

China Eye



**SACU: The Society which has promoted understanding
between the peoples of China and the UK since 1965**

Spring 2025

Number 85



Contents include:

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Sino File and China Eye Diary**

CHINA EYE

Spring 2025 Issue No 85

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The Summer issue (Number 86) of China Eye will be available in early May 2025. Please send news or articles for inclusion before 20 April 2025 to Walter Fung, Tel 0161 799 6944, Email: walter.fung888@btinternet.com

Front cover; Embroidery of Cats at Suzhou Silk Museum; photo by W Fung in April 1983.

Welcome

Resignation of SACU Chair, Chris Nash

I would like to inform you, on behalf of SACU Council, that unfortunately Chris Nash has stepped down as SACU Chair. When he took up the role in 2023 it was on the basis that he would be moving back to the UK in February 2024. Zoë Reed continued to co-work with him and support him in the knowledge that the role does require the postholder to be living in UK, and that Zoë could not complete the handover to him until his return. Unfortunately, Chris has found that it has not proved possible to return to the UK and so he has resigned the role in advance of our big year of celebrations 2025. Whilst unfortunate, it will not hamper our plans for 2025 in any way. Council has reviewed the situation and decided SACU Executive Committee and SACU 2025 Planning Group will work together and focus on the delivery of all the exciting activities for the time being. Please see pages 14-16. However, if any member is interested in the role, please email membership@sacu.org.uk

Zoe Reed

Reading about China

This issue contains an unusually larger number of books about China. Some are presented here as complementary to the SACU tour to China, *In the Footsteps of George Hogg*, Tamara Treichel's book *Hutong Heartthrob*, reveals subtle differences in East West culture in everyday affairs. A 'bonus' is that there is a description of the historic places they visit together. Keith Bennett and Carlos Martinez's book, *People's China at 75, the Flag Stays Red*, is extremely important as it presents facts from the Chinese point of view of China's development since the 1949 Revolution. Not all histories, even by eminent historians and well qualified scholars present accounts which are without some 'Western' bias.

Advancing UK-China Higher Education (Cheryl Yu)

Our secretary Cheryl Yu is a leading voice in advancing UK-China higher education and transnational education. She is co-founder of Higher Education Connected and has had her views quoted in the latest issue of the publications, *'University World News'*, *De La Cour Communications* and also *icef monitor*. Cheryl is hoping that the UK will maintain or regain its leading position in the Chinese education market and that the UK should attract the brightest Chinese students. In addition, British students should be encouraged to study abroad and become internationalised; Chinese universities would welcome UK students. Also, more attention and support should be given to career/employment fairs for final year students.

She is also advising that to attract students to the UK, UK universities, especially those of the Russell Group, need to work differently, especially in China. Some students have the benefit of splitting their course by taking the first year at one university and the subsequent years at a different university.

The UK faces two obstacles. One is that Chinese parents and students rate their university course and degree on the

success it delivers after graduation i.e. the return on investment. (ROI). If UK university fees and living costs increase, the RIO in the UK will be unfavourable. Also, the Chinese are guided by the QS World University Ranking and UK universities will be at a disadvantage if they lose ground in that ranking. The University of York lost several places last year falling from 167th to 184th.

An interesting but important aside, is that some Chinese students, on leaving the UK, having completed their course, are less proficient in spoken English than when they arrived. They tend to associate with other Chinese students than with those of the host community.

Cheryl chaired an on-line webinar entitled 'Advancing UK-China Higher Education and Transnational Education.' She commented, 'China currently serves as the largest Transnational education (TNE) host country for UK higher education. TNE, as a bridge between two educational systems, has gained great recognition from Chinese students, parents and educators. To maintain relevance or a sustainable future, the collaboration and educational offers need to be aligned with the national strategic growth, and it needs to be contextualised to keep local relevance.'

NB. Chinese universities are climbing the world university rankings rapidly. Tsinghua is rated number 12 (up from 30 in 2018), Peking is now rated number 13, up from 27th in 2018. They could soon be challenging Oxford and Harvard.

China's developing infrastructure

Meanwhile, if Facebook postings are accurate, China continues to build infrastructure, bridges, roads, metro systems in cities and airports at an unbelievable pace. Some of the bridges, particularly in Guizhou are truly amazing. China seems to have developed new techniques in bridge building as well as rapid track laying for railways. Also, novel building techniques are in use to build multistorey building in days, not months or even years as in the West. When the world economy fully recovers from the pandemic, the advanced ready infrastructure will facilitate growth.

Green energy and Nuclear Fusion

China is leading the world in solar panels, wind turbines and lithium batteries for electric vehicles. Breakthroughs in nuclear fusion have been reported. If these reports are accurate, the goal of almost unlimited quantities of clean electricity will eventually be achievable. From some reports China is apparently leading in this extremely important field. Nuclear fusion will provide a means of generating enormous amounts of green energy at low cost.

BBC World Service video on positive aspects of China

I would urge all SACU members to follow the link below. It summarises the progress China has made and how it is leading in many technical areas of extreme importance and relevance to the modern world. China is making up to 90% of the world's solar panels and by 2028, 60% of the world's renewable energy will be Chinese.

<https://youtu.be/z7do1hbb6fE?si=1hNkgF0qe0u3PQ1O>

NB. If difficult; copy and paste the link into your browser.

Walter Fung

Can you contribute to SACU's Mission?

友 To promote friendship and mutual understanding between the peoples of Britain and China.

友 To provide facts and analysis about China – not uncritically but always from a firm basis of friendship.

友 To help the British people understand the meaning of China – past and present.

SACU Council strives to achieve these aims but needs the support of individual members.
All SACU Council members are volunteers, nobody is paid.
If you can help, please contact
Zoe Reed email zoe@sacu.org.uk

Membership

Membership is open to all who subscribe to SACU's aims. Membership applications and renewals can be made online by logging into SACU's online membership account from our website: <https://sacu.org/join.html>

Membership rates:

Individual	£23
Retired/Unwaged	£18
Students (PDF only)	£10
Institutions and Libraries	£27
Overseas (Airmail)	£35
Overseas (PDF only)	£13

Membership payment methods:

Online: pay with PayPal using your PayPal account or credit/debit card, by logging into SACU's online membership account from our website:
<https://sacu.org/join.html>

Offline: bank transfer, standing order, cheque, recurring PayPal subscription plan – please email for details:
membership@sacu.org.uk

Cheques may be made payable to SOC FOR ANGLO-CHINESE UNDERSTANDING LTD and send to:
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Your email address will be used only for SACU purposes. It will not be passed to any other person or organisation without your permission. In circulars such as the **SACU email newsletter** your email details will be 'blind' and not visible to others.

China Eye

Recent back copies are available to view on our website:
<https://sacu.org/magazine.html>

All earlier issues of SACU's magazines *China Now*, *China in Focus* and *China Eye* are available to members in our digital archive: <https://archive.sacu.org>
(Please ask for members-only password)

SACU Newsletter

We circulate a monthly email newsletter to all members. Newsletters include notices of forthcoming events, member news, and links to topical information that we consider will be of interest to SACU members. Members are invited to send items for inclusion to the SACU newsletter team:
newsletter@sacu.org.uk
Please remember, you can unsubscribe at any time.

SACU's Digital Communications

Website: www.sacu.org.uk
Email: info@sacu.org.uk
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sacu.uk>
X (Twitter): <https://twitter.com/SACUUK>
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@SACU-sd5ys>
WeChat: ID: SACU1965
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/socanglochinseunderstanding>

Our social media channels carry posts and news of events which inform and educate our members and readers about China, especially positive aspects to balance the negative aspects we so often read in the UK media.

SACU Digital Archive

Launched at Chinese New Year 2023, our magazines and early newsletters, SACU documents and rare photo collection can be viewed online: <https://archive.sacu.org>
(Please ask for members-only password)

SACU Events

Please keep an eye on our website, social media and members newsletter for news of forthcoming SACU events. SACU holds events for the public and some members-only meetings. Events are held on Zoom or are hybrid (both in-person and on Zoom). Our AGMs are held as hybrid events.

SACU's membership is spread across the UK and beyond and Zoom has enabled us to reach more of our members and the public than we did before the pandemic, when we held in-person meetings only, so we continue to hold some online and some hybrid events.

SACU still needs a Programme Coordinator. He or she will not expect to be directly involved with each and every individual event. Anyone interested in the role please contact SACU Council

SACU Speakers Bureau; please see opposite

This includes members who offer to give talks in schools or to other organisations on topics relating to China, always from a SACU standpoint of friendship and understanding. Please get in touch if you would like SACU to speak at your school or if you would like to join the bureau as a speaker.

SACU/Peking University Essay Competition

Our annual essay/multimedia competition for schools, generously sponsored by Peking University. Are you connected with a secondary school which would like to take part? Do get in touch.

If you have any membership questions, please contact:
Ros Wong Antrobus, membership@sacu.org.uk

Notices from Council Members

SACU 2025 Activity Plans; Please see pages 14-16 for more details/

As mentioned in the Autumn issue of China Eye (No 83) next year, 2025, is a very special year for SACU, being the 75th year since its foundation by Joseph Needham and others. The year is also 110th anniversary of the birth of George Hogg and the 20th anniversary of the birth of Edgar Snow. A SACU Council planning group has been working on a number of activities to mark these important events.

Lecture Series on 'The Art of Living from the Confucius Tradition.'

These are scheduled for this year and will be given by Dr Katherine Ngo and Dr Kelly Ngo of the University of South Wales. They will be delivered on zoom on the third Thursday of the month at 7.00 pm. There will be nine talks altogether in groups of three. Please refer to the SACU email newsletter for more details, nearer the time. **These are excellent talks and are thoroughly recommended for learning about Chinese Culture.**

From Barnaby Powell, SACU Speaker's Bureau Organiser

SACU Education Working Group

Our speaker's Bureau is already six-strong, but seeks additional members to cover different parts of the UK. Our main aim is to give Schools Talks on China. We have given a couple of talks in this past year to independent schools which are SACU members and we can follow up with those other schools which have participated in the Essay Competition before. We are currently working on contacting those State schools which we believe would be interested in a talk, and which would clearly complement participation in the Essay Competition. Once we have responses to our invitations, we shall need to follow up and deploy speakers to liaise with schools to set dates, etc. Please advise Barnaby.powell@gmail.com as Convenor if you like to join the Education Working Group and/or volunteer to speak to schools.

