

ACADEMIC NEWS

December 2006 and January 2007

With Susie having medical tests in the UK at the end of the year, we've combined the December and January Academic Newsletters to give you a double edition! At least it means you had one less email message to read over the Christmas and New year period!



Here in Xi'an several folk in Lesley's Sunday gathering recently had a close shave at a local restaurant. Whilst they were eating a meal on the second floor after their meeting, there was a violent gas explosion in the kitchen downstairs, which blew windows, bottles, crockery and broken pottery out onto the pavement. Although the damage was quite extensive, the manager claimed that no one was injured in the blast (see photo of a more peaceful lunch on Christmas Day at the Bell Tower Hotel with Ann, Edwin, Helen, Joan and Rachel)

Teachers, Students and Staff

Lesley C (UK) has officially announced her retirement from the Association after many years of faithful service as company secretary and head of administration. Lesley was initially based on Lamma Island, Hong Kong before relocating into China in the late 1990's and establishing a committed local Chinese team to cover the many aspects of administration within the Association. She will be greatly missed by everyone connected with the work and especially those within her own department.

Continuing with the same theme, **David L (Aus)** officially retired at the end of December - not as a Director of the Association but from his position of leadership based in Greensborough, Australia! Janette C will also continue to be involved with the work.

With the beginning of the Chinese New year holiday, most teachers and students are currently travelling around the Far East or with family and friends around the world.

Jenny T and **Stephen O** are back in the UK; **Paul B** is visiting friends in NZ; **Rosemary B** and **Elaine E** are with family in Australia; **Frieda Y**, **Jan B**, **Don & Lynne H** (with **Jemma**), **Rich & Maggie K** and **Chris & Anna C** (with **Daniel** and **Joseph**) are all on

holiday in Thailand; **David P, David R, Helen T, Rachel W, Ann S, Jen H** and **Allison B** are all travelling around China; and finally **Jeff B, Joan S, John K & Dong Mei** (with **Enoch**) and **Dave & Susie B** (with **Edwin**) are staying put for most of the holiday period.

Ann S (UK) is travelling to Shanghai to see a consultant about a suspicious lump on her knee. We are not sure whether insurance will cover this as it is urgent but they do not consider it an emergency.

Around The World

Lesley T (UK) has completed her course of radiotherapy and is feeling tired out. **Stuart** returned to the UK in December and both are now beginning to look for paid employment in the UK (see photo of Lesley & Stuart outside Shaanxi Teachers' University).

David & Celia (UK) recently enjoyed a trip to Ethiopia but were glad to return to support their daughter who hasn't been well. Given their family situation, David and Celia have decided not to visit China in March and send their apologies for the AGM.



Events and Visits

Cyril & Gabrielle are in Hanzhong from 17-23 January, 27 February - 4 March and again in April.

Lesley travelled to Guiyang to visit **Martin & Sue W** and their work, she also spent time with **Chris & Kate V** in Shanghai. She is currently coming to the end of a working holiday in Hong Kong.

The **Association's AGM** will be held on 23 March 2007 during the afternoon. We will hear reports from each department and then have a meal together.

The lunar **Spring Festival** ushers in the year of the Boar on 18 February.

Office and Resources

Internet communication between China and the rest of the world was disrupted by an earthquake off the coast of Taiwan in late December. The quake ruptured a major cable on the sea bed. Most of the Internet returned to normal after a few weeks although some websites still seem to be slow to access.

Ann W (CHN) is offering a course on 'Chinese History and its Impact on Society Today' over the Chinese New Year holiday. The course will commence on 22 February and run for five consecutive weekday mornings from 10:00am to 12:00 noon in the Academic office. To date around a dozen people have signed up for the course.

For Your Information

Don't forget the **Study Bursary** - if you are a teacher within the Academic and have been studying Chinese language part-time this semester we will meet 30% of your costs (if you pay out between 300 and 2000 rmb in wages to tutors). For more details contact the Academic office.

The British Foreign Office publishes information aimed to encourage safer overseas travel. Their website link is:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1100183245921>

Other Departments:

Support Services (SPS) / Administration have purchased a new van for the work in Hanzhong. We are looking forward to the completion of a new road between Xi'an and Hanzhong which will cut travelling time down to about four hours. The present route is along scary, narrow, winding mountain roads. **James (CHN), Amy (CHN)** and **Simon (CHN)** went down in the van to help with Health & Safety and renovation work. **Jessica (CHN)** and **YL (CHN)** also spent time there to assist with accounting and human resources. **Abigail (CHN)** stayed in the Dorcas Centre for a month for training and experience in accounts, she works in Hanzhong. Discussions are ongoing in the wages subcommittee about how to reward workers with good character and attitude, not just experience and qualifications.



Child Development the babies in the Bulrush Baby room have returned to the main welfare centre at least until after the Chinese New Year, negotiations are underway to re-establish things on a new footing. **Shannon (USA)** and **Maria (USA)** are taking a break overseas, and their Chinese carers, are waiting to see what will happen. **Cyril & Gabrielle** have stayed in

their new apartment in Hanzhong but were freezing cold - central heating is only supplied to people living north of the Qinling mountain range in Shaanxi province, so they huddled close to an electric radiator!

The Xianyang 5th anniversary celebration on Christmas Day went well, there was an enormous 5th Birthday Cake for everyone to share (see photo of Gabrielle, Lesley and Sally cutting the cake)

The Xi'an Child Development Centre has employed their first **male carer** in the Beth Isaac room, some of the special needs children are now taller and heavier than some of the female staff and its hard to lift and carry them. **Bob (UK)** from SPS is giving training on subjects such as time management, dealing with relationships and decision making. Carers and children on the second floor of the MWC are receiving input from our staff and are being connected in with a local parents group and school who specialise in helping children with special needs.

Healthcare received help from **Richard G (Aus)** and **Phil (Aus)** for a month, they lived in the Golden Bridge apartment close to the Dorcas Centre where the Admin team work. As well as training our team, they trained about 30 medical staff from the Beiguan hospital in CPR and First Aid. A young lady called **Ying (CHN)** is volunteering to help with several children who come to HSC on weekdays for exercises and activities, she herself has pancreatic cancer but is cheerfully helping these disabled children. Newsletters are now being posted onto a website instead of distributed by email - please contact us if you would like further information about the website.

SNE Programme has moved into a new centre well equipped by the grant from Beijing and maintained by the Foster Care program. It is a big blessing to them and to many others in the city caring for children with special needs who share the facilities. They are also renovating and renting an office. More children have joined SNE and also a carer for training. The children are intrigued by a new sensory room, designed with a special combination of various lights, colours, textures and music to interest those who tend to retreat into their own little world - **Jan** took photos during her visit but the lovely lights are invisible, as the flash kicked in!

Community Development (Social Welfare) are always very interested to hear how old friends are getting on. **George** now has a job locally and often pops in, he always looks very smart and well. **Lee** now works in Beijing, but keeps in touch across the miles. Others might find themselves back in d/t units if they slip back into their old ways but can keep in contact through visits by the team. **Young Jack** is finding it hard to settle into work, he is now working at a smaller restaurant after a 'disagreement' with his boss at a larger one. People have been helped to escape from dependency on cigarettes and even cough medication as well as tackling drug and alcohol abuse.

We hope to see some of you at the AGM.

Lots of love from Dave, Susie and Helen.