Visit from Wang Yongli, Deputy Chief Executive of Confucius Institute Headquarters and Deputy Director General of Hanban

In June 2014, all the staff at our Confucius Institute received the highest profile visit ever from Hanban, the Confucius Institute Headquarters in Beijing. Mr. Wong Yongli praised the CI’s work and thanked all involved for the strong support from the University of Sheffield.

On 11 June, Wang Yongli, Deputy Chief Executive of Confucius Institute Headquarters visited the SCI (Confucius Institute at the University of Sheffield) for the first time, accompanied by regional manager Wang Feng, who is in charge of the CIs in European countries. Professor Sir Keith Burnett, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, gave a warm welcome to the delegates. Professor Sir Burnett said that he appreciates Hanban’s support for the SCI and highly praised its role and its achievements in the University of Sheffield.

At the meeting were representatives from the world of politics, business and academia in Sheffield: Mr. David Baker who is the Special Representative of Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and city councillor of Sheffield; Mrs. Jenny Baker who is vice-chairman of the Liberal Democrats of Sheffield and city councillor of Sheffield; Giles Blackburne who is the Director of CBBC (China-Britain Business Council); Nick Patrick who is the Manager of SYITC (South Yorkshire International Trade Centre); Chris Wright who is the Head of Six-Form at Eckington School which is also our affiliated Confucius Classroom and Jun Pan who is the Education consular at the Consulate-General of the People’s Republic of China in Manchester.

After a tour in the SCI, the delegates listened to a report given by Dr. Lucy Zhao which included the promotion of Chinese language and culture in local academia, politics, business and the community. In the report, Dr. Zhao introduced a project that will build the SCI into a research-led, comprehensive Confucius Institute, focusing on the Confucius Chinese Studies Programme and the research of Chinese teaching for foreigners. Deputy Chief Executive Wang appraised our achievements and approved our future plans.

During the meeting with the Chinese teachers at SCI, he emphasized the positive impacts of the CI on the development of modern China, as well as to the societies around the world. He thanked the teachers for their important roles and historical contribution.

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A word from our Director

During the last 6 months, there have been many events that we would like to share in Newsletter No. 13. These months have been very busy and rewarding for the SCI.

This year started off with a festive celebration of the Chinese New Year in Sheffield's City Hall. Other big celebrations have followed, most notably the 10 Year Anniversary Celebration of the Confucius Institute. This was celebrated with a documentary film of the SCI. Congratulations letters received from Deputy Prime Minister and our VC.

This year in June, we welcomed Hanban delegates for the first time at the SCI. Deputy Chief Executive Wang Yongli and regional manager Wang Feng praised all our hard work.

We organised another big event to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival entitled “Chinese Dragon Comes to the Park” at Weston Park and the Weston Park Museum.

This year, "Doing Business in China" business seminar was launched in May and due to its immediate success was followed by a second business seminar in June. In addition to these two business seminars, two professors from Cambridge were invited to speak at our China seminars on the environment and language research, respectively.

Furthermore, cultural events for students this year included the "China in Photographs Competition", the Chinese New Year Painting Competition for schools and the “Go East! Week”. This semester the HSKK (the Chinese Proficiency Test) was launched, HSK tests were held again and CI scholarships were awarded.

The highlight of the next newsletter will be the first CI Day celebration in commemoration of the 10-year CI anniversary. More news of the events of the aforementioned events can be found in this Newsletter and I hope you will enjoy the read.

Dr. Lucy Zhao
Director, Confucius Institute at the University of Sheffield

Congratulations from Rt. Hon Nick Clegg MP
Deputy Prime Minister

Dear Sheffield Confucius Institute,

I would like to send you my congratulations at a time when the Confucius Institute Mission in the UK is celebrating its 10th year.

As a Sheffield MP I support the work you have done with the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce, the University of Sheffield and others. Introducing Chinese language and culture to the UK and helping to foster business links has been beneficial for cultural and economic growth both in China and the UK.