Chinese Brush Painters' Society (Yorkshire)

This society provides a focus for all who are interested in Chinese Brush Painting. The society arranges workshops with Chinese and other experienced tutors and provides information and assistance to members on all aspects of the subject. Currently the group has over 140 members, who travel from Cumbria, Cheshire, Nottingham and Lancashire as well from all parts of Yorkshire to attend workshops. These workshops usually take place at a weekend and sometimes for two-days. They are suitable for beginners or experienced artists. The group produces a regular monthly newsletter packed with information. Meetings are usually

held every month at the Pool-in-Wharfedale Memorial Hall LS21 1LG (on the A659) at the bottom of Pool Bank, just off the A658 between Bradford and Harrogate). The venue has excellent facilities and car parking.

Further information from the Secretary: Anne Allan,
Tel: 01422 368482 or email: mail@anneallan.com
Website: www.cbpsvorks.co.uk

China Eye Diary

This year 2025 is the Year of the Snake, New Year's Day was on January 29th. 2025. The full sequence of 12 animals is in this order: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig. Forthcoming major festivals are;

4th April, Qing Ming (Tomb Sweeping)
1st May, Labour Day
31st May, Dragon Boat Festival
29th August, Chinese Valentine Day (Double Seven)
1st October, China National Day
6th October, Mid-Autumn Festival (Moon Cakes)
29th October, Chong Yang (Double Nine), Seniors' Day

Portico Library Exhibitions

Iris Yau's Exhibition, the Infamous: Opium, Silk, Tea & the Mission was a finalist in the Manchester City Culture Awards. Although it did not gain first place it was well thought of and the Portico Library recorded a record number of visitors, Iris was competing with exhibitions which had much larger budgets.



Iris at the awards ceremony with Portico Staff; Joe Fenn, Thom Keep and Carol Ann Whitehead. (From the Portico Website)

The Portico has since organised a follow-up exhibition, 'Echoes', which voices the Portico collection of books about China. During the public opening on 24th February, three Critical Friends of the Portico made short presentations. Two, Bruce Lai and Deborah Ng were from

Hong Kong, but now living in Manchester. The third was SACU council member, Yichao Shi, who was originally from Ningbo in mainland China. The proceedings began with a screening of 'Mother Tongues' a film about the Chinese community in Manchester, in particular about a Chinese school for Chinese children to learn their mother tongue. The classes were very well attended and were conducted in Cantonese Chinese with some parts in Mandarin. This excellent film was made by Matt Lingard, a British student of the Manchester Metropolitan University in 1986 as part of his degree dissertation.

The free entry exhibition 'Echoes' will continue until 30 May 2025 and is highly recommended.



The Portico Library in Mosely Street Manchester

Chinese New Year celebrations

Chinese New Year, the Spring Festival, was celebrated by Chinese people all over the world. The Spring Festival, also called the Lunar New Year, is the most important festive for Chinese people. Hundreds of millions of journeys were made in China as family reunions took place.

Many Chinese cities arranged spectacular drone displays as shown here. A pity they were not widely reported in the British media. This photo was taken from a computer screen receiving Chinese Television Global Network. (CTGN)



I believe this display is at Wuxi, 300,000 drones were used for this display (29 January 2025)

As usual, many celebrations were also carried out in British cities; the main ones being in London, Liverpool and Manchester, which have large numbers of Chinese or people of Chinese descent. Many local people attended the celebrations and festivities. They were entertained by the usual Dragon Parade and Lion Dances. In Liverpool, one innovation was the stilt walkers; they must have been about eight foot tall!



Stilt walkers in Liverpool Chinatown (WF)



Gerard Street in London's Chinatown (WF)

London's Chinatown seems to always have a surfeit of Chinese lanterns all year round and not just at Chinese New Year. The area has four Chinese arches, the latest apparently

funded by a Chinese insurance company. The greeting 'Kung Hei Fat Choy' is a Cantonese expression, meaning 'Greetings, make plenty of money'. The Mandarin equivalent is 'Gong Xi Fa Cai'.



Manchester's Snake for Chinese New Year (WF)

SACU council member Jiayi was in China for the Chinese New Year. She supplied the following three photographs.



New Year decorations in front of Shenyang Railway Station (JX)



Chinese God of Wealth, near City Hall of a northern city (JX)



Communal Garden in a residential neighbourhood (JX)



Chinese New Year cards showing fish. The Chinese word for fish is 'yu' which is a homonym for surplus (profit)

SACU members were invited to the Sinking of the Lisbon Maru film screening preview.

The film relates how many survivors of the sinking of this Japanese transporter ship were rescued by Chinese fishermen. The Lisbon Maru was sunk by an American submarine during World War 2 off the coast of China. The Americans did not know that the ship was carrying POWs, many of whom were British soldiers. As the ship was sinking, the Japanese hindered the efforts of the British to escape and abandon ship. They even opened fire on them. Chinese fishermen, risking their own lives, rescued 384 of the men, but 828 lives were lost. This Chinese made film has won many awards and is scheduled to go on general release in the UK during March.

NB. A memorial to the men who lost their lives is being planned for the National Arboretum in Staffordshire. A monument to the Chinese fishermen is under consideration.

Screening of ‘The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru’ a report by Barnaby Powell

On Friday, 17th January, several SACU members attended the screening of a new documentary film at the invitation of the Chinese Ambassador at the Soho Hotel in London. The film is a remarkable re-enactment of the terrible fate which befell 1,800 British and Canadian POWs, who were being shipped to Japan on a commercial freighter in 1942.

The story had remained untold and largely forgotten until a Chinese film-maker, Fang Li, and a British writer on military affairs, Brian Finch, teamed up to uncover and bring the truth of the disaster into the open. Together they scoured the world to interview both the Japanese ex-soldiers and the survivors and descendants of the men who were killed off the coast of northern China, when their ship was torpedoed by an American navy vessel, whose commander had no knowledge of what was carried in its holds.

The Japanese soldiers on board, fearing that their prisoners would escape as the ship began to list and break up, battened down the hatches and sealed them with tarpaulins. The British POWs below, many of whom were already malnourished and emaciated, suffered in appalling hot conditions with the deprivation of both light and oxygen. This incident and the scenes which followed were graphically captured by CGI, which then depicted how a hole was finally slashed through the hatches to allow some 700 of the men to escape and jump into the sea. Those too weak to move were left to die.

Those who escaped were shot at and many died in the water, but those who swam away towards the Chinese shore were picked up in the boats of local fishermen who had seen the ship sinking and braved the Japanese fire to save the British POWs. The Japanese pursued them onshore, where the local people had given them food and shelter. Three of the survivors were disguised as locals and were not recaptured while the rest were eventually sent to prison camps in Chongqing. The heroism of both the Chinese and the British POWs is faithfully memorialised in the film, which has been entered at the BAFTAS and OSCARS for an award as the Best Foreign Documentary.



Barnaby Powell, Iris Yau, Bi Haibo (Chinese Embassy) and Zoe Reed. Photo credit; Fiona Sim (Friends of Socialist China/Black Liberation Alliance) via Iris Yau.

Report by Iris Yau from the Spring Concert at Royal Academy of Music in London; Sunday 2 February

Sino-British Concert 2025 新春音 乐会 2025

On Sunday 2 February 2025, SACU members Pedro Agostinho, Zoe Reed, Penny Robbins, Ros Wong, Michael Wood and Iris Yau attended the [EAST-WEST
DIAGLOGUE: Sino-British Concert 2025](#) at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

The concert was organised by the Sino-British Ensemble, co-hosted by UK-Beijing Arts Centre, and the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding (SACU).

Michael Wood (SACU President) gave the welcome speech to a full house concert audience, including Ambassador ZHENG Zeguang and his wife Counsellor HUA Mei, Minister Counsellor BI Haibo, and Minister Counsellor ZHAO Fei from the Chinese Embassy in the UK.

Recording was by courtesy of Sino-British Ensemble. Camera by YANG Haopeng. SACU was a Co-host at this sell-out concert, held at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

The concert was organised by the Sino-British Ensemble, the founders were Xinyi GUO, Siyang YU and Song SHI. The UK-Beijing Arts Centre and the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding ...

Iris Yau uploaded the recording from Sino-British Concert on SACU Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9XxQuPIInRU>



Photo credit: Iris Yau



Michael Wood SACU President attended the East-West Dialogue Concert Sunday 2nd February 2025 Royal Academy of Music

Welcome to this very special evening at the Royal Academy of Music where so many famous musicians, composers and conductors have worked since 1822 when the Academy was founded, and on this very stage in this concert hall since it opened in 1912. (The Chinese connection I might add goes back a while too - the Sinfonia's first visit to Beijing was nearly 30 years ago).

Michael Wood, SACU President's Opening remarks:

I'm Michael Wood President of SACU - the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding – and it's a great pleasure to be invited to say a few words. This evening's concert is a celebration on many levels, not least of all of course because we are right in the middle of celebrations for the Chinese New Year - the Year of the Wood Snake. And we are honoured tonight by the presence of his excellency Ambassador Zheng Zeguang and his wife Madame Hua Mei.

Our evening is the brainchild of the wonderful Sino-British Ensemble. Founded in 1994, and based in the UK, there are musicians especially drawn from Britain and China but also Germany, India and other countries. Among them are some of the most exciting soloists of the younger generation. Music of course is a wonderful path to dialogue - some would say the best - and musical dialogue goes back a long way in the histories of China and the West. The story starts with Matteo Ricci - the Jesuit missionary who came to China in 1580. It's rare in history you can

pin down the exact moment that provides the spark for change – but in 1601 Ricci presented the Wanli Emperor with.

what the Chinese called a 'western qin', a clavichord or virginal, a kind of harpsichord, the ancestor of the piano. Wanli was intrigued by the strange instrument and sent four eunuchs from the Chinese College of Musicians to ask Ricci to teach them how to play. Now Ricci was not a musician, so when he reported to the palace, he brought along a friend who was, and he taught the eunuchs four songs for which Ricci wrote lyrics infused with Christian philosophy.

The lessons lasted a month, and then the eunuchs presumably gave a recital, although Ricci was not invited and never got to meet the emperor. However, that was the beginning: while Ricci's gift failed to turn China into a nation of Catholics (as if!), it did start the country on the path to becoming what it is today: a nation of pianists, piano makers, piano students, and piano lovers....

China today is preeminent in the world on the piano and that love affair in turn has transformed the whole approach to music in China and its links with other musical traditions- as we'll see tonight. The Jesuit missionaries who followed Ricci continued to present China's monarchs with keyboard instruments - the Kangxi Emperor - and how typical of his inquiring mind - even took the time to learn a few tunes on the harpsichord himself and encouraged some of his sons to play it, too. So, there is a long and fascinating backstory to the Sino-British Ensemble's wonderful work today.



Photo shows: Iris Yau, Michael Wood, Zoe Reed, BI Haibo, Cultural Councillor and Ros Wong Antrobus.

