

## China Study Camp 2016 Diary - Millfield School



9<sup>th</sup> July by Sofya Diskantova Y9:

Although the journey had officially started in London Heathrow for the rest of the group, mine had started 13 hours before that. I flew over from Russia and waited in the airport for eight hours before meeting the group. We then proceeded to board our plane for an eight hour flight to Dubai. It was not as bad as it might sound. I slept for a majority of the way – at least tried due to confined spaces, and therefore wasn't tired as we arrived in Dubai. We then decided that we shall not starve and eat in MacDonald's. Although our choice of the venue had slightly disappointed Mrs. Keeler, she kindly paid for our meals, whilst crashing on rice.



10<sup>th</sup> July by Sofya Diskantova Y9:

Our flight from Dubai to Beijing was delayed for a bit more than an hour due to a medical emergency (a passenger falling ill) on board, but everything went well and we were soon to be off. Our eight hour flight went smoothly, apart from occasional turbulences. As we came off the plane, we were greeted with an oven like blow to our faces. I was expecting China to be hot, but I was not expecting 27 degrees Celsius at midnight. I was seriously worried about my survival chances for the next day. We joined the other groups that are going to the same place as us, and got onto the buses for our 45 minutes journey to our hotel. We were so knackered that we didn't even care that the wooden cupboard in our room actually felt softer than our beds. After praising Gods for the inventors of showers, we became slightly concerned with our biological clock and getting up in the morning. It turns out, though, that we didn't have to worry about anything as we blacked out the moment we got into bed.



11st July by Alice Sismanovic Y9:

Today we had our most exciting day yet ahead of us.

We woke up to a great window view of Beijing City and the sounds of beeping cars at 7.30 in the morning. We then took a shower just before heading straight down to breakfast downstairs. When walking into breakfast we were greeted with happy smiling faces welcoming us in to have food. To our surprise we were served food that we thought we would have been served for dinner. For example rice, noodles and meats. These were not at all what we had expected. We were all looking forward to cereals and toasts but we found that rice and hot foods were actually extremely tasty for breakfast. Hot drinks such as warm orange and milk were all given to us to drink with our breakfast even though they were hotter then the temperatures outside. The average temperature was more than 30'C.

After breakfast we went back to our rooms where we had a long two hour break to collect our things, pack our bags and text our parents back home. At 11 O'clock we met down in the reception where our tour guides greeted us with a McDonald's for an early lunch to eat whilst making our way to Beijing Train Station. The bus journey was around 30-45 minutes which didn't feel that long when you had amazing views, a hot burger and an ice cold drink to enjoy. Once we got to the train station it was time to wait for our train. It was setting off at 2 O'clock meaning we had around 2 hours to relax and look around the shops. In this time we all ate a delicious ice cream and drank a cold bottle of water to compete with the heat of the weather. When our gate opened to welcome everyone onto the train we prepared our tickets and passports to show to the security guards. After safely getting through we walked onto our carriage where we then sat down in our seats. 5 hours passed extremely quickly when looking at the beautiful views of China, playing hide and seek around the train and eating a delicious lunch that we bought in the food cart.

We arrived late at night in Changzhou train station, which was then followed by a short 45 minute journey to Changzhou Senior High School. Once arriving in our rooms we unpacked ready for the next day and then settled down to have a good nights sleep after a long day of travelling.





12nd July by Grace Stonehouse Y9:

Today was our first day at the Changzhou Senior High School. We didn't know much about the campus but we knew where the dining hall was because it is right next to our dorms and we ate there on the previous night.

Breakfast was our first event of the day and I ate lots food. After breakfast the girls made their way into the local shop opposite the school where we bought fans, sweets and insect repellent to help us through the week, whilst the boys searched for WIFI. Once we had finished, it was time for the opening ceremony. Many different people were introduced and spoke to us all about what was going to happen in the week. We then were introduced to our Chinese buddies, we asked a variety of questions to each other and they then gave us a tour around the school campus. When we arrived back at the classroom it was time for our first lesson of the camp. We introduced ourselves to the class and learned basic greeting phrases. After lunch we started our lesson on paper cutting. We learned many techniques and used them in producing our own paper cuttings. I really enjoyed this lesson!

