

# Academic News

## August 2006

Those of us who spent the summer in central China were relieved that the heat subsided after July so that we could sleep more easily at nights. Sultry, humid weather prevailed and we enjoyed a spectacular electrical storm with no rain at all ....



**Rob M** completed his year of working with us in Academic, and also studying Chinese part-time, at the end of August . Together with **Grace**, he has moved into accommodation at the Institute of Post and Telecommunications here in Xi'an as a full-time English teacher. We have all really appreciated his involvement and support over the last twelve

months, cheerfully serving wherever needed and caring for us all with genuine kindness. We are already missing his friendly presence in the Academic office especially when its time for a cup of English tea! Rob may continue to cover the office one afternoon a week - with no official responsibilities he'll have three hours to catch up with world news on the Internet, one of his favourite pastimes! We're looking for suitable captions to go with this recent photo of Rob taken whilst he was in Dingbian arranging the summer school with Grace - how about 'Let me show you one of the main stages of the ELA Academic initiation ceremony!'

### Teachers, Students and Staff

**Chris & Anna, Daniel and Joseph** are settling into the Teachers College in Guiyang having moved there over the summer. Chris is really pleased to be mainly teaching small classes of students based on his campus. The whole family are adjusting to having less space within the apartment and the surrounding area for playing.

**David R** is looking forward to a competition for 100 primary school teachers in mid-September. He is a judge assessing their English ability, lesson preparation and teaching content. He will also give a lecture to them.

**Maria S** is helping her friends to look after six children with cerebral palsy. They went for a picnic to a recommended site out of town which turned out to be a rather swampy fish farm - the children had a wonderful time anyway! Maria will be in Xi'an with a friend from the USA from 13-17 September.

**Dave & Susie** are planning to move into a larger ground floor flat in a building about five metres away from their current home! Provisional move date 28 September.

**Lesley C** returned to Xian on 21 August having left the capable Admin team to oversee the work during the summer months.

**Cyril & Gabrielle** flew into Hong Kong on 2 September and arrived back in Xi'an on 8 September.



### **Around The World**

**Alan D** (Aus) is again suffering from the auto-immune disorder which affects his energy levels and causes a swollen liver. It flared up following a reduction in medication. A liver biopsy has been taken for further analysis.

**Ann L** (UK) was in hospital for four weeks after she fell from her brother's loft and damaged her back. As well as resting in bed she had to wear a body brace for 6-8 weeks. Ann is now planning to be based in the UK and return to China for a few months each year, starting from next April.

**Lesley T** (UK) had an operation on 7 September to deal with breast cancer, thankfully an early and treatable type (DCIS) which has not spread or become invasive. **Stuart** returned to China on 5 September to teach most of their classes, leaving Lesley in the tender care of their two adult sons at home. Lesley plans to return to China in early October.

**Celia N** will be attending college in the last weekend of September and is deciding whether or not to continue her study.

## **Events and Visits**

### **Summer Schools**

The third and final Summer School based at **Dingbian Middle School** in NW Shaanxi seems to have been a great success, with **Barry & Jan** sending us through several very encouraging reports during the two weeks (photo of **Gerald** from team reading English to toddlers in Hephzibah, our childcare unit).



### **English Teacher Training Programme (ETTP) Report**

This summer four single ladies from the UK (photo left to right **Elaine E**, **Jenny T**, **Jen H** and **Ann S**) completed the four week programme here in Xi'an, either staying with long-term team members or in rented accommodation. At the end of the month they were joined by two new teachers, **Rich & Maggie K** and a new language student, **Allison B**, who transferred from other organisations working in China. For a few days midway through the month, **Elaine** and **Jenny** were escorted to Lanzhou by **David P** and **Helen** to

have their Chinese medicals and also familiarise themselves with their flats, the campus and some of the city. Thankfully their early visit to the campus seems to have prompted the university to use the last two weeks of August to repair and clean the flats for their return at the end of the month. This year, with Edwin in our family, we were particularly grateful for the wonderful team of long-term folk who assisted during ETTP - Helen, Rob, Stacie and David P deserve special mention.

