



AITECE Ltd (Australia)

Association for International Teaching Educational
and Curriculum Exchange

NEWSLETTER Issue 13, November 2007

Teacher Coordinator's Report AGM May 27, 2007

New Teachers

During the past 12 months 7 new teachers from Australia and 1 from New Zealand began their teaching contracts in China. Many teachers have renewed their contracts, so that presently there are 15 teachers from Australia and New Zealand with AITECE. They are in Chongqing (3 Universities), Nanchang (2 Universities), Zunyi, Shanghai, Chengdu, Changchun, Zhaoqing and Fuzhou (2 Institutes).

Returned Teachers

Four teachers returned to Australia since our last AGM: Brian Jeffers, Lyn Carroll and Liz & Peter Hogan. Mike Hansen (NZ) is still teaching in China; but has left AITECE.

Prospective Teachers

Two new applicants are currently preparing to begin their Contracts in August, 2007.

Future Teachers

Presently there are at least 6 people who have expressed an interest in teaching in China with AITECE in the near future. The Teacher Coordinator keeps in contact with these people. Hopefully they will make application.

Promotion

The Teacher Coordinator encourages all to promote the work of AITECE and recruit new teachers for teaching in China. For promotional material we are indebted to Margherita McCaughey for her assistance to the Coordinator in preparing and

printing items for distribution. Steve Cram (at Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education, Croydon) also assists in posting out Application Forms and AITECE brochures to those who make enquiries. Further contact/promotion with schools, parishes and AITECE representatives is planned for this year. At present the Committee is considering establishing a website for AITECE (Australia). Hopefully this website will be available soon. The release of our first AITECE (Australia) Newsletter online suggests that we will have a valuable resource for the promotion and recruitment of new teachers. Special thanks and congratulations to Brian Jeffers (Editor), and Michael Dredge and Margaret Miller for the publication of the first issue online in May 2007.



*Seated: Michael Dredge, Greg McEnnally, Margaret O'Connor, Patricia Rentoule
Back: Margaret Walsh, Brian Jeffers, Ann Laidlaw & Stan Cusack*

AITECE NEWSLETTER

AITECE (HK)

As is necessary when preparing new teachers, the Teacher Coordinator is in regular contact with the Manager, Hugh MacMahon, at the HK office, as well as William Byrne (Assistant Manager) and Rita Chiu, Secretary. Hugh has recently informed us that since AITECE began in 1988, 81 Australian people have gone to teach in China with AITECE. We can be grateful and very pleased that we head the list! Hugh is always looking for more AITECE teachers! This semester (July) at least 20 teachers will be finalizing their contracts. I can give (HK) AITECE leaflets to anyone who may want to pass them on, thank you. The new teachers are always impressed with the service that HK offers them, especially at the Orientation in HK before they leave for their China placements.



Pat McIndoe from Tasmania

Ceremonies/gatherings for former, new and returning teachers

August 2006:

Yum Cha at Marigold Restaurant, George Street, Sydney.

14 AITECE people enjoyed the meal, reminiscing, and each others company. We used the occasion also to farewell a new teacher, Austin Punch.

September 2006:

Debrief/Welcome Home evening for Brian Jeffers, at Marsfield.

November 2006:

Orientation Session for new teachers, Anne Ting and John Oxland, at Balmain.

January 2007:

Orientation session for Sandra Power, Bellevue Hill.

March 2007:

Debrief/Welcome Home for Liz and Peter Hogan, Marsfield.

May 2007:

Debrief Session for Pat McIndoe, Tasmania.

May/June 2007:

Debrief/Welcome Home for Lyn Carroll (in Perth)

Many thanks to all who were present for these occasions, especially in giving advice to prospective teachers at the Orientation sessions; and sharing and support for returned teachers at the Debrief Sessions.

Interviews for New Candidates

As many as 7 interview sessions were held during the past 12 months for all new candidates. I am very grateful for the time and assistance offered by Cecily Gaudry, Ann Laidlaw and Michael Dredge at these sessions.

