

# Needham Research Institute Newsletter

李約瑟研究所通訊

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Newsletter edited by Susan Bennett



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## New Trustees join the NRI Board

The Board of Trustees at the Needham Research Institute is a great privilege to chair, not least thanks to the quiet dedication and generosity in ideas of its distinguished members. Renewal of membership is, however, one of our perennial duties, and the Trust this year marks the retirement of two of our most long-standing and committed members. Between them, Professors Sir Geoffrey Lloyd and German Berrios have given a full half a century's dedicated commitment and service to the Trust, and our gratitude is immense. We are pleased to say that goodbye from the Board is absolutely not goodbye from the Institute, where Geoffrey and German will remain extremely welcome in the years ahead. Gratitude to our retiring trustees is accompanied by a warm welcome to our newly joining trustees. I am delighted to extend that welcome to the following colleagues. I am looking forward so much to working with and learning from our new trustees, and trust they will find this association with the Institute as enjoyable and stimulating as have I.

Professor *Martin Jones*, Chairman



**Mary Augusta Brazelton** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Cambridge. Her 2019 book, *Mass Vaccination: Citizens' Bodies and State Power in Modern China* (Cornell, 2019), examines the history of mass immunization in twentieth-century China. Mary's interests lie broadly in historical intersections of science, technology, and medicine in China and around the world. Current projects include a collaborative exploration of the history of transportation technologies, with particular interests in transnational histories of civil aviation, and a study of the history of penicillin development in China. Mary was honoured to receive the 2019 Zhu Kezhen Senior Award from the International Society for the History of East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine, as well as a 2020 CUSU Student-led Teaching Award in Partnership.

**Charles Harpum** studied law at Downing College, Cambridge and was a Fellow of the College from 1977 to 2001. He was also a University Lecturer in the Law Faculty. In 1994 he was appointed by the Lord Chancellor to be one of the five Law Commissioners for England and Wales to carry out law reform. He headed the Property and Trust Law team at the Commission. His work at the Commission included the Trustee Act 2000 and the Land Registration Act 2002. On leaving the Commission in 2001, he joined Falcon Chambers in London, and practised at the Bar until he retired in 2018, specialising in complex land law issues. He is a barrister and bencher of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn. He was awarded the degree of LL.D by Cambridge University in 2003 for his publications. He was made QC *honoris causa* in 2018 for his contribution to property law.



**Katie Lee** has worked with, and on, China for the last thirty-five years. As Director of the Great Britain - China Centre, she developed a series of rule of law programmes with Chinese partners particularly in the area of criminal justice, and set up a Leadership Forum for deepening understanding and engagement between the UK's three main political parties and the Chinese Communist Party. She has worked as Strategic Relations Manager for then UK Trade and Investment Body in Beijing working on building Chinese investment into the UK, and for a brief period with a Chinese investment company. Katie is currently Senior Adviser - China Affairs for the Group Public Affairs function at HSBC.

**Imre Galambos** is a specialist of Chinese manuscripts. He received his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley in 2002, with a dissertation on the structure of the early Chinese script. Following his graduation, he worked for the International Dunhuang Project at the British Library. After 10 years, he moved to Cambridge to teach pre-modern Chinese subjects; he is now Reader in Chinese Studies. His main publications include *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing* (2006), *Manuscripts and Travellers* (2012), *Translating Chinese Tradition and Teaching Tangut Culture* (2015) and *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture* (2020). He is currently working on translations of Chinese texts into other languages before the modern era.



## Naming of *The Ho Peng Yoke Room*

Following our recent Trustees' meeting on 6th March 2020, a short ceremony was held to formally name the office which Professor Ho had occupied for many years during his time as Director. Our Chairman Professor Martin Jones made a speech as he unveiled the new brass plaque and John Moffett spoke about Professor Ho's remarkable life and achievements.



## New Grant for the Institute

We are delighted to announce the establishment of "The Suiyuan Grant", from funds generously donated by a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. The grant will mainly be used to support scholars from China to undertake short-term academic visits to Cambridge, as well as workshops to be held at our Institute. The Institute and its Trustees would like to thank Dr. Chuan GAO, a long-standing friend of the Institute, for her key role in establishing the Suiyuan Grant.

