

Australia China Friendship Society
ACT Branch Inc



澳中友好协会

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Bulletin

2023/7 July 2023

Coming events

Film night

26 July

Talk on holistic Traditional Chinese Medicine

30 August

Talk by Jocelyn Chey

27 September



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Promoting friendship and understanding between the Australian and Chinese people

Film evening.

The Society's function for July will be a film screening at the Southern Cross Club at Jamison on Wednesday 26 July. The film is *The Song of the Phoenix*:

In the 1980s, Master Jiaosan headed a suona ensemble, playing at weddings and funerals. The local custom means that the masterpiece of "Song of Phoenix" could only be played to well-respected persons during their funerals. Jiaosan's apprentice You Tianming worked very hard and stood to succeed Master Jiao with the suona ensemble. Jiao and You witness a lot of ups and downs in this musical form of suona. When fellow suona players were forced to make a living in the city as unskilled laborers, the ensemble finally broke up. However, You Tianming stuck to his promise to Master Jiao and committed himself to the traditional art. When Master Jiao passed away, Tianming played "Song of the Phoenix" at his graveside to commemorate the noble and dignified life of Master Jiao.

29th Golden Rooster Award-Grand Jury Prize

Director: Tianming Wu (Tutor of famous director Yimou Zhang)

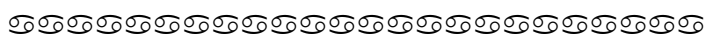
Length: 107 mins

Cast: Zeru Tao, Mincheng Li

Genre: Drama

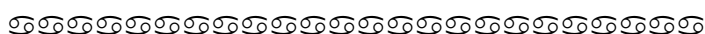
Language : Mandarin with English subtitle

As usual, members and friends are invited to meet for dinner in the bistro from 6.00pm. The film will begin at 7.30pm. A gold coin (or more) donation will go towards our Project Hope students. Please book by emailing acfsevent@gmail.com by 22 July.



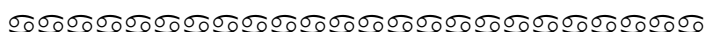
Talk on holistic Traditional Chinese Medicine

Dr Xue Song LIU(TCM) BMed and Dr Yang Xu(TCM) BMed from the Song & Yang Clinic have agreed to give us an illustrated talk on holistic Traditional Chinese Medicine on Wednesday 30 August at 7.30pm at the Jamison Southern Cross Club. More details in the next newsletter.



Talk by Jocelyn Chey

Jocelyn Chey will again be coming to give a talk to members and guests on Wednesday 27 September at The Jamison Southern Cross Club. The title is yet to be confirmed.



Fast facts from the *Beijing Review*, July 2023

- A 16 megawatt wind turbine was installed 35 km off the coast of Fuzhou, Fujian Province on 28 June. It is claimed to be the world's largest per-unit capacity wind turbine. It is operated by China Three Gorges Corp.
- Chinese courts at all levels concluded some 37,000 first-instance drug-related cases in 2022, continuing a downward trend that began in 2015. Drug-related court cases accounted for 3.59% of all criminal cases in China in 2022, down from 8.35% in 2018.
- Airbus for the first time has delivered an aircraft assembled in Tianjin to a European client. Hungarian airline Wizz Air took delivery of its first A321neo aircraft assembled in China on 27 June. Since it started in 2008 over 600 aircraft have rolled off the Tianjin production line. In April Airbus announced it would construct a second production line in Tianjin.
- In 2022 China's known lithium reserves increased by 57%. 40% of the reserves are in Jiangxi Province.
- Turnover of the civil aviation sector was 9.71 billion ton-km in May, rising 4.3% from April that is 90% of the May 2019 pre COVID level. Nearly 52 million air passage trips were made in May, that's nearly 95% of the level in May 2019.

Thanks to Neil Birch for compiling these.

Australian Centre on China in the World

Death, History, and Sense of Place in 14th-15th century Dali

27 July, 4-5.30pm CIW Seminar Room, Eloise Wright, Assistant Professor, Ashoka University

In the late 1970s, the Dali Cultural Bureau acquired a number of stones bearing Mongol-era inscriptions that had been discovered in the walls of the famous Wuhua Tower during the Cultural Revolution. The twenty funerary inscriptions in this collection joined a larger collection of rubbings from the late 14th to the early 20th centuries, collected throughout the region in the 1930s and 40s.

For further information go to <http://ciw.anu.edu.au/events/death-history-and-sense-place-14th-15th-century-dali>

Committee News – June 2023 meeting

The Committee met at the Lemongrass Thai restaurant in Woden on a cold and rainy night.