Photo credit: David Peat (Friends of Socialist China)

Ben Lunn (SACU member) interviewed the organiser of the Sino-British Ensemble a vision for cultural exchange.

On the 4th February I had the opportunity to talk to Xinyi Guo about the work leading up to the ensemble's Chinese New Year Concert, as well as talking about the dreams and goals of the ensemble looking forward.

We initially talked about the process of choosing the repertoire for the concert. "They are designed in pairs, all of them are one piece from the East, and one piece from the Western world" Xinyi told me. She highlighted they were paired up with similar works, or comparable stylistically, and she said "I want to promote these interesting comparisons" which really rings true among the paired works throughout the concert the pairing of *Yellow River Piano Concerto* alongside Smetana's *Vitava Dialogue* being one notable example.

The concert was a notable success, and the attendance of the Chinese Ambassador Zheng Zeguang as well as SACU's own Michael Wood really underline the importance of the work that has been done by Xinyi and her colleagues.

As the concert had past, our talk very quickly looked to the future for the ensemble, as well as considering the implications of such important work. I told Xinyi about the importance I place on work like this because of how understanding another people's art and culture is one of the greatest ways to humanise someone, which given the current geo-political challenges surrounding Britain's relationship with China adds extra importance to this work. Xinyi noted the particularly wonderful moment when at the end of each piece, the performers would join together and holding hands, highlighting just how beautiful it is.

Xinyi went onto describe the ways in which the ensemble came into being, as well as discussing the positive evolution of the Sino-British Children's Choir. She described how these elements came to being from an original aim of simply sharing Chinese music whenever she had the chance to perform, to slowly finding more musicians to work with who want to work together and understanding these wonderful pieces, before eventually trying to make their work together something more formalised and official.

Xinyi added that the Chinese New Year celebrations was the fourth concert of the ensemble and told me about the ensemble's upcoming concerts which carry on this process of celebrating both East and the West, while finding unifying themes. Which will be events to keep your eyes out for!

We also discussed aims about taking the ensemble out to China, to make the exchange pro-active and not just celebration of these efforts just in Britain.

Xinyi noted the plans to take the ensemble to China in the months ahead, as well as the other wonderful projects they have, to make the ensemble a champion of cultural exchange and cultural bridge building. As has been noted by other commentators who are eager to see exchange between Britain and China, this ensemble is to be commended for its work – as it is both a noble endeavour, but also an area of work that needs more active encouragement, not just from specialised groups like this ensemble, but other cultural bodies like Britain's orchestras, opera companies, or contemporary ensembles. Xinyi Guo's enthusiasm for the work is infectious, and it is wonderful to see musicians in Britain taking the initiative to build these connections. The ensemble has great plans, which will span across Britain as well as returning to China, so if they are coming close to your neck of the woods, I actively encourage you go to see them.

The Sino-British Ensemble actively embody exchange and understanding between China and Britain. I sincerely hope they will continue to go from strength to strength and that others will be convinced by the wonderful art they will go onto share.

About Ben Lunn

Dr Ben Lunn has forged himself a unique position within the new music landscape. As composer, Lunn's music reflects the material world around him, connecting to his North-Eastern heritage or how disability impacts the world around him or his working-class upbringing. Alongside this, he has become renowned for his championship of others, which have seen him creating unique collaborations with musicians from across the globe and has been an eager member of SACU since 2020.

Meridian Society joint event with the British Library; The 'C' Word, Being Chinese in Britain Today.

Several SACU members attended this important panel discussion and forum at the British Library on Friday 31st January 2025. Sinophobia has been with us for some time and is still with us, especially in the current 'cold war' economic climate. Issues concerning experiences by Chinese people living in England were shared and discussed by a panel of British Chinese from a range of occupations, age groups and different backgrounds. The issue of identity was discussed; 'Are we Chinese or British?'

The participants included: Anne Witchard, Reader in English and Cultural Studies at the University of Westminster, Eddie Chan from Hong Kong a co-founder of the Chinese Welfare Trust, Lucy Sheen, actress, activist and film maker, Ben Chu, policy and analysis correspondent at BBC Verify, who has also

presented reports on BBC news, Ken Cheng stand-up comedian, writer and professional poker player, Yan Wang Preston, visual artist focussing on the environment, landscape, migration and identity, Geoff Leong, restaurateur and Xinran, originally from Beijing and founder of 'Mothers' Bridge of Love. The event was organised by Wenlan Pang, a director of the Meridian Society.



The event was in two parts: individual presentations by panel members (above) and secondly a discussion (below) by panel members, led by Wenling Pang including Q & A from the audience.



Top photo shows: Iris Yau, Professor Hugo de Burgh and Wenlan Pang. Bottom photo shows: Iris Yau, Walter Fung and Pedro Agostinho

Photo credit: Iris Yau

Professor Hugo De Burgh is the founder and Chair of the Kensington Wade Dual language School, Chinese and English. He has recently joined SACU.

Wenlan Pang is a director of the Meridian Society, an organisation which has similar objectives as SACU. She has produced documentary films in both the UK and China.

Plaque to Gladys Aylward is put in place in Nelson Street, Liverpool Chinatown

The Crowdfund efforts to finance the plaque was arranged by Moira Kenny-Campbell. The former Chinese Gospel Mission was for a time, the Chilli Chilli Chinese Restaurant, 20 Nelson Street, which is now closed. There are believed to be plans for this building, to be developed into a hotel. This possible development is generally welcomed as it could help revitalise Liverpool Chinatown.

Gladys Aylward is known for her Christian missionary work in China. She helped eradicate foot binding of women in the area in which she worked. As the Japanese army advanced, she led about 100 children over mountains to safety. Her story is of especial interest in Liverpool because a film, The Inn of the Sixth Happiness was made in north Wales. telling her story. Chinese children from Liverpool featured acting the part of the Chinese children Gladys led over the mountains. Some of the Liverpool children, now in their 70s and 80s still live nearby



Chinese Ceramic Collection Display at Bolton Museum

This special collection was organised to mark the Chinese New Year of the Snake. It was co-curated by SACU member Dr Fang Zong with Bolton Museum curator Matthew Watson.

The items on display were donated by Frank Hindley Smith, a wealthy mill owner from Bolton. He had a collection of many works of art, including Chinese porcelain. Only a selection, mainly from the Qing Dynasty, are shown in the exhibition. Ceramic pottery skills were confined to China. It took centuries before Westerners could produce pottery approaching the quality and fineness of Chinese produced goods. Several SACU members attended the exhibition on the opening day.

Frank Hindley donated many other items, not just Chinese to several other museums in the UK.



From left to right: Walter Fung, Yichao Shi, Dr Fang Zong and Matthew Watson (Bolton Museum curator)

Photo credit Yichao Shi

North-west SACU Chinese New Year celebration meal at the A Plus Restaurant in Manchester on 8th February.



Photo by Yichao Shi

Wealth from Guano from Peru. Chinese indentured labourers in the 1800s by Walter Fung

I have been a member of the National Trust for about 50 years and receive their Annual Report and Handbook. They also issue a quarterly magazine, which contains some interesting articles. The latest, Spring 2025, included an article about Tyntestfield House north, Somerset, near Bristol. which has just had a temporary makeover. It is a property of the National Trust.

The Tyntesfield estate was chosen by William Gibbs and his family as a country retreat in 1840. He made his fortune trading commodities with Spain and South America. His company gained exclusive rights to import guano, which are bird droppings, to Britain. Guano is excellent fertiliser, rich in phosphorous, nitrogen and other nutrients. More than ten million tons, valued at hundreds of millions of dollars were exported from Peru to Britain and Europe from 1850 to the early 1870s.

Guano is the native Peruvian word for bird droppings. Over many centuries, untold numbers of seabirds, cormorants, gannets and gulls had dropped their faeces on the grounds of the Chincha Islands, about 13 miles off the coast of Peru. The result was huge mounds of guano, some were 150 feet thick. Chinese labourers hacked the material off and transported wheelbarrows full to waiting ships up to a quarter of a mile away.

Each labourer had to dig and transport five tons of guano every day under the hot sun. It was extremely unpleasant work. Because it never rained in the area, the guano was compact and hard, but dusty when handled.

The dust choked the Chinese labourers and burned their eyes, throats and lungs. Supervisors used whips to spur the workers on. They had to work every day under imaginably severe conditions. Many were worked to death and reports say that some workers committed suicide every week. More than two thirds were dead before the end of their contract. Some of those that did survive were forced to sign new contracts or face arrest. Others simply ran away and were never found. Probably few, if any, saw China again. Many of the labourers came from south China, Guangdong province and it is likely that many were from my parent's home county Toisan, (Taishan).

Chinese labourers worked all over Peru, starting about 1852, when the American ship, the Ohio sailed from China to Peru carrying 300 Chinese labourers. Over the next ten years, 62 ships under the American flag transported Chinese. It has been estimated that 40,000 Chinese were transported during the first six years. They worked on sugar plantations and in railway building as well as working guano. Rob Stallard in his article, The China Slave Trade, China Eye No 83 mentions Chinese labourers in Peru.

I visited Peru in 2006 and explored Lima's Chinatown. I was surprised at the size, perhaps larger than London's. There was a Chinese arch and pavement tiles with Chinese designs. Chinese goods were on sale, including Chinese cabbages. I was told that the labourers in the last century brought seeds with them. I believe the Chinese had their origins in Guangdong and Fujian province. The restaurants in Chinatown were offering popular Chinese food and many had a set 'Chifa' menu. I believe there were more 'up market' Chinese restaurants in the suburbs of Lima.

Some researchers claim that about 15% (about 4 million of a total population of about 30 million). of the Peruvian population have Chinese roots, although the official figure of present-day Chinese from the 2017 census is only 14,307. A total of about 100,000 Chinese were taken to Peru in the 19th century.

I went into a small supermarket staffed by young Chinese men speaking Mandarin. They were probably new arrivals. There was a Chinese cemetery nearby, which I would have liked to have visited, but time did not allow. I was hoping to see the inscriptions on the tombstones which may have given more detailed information on where they came from in China such as town and village. There may have been some distant relations? However, I was in a tour group organised by 'Travel Collections' tour company and had to keep to schedule.

Later we stayed in a hotel which was formerly a plantation owner's residence. Chinese worked on sugar plantations after the abolition of slavery. I was told that some Chinese plantation workers, revolted over their harsh treatment and murdered the owner in

a spot, not too far from my hotel room door! I have to confess that I slept with the light on all night!



