

澳中友好協會 NSW INC.

AUSTRALIA-CHINA

FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY NSW Inc. *est 1952*

Past Patron Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO

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Bulletin No.498 August 2026

AUSTRALIA CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY NSW

August 2026 event

*Yum Cha Lunch at Zilver Restaurant,
Chatswood*



WEDNESDAY, 19 AUGUST 2026, 11:00AM

ZILVER RESTAURANT

LEVEL 6, WESTFIELD CHATSWOOD

600/1 ANDERSON ST, CHATSWOOD, NSW 2067



RSVP by 17 August 2026 to hktn_hk_2000@yahoo.com

President's Report

On May 15, Michael Li signed a Memorandum of understanding on behalf of the Australia China Friendship Society of New South Wales with the Liaoning Provincial People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. This further strengthened the relationship between the two organisations.

Early May, Bob Carr launched the inaugural MOCA History Forum entitled Reimagining Chinatown. He introduced the exhibition curator, Dr Shuxia Chen, who discussed the exhibition, its creation and the stories behind Sydney's historic Chinatown. During the discussion that followed, we also heard from the descendants of some of the early Haymarket residents.

Then, on a rainy June Sunday, 4 stalwarts visited the historic house, Eryldene, in Gordon. There are also fine gardens resplendent with camellias. As the long-time residents were into Ikebana, a fine presentation was made of this Japanese flower-arranging art form. Read more in the Bulletin.

On June 19, some members attended the opening ceremony at the China Cultural Centre Sydney of the "Lanting Cultural Salon The Realm of the Clouds and Mountains in Chinese Calligraphy and Painting and Tea for Harmony Dragon Boat Race Festival Elegant Gathering". We enjoyed the artistic exhibition, cultural performances and indeed, fine food and Tianjin tea.

On the day that I flew out to China for a Cultural Exchange tour, members attended the opening ceremony of the "Jixiang Tang Cross-Cultural Painting Journey" held at MOCA.

The 9-day Cultural Exchange to Hangzhou and Tianjin, sponsored by the China Cultural Centre, Sydney, and headed by its director Mr. Yuan Wei,

was a great success. I accompanied 9 creative artists and we were warmly welcomed by a number of institutions as well as taken to significant sites in these regions. See my full report in this Bulletin.

On July 15, we escaped the cold to see the latest exhibition at the White Rabbit Gallery, entitled Black Myth. Inspired by the video game *Black Myth: Wukong* (2024), a contemporary retelling of the legendary novel Journey to the West, the exhibition shows that traversing darkness is often a prerequisite to finding the light. We followed the viewing with tea and dumplings in the gallery's restaurant.

Finally, on July 23, the China Cultural Centre hosted the opening of the exhibition "Imagery from the East, Boundless Childlike Wonder : an Exhibition of Original Works by Chinese Animation Artists". That evening, I was given the opportunity to speak about our recent cultural exchange trip to China.

Animation, being very much a visual language, is a perfect medium for cultural exchange. It appeals to all ages and can cover a very wide range of scenarios. The exhibition, along with the visiting artists from China, will provide a marvelous opportunity for cultural exchanges to flourish.

***Peter Weitzel, President, ACFS NSW Inc
August 2026***

**Jiangxi Guangxi Guizhou Tour - 22 Days 2026
8 -29 October**

See details on our website.

www.acfsnsw.com.au

If interested, please email Peter at

peterweitzel@hotmail.com

OR Kim at

thimkim@hotmail.com

AUSTRALIA CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY NSW

September 2026 event
August Moon Street Parade,
Chatswood Street Fair



SATURDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2026, 1:30PM
(PARADE STARTS 2PM)

ASSEMBLE NEAR CHATSWOOD CHASE
IN BERTRAM STREET, CHATSWOOD,



*RSVP by 14 August with full name, address, email
contact and phone number (for insurance purposes)
to peterweitzel@hotmail.com*

Report on Hangzhou, Tianjin tour, China 27 June-5 July

Cultural Exchange Tour

By Dr Peter Weitzel, ACFS NSW President

Early Saturday afternoon, June 27, I joined the Director of the China Cultural Centre Sydney, Mr Yuan Wei for a 9-day cultural exchange with 9 artists and musicians. Our flight arrived very late and were finally in our rooms at the Jade Emperor Hotel in Hangzhou just after midnight (2AM Sunday, Sydney time!).

