

**President:** Barbara Markland  
**Phone:** (03) 544 4712 **email:** erm@xtra.co.nz  
**Secretary:** Christine Ward  
**Phone:** (03) 538 0344 **email:** christine@brainward.com  
**Website:** www.nzchinasociety.org.nz



No. 9 – October 2020



## October meeting **Along the Silk Road with John McKinnon**



**Friday, October 30, 5:30 p.m.**

John and Diane McKinnon have recently joined NZCFS Nelson and we welcome the chance to hear something of their many work and travel experiences.

When Ed Hillary built the hospital at Kunde, Nepal in 1966, John and Diane McKinnon were the first volunteers there. They lived at Kunde where John worked as a doctor and Diane taught in the school built earlier by Ed Hillary's team.

They returned many times and built up strong friendships and special appreciation of the Nepalese people.

After retraining in England as an ophthalmologist, John continued to work for better health outcomes in Nepal. Diane set up 'Footprint Tours' with guided tours and treks to Nepal, India, and Central Asia. These personally escorted treks and tours drew on their friendships and cultural understanding built up over many years. There has also been huge involvement with the Himalayan Trust, working for improved welfare, health and education in those countries.

This month, John brings to Nelson NZCFS, fascinating stories and photographs of his journey along the Chinese Silk Road. Sadly Diane is unable to be with us on this occasion.

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

If you wish to have the catered meal it costs \$15. Pay cash at the meeting or by Internet banking to our new NZCFS Nelson account, 03-1354-0490726-00, use your name as reference, and contact Barbara Markland as below.



**To arrange catering, please contact Barbara Markland  
 by Monday, October 26.**

**ph. (03) 544 4712 text: 021 447 180 e-mail: erm@xtra.co.nz  
 Please make sure she knows you are coming!**

## Nelson has a Member of Parliament with NZCFS links!

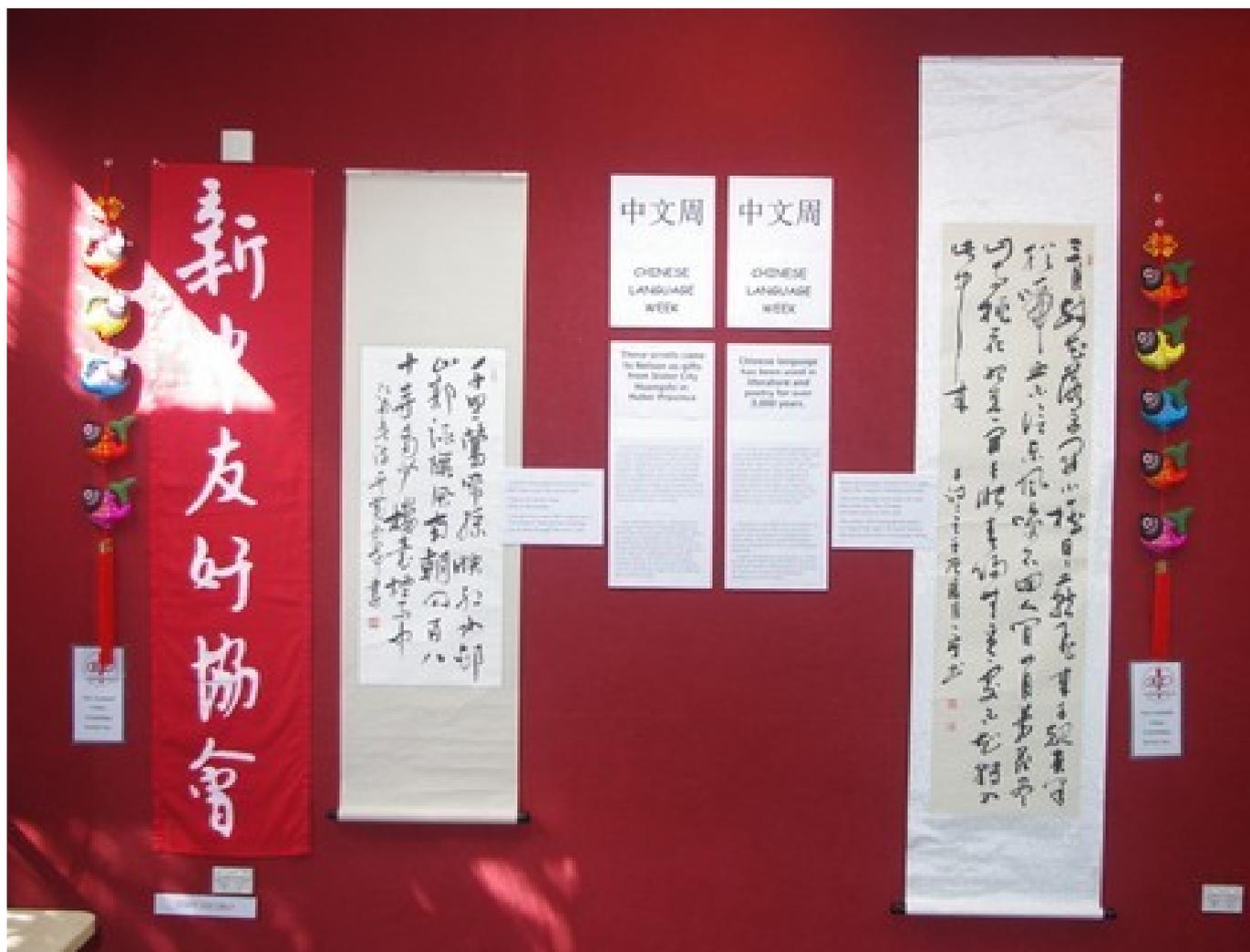
As everyone knows, Rachel Boyack has been elected as MP for the Nelson electorate. Rachel has been a member of Nelson Branch following her selection to go on a NZCFS tour. In 2016, Rachel, along with Jifang Black, was a Nelson delegate on the 'Prominent Persons and Leaders' trip to China with President Dave Bromwich. We congratulate Rachel on her successful campaign and wish her well for her future in Parliament.