Lima Chinatown



Lima's Chinese Arch. Erected in 1971. One side has the characters 'Tian Xia Wei Gong' Sun Yatsen's words. 'All below heaven are equal' or 'The world belongs to everyone'. The other side says 'Chinatown' and other details such as date of erection and who was involved.





SACU 2025 Planned Programme of Activities – position as at 22nd February 2025

Please refer to SACU email newsletters for up-to-date information

2025 is the 60th Anniversary of SACU. It is also the 110th Anniversary of the birth of George Hogg. Working together with key partners in Harpenden (the birthplace of George Hogg); the Needham Research Institute (Joseph Needham was SACU's founder); the Chinese Embassy; the CPAFFC, both National and Gansu Province, CGTN Europe based in London and hopefully others in UK and China, we plan to celebrate both these occasions in many ways throughout the year. All offers of help and support are welcome.

2025 is also the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII. This is of world-wide significance – including for China. CGTN and the Chinese Embassy in UK as well as the CPAFFC want to tell the story of how British and Chinese people fought together during WWII. Telling the story of a person who left such a powerful legacy as George Hogg will bring in the human element.

SACU's Programme for the year has a number of events and activities which are specific to celebrating SACU's 60th and George Hogg's 110th anniversaries, eg the *In the Footsteps of George Hogg* tour. Some of our regular annual activities, like the Essay/Art Competition, have a specific focus for this year on themes connected to the anniversaries. There are also activities which are not specifically linked to these special anniversaries. All our activities are with the aim of promoting friendship and understanding between the peoples of Britain and China in accordance with SACU's mission.

Details for sign up for all these activities will be given in our monthly SACU Members Newsletter – please look out for details!! The name of the SACU Council member leading each item is shown below – please get in touch with them if you want to help or want more information!

January – December 2025 - 3rd Thursday in the month – Wang Fang

- Monthly seminars “A Practical Guide for Every Day: The Art of Living from the Confucian Tradition” This is a fantastically interesting series of lectures by a university lecturer expert in the field Katherine Ngo and her sister Kelly Ngo. Please do book a place through Eventbrite – there is free to SACU Members and friends, and you don't need to have attended earlier lectures to enjoy future ones!

2nd February 2025 – Zoë Reed

- Cross-Cultural Musical Dialogue Concert, Royal Academy of Music, London: SACU was Co-Host and our President Michael Wood gave the opening address [copy of speech elsewhere in China Eye].

11 – 13 March 2025 – Li Linxi

- London Book Fair – showcasing two books, recently translated into Chinese, by SACU members who are authors [below] and presentation by Michael Wood [subject to availability] ○ *Blades of Grass* by Mark Aylwin Thomas translated by Li Linxi SACU Archivist [biography of George Hogg]



○ *A True Friend to China* by Andrew Hicks [Jack Jones and the Quaker Ambulance Unit]

2 – 18 April 2025 [with extension to Beijing 19-23 April] **to be filmed by CGTN – Pete Jarvis**

- **In the Footsteps of George Hogg Tour**
- **Celebration in Gansu [SACU as guests of Gansu Provincial Government FAO]**

31 May 2025 – Rob Stallard and Cheryl Yu

- Informal SACU Social event for members [in person]

21 June 2025 – Cheryl Yu

- SACU AGM 2024 [online]

July 2025 - Iris Yau

- Working with St George's School, Harpenden and local History Society and Town Mayor
- Exhibition opening in Harpenden Museum telling the story of George Hogg including artifacts from museums in Gansu [tbc subject to funding]

Saturday 20th September 2025 – Formal Celebration – Ros Wong Antrobus/Cheryl Yu/Zoë Reed

- SACU's celebration of both SACU60th and George Hogg110th anniversaries [London with sponsors – LAU KCL venue tbc and Chinese Embassy support tbc]; speakers include
- Chinese Embassy
- CPAFFC Delegation – led by President Yang Wanming
- British Government/Local Government [tbc]
- Michael Wood SACU President
- Kerry Brown KCL LAU China Institute [tbc]
- Activities include
- Essay Competition Award Ceremony
- Performance of music composed by Ben Lunn specifically for SACU's 60th Anniversary
- Gift of GH Statue from Gansu presented to Harpenden Mayor [tbc]
- Videos of GH Footsteps Tour and Exhibition [tbc]

Saturday 25th October 2025 – Iris Yau/Zoë Reed/ Cheryl Yu

- Tour Needham Research Institute - Saturday; with Council meeting and pop-up exhibition

October – Iris Yau

- LAU China Institute KCL – China Week talk [tbc]

Activities running throughout the year

We welcome offers of help and we particularly want help in promotion

- SACU online Zoom series of related talks: **Barnaby Powell**
talks already programmed include ○ Frances Wood –



Dunhuang ○ Rob Stallard -

Joseph Needham ○ Andrew Hicks – A True Friend to

China ○ Mark Aylwin Thomas – Blades of Grass ○ Brian

Finch – Sinking of the Lisbon Maru -

○ Michael Wood – topic tbc ○ Kerry Brown – topic tbc

- Stand Up to Sinophobia - join the demonstration [March] **Iris Yau**
- Joint Events in person London venue with talks from writers [Chinese Embassy tbc]
- Essay/Art Competition and talks in Schools [promotion flyer available] **Wang Fang**
- Chinese Labour Corps Armistice Day [November] **Iris Yau**
- Exhibition Catalogue **Iris Yau**
- Book production with Shandan Bailie College tbc **Li Linxi**
- CGTN promotion of SACU activities throughout the year **Li Linxi**
- Social and other media promotion. [need support – all offers of help welcome] **Cheryl Yu** • Partnership development and building connections [e.g. ICCIC Co-op Adopt tbc] **Iris Yau/Wang Fang**

Zoë Reed zoe@sacu.org.uk

On behalf of SACU2025 Council Planning Group

Update 22nd February 2025

SACU TOUR TO CHINA: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF GEORGE HOGG: APRIL 2025 (Closing date passed 21 February)



Above; On the left is Rewi Alley, one of the founders of the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives with George Hogg on the right. The Gung Ho sign is at the top. Photographed at Shuangshihpu in 2016. (photo by WF)

冬季回国见闻汇总

孙踊

2024 年 12 月 12 日

今天（2024 年 12 月 12 日）闲逛成都人民公园一带，看到引起清朝垮台的四川保路运动之纪念碑，尝了成都有名的蹄花，等等。

2024 年 12 月 11 日

今天（2024 年 12 月 11 日）逛成都望江楼公园，此园主要是纪念唐女诗人薛涛。

2024 年 12 月 10 日

今天（2024 年 12 月 10 日）上四川博物院参观，突发一念：为什么我们称“巴蜀”之地？为何不用“蜀巴”？目前收集到六种解释，谢谢提供者。

(1)历史上中国文化正统性非常重要，巴国是皇帝封的，而蜀国是自封的。你问这有何深义？

(2)有人解释为：因为要先张开嘴才能再把嘴闭上，发音，耗能最少。

(3)另有一解：地名多依习惯法。一定要追根溯源的话，则巴指地理气候，是上位概念，蜀指历史人文，是下位概念，故称巴蜀。

说明：巴的象形文如带叶子的树枝，扇子发明之前驱赶蚊虫用的，借做地名表示当地气候闷热潮湿、蚊虫猖獗。蜀的象形文是带围墙的居邑，加虫表蚕桑为后起。——一孔之见，希望能帮到你。

(4)巴蜀，即巴山蜀水的简称。巴山蜀水用来形容四川一带。川东是古巴国所在，即大巴山；川西是古蜀国所在，成都平原一带有诸多河流，通称蜀水。所以巴蜀是一个地域的概念。说巴蜀而不说蜀巴，只是习惯而无深意。

(5)秦先征服了古巴国，而后征服古蜀国，奠定了秦征服中国之前的基础；之后，约定俗成。能不能这么看？

(6)只有“巴山蜀水”一说靠得住，别的都是附会。人们习惯说山水，而不是水山，如山水画，青山绿水，桂林山水等。至于巴的爵位比蜀高等，皆臆想。

2024 年 12 月 09 日

西方工业革命的 inspiration

今天（2024 年 12 月 09 日）参观成都蜀锦刺绣博物馆的感想：多年前在英国不记得是听来的，还是看来的，或读来的，说西方一直以为中国传到西方纺织品如丝织品是机器织的，说不可能是手工织出来的，这就成了西方工业革命的 inspiration。在当今的国际环境下，西方已不再有人提起它了。

A Summary of My Trip to China in Winter

Yong Sun

Translated by Jiaxi Li

December 12, 2024

Today I wandered around Chengdu People's Park and saw the monument to the Sichuan Railway Protection Movement (四川保路运动) that caused the fall of the Qing Dynasty. I also tasted the famous Chengdu delicacy, stewed pig trotters.

December 11, 2024

Today I visited Chengdu Wangjianglou Park, which mainly commemorates Xue Tao, a female Chinese poet in Tang Dynasty.

December 10, 2024

Today I visited the Sichuan Museum and I suddenly had a thought: Why do we call Sichuan the land of 'Bashu' (巴蜀) instead of 'Shuba' (蜀巴)? So far, I have collected six explanations. Thanks to all the contributors.

(1) Historically, legitimacy of governance is crucial to Chinese cultures. The Kingdom of Ba was granted by the emperor of the time, while the Kingdom of Shu was self-proclaimed. What do you think of this?

(2) Some think the pronunciation of 'Bashu' is less energy consuming than that of 'Shuba' because to pronounce 'Bashu', you would have to open your mouth first before closing it again.

(3) Another explanation is that places are named mostly based on customary laws. To trace the origin of Ba (巴) and Shu (蜀), it is believed that Ba generally refers to the geography and climate of Sichuan, which is considered to be a superordinate concept. Meanwhile, Shu generally refers to the history and humanity of Sichuan, which is a subordinate concept.

Therefore, people have always used the term ‘Bashu’ rather than ‘Shuba’.

Additional note: The Chinese hieroglyph of “Ba” (巴) looks like a branch with leaves, which was used to drive away mosquitoes before the invention of the fan. It is also used as a place name to indicate that the local climate is hot and humid, and mosquitoes are rampant. The Chinese hieroglyph of “Shu” (蜀) is a walled settlement, with the addition of insects and sericulture (silk farming) as the latter.

(4) “Bushu”, a term describing the Sichuan region, is the conflation of “Bashan” (Ba mountains) and “Shushui” (Shu waters). Eastern Sichuan was where the ancient Kingdom of Shu was located; the numerous rivers on the Chengdu Plain are commonly known as Shu waters/rivers. Therefore, Bashu is a generic regional concept. “Bashu” is only a habitual and commonly used term with no specific purpose.

