie

The Branch June meeting focused on two of our Mandarin Language Assistants (MLAs) who were soon to return to China after a year in Nelson. Sophie (Liu Shenzhen) and Annie (He Anni) presented slide shows about their home towns and provinces. They also summarised the work they have done in Nelson primary and intermediate schools under the auspices of the Confucius Institute at Canterbury University. Both said how much they had enjoyed working here, the wider touring around the country, and the extension of skills resulting from their experiences.



Sophie comes from Hubei province and studied in Wuhan. Her presentation covered the traditions, history and geography of the area. This was interesting for us because it gave a greater insight into the surroundings of our sister-city Huangshi. Sophie covered historical celebrities, Meng Haoran (Tang), Wang Zhoujun (Han), and Li Zhizhen (Ming) as well as memorials to more recent events such as the Wuchang Uprising with Sun Yat Sen (1911). We were shown some of the many famous temples, pagodas and statues in the Wuhan area. Sophie has worked in three Nelson schools, with 500 students, and accumulated 430 teaching hours. Her favourite school was Clifton Terrace under the guidance of James Heberd. She plans to return to NZ to train as a teacher here.

Annie's home-town is Changsha in Hunan Province. It has a population of 7 million and a 3,000 year history. It is noted for its mountain, water, island and city: Yeulu Mountain, Xiang River and Meixi Lake, Golden Island, and Changsha's CBD. Changsha is famous for being the site of Mao Zedong's conversion to Communism. This is commemorated on Orange Island by a huge statue of the young Mao. Annie showed us pictures of important sites including the Yanghu Wetland Park, the Egret Pagoda and the Dufu Pavilion. In 1938, when Japanese troops were entering Hunan, Chiang Kai Shek suggested burning Changsha to prevent it being taken. So the Wexi Fire destroyed 90% of the buildings and took 300,000 lives. Annie has enjoyed working with Nelson young people, travelling the country in her car, the friendliness of Nelsonians, and being made famous when her story was published in a local newspaper. She hopes to use her experiences here to enable her to continue teaching in other countries.

Sophie and Annie were thanked for their great work in Nelson and presented with gifts and cards to add to their memories.



From Nelson Executive:

- Jeanette has resigned as minute secretary due to health issues. Thanks were expressed for her service in the role this year. Christine Ward will step into the role.
- The branch will donate books to Nelson and Tasman Libraries: 'Rewi Alley, from Canterbury to China' and 'Appo Hocton, New Zealand's First Chinese Immigrant'.
- New MLAs may be here for our July meeting, if not we will welcome them in August. Jane will find out when they are arriving so we can welcome them at airport. MLAs become honorary members of Nelson Branch during their time here.
- There was discussion about improving support and oversight for the MLAs in Nelson as there was a feeling that this may be being overlooked. Confucius Institute to be contacted about this and an invitation to visit Nelson extended. Jane Lister to discuss with local co-ordinators how NZCFS could best assist with care of MLAs.
- Chinese Language Week: Sept 23-29. A project for New Zealand Chinese Language Week in September has been proposed. NZCFS collaboration with Mandarin classes in local schools could see 'posters' of Chinese characters attached to trees and posts in Nelson and Richmond for the week.

National President Speaks in Guizhou



Dave Bromwich has attended an international conference entitled 'Embracing a new era of eco-civilisation'. 2,400 guests were at the opening ceremony which showcased the ways many countries are facing up to issues of environment and economics. Dave, in his role with the International Committee for the Promotion of Industrial Cooperatives (ICCIC), addressed a poverty-reduction sub-forum on 'The value of the cooperative in facilitating environmentally sound practices while lifting incomes and enhancing community harmony'.

Some Nelson members have visited cooperative projects in China which have, in some cases, been assisted by NZCFS. The principles of ICCIC are put into practice to assist communities in rural China. Cooperatives involving onions, rabbits, kiwifruit, dragon fruit, cottage crafts, and many more, demonstrate how the rural poor, especially the women, can be empowered by using this model.

Dave also met up with Jeanette Jones' friend while in Guizhou, which is where 5 delegates from Nelson attended the Friendship Forum in 2014.

