

The Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall Opening Ceremony 20 August 2021

Background

Rewi Alley, a New Zealand-born writer, political activist and humanitarian has been one of New Zealand's most prominent export to China. His legacy of 60 years dedicated to improving the lives of the Chinese people, continues to strengthen the relationship between China and New Zealand. His involvement in the Gung Ho Movement, the Chinese Industrial Cooperative Association, the Bailie Vocational Training Institute and the International Love and Peace Initiatives with the New Zealand China Friendship Society, were significantly honoured in his later years by New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange, who acknowledged him as "New Zealand's greatest son".

The New Zealand Bailie Training Base and New Zealand China Friendship Society have joined together to continue the work of Rewi Alley. To celebrate and advance the friendship between New Zealand and China and to ensure Rewi Alley is remembered by future generations

After a year of significant planning, investment and preparation the Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall is ready to be shared. Thank you to all those who have been involved.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions on August 20, 2021, the opening of the Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall was conducted via an online opening ceremony. This was a collaboration between the New Zealand Bailie Training Base, the New Zealand China Friendship Society and the three Bailie Schools in China.

Ceremony Procession

The opening was observed by a hundred guests from New Zealand and China. The Master of Ceremonies, Dr Jenny Yao, commenced the opening of the Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall in New Zealand at 2 p.m. local time (10 a.m. Beijing time) and guests were welcomed with a traditional Māori karanga performed by Ms Juanita Helg (Ngāpuhi).



The welcome was preceded by an acknowledgement and introduction of keynote speakers and dignitaries.:

New Zealand attendees: Mr David Bromwich, President of the New Zealand China Friendship Association and Honorary Chairman of the New Zealand Bailie Training Base; Dr Jinming Chen, CEO of the New Zealand Bailie Training Base; Mr Li Deng, Honorary President of the New Zealand Bailie Training Base; Ms Naisi Chen, the Member of Parliament of Labour Party; Mr Simeon Brown, the Member of Parliament of National Party; Mr Simon Watts, the Member of Parliament of National Party and his wife Shannon Alley (member of the Alley Family); Mr Paul Yang, Representative of the Mayor of Auckland, Auckland City Councilor; Dr Jian Yang, former Member of Parliament, and Chair of the Education and Science Select Committee; Ms Nancy Lu, National Party Member of Parliament List Candidate; Professor Wei Gao, Academician of the Royal New Zealand Academy of Sciences and Honorary President of the New Zealand Scientists' Association; Professor Aiguo Hu, President of the New Zealand Chinese Scientists' Association; Professor Jun Zhang, School of Education, University of Auckland, New Zealand; Professor Xun Xu, University of Auckland; Mr Frank Xu, President of the New Zealand Chinese Building Industry Association; Ms Susan, founder of the New Zealand Newspaper, other local media outlets, as well as the overseas Chinese community counterparts.

Attendees from China: Professor Peng Dongjun, President of Shandan Bailie Vocational School and College in Gansu, and colleagues; Professor Jiang Qiuxia, Deputy President of Lanzhou City University, and colleagues; Professor Huang Xianming, Executive Deputy President of Beijing Bailie

University, and colleagues; Mr Kuang Ying, the researcher of Gung ho and Bailie history; Mr Feng Qu, the researcher of Baoji Gung Ho and Shuangshipu Bailie history.

The opening ceremony was divided into four sections: keynote speeches, opening ceremony, virtual tour to the commemoration hall (Virtual Tour), and a group photo opportunity.

Keynote Speeches



Mr Dave Bromwich – President, New Zealand China Friendship Society

Mr Dave Bromwich delivered his speech at the opening ceremony. He stated, “ Today is a very special day. Two years ago, marks the day that Chairman Xi visited Shandan Bailie Vocational College. It has shown how important it is for the Chinese Government to pay attention to vocational education.”

He shared how Rewi Alley left three legacies to Chinese and New Zealanders: the Gung Ho Industrial Co-operative Movement, Bailie Vocational Education, and the establishment of the New Zealand China Friendship Society. “I have been privileged to have very close ties with all three. I have visited Shandan and Lanzhou Universities on numerous occasions and have been involved in the establishment of several cooperative promotion projects with the local governments. This brought all three legacies together, with Gungho Cooperatives, Bailie training facilities and support from NZCFS.”