(5) The Qin State conquered the ancient Kingdom of Ba, then the ancient Kingdom of Shu, laying the foundation of a unified China. Afterwards, it was generally agreed Sichuan was called Bashu rather than Shuba, because of the sequence of these historical events. This is one possible explanation.

(6) The only reliable answer stems out of the phrase ‘Bashan Shushui (巴山蜀水)’ and all other explanations are only additional opinions. People are simply used to saying “mountains and rivers” in Chinese, instead of “rivers and mountains”. Some examples include landscape paintings (山水画), “green mountains and rivers” (青山绿水), “Guilin mountains and rivers” (桂林山水), etc. The idea of claiming “Ba” has a higher title than “Shu” seems proofless.

December 09, 2024

The Inspiration of the Western Industrial Revolution

Below are my thoughts after visiting Chengdu Shu Brocade Embroidery Museum today:

Many years ago in the UK, I learnt from somewhere that people in the West did not believe that imported high-quality textiles such as silk could possibly be hand-woven, but that they had to be made by machines. This belief became one of the inspirations of the Western Industrial Revolution. However, in today’s international environment, this is rarely mentioned.



Monument to the Sichuan Railway Protection Martyrs of 1911 (WF)



Scene in Peoples' Park; Everybody sing! (WF)



Chengdu is famous for its teahouses (WF)

The Friends Ambulance Unit and the CIC School at Shandan

Andrew Hicks

Andrew is a retired solicitor with experience in Hong Kong, Thailand as well as the UK. He is the author of several books including 'Jack Jones, A True Friend to China: The Friends Ambulance Unit 'China Convoy 1945-1951'. Andrew is a council member of SACU and a regular contributor to China Eye

It is truly wonderful how generously China honours foreigners such as George Hogg who served and sacrificed for the Chinese people in their times of greatest need. Nonetheless, China does not forget how the western nations exploited her weakness during the nineteenth century and occupied parts of her territory, extorting harsh trading conditions. For example, at the end of the eighteenth century, British ambassadors to the Chinese emperor were rebuffed when seeking to open up trade, so the British instead kicked down the door. The 'Opium Wars', during which steam powered gunboats were able with impunity to blast Chinese naval fleets out of the water, led to the ceding to Britain of Hong Kong and to the opening up of so-called treaty ports for trade. Thus China was dismembered and made a virtual colony of several western nations.

Yet despite this China still glorifies and honours foreigners such as George Hogg who later worked and died in the service of the Chinese people. Hogg went out to China in 1938 and became headmaster of the remote Shandan Bailie School, a vocational school run by the CIC (Chinese Industrial Cooperatives) in Gansu province. The school trained boys and young men to run new industries following the widespread destruction caused by the invading Japanese in the nineteen forties. Playing basketball Hogg suffered an inconsequential injury to his foot, contracted tetanus and in July 1945 he died. Now in April 2024 on the hundred and tenth anniversary of his birth there is a major celebration of his life to be held in Shandan and members of his family and of SACU have been invited to attend.

This warm gratitude and acknowledgement of Hogg is remarkable but it runs to an established pattern. In several places in China there are memorial gardens and statues almost like shrines to foreign individuals who have given service to her people. Thus for example a Canadian surgeon, Dr Norman Bethune went to do medical work at Mao Zedong's base in Yenan. In 1939 while operating Bethune cut his finger and, in poor health from overwork and exhaustion, it became infected and he suffered septicaemia and died. Mao praised him highly in a written eulogy and Bethune thus became immortal as a very dedicated friend to China.

As well as some parallels in the awful circumstances of their deaths, Hogg's memory is likewise now assured as in an address at a state banquet at Buckingham Palace in October 2015 President Xi Jinping said that his country will not forget the economic and moral support given to China by the British people during the Second World War. He

specifically mentioned George Hogg as a fine example of this contribution.

Thus China is keen to celebrate instances of past friendship as a basis for improving relationships between our nations today. Such attention can only be focussed on a few individuals but doing so draws attention to the fact that in the West there was huge respect and concern for China when in the early thirties Japan began to invade. While the Allied war effort was tied up fighting in Europe and North Africa, there was no possibility they could actively contribute military resources for opposing the Japanese. Yet China's courageous resistance proved crucial in tying up a substantial proportion of Japan's military capacity and thus hugely benefited the Allies in the war in the Pacific.

As major military intervention was never going to happen, support for China became the sphere of individuals committed to the cause of China. A fine example is Arthur Clegg who campaigned for China with a number of groups as told in his book, **Aid China, 1937-1949. A Memoir of a Forgotten Campaign**. Dr Robert Mamlok's book, **The International Medical Relief Corps in Wartime China, 1937-1945** records how a contingent of twenty seven doctors, including his own father, had fled eastern Europe to join the fight against fascism in the Spanish civil war. They then offered their services as doctors in China, working with the Chinese Red Cross and faced many challenges.

A much larger medical aid project was the Friends Ambulance Unit 'China Convoy'. As committed pacifists many British Quakers and others applied for exemption from military service as conscientious objectors. Instead of active service they could go to China with the FAU as unpaid volunteers, selected for their pacifism and 'China concern'. The project had two aspects, medical teams working in hospitals and disease prevention such as inoculations and malaria control. Secondly, the FAU also imported medical supplies, drugs and hospital equipment whose production had been destroyed by the Japanese advance. This was flown into China from Assam in India which the FAU then distributed over vast distances to where it was needed in a motley fleet of ageing trucks. About 350 men and a few women including twenty doctors worked from 1941 to 1952 thus saving many lives. It was tough and dangerous and twelve FAU members died in China, including two doctors. Dr Quentin Boyd serving with the FAU believed he should live no better than his Chinese patients, lost weight and became weakened through overwork. He died possibly poisoned by Atabrin, a malarial prophylactic.

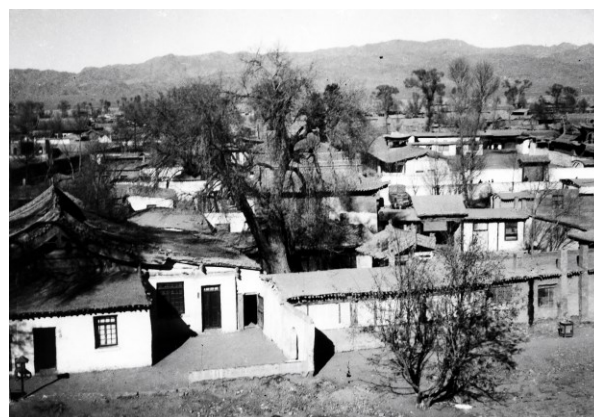
Despite the FAU being the biggest British humanitarian contribution to China during the hostilities little has been written about it and it is now largely forgotten. Thus I was proud to produce my own book, **Jack Jones, A True Friend to China**, much of which is a compilation of the writings of Jack Jones, the FAU's transport director, a passionate advocate for China. These tell the story very vividly and evoke those challenging times and the commitment to service far better than a formal history ever could.

What came to light in my research was that the relationship between the FAU, the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives and the school at Shandan was incredibly close. In fact the FAU seconded at least eight of its staff members to work at the school, covering all their expenses. One of them, Courtney Archer became so committed to the school that he stayed for six years, working as the 'right hand man' of Rewi Alley, also from New Zealand, who was the power driving the CIC. Convoys of FAU trucks regularly visited the school, taking several weeks to cover the two thousand kilometres of terrible roads from its transport base in Chungking. They would also visit the school, passing through on the way to buy fuel at the oil fields about three hundred kilometres further on. They supplied the school's hospital with drugs and medical equipment and so made a crucial contribution. It was almost as if the two projects were part of the same organisation.

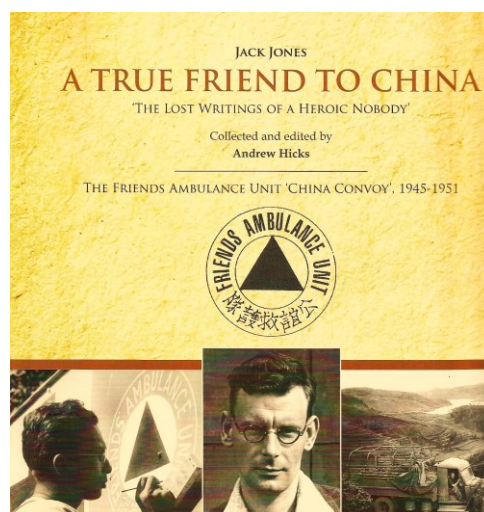
When, following the end of China's civil war, the communist government closed down all foreign projects in China, the FAU donated its trucks, garage and other equipment to the Shandan Bailie School. Many of its Chinese staff also moved to the school, taking a convoy of sixteen heavily loaded trucks on an epic journey from Chungking to Shandan. Rewi Alley in his book, **Yo Banfa**, records that the journey took six months and that they ran out of money and had to offer their services as mechanics mending other vehicles to complete the journey. Even Jack Jones records that he was invited to go and work at the school but of course that was impossible as the foreigners had to return home and become exiles from China.

Better relations with China can now be built on these grateful memories of selfless contributions to the relief of suffering in China. Keeping alive the memory of George Hogg as someone who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of China is thus of great importance. He is a fine example of British goodwill towards China in the nineteen forties, further indicated by the many who were willing to go and work there, risking life and limb.

The enmity of the Cold War era sadly soon became a severe crisis, caused in part by a western phobia of communism. However, China is now keen to overlook past negativity and instead to base current international relations on the grateful memory of true friends such as George Hogg and the many other principled volunteers who have offered humanitarian assistance to China when at its lowest ebb.



The above three photographs are of Shandan and are from the Peter Townsend collection



Andrew's book on the Friends Ambulance Unit in China during WW2.



Reading about China by Walter Fung

Hutong Heartthrobs by Tammy Treichel, Earnshaw Books Hong Kong 2024, 231 pages

The author is better known to SACU readers of China Eye as Tamara Treichel. She has written several informative articles over the last ten years or so for SACU. She is an American of German origin, who has lived in China for the last ten years working in journalism and editing. This is her biography to date of her varied and extremely interesting life and in particular how she met her partner, Jackie who also has had a varied and interesting life. He has worked in films and even acted as a stand-in for the superstar, Jackie Chan.

They travel and do many things together and they discuss many subjects including Chinese legends, literature, art and the way of life in general. Their discussions, in many cases, show the difference between Western and Chinese attitudes and culture. This is an additional important reason for reading her book. A simple example is when she is giving directions to a certain place in Beijing and she uses the Babaoshan cemetery as a landmark. Jackie, tells her that this is inappropriate because anything to do with death is taboo for Chinese people. I know this from my own experience in England.