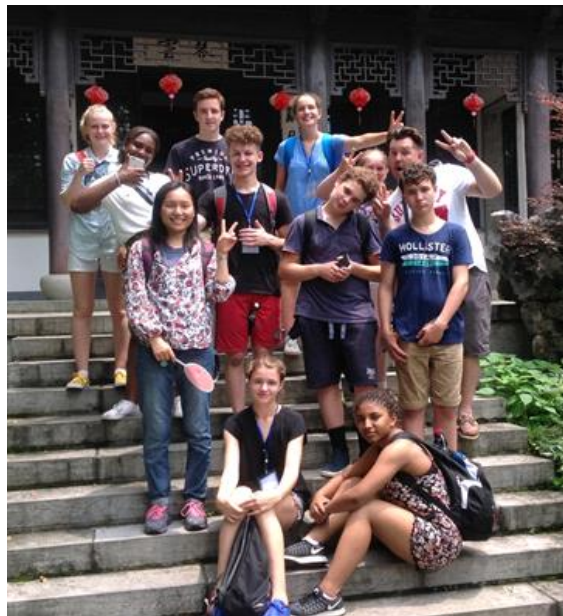
Sport was next on the list. There was a variety of sports that we could pick from this included Ping Pong, basketball, athletics and badminton. Then it was supper time and we enjoyed a lovely warm cooked Chinese meal.



13rd July by Charlie Bone Y10:

We woke up really early- about... .. 6:30. We didn't actually get out of bed to get changed until 6:45 and then had a shower. We then had breakfast. In China, you don't have breakfast, lunch and dinner; you have rice with every meal.

We then got on the bus and we travelled and went to a cave, the bus was way too cold and the AC was really annoying - I was shaking. We got to the cave and it was really hot, about 35 degrees. We walked around the trail and took pictures of the scenery, and all the Asian buildings. We went into the cave and it was wet and humid. It wasn't very natural as the owners had put concrete in there and made loads of stairs around everywhere, we got a boat ride out of the cave in a big underground river and then walked round some more trails, lots of us bought slingshots for 80p but they were taken off us quite quickly because it was dangerous. We went home and went out to a restaurant called Ocean Dip, it was a good experience but not many of us enjoyed it, so we went to Pizza Hut afterwards to fill us up.





14<sup>th</sup> July by Jasper Hall Y10:

Today at Changzhou School we woke up at 7:10 to then eat breakfast together in the dining hall. Breakfast was similar to the usual. I had rice, egg tart, bread and watermelon.

We then started our Chinese lessons at 8:00, we learned about weather and seasons. The lesson lasted 1.5 hours with a little break in between we then went on to do preparation for our presentation on Architecture in Changzhou. For lunch I had chicken with rice and a Pepsi.

Shortly after lunch we had a calligraphy lesson. Calligraphy was a good experience and fun to do. This lasted for two hours so we ended up making wonderful characters (福 which means happiness) on nice coloured paper which we were allowed to take home after. The lesson finished and we were all due to play sports until the rain started to pour which delayed us from playing but I ended up playing volleyball and badminton with Thor and My buddy Luke after the rain stopped. At this point it was around 5pm. Dinner was at 6pm and 7pm onwards I had some holiday work so we all had a relaxed evening.



15<sup>th</sup> July by Fifi Fufeyin Y9:

Today we visited three places: the water city, the silk factory and the Suzhou gardens owned by the Wang family.

The first place we visited was the water city. It was a very interesting place. There were many shops with a variety of beautiful items. I mostly liked the shops with China's traditional dress. There were so many adorable animals that stared so innocently at you which were most adorable.