Sponsorship for AITECE Australia

Our Teacher Program expenses are presently being covered by annual subscriptions, donations and Administration Fees from new candidates. We are most grateful for this help. At present we are planning to submit a Sponsorship Application to the Australia-China Council

AITECE NEWSLETTER

in Canberra. If this application is successful we may be able to give financial support to those candidates who cannot meet the many expenses necessary in preparing to teach in China. Extra funding would also greatly facilitate the operations of the Teacher Coordinator and the Program itself, especially by way of the planning and presentation of more in-depth Orientation and Debriefing workshops for the teachers. Many thanks to Laurie Needham (Treasurer) and Ray O'Donoghue and his helpers for preparing the Application to the Australia-China Council.



*Back: Bernadette Nuque, Joan Chen, Joe Young, Greg McEnally
Front: Donna Marie Fu, Stan Cusack, Gina (in pink)*



Margaret Walsh visiting Mel Couch, Gina & Bernadette in Fuzhou

AITECE (Australia) State Representatives

The Teacher Coordinator is currently making more formal arrangements for returned teachers to act as AITECE representatives in their respective States. This has already been done informally, as the need has arisen with various new applicants. Cyril Hally has offered to promote AITECE and recruit teachers in Victoria. I would appreciate any suggestions re this arrangement.

Expressions of thanks

Finally, as Teacher Coordinator I would personally like to express my very sincere thanks to all members of the committee for their support, efforts and time spent on all matters related to the AITECE (Australia) Teacher Program. My special thanks also to Laurie Needham and Bernard Gartland (President) for making their Balmain premises and its office, staff and room facilities available for our meetings and sessions; and for their warm welcomes to new teachers and others interested in AITECE. There is no doubt that we can be proud of our work here in Australia. While some new teachers may at first find it difficult to settle in such a different environment and culture, eventually they are more than pleased, even delighted, that they have taken the step to help educate the young people in China. I hope that together we can continue to promote AITECE, so that many others may experience the wonderful opportunity of living and teaching in China. Thank you again.

Margaret Walsh

AITECE (Australia) Teacher Coordinator
May 27, 2007.

A Party for Foreigners

Each year the Fuzhou city government invites expatriates working in the city to a Christmas - New Year dinner, held in one or other of the better hotels. This year was the turn of Lakeside. I had been out at college for most of the day, not arriving home until 5pm, which did not leave much time before our driver picked us up at the middle school at 5.20pm. ACC middle school (the equivalent of our high school) is only about three minutes walk from our apartment, so has always been a good pick up point. After some welcoming speeches from the Deputy Mayor, in Chinese but with an English translation, we were provided with some entertainment. Some boys and girls gave us a Kung-fu exhibition, with some gusto; nobody, you will be pleased to know, was decapitated by the flashing swords. There was an instrumental act; some dancers and three singers, all very good. One of the singers is herself an expat, being a Filipina, teaching at Hwa Nan. Back in the Philippines she had been an opera singer, and you could tell. Talk about power. She certainly did not need the microphone, which I thought actually detracted from the quality of her voice. Meanwhile we ate ... and ate ... and ate. It was quite a spread, buffet style, and very, very nice. So you see, there are some compensations in living here. At the end of the evening, this year's winner of the Friendship Medal gave a speech. He is a businessman who has been here for ten years. He spoke of the difficulties in doing business ten years ago and of the great changes that have taken place in the city over such a short period of time. He finished by giving as his opinion the three areas which the city most needs to attend to in the future: (1) traffic - and I could see other expats vigorously nodding their heads; (2) graffiti, which I do not think is too bad; it is worse in Sydney; (3) environmental education of the young, and certainly there are big problems here with pollution. In short we had a great night, a good way to usher in Christmas.

Greg McEnally

EDITORIAL

When Tennyson wrote: *'I am a part of all that I have met,
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world...'*

he expresses, in the person of Ulysses, the familiar experience of our remembrance of things past and our yearning for something still to come.

This thought came to mind as I reflected on the life of a dear Chinese friend of mine who owed his knowledge of English to his American teacher in the 'forties. He would often quote to me the final lines of the poem:

"To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

and, indeed, included these words in a History of his College which he gave me to read.

As our new AITECE brochure puts it:

"Teaching may not be the only feature of your time in China. What seems to emerge is a wonderful dialogue between yourself and your students on beliefs, culture, values etc. The returned teachers speak a lot about this."

