

Chinese Cultural Group Merton



What an amazing summer, not only did we witness the success of London 2012 Olympic, we were proud of the tremendous achievement by our team GB and the many inspiring great Olympians. Let us continue to cheer and support all the participants of the **Paralympic** Games ending on the 9th September. May the spirit of the Olympics Games continue to serve and inspire a generation.

In this issue, Maggie is sharing her 'OLYMPICS' experience and let's applaud on how close Paul is to reaching his personal life-quest. Do you see any 'similarity' in the Chinese RED eggs and the Easter eggs after reading the Egg Symbolism? I hope you will try out and enjoy our simple Chinese recipe on page 5, as well as benefit from other articles and information provided in this issue. Thanks for your support! Lee

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WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

— Eugene Byrne

There's not much to report since my last note in 2011, mainly because our sessions have been progressing as planned and announced, and we don't meet in August anyway. The introduction of a mah-jong session proved popular, reminding anyone who has been in Hong Kong of the rattling sound coming from the restaurants in some main streets at night as the counters were being reshuffled to start the next game.

But we still have development challenges to meet and the Committee will face these again at its next meeting on the 19th October, when we will be returning to the SWOT analysis mentioned in our Summer issue. We will then also be developing our programme for 2013. While it is of course for the Committee to decide on plans for the future, our requests for ideas and suggestions from members have not so far proved very fruitful, so we would still welcome any that you may think of.

One Games Maker's Account of her Experience at the 2012 Olympics

You will forgive me if I boast! I am so lucky to have been one of 7,000 Games Makers at the Olympics 2012. Frankly, I did not fancy my chances of being picked out of 28,000 applicants. Some friends warned that my age was against me.

We went through a very stringent process of selection --- interview, CRB checks and sessions of training and preparation on and off various Olympic venues, starting as early as December 2011. It was when I tried on the uniforms and looked into the mirror that I realised that I was going to be part of the greatest show that Great Britain has ever put on.

Volunteers were needed for different aspects of the Games. I was assigned to the Olympic Park (my first choice) to the Security Team. Our brief was to welcome and offer help to the spectators during the time they queued up to go through security checks which were on a par with the operations at international airports. It turned out we were working alongside the armed forces personnel, whose presence inspired confidence in both the workforce and the spectators. They are such nice and dedicated young men and women, many of whom had just come back from their stint in Afghanistan, and had their leave cancelled at short notice to stand in for G4S.

On early shifts we had to be at our posts before the gates opened at 7:00 a.m. I could not believe where the crowds came from; non-stop. It seemed like the whole world descended on us, each individual desperate and hyped up to go into the grounds. They came in colours of their own countries, draped in patriotic flags, carrying banners, faces painted, wearing multi-coloured wigs and special costumes. Spectators and



the workforce mingled, sang, danced, and exchanged greetings along the way. The atmosphere was electric.

The English weather was in its element. Some days we had all 4 seasons within a few hours.

But, the rain did not dampen any spirit. Games Makers and all, we were



buoyed up so much by the friendliness and the joviality that we did not feel tired even after being on our feet for 8 hours on end. Thankfully, I was able to keep up with my fellow volunteers in their early twenties. I must say I surprised myself! Mind you, it was quite a different story after the closing of the Games. I did not want to get out of the settee for a week.

I did not experience the glamour of being interviewed or filmed on TV, but I still felt very much part of the picture, albeit a miniscule part.

I have had an experience of a life-time, something I would not have liked to have missed.

My rewards are: a wonderful memory of August 2012, a few badges, a souvenir baton given to every Games Maker, and an inspiration to take more interest in sport. I did meet and welcome a large contingent of Chinese spectators in their red T-shirts, who came all the way from China to support their heroes. I am so proud to be Chinese. Our compatriots came second in their trawl of medals: 88 in all, 38 of which are gold.

Finally, I managed to have a photo with Louis Smith, the British Silver Medallist on the Pommel Horse in gymnastics. Isn't he lovely!

By Maggie Woo



Paul Hider 海德

Life in China
Article #5

For all Paul's news see:
www.paulinchina.info

PURSUIT OF MY LIFE-QUEST

Two hours flight away, Bangladesh was my 95th new country in a life-quest to reach 100. I'd persuaded my Chinese wife to come along too, and we weren't quite sure what to expect on arrival at Dhaka airport at 4am. Ten days later, we returned to China with vivid memories, upset stomachs and an increased gratefulness for the amenities we enjoy here.