Andrew Hicks wrote an Afterword to Tamara's book, which is reprinted below as an excellent review of the book.

Andrew Hick on *Hutong Heartthrobs*

This book has some beautiful themes that are close to my heart, about the thrill and stimulus of living in a foreign country far from home and of falling in love with someone of a different culture. Succeeding in a long-term relationship and marriage is always a mountain to climb but it is even more so when trying to understand your partner across the barriers of culture and language. Yet equally such relationships are especially rewarding as this is the best way to feel at home in and learn about your adoptive home country.

Such individuals courageous enough to marry across cultures have to be adventurers as indeed is the American author of this delightful book. She tells us the story of her American mother meeting and marrying her German father, of herself going to study at a top university in Germany and ultimately of working in China and falling for its people and culture. And also of course for her Chinese boyfriend whose life as an actor likewise has been unorthodox and exciting.

The couple face many challenges; the death of the author's father, long separations and of course dealing with the many issues of reconciling such different upbringings. But what comes across very strongly is the sheer joy of living in so rich and different a culture, all the intricacies of daily life being vividly described and evoked. And the book suggests the positive conclusion that we can be drawn together by our common humanity rather than divided by our differences.

I also associate with the author's achievement in writing of young lives with much verve and detail that draws the reader

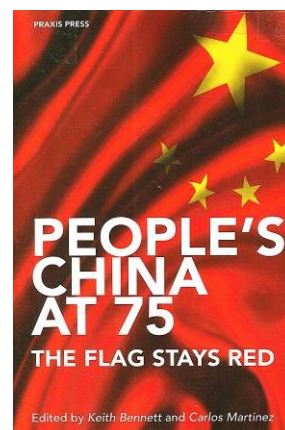
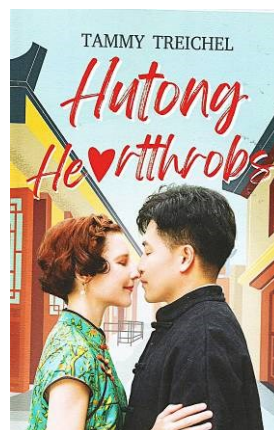
in so powerfully. I too have constructed such a story, a novel called *Thai Girl*, about how a young Englishman is totally perplexed by the reactions of the young Thai woman he is wooing with great passion but not always successfully. Writing a book is a mountain to climb but a belief in the importance of its themes is fundamental to its success.

The other common aspect that I too have written about is how despite all the tensions and mutual suspicion between powerful countries the role that individuals can play in breaking down barriers is of great significance. In Chapter 3, the author tells how she and I met in Beijing and discussed my recent book, *A True Friend to China*. This relates how throughout the turbulent years of the nineteen forties several hundred mainly British and American volunteers distributed medical supplies over the ravaged roads of China and provided doctors and medical aid to people in great need. These volunteers were conscientious objectors excused from military service, allowed to pursue their principles of giving humanitarian aid without strings attached and as ambassadors striving for better international understanding.

In fact, like them, we are all ambassadors when we travel abroad and in particular when we settle in a foreign country and make it our own. Seen in this light the romantic adventure in this book of Tamara (Tammy) and Jackie is a heroic and heart-warming one which I greatly admire and applaud. For the Western reader we share Tamara's constant curiosity to learn more about China and we learn much along with her. And the Chinese reader will discover how an American perceives and respects their own great country and how it is for her to adapt to living there.

If the personal minutiae of a shared life in China make for fascinating reading but the book has a greater significance for being an inspiring example of how individuals can transcend the negative aspects of centuries of tensions between their countries and provide a microcosm of how things ought to be between us. I too love China and its culture and I commend this book as a fine example of what can and should be aspired to both in personal and international relations. The human predicament is universal and we are always more similar than different.

Andrew is a member of SACU council. He is the author of *Jack Jones; A True Friend of China*, a history of the Friends Ambulance Service in China.



People's China at 75, the Flag Stays Red, Edited by Keith Bennett and Carlos Martinez. 152 pages. Praxis Press Glasgow, 2025.

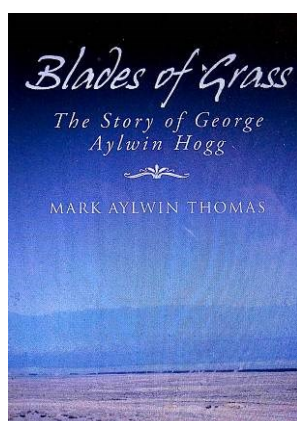
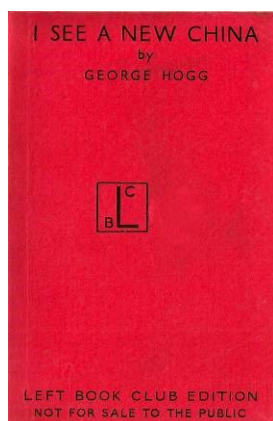
This is an important book for anybody who wants to understand the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) and the Communist Party of China (CPC). Written by several expert authors, the book relates the origins of the CPC and the formation of the PRC and discusses the current position in the world in a clear and concise way. Many references are given at the end of each chapter. The introductory chapter is 'understanding socialism with Chinese characteristics', written by the two editors of the book, both of whom are members of SACU.

The aims of Xi Jinping in his programme for a 'New Era' are listed and explained. They include: battling against corruption, eliminating extreme poverty and ensuring that those lifted out of poverty do not slip back into poverty, tackling pollution, protecting the environment, safeguarding diversity, being a leader in renewable energy and working against climate change, increasing medical care and insurance and also old age pensions.

Steps will be taken to strengthen the Party and ensuring that it serves the people. In addition, support will be given to support other socialist countries. A strategic goal will be building a world community of a shared future for humanity.

Other chapters include; building socialism with Chinese characteristics, standing up and opposing hegemony and China's socialist democracy. Jenny Clegg, a SACU Vice-president relates China's transition to socialism during the years 1949-56. Despite many challenges and mistakes much was achieved in providing basic necessities of life such as food, clothing and rural medicine through the efforts of bare foot doctors. Advances were made in agricultural techniques and life expectancy was significantly increased.

I see a New China by George Hogg, Victor Gollancz, 1945 London



I see *A New China* was written by George Hogg during his time in China. It is like a diary of his experiences in China, which provides a lot of first-hand information on the problems he had and what the Chinese Industrial Cooperatives faced. The introduction is written by Rewi Alley, one of the founders of the Industrial Cooperatives in

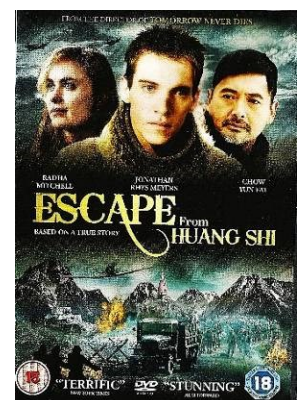
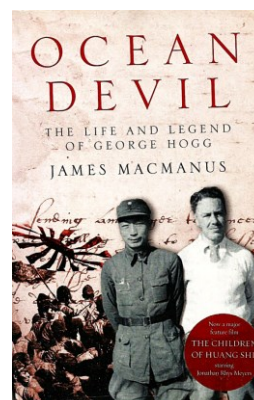
China. Rewi Alley wrote this in Shensi (Shaanxi) in September 1943. Alley writes highly of George Hogg stating, 'Through his being and working, many **blades of grass** will grow in places where none grew before'. This possibly explains the title of George Hogg's nephew, Mark Aylwin Thomas's biography of his uncle (*Blades of Grass*, AuthorHouse UK, Bloomington USA 2017). This book has recently been translated into Chinese by SACU Archivist Linxi Li.

It is notable that George Hogg, in his book, *I See a New China*, on page 22, reprints, in full, a notice, 'pinned in a prominent position', 'A Diagram of the Three Principles of the People. (Ordinally proposed by Dr Sun Yatsen, who is regarded as the Father of Modern China by both the mainland and Taiwan and in fact by Chinese all over the world.

- 1) The new Chinese Republic based on the Three Principles of the People (of Dr Sun Yatsen) will not be a capitalist democracy, such as England and America, neither will it be a Soviet Union or a socialist state, but it will be a new kind of democratic republic based on the unity between all classes.
- 2) The semi-colonial status of China will be changed to that of an independent self-governing nation. But however strong China becomes, she will never herself become an imperialist power. She will not interfere with other countries, and will treat every country that recognises her independence as an equal.
- 3) To realise this the Kuomintang, Communist and other Resist-Japan parties must cooperate not only during the war, but long afterwards.

These principles are still generally valid today and apart from the phrase 'neither be a Soviet Union or socialist state', could well have been spoken by today's leaders of the PRC.

George Hogg's story is the subject of the film, *Escape from Huang Shi* and also the book, *Ocean Devil, The Life and Legend of George Hogg* by James Macmanus, 2008, Harper Perennial.



SHANGHAI AND NANJING 1937, Massacre on the Yangtze. Benjamin Lai. Osprey Campaign 309, 2017. ISBN 978 1 4728 1749 5. A book review by John Ham

A glance at the map shows how much Japan had gobbled up China in the decades before the Second Sino-Japanese War. By 1937 belligerent Japanese generals wanted more. Navy Special Landing Force marines garrisoned in Shanghai were ready to fire the first shots. Chiang Kaishek's "Germanized" Nationalist Army, deficient in artillery and tanks – handfuls of Vickers 6-tonners, Vickers-Carden-Loyd amphibians. Panzer Is, CV 13/35 tankettes – could not match the Japanese. He planned a delaying battle at Shanghai, then withdrawing to inland defence lines hoping the Western Powers would come to his aid.

The Chinese Navy lost most of its ships to Japanese bombing trying to block the Yangtze and prevent the IJA Shanghai Expeditionary Force landing. Chiang's Air Force and Soviet volunteers downed some aircraft but could not stop the bombers. Attrition battles continued for Shanghai and neighbouring cities. Further Japanese reinforcements landing at Hangzhou threatened pincer envelopment, and despite stands like the legendary "800 Braves", Shanghai was abandoned. Advancing to Nanjing the Japanese Army breached its fortress walls, overcoming defence lines and hill forts. Panicked inhabitants died in lethal crushes trying to exit the city gates when the evacuation order was given. Then the killings began: civilians and soldiers – regiments of POWs and beheading competitions.



The Dove of Peace at the top of the figure at the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders, Nanjing (WF)

Post-war few war criminals were indicted. The book includes a very detailed order of battle and well-designed maps indicate unit positions and movements; for linguists names are given in Chinese and Japanese characters. These early WW2 Far East battles attract less attention in English language publications. The writer is ex-military and includes substantial material on participating Chinese regiments. Recommended. Thanks to Osprey for the sample.