When Mr Bromwich was informed that the New Zealand Bailie Training Base would establish the “Gung Ho - Bailie Vocational Education History Exhibition Hall”, he gave confirmation from NZCFS and Alley Family members that the name be changed to the “Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall” and a display section included the New Zealand China Friendship Society to fully reflect the ideological philosophy of Rewi Alley. He noted that retrospectively it was 34 years after Rewi Alley passed away and finally we have this Commemoration Hall to carry on promoting his three great legacies.

He suggested that New Zealand and China could strengthen exchanges and cooperation through this platform, and that this would help the shift in focus back to New Zealand vocational education, as in his view, the Bailie system could help to meet the needs of a lot of young people in need of upskilling in this area.

He also suggested that Rewi Alley’s wish to enhance mutual understanding, dare to pursue facts and truth and not be influenced by the outside world; so that friendly relations between the two countries can develop steadily, is still relevant today.

Finally, he sincerely acknowledges how the Commemoration Hall will have a significant role to play since inheriting the three legacies of Rewi Alley.



Mr Meng Foon- Commissioner for Race Relations, NZ Humans Rights Commission
Due to Covid restrictions, Mr Meng Foon, member of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission and Commissioner for Race Relations, prepared a special

video extending his congratulations and best wishes for a successful opening ceremony.



[Ms Naisi Chen – MP, Labour Party](#)

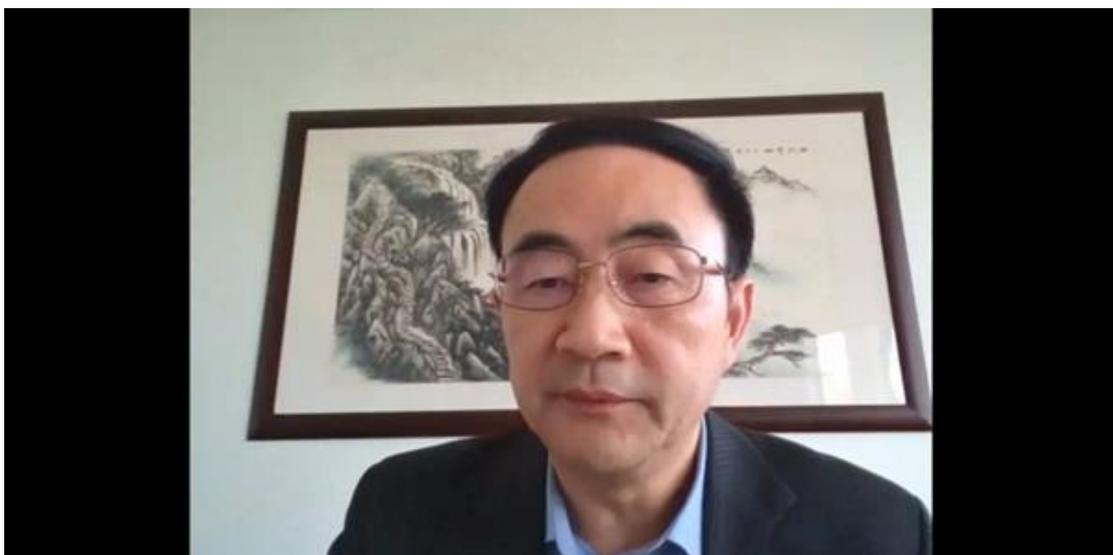
Ms Naisi Chen, the Member of Parliament of Labour Party, also stated that she was honored to participate in the opening ceremony held online and expressed her warm congratulations – “People gathered online today has a very good meaning, in that we are not only honoring Rewi Alley's spirit and encouraging the expansion of his three legacies, but also celebrating the opening of the actual Commemoration Hall”. She also complimented Rewi Alley's commitment and the three legacies he left for the people of New Zealand and China, which influenced and encouraged subsequent generations. She also stated that Rewi Alley's Gung Ho Industrial Cooperatives and Bailie Vocational Education are very compatible with the Labor Party's present vocational education reforms. Last year, the government of New Zealand consolidated 16 polytechnics into a single mega polytechnic (NZIST) with approximately 100,000 students. With the aim of providing dependable support for the future rapid growth of the New Zealand economy, which will necessitate a high number of qualified people. “The relationship between China and New Zealand is growing and developing,” she added, “Mr David

Bromwich noted that Rewi Alley inspired us to look for truth and facts in the midst of numerous misunderstandings, promote the long-term development of the relationship between the two countries. Congratulations on the success of the opening ceremony, and I hope that through this Commemoration Hall, Rewi Alley's three legacies will be carried down from generation to generation among the people of New Zealand and China."



