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No. 10 – October 2022

**October meeting**  
**Lister Luyou:**  
**Travels Around China's Border Regions**

**Friday, October 28, 5:30 p.m.**

Between 2014 and 2017, Ian and Jane Lister spent several months each year in China while Ian was employed managing the NMIT China programme. When Ian's work periods were completed, Ian and Jane frequently travelled independently throughout China and around China's border regions. These areas are inhabited by local peoples with cultures that span the borders and often are subject to tight security regimes.

Their talk will focus on the highlights of travelling across Tibet into Nepal, from Yunan into Vietnam and in Xinjiang along the Tajikistan border towards Pakistan, reflecting on their interactions with local peoples and the challenges of travelling in these high security areas.

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 24.  
ph. (03)544 4712 text: 021 447 180 e-mail: erm@xtra.co.nz  
Please make sure she knows you are coming!**

## Nelson Celebrates China Week

Nelson celebrated China Week and Chinese Language Week with an exciting range of events held in The Trafalgar Centre from Wednesday 28 September to Saturday 1 October. The Nelson branch of the NZ China Friendship Society actively participated in this celebration that was organised in conjunction with Nelson City Council and the Chinese Association and supported by other local organisations.

### Address by Race Relations Commissioner Meng Foon

The Nelson Branch of the China Friendship Society hosted Race Relations Commissioner Meng Foon for the opening of China Week on Wednesday 28 September. Meng was a delightful guest with an informative, entertaining and thought-provoking address.

Meng talked about the long history of Chinese people in New Zealand. The first Chinese came to New Zealand to work the “new gold mountain” but did not want to stay as they had left their families in China and just wanted to make a fortune. He acknowledged the Nelson descendants of Appo Hocton, the first Chinese man to come to New Zealand in 1842 and become a naturalised New Zealander. (Appo Hocton became an important member of the Nelson community and is highly regarded by our branch).

Meng, who speaks Cantonese and the Seiyap dialect as well as being fluent in Te Reo, stressed the importance of language in understanding people, their culture and the environment in which they live. He used Te Reo examples to demonstrate how place names can give meaning and clues by describing local characteristics. Understanding a language is key to understanding a culture.

Culturally there are similarities between Asian, Maori and Pacific people not always recognised by others. Being told to “look at me” when being spoken to may be acceptable in European cultures but is considered disrespectful by Asian, Maori and Pacific people. He told the story of the SS Ventnor that sank off the Hokianga while returning the exhumed bones of Chinese miners back to China. The local iwi showed respect by recovering and burying many of these bones.

Meng noted the apparent recent rise in racism against the Chinese saying that these things tend to come in spasms. Covid and media commentary on China’s presence in the Pacific have contributed to this. Racism and discrimination start when kids are young. These behaviours need to be called out. Peer pressure and supply chain are very powerful in shaping the way people think. He is pleased to see the new New Zealand history curriculum being introduced in our schools and says we should not be afraid of our history. Meng has high hopes for the success of the new National Action Plan on Racism, (perhaps something NZCFS should take time to consider fully). The more we learn, the more we understand. It is important that government is not discriminatory and that racism is not systemic. Drawing on lessons learned from his father, he said the best way to harmonious communities is to “have a cup of tea and talk with people”.

Reinforcing what we in NZCFS already know as being highly important, he said “When people get to know your culture and understand the value of culture it lessens discrimination and racism.”

### Business Seminar: Doing Business with China

As part of Nelson China Week 2022, we held two business events; ‘Doing Business With China’ and ‘Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce – Business After 5’ with a Chinese theme. This was the third attempt at holding the event because of earlier postponements due to Covid restrictions.



