

# News Letter

August 2008

## Australia-China Friendship Society Victorian Branch

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## Beijing Olympic Games "truly exceptional Games"



-- The Beijing Olympic Games are "truly exceptional Games," said International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Jacques Rogge at the Games' closing ceremony staged in the National Stadium in northern Beijing on Sunday night.

"Through these Games, the world learned more about China, and China learned more about the world. Athletes from 204 National Olympic

Committees came to these dazzling venues and awed us with their talent," Rogge said in his closing speech.

The IOC president said the past 16 glorious days will be cherished forever. "New stars were born. Stars from past Games amazed us again. We shared their joys and their tears, and we marveled at their ability. We will long remember the achievements we witnessed here."

He praised the athletes as "true role models". "You have shown us the unifying power of sport. The Olympic spirit lives in the warm embrace of competitors from nations in conflict. Keep that spirit alive when you return home." Rogge expressed best wishes for the athletes who will participate in the upcoming Paralympic Games, scheduled for Sept. 6-17. "They also inspire us."

He also thanked the people of China, all the volunteers and the Beijing Organizing Committee of the 29th Summer Olympics.

At the end of his speech, Rogge declared the closing of the Beijing Games in French, and called upon the youth of the world to assemble four years from now in London to celebrate the 30th summer Olympic Games.

BEIJING, Aug. 24 (Xinhua)

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

It has been another busy couple of months for the Society.

### Talks – Western China

On 30 June, Professor Colin Mackerras of Griffith University spoke on “China’s Western Ethnic Groups: Religions and Politics”. The talk focused on Tibetans and Uyghurs but also referred to a few other groups. Professor Mackerras is a world-renowned expert on China’s minority nationalities, so we were privileged to be able to hear him speak in Melbourne.

In July we welcomed a delegation of Tibetologists who made a presentation, which was followed by an interesting and lively discussion with the audience.

### FILM NIGHT

At our film night in August, we showed a feature film titled “Kekexili”. Kekexili is one of the few remaining unspoiled and uninhabited places in China. It is also the last refuge of the Tibetan antelope. The film told the story of the fight by local volunteers to save the antelope from extinction due to aggressive hunting by poachers.

The documentary “Su Embroidery” gave the history of this beautiful craft, which originated in Suzhou, an ancient city more than 3000 years old.

### Annual Dinner

Our annual dinner was held on 1 August, where we enjoyed excellent food and company at the Dragon Boat on the Yarra. Acting Consul General Mm Yang Yueming spoke graciously and warmly of our ongoing friendship with China, and thanked us for our efforts over the years to promote friendship and understanding between our two peoples. Also in attendance were Consul Mr Chen Di and Vice Consul Mm Tang Ting. We were also pleased to welcome the Honourable Ken Smith MP and Mrs Smith, as well as former Victorian Presidents Paul Liu and John Breheny. We proposed a toast to the continuing friendship between the Australian and Chinese peoples and to China’s successful hosting of the Olympic Games.

### Olympic Games a Success

Notwithstanding a number of negative reports and comments in the media, I think it is clear that the Games have been an overwhelming success – in an all-round way. Nothing was able to dampen the enthusiasm of the participants, the cheering audiences and the TV watchers from all over the world. All competing athletes and those who worked so hard towards the success of the Games should be congratulated!

### Farewell to Consul General Mr Liang Shugen

Since our last newsletter, we have farewelled Consul General Mr Liang Shugen and Mm Liang, who have returned to China after several years in Melbourne. They will be missed, but we are hopeful that they will enjoy a well-earned break prior to their next appointment.



## A Speech at Victorian Branch Annual Dinner Party

Acting Consul-General Mme. Yang Yueming

Mme. Louise Clayton, President of Australia China Friendship Society Victorian Branch, All the members of the ACFS Victoria Branch Committee, Distinguished guests, dear friends, Ladies and gentlemen:

Good evening! I’m very delighted to attend the Annual Dinner of ACFS VIC Branch before the end of my posting in Melbourne. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to Mme. Clayton for the kind invitation.

56 years ago, soon after the founding of New China, a group of committed Australians formed the society to promote the relationship with China. They reached out their hands of goodwill and friendship across the vast Pacific to the Chinese people when they needed it most. Working with dedication and perseverance, they helped to bring down the barriers between the two countries and bring our two peoples closer. Some of them are no longer with us, but the seeds of friendship they sowed are bearing rich fruit.

56 years ago, coming to Australia or going to China was as difficult as going on a trip to the moon. But last year alone, more than 357,000 Chinese and 260,000 Australians visited each other's country. And there are now 100,000 Chinese students studying in Australia, accounting for 25% of all the overseas students here in Australia.