Best wishes for your work in the future and I’m sure your documentary will prove to be a success.

Kind regards,

Nick Clegg MP

Congratulations from Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Keith Burnett

Dear Confucius Institute Headquarters,

As Vice-Chancellor of The University of Sheffield, I would like to extend the congratulations of our students and staff to Hanban on the tenth anniversary of the global Confucius Institute network.

Over the past decade, Confucius Institutes collectively have made an enormous contribution to the understanding of Chinese language and culture around the world. In addition to classes for young people and working with businesses, the Confucius Institute within our University is a focus for learning more about China, building bridges of understanding between academics and students from over 100 countries as we work together to address the great challenges facing our planet. The University of Sheffield is pleased to be part of this wonderful project and looks forward to contributing further in the years ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Keith Burnett
Vice-Chancellor

SCT’s Documentary for the 10th Anniversary of the CI

Our complete documentary can be viewed online at: http://youtu.be/T2tlubORnP4

To commemorate the first Confucius Institute that was opened on 21 November 2004 in Seoul, South Korea, around 400 Institutes in the world have made documentary films about their CIs.

We were established in 2007 and our documentary showed the importance of our Institute in the local community and our contribution to increasing local awareness of the Chinese language, culture and business. Besides offering courses in Mandarin language, arts, Calligraphy, Kung Fu and Tai Chi, the CI also organises a series of China seminars, Business events and cultural activities to as broad an audience as possible. The documentary presented interviews with Sheffield academia, City Council, political and business supporters of SCI, plus industries and local communities. The commemoration increased the profile and awareness of CI and our missions.
Down to Business! 
“Doing Business in China” Launched Successfully

Advice on how to do business in China, including business etiquette and Chinese characteristics, were the subjects of a new series event entitled “Doing business in China”.

In May, the SCI held its first series of the business seminar. Due to its instant success, the second in the series followed in June.

Working with Sheffield Chamber of Commerce, SYITC (South Yorkshire International Trade Centre), and the China-Britain Business Council (CBBC), the first “Doing Business in China” seminar attracted more than 20 Sheffield entrepreneurs ranging from multinational companies to small startup businesses, in addition to students from the two universities in Sheffield. The second had the theme “Using Chinese Classics in Today’s Business World” and the seminar attracted more than 60 people from business and academia.

Both seminars included keynote speakers from two of our partner organisations and the SCI. Nick Patrick, Manager from SYITC talked about “Route to the market place” and Giles BlackBurne, Director from CBBC, discussed opportunities and challenges in approaching China. In the second seminar, Giles provided an overview of negotiating in doing business in China, including Chinese negotiating tactics – 36 Chinese stratagems that provide an understanding to much of Chinese thinking. Some legal issues regarding agreements familiar to Chinese buyers were given by Michael Hall from Hill Dickinson. Kun Ma from the SCI highlighted modern day Chinese characteristics and behaviour. Kun Ma from the SCI gave a speech on the craftier side of Chinese business culture.

Given the status of China as a nation of increasing global importance, seminars like these are important for improving inter-cultural understanding and to provide key knowledge for those intending to pursue valuable business links and opportunities in China. More focus seminars will take place on a topic by topic basis, dealing with the differences between Chinese culture and British Culture.

Welcome Professor Tian

We would like to welcome Professor Ran Tian who is from our partner university: Beijing Language and Culture University. She received her MA there and majors in Chinese Language Teaching as a Second Language, especially Discourse Grammar in Chinese Teaching. She has published two books and over twenty papers about this field and was awarded many prizes for her teaching expertise. Furthermore, she has also been sent by Hanban to many countries to lecture on Chinese teaching. As a Deputy Director at the SCI, Professor Tian will be contributing to the Chinese teaching programmes at the SCI.

Journey into China - China in Photographs from a Personal Perspective

Gemma Thorpe, a photographer and filmmaker based in Sheffield, presented her journey in China as a student, a tourist, a photographer and an adventurer.

