

SISTER CITIES

 peace through people

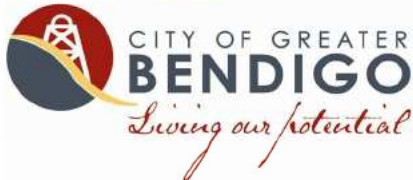
BENDIGO

SISTER CITIES

NEWSLETTER

 Bendigo

Vol 2; Issue 21
Summer 2009-10



Bendigo's Sister Cities: Penzance / St Just, Cornwall, United Kingdom;
 Los Altos, United States of America; Tianshui, China

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Message From the Chairman

Welcome to the Summer edition of our newsletter.

This year has proven to be another very fulfilling one for our committee.

The primary school email program linking schools in Bendigo and Cornwall has proven very successful.

We have entertained visitors from our American sister city, Los Altos, and shown them many of the wonderful attractions Bendigo has to offer.

The park bench, generously sponsored by the Penzance St Just Twinning Committee, Penzance Town Council and St Just Town Council in understanding of the impact the Black Saturday fires had on the people of Bendigo, is under construction. Several possible locations for the bench and accompanying plaque are being

considered. Our website also nears completion, and should be operational early in the new year.

Two Bendigonians participated in the Gansu International Fellowship Program at Lanzhou University, China between September and November. As a result, many potential initiatives have been identified to build on the existing relationship between Tianshui and Bendigo, and these will be further pursued.

And 2010 begins with quite a fanfare. The long awaited opening of the sister cities gardens in Rosalind Park will form part of the Summer in the Parks program in January. There are three separate gardens, each with a theme representing one of Bendigo's sister cit-

ies. There are many more projects planned for the coming year.

Election of office bearers was conducted recently. As a result, office-bearers for 2009/10 are: - Chairman, Peter Mundy. Deputy Chairman, Doug Turner. Secretary, Jeff White. Treasurer, Sheryl Retallick.

My thanks to a very dedicated and passionate committee for their contribution throughout 2009, and I wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas, with very best wishes for 2010.

Peter Mundy
Chairman.



- Special points of interest:**
- Two Bendigo residents awarded Sister City fellowships to Lanzhou, China
 - Visit from Los Altos Residents
 - Park bench from Penzance & St Just under construction and Sister Cities gardens opening soon
 - Website nearing completion
 - Tamworth Sister Cities Conference



New Sister Cities Banner

Left: Some Sister Cities Committee members displaying our new banner, which can be utilised on occasions such as static displays or presentations.

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Letter from Lanzhou: A Visit to Tianshui

by Yvonne Bahen, One of Bendigo's Sister Cities
Fellows to Lanzhou, China

**Lanzhou : Wednesday 18
November 2009**

Winter begins on an actual day here, arriving with a solid wall of still cold air. Officially it should have begun yesterday, on the first day of the 10th month, according to the Chinese traditional calendar, but this year it was early with a blanket of 'light snow' falling last Friday, with more light snowfalls every few days. It partially melts during the day, leaving patches of trampled icy snow and treacherous patches of clear black ice. Dangerous to step on: - you can go down like a sack of potatoes in the middle of crossing a road. I am nursing a badly sprained wrist to prove it. Even the traffic slows to a crawl and we can actually cross the road without the usual fear of being run down by buses and taxis.

Autumn doesn't have time to finish. There are no scenes of flaming red and gold in the gardens and hillsides. Some trees display their colour but for most trees the leaves are simply freeze-dried by the intense cold and drop, making a brittle green carpet. Yesterday the temperature plummeted from a few degrees below zero the day before to minus 18. By mid-morning it was still minus 18. My toes were numb inside my fur lined boots after standing for an hour in the post office sending things home; my lips were

numb after walking back to the university. Then they were numb in a different way after eating a bowl of the local stir-fried noodles. The locals here consider food tasteless if it is not well seasoned with chilli or Sichuan pepper.

Last weekend Tim Gerber and I finally achieved our goal in visiting Bendigo's sister city Tianshui, where the Delegation spent two nights. It seemed quite an attractive city, with some nice precincts: several small plazas; a street market; the elegant residence of a former Ming Dynasty bureaucrat Hu Laijin, now restored as a historical home; an 'ancient' commercial street; the Fuxi Temple complex dedicated to a legendary 'first human ancestor', Emperor Fuxi. Tianshui hosts two festivals in January and July, celebrating the achievements of this Emperor who is said to have created the Eight Diagrams (Ba Gua), invented books, formulated etiquette and to have taught people how to fish with nets. And I have finally seen a Chinese Scholar tree as there is an ancient specimen growing within the temple.

We visited Tianshui's famous Buddhist grottoes at nearby Maiji Mountain, one of the four largest grotto complexes in China, featuring carvings and murals dating from the 4th century to the 19th century. Tianshui also boasts a well preserved Neolithic town, Dadiwan Ruins, dating back to approximately 8,000 years, in addition to many other scenic

attractions. Tianshui is renowned for its beautiful lacquer ware and the plaque pictured on the following page featuring a scene from Maiji Mountain was presented to Bendigo by the Mayor of Tianshui.

Other handicrafts made in Tianshui include a thriving silk carpet industry, jade carvings and a range of articles woven from straw and hemp.