Whilst Yunnan Province remains in drought (6 months without regular running water now), Dhaka was badly flooded for some of the days we were there. Foot-deep water covering the streets quickly dampens one's interest in visiting museums or shops. But the Bengalis have seen it all before and cope admirably without complaint. The rains do at least have the effect of washing away some of the dirt and rubbish which builds up on the street – something we are not really used to seeing here in Kunming with its myriad peasant workers cleaning the city each night. We knew, of course, that Bangladesh would be hot and humid, while Kunming's environment is famed throughout China as being "Spring-like" throughout the year – neither too hot nor too cold. But a surprise to us was how comparatively orderly life in China is. Kunming's traffic is bad, but the pushy rickshaws, taxis, buses and private cars in Dhaka cause enormous traffic jams. (On our last day, we spent 4 hours in a taxi making a 6km round trip to pick up an ordered gift). Kunming has its broken roads, but Dhaka's are a lot worse. Kunming has street-vendors and beggars on the streets, but Dhaka's are more dense and intense. We also arrived during the Ramadan festival. With 85% of the country Muslim, the

country was fasting throughout the day, so finding any food between breakfast and late evening was a struggle. And each time we tried the local food, we suffered the following night!

And yet the people! The people are so polite, curious, friendly and helpful. Perhaps they get so few foreigners that there is still a wonder and excitement about making contact? Perhaps it's just in their nature to be outgoing? For a few it was a means to a "tip" but for most it was pure kindness. Certainly compared to the more insular Chinese, we found the Bengalis full of smiles, keen to chat and willing to go out of their way to help you. Despite all the difficulties of our trip, it is their kindnesses we will remember most. We "coped" for ten days. For them it is their life. And yet they find much happiness in what they have. Would that we were all so patient and content with our lot.



Egg symbolism in Chinese Culture

The **egg** has been a symbol of fertility, rebirth and the cycle of life in many cultures. Due to its oval shape, it signifies the earth and is associated with the beginnings of life.

In China, foods are given particular meanings, so that a type of food can only be eaten by some specific individuals in certain occasions, or must be eaten in specific occasions.

I have recently been presented with some red eggs and ginger - my nephew's wife had given birth to their second child, a son. That would make me a great aunt many times over. Eggs hold a special symbolic significance in Chinese culture, representing fertility and rebirth.



Red boiled eggs with pickled ginger

In Chinese, the pronunciation of egg, "*dan*", sounds similar to "*dai*", which means generation. When two people get married, when a baby is born, at the baby's first-month birthday, and some other joyous occasions, red-dyed eggs are given as auspicious gifts. They represent hope, happiness, and carrying on the family line by having babies. As is usual, my nephew and his wife held a "red egg and ginger party", where they served round hard-boiled eggs to announce the birth at the one month birthday. In central China, the number of eggs presented depends on the sex of the child: an even number, usually six or eight red boiled eggs with a black

point dotted on one end will be delivered for a boy and an odd number, usually five or seven without black point for a girl.

Egg rolls or spring rolls resemble the shape of a gold bar, and thus are often served at New Year as a symbol of wealth and prosperity in the coming year. The egg dumplings (*dan jiao*) also represent wealth (any dumpling represents wealth) often served in hot pot dinners.



By Helen Marti

WORKSHOP

Jingju Opera - Sunday 16th Sept 2012

JINGJU Laosheng (Older Male role) Styles of Singing – a lecture-demo and workshop presented by Kevin Zhang. This is the final FREE lecture-demo sponsored by the UK Research and Development Centre for the Traditional Chinese Culture in Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of LJKOA.

If you are interested please contact LJKOA on 07711654663, UKCTC 07766655168. All lectures in English and Mandarin, with subtitles.

Venus: Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, 106 Piccadilly, London W1J 7NL

www.londonjingkunopera.co.uk



EXHIBITION & EVENTS

- Southbank Centre

There are events and an exhibition on Chinese arts at Southbank Centre, starting in September. You may be interested in learning about them.

7-9TH Sept Art of Change - Exhibition

13th Sept Art of Change – Tour (FREE)

9th Oct What's China Thinking?

