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Editors' Introduction

The academic year 2016-2017 marked the 50th anniversary of the formal establishment of the British Association for Chinese Studies (BACS). In order to celebrate this landmark in BACS history, current President, Jane Duckett, invited three former presidents—Don Rimmington, Stephan Feuchtwang and Tao Tao Liu—to reminisce on the early history of the Association and some of its major achievements over the years. Their essays presented here reveal how serendipitous beginnings have led to over 50 years of extensive activities as the Association has lobbied tirelessly on behalf of an ever-expanding field. From teaching and research, to school outreach and government engagement, and of course to the establishment of our very own journal, successive Councils have worked hard to build a strong profile for Chinese Studies that will ensure continued success over the next 50 years and beyond.

We are also pleased to be able to include a highly topical essay by Gerda Wielander, which reviews Xu Zhiyong's 2017 memoir, *To Build a Free China: A Citizen's Journey*, in the light of recent political developments in China, including Liu Xiaobo's untimely death on 13 July. Written in her personal capacity as a scholar of China rather than as *JBACS* editor, the views expressed in it are her own and do not reflect the position of *JBACS* or the British Association for Chinese Studies.

This issue marks another milestone as we say a fond farewell and many thanks to our founding Editor, Don Starr, who came to the end of his term of office last year. From Volume 1 in 2011 to Volume 6 in 2016, Don oversaw the development of *JBACS* from its first tentative beginnings to the mature journal before you today. Even before the publication of the first issue, Don had worked for several years on developing various concepts for a BACS-run journal, all with a particular eye on how to best support our academic community in the challenging times of RAE/REF, and the increasing demands for open access

publication. As well as leading the development of the journal, Don also undertook the onerous task of copy-editing many of the issues to sometimes very tight deadlines. We are sure you will join us in thanking Don for his contribution and wish him well as he enjoys his new-found free time!

In this issue, alongside the essays, we are pleased to introduce three new authors to the *JBACS* stable. The first two research articles, from Lauren Dickey and Vivienne Xiangwei Guo, continue to showcase the excellent work undertaken by our early career researchers in the UK. Both were ranked highly in last year's BACS Early Career Researcher Competition and, following in the footsteps of Pamela Hunt and Jie Li (both published in *JBACS* Volume 6, 2016), we have been very pleased to work with them over the past year to bring their research to publication. The papers reveal the breadth of scholarship in Chinese Studies today—Lauren's paper examines four elements of strategic tradition in the cross-Strait relationship, whilst Vivienne's paper looks at the post-war political reorganisation of Chinese women activists within the CCP United Front framework. Joining them is Andreas Fulda, whose work on foreign and domestic foundations sheds new light on the contested roles of such organisations in the PRC.

Last, but not least, we would like to formally welcome our new sub-editor, Scott Pacey, who joins us from the University of Nottingham. Given the increasing number of submissions to the journal, we hope we didn't undersell the magnitude of the task in hand in the job advert!

We look forward to working together to establish *JBACS* as a regular biannual publication with issues in January and July every year. With rigorous double-blind peer-review (and here we must thank all of our excellent referees and Editorial Board members, who have worked hard, and to often tight deadlines, over the past year to ensure the quality of both our ECR prize and research articles), we aim to establish *JBACS* as one of the leading English language journals on Chinese Studies in Europe.

Sarah Dauncey and Gerda Wielander