56 years ago, there was no trade at all between us. Today, China has become the Australia's largest trading partner with two-way volume of 43.8 billion AUD in the 2006-2007 financial year.

Under the good phenomenon of warm relations between China and Australia, we would never forget our old friends, and the important role that ACFS has played in promoting the nongovernmental communication between our two countries is much valued. I made friends with members of ACFS Vic Branch when I first came to work in Melbourne in 2004, when Mr. Paul Liu was the president. Mr. Liu was always actively involved in various activities to enhance the influence of ACFS. He even wrote articles to criticize the stigmatization of some local media on the issue of China's "Human Rights" and "Freedom of Religious Belief", which impressed me a lot. December of 2007 marks the 35th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Australia, the Former President of ACFS John Breheny wrote to the Premier of Victoria in March 2007, suggesting to him to hold a ceremony to celebrate the event. In 2008, after the riot in Tibet on 14<sup>th</sup> March, some western media made a lot of perverted and disloyal reports on the riot, which aroused protest of overseas Chinese. On 13<sup>th</sup> of April, thousands of Chinese students in Melbourne made a parade to oppose violence and media distortion. The president of ACFS Vic Branch Mme. Louise Clayton attended the parade and made a speech on the spot, showing great understanding and precious support to the Chinese students' patriotic activities. After the earthquake in Sichuan this May, the ACFS Vic Branch made generous donation to the victims of earthquake, representing their friendship to the Chinese people.

The Beijing Olympic Games will open in just a week. We believe that the Olympic is not only a high level sports meet, but also a great multicultural gathering. It serves as a bridge to link peoples with different cultures and promote the peace and harmony of the world. Chinese people have been longing for better understanding from the outside world. There is a famous saying in China today,

"The world gives China 16 days over the Olympics, and China will repay the world with 5000 years of civilization". I am deeply convinced that the Beijing Olympics will showcase the enormous historical and cultural treasures of China. And this will contribute to the exchange and symbiosis of the Oriental and Western cultures.

It is now mid-summer in Beijing. The people's enthusiasm for the Olympics is as hot as the weather. All the preparations for the Games have been accomplished; volunteers are determined to make a "Beijing Business Card" with their smile and good service; all the construction sites in Beijing have stopped work; the traffic policy of alternate number plate has been implemented; boulevards and streets in Beijing are very clean, and red lanterns and Olympic flags can be seen anywhere; old men repairing bicycles with bared arms now wear T shirts, old ladies in the lanes are practicing to say "Hello, welcome to Beijing!" in English; many modernized toilets have been installed around streets, and people would never worry about finding "No.1"—that's how the Chinese people call toilet. It shows how important people think about going to the toilet.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to express my best wishes to Beijing Olympics and to both the Chinese and Australian Athletes!

May I also wish our good friends from ACFS:  
Happy life & Good health!

## Latest News

New Consulate-General of People's Republic of China to Melbourne Mr. Shen Weilian arrived on 26th August 2008. Mr. Shen was Deputy Consulate-General to San Francisco in United State before been posted to Australia. He is a senior diplomatic officer who has long service in Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We are always looking for interesting stories and articles to share with our members. Any members who have great stories to tell please contact ACFS office Fax: 03-9654 8099 or e-mail to [acfsvic@vicnet.net.au](mailto:acfsvic@vicnet.net.au) Opinions expressed in this Newsletter do not always reflect those of the ACFS and its policies. Reliance upon information in this Newsletter requires independent verification of its accuracy or completeness

## "China's Western Ethnic Groups: Religions and Politics"

--Lecture by Colin Mackerras

On June 30, renowned China expert, Professor Emeritus Colin Mackerras, gave a public lecture at Melbourne University's Sydney Myer Asia Centre on the Religion and Politics of the ethnic groups in Western China. The event was organized by the ACFS Victoria branch, ACFS secretary Craig Skinner introduced Prof. Mackerras.

What followed was a well-informed and thoroughly researched briefing on the history and current state of affairs in China's Western regions. This stands in stark contrast to so much misinformation coming from sections of the Australian media of late.

Prof. Mackerras began by talking about Tibet and noted that the Dalai Lama and his views receive no critical attention, unlike almost any other political or religious leader; he seems to be above reproach. Yet his assertions that the Han majority of China is committing "cultural genocide" seem very hard to justify when the population of the Tibet Autonomous Region is overwhelmingly Tibetan. Prof. Mackerras suggested that the effects of modernization were similar everywhere in the world, and not the result of a calculated policy of cultural destruction. With the largest proportion of clergy anywhere in the world, Tibetan culture does not seem to be systematically threatened.