We are truly a part of all that we have met.

The Editor

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The Joys of a Tourist

It was towards the end of my final year in China and, with time running out and the May Day Holiday looming, I decided on a trip to the land of the Terracotta Warriors - not alone, let me add, but in an arranged tour. I was the only foreigner in our party, most of whom had no English, but the guide was most helpful and my companions took special care of me. I became quite friendly with a family from Taiwan who had a 7 year old son, and they encouraged him to practise his English. He took delight in describing things he saw — that is a red T shirt, this apple is red, my jacket is yellow etc. He sat behind me in the bus as we moved from site to site and would tap on the window to get my attention as he made a new discovery. He ‘adopted’ me as his grandfather and would often drag me after him to point out items of interest. I was also ‘adopted’ by an old



Son, Grandmother & Mother

lady as her husband: there was, you see, a two-hour wait to board the cable-car up to Hua Shan so the guide thoughtfully removed the two of us from the queue and sat us down in a shady spot. The onlookers must have had curious thoughts about this odd couple walking hand in hand to sit down in comfort. For the rest of the tour, she became my minder, just like a loving wife. Another helping hand was my room-mate, her grandson. On the first

night, he was reading a textbook in Chinese and, since I recognised the Economics diagrams, we had something in common and so a bond was forged for the rest of the trip.

And, as so often happens on a tour, the incidental misadventure adds spice to the rigid programme. Getting lost can really be fun! It happened like this: our party



With William

had ample time to view the awesome spectacle of the ancient soldiers, and gathered then around the guide to head back to the bus. All it needs is to be distracted for just a moment and a foreigner looks in vain for the guide’s flag amongst the milling thousands. If, into the bargain, he has not noted the number of his bus, what is he to do? Well, I headed across the fields in the general direction of the buses, picked a spot relatively open and stood there waiting. I was far from lonely for, conspicuous as I was, people kept coming up to talk and listen. And this went on for an hour during which my constant preoccupation was looking around for anyone from the tour group whom I could recognise. The one who spotted me (one of many who had been assigned to search, it seems) promptly rang back ‘Eureka’ on his mobile and returned me to the group, to the great relief - and amusement - of all!

Brian Jeffers

Memories of Min Jiang

Min River has over the centuries been the life- blood of Fujian Province. Day and night, the chugging of the sand-barges merges with the incessant road-traffic noise, as, loaded with sand to the gun-wales, they head downstream to building sites unseen. Along the banks, shipyards and wharves bear witness to the thriving industry of the place. At the noontide for a couple of hours, the barges berth near the bank like a regular flotilla while the crews slip ashore for some shopping. Up-stream, the pylon of the Three Districts Bridge dominates the landscape like a Colossus. As the fisherfolk trail or reel in their nets, their quiet intensity is balm to the spirit.

Liberation Bridge rumbles and groans with its burden of buses, trucks, cars and bikes. By night, footpaths morph into mini-markets for fruit, clothes and footwear. Just off the bridge, a large outdoor plaza is the nightly venue for graceful

ballroom-dancing, the solemn-faced couples the envy (it seems) of the less talented or daring onlookers. On summer nights, families emerge from stifling houses to pick up a cooling breeze and simply chat, or watch others fishing from the rails, often bringing their own collapsible stools.

On the banks, funeral-wakes and night-movies for the locals are common. Women armed with baskets of laundry step cautiously down to the water's edge and washing dries from improvised lines. The elderly do fitness exercises or walk their grandchildren. Young lovers stroll arm-in-arm after the toil of the day.

My final memory is the turbulence and power of the Min in flood, submerging riverside shrines and banyan trees alike, even threatening the decking of the bridge. This river has truly been my friendly companion in all its capricious moods.



Recollections of China from Roderick O'Brien

The first sign of the turn of the season has arrived: the almond tree in my yard has begun to blossom. It is an old and ugly tree, but each year it defies its age with an abundance of beautiful white blossoms.