Invited as a special guest for the China in Photographs Competition prize-giving ceremony, Gemma not only displayed her photographs, but also revealed her love affair with China, which began in 2007 when she went to study an MA in International Photojournalism and Documentary Photography in Dalian. She lived in Beijing during 2008 and 2009 and then in Chengdu in 2012.

To better understand the country, she believes that you need to make friends, to go out and get into ordinary people’s daily lives. She joined in a photographing project for the Olympic stadium construction while living with a Chinese family. She studied Mandarin Chinese for a language program sponsored by the Great Britain China Centre. Things turned “real and personal” when she took a self-arranged trip into Gobi desert. This trip revisited journey taken in the late 1920s by the first female English commissioner. The commissioner was accompanied, on camels, by two French companions, into the northwest of China. Gemma retraced their steps and tried to take photographs of the same scenery as seen in the book. She talked to the local villagers, trying to find decedents of local people depicted in the book. Her photo-journal taken along the way gives an insight into the local people’s life which proved to be very inspirational and moving.

Gemma is now working with the Sheffield city archives to document the city’s Chinese community.
China in Photographs Competition 2014

The annual event looks at pictures taken in China and is open to all. Over 360 photo images from 69 participants, the most competitors to take part since the competition began.

70% of participants were non-Chinese, among whom were just people who have been to China on a business trip, a holiday, a visit or for a study. Each photo, along with a description, tells a story, taking people into different aspects of China.

All images were sent in as electronic jpg files. The competition was fierce and judged by a panel consisting of the University Photographic Society, Gemma Thorpe, a professional photographer, and the staff at the SCI office. All of the stunning photographs, together with descriptions, were on display at the second business prior to the prize-giving ceremony celebrating the winners.
Galloping into a New Year – Welcome the Year of the Horse

120 horse paintings were received from schools across Yorkshire & Humber, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, marking a stampede into the New Year!

Hundreds if not thousands of pupils at each school started to create their pictures of horse(s) inspired by Chinese New Year even before the Christmas holiday. Initially, a preliminary display and judging took place at schools. Subsequently, each school was invited to submit the pupils’ artwork for a competition taking place at the SCI. A Maximum 3 artworks per Key Stages (including Six-Form) were sent into us.

All paintings received by the CI had been carefully judged by our Arts teachers and our Language teachers. 36 winners and 56 runner-ups were selected. The Painting Exhibition and the Prize-giving Ceremony for the winners of each school took place at Sheffield City Hall as part of the Chinese New Year Show. Winners from 23 schools took part in the Ceremony and each individual school received a prize as well.

From November 2014 onwards, we will be open for entries for 2015: The Year of the Sheep!
HSKK Launched and CI Scholarship Awarded

Confucius Institute Scholarship has raised the entry bar with new requirements of HSKK result in 2014. With HSKK test results at the SCI, eight awarded winners overjoyed to be able to study in China!

Taking the HSK Level 3 and HSKK Basic were a requirement for the Confucius Institute Scholarship which Guy Wing was applying for. His application was successful and now he is enjoying a semester of studying Chinese language at Nanjing University.

Although Guy Wing took History and Politics at the University of Sheffield, it was the Sheffield Confucius Institute where he began his Chinese language study. Now as our SCI alumni student, Guy Wing gave us an insight into what the scholarship details:

"My course at Nanjing University is very well structured with 4 hours of classes each morning. These include newspaper reading and creative writing, ensuring relevance and variety. The University lives up to its fine reputation as the teaching is excellent and the campus very attractive."

He expressed his thanks to the SCI: "From learning my very first characters to processing my scholarship application, the staff at the Sheffield Confucius Institute have been helpful and encouraging."

Endorsed by Hanban, HSK / HSKK (HSK speaking test) is an international standardised Chinese language test to measure the ability of non-native Chinese speakers to communicate in Chinese in daily lives, academic and working settings.