Next we went to the silk factory. The kind people showed us how silk is made and all the effort that goes into making it. I also bought some items for my family that I think they will really like, everyone took advantage of the free WIFI and face timed our families.

After that we visited the Suzhou gardens that had many confusing twists and turns but we managed to get through. There were many Chinese citizens eager to take photos with the fascinating children zooming past. The gardens were truly beautiful but I did expect them to have a bigger variety of colours on the grounds instead of just green.

Overall the day was really nice and the weather wasn't too humid.





16<sup>th</sup> July Home Visit by Charlie Kilner Y9:

Today we woke up at 7 and had breakfast and shortly after met our buddies who we would spend the day with, my buddy was Caroline and we had Thor, Alice and Fifi in our group for the day.

We started off by walking into the city and going to a very big shopping centre, whilst we were here we had Pizza Hut for lunch which was so nice to have because we haven't had in a long time. Then we found an arcade nearby which we had a go at and all five of us enjoyed, then we got to look around a lot of very nice shops that I enjoyed, after that we walked to an even bigger supermarket that is a bit like the ones we have back in the UK.



After that we headed to Costa because Caroline kindly agreed to let us have WIFI briefly before we set off to go to the cinema which was great! We watched Teenager Mutant Ninja Turtles 2 in 3D and to top it off the Chinese popcorn is actually really nice!

After that we were picked up by her mum who then took us to a big Ferris wheel a bit like the London Eye and it was great, we got to see the whole city, but I have to admit me and Thor did get a tiny bit scared because of the heights.



Then we headed over to Caroline's Nan's house and on the way we had to swap who was sitting on the floor of the car because there wasn't enough room which was very funny because we had to change who was sitting down whilst we were driving!! Luckily I was the only one who somehow didn't sit on the floor.

Once we got to Caroline's Nan's house we were greeted by her Aunt, Cousin and Nan. We all had a great meal whilst getting to know Caroline's family more.

Straight after the meal we said goodbye to her family and headed to her house when we got there she very kindly gave us all presents.





16<sup>th</sup> July Home Visit by Sofya Diskantova Y9:

Today we went to our buddies' house to meet their family and experience complete immersion into one's daily life in China. We met up with our buddies after breakfast at 8am, and we were very excited for what was about to come.

Grace and I had the pleasure of spending the day with Mia's family and Mia herself. After signing out with her teacher, we made our way down to the bus stop, and that was the official beginning of our adventure. We decided to go to her house first and introduce ourselves to her parents. We tried to hold our conversations in Chinese, but might have failed miserably. Her parents were very lovely and made sure to not show us how truly confused they were by what we were saying. After exchanging our gifts, Mia's parents escaped to the kitchen to prepare our meals, meanwhile we have enjoyed luxuriously soft sofa and had a few snacks. We chose a film to watch and just chilled for about an hour. Mia's parents were well prepared and bought a lot of snacks. The majority of them were really nice, but some of them were quite unusual, such as crisps with a flavour of pickles... Nevertheless we moved on from lying on the sofa like a bunch of happy sea lions to, making dumplings. We also kind of failed at that, but our skills were quick to improve and Grace managed to make reasonable dumplings. We made about 30 dumplings and went back to being happy sea lions. We were then invited to have lunch. Mia's parents cooked up so much food, and single dish was so tasty and fulfilling that we were soon to have reached the point of being unable to eat anymore. All the dishes were very memorable, including our failed dumplings, but we were especially fascinated by a black chicken, which tasted just like a normal chicken. We then proceeded to fall into a food coma, and discovered WIFI.

Mia suggested that we should go to the 'South Street' for shopping, and we were off soon afterwards. After strolling through the shops Mia and her mum took us to a café they knew and bought us a dish and a drink to try. We didn't quite like either, but it definitely was an experience. Our drinks were supposedly mango ice tea, but they had an after taste of 'Digestives' and our dish didn't really taste like anything.

