



Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

NEWSLETTER

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December 2014



From the President

Last year, I was elected President and I outlined some goals:

1. Modernising our image;
2. Enlarging membership - engaging with younger people;
3. Encouraging stalled talks with our Pacific neighbours;
4. Fundraising;
5. Establish a visual library (movie & stills).

I am pleased to say that with all of the above, we have made significant progress:

- Our website is due to change early in 2015, with new graphics and sections for activities;
- Wai Ching has been active in talking to groups and people about joining and topics of interest to attract new members;
- Following the successful biennial Friendship Forum, talks with Pacific nations are to recommence, with work before Christmas 2014;
- Plans are on the drawing board for several functions next year, including a “blockbuster” event;
- Tower Liu has already begun scanning and archiving images kindly lent by members past and present;

This year, activities included:

- Friendship Forum, with Wai Ching as Victorian delegate,
- Federal Directors’ Meeting, Darwin, with Robin as Acting Federal Secretary,
- John Brumby Dinner/Fundraiser at Quanjude Duck Restaurant and
- Installing a current Constitution to conform with new laws.

Next year, we plan:

- Eco tour of several districts in China, including Shanghai and Beijing;
- Blockbuster panel “In this Asian Century, where the hell are the Asians?”;
- Big progress & plans for the Pacific, with renewed interest;
- Cultural exchanges; - concerts, artists, performers, courtesy of information collated by Lia Cross;
- Sporting opportunities, especially youth; - football, maybe other suggestions?

As always, I am open to new ideas and happy to discuss any time. I still believe we must be more vocal (including a media profile) to support China and promoting friendship and understanding between our two peoples. However, I thank all of you for your support this year and look forward to your continuing participation into the future.

May you all have a wonderful, safe and prosperous 2015.

Anthony M Leong,
President, ACFS Vic Branch



Happy 2015

ACFS Vic Branch 2014 AGM

The ACFS Victorian branch conducted its 2014 Annual General Meeting on 26 November where there was a very good attendance and the Cultural Consul Mme He Ta was welcomed.

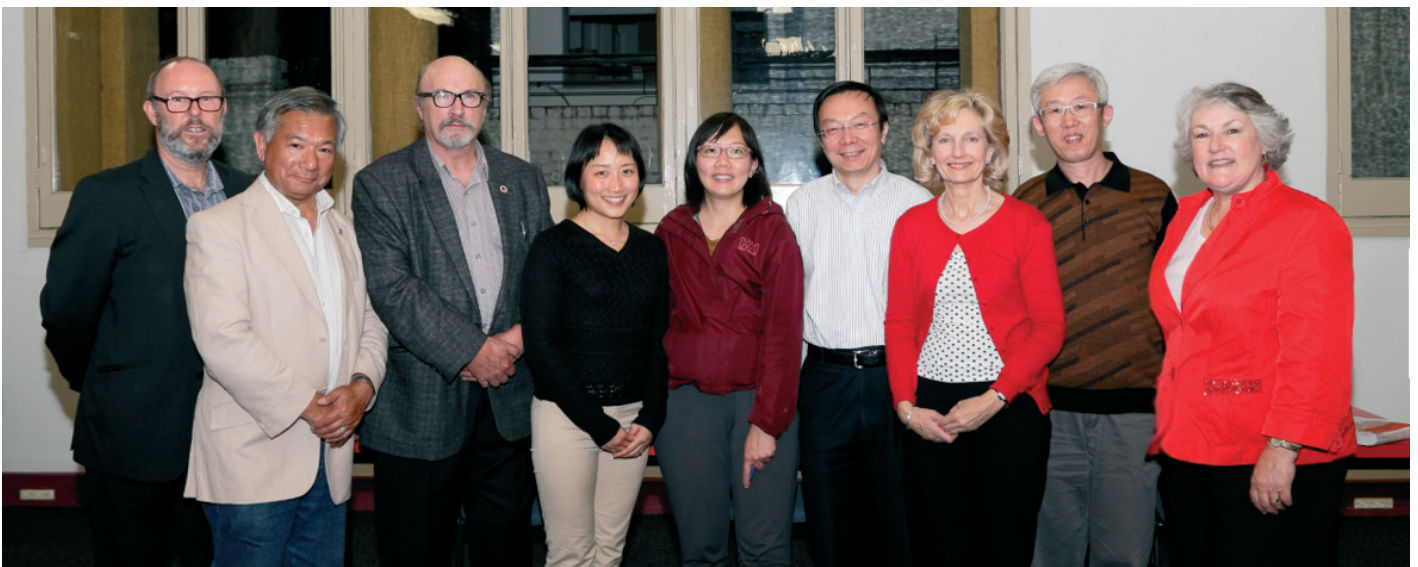
The meeting unanimously agreed to adopt new rules for the ACFS Vic Branch and a copy is available on our web site at www.acfsvic.org

A new Committee was elected and we welcome Amy Chan and Charlie Jenkins.