Like Harcourt, Tianshui is renowned for its orchards, producing wonderful apples and cherries, apricots and pears and others with a total fruit production of over 250 million kilograms. There are of course a range of other industries typical of a medium sized city situated close to the borders of Shaanxi, Sichuan and Gansu Provinces.

Tim and I wish we could have spent longer exploring this charming part of Gansu Province than the very short two days available to us. However, we are looking forward to returning to spend far more time in the region and we plan to lead a Sister City delegation here in 2010.



Images from Tianshui, China



Above: Beautiful lacquer plaque presented by Mayor of Tianshui to Bendigo.



Above: inside view of traditional greenhouses seen all over Gansu province. Facing south with a very thick cement wall which absorbs heat during the day. Approx 100m X 4m.

Right: Sister Cities signs at Tamworth, NSW. Extensive efforts to have similar signs re-instated at Bendigo's entrances have proved fruitless.

2009 Tamworth Sister Cities Conference By Sheryl Retallick

Tamworth in northern NSW is probably best known as an attractive agricultural area and the home of the Australian Country Music Golden Guitar awards. Between 19th and 22 July the Tamworth Regional Council hosted the 2009 National Sister Cities Conference.

Following the theme "Back to Basics," delegations of various sizes and ages gathered at the impressive Tamworth Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC) for presentations and workshops. While many interesting and thought provoking ideas were outlined by the various speakers, for me, Greg Hammond's workshop, "The Art of Communication" and the address by Pam Faye, former Australian Ambassador to Germany, dealt most directly with the various issues facing Sister Cities.

Tamworth has three Sister Cities: Sannohe in Japan, Chaoyang in China and Gore in New Zealand. Each



delegation spoke with great enthusiasm about their sister city relationship and how it is being strengthened and kept alive through visits and regular exchange programs at the school, community and local government level.

Young people were well catered for at the conference. They attended many of the presentations; social events, team building and focus groups, which were all designed to further spark their interest in Sister Cities.

The evening social events provided an important opportunity to meet and chat with other delegates. Proceedings started with Sunday evening Welcome Cocktail reception at the Regional Art Gallery. Monday's Social dinner featured an energetic indigenous dance troupe and the Tuesday Gala Awards dinner recognised the achievements of various Sister Cities Committees from across the country. Special congratulations must go to the diverse range of projects which were recognised and it is our hope to submit a project for 2010.

Toowoomba was announced as the venue for 2011 Conference, but till then, Rockhampton is looking forward to hosting the 2010 National conference between 11-14 July. Their theme will be "Real, Relevant Rewarding."



Entertaining Our Visitors From Los Altos



On Friday the 6th November, 2009, the Sister Cities Committee for Greater Bendigo were given the opportunity to return some long over due favours for our Sister City in Los Altos. The recent history of our relationship has shown they have invited a youth to visit them, home hosted the Bendigo Braves Babes and home hosted the Bendigo Braves Basketball team. This opportunity came in the form of entertaining a family from Los Altos. They were John and Gina Atkinson and their daughter, who is currently residing in Wellington, New Zealand. John and Gina have recently joined the Los Altos Sister City committee so wanted to include Bendigo in their planned jaunt down south.

We were aware of their plans and travel arrangements. Basically it was Friday afternoon and evening in Bendigo followed by Saturday morning then on to Ballarat. A little latitude was built in on the departure time. They organised a Friday afternoon visit to the Central Deborah Mine for the long tour and the rest they left

to us. We had certain thoughts on where to go, who to meet, what we wanted them to know and the thoughts we wanted them to take away with them. Ultimately we wanted them to know we were an active and hospitable unit and Bendigo is everything it is cracked up to be.

Friday night we indulged in socialising and getting to know each other over fine food in a nice environment. Barry brought them to our table at the Wild Mint Restaurant where we dined, talked, loosened up and took the mandatory photo images. Peter said a few kind words as Chairman of our committee. First thing Saturday morning Doug picked them up from their motel and gave them a tour of our bushfire ravaged areas and local historical features, before adjourning to the Boardwalk Restaurant for breakfast.

Enroute to the Boardwalk we had a quick tour of the police station. We sat on the outside deck and watched the walkers, ducks and rowers going about their business. Jeff joined us and we engaged in further talking and socialising. We left the Boardwalk and caught up with Merle in the vicinity of the Chinese Museum. We walked and talked as we visited the Los Altos gardens in Rosalind Park, then walked through the park and recognised the park bench given to the citizens of Bendigo by the Citizens of Los Altos.



From Rosalind Park we had an excellent view of the Central Business District of Bendigo that included much of our rich architecture, including the Memorial Hall, Visitor information centre (Old Post Office), Shamrock Hotel, Court House and Town Hall. We walked and talked to the Chinese Museum. Merle was in her element and introduced them to Russell Jack who manages the venture and has an intimate knowledge of the Sister City program.

That concluded a very quick visit to Bendigo. We are convinced we have set a high standard of hospitality and friendship and the message getting back to the Los Altos Committee will be good. Time was against us but we covered the basics. We thank the Atkinson family for making the time to include us in their tripping.



Image 1: The Atkinson's and Committee Members at the Boardwalk.
Image 2: Los Altos Bench, Rosalind Park