We discussed the technology grant, of which there is \$1143 remaining to be spent. John located an end-of-financial-year deal on the PA system he had been looking at, and ordered it on the spot. The Lantern Festival grant has been acquitted and Carol and Tanja are working on an application to the Canberra Southern Cross Club for their community grants, seeking money for printing the letters and certificates for the Panda Competition and some for prizes for the Competition.

The School Awards ceremony and the ANU Classical Chinese Music Ensemble concert are both affected by the unavailability of the China in the World centre due to maintenance and renovation. Carol and Amanda, along with Rupert from the Ensemble, are exploring alternative venues.

As always, planning for future functions occupies our time. Corinne is working on ideas to involve more young people in our activities (a dress-up ball, a dumpling-making workshop among others) and will try to refine them for the next meeting. Any ideas from members most welcome! She is also working on updating and maintaining the website.

As usual, dinner followed, with the duck in tamarind sauce a stand-out for me.

Jean Norman, filling in for Tanja who is recovering from Covid.

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## Yum Cha lunch

Twenty-six members enjoyed a yum cha lunch on Sunday 18 June at Ginseng Restaurant at the Hellenic Club. It was the first time we had dined at this restaurant and owing to an error by Carol, the time specified for the start was 15 minutes too early, so we all had time to move around and chat to each other before going to our tables.

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Historical Walk in Queanbeyan

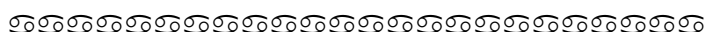
A footnote to the Queanbeyan walk story – member Roger Carter writes:

I saw in the latest news that Donna Zhao made some nibbles for your outing. Donna and I are classmates at CIT, she is an amazing baker.

See the CIT Student News, where Donna recently won the baking competition for best gluten free pie in Australia.

Donna hides her light under a bushel but I think this should be shared in the next newsletter.

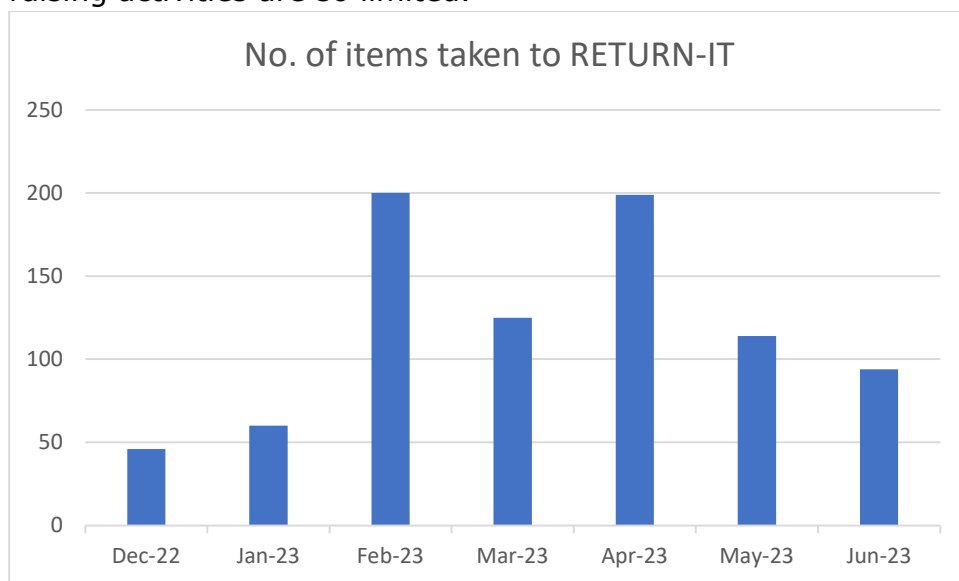
Australia's best Gluten Free pie: Congrats to Donna Zhao who just won an award for baking Australia's best gluten free pie at the Baking Association of Australian national awards. Donna is studying Baking and loves working in the industry.



Recycling of cans and bottles

Many thanks to those members who have taken their cans and bottles to the RETURN-IT recycling centres and chosen to donate the refund to ACFS.

Individual donations have varied from 12 to 200 and every \$ counts when our fund-raising activities are so limited.



To date 838 items have been returned for refunds to the Society of \$83.80

Instructions on how to credit deposits to our account were in previous *Bulletins*.

Letter from Zhanjiang – Roger Arnold

In search of teas that rock ...