Many world leaders have called for a dialogue between the Tibetan leader in exile and China's government, but once again, there is a lack of public understanding as to just what each side's position is. Prof. Mackerras provided some enlightening detail here to show that the positions of both sides mean that agreement is very difficult to reach. The Dalai Lama claims that Tibet takes in a much larger area than the Autonomous Region which the Chinese have demarcated and also calls for a much greater autonomy than the Chinese will ever be willing to grant. This stand off seems intractable, at least at the moment.

The talk then moved on to Xinjiang, also in China's west and located to the north of Tibet. The ancient Silk Road once passed through Xinjiang and today it is another area populated by ethnic minorities. Again, Prof. Mackerras shared interesting details

about the history of the region. This area of China is mainly Muslim and although many parts are not as rich as they were during the time of the Silk Road, this area of Western China is rapidly developing.

Overall, the lecture was entertaining and informative. We hope to bring you more such lectures in the future.

*ACFS committee member Sandy McLeod*

## Prejudice a blight on Games

Am I the only person who has noticed that news reports of the Beijing Olympics are overwhelmingly negative?

The complaints hurried by our media against Beijing are becoming very uncharacteristic of a nation that does not tolerate whingeing.

The Olympics are first and foremost a showcase of sport at the highest level, yet the media chooses to shroud the event with anything but sport.

Notably, much criticism has been levelled at China for its treatment of Tibet and the human rights issue.

While Australia is quick to judge other, have we forgotten our own shameful history of the stolen generations and, more recently, our unnecessary involvement in Iraq?

First, Australia reported the murder of an American in Beijing then a few days later claimed intense security was compromising spectators' enjoyment of the Games.

It seems Beijing cannot do anything right.

Why hasn't the Australian media criticised the US with the same passion for its atrocities-Vietnam, the Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq to name but a few?

Sadly, the only logical explanation I can find is prejudice – West against East, capitalism against communism, whites against Asians.

from "MX" 15 August James, Balwyn

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## Fujian Puppet visit Melbourne

The Quanzhou Marionette Troupe performed to packed houses for the two days they performed at the Melbourne Chinese Museum in the city at the end of June and early July 2008.



What a treat to see the skill of these puppeteers perform with their Marionette Puppets, traditional and mythical stories as well as fairy tales, played out with the colourful and intricately made marionette puppets.

According to history Puppets existed in the Han Dynasty (206BC) although these puppets were not manipulated by men... According to historical texts we can conclude that puppets manipulated by men were used in China to portray operatic stories during the Qi period between 550-570. These days we see colourful stories depicting traditional Chinese life.

An ancient art indeed and a very entertaining one. Fujian Province is well known around the world for their puppet performances, their skills in puppeteering and the fine workmanship that goes into the creation of each string puppet. Each puppet figure has up to 30 strings to manipulate and on the day I attended I was fascinated to watch the skills of these puppeteers, how they managed to keep each puppet moving at speed and not tangle their stings had to be seen to believe. The puppeteers were actually performing their stories exposed on stage without a screen but for the final story the puppeteers had a screen about 3feet height and worked around

it and in front of it. The complete performance kept us all riveted to our seats.

Fujian Province is famous for their puppets and puppeteering performances, our troupe was from Quanzhou where they specialise in the string marionette but also use the popular glove puppet.

After the show we were lucky to be able to purchase glove puppets and the popular string manipulated delightfully coloured dragon which the children just loved.

I adore my two glove puppets, the emperor and the monkey king pictured over are strikingly colourful and elaborate.

Contact the Melbourne Chinese museum for information on their program for the rest of this year and maybe if you're lucky they may still have puppets for sale.

Chinese Museum 03 9662 2888

-- Suzette Murray

## NEW BUDDHIST TEMPLE IN MELBOURNE

The Melbourne Buddhist Community Association Inc. has a new temple.

Located in Elizabeth Street, North Richmond the new Buddhist temple was officially opened by Federal Member for Melbourne, the Hon. Lindsay Tanner, Minister for Finance and Regulation, on 26 July 2008.

Former ACFS committee member and foundation President of Community Buddhist Association (established in 1992) Ms. Josie Blyton welcomed all guests. Over 100 people gathered in the newly built temple to witness this historic event.

The new temple will provide facilities for all Buddhists to meet together to further their religious beliefs, and for educational and community activities. It will provide an assembly point for the practice of the Buddhist faith and the development of closer integration between people of all ethnic backgrounds.

## Visit the Serene Lotus Pavilion Garden – As featured on the ABC's Gardening Australia

Come and see for yourself the beauty and majestic surrounds of a Chinese Garden, which has been 20 years in the making.

A perfectionist of his craft, Mr. Hoe Lim (ACFS member) has opened up his garden to the general public in support of Australia-China Friendship Society Victoria Branch. In the tradition of the ancient art of 'Feng Shui' the garden features hills, valleys, rivers and lakes, as well as characters and animals, which bring the garden to life. Special features include miniatures of The Great Wall of China and the Lotus Pavilion.