Before houses were built in my area there were orchards of almond trees and fruit trees: many of these trees survive in the back yards of the houses. They attract a variety of birds. The most pleasant are the curious shrikes who walk right up to the door, to look in and see what you are doing. Usually they leave a little white “calling card” on the pathway.

My recollections go back to the time when I was teaching in Wuhan, where the blossoms were especially famous. The leading university in the city is Wuhan University, and every year the campus would be alive with the colour and scent of the blossoms. To go to see the blossoms was a popular outing for students from lesser universities. (I think that there was a Japanese connection - perhaps the Japanese planted the cherry trees when they occupied Wuhan.)

Yangste Dreaming by Margaret Walsh

Yes, I can recall the beauty and gift of life given me during five evenings in May '95 as we drifted up the Yangste River from Chongqing to Yichang. It was simply a magic opportunity to go up onto the top deck of our (Chinese) boat and stand and gaze at the evening sky.

The river was then still flanked by its very high mountain peaks. Through the mist they appeared as comforting friends guiding us on our journey.

At that time of the year also the exquisite perfume of the mandarin blossoms wafted by and enhanced the mood.

One evening I found Simon on the deck singing a melody in his beautiful tenor tones. How could I ever forget these experiences!

Experiencing Hidden China

I'm wandering along an alley between one-room homes in China.

Each home faces into a courtyard, or a smaller alley, hidden behind red doors in these grey concrete walls. Bicycle-drawn carts and motor-cycles with locks around their tyres clutter the alleys. I peek through a door and see a shoulder-wide passageway with wet clothes hanging overhead and loose bricks lining the edges. A narrow door opens to the right into a room where several men, or one family, live. There may be a courtyard around its corner, but I keep walking.

This is a *hutong* - a neighbourhood of alleys, hidden courtyards and tiny rooms. It is the Chinese adaptation of a Mongolian *ger khoolol* - the communities of single-family living units connected by common fences enclosing small family capsules. Mongols put their *gers* - or *yurts* - in their space and use wooden fences to seal out the world; the Chinese use concrete and red wooden doors. For all their drab, uniform bleakness, they sometimes house beautiful surprises.

The Temple Side Inn and Hostel is one such treasure. Intentionally plain on the outside, within it opens to a fifteen-room hostel in the *hutong* walls around an open garden with healthy plants and plenty of sunshine.

There are other hidden gems in the *hutongs*, with beautiful apartments just a heavy red door away. Their cleanliness is often a striking counterpoint to the trash heaps - there are few trashcans in *hutongs* - and industrial debris piled in the alleys.

Just as frequently, though, conditions are striking in other ways - one door is propped open in this alley and inside, I see five bunk-beds crowded together. Laundry hangs from the upper beds and someone had draped a battered pair of nunchakus over his steel head rail - probably one of the few luxuries that man owns.

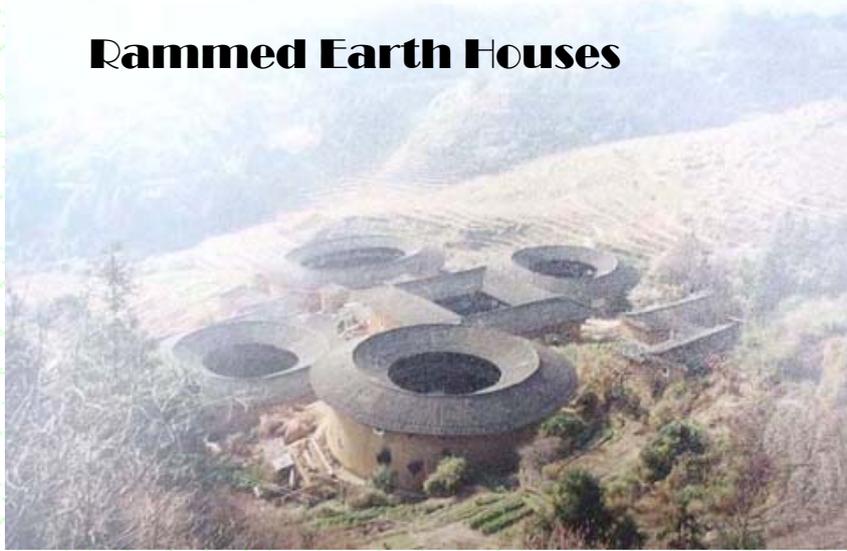
Lost in mazes of barely-marked grey corridors for block after block throughout the city, this is the China the tourists don't see - just as real as the shiny buildings and grandiose Tiananmen Square, but wider spread and, in a way, more meaningful. This is real life and it's unfolding in enforced anonymity off the beaten path.

