

# CHINESE CULTURAL GROUP, MERTON

## Autumn 2011



**W**elcome to our Autumn newsletter. In this issue we will be touching briefly on the Chinese characters, exploring Feng Shui and hope to introduce its history, meaning, and illustrate more in our future newsletters. You will also see some collections of amazing stories and interesting events that may bring some colours to the autumn. On page 4, you will find our forthcoming programme, so don't miss the last few meetings before year end, especially our Christmas Party & Carols on the 20th December. Happy reading!!

\*麗麗\*

### Chinese proverbs

天下无不散之筵席

**Lit: There is no never ending banquet under the sun.**

**All good things must come to an end.**

岁月不留人

**Lit: Age and time do not wait for people.**

**Time and tide waits for no man.**

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## Word from the Chairman—Eugene Byrne

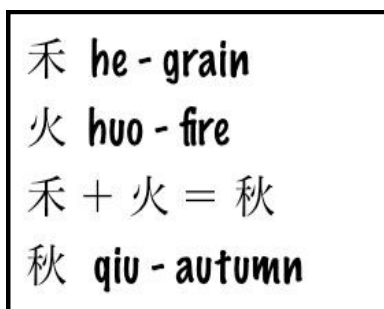
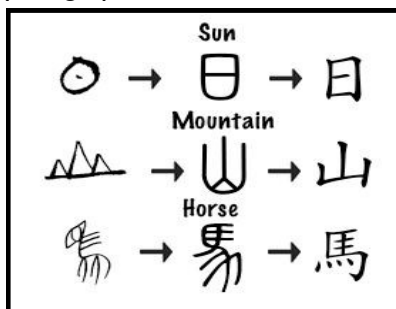
We have had a successful year so far in producing interesting events for our programme. The new Taichi format introduced by Maggie Woo, in which the class and our leader follow a demonstration video, has worked well and proved to be popular. We have had a varied set of events, provided by Maggie and others, and many thanks go to the roster of members who set up the furniture and provide the tea and coffee for meetings. We have an active committee but would welcome any volunteers to join it.

However our project to produce for the Wimbledon Bookfest an example of the important new documentary trend in films on the mainland fell through because of a funding demand that arose at the last minute. It is difficult to find sponsorship in Wimbledon for Chinese events, we'd really welcome any ideas. Providing a Bookfest event is important for raising our profile and attracting new members. While the total number of members remains fairly constant at just over 30, attendance at meetings has fallen: this was discussed at the AGM when members present raised useful comments but still it is difficult to find how to deal with this. If you read this and have not seen us yet I do hope that if you can fit it in you will take the opportunity to come and join in.

## Chinese characters that are pictures

**Many people think that the Chinese characters are pictographs, ie drawings, pictures of things. A bit like the Egyptian hieroglyphs...**

Actually only some of the Chinese characters are pictographs. Moreover, often these pictographs have evolved over the course of time, becoming an almost abstract representation of the real model. Here are some examples of this kind of Chinese characters, and how they changed over time from the archaic to the modern writing.



Some Chinese symbols for words are pictures of things

Meaning - Meaning compounds, an example :-  
Chinese symbol for "autumn" this character is formed by the two characters that represent wheat and fire. In fact autumn is the time of the year when farmers burn the stubble ...

More information can be found in <http://www.taiwan-travel-experience.com/chinese-symbols-for-words.html>

## An Unusual Woman. A Simple Life.

**Deanie Ip (葉德嫻)**, a 63-year-old Hong Kong actress and singer, won the best actress award at



the 68th Venice Film Festival on 10th September for her remarkable performance in 'A Simple Life', which makes her the second Chinese woman winning this title as Gong Li was named the best actress for 'The Story of Qiu Ju' in 1992. The audience in the UK will have an opportunity to see her moving portrayal as an aging servant in the 55th London

**Film Festival—A Simple Life**

**25 Oct 17.45 Vue Screen 5**

**27 Oct 15:45 NFT1**

For more information on 2011 London Film Festival: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/>

Contributed by I-Chen Tsai

## ON THE EASTERN OUTSKIRTS 東郊

The Tang poet Wei Ying-wu 韋應物 (735-830) from Chang'an (near Xi'an, where the soldiers are) was governor of Suzhou near modern Shanghai. A benevolent governor of integrity, he belonged to a cultivated circle of poets there. This poem expresses the common longing of mandarins to be able to retire and live the simple life writing poetry in the mountains. The prototype for this, four centuries earlier, had been Tao Yuan-Ming. (tr Innes Herdan)

Cramped in my office, all the year through,  
I left the city, to squander the bright sunshine.  
Willows waft a kindly spring wind,  
Blue hills smooth away my cares.

I take my rest in leafy woodlands,  
Come and go by the green mountain torrent.  
A fine rain veils the sweet-smelling fields.

Where was that wood-dove crooning?

A heart that loves solitude is often baulked,  
Official business keeps one hustling.  
When my public duty is over, I shall build a hut here –  
Try to live like T'ao Yuan-Ming.

吏舍跼終年，出郊曠清曙。  
楊柳散和風，青山澹吾慮。  
依叢適自憩，緣澗還復去。  
微雨靄芳原，春鳩鳴何處？  
樂幽心屢止，遵事跡猶遽；  
終罷斯結廬，慕陶真可庶。

Contributed by Eugene Byrne

## Members' corner

### OUR INFORMAL 'SOCIAL' MEETING

The first of our informal "social" meetings took place on 19th July. Sadly there were very few of us there but it was a very happy occasion, with lots of chat.

I-Chen was back from her travels and brought some interesting samples of food from Taiwan, which we all enjoyed with a cup of tea after our usual session of Tai Chi with Lee's DVD.

