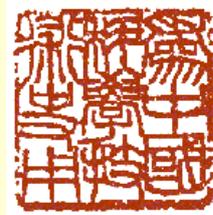


Needham Research Institute Newsletter

李約瑟研究所通訊

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Visit of H.E. The Chinese Ambassador



Professor Cullen presenting her Excellency with a copy of Science and Civilisation in China

On November 29th we were honoured by a visit from Mme Fu Ying 傅莹, the recently appointed Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the UK. We were delighted to show her something of the Institute and its work, in which she took a keen interest. She also met a number of our researchers, including Yi Degang 仪德刚, the Lee Foundation fellow for the current year, who like her is from Inner Mongolia. In the afternoon the Ambassador gave a lively and interesting talk to a mainly student audience drawn from the University. We have in the past been greatly helped in our academic relations with China by successive Ambassadors and their staff, and we wish Mme Fu a successful time in the U.K.

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Appointments

We are happy to be able to report that the University of Cambridge has recently named our Director, Christopher Cullen, as Professor of the History of East Asian Science Technology and Medicine on an honorary basis, and that Professor Roel Sterckx, newly appointed to the chair of Chinese in the University, has joined our board of Trustees. Both these events strengthen the already excellent links between the Institute and the wider academic environment of Cambridge.

Archive Catalogue goes live

As well as being a great scholar, Joseph Needham was one of the 20th century's most systematic preservers and filers of documents. On his death in 1995 he left to the Institute a huge collection of papers relating to his work as a historian of Chinese science, and especially as the creator of the *Science and Civilisation in China* project. These include 388 files containing Needham's notes and correspondence relating to every part of his plan for SCC as well as some early pre-1950s files on more general history of science topics. The collection also includes material relating to conferences attended and lectures given, papers on Needham's association with and membership of history of science and sinological organizations, documents relating to contacts made by Needham in the course of his work, and material illustrating Needham's many trips to the Far East and his study of the Chinese language. All these series complement the main research files and help to build a very full picture of a great life's work.

Clearly these materials are a major resource for scholars in many different areas, ranging from the history of science in 20th century Cambridge to the development of Sino-British scholarly relations. Cataloguing and conserving them was therefore a project high in the Institute's list of priorities. Thanks to a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon foundation of New York we were finally able to recruit a professional archivist – Joanne Meek – who began work in July 2004.

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The successful completion of the project was celebrated by a meeting of scholars and friends at the NRI on 25th May 2007. The Director opened the meeting with a general introduction to the history of the SCC project. Joanne Meek then provided a detailed overview of the contents of the archive and the work undertaken during the course of the project. We were then pleased to welcome Wang Guozhong 王国忠 of the Joseph Needham Materials Centre, Shanghai, an institution dedicated to the study of Needham's life and work. Mr. Wang provided an introduction to the work of his Centre and described some of its plans for the future.



Archivist Joanne Meek speaking at the meeting to mark the completion of the archive project, 25 May 2007

In September 2007 the full catalogue was completed. The project allowed for very detailed cataloguing work of the more than 21,000 items contained in the archive, and meant that necessary steps could be taken to ensure the physical preservation of the material for many years to come. The catalogue also includes Chinese characters for personal names and names of journals and other publications, in addition to their romanised versions. It has now been launched through the University's archive web portal, Janus (<http://janus.lib.cam.ac.uk>). This portal provides a single point of networked access to catalogues of archives and manuscript collections held throughout Cambridge.

In addition to the main item catalogue, scholars will be able to make use of an index of personal names encountered in the archive. The index has entries for more than 260 scholars who corresponded with Joseph Needham in connection with the *Science and Civilisation in China* project. In addition to notable Chinese scholars, such as Zhu Kezhen 竺可桢 and Guo Moruo 郭沫若 the list includes Western historians of science, such as George Sarton and J. B. S. Haldane.

Now that the archive is available for consultation, we look forward to it being used by a wide range of scholars. Indeed in the few short months since its launch, we have already had several visits and requests from scholars for documents from it.

[Please note: Physical access to the archive is by appointment only. Please contact the Library, John Moffett. Details of other collections of archival material relating to Needham's life and work can be found on the NRI website.]