## Renewal of the Li Foundation fellowship

We are pleased to report that the fellowship programme sponsored by the Li Foundation of New York Inc. has been renewed for the year 2020-2021. In her letter to the Institute, the Foundation's President Gail Chun-DeDuonni, referred to "the long and distinguished relationship between our two organizations". We are grateful to the Board of the Li Foundation Inc. for their longstanding and most generous support of the Institute's academic endeavours.

## New position for Dr. Huiyi Wu

After six years as our Independent Schools Foundation (ISF) Research Fellowship holder, Dr. Huiyi Wu will leave us to take up the position of chargée de recherche at the Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris at the beginning of February. We thank Huiyi for her many contributions to the life of the Institute, including particularly her organisation of the academic seminars, and her engagement with the wider Cambridge community. As we go to press, the recruitment process for Huiyi's replacement is underway, and, COVID-19 permitting, we look forward to welcoming the students and teachers from the ISF back to the Institute for their annual summer school visit in 2021. We wish Huiyi well in her new post, and look forward to welcoming her back for periodic research visits.



## Donations to the Ho Peng Yoke Fellowship Fund

We are most grateful to the following scholars for their generous donations to the HPY Fellowship Fund: Dr. Hongjun Jiang, Inner Mongolia Normal University; Dr. Gong Wang, Institute for the History of Natural Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences; Dr. Yuanming Song, University of Science and Technology Beijing; (4) Professor Margaret Pearson, Skidmore College.

## Selection of 2020-2021 Fellows and Visiting Scholars

We are pleased to announce the following awards, and look forward to welcoming everyone in the new year.

Ho Peng Yoke Fellowships: Dr. Guangchao Wang (Chinese Academy of Sciences), Dr. Avital Rom (University of Cambridge); Jing Brand Scholarships: Dr. Xiaochengyang Jiang (Peking University); Dr. Yijun Wang (New York University), Professor Feng Zhao (China Silk Museum), Professor Changping Zhang (Wuhan University), Jing Brand Tianyoude Scheme: Professor Guozhuang Zhao (Southwest University). Sino-British Fellowship Trust Fellowship: Dr. Guisen Zou (Guangxi Minzu University); Li Foundation Fellowship: Dr. Dingyi Xu (Nanjing Agricultural University).

Visiting Scholars: including Professor Fengxian Bu (Shaanxi Normal University), Dr. Na Li (Nanjing Forestry University) and Dr. Liyuan Yue (University of Science and Technology Beijing), all of whom are in receipt of grants from the China Scholarship Council. Dr. Yumi Suzuki (University of Bern).

Details of all the fellowships we offer, and information on how to apply to visit the Institute can be found on our website at [www.nri.cam.ac.uk/opportunities](http://www.nri.cam.ac.uk/opportunities).

## Director of Research appointment at the McDonald Institute



We are delighted to report that our Director, Professor Jianjun Mei, has been appointed to the position of Director of Research at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge. Jianjun was based at the Department of Archaeology for his PhD (1995-2000), and is looking forward to contributing to the activities of the McDonald Institute.

## Professor Hilary Smith delivers our Ma Kanwen Lecture

Professor Hilary Smith, a Jing Brand Scholarship holder from the University of Denver, presented an excellent lecture on '*Vitamins, Chinese Dietetics and Modern Nutritional Knowledge*'. More than sixty people attended this lecture from as far afield as the USA, Canada and China, including our first Ma Kanwen Lecture speaker, Professor Zhang Shujian, as well as Dr. Yu Weidong, a major donor to the Ma Kanwen Fund.



**In this most unusual of years, we thank our Fellowship holders and Visiting Scholars during the academic year 2019-2020 for their forbearance and good humour in difficult circumstances. The Institute has followed the Government and University guidelines and has continued to make its facilities available where possible.**

- 1) Ho Peng Yoke Fellow: Bill Mak (Kyoto University)
- 2) Jing Brand Scholars: Zhang Meng (Peking University) Song Yuanming (University of Science and Technology Beijing) and Hilary Smith (University of Denver);
- 3) Needham-Silk Road Fellow: Tong Yangyang (Northwest University);
- 4) Soon-Yong Kim Fellow: Yu Jia (Phd candidate, History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge);
- 5) Lloyd Dan-David Fellow: Zhao Jingyi (Jenny);
- 6) Independent Schools Foundation (HK) Fellow: Wu Huiyi;
- 7) Sino British Fellowship Trust Fellow: Jiang Hongjun (Inner Mongolia Normal University)
- 8) Other Visiting Scholars: Kato Shigeo (Waseda University); Yang Lijuan (Institute for the History of Natural Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences); Wang Chuanchao (University of Science and Technology Beijing); Fan Yanni (Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine); Sun Jicheng (Shandong University of Technology).