There were two visitors came from different parts of the world, one from Holland and the other, a Nigerian lady who has lived in many different parts of the world, so the chat was somewhat international. We would like to welcome more new members to join us.

Contributed by Ivy Salvage



**H**aving lived in China for twelve years, and having married a Chinese woman this year, I consider Kunming (capital of Yunnan Province, SW China) my home and really enjoy my life here. However, I still keep my U.K. passport and recently returned from a three week visit to Britain along with my new wife who was visiting the U.K. for the first time. Seeing the country through Jiajia's eyes made me focus on the contrasts between British and Chinese lifestyles, and perhaps appreciate British virtues more.



"So green..." was Jiajia's first summary of Britain, viewed from the windows of plane, car and train. And compared to the concrete of Kunming and the heavily worked surrounding countryside, it certainly is. English cities are not necessarily a lot cleaner than Chinese – hordes of peasants give the Kunming streets a thorough cleaning every night in - but they just seem tidier and more orderly. Drivers in Britain follow the rules, pavements have less signage obstacles, rubbish is kept out of sight, etc.

My last visits to the UK were two years ago, and four years before that. One of my biggest surprises over that time has been the reduction in public smoking in Britain. In China, more than half of all men smoke (though, interestingly, very few women) and many restaurants reek of smoke - not nice places to eat. However, there's no denying that Chinese restaurants are a lot more affordable than British counterparts. I was shocked to be charged a tenner for a sandwich and coffee in London – the price of a sit-down meal for four in Kunming! And Chinese food is a lot healthier too.

So why is life in China so addictive to me personally? Partly it's the challenge. My Chinese language skills are embarrassing even after so many years, so being understood and getting things done involves creativity and lateral thinking (plus a little help from the wife!). Partly it's the people – their respect for foreigners, their can-do attitude, their patience with daily difficulties, their curiosity and naivety. Plus, it's having a job I love, living in a city with great weather and the excitement of being in the most "happening" country in the world. British life is sometimes just a bit too predictable!

By Paul Hider 2011 (Series #1)

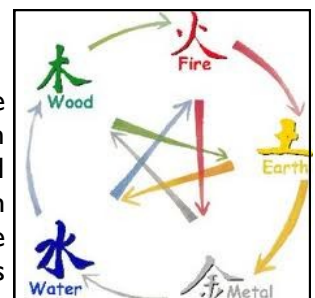
Do check this link to all his news : [www.paulinchina.info](http://www.paulinchina.info)

Many thanks to Ivy who has found and introduced Paul. A section will be allocated to Paul's future contributions in our newsletters and I trust you will learn a lot and most of all, enjoy following Paul's life in China with the Chinese people

## Explore Feng Shui History, Meaning, and More

**F**eng shui (meaning literally "wind water") is part of an ancient Chinese philosophy of nature. Feng shui is often identified as a form of geomancy, divination by geographic features, but it is mainly concerned with understanding the relationships between nature and ourselves so that we might live in harmony within our environment.

Feng shui is related to the very sensible notion that living with rather than against nature benefits both humans and our environment. It is also related to the equally sensible notion that our lives are deeply affected by our physical and emotional environs. If we surround ourselves with symbols of death, contempt and indifference toward life and nature, with noise and various forms of ugliness, we will corrupt ourselves in the process. If we surround ourselves with beauty, gentleness, kindness, sympathy, music and various expressions of the sweetness of life, we ennoble ourselves as well as our environment.





## The Films of Edward Yang

Edward Yang (楊德昌, 1947-2007) has long been regarded as one of the most gifted and prominent directors in the New Taiwan cinema movement of the 1980s. His films express the confusion, anxiety and sheer beauty of societal transformation. Yang's insightful exploration of Taiwanese urban life gained him numerous nominations of film awards as well as international recognition. In 2000, he won at Cannes Film Festival the Best Director for "Yi Yi" (A One and a Two...), an undisputed masterpiece.



In order to pay tribute to the late filmmaker, last year in the 54th London Film Festival, BFI showed Edward Yang's masterpiece, 'A Brighter Summer Day', a restored, full-length version of the film. This year

in 28th September to 9th October, the BFI Southbank had put on a fresh retrospective of Yang's films. For more information, please check: <http://www.bfi.org.uk>

Contributed by I-Chen Tsai

## Skyscrapers in Shanghai

**S**hanghai now has twice as many skyscrapers as New York. To write about urbanisation in China is to traffic in superlatives.



Three decades of sustained economic growth, concentrated along the booming coast, has lured millions from the impoverished Chinese countryside. This great migration - unprecedented in human history - has put 46 Chinese cities over the one million mark since 1992, out of a national total of 102. And this is just the start...

Read more at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13799997>

## Our social group programme:

**Each meeting will be from 3.30pm to 5.30pm with 45 minutes of Taiji Qigong Shibashi to music, followed by social hour / a talk given by members of the group or a guest speaker.**

**New members are welcome to join us.**

4th Oct	Looking at classical calligraphy (Eugene Byrne; preparation for BL visit)
18th Oct	Visit to the British Library (meet there at 5.00 p.m. NUMBERS STRICTLY LIMITED: PLEASE BOOK) (Eugene Byrne)
1st Nov	Chinese Antiques Roadshow (Maggie Woo)
15th Nov	Quiz
6th Dec	The Encounter with the West (Eugene Byrne)
20th Dec	Christmas Party & Carols (Maggie Woo)

**Chinese Cultural Group Merton  
C/o Wimbledon Guild  
30-32 Worple Road,  
Wimbledon SW19 4EF**

**For further information, please  
contact Eugene Byrne on  
020 8947 1346**

## Next Quarterly Newsletter

**Please email Lee if you  
have any interesting  
article to be considered .**

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For the Chinese Cultural Group Merton  
by Lee Monczak