'Yellow is Forbidden' is coming to Nelson

This documentary, from New Zealand film-maker Pietra Brett Kelly, will be on show in Nelson as part of August's International Film Festival. It is the story of haute couture designer Guo Pei, who defied Chinese clothing regulations from an early age and has rocketed to international fame as designer to the rich and famous. Click on Google for the film trailer using 'Yellow is Forbidden' and a glimpse into Guo Pei's grand ideas of wearable art as well as her entrepreneurial success. The first garment on the trailer is



an enormous yellow and gold creation worn by Rihanna on 'The First Monday in May' for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's annual gala event which, in 2016, opened an exhibition of Chinese 'fashion' and artefacts. The story of this exhibition was also made into a popular film documenting the two-year process to mount MOMA's comprehensive Chinese exhibition.

Check the film festival schedule which is out on July 18 and book your seats for the Nelson screenings of this modern Chinese story presented by a famous Kiwi documentary maker.

Flooding in Sichuan and Gansu

Recent weeks have seen much flooding in China, most recently in Sichuan and southern Gansu (which borders Sichuan). A downpour triggered a landslide in Gansu that swept through Zhouqu village, destroying buildings and leaving vehicles and houses covered. There are reports that both Yangtze and Huang He (Yellow) rivers have experienced a surge in water levels.



People have died or are missing in both provinces, millions have been affected by the floods, and the Baoji-Chengdu railway has been closed by slips. Districts in

both Chengdu and Chongqing are under water. The water level behind the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze had been lowered earlier, in May, in anticipation of a flood season.

Other provinces are now experiencing similar conditions with the normally arid region of Inner Mongolia, which had suffered weeks of drought, also issuing a flood warning.

Kumara Miners Memorial Reserve

Work is progressing on this project at Kumara, south of Greymouth. A local contractor has carried out excavation and formation of the contours of the garden; this was expected to be finished in June. In another boost to the project, a local Kumara family has donated \$5000 to be used to fund a table and chair set to be located in the picnic area of the garden. Several local families have now supported the project and donated land or funds.

A sculpture depicting shovels, representing other nationalities involved in gold mining in the area, will be placed within the Memorial Reserve. It is being partly funded by the Chinese Poll Tax Heritage Trust Fund.

Laixi Puppets in Wellington

Recently a troupe from Shandong province were performing puppet theatre at Te Papa.

Puppet performing arts are an important part of Chinese traditional culture, and a national treasure that has been passed down for over two thousand years. The city of Laixi is the birthplace of Chinese puppetry and widely considered the hometown of the performing art.

During the performance, puppeteers use both hands to control the puppets from behind the stage. The main techniques for puppeteering includes lifting the puppet, twisting the control handles, and ensuring their feet dance with style.

The puppets are 60cm to 100cm tall, and are traditionally carved out of wood. The puppeteers of Laixi have a unique way of crafting the puppet's head, using mainly paper instead of wood, in order to make them lighter and easier to control.

Kathleen Hall Room in Baoding

In November 2017 a new exhibition room commemorating Kathleen Hall was opened in Baoding City Centre. Honorary NZCFS member Ma Baoru encouraged this initiative, and got strong support from National People's Congress Director Ma Yufeng. The room contains pictures of Kathleen at different stages of her life, and also includes pictures of Rewi Alley and Tom Newnham, and recent visitors to Baoding from Kathleen's family and NZCFS.

Explore China: the Centre Tour

7 – 29 October 2018

This is going to be an amazing tour; our society tours are always the best value because of our contacts in China. The tour starts in Nanjing and takes in Kaifeng, Chongqing, Three Gorges (cruise and visit the dam), Changsha, and ends in Shanghai. There is not much time left to decide to join this tour so have a look at it, and mention it to anyone you know who could be interested in this trip of a lifetime.

<http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/31827/nzcfs-explore-china-the-centre-tour/>

Wuhan Bridges

Many of us have crossed the Yangtze at Wuhan, but did we realise that there are nine bridges open to traffic at present, carrying 700,000 vehicles per day? The most recent, the Zhuankou River Bridge, opened in December 2017, is the widest in China (43 metres) and has a total length of 8.9 km. There are 135 bridges over the Yangtze of which 30 are presently under construction.

The famous Wuhan First Yangtze Bridge, opened in 1957, carrying both road and rail, was at the time, the easternmost of the Yangtze bridges. There are now other bridges east of Wuhan and a new bridge at Shanghai will soon be the easternmost.. The Wuhan bridges demonstrate the remarkable technologies developed in China and now being used by Chinese companies around the world.

New members

We welcome Gabi Kraft and Graham Peat who attended the last meeting.