*Farewell party for a number of this year's scholars (11.9.2020)*

## Seminars and lecture during lockdown

During the lockdown period which began in March, thanks to the support of our Fellowship holders and Visiting Scholars, five virtual seminars took place on Zoom.

The first was delivered by Zhang Meng under the title *The Fear of Contagion: Plague, Race and Face Masks in Modern China* on 22nd April. The second seminar was given on 22nd May by Fan Yanni, *A Journey of Chinese Materia Medica to the West (1840-1949)*. On 29<sup>th</sup> May, Song Yuanming gave a talk on *The Exchange of Agricultural Knowledge between China and the West in Late Qing Dynasty: Case Study Based on Sericulture and Soil Science*. Yang Lijuan's seminar under the title *From Translation and Introduction to Exploration and Reflection: The Development of Modern Geology in China (1890s-1920s)*, took place on 12th June. The final 'virtual' seminar was given by Wang Chuanchao on 19<sup>th</sup> June: *How to make taking Chinese medicine more convenient? The Changes of decoction in Republican era China*. All of these events were well attended and scholars and staff enjoyed the opportunity to make contact in this way. Following the first lockdown, on 11th September, Dr. Jiang Hongjun presented a physical lecture at the Institute on *Integrating Scientific and Confucian Concepts through the Translation of Physics Experiments: Focused on Wu Guangjian's Treatise on Physics from the Late Qing Dynasty*. It was the first academic event to be held here since March.

In view of the ongoing pandemic situation, the arrival of our next cohort of visiting scholars has been postponed until the spring of 2021. As a result, bearing in mind the particular nature and purpose of our text-reading seminar format, we took the decision not to hold our regular Friday afternoon or Wednesday lunchtime seminars for the Michaelmas Term 2020. The Friday text-reading seminars have taken place every Term since January 1993, without interruption, and we look forward to getting them up-and-running when the Institute is once again hosting visitors.

## Needham's Intellectual Heritage

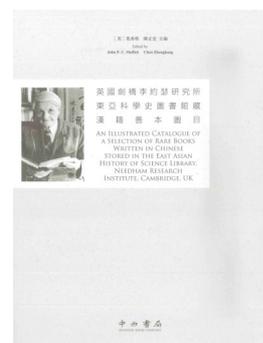


The newly-established journal *Cultures of Science* has published two special issues on Needham's Intellectual Heritage, with Professor Jianjun Mei as guest editor. They include five essays, four research papers and one report written by Dr. Needham himself. Most of these contributions are actually the essays and papers which were presented at the workshop

*"Dr. Joseph Needham's Intellectual Heritage: a workshop to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the death of Dr. Joseph Needham"*, which took place at the Institute in July 2015. See Newsletter 12.

## Illustrated Catalogue

We are delighted to announce the publication of a selection of Dr. Needham's old Chinese books *An Illustrated Catalogue of a Selection of Rare Books Written in Chinese Stored in the East Asian History of Science Library, Needham Research Institute, UK* 英國劍橋李約瑟研究所東亞科學史圖書館藏漢籍善本圖 (Shanghai: Zhongxi Book Company 2020). The Catalogue was compiled by Professor Chen Zheng-hong of Fudan University and our Librarian, John Moffett. Our most grateful thanks go to Professor Chen, and his colleagues, whose enthusiasm and erudition made this volume a reality.