16th Oct Martin Jacques

For more detailed information, please check out the link below.

<http://ticketing.southbankcentre.co.uk/find/festivals-series/art-of-change-new-directions-from-china>

Chinese Recipe - Minced chicken and sweetcorn soup (serves 4)

Ingredients:

200g of chicken breast
3 egg whites
400g sweetcorn (with 4/5 minced for the texture)
frozen or tinned
2 tsp salt
4 tbsp cornflour (the fine white stuff)
4 tbsp cold water
(soup base) 1 can chicken consomme + enough water to make up to 4 cups of liquid
2 tbsp chopped Parma or Serrano ham (if you don't have the Chinese ham)
White pepper powder & spring onion (optional)

Preparation:

- 1) Separate the eggs, put the egg white into a mixing bowl (use the yolk for something else)
- 2) Mince the chicken
- 3) Mix the minced chicken into the egg white by carefully swirling them together, mix thoroughly
- 4) Mix the cold water and the corn flour into a paste
- 5) Bring to a boil the soup base (chicken consomme and water) with all the corn and salt.

When it boils turn the heat down, then mix the cornflour paste into the soup base using a wooden spoon, stir well and boil until it thickens and the colour starts to turn



transparent (if it is not thick enough put some more cornflour paste in)

- 6) Turn up the heat to medium high and mix in the chicken and egg mixture and keep swirling gently until it starts to boil again then cook it for another 3-4 minutes until thoroughly cooked.

- 7) Serve the soup in the bowls topped with chopped ham, the optional white pepper and spring onion.

By Sissi Wong

READING - Mao's Last Dancer

A wonderful way of learning a little about China's more recent history!

I have just read Li Cunxin's book "Mao's Last Dancer" and found it completely fascinating. It's the story of a boy from a very poor Chinese peasant family, chosen at the age of eleven to be trained as a ballet dancer in Madame Mao's academy in Beijing. It takes you from the late 1940s, through the Mao indoctrination, to the changes in the 1970s and the boy's eventual introduction to the "dissolute" West.

If anyone would like to borrow the book, just let me know. `

You can also watch the author on YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbIFdwViKcU>

Ivy 020 8542 9154

Confucius 551- 479BC

It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop.

Men's natures are alike, it is their habits that carry them far apart.

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in getting up every time we do.

To love all living things and treat them well, without thought of the self, that is good and just.

Respect yourself and others will respect you.

Question & Answer in the Middle of the Mountains

Poem by Li Bai

Ask why I stay so many days in these blue green mountains
 I can only reply with a smile that shows how leisure fills my heart
 As a peach blossom falls into the river to be
 carried far away on the current
 From this perch I cast my gaze on Heaven
 above and Earth below
 Of both I hold back and partake in equal part.

山中问答
 问余何意栖碧山
 笑而不答心自闲
 桃花流水窅然去
 别有天地在人间



NEWS IN CHINA

By Emma Clark PUBLISHED: 25 July 2012

Breathtaking force: World's most powerful dam opens in China as gushing water generates the same power as FIFTEEN nuclear reactors

The giant and controversial Three Gorges Dam in China has launched the last of its generators, just as it hits its annual flood peak.

The final 32 generators went into operation, making it the world's largest hydropower project, built on the Yangtze River in the Hubei Province. It is designed to decrease the risk of flooding during the current peak rainfall season, as well as store and distribute water during the dry periods.

A series of incredible photos show the sheer force of the flood water released from seven spillways after heavy downpours in the upper reaches of the dam caused the highest flood peak of the year.



Forthcoming CCGM programme

18/9/12	Taiji Qigong Shibashi Celebrating Mid-Autumn Festival and Celebrating Age Festival Talk: The Japanese Invasion 1937	Lee Monczak & Helen Chiew Eugene Byrne
2/10/12	Taiji Qigong Shibashi Talk: World War II 1937-1949	Eugene Byrne
16/10/12	Taiji Qigong Shibashi Quiz on China and Chinese themes	Maggie Woo
6/11/12	Taiji Qigong Shibashi Talk: World War II 1937-1949	Eugene Byrne

Please email your experience with the Chinese people, culture, food or any interesting events you have been to that you would like to share in our newsletter. Please email to surreylee@gmail.com.

Check <http://issuu.com/ccgm/docs> for our archive file.

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