A recent invitation we received to visit WuYi mountains in northern Fujian to experience the Spring tea harvest was hard to pass up. Fujian is the province where I lived and worked when first I moved to China and harbours many happy memories. And, this region features a UNESCO world heritage listed National Park, having attracted accolades for its local culture along with two alluring elixirs of health and happiness that both my wife and I particularly enjoy: *"one all-seeing green leaf and simulant panacea, and one a space of wonder and wind, indomitable culture and a vital source of fresh water"*¹

It is a long way from our current home in Beihai to Wuyi mountains, and after investigating various options, we went by highspeed train as a line goes right through the town of Wuyi. But with no direct services, our journey involved first a short ride (just over 1 hr) north from Beihai to Nanning (the capital of Guangxi province), and then a second longer ride (9 hr) that took us eastwards from Nanning all the way across southern China to Wuyi. Despite the length of this journey, we thoroughly enjoyed it – high speed trains here are very comfortable, quiet, clean and have great service in their little buffet cars where one can procure quite tasty Chinese fast food and various snacks at reasonable prices.

The timing of our visit to Wuyi was carefully planned to coincide with the best of the Spring tea harvesting season there. The local tea producers there swear that the best Wuyi tea leaves can only be picked from "Guyu" (around April 20) to "Lixia" (around May 6)". Guyu (谷雨 gǔyǔ) is a Chinese solar term² signifying 'The rain for the crops' and usually coincides with the real start of the rainy season in southern China, while Lixia (立夏 lixià) is the term signifying 'set the start of summer.' And true to form we were greeted by plenty of rainy, and misty weather for our visit to Wuyi – but this just added to the mysticism, serenity and atmosphere of these wonderful mountains.

Soon after our late afternoon arrival to the town Wuyi, our friend whisked us away to his village a short drive outside of town. Sitting in one of the regions broader, more accessible valleys his family's home included a relatively recently added lean-to extension that serves as their tea processing facility. Inside this, our friend proudly introduced us to a series of machines his family use to produce their processed teas: all various styles of what they call "yancha", or rock tea (*yan* = rock, *cha* = tea).

Most *yancha* can be categorised as oolong tea, and strictly speaking can refer only to teas grown and processed in Fujian's Wuyi mountains. They are called rock teas because of the region's terroir – it is a very rocky mountainous area. Local teas inherit unmistakable "rocky" tastes, thanks to not only the local terroir but also the local drying and roasting processes.

¹ Jeff Fuchs: www.jefffuchs.com

² Chinese solar terms include 12 major and 12 minor solar terms. Ancient Chinese divided the circle of the annual motion of the sun into 24 equal segments; each segment was called a "jie qi" or solar term. For more information: <https://www.chinahighlights.com/festivals/the-24-solar-terms.htm>

They say it is the local drying and roasting technique that really helps set Wuyi rock teas apart from other oolong teas. This drying and roasting involves not just one or two steps, but a several, distinguished steps some of which seem unique to Wuyi.

This is what we were introduced to in our friend's village house. The first step in their processing involves withering the leaves in drum like fan forced driers; when we arrived these were replete with leaves picked earlier the same day, with alluring aromas from the fresh leaves wafting out from these and permeating the building. Once sufficiently withered, the leaves are then usually subject to a higher temperature drying process in a type of kiln, but with just a very gentle heat. At the end of this stage the tea is still quite vegetal and floral, and if the processing stops here the tea would be called a type of *maocha*, much like a green tea.



The final stage of processing *yancha* involves gently roasting the tea over well-burnt charcoal. This is what were introduced to in a separate room – small batches of tea are loaded into special bamboo baskets, thin enough to allow the heat to touch the leaves but thick enough so the leaves do not get burnt. With the special pre-burnt charcoal used for this step, most *yancha*'s have no discernible hint of smokiness. With the special baskets sitting over the gentle glowing charcoal ash, the tea leaves need to be turned every 30 minutes or so, until they reach the desired level of roasting.



Not long after our introduction to this fascinating tea production process, we found ourselves enjoying dinner with our friend and his family. They seemed very happy that we found great delight in their local dishes and, of course, their local 'red wine'. We were fascinated by this wine – it was not made from grapes but was a rather stronger concoction made from *baijiu* (white spirit wine) that had been infused with some local flowers, imparting a stunning red hue to it. During this leisurely dinner, our friend kept ducking out to check on the withering process and rotate the drums as needed to ensure even withering. He explained how at this time of year, there can be a series of sleepless nights as various stages of the processing must continue through the night.