We then concluded that our attraction to WIFI and the soft sofa of theirs was too strong, and we headed back to their house to chill. Mia ordered a small seafood pizza for us to serve as an appetiser and it was delicious. Our dinner also consisted of many dishes including noodles. We've had the same problem as we've had at lunch and tried our best to not fall into the food coma again.

All was well, but then came the time to head back to our dorms, and we set off. On our way back I made a weird decision to buy four small cans of green tea for my sister, without realising how suspicious it is going to look in my suitcase. Whilst I was making that weird decision Grace had tried some green tea for the very first time, but humbly confessed that she'd rather just stick with the English tea. It felt really sad to say goodbye as we have had such a wonderful day and didn't want to go back to our dorms. We both agreed that it was one of the best experiences in our life.

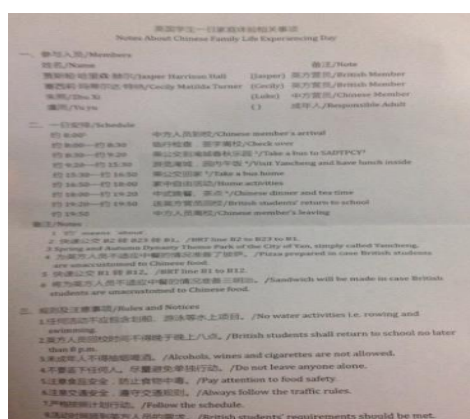
### 16<sup>th</sup> July Home Visit by Cecily Turner Y10:

Today we spent the day with our Chinese buddies. I was in a pair with Jasper and our buddy was Luke. Luke bought his cousin with him and she was really nice, her name was Rain.

We set off for a theme park called Spring Autumn Dynasty at around 8am. We took a bus to the park and it was a very easy journey. Luke took us around lots of exhibitions on the history of China in the park. He explained everything in very good English but still made us talk a bit in Chinese. Afterwards Jasper, Rain and I went on a rollercoaster, which I really enjoyed. We then had lunch and all ate beef noodle soup and Luke bought some traditional Chinese snacks. Then we watched a 4D film, which was my favourite part of the day. We were strapped into seats, just like a rollercoaster, and then the seats were lifted up and the whole room went completely dark and I couldn't hear a thing. Suddenly stars appeared on a curved screen in front of us and then a 20 minutes animated film was played about the local area and how it looked in the past. The seats moved and jolted so it felt like we were going through ancient China. I'd never done anything like it before and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

We then went to the remains of an ancient city inside the park which were truly beautiful. We then left the park and got on the bus to get to Luke's flat. When we arrived we were greeted by his family and it was obviously a big occasion for them as lots of Luke's family were there. I really enjoyed the meal that his family cooked for us, even the pickled fish! Jasper didn't really enjoy the food so he just ate lots of rice.

After dinner Jasper and I gave Luke and his family presents and they loved them. Luke especially liked the snow globe from London that Jasper gave him – he couldn't stop smiling. Luke's family gave us six massive peaches each, they were huge! Then we said our goodbyes and thanked the family for a lovely evening. When I got back to my room I went into bed and fell asleep straight away as it was such a busy day.





16<sup>th</sup> July Home Visit by Yasmine Fosu Y11:

Today we visited our Chinese buddies' houses and met their families; I was paired with Charlie Bone for the visit and I was eternally grateful for his company as our buddy was very shy and spoke very quietly (but was extraordinarily nice). We started off the day by continuing my quest to find a SIM card, however all attempts were futile as I am not Chinese. It was also not helped by the fact that Charlie and I are clearly foreigners and babies and small children were frequently thrust upon us by their parents to take photos with- the purpose and use of these photos once taken I am still unsure of. It seems unlikely they would have a photo of two strangers holding their son in a silver frame on the mantle piece of their home, however I digress...

After scouring about town for a SIM card and accepting defeat, we headed to Starbucks where Charlie drank both mine and his hot chocolates in record setting time as the barista thought I must be joking about being allergic to chocolate and insisted we have two. That barista was a persuasive lady.