British Science in Beijing – following in Needham's footsteps

From 1943 to 1946 Joseph Needham ran the Sino-British Science Co-operation Office (Zhong-Ying Kexue hezuoguan 中英科學合作館) in Chongqing. It was a time of great difficulties for Chinese scientists, and the help that Needham brought them was vital to China's war effort. He arranged for research publications and hard-to-get spares and reagents to be flown in 'over the hump' of the Himalayas, and did all he could to help maintain contact with colleagues in allied countries. His work left a great legacy of gratitude that did much to ensure support from influential quarters when he began the *Science and Civilisation in China* project. Surprisingly, for the next sixty years there was no office in China specifically charged with Sino-British liaison and co-operation in the fields of science and technology – apart, that is, from the scientific attachés in the British Embassy. It is therefore pleasant to report that on October 30th our Director, Professor Christopher Cullen, took part in the opening ceremony of the Beijing office of Research Councils UK, a body that brings together the seven great funding councils that support British research. Moreover, the main meeting space in the new offices has been named as the 'Joseph Needham Suite'.

The guests of honour at the opening were Mr Li Xueyong 李学勇, Vice-President of P.R.C Ministry of Science and Technology and Mr John Denham, Secretary of State at the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills. Lord Browne of Madingley, a Trustee of the NRI, presented both guests with volumes of *Science and Civilisation in China*, and Professor Cullen presented framed photographs of Joseph Needham to the Director of RCUK China, Mr Chris Godwin. These photographs will be displayed in the suite that bears Needham's name. In his speech at the opening, Mr Denham said 'China has identified "the scientific path of development, operating within a harmonious and balanced society" as the key to its long-term emergence as a developed economy. The contribution, you have made to the world through the arts, technology and science is incalculable. You have changed history through discovery. And the life work of the late Joseph Needham, a great friend of China, provides us in the UK with a tremendous resource to enable us to develop a better understanding of China's contribution to science, technology and medicine.' We at the NRI wish RCUK China every success in their work!



Chinese Premier in Queen Victoria's Land

Following defeat in the the first Sino-Japanese war (1894-5), Li Hongzhang 李鸿章, an imperial envoy of the first rank, visited Great Britain in August 1896. The visit lasted 20 days, and took him, in addition to London, to Southampton, Portsmouth, Manchester, Flintshire (Wales), Barrow-in-Furness (Cumbria), Glasgow, Rothbury (Northumberland) and Newcastle upon Tyne, among other places. While in the UK, he was received by Queen Victoria at Osborne House, Isle of Wight, and also met with a number of important people, including the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury (Robert Cecil), the former Prime Minister William Gladstone, and the renowned scientist, Lord Kelvin (William Thomson).

This visit was extensively recorded in the British press and official archives, and was the main object of my research in different libraries during the period of my Mellon Foundation fellowship here at the NRI in 2006-2007.



Professor Liu Dun visits the Forth Rail Bridge near Edinburgh in Scotland — the world's first major steel bridge, still in use. 1.5 miles in length, with its gigantic girder spans of 1710 ft, it was begun in 1883 and formally completed on 4 March 1890. When Li Hongzhang visited the UK, he was taken to this great feat of industrial civilization on August 18, 1896.

One of the most interesting reports concerns Li's toast at a reception that the Great Eastern Extension (telegraph and cable) Co. gave in his honour at its headquarters in Greenwich: "We live in a world of evolution, in which the two principles, the struggle for existence, and the survival of the fittest, will always hold good. Telegraphy and railways are the fittest means of communication... I have always advocated the amalgamation and combination of European

skill with the unlimited natural resources we have in China and the prosperity of the Chinese telegraph administration shows the effect of the combination... a combination of European scientific knowledge with Chinese natural resources not only for the benefit of England and China, but for the benefit of humankind in this world". (The Times, Aug 15, 1896).

Through this visit, Li Hongzhang undoubtedly gained a more profound knowledge of the general state of the world and of the weak, impoverished condition China was in. However, his notion of achieving "benefit of humankind in this world" through the "combination of European scientific knowledge with Chinese natural resources" was only a daydream in an era when Social Darwinism prevailed.

Professor Liu Dun

Professor F. Peter Lisowski (1922 – 2007)

From an obituary by Peter Lee, Honorary Secretary East Asian History of Science Foundation, Hong Kong

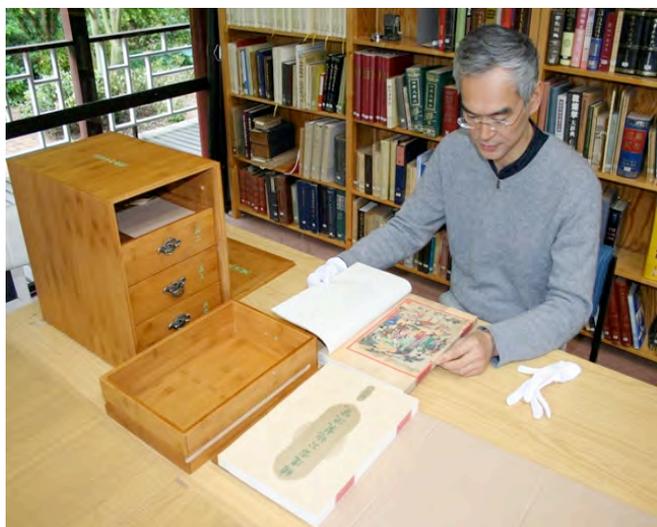
Professor Peter Lisowski, one of the four original Trustees who established EAHSF (Hong Kong) in 1979, passed away peacefully in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia on January 11, 2007 at age 84.