*Race Relations Commissioner, Meng Foon, addresses the opening of Nelson China Week.*

China Week was initiated in 2017 in conjunction with the then Chinese Consul General and Nelson Mayor with the thought “How can you do business with our largest trading partner if you don’t know anything about their culture?”. This year again there were very high calibre speakers from Australia, Auckland, Wellington and Nelson to share their knowledge. The speakers were:

Dr Luca De Leonardis: Head for Australia & New Zealand, Invest Hong Kong

Jo Coughlan: Managing Director, Silvereye Communications

Franky Wang: Head of Asia Business Activation, Bank of New Zealand

Ethan Jones: Senior Advisor Business, Asia New Zealand Foundation

Frank Witowski: Owner, Hybrid eBikes

The speakers were very well received with very positive feedback from attendees. Dr De Leonardis also spoke at the Chamber of Commerce function. Testament to the interest in the event was that three attendees drove up from Christchurch especially for these presentations.



*Ali Boswijk, CEO of Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce, addresses the Business Forum*

## Community Day

China's National Day culminated on Community Day on Saturday 1 October. This proved to be an extravaganza all Nelsonians could enjoy with table tennis, calligraphy, and Mahjong to try, as well as wonderful Chinese food prepared by members of the Nelson Marlborough Chinese Society with support from the Chinese Cultural Society of Wellington.

The Nelson Branch NZCFS had books to sell, and to give away, as well as a selection of Chinese mementoes gifted by the Consulate in Christchurch for the many children to take away. The branch was also responsible for the display of gifts presented to Nelson by sister cities Huangshi and Yangjiang, and for the exhibition of paintings by local children that had been digitised and sent to Wuhan for display in celebration of NZ/Hubei Week. Books and photographs relating to Appo Hocton, New Zealand's first naturalised Chinese settler were of great interest and Alvin Schroder, a great-grandson of Appo and branch member, was acknowledged.

During the day the items presented during the dance and musical evening on the previous evening were performed again, as well as many more. Nelson Branch supported two talented musicians and a dancer from Christchurch and also contributed to the expenses incurred by performers from Blenheim. With performers from Nelson, Christchurch, and Blenheim there was an amazing array of talent, and demonstrations of Chinese culture including a dragon dance and a parade showing Han Fu national dress, and Qipao.



*Performers entertain at the Community Day*



*Enjoying a game of Mahjong at Community Day*

This was an event to remember: bright and lively, entertaining, and a bringing together of the people in our community.

## Thanks from the President:

A report on China Week is elsewhere in this newsletter but I wanted to add my thanks to all who helped make the event such a success. Ian and Jane Lister and Bill Findlater, in particular, for the work they did in preparing for the event and also the committee and members who did so much during the days of the event: setting up and then packing up; selling raffle tickets and books; manning our stall; managing money . . . The evening with Meng Foon was something special, the business event successful, the evening performance wonderful and I believe the Community Day was everything we had hoped of China Week.

- Barbara Markland

## Rewi Alley Memorial Exhibition

*Victoria Room, Christchurch Town Hall, 1.00pm – 4.00pm., Thursday 20 October*



2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and New Zealand and the 125<sup>th</sup> birthday of Rewi Alley. To mark this important occasion, an exhibition of art works to do with the life of Rewi Alley will be held at the time and location shown above.

There will be approximately 100 art works by several artists on display, one of whom is Rewi Alley's foster son Deng Bang Zhen. The exhibition is being curated by the Friendship for Peace Organisation and the Chinese Embassy, and supported by the New Zealand China Friendship Society.

This exhibition will be of great relevance to anyone with an interest in the life of this very famous New Zealander, who spent 60 years of his life working for the poor people of China. Be sure to go along and see it, and of course please pass this information regarding the exhibition on to friends and family or indeed anyone

whom you think would be interested in seeing this very interesting exhibition.

## NMIT International student lunch

Barbara, Ian and Jane attended a lunch held at NMIT to welcome new international students, including a contingent from China. We were able to meet up with two students from China who have begun forming a WeChat group to enable us to make contact in the future. We hope to include the students in future activities including the November Pot Luck dinner, in conjunction with the Nelson Chinese Association. Both students were delighted to receive a copy of Dave Bromwich's Collected Papers on Rewi Alley's Internationalist Spirit.

We also met with Caesey Petterson who is NMIT's Wellbeing Coordinator and the main contact person to disseminate information back to the Chinese students who are studying at NMIT.



*Xing Peng (Jimmy) from Weihai in Shandong Province and Yi Wei from Beijing*