The new ACFS Vic Branch Committee is:

Anthony Leong: President
Tower Liu: Vice President
John Breheny: Vice President
Douglas Chen: Treasurer
Robin Matthews: Secretary

Neil Barker: Committee Member
Amy Chan: Committee Member
Wai Ching Chan: Committee Member
Lou Clayton: Committee Member
Lia Cross: Committee Member
Charlie Jenkins: Committee Member



The ACFS Victorian Branch Committee 2014

Matt Landolfo from Labor Energy Action Network addressed the meeting on “China and Climate Change”. Key points made in Matt’s presentation included:

- Impacts of climate change is directly related to the economics of a country with a loss of 5% of GDP if we don’t act immediately;
- There is the potential for national security threats over water and resources with people displacement;
- Increase in temperature will threaten wheat yields in China which will lead to threats to food security;
- China is making great improvements to climate change, such as banning free plastic bags in 2008, recycling metal waste from electronics and developing technology to decrease vehicle emissions;
- BYD, a large vehicle manufacturer, is competing on the world market with new electric cars;

Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the Australian and Chinese People

- Australia is not providing investment in renewable technology like China;
- China has large deposits of lithium which is used in battery manufacture and this will help place China as a world leader for battery manufacture and sales;
- China is carbon trading internally;
- \$36B is invested in China for the use of solar and wind energy;
- The US – China Climate Change agreement was to be commended; and
- He looks forward to the Paris Climate Change conference next year.

Matt concluded his address by asking the members for their thoughts on the role of nuclear energy. The meeting expressed strong concern for the current lack of a safe disposal method of nuclear waste. The meeting concluded with general discussion on climate change and the China – Australia Free Trade Agreement.

The meeting concluded with everyone enjoying a shared supper.

Robin Matthews

ART AND ABOUT IN MELBOURNE

REVIEWS by Lia Cross



1. CONCIERTO DE ARANJUEZ

Featuring YANG XUEFEI Thursday Night Masters Series, 2nd October, Hamer Hall, Arts Centre.

Yang was the star this event. Masterful indeed!

As she explained in her Radio National interview before her first of two concerts with the MSO (*Melbourne Symphony Orchestra*) in Melbourne, finding tutors to teach her classical guitar when she was growing up in Beijing was not easy. Her career is peppered with "firsts": first ever guitarist in China to enter Beijing's Central Conservatorium of Music; first guitarist to give a concert

in new Beijing National Centre for Performing Arts (the amazing structure behind the Great Hall of the People nicknamed locally as "the egg"); first Chinese student to be awarded a full postgraduate scholarship to study at London's Royal Academy of Music where she is now a fellow in recognition of her distinguished career. (1)

This particular evening Ms Yang performed in two of the four pieces in the Programme: The classical masterpiece for guitar, Rodrigo's "Concierto De Aranjuez", brilliantly accompanied by the strings and woodwinds of the MSO, and the Australian Premiere of Tan Dun's "Guitar Concerto Yi 2".

In this concerto the guitar was used as a punctuation piece to complement amazing sounds from the other instruments. The conductor confessed of being nervous to the audience before starting this piece as during its performance, he was required to use his hands to clap an accompaniment to the guitar's strumming- something he had never had to do in his conducting career. Even more unusual was the fact that some percussion instruments were dipped in water before being struck (the tambourine was one) to change their tone. There had never been a fish tank filled with water at the back of the orchestra on stage before!

People who attended Tan Dun's concert earlier this year would be familiar with his creative new

sounds, so don't miss out on his upcoming concert scheduled for Chinese New Year in 2015. Meanwhile, our remarkably talented Ms. Xuefei Yang, "is committed to expanding her guitar repertoire to include Chinese music." (2) With Tan Dun's compositions, she can't go wrong. Absolutely a Chinese musician to be added to any classical music lover's list!
(Refs. 1 & 2 from MSO Concert Notes, Sept./Oct.2014, p.21)

2. LOFTY MOUNTAINS AND FLOWING WATER

Jun Tian Yun He Ensemble, Elizabeth Murdoch Hall, MRC, Sun. Oct.9th.

As part of the Melbourne Festival we were fortunate to experience the haunting sounds of the timeless and majestic seven stringed GUQIN in this, the Australian Premiere of the Guqin Ensemble founded by Master WANG Peng. Beginning with the traditional famous piece 'Lofty Mountains and Flowing Water' guqin solo, the "instrument of the sages" as it is called, went on to be paired with the cello, guitar, throat singing and Kunqu opera to demonstrate "the remarkable breadth of Chinese instrumentation" (Melbourne Festival programme Notes, p. 37)

I couldn't agree more as I adore the guqin and its versatile sounds. However, despite the informative introduction introduction by Carillo Gantner, the detailed program notes and the remarkable accomplished performers themselves, I felt that the mostly non- Chinese audience received the concert in a somewhat subdued manner. Why? These were very esoteric performances best appreciated by audiences accustomed to them. But to a western musical ear unaccustomed to the exotic sounds , it seems to me that it was too much newness in too short a time. The audience was left somewhat perplexed.