Mr Paul Young – Councillor, Auckland City Council

Mr Paul Young, Auckland City councillor, expressed on behalf of the Mayor of Auckland and the City Council high praises of Rewi Alley's profound love and conveyed his best wishes for the Commemoration Hall's unveiling.



Dr Jian Yang- Former MP, and Chair of the Education and Science Select Committee

In his speech, Dr Jian Yang, first thanked the New Zealand Bailie Training Base and the New Zealand China Friendship Society for establishing the Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall and congratulated them on its successful opening. He stated, "This is not a small achievement. Although we came a little late, we finally have a permanent place to commemorate Rewi Alley." He said, "Rewi Alley was a remarkable man and a symbol of New Zealand-China friendship as well as China's international relations. It is critical to develop non-governmental exchanges and carry on Rewi Alley's international love, especially considering the current unpredictably volatile international situation. Simultaneously, he emphasized how important vocational education is in New Zealand. In the future, Vocational Education exchanges between the two countries, and the role of the New Zealand Bailie Training Base will be crucial.

Dr Yang also stated that he assisted in contacting the Jiangxi provincial government and local governors of Ganzhou, that he discovered many valuable historical material about Rewi Alley, particularly the historical records of Rewi Alley's founding of Gung Ho and the Bailie Schools in Ganzhou in 1930. At the same time, Dr Yang congratulated Dr Jinming Chen and his wife for their efforts in planning for the Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall's establishment.



Mr Simon Watts – MP, National Party

Mr Simon Watts, the Member of Parliament of National Party, stated, "First of all, thanks to organizers for your invitation. It is of special significance to me to participate in this opening ceremony with my colleague MP Simeon Brown and MP Naisi Chen." Then he went on to talk about his wife, Shannon Alley, and that Rewi Alley's grandfather and his wife's great grandfather were brothers. The two Alley brothers arrived in New Zealand together in 1850. Rewi spent his entire life serving in China. He wished the Commemoration Hall a smooth opening and expressed that he was looking forward to visiting the Hall in person with his wife once the covid-19 restrictions eased.



Professor Peng Dongjun – President, Shandan Bailie Vocational School

According to Professor Peng Dongjun's speech, the President of Shandan Bailie Vocational School and College in Gansu stated that Rewi Alley personally founded the Shandan Bailie vocational school. President Xi Jinping paid a personal visit to Shandan Bailie school in 2019, emphasizing the importance of Rewi Alley and vocational education. He appreciated Rewi Alley's showcase of craftsmanship's spirit that has been a fundamental principle in the development of vocational education



Professor Jiang Qiuxia – VP, Lanzhou City University

Professor Jiang Qiuxia, Vice President of Lanzhou City University, complimented on the Commemoration Hall's opening, expressing excitement about the broad potential of vocational education, and optimism for greater connections with the future of New Zealand vocational education. Professor Jiang shared with the attendees the university's cultural education efforts to inherit Rewi Alley's spirit and demonstrated the school's positive attitude and the practical outcomes of Rewi Alley's activities, also expressing the direction of future vocational education collaboration and development.



Professor Huang Xianming, EVP, Beijing Bailie University

Professor Huang Xianming, Executive Vice President of Beijing Bailie University, voiced the motto "**Hands and Mind**" and "**Create and Analyse**" and "**Work hard and Work together**" proposed by Rewi Alley, which were referred to by President Xi Jinping in numerous occasions and official speeches. He stated that the University hopes to expand their vocational education cooperation with New Zealand, which will be coordinated through the New Zealand Bailie Training Base.