Rachel follows in the footsteps of another Nelson NZCFS member, Philip Woollaston, who was member of Parliament for Nelson from 1981 to 1990. He later became Mayor of Nelson, during which time he initiated the Sister-City relationship with Huangshi.

## NZCFS Nelson Commemorates Chinese Language Week 2020

We planned to have a display in the Elma Turner Library through Chinese Language Week and a Garden Party in the Huangshi Chinese Garden on daylight saving day, September 27. This has become an annual fixture, but often the spring weather has been a problem. This year, although the sun was shining, the forecast was for downpours and wind gusts around 2 p.m., so the word went out that we would move indoors at Lister's home in Richmond where some decorations went up. We drank some Chinese tea, ate some mooncakes, and tried some calligraphy in the windy conditions on Lister's verandah. Grateful thanks are expressed to Jane Lister for arranging the programme, and to Sharon and Nigel for the calligraphy. Sadly, the tai chi, and the musical items had to be cancelled.

Below is a view of the Chinese Language Week display in the Nelson Library. This focused on two calligraphy scrolls containing poems along with related information panels and translations. The white triangle on the NZCFS banner is unavoidable light from a window above.



## **The Nelson Library Display**

This display was arranged by Christine Ward with expert advice and translations by Jifang Black. The display was designed as a celebration of the long history of Chinese language and literature. It was based on two calligraphy scrolls which came to Nelson from schools in our Sister City Huangshi.

Below we have the contents of the explanation panels in the library for Chinese Language Week. The scroll on the right has the following script attached with Jifang Black's translation of the poem about the beginning of spring.

### **Chinese language has been used in literature and poetry for over 3,000 years.**

This scroll, by a Huangshi calligrapher is a poem by Wang Ling (1032-1059), who wrote during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1279). He used 'Ci' poetic form, with lines of unequal length with prescribed rhyme schemes and tonal patterns related to natural rhythm of speech. There were usually several 'thoughts' or 'sentences', each with a set number of characters. The cadences were important so the verses could be sung to a known folk tune.

The poem is not titled. The inscription on the left shows the rules of its structure rather than its content. The topics were often about natural or built landscapes, human longings and moral or philosophical dilemmas. English translations are usually in a form of free verse which do not reflect the strict rules and rhythms of the original verse, but do cover the content and emotional references as much as possible.