Peter was Chair Professor and Head of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Hong Kong from 1969 until his retirement in 1983. He and his wife Ei-Yoke then moved to Hobart where he continued his scholarly and academic work at the University of Tasmania until 3 years before his untimely death. As a close friend of the late Dr. Joseph Needham, he was truly dedicated to supporting Dr. Needham's monumental work *Science and Civilization in China* in various ways. He was one of the four original chartered trustees in the founding of the East Asian History of Science Trust in February 1979, which was then reincorporated as EAHSF (HK) in June 1981. He worked tirelessly during the early phase to expand the Board in 1979, and enlisted the support of the late Dr. Philip Mao to take over the Chairmanship in 1980. He was also instrumental in raising the first HK\$1m from an anonymous donor for the construction of the NRI Library, and was principal architect in the establishment of the EAHSF (HK) Lectureship Series (now the Joseph Needham Memorial Lectureship). He was also a generous donor of books to the East Asian History of Science Library collection. In recognition of his invaluable contributions, he was made Honorary Director upon his retirement from the EAHSF (HK) in 1983, and an Honorary Fellow of the Needham Research Institute in 1999.

The Library

With the completion of our archiving project described elsewhere in this newsletter by Joanne Meek, another great stride has been taken in making available the research resources of the Institute to scholars worldwide. The archive contains much material – journal articles, photographs and even copies of pre-modern Chinese texts – that complement the Library collection, further enhancing the research value of our unique collection. We are very grateful to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for so generously funding the project, and to Joanne Meek for the marvellous job she has done.

Through the year, the Library collection has continued to expand, as a result of both purchases and donations. Recent donations have included a set of reproductions of Chinese medical texts held in Japanese libraries from Professor Zheng Jinsheng 郑金生 of the Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences in Beijing, and nearly 50 recent doctoral dissertations on the history of science from students at China Science and Technology University, Hefei, from Professor Hu Huakai 胡化凯. Most significant has been a recent bequest to the Library from the estate of Dr. Katherine Po Kan Whitaker, a part of which has been used to purchase a reproduction of a remarkable C16th Chinese manuscript work, *Bu yi Lei Gong pao zhi bian lan* 補遺雷公炮製便覽 (Handbook of the Supplement to Leigong's Methods of Preparing Medicine). This magnificent work is now in the library of the Academy for Traditional Chinese Medical Science in Beijing, where it was "rediscovered" a few years ago by Professor Huang Longxiang 黄龙祥, recently a visiting Mellon Fellow at our Institute.



Professor Huang consulting the Leigong Handbook in the Reading Room at the Institute.

The work depicts *materia medica* and their processing and is replete with beautiful colour illustrations of a quality rarely matched in traditional Chinese medical works. An example of one such illustration is reproduced opposite.

We are, as ever, extremely grateful to all our donors for their contributions to the Library.



Processing saltpetre in Leigong's Handbook.

This summer I visited China once again, collecting books, attending conferences and developing contacts with historians of science in China. I was fortunate to visit Northwest University in Xi'an, where Professor Qu Anjing 曲安京 heads a group researching the history of Chinese mathematics and astronomy, and then Northwest Sci-Tech University of Agriculture and Forestry, Yangling, a major centre for the study of the history of agriculture in China. After a few days in Beijing attending the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Institute for the History of Natural Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences, I went down south to Nanning to attend the 11th International Conference on the History of Chinese Science. It was a great pleasure to meet so many old friends and to make more new ones, and I am extremely grateful to my hosts in each of these places for making my stay so fruitful and enjoyable.

John Moffett

Seminars

2007 saw another full programme of our Friday text-reading seminars at the Institute, well attended and much enjoyed, by all accounts. In conjunction with the Macdonald Institute for Archaeological Research of the University of Cambridge, we also held a symposium entitled *New Direction in the Archaeology of Bronze in Ancient China*. This brought together four scholars involved in the preparation of a volume on non-ferrous metallurgy for the *Science and Civilisation in China* series, Professors Bob Murowchick (Boston University), Mei Jianjun (University of Science and Technology, Beijing), Su Rongyu (Chinese Academy of Sciences) and Li Yung-ti (Academia Sinica, Taipei).