The Chinese Economy (2024-5) by Barnaby Powell

Barnaby is a member of SACU council. He is well qualified to write this short article as he has many years' experience in international finance including that of South-east Asia.

Recovery from Covid has taken its toll on China's economy. In 2024, the country's growth rate rebounded somewhat, but still remained around only 5%, the slowest in years. This was largely due to the long-drawn-out property market collapse, local government debt and youth unemployment, which is an ominous sign along with the declining birthrate. Consumption stays stubbornly low as the population is reluctant to spend and continues to save 30-40% of its income in the face of unexpected setbacks and uncertainty. Confidence is taking time to return as the *yuan* loses strength and there is even talk of a devaluation in order to boost exports.

However, China's is the world's second largest economy and is well set to surpass the US by 2030. Its current GDP is \$31 trillion (in purchasing power parity) versus the US's \$27 trillion, but its per capita income is only \$23,000 versus the US's £74,000, given its population of 1.4 billion versus the US's 333 million.

It is also the world's largest creditor nation, whereas the US is the largest debtor. Its foreign exchange reserves are \$3.5 trillion versus the US's 775 billion and it trade surpluses total \$1 trillion. So, it has amassed a colossal amount of



A stark monument to the Nanjing Massacre of 300,000 Chinese civilians and POWs (WF)



Monument to Peace at the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders (WF)

treasure in its coffers for investment and as a war chest. The world is its oyster – it has the aims and the means, the funds and the human resources to extend its influence and presence far and wide and to change the current world order.

Above all, China is the global manufacturing centre – the ‘factory of the world’ as opposed to India – the ‘office of the world’. It is also the main trading partner of 120 countries. The threat of an imminent tariff war with the US will be countered by retaliatory tariffs. This time, it is well prepared to withstand economic sanctions. Diversification of its manufacturing bases away from the country to South-East Asia is well underway for products like clothing, toys and shoes. It has also sought alternative supply chains for many sources of raw materials and components.

Although its ‘soft power’ initiatives have paled in the shadow of its ‘hard power’ breakthroughs in telecoms, AI and, most recently, ‘Deepseek’, it has now stolen a march on the US in the race for technological supremacy. But before these two great powers embark on a reckless expenditure of blood and treasure in military build-up and the space race, some pause for thought should be given to the true meaning of a ‘shared future’. In the current stand-off between China and the US which seems to presage a new Cold War, Rudyard Kipling’s *The Ballad of East and West* comes to mind:

*But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth
When two strong men stand face to face, tho’ they
come from the ends of the earth.*

Before another brave historian undertakes the writing of *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, perhaps we should heed the words of Edward Gibbon in his magisterial work on the Fall of Rome: *The obvious definition of a monarchy seems to be that of a state, in which a single person, by whatsoever name he may be distinguished, is entrusted with the execution of laws, the management of the revenue and the command of the army. But unless public liberty is protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians, the authority of so formidable magistrate will soon degenerate into despotism.*



Modern Beijing office buildings

Sino File compiled by Walter Fung

Items worth reading again

From The Times 16/7/19, Huawei

A parliamentary committee concluded yesterday that there are no technical grounds for excluding Huawei from Britain’s rollout of 5G. The benefits of Huawei are clear and the removal of Huawei from current or future networks could cause significant delays.

From Newsweek May 9 2005

China’s growth has amazing benefits for the world and America in particular. Morgan Stanley reports that cheap imports from China have saved American consumers more than \$600 billion in the past decade. They have saved manufacturers even more.

The *Economist* magazine notes that it was largely thanks to China the world as a whole escaped recession after America’s stock market bubble burst in 2000-01. And by buying up US Treasury bills, China along with other Asian countries, has allowed Americans and their government to keep borrowing and spending and thus keep the world economy going.

From the British Press

Former MI5 director writes spy novel

Stella Rimington, who was Director-general of MI5 from 1992 to 1996, has written her 12th spy novel called *The Hidden Hand*. The main character, Li Min, is used by the Chinese authorities. Li leaves Harvard and transfers to an Oxford college where she is ordered to associate herself with the daughter of an American military man. A young CIA officer is assigned to befriend Li to ascertain what is happening. The reviewer of the book says it is a warning to those who still do not see China as a threat and goes on to describe those who admire Chinese civilisation as ‘useful idiots’. The book, *The Hidden Hand* will be published on 30th January. (From Culture, Sunday Times 19/1/25)

World’s largest hydroelectric plant to go ahead

This will be on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo river, which flows from Tibet into India and Bangladesh. One section falls 2,000 metres over a stretch of 50 km (31 miles) making it a potential site for a dam producing hydroelectricity. Official estimates have estimated a figure of 300bn kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, which is sufficient to meet the needs of 300 million people. The proposed dam’s capacity will be three times that of the Three Gorges Dam, currently the world’s largest.

There are several important challenges; four to six 20 km tunnels will have to be constructed through the Nacha Barwa mountains to divert the flow of the river, the area is prone to earthquakes and people will have to be relocated. The possible effect on the ecosystem and downstream issues with India and Bangladesh are also concerns. Cost could be as much as one trillion yuan (\$137 billion). (From The Economist 4/1/25)

Stammer wants to build new rapport with China

Stammer will meet Xi Jinping on the side of the G20 summit in Brazil today. It will be the first meeting of a UK prime minister with President Xi in five years. Theresa May was the last UK prime minister to go to China in 2018 seen by China as enhancing the 'Golden Era.' Stammer has emphasised the importance of the Chinese economy and said that it is only right that the UK engages positively with Beijing. Downing Street has said that Stammer will be 'firm' and have honest conversations with Xi on areas of disagreement, whilst being challenging where we have to be. Given the size of the Chinese economy, it is important to have a pragmatic and serious relationship.

Critics have mentioned the Hong Kong issues, Uighur problems and warnings by MI5. However, UK exports to China have risen from £20 billion in 2016 to £33 billion last year. Also, Rachel Reeves is expected to travel to Beijing next year. *(From The Times 18/11/24)*



From the Internet Facebook (PC screen)

Chinese AI DeepSeek can be a boon for Britain

Lord Vallance, the science minister has said that Britain will reap the benefits of artificial intelligence developed by the Chinese tech firm, DeepSeek. He added that DeepSeek has shown that AI is not going to be dominated by two or three companies because we are now in a competitive era. Small upstarts can change things and we are going to see more innovation.

DeepSeek shook the financial markets last week when it was found that its new AI models R1 and R3 were amongst the best available and had been developed cheaply. Despite a US ban on high-end chips to China, DeepSeek released the technology as 'open source' for all to use and develop.

Nearly a trillion US dollars were wiped from the value of high-tech and infrastructure companies last week. Shares were sold off in the belief that they had over invested in data centres and that they would now face greater competition. Some losses have now been partially recovered. Rishi Sunak set up a UK AI Safety Institute with £100 million funding, which has voluntary agreements with high-tech companies such as Open AI, Google and Meta to test their models before release. New legislation is being prepared to make

pre-release 'compulsory before release'. *From The Times 5/2/25)*

Chinese 'super' embassy likely to go ahead

China applied to build a large diplomatic complex at Royal Mint Court near the Tower of London, but its application was opposed by the Tower Hamlets Council in 2022. In addition, the Metropolitan police was against the plan because it believed controlling any protests on the site would be difficult. Others think it could facilitate Chinese spying. However, the British government is trying to attract Chinese investment and now supports the new embassy. This was after a meeting with Xi Jinping with Sir Keir Stammer last year. Following a further review, objections have now been dropped and the embassy project is likely to go ahead. The final decision will be made by Angela Rayner, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. *(From the I newspaper 15/2/25)*

China and India agreement

On the sidelines of the annual BRICS summit in Russia, President Xi Jinping of China and Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi held their first bilateral meeting in five years. Mr Xi urged the two powers to co-operate to promote the multipolarisation of the world and the democratisation of international relations. Days earlier, they reached a truce about patrolling their disputed Himalayan border. *(From The Economist 26/10/24)*

Beijing and Delhi resume direct flights

Direct flights are to be resumed after five years, indicative of a thaw of relations after the border clash in 2020. Arrangements will be made at 'an early date'. This follows a meeting between India's top diplomat and Wang Yi, the Chinese foreign minister. Relations have improved over the last four months after several high-level meetings, including that between Xi Jinping and India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in October. *(From the I newspaper 29/1/25)*

Restoration of Huizhou ancient carvings in China

Wealthy merchants commissioned craftsmen to carve decorations for their homes in ancient Huizhou, Huangshan in Anhui province. They were to show off their wealth. The carvings are now a World Heritage item. Carvings in stone, brick and wood have been integral to Huizhou architecture since the Ming Dynasty (1368 -1644). They are situated in craggy mountainous terrain and have become badly eroded over the centuries but are now being restored by expert craftsmen, such as Kuai Zhenghua. It is difficult work as many parts are missing, but some clues are available because many carvings depicted legends. *(From The Times 29/11/24)*

Robot husky trains for Antarctica

China has created a robot husky (dog) that can detect hidden crevasses and also carry heavy 100kg loads for polar explorers in the freezing conditions in the Antarctic. This is the latest animal-like drone to be unveiled by China, after the robot 'Wolves'. The 'huskies' have six legs and are extremely resilient; they can move across ice and snow and can operate at temperatures as low as minus 40 degrees centigrade. Efforts are being made to extend the life of the battery, which can only last two hours at very low

temperatures. The huskies can be used to walk ahead of humans and give warnings of crevasse or cracks in the ice.

Robot dogs have been used by military forces around the world for years to perform dangerous tasks in dangerous environments. However, China has a robot wolf that can climb stairs and obey spoken commands, can move at running pace and can carry an automatic rifle. *(From The Times 28/1/25)*

Senior military commanders purged

The latest is Admiral Miao Hua, a member of the Chinese Liberation Army. This is in addition to two defence ministers, Wei Fenghe and Li Shangfu who are awaiting prosecution and who have been expelled from the Communist Party. They are accused of a string of crimes, notably taking bribes. The crimes are believed to be connected to investigations into China's rocket and missile development work. Many officers and executives are said to have been dismissed over the past two years. *(From The Times 29/11/24)*

China's Mars rover finds possible signs of water

Data from China's Zhurong rover, which landed on the Utopia Planitia region of Mars in March 2021 and was operational for a year, has shown evidence of wind waves and sand. The unit's ground-penetrating radar show layers of rock, which could suggest that a now-vanished ocean was once fringed by a sandy shore. The rover, which travelled 1.2 miles at right angles to escapements thought to be the remnants of a shoreline that existed four billion years ago. However, the 'shoreline' was irregular instead of being level as would be expected. Also, puzzling was where had the water gone? *(From The Times 25/2/25)*

China's plans for moon base

Beijing has landed four spacecraft on the moon in the last 11 years, compared to just one by the US. It is believed the target for a Chinese moon base is 2035. 'Mock-up' buildings have been shown to be 'egg-shaped', standing on end and which will be built by robots and 3D printers. They would have to withstand lunar conditions; temperature variations of 300 degrees centigrade and cosmic radiation. *(From The Times 27/11/2)*

From The Chinese Press

Indonesia joins BRICS as full member

Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world and the largest southeast Asian economy, has become the latest full member of BRICS. In addition to the five original core members, are Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Ethiopia and Egypt. There are eight partner members, which include Malaysia and Thailand. Furthermore, 30 other nations have formally applied to join.