This garden is a must see for all garden enthusiasts as well as those who will enjoy the calm serenity of this masterpiece.

Open one weekend only. All welcome

Date: Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th October

Time: 10.00am to 4.00pm

Location: 67 Asling Street, Brighton (corner of Wesley Street, 2 minutes, from Gardenvale Station)

Charge: \$ 5.00 (All proceeds to Australia-China Friendship Society Victoria. Children under 11 free)

For further information, call ACFS office: 03-9654 8099 or Hoe Lim (Serene Lotus Pavilion Garden) on 9505 0192

## Vale - Neville Manning Blyton

The passing of our long-time, most dedicated member, Neville Manning Blyton saddened us. Mr. Blyton's funeral washeld at Springvale Botanical Cemetery on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2008 and a memorial service at St. Johns Cathedral 11<sup>th</sup> July. His family and his friends at the ACFS will sadly miss him.

## NEVILLE MANNING BLYTON

--Speech by Lindsay Weate at Memorial service

It is a great honour for me to speak to you today on the life and achievements of Neville Blyton, a very great friend and a person I have admired so greatly in his business activities and leadership of organisations supporting the community generally - but especially the world of export.

Where do you start with a man of this stature and standing in the community? I suppose, as always, it is best to start at the beginning – the time I first met Neville in 1962.



NEVILLE MANNING BLYTON OBE. KOC.

12.09.1922 - 28.06.2008

At that time Neville was the Managing Director of the export division of HC Sleight and by very hard work and the recruitment of talented staff had achieved a standing as probably the major merchant export house in Australia. In that year I had joined the Export Payment Insurance Corporation, an Australian Government business undertaking and in whose establishment Neville had played a leading role by being part of the group which had lobbied the government of the day to start an insurance arm to protect exporters on the risk of non-payment by overseas buyers. At that time the Melbourne export world had many very eminent business executives who, with Neville, formed a formidable group determined to see that Australia prospered on world markets. Names such as Sir Charles McGrath of Repeo, Ken Kent of Bonlac Foods, John McCulloch (Kraft Foods) and Free Strickland a very close friend of Neville's who sadly died on the same day as Neville's passed away. All worked together to promote and develop Australia's export trade.

In this environment it would have been, easy for someone like Neville to sit back with a relaxed attitude and allow his very successful company to continue to develop without further effort - but this was not Neville's style. He always recognised that participation in trade organisations and export education was a must in order to see Australia advance to become a great trading nation. He was involved in the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce early in his business life and became president of the Chamber in the years 1971 - 1973. As part of the Chamber involvement he was Chairman of the Exporters Section and ensured that many of his senior staff were active in that Section. It was no wonder that politicians generally and particularly trade ministers such as Sir. John McEwen sought his advice on export matters and were ready to accept his invitations to speak at Victorian Export functions. Similarly his involvement with the Australian Institute of Export where he was a founding member, a director and later President of the Institute. His dream to extend the knowledge of young people engaged in export resulted in the formation of the Victorian College of International Business where he served as a board member and Chairman.

Neville could be described as having

a forceful and forthright personality with a determination to have his arguments recognised. I can remember my staff avoiding the telephone when Mr. Blyton phoned and in later years I often teased him that staff "put on their tin helmets and dived for cover" when he called. He could never quite recognize the fact that he had this reputation of being a strong personality in business dealings but we, who knew him well, could see that his strength of purpose was based on expert knowledge of his subject and an insistence to "get the message across".

Those who served with him could only admire his boundless energy and negotiating ability to obtain the export orders he sought. In opening up new and lucrative export markets for coal and woodchip he visited Japan some 180 times and was a member of trade missions to many countries worldwide.

Well you might say that Neville had a full and exciting life with his involvement in all the prestigious business and organisational activities I have mentioned so far - but this is not the case. He also found time to be part of the diplomatic corps in Victoria as the Consul for Belgium, representing that country for many years with great distinction. On his retirement from the post, he was honoured with a high order from the Belgium Government in recognition of his services, which complemented the Order of the British Empire (OBE), which he had received in recognition of his services to Australian business - particularly export.

In his life of retirement Neville was determined to continue to be involved in many activities, especially those of the Australian Institute of Export, his service as President of the Australian Asia Society and also lending great support to Josie his wife in her activities to support the Buddhist community in Melbourne.

The list of Neville's lifetime achievements is almost endless and I hope that I have covered as many as possible. As a man and a friend he was all that you would expect of him. I will miss him greatly and remember him fondly. I am sure you will all join with me in passing on our condolences to Josie and the children, all of who were so greatly loved by Neville.