

Christchurch Branch Newsletter – December 2023

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Compliments of the Season

**Your committee wishes everyone
 a very Happy and Peaceful Family
 Christmas**



Next Meeting – 29 February 2024

Annual General Meeting

The first meeting of the year always includes the branch's Annual General Meeting. Please give some thought between now and then as to whether you would like to stand for the committee. This is an opportunity to become more involved in our society's activities. We are all committed to the NZCFS; here's your chance to give your talents to achieve the aims of our organisation.

Following the Annual General Meeting we will have a speaker (details to come).

November Meeting Speakers

Jodie Martin, Dr Zhu Linglin and Mandarin Language Assistant Tianyu Li (Sophie) of the Confucius Institute at the University of Canterbury (CIUC) gave us a very interesting talk on the Institute, which is a collaborative project between the University of Canterbury and Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan and was opened at the University of Canterbury in 2010.

Its activities include - assistance with regular Chinese language lessons; National Calligraphy competition; Local libraries/community activities for Chinese Language Week; Mandarin Learning Assistants (MLA) programme; Post grad students (Masters) studying Language or Teaching on placement; 1 year but sometimes can be longer MLAs contribute to schools: Teaching 'taster' classes designed to interest students in learning more about Chinese culture and language; Assisting Chinese language teachers by providing opportunities for students to interact with a native speaker, stimulating genuine classroom communications; Assisting teachers in the classroom and/or making small group work not only possible but more effective; Assisting teachers to extend their own Chinese linguistic and cultural knowledge; "Chinese Bridge" competition; Chinese Culture on the Road – in schools; Short term scholarships with HUST (4 weeks, 6 months or 1 year; Teahouse; Calligraphy classes and workshops; Mahjong club; Tai-chi classes – and more!

CUIC and our branch have committed to working closer and supporting each other, and having Jodie on our branch committee is a very useful and important part of that.

Get this date in your diary!

New Year Banquet

**Sunday 18 February 2024
Focus Chinese Dining
Addington Mall
300 Lincoln Road**

Further details to come!



Selwyn District Principals' visit to China

The Selwyn Sister City Committee and the Christchurch China Sister Cities Committee were asked by the Christchurch Chinese Consul General, Madam He Ying to recommend school Principals to journey to China in September, to explore the Legacy of Rewi Alley. Five Primary Principals from Malvern, five High School and Area School Principals from Christchurch and Dunedin and one International Director joined the delegation, lead by retired Principal and Selwyn Sister City Chairperson, Allison Rosanowski.

The journey of discovery began in Beijing with sessions on Chinese language, tea culture, historical exhibitions and an exhibition of finely etched ancient ink stones. A practical session reproducing a Chinese painting was a testing but fun activity. A visit to the Petroleum Campus of the Beijing No 101 Middle School gave opportunities for interaction with students as they researched in English, the origins of Mid Autumn Festival. Moon cakes were shared.



Delegation in Tiananmen Square

A glimpse into the history of China was observed as the delegation climbed the Great Wall, visited the Summer Palace, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. At the Summer Palace we learnt how the term *Dragon Queen* began and the *power behind the yellow curtain* as the unseen empress ruled a young son and young nephew sight unseen. The moa donated by Roger Duff of the Canterbury Museum is on display in the Beijing Natural History Museum. The NZ embassy in Beijing welcomed the delegation and all were impressed by the carved whare.

Rewi Alley's influence is greatest in Gansu province, where he established schools in Lanzhou and Shandan. Selwyn has a Sister City relationship with Shandan, while Christchurch has a relationship with Gansu province.



Delegation at Shandan Bailie Vocational College at statue of Rewi Alley and George Hogg Mausoleum in Shandan, with Principal Mr Peng.

