

The Report from the Ulanhot Team 2013

We are part way through our **Amity and China Orientation Programme in Nanjing**. We have attended **three days of seminars and teaching workshops, cultural visits and Team briefing sessions** and we have begun to get used to the chopsticks and to the high temperatures and humidity of Nanjing.

Amity have made arrangements for many cultural sightseeing visits while we are here as part of our introduction to China. John and Jane visited the **Amity Printing Press** which has now produced more than **one hundred million Bibles** since the factory opened in 1986. The scale of the factory is truly amazing and we were given a great tour of the whole factory and saw the production of the Bible from the very first printing process. Bibles are printed here in ninety different languages in addition to those produced for the China market. We also saw the production of the Braille Bible. Jane joined a group visiting a **Silk Manufacturing Museum** where we were entertained beautifully by musicians playing traditional instruments. Lawrence and Kate went to an **arts and crafts Centre** where they saw **traditional Chinese crafts** in production and had the opportunity to make a Chinese **paper cut** for themselves. They also visited the **Nanjing Memorial Hall** (very reminiscent of a Holocaust Museum) which remembers the Nanjing massacre of 1947 when the Japanese invasion of Nanjing began. These have been important opportunities to begin to learn about China, its history and its culture-even though it is a very tiny snapshot of the very rich culture and traditions of this part of China.

We have enjoyed meeting with our fellow volunteers from the UK, US and some European countries. When you see this brief report we will be travelling to **Ulanhot, Inner Mongolia**, to our teaching site, where we will be teaching English for the next three weeks to a group of **100 Chinese Teachers**. We will take two more internal flights in order to reach our destination in the far north eastern corner of Inner Mongolia. We are fully prepared and we are looking forward to new challenges. So after the preparation-the real work begins!

We have arrived!

Kate teaches the world to sing, Lawrence teaches First Aid and the Chinese Teachers make Christmas cards in July News from the Inner Mongolia Team

The Team-Jane, Kate Lawrence and John, have now completed the first week of teaching in Inner Mongolia. **Lawrence** is a gifted and accomplished natural teacher. This is Lawrence's first ever teaching experience and he is a natural teacher! He seems to prepare lessons effortlessly and conscientiously! Lawrence and Jane have the largest of the classes and his class love his lessons and all of the teachers have a very good relationship with him. He is loving being here. **Kate** is having lots of fun with the classes and this week 'has taught the world to sing!' She hopes to have a choir at the closing ceremony-or perhaps a 'flash mob' to sing some of the songs! There is always fun and laughter in Kate's classes. Kate is really enjoying the whole China experience and the time here may perhaps signal a change of career for Kate. Kate is enthusiastic, funny and very hard working! Kate always has lots of good, funky activities for the Chinese Teachers to do. **John's** warm and outgoing personality means that he relates easily and well with everyone and the Teachers are relaxed and confident. He has brought his knowledge of walking and the Yorkshire countryside to China with him. **Jane** gets to teach the challenging stuff-pronunciation, common grammar problems and

Chinese and western culture topics-but also has time to do interesting activities. Christmas and Easter have come to China and so the teachers are making Christmas cards, filled Easter eggs and next week we will have a mock wedding ceremony with John taking Graham's role and marrying two unsuspecting volunteers!

We are teaching in a brand new school-the size of a College back home-and we have state of the art computer facilities and classrooms. We are living and teaching on site-as are the majority of the Chinese Teachers who are attending the course. We have four wonderful Chinese Assistants who are experienced Teachers from this school and so they can give wonderful support. We have an Office next to our four bedrooms in the dormitory block and another preparation Office between our classrooms a five minute walk away. We are very well fed three times every day and the food just keeps coming! We are all having a great time here-working hard but loving being with our Chinese colleagues and fellow Teachers.

The next bit!

The China Team have now completed two weeks of teaching in Inner Mongolia. We shared a wonderful weekend outing with our Chinese hosts to a reservoir and a site of special beauty in this distant north eastern corner of the region. On Sunday morning we joined at least 600 other local Christians in an early morning worship service. The photograph looks as if we were asked to join the choir-but I can reassure you that we did not! We were very warmly welcomed by the two Ministers who were leading the service that morning. We were also very moved by the gracious manner and blessings of the 87 year old Senior Minister.

The teaching is going exceptionally well, with our 99 Chinese Teachers becoming more confident by the day and clearly enjoying the range of activities and lessons. Easter came to China this week and the Teachers enjoyed making their Easter cards and decorated eggs. The highlight of the week for everyone was our 'mock wedding' with our volunteer bride, husband, best man, father of the bride and bridesmaids. John was our able minister conducting this traditional church wedding. The bridegroom was more nervous than the bride and blushed furiously! Rings were blessed and exchanged, the register was duly signed and witnessed and the whole congregation cheered and clapped. They walked up the aisle to Glee's 'Endless Love' and walked down the aisle to Take That's 'Rule the World'. The wedding cake was spectacular and amazingly we were all able to share the cake in the afternoon. Happy memories for everyone.

John has taken class groups around the extensive school grounds and they have constructed plans of the campus. This is no small feat if you could see the size of the campus here. Kate had some exciting 'shipwreck' lessons where the purpose was to decide which characters should be placed into the life boat from a sinking ship and transferred on to a desert island. Jobs then had to be assigned and rules for living on the island agreed. This scenario led to some very tricky moral issues being discussed with the more able classes of Teachers. Lawrence has been story boarding traditional English stories using the illustrations from children's books with the Teachers writing the scripts. Kate has taken classes around the visitor sites of Yorkshire using the tourist brochures as sources of information. We have all continued with the essential grammar, vocabulary and the niceties of learning English. So a fun and very busy week.

We are home! We have had such a memorable time in Inner Mongolia in particular and China in general. The highlight of the final few days was spending time with our four key translators and supporters and being invited to one of their homes for a final meal before we flew back to Shanghai via Beijing. It was a joy to be able to receive this kind of hospitality and welcome.

When we left our hosts we were given so many gifts and leaving presents. It reminded me of that very old television program Crackerjack where the trick was to hold as many weird objects as you could including cabbages! We had a carpet, banners, dvd's, wall hangings, books, photo albums and so many gifts to bring back as hand luggage on the flights! We had to do some nifty juggling with suitcases and bags in order to get everything home. Our Chinese hosts and friends are so generous and gracious and this is one quality and aspect that the team will remember.

All of our 100 Chinese teachers graduated from the English Program and were awarded their Certificates and English qualifications at the closing ceremony. They now have a short break with their families before their new term begins towards the end of August. We have email contact details for every Teacher and from previous years experience I know that many of them will wish to keep in touch with us.

In Shanghai we were reunited with the other Amity volunteers and shared our experiences. John, Lawrence, Kate and I were then able to spend some time in Shanghai as tourists seeing the major sights and hitting the tourist quarter of old Shanghai, Yu Yuan Gardens and The Bund. A very different experience to the grasslands on Inner Mongolia.

It has been a fabulous experience!

Jane Kate Lawrence and John