### **Association Conference**

Once again the conference is taking place during the first week of October with two days of meetings at a local holiday resort south of Xi'an, followed by a day out together in the countryside before concluding with a departmental day. All the directors are expected at the conference with several days of Board meetings during the following week.

**David B** is attending the SAFEA (State Administration of Foreign Expert Affairs) conference in Shenyang, Liaoning province, without Susie this year. The three day conference begins on 19 September.

**David & Celia** are planning to visit Lanzhou for the first time on 12-13 October. **Cyril & Gabrielle** are also planning a visit to Lanzhou later in October

**Teachers' Day** this Sunday 10th September and the **Mid Autumn Festival** with moon cakes is on Friday 6th October.

### **Office and Resources**

With the recent replacement of an old computer, we are very pleased to finally have two computers which will network with each other in the Academic office!

### **Other Departments:**

**Administration** currently has Bob (UK) working with them for three months. Sadly in the Spring we will be saying goodbye to **Pauline** (Mal) - everyone is now asking who'll take folk to the market to buy cloth for making clothes? In their most recent report, the Administration team requested that, having been informed by the PSB that fake goods on sale in the Muslim market are now

being targeted by the police, we not ask any of the hospitality team to assist with the purchase of fake brand name products around the city.

**Childcare** units in Xianyang and Xi'an have bright, clean paint ready for the darker winter months ahead. Xianyang also sent three children for heart surgery and seven babies (less than 6 months old) had cleft lips repaired during August. Children in hospital wards each need a carer to see to their food, bedding,



changing and washing, which disrupts the usual staffing arrangements. Children love having their very own carer and it's hard to return to normal, where one carer looks after five children.

**Healthcare** are offering the services of **Dr David Fong** (Aus) for two months and **Dr May** (Chn) continues to provide dental care. **Nurse Rachel** (Chn) gave some training to village folks dealing with diarrhoea in children, whilst **Jan** (UK) demonstrated physical therapy for disabled children there, including a toddler with cerebral palsy.

**SNE Programme** made extra time to really support and encourage parents for the last few days of August, instead of the normal sessions with the children. **Gill H** (UK) is coming to help with speech and language for three months from September. The six week SNE training course for teachers, nurses and doctors, which included practical sessions and group work, went well and **Sue** has been invited to do more teaching. Some carers didn't expect children with problems such as cerebral palsy to be able to do anything, whereas others were expecting too much!

**Social Welfare** are mourning the loss of one of their longest standing friends, a dear brother called **King** (see photo). He has known for several years that his heart required surgery but the operation would have cost 70-80,000 yuan and they are from the poorest part of Lanzhou. His condition recently deteriorated suddenly and he passed away in hospital, leaving his wife Queenie and their five month old baby, Enoch. If you'd like to help in any way please contact Wendy at Bethesda.

**For your safety...**

The Public Security Bureau (PSB) have asked us to remind foreigners on-field of various safety matters:;

- Consider fire precautions and evacuation routes from your homes. In company apartments we fit fire alarms and extinguishers and try to arrange an alternative fire escape to the door, e.g. a lockable escape gate made through iron safety bars on your windows
- Look after your valuables in public places - strong bags and money belts help deter opportunist pickpockets
- Get receipts from taxi drivers. When Dave left his bag in a taxi we rang the company and the driver promptly returned to our estate and he didn't even charge us the cost of his return journey!
- If you need to go through a rough area late at night take a taxi or get a friend to 'song' you home (Chinese word for accompany)
- Folks living off-campus who have an overseas guest to stay for more than a day need to register them with the local PSB within 24 hours of arrival (Take passport and photocopy of it). When moving in to live in a residential estate, the estate office (Wu ye ban or local Pai Chu Suo) should be informed of your exact address and given a copy of your passport. Inform them if you move out.
- When obtaining a new visa from provincial PSB officers take along your actual passport for inspection as well as a photocopy of it.

We hope to see many of you at the conference.

With love from Dave & Susie and Helen