Shandan Bailie Vocational College has had a Sister School relationship with Darfield High School for almost 26 years. Principal Andy England, accompanied by International Director Amanda Wright, presented Principal Peng with a traditional Māori weapon called a tewhatewha, which symbolizes the kindness between the world's peoples. The two faces of the tewhatewha represent both Chinese and New Zealand people, so that though we may be far apart we are joined together. The College's Rewi Alley Museum documents the

huge input of Rewi into improving the lives of local people. The Vocational College and associated senior high school now have 7300 students, most of whom live on site.



Delegation at Rewi Alley & George Hogg Mausoleum in Shandan, with Principal Mr Peng

In Shandan the delegation visited the recently refurbished library which has manuscripts that are over a thousand years old. Seeing the spartan former home of Rewi Alley and the magnificent new museum that documents his life and work and displays treasures he donated to the people of Shandan was a highlight.

All the delegation visited Qingquan School, which is forging a relationship with Darfield Primary School. The other four Malvern primary schools, Springfield, Sheffield, Windwhistle and Greendale have also been paired with Sister Schools. There is huge disparity in size. The smallest Malvern School represented has 28 students; the Shandan primary schools had up to 3000 students each.



Shandan Number One High School visit

A visit to Shandan No1 Middle School provided another opportunity for a Sister School in Selwyn.

In Lanzhou the delegation visited Lanzhou City University; previously the Bailie Oil School established by Rewi Alley. In the craft section of the university students were engaged in pottery, ceramics, print making and textiles. While in Lanzhou, Mairehau High School Principal Harry Romana was able to visit the Lanzhou No 1 Middle School to establish a Sister school relationship. His school's gifts were a Whakairo to represent the two cultures and a mere as a sign of leadership and strength and a Korowai made by a Mairehau School



Dunhuang, Mogao caves

While in Gansu, the delegation visited the Zhangye Rainbow landform and the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, which house Buddhist sculptures and paintings of over two thousand years. A visit to the Dunhuang Dunes, part of the Gobi desert, gave participants the chance to climb to the top of the enormous dunes or ride a camel.

The final stop in China was in Shanghai, where a walk on The Bund in the evening was a highlight after visiting Rewi Alley's former home site, from when he first arrived in China in 1927.

Dr Peggy Burrows of Haeata College accompanied by Harry Romana of Mairehau High School, were able to fly to Wuhan, another Christchurch Sister City, and sign Sister School agreements with two schools. This relationship signing had been delayed by Covid.

The delegations' visit was sponsored by the Beijing Language and Culture University, the Christchurch Chinese Consulate, the Selwyn Sister City Committee and the Christchurch China Sister Cities Committee

and the participants schools. The expected future growth in relationships of teachers and students is testament to the ongoing legacy of Rewi Alley. The cultural exchange and mutual understanding built within the group and with our many Chinese hosts made for a meaningful trip.



Presentation to Shandan Delegation Leader Wen Yong by Crs Bob Mugford and Lydia Gliddon

Shandan guests visited Selwyn, Hurunui and Christchurch late November - early December for four days. The Shandan delegation was able to reestablish links with their Sister City, Selwyn.



Sheffield Primary School Principal Nigel Easson receiving paper cut from Shandan Delegation Leader Wen Yong.

The group visited four of the Primary Sister Schools and exchanged updated Sister School agreements as well as Sister School, Darfield High School. A visit to Rolleston College to explore a Sister School relationship with Shandan Number One High School was also included in the programme. The MOU with Shandan includes agri - business and water management. This time the Shandan visitors observed sheep milking (Shandan is a sheep region), using water probes to ascertain how much irrigation is required, and a winery.

For two days they were joined by delegations from Gansu province, Beijing Bailie University and the Rewi Alley Foundation of NZ, which all have ties with the Rewi Alley legacy. They visited Springfield, Rewi Alley's birth place, plus Amberley and Christchurch where he was educated.

The Rewi Alley Legacy remains strong in all our regions here in Canterbury and in China.

Allison J Rosanowski
Delegation leader
Selwyn Sister City Chairperson

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