Jane Street was among the first test takers for HSKK at the SCI. She gave us the reason why she needed to take the tests. She said:

"I’ve been studying Chinese for the last six years at the Confucius institute and through self-study. I love learning and using what I learn to communicate with friends. But overtime I’ve come to realise that I need to have goals to help me to progress and to motivate me to keep going! That’s why this year I decided to take the HSK level 3 and HSKK Intermediate tests.”

Through the preparations for the tests, Jane not only brushed up her Chinese but also brought her level up to a certain standard. Her thoughts about the reviewing process and enjoyment:

“Learning the required vocabulary for the HSK test really boosted my character recognition. And practicing for the listening section of the test really helped me to focus on improving my listening skills. I particularly enjoyed the new HSKK speaking test because the way the test is designed gives you a lot of freedom to express yourself. You had to describe what was happening in some pictures and then also answer some questions. You had to give opinions and reasons.

explain your ideas and be creative! Preparing for the test helped me to gain skills in order to communicate in a natural but accurate way. I would definitely recommend taking these tests to all of you Chinese learners out there! “.

Tested and Awarded at the SCI

SCI is one of the oldest Chinese Proficiency Test centres, offering HSK/HSKK (HSK Speaking) and YCT tests twice a year; namely in spring (April-May) and in winter (November-December).

HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) and HSKK are open to all ages, while YCT (Youth Chinese Test) aims at primary and secondary school students.

Two independent parts: written test and oral test can be taken separately.

Next test dates: YCT (written and oral): 15 November 2014

Registration online: www.chinesetest.cn/getkdinfo.do?id=147

or http://onlineshop.shef.ac.uk/browse/productasp?ompid=1&modid=1&catid=94

Syllabus and Test Papers download: chinesetest.cn/godownload.do

Online Practice: chinesetest.cn/gosimexam.do

Confucius Institute Scholarships:

Now requires both HSK and HSKK results, the scholarships begin around Easter time, once in a year.

Seminars Focused on China

In March and May, the Confucius Institute hosted two open China seminars during which two professors from Cambridge University provided fascinating information on the environment and also on the subject of language studies.

Professor Roel Sterckx (above) talked about the environmental history and the use and abuse of ancient Chinese philosophy. ‘When the ruler wants a fish, his ministers dry up a valley’. He questioned some of the assumptions behind the harmony between humans and their natural environment in China’s history.

Professor Boping Yuan (left) reported on an empirical study investigating Chinese speakers’ second language acquisition of English wh-on-earth questions (i.e. questions with phrases like what on earth or who on earth). His talk ‘What on earth’ interested Chinese speakers’ and their English grammar studies.
Chinese Dragon Comes to the Park

To celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival, a series of Chinese themed events around the Chinese Dragon were held at Weston Park and Weston Park Museum for two days.

Originally the festival was to commemorate Qu Yuan, a patriotic minister and poet in ancient China. The Chinese Dragon Boat Festival falls on 5th May in the Chinese Lunar Calendar, and is celebrated typically with making Zongzi (boiled glutinous rice dumpling) and holding dragon boat races.

Working with Weston Park Museum and Sheffield City Council, SCI staged the two days’ activities which ranged from indoor workshops to outdoors a life size dragon held aloft on 10 poles.

The most popular activity was the arts & crafts, making everything related to a Chinese dragon: hand-held playing dragon, wiggling and flying dragons, dragon boats, dragon lanterns and dragon face masks. To complete all of these handicrafts would take a good few hours! People started to admire their “nice” and “powerful” Chinese dragons, hoping the dragon would indeed bring fortune and good wishes to all.

Another equally popular event was making Zongzi. Fascinated by wrapping leaves, each time-based session was full with eager attempts. After listening to the origins of Dragon Boat Festival, participants followed step by step to attempt their first self-made Zongzi. Interestingly, their attempts, a few rescued by our staff to ensure there is no leaking, would be boiled for the next group of people to taste. Some Zongzi have been taken away by participants to boil at home as they requested.