The next morning, we joined our friend and his family to pick more of their tea leaves from their picturesque hillside fields, where some of their neighbours were also busy

on similar endeavours. But rather than being a slow, labour intensive harvest involving hand plucking such as I have witnessed previously on numerous occasions in Sri Lanka, recent innovations have seen development of lightweight machines that efficiently pluck tea leaves and do so with reasonable quality. These machines are best described as a combination hedge trimmer cum leaf blower; the sheared leaves and buds are blown into an attached collection bag as they are severed from the tops of the tea bushes. This mechanical plucking results in the just plucked tea fields having a wonderful manicured appearance of sheared hedges in European gardens rather than of remote, mountainous tea fields.

With their tea picking for the day all finished within a couple of hours, once the leaves were transported down the mountain and loaded into withering drums, we set off to be introduced by our friend to a few other growers and boutique tea producers. Soon we are learning the importance of terroir to the local teas, and how the prices of both fresh leaves and the finished product vary markedly depending on the valley, the aspect and variety of tea bushes from which they are sourced.

Later that day as we sit tasting teas and talking more on the subject of terroir and tea varieties, I inquire about the availability of *Lapsang Souchong* tea (known in China as 正山小種 – zhèngshān xiǎozhǒng) – as Wuyi is the original source of this intriguing variety of tea and I am keen to track some down. But while this tea well known to many western tea connoisseurs, I have found that it can be little known and hard to find in southern China (at least within the circles I move in). Upon my inquiry, our host (a good friend of our friend) smiled and went to fetch some small tea packets from her storeroom. Soon, we were sipping a most intriguing, wonderful tea that was remarkably different to what one would expect based on a familiarity with Twining's' bold, smoky *Lapsang Souchong*. Sure, it did have some smokiness, but in a wonderfully subtle, delicate and alluring way with a delicately coloured yellow/gold liquor and subtle taste of dried longan for the first few brews. Intrigued by this revelation, I was left vowing to explore and learn more about the intriguing world of *Lapsang Souchong* teas.

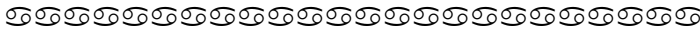
The next day, we set out to explore deeper into the mountains that Wuyi is known for, and based on our friend's recommendation, we start our day of exploration with a bamboo raft ride. This took us along a section of one of the area's rivers famous for having 9 bends along with spectacular scenery of beguiling protuberant mountain peaks and cliffs soaring above the river's banks throughout the passage through these bends.



After our superb raft ride, we set off to climb some of the spectacular looking peaks under grey, sodden skies, hoping that heavy rain predicted for later that day would hold off long enough for us to explore high and wide. Fortunately, the mountains of Wuyi are not particularly high, but as we soon discover on one of the lesser trodden routes, they do offer some incredibly spectacular hiking trails. Our climb up one peak call Dawang Shan saw us navigating up narrow stone steps to ascend inside a soaring, narrow rock crevasse – a superb and thrilling route that really had us filled with awe. As we emerge at the top of the crevasse close to the top of the peak, we were greeted by swirling wafts of mist and rain. But rather than dampen our enthusiasm we were delighted; the swirling mist added a beautiful ethereal feeling to the magnificent, seemingly endless expanse of mountainous that extended before us – the misty landscape echoed classic Chinese ink paintings where mist and clouds are used to provide surreal perspectives.



Overall, the few days we spent exploring the teas, culture and landscapes of Wuyi Mountains were pure magic. And whilst we heartily recommend a visit, we must also caution that, like us, you could well find yourself thoroughly enchanted by the spell of this gorgeous mountainous region of south-eastern China.



Rare Milu deer spotted in Tianjin

By YANG CHENG in Tianjin | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2023-07-07

The white-colored Milu deer, a rare species native to China, has recently been spotted in the Qilihai wetland area of North China's Tianjin municipality.

In 2011, a Milu deer island was established as a tourist destination, and 10 Milu deer were introduced for visitors. Dedicated caretakers were appointed to be responsible for their feeding and care. Since mid-2017, the local government has suspended tourism activities and restricted farming, converting a significant portion of the area into nature reserve. The efforts involved relocating residents who used to live in close proximity to the wetland. Thanks to these efforts, the deer population has reverted to a wild state, and their numbers have steadily increased.



Australia China Friendship Society ACT Branch — membership application form

Annual subscriptions are due on 1 January and are current until 31 December of the same year. The monthly Bulletin is included in the subscription and is distributed by email.

Subscription rates, payable to **the Treasurer, PO Box 530, Civic Square ACT 2608** are:

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