On the way to our buddy's house for lunch, we walked past a man stood next to a bicycle which had small cages of locusts attached to every surface. The insects here can only be described using one word: monstrous. These beasts were sure signs the end is nigh. Seriously, signs of the apocalypse are floods, tornadoes and the unleashing of locusts - specifically Changzhou locusts. It was on seeing these things that we devised our plan: to release numerous locusts into Mar. Bone's room. We spent the rest of the day fine tuning our attack, and coming up with back up plans in case of any unexpected situations: e.g. should we not be able to obtain the master key to gain access to the room. Charlie was very scared of the locusts and said he would jump out of the car if they got free while it was moving.

When we arrived at the home, we were greeted by her parents, brother and dogs. We went upstairs, exchanged gifts and had a lovely meal after we'd successfully transferred noodles from the bowl to our plate with chopsticks (this took approximately 5 minutes and was a team effort). It was a meal that could win 'Master Chef'. Her dad had made all the noodles himself using a machete which seemed a bit excessive at the time but there was probably a reason for it, and we spoke to the family about the paintings on the walls, what her parents did for work and their cat.

When we finished lunch we went for a walk around the lotus garden. Lotus flowers are very pretty. In contrast, they do not taste good and anyone who says they do is lying. I also almost pushed an old woman into a lake by turning around too quickly with my enormous turtle shell backpack that contained nothing useful whatsoever.

After the lotus garden we went back to the family home and had a super delicious dinner, again, 'Master Chef' worthy, and tried to explain 'pranking' to the family and attempting to rationalise and validate emptying 10 locusts into a teacher, and my ex-houseparent's bedroom.

We then returned to school earlier than everyone else at 7.30pm and the plan commenced. We started by trying to pick the lock of Mr Bones room with a Bobbi pin but all I've ever picked were my GCSE subjects. I lacked the required experience with breaking and entering and therefore, this didn't work. We got into the room in the end in a much less thrilling way, we asked one of the cleaners, and emptied the locusts (with a lot of screaming and squirming) and left.

After all the excitement of the insect discovery, we all went to bed to prepare for another long and jam-packed day, quite pleased with ourselves.

I also feel I should make it clear that no people or animals were harmed in the making of this prank.

17<sup>th</sup> July by Thor Davey Y9:

On Sunday today we went to the gardens near the pagoda across the road, which were very carefully maintained and there were lots of people doing different morning activities. Some were doing Tai Chi in groups; some were using swords and others were just playing Chinese chess with mates. All in all it had a peaceful and spiritual feel to it. The pagoda was very big and full of old artifices and at the top there was a big brass bell. The pagoda also had an amazing view of the gardens, our host school and the river.

Then after lunch we had a double lesson of Chinese and after the lesson we went to an American burger bar where we all had a burger but mine came really late after everyone else had finished so I had to eat it quickly then we went to a Karaoke bar which was really good fun but then someone put flashing white lights on and my head started to throb and I felt sick. Then it was back to school and bed.





18<sup>th</sup> July by Grace Stonehouse Y9:

We started off the morning with breakfast at 7:30. I ate some rice and a couple of potato smiley faces. After breakfast we had our first lesson where we talked about YCT exam and revisited the topic 'parts of the body'. Because the lesson was quite long being 1 hour and 25 minutes (including a ten minute break) it was rather boring and I found myself counting the minutes away. When the lesson had finished we had to prepare for the closing ceremony as all the schools had to do something in it. We had chosen to sing the British national anthem in Chinese. Mrs Keeler had finished translating the national anthem into pinyin and we were ready to start practicing. Cecily practiced the tune on the piano and we practiced the lyrics. Once we had finished we had our second lesson of the day. In this lesson we started to revise for YCT exam. This lesson wasn't very interesting and it was definitely not as entertaining as any of Mrs Keeler's lessons.

We then all went to have lunch and a nice relaxing lunch break which started at 12:00 and finished at 2:30. Then we went to a comb factory in which we looked at the history of combs and how the workers made them. We walked round the small factory and looked at the detail of the combs.