***When spring begins, flowers start to open  
Then their colourful blooming continues.***

***The little swallows from under the roof have come out.  
They fly away and then return to their nest.***

***The cuckoo, still missing spring beauty, is crying in the night.  
He cannot believe that spring will return so he keeps calling.***

Here follows the text associated with the left hand scroll, and Jifang Black's translation of the poem about looking across the water city in the misty rain and wondering about the long-ago past.

### **These scrolls came to Nelson as gifts from Sister City Huangshi in Hubei Province**

The art of calligraphy is closely linked with Chinese language and literature. Surviving Chinese scripts date back over 3,000 years in orders made for the rulers of the Shang Dynasty (1600-1100 BCE). From the tenth century, calligraphy was a key component of the imperial civil service examinations, paving a path to power and prestige. At that time, exceptional calligraphy was seen as an expression of upright morality and a sign of strong and righteous character.

From the earliest times, calligraphic art has been linked with literature, especially that of the ancient poet-philosophers. When an aspiring calligrapher was considered good enough, permission was given for the words of ancient poets to form the basis of a scroll. Famous calligraphers linked with famous poems can result in a valuable artwork. As well as the Chinese characters, a scroll can include a pen and ink drawing in the traditional style.

***From far away song birds can be heard, red trees cover the distant hills.***

***Flags in the water-town wave in the breeze.***

***Long ago there were 480 temples here.  
How many of these ancient buildings can be seen through the misty rain?***

## **Nelson Branch Executive Report**

It has been several months since there has been a general branch meeting in Nelson. The Executive Committee has continued to meet, however, with the most recent meeting at Eastern Cuisine in Richmond on October 7. There have been requirements from the National Executive relating to constitution changes and modifications to the rules and processes of NZCFS nationally. President Barbara and Secretary Christine attended the August National Executive meeting in Wellington and will go there again for the November meeting. At the October Nelson meeting, our business centred around future directions of the society.

### Constitution and Rules Review

The Constitution and Rules Standing Committee has sent out a table of possible changes to the NZCFS Constitution and Rules, as they can be seen on the NZCFS website. Nelson has discussed these and responded to the suggestions. Branch responses will be tabulated further to be discussed at the November National Exec meeting. As a result there may be some remits for the National Conference and AGM to be held in Napier in May 2021.

### What does it mean to be a friend of China?

This question was planned to be discussed at our August Branch meeting which was later cancelled. Branch Executive members have been considering and discussing this question. Some reported their views at our meeting, and some have written related statements. Some of the Nelson ideas are summarised below:

- There was a general feeling that we like being friends with Chinese people, both in China and locally.
- It can sometimes feel uncomfortable to be a 'friend of China' if this means being a friend of the PRC government, because we may be disturbed by some of its actions.
- As a comparison with the US: we may not like the government of the US, but we can still have many friends there.
- We should emphasise mutual respect between the peoples of China and the peoples of New Zealand. This includes all ethnic groups and religions in both countries.
- We can demonstrate our friendship through exchanges (especially for young people) and being involved with tours and delegations.
- Nelson Branch likes to get on with the job of demonstrating friendship by: working for Sister City Cooperation and exchanges, supporting Mandarin Language Assistants working in our schools, arranging exchanges for high school students, being involved with delegations and NZCFS tours, cooperating with Chinese communities in Nelson, having a presence at Race Unity Day, and being involved in China Week every two years.
- There was general consensus that the aims of NZCFS to promote goodwill, understanding and friendship is a worthy goal, but it is about 'people', not 'government'.
- We understand that we must recognise the government of China, and appreciate the advances made in the last 50 years, but our emphasis is on friendship with the people of China.

### Keeping Nelson's Connections

In the absence of real exchanges, we could encourage our students (and others) to set up or continue electronic communications with friends and connections in China.

In the absence of students coming to NMIT on Appo Hocton scholarships we could arrange, with Xu Zugui, some assistance for a disadvantaged student from Huangshi Number 3 High School to attend a Chinese university.

## **Jingdezhen information**

South China Morning Post has an article on the porcelain city, Jingdezhen. Rose Kerr has a special association with this city. The article includes many photographs of the modern artisans at work.

<https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/long-reads/article/3105628/china-town-porcelain-capital-jingdezhen-2000>