Every other alley has shops lining an extra-wide pathway, the homes inside the walls and the butchers, fruit-pedlars and old women running sewing-machines on the outside. Men ride bicycle-drawn carts slowly, calling out for people to bring them recyclable bottles. Children play; adults buy and sell, and come and go through narrow doors into private worlds I'll never see.

I'm lost in China.

With acknowledgement *The Epoch Times* September 19-25, 2007

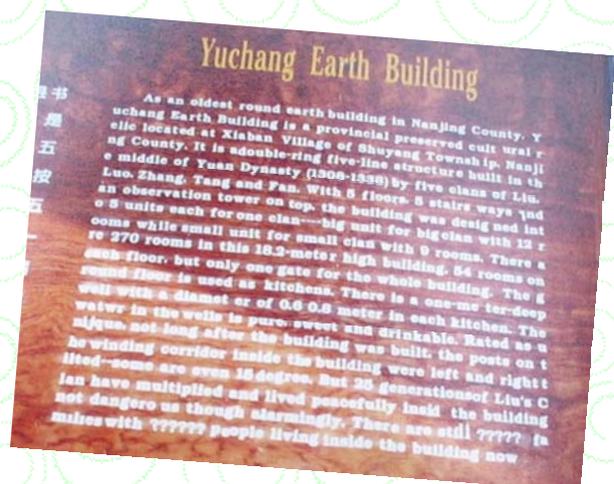
Rammed Earth Houses



The rammed earth houses in Fujian Province have a long history. The Hakkas who migrated from the Central Plains built such fortress-like houses in order to protect themselves when necessary. Today, such earth houses are unique among buildings in mountainous areas, creating a special architectural culture of residential houses in the world.

Such earth-houses are concentrated in Nanjing, Hua'an and Yongding counties and fall mainly into three kinds: Wufeng, square and round buildings. In general, they have three to five storeys and are more than 10 metres high. The mixture of earth, lime and husk is the main building material. Sometimes, bamboo and wood slices are used too. The rammed wall is one metre thick and can withstand a strong earthquake.

The rammed earth houses in Fujian Province demonstrate architectural, folk and mass cultures, ethics and etiquette simultaneously. They display the collective strength and wisdom of the Hakkas. Also, they symbolise the excellent culture of the Chinese nation. Such buildings are praised as a brilliant pearl of the east civilisation and wonder of ancient Chinese buildings. Today, the rammed earth houses in Fujian Province are attracting domestic and foreign tourists with their brilliance.



A Sad Sequel to a Love Story

Unfortunately, my bike, the symbol of ability to overcome my fears, my joy and my pride, was stolen one Tuesday afternoon in May.

After my classes in the afternoon, I rode my bike out to Rongqiao Town, along a very wide and quiet road beside the Min River. This area, by the way, is my favourite bike place. It was so relaxing and a very pleasant bike ride. I wasn't able to go that far though because there were police officers blocking the road. That week was the Fuzhou Fair. They were securing the area for an important event that night.

I headed back towards Fujian Normal University. Since I had plenty of time, I dropped by Andersen shop to buy some bread and visited the video shop as well as I was already in the area. As I was heading back home I suddenly remembered I needed some mushrooms so I went to the wet market opposite students' street. I frequented this place ever since I found out they have a greater variety of vegetables compared with the other wet market near our place. As I often did on previous occasions, I parked my bike at the usual place full of confidence and without any trace of doubt or misgivings that my bike would not be safe. I wasn't gone for long, maybe about 5 minutes.