Dr Jinming Chen – CEO, NZ Bailie Training Base

In conclusion, Dr Jinming Chen, CEO of the New Zealand Bailie Training Base gave his key-note speech. He explained "Today is a wonderful day. The Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall jointly established by the New Zealand China Friendship Society and the New Zealand Bailie Training Base, was officially finished after more than a year of preparation and strong support from all parties. It is also the first "Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall" to be established by New Zealanders. Now, there is a permanent location in Rewi Alley's hometown to remember and honor him. Witnessing this wonderful event online is a terrific privilege for so many people from New Zealand and China."

Dr Chen extended a cordial greeting to all attendees on behalf of the New Zealand Bailie Training Base. He also used this opportunity to express his gratitude to all of the team that worked behind the scenes to prepare for the opening ceremony.

"Just when everything is ready and waiting for the grand debut," Dr Chen remarked, "the pandemic alarm rings again. New Zealand has been lockdown level 4 of since midnight on August 17. We made the decision to hold the opening ceremony online as planned. The photographs you will see today were taken at the Hall before the lockdown. My wife and I revealed a small film that we shot during the rehearsal. Today, it will be unveiled on behalf of the visitors. You can experience our feelings of joy and excitement, even though this would not be a true reflection of how stunning it is.

Rewi Alley moved to China in 1927 and spent 60 years there working and living. He dedicated his life to the cause of Chinese national freedom and

development, and the Chinese people praised and adored him for it. We will never forget how, during the dark years of the war, he visited all throughout China and took part in the campaign to encourage industrial cooperation. “Working Together”, the motto of Gung Ho during the Anti-Japanese War resounded throughout the country, and it played a significant role in bolstering China's resistance to Japan. We will never forget how he overcome adversity, founded Bailie schools in a variety of locations around China with like-minded people, and developed a significant number of practical technical talents for China. His motto, "Hands and Mind, Create and Analyse," has since become a slogan for Bailie Schools. We will never forget that the New Zealand China Friendship Society he founded has become an advocate and practitioner of friendship between New Zealanders and Chinese people. He has put in a lot of effort for the New Zealand-China Friendship over the last few decades.

Gung Ho's spirit, Bailie's vocational education philosophy, and international love peace are Rewi Alley's three priceless legacies. We have the responsibility and obligation as latecomers to contribute to the inheritance of this heritage. The original intent of the Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall was to perpetuate the Chinese people's traditional virtue of gratitude, which includes remembering those who “dug the well”, as well as to remember Rewi Alley's noble cause and great spirit among the people of New Zealand and China from generation to generation. The creation of the Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall has created a new platform for New Zealanders, particularly the younger generation, to appreciate and learn about Rewi Alley and his life and achievements. Next, the New Zealand Bailie Training Base will commit to developing a long-term strategy to reach out to local primary and secondary schools, to further promote cultural education and pass on Rewi's legacies to the next generation, "We will strengthen our cooperation with Shandan Bailie Vocational School and College, Lanzhou City University, and Beijing Bailie University in the future, learning from their advanced experiences, constantly enriching and contributing to the Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall, so that it can play an important role in the social function of the Bailie training base in New Zealand.

[Opening Ceremony](#)

Dr Jinming Chen and his wife Cathy Zhang pre-recorded unveiling video for the Commemoration Hall was played following the conclusion of the keynote speeches, marking the official establishment of the first Commemoration Hall in New Zealand, founded to remember the life and work of Rewi Alley.



Virtual Tour and Group Photo

After a virtual tour of the Commemoration Hall online, all the participants were instructed to pose with raised thumbs for the group photo opportunity and this brought the opening ceremony to a successful finish.



Acknowledgements

The decision to proceed with the opening of the Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall, during an unexpected L4 lockdown in Auckland NZ, via an online event could not have been achieved without the efforts of The New Zealand Bailie Training Base, the New Zealand China Friendship Society, and other closely connected parties. Today we acknowledge the tremendous amount of time and commitment to make this a reality. We thank those involved in the preparation to overcome the technical obstacles when participating in an online ceremony. This reflects not only admiration for Rewi Alley, but also a genuine desire to continue Alley's legacies. We hope that the Rewi Alley Commemoration Hall, will play an important role in fostering non-governmental friendship and exchange between New Zealand and China.







NEW ZEALAND BAILIE TRAINING BASE
新西兰·培黎实训基地



新中友好协会
New Zealand China Friendship Society