We then went to a theme park called Dinosaur Park. This was the highlight of the day for me and many others. Although the queues for the rides were long, the wait was worth every minute. The park design was fascinating and the rides were amazing. I also got to meet an elephant at the park.



19<sup>th</sup> July by Jasper Hall Y10:

Today was the last day at the School. We woke up at 6:50am and had breakfast before 8 as our first lesson started at 8. The whole morning was pretty busy as I had to present a poster with Cecily about Changzhou's architecture. We then had a ten minute break and shortly after we had our YCT exam. In my case I was taking YCT Exam level 3, which I thought went ok.

We then had lunch which was chicken and rice with a few vegetables on the side. During lunch I was revising for my speech which was taking place 3 hours later for the closing ceremony. At 2 we got together as a school and rehearsed our performance which was singing the British anthem in Chinese. We then got closer to the start of the closing ceremony. So we all piled in to the hall and it started. All the performances went well and were all entertaining including our school performance.

Later that evening we were off to Shanghai so we took the bullet train which lasted 1 hour. We then got to the airport hotel but that didn't work out too well so we decided to change hotel and ended up at the Meridian in the city centre and we could see more of Shanghai. The hotel which we stayed in was very nice but not the cheapest room. We ended up having a relaxed evening in the hotel and had a peaceful sleep.





20<sup>th</sup> July by Charlie Bone Y10:

First we woke up in Shanghai in the 5 star hotel, we had the Royal suite but had to share it with all 6 boys on the trip, including Mr Bone (Charlie's dad)... It was a funny night - we had three in one bed, two on sofas and one on an extra bed.

We got up early and took the taxi to a train station where we got on the tube, it was smelly and full of people, there was no room at all, we had breakfast once we got off the tube, and went to a bullet train, and travelled back to Changzhou, where we packed our bags and got on bus to the bullet train station once again, and went to Beijing, this took about 6 hours. We got to the hotel and went to bed straight away.

Morning view of Shanghai from the hotel room:



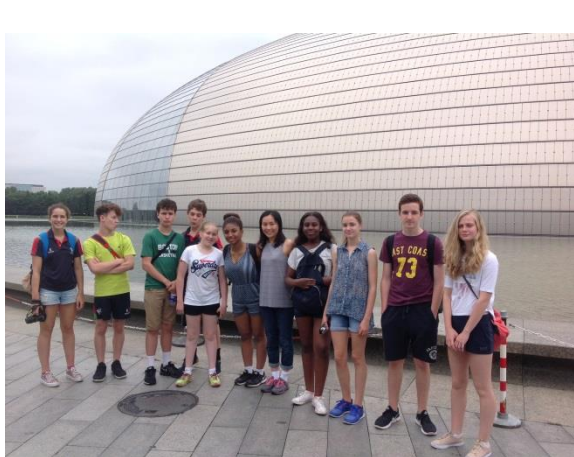
21<sup>st</sup> July by Cecily Turner Y10:

Today we were massive tourists - we went to Tian'anmen Square, the Forbidden City and a Kungfu show.

The day started early which meant everybody slept on the minibus. Once we arrived at Tiananmen Square we were told to look around and take photos. In actual fact Chinese tourists took photos of us instead because we were more interesting than the square. Once one person got a photo, for the next 10 minutes new people would join in and ask if they could be photographed with us and this happened every half an hour or so.

Once we had spent about 30 minutes in the square we headed to the Forbidden City. They place was heaving with Chinese tourists. It didn't seem very forbidden as half of China was in there! The city was huge and it took an hour to walk through it, and 10 minutes before we left it started pouring down so everyone was soaked. We then went to a restaurant to eat lunch and we started to dry off.

After lunch we drove to the Red Theatre to watch a Kungfu show. It was really enjoyable and very well done. We then had dinner at another restaurant and then went back to the hotel.