Then, at 9AM Sunday, we were off to the Zhejiang Art Museum with our guide Mao Mao. Once there, we went on a tour of a retrospective of 97-year-old artist, Bao Chenchu, followed by a face-to-face exchange with Director Ying Jinfei and staff. There was even time to experiment with wood-block printing over coffee and sweets before the first of many scrumptious lunches. After lunch, we visited the retrospective of renowned Chinese oil painter Song Ren permanently housed and exhibited at the Xiao Feng Art Museum in the Xihu District of Hangzhou. The museum features 503 works spanning the 80-year careers of the late artist and her husband, Xiao Feng. The art works recount China's revolutionary period.

Next was a cruise of Hangzhou's famous West Lake which was being enjoyed by the masses on this sunny Sunday afternoon. The days were hot (35-38 Celsius) and humid. Boats, big and small, plied the waters of the lake and swarms of people wandered its shores. Several people held up 1-yuan banknotes to compare the scenery to that printed on the money. Hangzhou's high-rise skyline was evident in the distance.

After 45 minutes wandering the Qinghefang Ancient (shopping) Street, we were off to dinner. Finally, we visited the historical Deshou Palace from the Southern Song Dynasty and were entertained by a children's show featuring a LARGE dancing pussy cat! Home about 9 – ready for bed.

After a buffet breakfast on Monday, it was on the bus and off to the eco-village of Yucun in Anji county. Once a heavily polluted mining town, it famously transformed into a model of green development. It followed the 2005 dictum, "Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets," which was coined by the then Zhejiang Party Secretary, Xi Jinping. Tourism is now flourishing as is the environment and the local residents.

After lunch, we stopped at the Moganshan Art Museum to see the installing of the art nouveau work of Czech, Alphonse Mucha, which had featured at the Art Gallery of NSW two years ago.

We then continued climbing up into the hills to visit the 'Naked Castle' located near the summit of Moganshan. At 800 meters above sea level and situated about 1 hour from Hangzhou, the property's luxury rooms, panoramic restaurants and spa offer a cool retreat from the summer heat. The main building was a reconstruction of a castle-style mansion established by Scottish missionary doctor, Dr. Duncan Main, in 1910. Having fallen into ruin, the entire construction process by 'naked Retreats group' took nearly four years. Nadia, our South African guide, dressed in faux Scottish regalia, gave us an enthusiastic introduction to the property and its history.

Then it was back down the narrow winding mountain road, through the bamboo forests back to Hangzhou for dinner and our hotel.

After breakfast on Tuesday, we headed to the Zhejiang Conservatory of Music (ZJCM) which is celebrating its 10th anniversary. We were shown around by Rosamund, a 3rd year student from Malaysia. A campus with state-of-the-art facilities, the ZJCM covers an area of 40 hectares, with a total building foot-print of 360,000 square meters! It houses 1 grand theatre, 3 concert halls, 3 theatres, 2 studio halls, 104 rehearsal rooms, 935 piano rooms, 8 recording studios, a library, and various other facilities for teaching and artistic practice.

The ZJCM offers Music and Dance Studies, Art Theory, and Drama and Film Studies. The conservatory grants both academic master's degrees in the arts and professional master's degrees in music and dance. It offers eight undergraduate programs: Composition and Composition Theory, Musicology, Music Performance, Dance Studies, Dance Performance, Dance Choreography, Performance, and Arts & Technology.

It boasts high-level art practice ensembles such as a Chamber Philharmonia, a Chinese Music Chamber Orchestra, a Symphony Orchestra, a Chinese Music Orchestra, and Choir.

Currently, ZJCM has 2,856 undergraduate students and 661 graduate students, with a total staff of 694, including 452 full-time faculty members.

As a modern music and art university, ZJCM is guided by the music education philosophy proposed by the Chinese musician, Li Shutong and the motto of 'striving for excellence', seeking 'to cultivate professionals with high

morals, steadfast character, and the pursuit of erudition and profundity in the arts.