My heart was pounding as I noticed right away that my bike wasn't there where I had left it earlier. I was in a daze and not quite sure if indeed I had left it there. I couldn't think clearly. I wanted to ask for help. But would the people around understand me? I stood there and I wanted to cry but couldn't. I just kept repeating like a mantra "My bike is gone". It was then that I noticed several men watching me. They had that look which my gut feeling was telling me that they knew what had transpired earlier. Left with nothing to do, I walked home dejectedly. For the next days I longed for my bike like it was a friend whom I dearly missed. It pained me to see it wasn't there each time I walked past our gate.

Bernadette Nuque



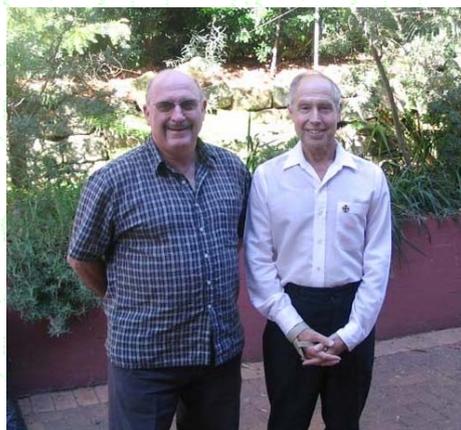
*Greg McEnally, Joan Chen,
Bernadette Nuque, Brian Jeffers*

The Latest from Margaret Walsh, Teacher Coordinator

Greetings to all - our present, past, and hopefully future, AITECE teachers. No doubt we all have wonderful (and sometimes not so wonderful!) memories of our time in China. Recently I was emailed a lovely cameo 'China Experience' from Roderick O'Brien. I responded with an account of one of my own special moments back in 1995. A more recent memory of this year was my visit to Tasmania during which I caught up with Pat McIndoe in Hobart. After many years in China and the last two years in Guiyang, Guizhou Province (where I visited him in 2004 also) Pat was gradually settling back to a quite different lifestyle; memories of China still vivid. Of course Tasmania has a most pristine environment with brilliant blue skies, sparkling waters, virgin forests; quite the opposite to hazy, polluted China. However, the presence of those engaging Chinese



A new friend for Margaret O'Connor



*Left: Greg McCann (10 years in China)
Right: Greg McEnally (recently returned)*

students we saw each day caused us to often forget adverse weather conditions! There are other teachers who have returned home to Australia this half year and we'll welcome them with a Debrief ceremony on November 25 at Balmain in Sydney. We had a special group of our former AITECE teachers gather on July 7 at Marsfield when we farewelled a new teacher, Margaret O'Connor, now teaching at the Anglo-Chinese College, Fuzhou. Special thanks to Michael Dredge, and to all former AITECE teachers for their participation and generous help at these sessions. Our last AITECE (Australia) Committee meeting for the year will include lunch hosted by Laurie and Bernie at Balmain. Many would be aware that these men give wonderful support to AITECE in Australia so we thank them for their contribution and wish them well in the future. My thanks again to all who contribute to our AITECE (Australia) efforts. We look forward to welcoming those new applicants who feel they could teach English in China ... an experience that lasts forever!



The AITECE Committee

*Back l to r: Reg Howard, Michael Dredge, Brian Jeffers, Ray O'Donoghue
Front l to r: Margaret Walsh, Cecile Gaudry, Bernard Gartland, Ann Laidlaw, Laurie Needham*

Information for Prospective Teachers

- ☐ Contracts with the Universities in China are available for six to twelve months (renewable)
- ☐ Teachers are placed in groups for company and support
- ☐ Visits from the office in Hong Kong are offered each semester
- ☐ Intakes are in February and late August/September each year
- ☐ Teaching in other subjects besides English language is also in demand eg Law, Business, Science
- ☐ TESOL Certificate is an advantage
- ☐ Adequate salaries, airfare allowance, medical bonus and free accommodation are usually provided by the Universities
- ☐ Personal expenses include insurance, visa, and medicals
- ☐ Initial interviews, preparation and orientation offered by the National Office in Australia
- ☐ An orientation program for new teachers is held in Hong Kong before teachers leave for China
- ☐ AITECE has a commitment to the poorer areas of China.

For Information

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For an Application Form

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“There is no doubt that I see the world differently as a result of my experience in China. Just the ordinary things we do as human beings, because we care for one another, meant so much to the teachers and students.” (A former teacher)