22<sup>nd</sup> July by Fifi Fufeyin Y9:

Today we visited the summer palace which had a beautiful view of a lake - there were many boats on which people could take a tour in but unfortunately we didn't go on those. There were many twists and turns to get to our destination but we eventually did it. One of the things that drew my interest was the long corridor as I have no clue why anyone would build such a long corridor! The palace was truly beautiful due to the many flowers and trees that were around, and I might have taken a stop at every shop. Altogether the day was amazing!



23<sup>rd</sup> July by Charlie Kilner Y9:

Today we started off our day by getting ready as usual but I was very excited because not only were we going to the Great Wall of China but we were also going to a massive fake market.

When we finished having our breakfast and getting ready we got onto the bus and had quite a long journey. The bus dropped us at the Great Wall. We were all very surprised to see how it actually was, and it was very hot today!

We all set off at different paces and all had periodic breaks whilst walking up, it was very hard and tiring walking up but when we made it to a check point and saw the amazing view it was breath taking!

It took us about one hour to get up to this certain check point and then we had to walk back down again, by the end of this the shirt I was wearing had changed colour because of how much I sweated!

We all met down at the bottom and shared our photos of the views and then got onto the bus where we went onto the fake market.

The fake market was a lot bigger and better than I thought – it had everything you could think of and more – about five floors of just shopping. We all bought presents and little things for ourselves. It was great fun!



A summary of the trip by Mr Matt Bone (Teacher):

Over the course of the summer term, ten pupils were invited to attend the 2016 Millfield China Summer Camp: an amazing opportunity to explore China's rich cultural heritage as well as a unique chance for pupils to develop and use their Mandarin.

After weeks of preparation by Mrs Keeler, the group assembled at the beginning of the school holidays flying out of London with 60 other pupils from 6 state and grammar schools to Beijing, China.

After a huge amount of travelling and a brief stopover in Beijing the group caught an early morning bullet train to Changzhou. The ensuing 6 hour high speed trip allowed pupils to view the diverse interior of China as the train tore its way through the landscape. This said, some were too busy eating express noodles, or sleeping to take in the whole journey!

The first part of our trip saw us encamped at the prestigious Changzhou Senior High School. Pupils were divided into dorms, meeting together to eat in the school canteen, and in classes as they learned Mandarin, calligraphy, paper cutting, and most enjoyably kungfu. Each evening saw the group wandering into town to various malls or markets with the occasional meal out. These visits into town presented pupils with excellent opportunities to practice their Mandarin as they ordered food and drinks, or bartered for goods on the markets. Some pupils were extremely brave buying and eating scorpions on sticks, which made a refreshing change from the daily myriad bowls of rice!

Following the successful completion of our study tour, which concluded in an exam, the Millfield pupils contributed to the closing school ceremony with their own rendition of 'God Save The Queen' which they sung rather well in Chinese! With all the studying and hard work done, it was time to don rice paddy hats and have some tourist fun, as the group returned to Beijing for the remainder of our tour.

A hectic schedule of cultural visits was demolished in a number of days as our hosts, rushed the group through all the 'must see' attractions surrounding Beijing, including: Tiananmen Square, The Forbidden City, the 2008 Olympic Park, numerous temples, palaces and gardens as well as markets for some extreme haggling to shop for presents, all this in 40 degree sweltering heat.

Two highlights of the trip which spring to mind were our impromptu overnight trip to Shanghai, which was fraught with failure, but saw the group pulling together with true Millfield spirit, this will always be remembered as the most fun/frustrating/fantastic five star hotel/camping trip. The other resounding memory being our visit to the Great Wall of China, which again saw true Millfield grit and high level of competition, as pupils raced to climb the wall in scorching heat to see who could reach the top the quickest: needless to say, Millfield saw off all competition from the other schools, with Cecily Turner running most of the way, with our other pupils hot on her heels!

Upon reflection everyone had a fantastic time in China making the most of every opportunity to culturally explore, learn and build memories which will last a lifetime.