Other indoor activities included learning Chinese language, experiencing Chinese calligraphy, trying out Tai Chi and kicking for Wudang Kung Fu. One participant exclaimed: “How fascinating they are! They are all new to me. It is my best visit to a Museum.”

The Dragon Dance took place outdoors at Weston Park. 20 meters long Golden dragon for grow-ups and colourful Green dragon for children! When the drums sounded, two of the dragons marched rhythmically across the grass fields, attracting cheering crowds.

Two more dragons painted on a cloth were hung up high at the entrance of the park caught people’s eyes immediately. Their bodies were to be decorated with individual dragon scales. Before adding a scale of their own, people had to play two games: matching logographic Chinese characters with their English meanings and finding out how many animals’ parts there are in the mythical Chinese dragon. These games gave people a taste of Chinese language and also inspired their imagination. Chinese writings and pictures appeared on the individual dragon scales and stuck onto the dragon’s body!

Some children preferred to join in with open activities on the grass: ball games, skipping ropes, badminton playing and a “dragon boat race” by holding a paper boat around their waists! For each activity they played, they got a stamp. More stamps accumulated meant more Chinese gifts received. June Burke, the Community Events Coordinator at Sheffield City Council said: “This is a wonderful spectacle to have in the Park. All these activities are very colourful and great fun.”

‘Go East Week 2014’
SCI Joins in EASSoc

Chance to find out more about Asia, outside the lecturer theatre.

In March, in collaboration with the Confucius Institute, EASSoc (the East Asian Studies Society) organised ‘Go East Week 2014’. During this week, students enjoyed some fun activities undertaken outside their lecturer timetable and lecture rooms.
New Opportunities: Introduce Mandarin at School for Free

To respond to the Department for Education’s decision to make a foreign language compulsory for pupils aged 7-11 from September 2014, we would like to help schools introduce Mandarin for free.

The Department for Education has made a foreign language a statutory subject at Key Stage 2 and to follow that schools are encouraged to choose one of seven languages - French, Spanish, German, Italian, Mandarin, Latin and ancient Greek, we think Mandarin is a "must have" at schools.

Mandarin, rated by the UK business the most useful foreign language for employees to speak after French and German, is increasingly becoming a world language. Education Minister Elizabeth Truss said:

"Mandarin is the language of the future – it is spoken by hundreds of millions of people in the world’s most populous country and shortly the world’s biggest economy."

To equip our school leavers and graduates with a language asset, every primary school child should have a good grasp of a language by age 11, while all secondary school pupils should have the opportunity to learn a language like Mandarin.

Built upon our existing programmes, "Confucius Classrooms", "Chinese for Fun" and "China Days", we would like to assist schools by offering Mandarin either as a curricular or extra-curricular subject. The first of such course will be free of charge for the individual schools. We have a pool of native speakers, experienced in the teaching in the UK, and have worked alongside with the mainstream schools since our establishment in January 2007. We can supply Mandarin teachers and cultural workshop instructors, prepare the teaching and learning materials, and help develop Mandarin language programmes at schools with the right authentic reading materials.

Our Supports for Schools

Mandarin Language Subject at Schools
Getting support from us and from Hanban to set up Mandarin language aimed for students up to GCSE Chinese level.

“Chinese for Fun” Extra-curricular Mandarin Clubs
Lunch time club or after school club for Mandarin Chinese is a fun, but informative, way of introducing Chinese language and culture to school pupils of all ages.

“China Day” Activities
Probably the best way to increase access to Chinese language and culture through an enhanced extra-curricular provision.
Activities offered: Chinese language; Chinese calligraphy; Chinese paper-cutting; Chinese paper folding; Chinese crafts. e.g. lantern making; Kung Fu; Tai Chi; Chinese folk dance and Chinese cooking.

Enquiries to:
Dr. Hu, Confucius Institute at the University of Sheffield
5 Shearwood Road  •  Sheffield  S10 2TD  •  United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 114 222 8447  •  Fax: +44 (0) 114 222 8334
Email: confucius@sheffield.ac.uk