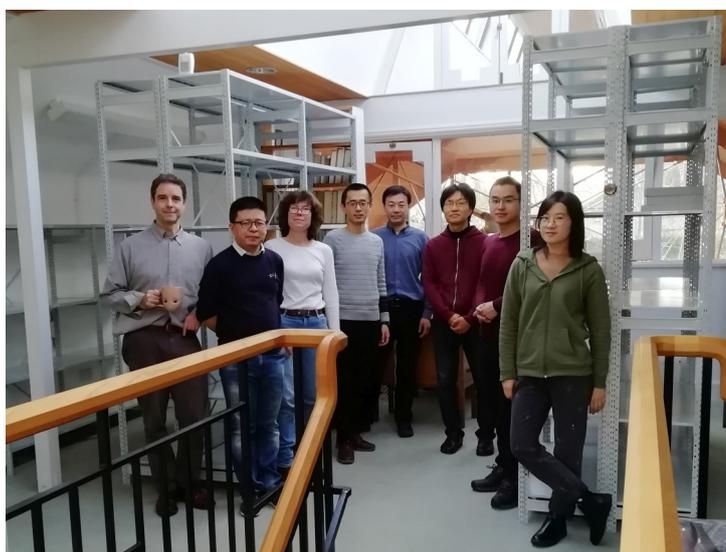


## Wellcome Trust Project

As reported in the previous Newsletter, work began on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 on a 3-year project funded by the Wellcome Trust: “*Science and Medicine in China from World War II to the Cultural Revolution: Sources from the Archives of Joseph and Dorothy Needham*”. The Project involves the conservation, cataloguing and selective digitisation of archives, photographs and objects relating to Joseph and Dorothy Needham’s engagement with China from the 1930’s to the early 1980’s. The archives are held mainly here at the NRI, but also at Girton College and the University Library. Our Librarian, John Moffett, has been joined on the Project by our part-time archivist, Dr. Rosalind Grooms, and Research Associate Dr. Sally Church. Despite everything that has been thrown at us over the past 14 months, and thanks to several diligent volunteers coming to our aid, much has already been achieved.



Ros Grooms and volunteer Zhu Hong making wrappers for lantern slides



Visiting scholars who helped to remove archive boxes in preparation for the installation of new shelving

## Other Activities

JN left us a very large number of “things”. Glass lantern slides for lecturing on biochemistry, and China, in their hundreds; rolls and rolls of photographic negatives, and objects... badges, fans, figurines, models, medals, masks and *materia medica*, commemorative plates and keys, and seals, with the red ink required in a variety of beautiful containers. All these are being numbered, described and catalogued into the new Cambridge archive management system (<https://arcspac-pub.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/21/resources>), photographed with the help of a volunteer, and then packed into conservation-grade boxes. The task is (almost) endless, but nearly every day brings a new surprise!



Peking opera mask

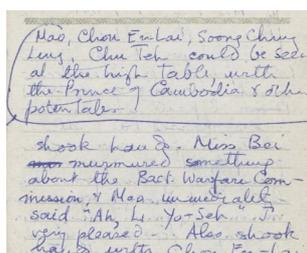
## Digitisation of Diaries and Photographs

A major priority was the digitisation of JN and DN’s diaries, notebooks and photographs from their visits to China between 1943 and 1978. It is particularly heart-warming to be able to report that all the diaries from Dorothy Needham’s visits (1944-45, 1964 and 1972) are now available, with transcriptions, on the Cambridge University Digital Library (CUDL) here:

<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/dorothyneedham>

We are very grateful to Girton College and DN’s relatives for granting permission to make these available, it being high time that this remarkable and pioneering scientist be brought into the limelight! We have also just added alongside his WWII diaries and photos, JN’s 1952 notebook of the meetings held by the International Commission on Bacteriological Warfare in China and Korea:

<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-NRI-00002-00005-00015-00001/1>



Entry from DN’s diary, about meeting Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai at a reception on 30th September 1964, the day before the celebrations to mark the founding of the PRC.

## Much more to come!

In the break between lockdowns we were fortunate that a member of the University Library Digital Content Unit was able to come to the NRI for 3 weeks to photograph JN’s several thousand photographs taken on his visits to China between 1952 and 1986. Work will now begin on the mammoth task of preparing descriptions of these, as well as of the notebooks that detail the institutions he visited, and the scientists and scholars whom he met. Some more rather fragmentary WWII material will also be added to DN’s section of the CUDL. And we have a fascinating, and unrelated, archival surprise to reveal sometime in the New Year, which we will report on in the next Newsletter.