We visited the Exhibition Hall and the Music Museum eventually ending in a face-to-face exchange with our staff hosts.

For lunch, we headed for the tea growing area and the Green Tea Restaurant in Longjing Rd. Beggar's chicken, wrapped in lotus leaves, was on the menu.

The after-lunch visit was to the China Academy of Art. There was a main exhibition involving montage entitled "Montage: From Dialectics to Dynamics". We were taken around by the curator, Zoe. Montage is presented in its many forms and the exhibition makes it clear how this technique of combination, juxtaposition and interpenetration reflects the manner in which our perception of the world around us is constructed and reconstructed.

There is, traditionally, a linear nature that can be perceived in the development of the montage. However, there was a final exhibit where the element that promotes the montage is then processed by artificial intelligence to produce a final image containing the element. In this case, there is no perceptual link between the chosen element and the final image! A thought-provoking exhibit.

Our final exhibition for the day was "Experience China: One Art, Boundless Seas, International Youth Art Exhibition". On display was art collected from youth of 52 different countries.

After dinner, it was back to the hotel to pack. Our last night in Hangzhou.

Wednesday morning, we visited the Zhijiang Branch of the Zhejiang Provincial Museum which opened in August 2023. The museum has a floor space of 100 000 square meters. It uses archaeological findings and cultural relics to construct the grand history of Zhejiang including the celadon ceramic culture, maritime culture, Song Rhyme culture and a long lineage of painting and calligraphy. Its collection of fine cultural relics included a jade cong from the Neolithic Liangzhu Culture (3300–2300 BC), a "Two Birds Facing the Sun" ivory carving from the Hemudu Culture (5500 BC to 3300 BC) and the Sword of King Zhuji Yushi of Yue from the Warring States period (475–221 BC).

The painting scroll "Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains" by Huang Gongwang (1347-1350) from the Yuan dynasty was also on exhibition. The display of the scroll included a digital copy that onlookers could roll back and forth and

enlarge to closely examine the various scenes on the scroll. There was also a life-size copy projected on the wall that allowed the onlooker to feel they were actually in the many scenes depicted. An impressive way to present an ancient Chinese scroll.

After lunch at the museum, we transferred to the Hangzhou East Railway Station to take the high-speed train to Tianjin via Shanghai and Nanjing. With a cruising speed of 348 km/hr and only 5 or 6 stops we were at Tianjin South Railway station in 5 hours (took us more than 21 hours in 1975!). A very smooth and comfortable journey. After a fine dinner, our guide, Jin, took us to the historic Astor Hotel on the Hai River where I also stayed in 1975 (then the Tientsin Hotel).

Thursday morning, we headed for the Tianjin Museum located in the Yinhe Plaza in the Hexi District of Tianjin. The unique architectural style of the museum, whose appearance resembles that of a swan spreading its wings, has led it to become one of the city's iconic buildings. It is the largest museum in Tianjin, which exhibits nearly 200,000 cultural and historical relics significant to Tianjin, including calligraphy, paintings, bronze ware, ceramics, jade, seals, ink stone, oracle bones, coins, historic documents and relics of modern times, and local folk art. Some of the most treasured relics that we were shown include:

The Jade Pig-Loong, The jade pig-headed dragon from the Hongshan Culture, Neolithic Age (c.6,000-5,000 years ago)

An Oracle bone with early writing meaning "The parturition of the woman named Jing", Shang Dynasty (1250-1192 BC)

The Taibao Ding, cast by the Duke of Shao during the reign of King Cheng of Zhou, Western Zhou Period (1046 BC-771 BC)

A Cloisonné Enamel Yuhuchun Pear-Shaped Vase with Floriation and Pheasant with the Imperial Mark of Qianlong Reign, Qing Dynasty, Qianlong Period (1736-95)

After viewing the exhibition, we divided into 2 groups to take part in public forums in the visual arts and in music. I took part in the visual arts forum "Encounter Tianjin Art Across The Sea – China-Australia Fine Arts Dialogue". Following lunch, we bussed through Wudadao or the Five Great Avenues which is where foreigners once ensconced themselves as they worked to deprive China of its treasure. There are over 230 buildings of all kinds from the architecture of Britain, France, Italy, Germany, and Spain making Tianjin a treasure house of colonial architecture.

We stopped at the Guangdong Guild Hall located in the Nankai District now used as a theatre museum. The hall was constructed in 1907. It served the people visiting from Guangdong Province. It is regarded as the biggest and best-decorated guild building-complex in Tianjin. Over the performance stage is a domed structure which affords excellent acoustics to the whole theatre space. This Guild Hall is where Dr. Sun Yatsen, a Guangdong native, spoke in 1912. Many masters of the Peking Opera gave performances here including Sun Juxian, Yang Xiaolou, Mei Lanfang and Xun Huisheng.

We were treated to a Peking Opera sketch entitled “At the Crossroads” complete with orchestra. We also heard an exquisite female soloist singing from “Snow in Midsummer – Imprisonment” or “The Injustice to Dou E”. Also located in the Nankai District, the Guwenhua Jie (Ancient Culture Street) was visited next. Street food vendors offered delicious snacks. Some shops sold black tea, soup and fried cakes. The souvenir shops also sold a variety of traditional handicrafts such as Yangliuqing New Year paintings and Ni Ren Zhang clay figurines.

In the evening, as well as a river cruise along the HaiHe, we were all treated to a magnificent welcome banquet. Friday morning saw us on the bus at 8AM heading for the Huangyaguan Great Wall, Tianjin’s 42 km section of the massive 21 000 km defensive structure.

Along the way, we visited the Dule Buddhist Temple with a history of over 1,000 years. It is considered the oldest wooden temple in China and has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Though the temple dates back to the Tang Dynasty, few of the original structures remain. The only surviving constructions are the annex and the gate. However, the temple’s gate roof is one of the oldest preserved roofs in China, making it a popular photography spot. The main highlight of the temple is the largest clay Guanyin (Goddess of Mercy) statue in Asia.

Next, we visited the Wansong Temple which is a large monastic complex on Mount Pan (Panshan) in the Jizhou District. It features serene granite pagodas and lush pine forests. We accessed the complex via the Rusheng Cableway. Key halls include the Mountain Gate, Hall of the Four Heavenly Kings, Great Buddha Hall, Scripture Repository, and Bell and Drum Towers—all constructed using traditional timber post-and-lintel systems, featuring upturned eaves, intricate carvings, ornate decorations.

Finally, at the Huangyaguan Great Wall, we split up. Some settled down to sketching the wall and its surrounds while others charged-off to see how far along the wall’s ramparts they could get while others set more modest goals. The setting of the wall is truly magnificent and the wall itself is a monument to human endeavour.

Back at the Astor after dinner, it was time to consider packing for the trip home.

After our last breakfast at the Astor, it was back on the bus for the National Maritime Museum in the Binhai New Area near the Tianjin port. Covering an area of 150,000 square meters, its 23,000sqm exhibition hall covers a wide range of themes including marine ecology, science education, environment, and interactive programs, as well as Chinese maritime culture and history.

Featuring countless life-size models of ancient marine animals, precious fossils and cultural relics, the museum aims to provide its audience with a comprehensive understanding of the abundance of China’s ocean resources. Historical records documenting ancient Chinese exploration of the oceans are also included in the museum’s collection, showing China’s long history as a maritime power.

In addition to the collection of maritime materials, cutting-edge technologies have also been used to help the visitors gain a better understanding of ocean ecology. Smart encyclopedias and online searching systems enable visitors to acquire specific information about sea life, while an AI-controlled lighting system and VR equipment can provide the audience with an immersive experience into the deep ocean.

Back at the Astor for lunch and then a rest before the 2:30PM bus to the airport. A couple of us were lucky enough to stay on but for the rest of us it was a domestic flight to Xiamen before boarding Xiamen Air for a Sunday morning arrival back in Sydney.

It seems that as I get older and slower, China becomes more energetic, more animated.

We arrived home exhausted but our understanding of China had been enhanced by our visit. Our many opportunities to experience direct person to person contacts brought us closer together.

There were not only the obvious exchanges that took place through visits to the various arts institutions but also the day-to-day personal exchanges with the many individuals that we encountered.

Such an experience helps break down stereotypes on both sides and, in fact, reduces the feeling that there are ‘sides’. We realize our common humanity and common aspirations. Mutual understanding leads to more trust and helps lower the temperature in these times of change.

A stronger foundation in the relationship between the people of China and Australia should lead to more shared opportunities and greater prosperity

Report on The Australia China Friendship Society National Conference, Brisbane June 5-7 2026

By Henry Ng

The author attended the 2026 ACFS National Conference, held in Brisbane on June 5 – 7. ACFS National is an umbrella organisation for Australia China Friendship Societies in Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, Northern Territory and Western Australia. The ACFSs in New South Wales, ACT and South Australia are not currently part of ACFS National.

The National Conference is held every two years. The 2026 Conference was hosted by ACFS Queensland. The programme consists of an informal dinner with a lecture (the Bill Morrow Lecture) on the first evening. The next day featured the formal conference with talks from government representatives and distinguished guests, followed by a gala dinner in the evening. The last day was reserved for internal administration of ACFS National and its Annual General Meeting.

Special conference speakers this year included:

- Mr Yuan Min Dao, Vice President of Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Country;
- Ms Li Wei, Minister Counsellor, representing Ambassador Xiao Qian;
- Dr Ruan Zongze, Chinese Consul General in Brisbane;
- James Martin, State MP for Stretton; and
- Professor Colin Mackerras AO

At the AGM, National President Jan Evertt (also President of ACFS Tasmania) retired from the post she held since 2022. The incoming National President is Shu Li Qin (李树勤), who is also President of ACFS Northern Territory.

The next ACFS National Conference will be held in 2028, and will be hosted by ACFS Victoria.



Conference Panel



ACFS National Office Bearers, Incoming President Shu Li Qin (seated left), Outgoing President Jan Evertt (seated right)

2026 Chinese Culture Workshops @ The China Cultural Centre

Introduction

From May 2026 China Cultural Centre in Sydney will add **ChineseLanguage** workshop to our existing workshops.

The interactive workshop gives students a unique hands-on experience of China's traditional skills, while building up their knowledge and appreciation of Chinese culture and art enjoyably and engagingly.



Now, you and your students are cordially invited to register our workshop and enjoy the charm of Chinese cultural here together with us!

Chinese Language

Join us to explore the fun and unique charm of the Chinese language!

The Chinese language workshop is designed for students with no prior knowledge or those just beginning to learn Chinese, as well as learners at an intermediate level. The main teaching content includes basic



Chinese conversations, discussions based on short and engaging videos, and the use of commonly used words and phrases at different proficiency levels. It also introduces Chinese characters and the cultural meanings and values embedded in the language.

Throughout the workshop, a variety of fun and interactive activities will be incorporated, such as Chinese songs, quizzes on general Chinese cultural knowledge, character recognition competitions, word-building contests, appreciation and recitation of classical Chinese poetry, and even choosing a suitable Chinese name for yourself, etc.

Knowledge Required

1. Beginners with no prior knowledge
2. Students who have learnt Chinese for six months to two years
3. Intermediate-level learners

What to Bring All materials and tools will be provided by China Cultural Centre

Class Size 20~40 students

Cost The cost for the workshop is \$30+GST /per student.

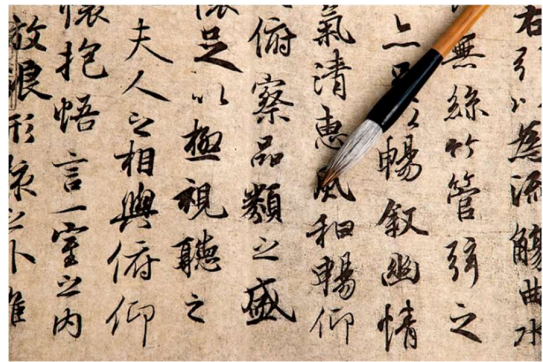
- Email to the coordinator by info@cccsydney.org to register your workshop. Bookings are made on a first-come-first-served basis and is only secured upon receiving the confirmation email.

* When you book your workshop, you are holding a space on our calendar that is no longer available to other schools. It is required to cancel the booking at least 5 business days before the scheduled class. You can call us at 0282283050 or email us at info@cccsydney.org cancel the booking.

Chinese Calligraphy workshop

This workshop offers a unique cultural experience for students to learn about Chinese culture through an introduction and practice of the traditional art form of Chinese calligraphy.

Guided by a passionate Chinese calligrapher, your students will discover the beauty and elegance of Chinese Calligraphy, write the Chinese character and even their names in Chinese as well. The teacher will share the knowledge about Chinese Calligraphy, the story about the characters, what you need to get started and how to hold and write with a Chinese ink brush. Then a quick quiz will be followed for the students to review and prizes be won. After the workshop, you are welcome to the exhibition and library of the Centre.



Knowledge Required

None! This workshop is perfect for complete beginners (Students must be over 9 years of age)

What to Bring All materials and tools will be provided by China Cultural Centre

Class Size 20~40 students

Cost The cost for the workshop is \$30+GST /per student.

- Email to the coordinator by info@cccsydney.org to register your workshop. Bookings are made on a first-come-first-served basis and is only secured upon receiving the confirmation email.

Chinese Opera Mask Painting

Learn the charm of Kunqu Opera and paint an opera face mask for yourself in a fun and relaxed environment!

Opera masks are treasures of Chinese traditional culture, created and passed down by artists for over a thousand years, and nowadays are popular all over the world. In this workshop, your students will learn about the history, roles, features of Kunqu which is one of the oldest forms of the Chinese opera, the meaning of colours used in the face mask, instruments, dances, costumes and the classic plays of Kunqu Opera. The teacher will show the techniques so you can paint using simple Chinese water-based ink and pigments on an opera mask. A quick quiz for the students will be followed to review and prizes be won. After the workshop, you are welcomed to the exhibition and library of the Centre.



Knowledge Required

None! This workshop is perfect for complete beginners (Students must be over 9 years of age)

What to Bring - All materials and tools will be provided by China Cultural Centre

Class Size -20~40 students

Cost - The cost for the workshop is \$30+GST /per student.

Email to the coordinator by info@cccsydney.org to register your workshop. Bookings are made on a first-come-first-served basis and is only secured upon receiving the confirmation email

'Abiding in Landscape' on Display at MoCA

By Secretary Dr Laurel Evelyn Dyson

Members of ACFS were challenged to contemplate 'Where is home?' at the opening of an exhibition of Tang Jixiang's paintings at the Museum of Chinese in Australia (MoCA) on 27 June 2026. The paintings in ink on paper or oil on canvas form a dialogue between the artist's Chinese homeland and his new home in Australia. The works are a reminder that art connects peoples across cultures. The exhibition spanned MoCA's ground-floor exhibition space and the newly renovated first floor. It was a timely event given the recent debates in the media about monocultural versus multicultural Australia.



ACFS Members Zoe White, Peter Hack, Susan Leong, Kim Lee and Laurel Evelyn Dyson with Chinese Vice-Consul General Wong

Professor Tang was born in Hainan in 1939, studying at the Guangzhou Academy of Painting and rising to become its Deputy Director in addition to many other honours. In 2007 he relocated to Australia to be near his family.

The works on display were representative of his 'Cross-Cultural Painting Journey', the subtitle of the exhibition. Joining a long line of artists to paint the Australian landscape, he has used the traditional

medium of Chinese ink and brush to reimagine the unique Australian environment in innovative ways. Furthermore, his black swan series reflects his musings on love and life.

ACFS Committee Members Kim Lee and Susan Leong admiring 'Colourful Australia'

ACFS member Leanne Tan with MoCA Chair Daphne Lowe Kelley in front of 'Surfer'

In addition, his work has increasingly explored the relationship between the spirit of Chinese calligraphy and the natural world. Some of the boldest paintings in the image.



'Peace Character'

Our viewing concluded with drinks and delicious nibbles: crab and caviar tartlets, little Peking duck pancakes, rockmelon with salami, and finally tiramisu. It was a highly enjoyable and stimulating way to spend a Saturday.



exhibition featured giant characters combined with

'Composition'

with drinks and delicious nibbles: crab and caviar

ACFS Visits a Flowery Oasis

By Secretary Dr Laurel Evelyn Dyson

A rainy Sunday – 14 June 2026 – saw camellia- and ikebana-loving members of ACFS NSW at 'Eryldene', the home of Professor E. G. Waterhouse and his Scottish-born wife Janet, situated in the leafy North-Shore suburb of Gordon. The name 'Eryldene' was derived from Mrs Waterhouse's family property near Glasgow. Despite the couple's interest in modern European languages – they had met in Paris while studying French – their contributions to Australian culture were decidedly oriental.

Professor Waterhouse was not trained in botany but during visits to China and Japan collected camellias and then started hybridizing them. His plantings include those in his own garden and also in the Vice-Chancellor's Garden and along Science Road at the University of Sydney, where he worked, and he was responsible for the famous jacaranda in the Main Quadrangle. The International Camellia Garden of Excellence at Caringbah, visited by ACFS a few years ago, is named after him.



Peter Weitzel, Laurel Evelyn Dyson, Kim Lee and Henry Ng with a giant camellia

Mrs Waterhouse must also have been an extraordinary woman, earning a Masters degree in languages from Glasgow University, when few women finished school, let alone undertaking university education. As early as the 1920s she embarked on ikebana and became the first president of the Ikebana Society of Australia. Though we tend to think of ikebana as a Japanese art form because of the name by which it is generally known, it began as a temple decoration practised by monks in China before being introduced into Japan with Buddhism. It was originally an exclusively male activity, often involving huge tree branches. However, by the late 1800s women entered the field and it was brought into the domestic sphere.

We were fortunate to view an ikebana presentation given by Jenny Goodwin and assistant of the hundred-year-old Sogetsu School of Ikebana. We watched her create exquisite works using a wide variety of materials: blossoms, leaves, stems, bark, giant bract fungi and net. We learnt that ikebana is based on three dimensions: the balance of Heaven, Humanity and Earth. One advantage is that you don't need many flowers to construct a piece, and all plant material is useful, as long as it has sculptural qualities.



Ikebana demonstration in the teahouse

After the demonstration we enjoyed a tour of the Waterhouse family home, designed by Sydney architect Hardy Wilson in Georgian/Colonial Revival style. The house still has largely its original interiors, with many Chinese paintings as well as oriental figurines and ornaments throughout. The rooms were also decorated on this occasion with fine examples of ikebana. During the tour we learnt a great deal about this remarkable family from our knowledgeable guide, including the fascinating fact that one of their four children invented Aerogard, with the aim of defending Queen Elizabeth from flies during one of her Australian tours.



One of the ikebana displays in the house: white camellias with blackened sunflower head

We concluded our visit, relaxing on the loggia with a 'cuppa' and delicious home-made treats baked by the volunteers. A stroll through the magnificent camellias in the garden made the perfect end to a lovely day, with rain clearing.

Enjoying tea on the loggia



In the garden



Black Myth at the White Rabbit

By Secretary Dr Laurel Evelyn Dyson

For our official July outing ACFS members returned to the White Rabbit Gallery in Chippendale for a viewing of their latest Black Myth Exhibition, based on a viral video game deriving from *Journey to the West*, the most famous Chinese novel, about how Buddhism spread to China. As usual, the contemporary art works represented a wide range of styles from Chinese-heritage artists. They were united by their imaginative attempt to answer the question, 'What do we believe in?'

At the entrance we were struck by 'Ship of Time', consisting of 5,000 sheets of fire-proof *xuan* paper forming a tunnel shaped like a moon gate inviting us to enter and travel through, as if on a voyage. Moon gates were included in the architecture of the remodelled exhibition spaces throughout the gallery: they are a traditional Chinese structure often used at the entrance to buildings and gardens to create a flow of energy

At the end of the tunnel, making the invitation to enter all that more tempting, was a landscape by Chen Chun-Hao 'Imitating "Travellers among Mountains and Streams"', based on a famous Song Dynasty ink-and-brush work by Fan Kuan. However, as we approached the modern version we realized that it was made of industrial stainless-steel nails – 750,000 in total – inserted using a nail gun, creating interesting tonal and three-dimensional effects.



'Ship of Time'



ACFS Members (left to right) Henry Ng, Leanne Tan, Pete Bannister, Andrew Barty-King, Kay Bannister, Laurel Evelyn Dyson, Kim Lee and Peter Weitzel standing in front of 'Imitating "Travellers among Mountains and Streams"'

Another work which captured the attention of our group was 'Spiritual Mountain' by Fu Xiatong. Like 'Ship of Time' this was made of *xuan* paper, but here punctured by thousands of tiny pin pricks in what the artist calls her 'language of the needle'. Taking her a year to complete, it pictures Gatö Jowo, one of four sacred mountains of Tibetan Buddhism. Truly a stunning work.

Lest the reader think that all art on display is in monochrome and represents modern interpretations of traditional Chinese culture, the tapestry by Xu Zhen 'Immortals' Trails in a Secret Land' should dispel that idea.

A riot of colour and texture, this tapestry of leather, beads, feathers, fabric and metal chains was influenced by Edward Lear's parrots, Baroque motifs, old jewellery, illuminated manuscripts and mythological bestiaries.



Leanne, Kim, Laurel and Peter with 'Spiritual Mountain', one of our favourites in the exhibition



'Immortals' Trails in a Secret Land'

Our group finished our tour, as is our wont, with delicious dumplings and exquisite tea in the White Rabbit tearooms.

FREE FILM NIGHT!

Set during the turbulent 1940s and 1950s, the film portrays a time when love was fragile and hard-won—when a simple token of affection, a love song, or a promise could linger in the hearts of separated lovers for years.

Fang Daolong (played by Sean Lau), a policeman with a complicated background, meets the legendary and resilient Chen Yuerong (played by Tang Wei). Their romance unfolds across three cities: they fall in love in Anhui, are separated in Shanghai, yet continue to hold onto a shared promise—to reunite one day in Hong Kong.

One night, Daolong waits anxiously along the shore of Hong Kong Island for the small boat carrying Yuerong to arrive. Unexpectedly, disaster strikes during the journey, leaving uncertainty over whether Yuerong can safely reach Hong Kong and begin a new life with him.

Inspired by a true story, the film tells a deeply emotional love story from an earlier generation, capturing themes of separation, endurance, migration, and hope amid the upheavals of modern Chinese history.



Date: 21 August 2026 (Fri)

Time: 18:00-20:10 (130mins)

Venue: Level 1, 151 Castlereagh St, Sydney NSW 2000

Director: Mabel Cheung

Writers: Mabel Cheung / Alex Law

Starring: Sean Lau / Tang Wei / Qin Hailu / Jing Boran / Huang Jue / Elaine Jin / Li Jianyi / Jiao Gang / Philip Chan

Genre: Drama / Romance

Language: Mandarin Chinese

Running Time: 130 minutes



If undeliverable return to:
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The Australia-China Friendship Society is a non-profit organisation, run completely by volunteers. It was founded in the early 1950s to promote friendship and understanding between the peoples of Australia and China.

In keeping with that objective we engage in the following activities:

- ☐ We hold regular meetings at which we hear speakers who have expert knowledge about China
- ☐ We publish our Bulletin on a regular basis.
- ☐ We organize tours to China and other countries, at the lowest possible cost.
- ☐ We host delegations from China.
- ☐ We organize language, painting, cultural and other specialist tours in China.
- ☐ We organize excursions and social occasions for members and friends.

Membership is open to anyone who supports our aim of promoting friendship and understanding between Australians and Chinese.

DISCLAIMER: The views expressed in articles published in the Bulletin are not necessarily those of the ACFS.

Australia-China Friendship Society NSW Membership Application Form

To renew your membership or to join, please pay by Direct Deposit, bank details below: Donations welcome!

	\$30 Individual member		\$35 Family				Donation \$ _____
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Direct Deposit: Commonwealth Bank

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