Those of us who know and love the guqin and are aware of how melodic it can be, left satisfied. Those who were not aware, probably went away feeling that the guqin is used only to play cords to accompany other instruments. From the comments I heard people make after the concert, I concluded that a more traditional repertoire based on the guqin's flowing sounds alone, would have been a better introduction to this wonderful instrument for a western audience.

3. LINGERING CHARMS OF JIANGNAN

Jiangsu Folk Music Orchestra, Murdoch hall, MRC, Oct. 27th.

This concert celebrated the 35th Anniversary of the Sister-state Relations between Jiangsu Province and the State of Victoria as part of the Melbourne Festival. Fittingly, it was well attended by former Jiangsu people living in Melbourne from the very old to the very young and a foot stomping good time was had by all!

The Programme comprised Vocal Ensembles, solos by various instruments (flute, guzheng, suona - brilliantly imitating bird sounds and played by extremely talented Zhang Qianyuan) accompanied merrily by an orchestra of traditional instruments (erhu, pipa, Yangqin and a variety of percussion) , to traditional well known songs and sounds. The artists were mostly young people obviously enjoying themselves and this enthusiasm transferred to the audience who responded in kind. One criticism though, the piece called "Horse Racing" would have been better rendered on the traditional Mongolian "Horse Head Fiddle" which has a different sound. The erhu's did a very creditable job nevertheless.

A surprise piece for the audience was "Click Go the Shears" performed by the Jiangsu Chinese Orchestra Jasmine Ensemble and especially arranged for the occasion by Wang Aikang. This piece followed by the traditional song "Jasmine Flower" set the mood for the concert. Tempting as it is to describe each piece in detail it suffices to say that a good time was had by all as the audience clapped enthusiastically and called for more after each item. Three cheers for cultural exchanges. May there be many more to come!

2015 Melbourne Conference on China, August 21-22, 2015 Accountability and control in the Xi Jinping era Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies, University of Melbourne

The Chinese leadership is confronted with a very different set of challenges to those that provoked its predecessors a generation ago to embark on a program of market-oriented reforms. China then was a poor but relatively well-educated and egalitarian country, with an abundance of surplus labour in the agricultural sector and very little interaction with the global market. Now, China is an upper-middle income country with shortages of manual labour that dominates the global supply of low to mid-end manufactured goods and global demand for most commodities. While a series of measures to increase the scope of the market in the Chinese domestic economy and facilitate the transfer of labour from agriculture to industry were successful in lifting China out of the low-level equilibrium trap, a similar set of policy measures will not lift China over the middle-income hurdle. The major constraints to the economic development of China today—a tight labour market especially for unskilled and manual workers, social and ethnic conflict, financial imbalances and a range of environmental problems—require targeted solutions supported by sophisticated systems of accountability and mechanisms of control.

The Xi administration has acknowledged that a major shift is required by announcing the dawn of a new era of 'comprehensively deepening reforms', in contrast to the era of 'opening up and reforms' that preceded it. Despite the loud rhetoric, many questions remain about the character of public policy in this new era.

The 2015 Melbourne Conference on China, for the first time organised by the newly inaugurated Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies at the University of Melbourne, provides a timely occasion to weigh up the state of the reform process in the Xi Jinping era. The purpose of this conference is to discuss the policy measures required to lift China over the middle-income hurdle, and whether the Xi administration has the will and institutional infrastructure to implement such measures.

The following areas of contemporary Chinese public policy in economic, social and political contexts will most likely be covered:

- China's path of development
- Law, legal system, legal culture
- Organisation of the Party and the bureaucracy
- Regulating the public and private economies
- Environmental concerns
- Financial and fiscal systems
- Social welfare reform
- Central-local relations
- Population policy

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THE AUSTRALIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY'S AIMS

Cultivate friendly relations with the people of China by fostering the study of China's history, language, culture, social and political structure.

Promote mutual understanding through friendly exchanges between the people of China and Australia. Strengthening ties with travel, the exchange of ideas, information and trade between the two countries.

To seek to clarify misunderstandings between the peoples of China and Australia, which may arise from the misrepresentation of information.

PRESIDENT: Anthony Leong

VICE PRESIDENT: John Breheny
Tower Liu

SECRETARY: Robin Matthews

TREASURER: Dong Chen

COMMITTEE: Neil Barker
Amy Chan
Wai Ching Chan
Louise Clayton
Lia Cross
Charles Jenkins

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VICTORIAN MEMBERSHIP RATES

Family \$40.00

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I/We support the Society's aims: Signature/s

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