China has called for advancing the process of expanding membership and partner membership to enhance the representation and voice of developing nations. This will foster greater democracy in international relations and promote a multipolar world. The governance model of BRICS should be characterised by equal cooperation, mutual respect, collective decision making and policy

coordination. The New Development Bank (NDB), unlike the World Bank, grants all founder members equal voting rights with no veto. Since 2015, the NDB has financed over 100 projects with loans totalling about \$35 billion. *(From CDGW 10-16/1/25)*

Ping Pong Diplomacy revisited

A gala dinner commemorated the 53rd anniversary of the Ping-Pong diplomacy incident and also the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between China and the US. The dinner was held in Los Angeles on 22nd December 2024 to remember the incident and to promote the healthy and stable developments of China-US relations. More than 600 people from both countries and different sectors attended the event. The Chinese table tennis world champions, Ma Long and Liu Shiwen exchanged jerseys with US players. Gene Sykes, the chair of the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee affirmed the unique role Ping-Pong Diplomacy played. The spirit of this extraordinary event has a powerful influence today

In April 1971 nine US table tennis players were invited to Beijing for exhibition games with Chinese players. This helped to break the ice between China and the US. *(From CDGW 3-9/1/25)*

Tik-Tok and WeChat OK in Malaysia

A new law in Malaysia sees Tik-Tok and WeChat secure licenses. WeChat is owned by China's Tencent Holdings, Tik-Tok by ByteDance, both are Chinese companies. The new law is mainly aimed at addressing rising cybercrime. In 2023, Tik-Tok had 17 million users in Malaysia, WeChat had about 12 million in 2024. *(From CDGW 10-16/1/25)*

Investment in water infrastructure

A record 1.35 trillion-yuan (\$185 billion) worth of investment was made for building water resources across China last year. This is the third year in a row that it has exceeded one trillion yuan. 47,000 projects were implemented through the year. This has played an effective role in promoting economic growth and creating jobs – over 3.15 million people have benefitted. *(From CDGW 3-9/1/25)*

Longest space walk

Two Chinese astronauts of the Shenzhou XIX mission conducted spacewalks to install space debris shields and other tasks outside the Tiangong space station on December 17th. They stayed outside for nine hours; the longest of 18 spacewalks conducted by Chinese astronauts so far. *(From CDGW 20-26/12/24)*

Hainan to be a global free-trade port

President Xi Jinping called for further emancipation of the mind in the construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port to transform it into a crucial gateway for China's opening-up process in the new era. He highlighted the strategic positioning of Hainan as a pilot zone for comprehensively deepening reform and also for ecological conservation and international tourism. In 2020, a master plan was released to make Hainan a globally influential free port by the middle of the century. *(From CDGW 20-26/12/24)*

Tibet (Xizang) GDP and living conditions increase

The GDP of the Xizang autonomous region totalled 276.49 billion yuan (\$37.96 billion) in 2024, which is an increase of 6.3% over the previous year. The per capita disposable income of all residents reached 31,358 yuan, which is 8.2% higher than the previous year. For urban residents the figure was 55,444yuan, a 6.8% increase; for rural residents, the figure was 21,578 yuan, an 8.3% increase.

Foreign trade also increased with the total import and export value reaching 12.67 billion yuan, an increase year-on-year of 15.4%. *(From CDGW 24-30/1/25)*

Guizhou bridge nearing completion

The Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge in Guizhou is nearing completion as the final steel truss weighing around 215 tonnes was lifted into place on January 17th. The bridge will be 625 metres above the Beipan river and the main span will be 1,420 meters long. Construction began in 2022 and is due to be completed later this year. It will shorten the travelling time across the canyon from about one hour to two minutes. *(From CDGW 24-30/1/25)*

Xi Jinping visits Macao

Xi arrived with his wife on December 18h on his seventh visit in 5 years. This visit marked the 25th anniversary of the return of Macao to China. Last year, due to a resurgent in tourism, Macao SAR's economy grew by 80.5% year-on-year in real terms. It is the fifth wealthiest region in the world according to Global Finance magazine in May. Macao's GDP, in the three quarters of this year reached 301 billion patacas (\$38 billion).

The casino industry has been the main drive for economic growth, but now the SAR government is making efforts to diversify into modern financial services, high tech industries, sports and convention services and the health sector including traditional Chinese medicine. Steps will be taken to strengthen supervision of the gaming industry and tackle gambling-related crime. Social services to improve peoples' well-being, such as housing for the elderly and those on low-incomes. *(From CDGW 20-26/12/24)*

Sino-US science and tech pact renewed

The US and China long standing science and technology agreement has been renewed on December 13th, despite the heightened tensions between the two countries. The agreement is set to last five years and will involve cooperation in the areas of public health care and climate change. The agreement was first signed in 1979 following the normalisation of relations between the US and China. It has involved more than 1,000 projects and over 30,000 US scientists. The US-China Business Council representing over 270 US companies operating in China welcomed the renewal. *(From CDGW 20-26/12/24)*

West urged to lift Xinjiang sanctions.

International experts are urging Western countries to lift sanctions on Xinjiang products claimed to have been produced by forced labour. The sanctions have caused widespread job losses. The requests were made during the International Symposium on the Employment and Social Security in Xinjiang held in Urumqi, which was attended by

210 representatives from 44 countries, regions and organisations. By the end of 2023 sanctions had disrupted over 100 local enterprises. Some had production cuts and other have had to shut down. However, businesses in Xinjiang still trade with 192 countries and regions. *(From CDGW 20-26/12/24)*

New advanced research ship.

On December 26th, an advanced, multifunctional research ship, Tansuo, 3 (Exploration 3) was commissioned. And delivered to the Institute of Deep-sea Science and Engineering based in Sanya. The institute is a subsidiary of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. More than 100 domestic institutes, universities and enterprises contributed to the ship's research, development and construction. *(From CDGW 3-9/1/25)*

Chinese cities on 'wetland' list

Wetland cities are the 'kidneys' of the world because they play a crucial role in purifying water, regulating climate and maintaining biodiversity. At the 64th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention held in Gland, Switzerland, nine further Chinese cities were designated as international wetland cities. They included, Dali in Yunnan, Lhasa in Tibet (Xizang), Fuzhou in Fujian and Yueyang in Hunan. At present there are 74 such cities in the world, 22 are in China. *(From CDGW 21-27/2/25)*

Land degradation management

Chinese scientists have developed a system for land degradation management using big data and AI technologies for the Arabian Peninsula. This was presented at the 16th session of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia by Li Xiaosong and his team from the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Aerospace Information Research Institute. The system can provide recommendations for policymakers based on the type of degradation; wind erosion, water erosion or salinisation.

About one third of Saudi Arabia's southwestern region will be involved with a project for land management and afforestation using Chinese equipment and knowhow. Praise has been given from delegates to the meeting including those from countries such as Argentina and Lebanon which had already discussed the possibility of transforming desert-like areas into green land.

In 1978, China initiated a programme in 13 northern provinces and has so far increased the forest coverage from 5% to nearly 14%. *(From CDGW 13-19/12/24)*

Advanced amphibious assault ship unveiled

On December 27th in Shanghai, China unveiled its largest and most advanced amphibious assault ship. It was named CNS Sichuan, after the south-western province. It displaces 40,000 tons of water, and can carry fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters and amphibious landing craft. It also features a two-island superstructure configuration, has a full-length flight deck and an electromagnetic launch system for fixed-wing aircraft. *(From CDGW 3-9/1/25)*

CDGW = China Daily Global Weekly

GOOD NEWS FROM THE ECONOMIST ISSUE on 18/1/25

Made in China 2025

Thus was an initiative begun 10 years ago to turn China into a green and innovative manufacturing power. The aim was to do this by relying less on labour and Western supply chains and more on automation and new home-grown technologies. The Economist actually says that, for the most part, this has been a resounding success. The torrent of goods pouring out of Chinese factories has resulted in a trade surplus of nearly \$1 trillion.

In 2015, China accounted for 26% of global value added in this sector and by 2023, the figure had grown to 29%. This is especially impressive because the growth has been in fields deemed important by the government.

Two good examples are drones and electric vehicles (EV). The plan was for China to sell 3 million EVs by 2025. This has been exceeded by a wide margin as more than 10 million were sold last year, nearly 66% of the global total. China's biggest drone-maker DJI has been even more successful, with a global market share of over 90%.

In the general area of clean energy, China also leads by a large margin. In 2015, China produced 65% of the world's solar panels and 47% of batteries. Today, the figures are 90% and 70% respectively. Government support helps to keep costs down. Much of the world's green apparatus is made in China.

Despite these successes, the Chinese government wants more innovative and more high-quality products. A plan was to increase research and development spending to 1.6% of total revenue by 2025, which was up from less than 1% in 2015. The figure of 1.68% was in fact reached in 2023.

Still to be achieved are work in aviation and especially semiconductors. China has successfully launched the C919, the first Chinese -made passenger plane, but it contains many foreign components.

However, progress has been made in higher labour productivity. China's labour force in 2023 was 123 million people, which now has a higher output per person. The output per worker increased by about 6% every year from 2014 to 2023; just slightly less than the government's goal.

These and other developments are part of the overall goal of self-reliance – taking things into our own hands, as quoted by Xi Jinping. (From *The Economist* 18/1/25)

Environment and climate change

I was very surprised to see this article. It is unusual to see a comprehensive article on the positive aspects of China, especially the items on the environment and climate control. China's government has been aware of the need to protect the environment probably longer than most Western fully developed countries. During my trip to China in 1983, I saw

a public notice in Xi'an urging protection of the environment. It is notable that at that time hardly anybody owned a car; nearly everybody rode a bicycle – the least polluting means of transport.



Xi'an in 1983; protect the environment (WF)



Public notice in China (WF)



The Earth is not well and we only have one Earth



Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding