Week in China

500

ISSUES: IN PHOTOS

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Picture this...

It is a cliché to say a picture is worth a thousand words, but at the same time, there is some truth in that old nugget.

On average we’ve run about 15 photos in each issue of Week in China, so over 500 issues we’ve featured around 7,500 of them. To mark the milestone of reaching our 500th edition (a few weeks ago) we pored through the images for those we regard as some of the most striking.

It wasn’t an easy undertaking to select 60 photos from such a huge number. People who have read Week in China from the outset will recall some of the more memorable early ones, such as the man with a washing machine strapped to his back, crossing a bridge, cigarette between his lips despite his exertions. We captioned it at the time ‘Home delivery with Chinese characteristics’ – it accompanied a story about ‘appliances for the countryside’, a subsidy scheme designed to improve rural standards of living and stimulate demand for white goods in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis.

The photos featured here range from the dramatic to the quirky but they show China’s many faces – from its incredible feats of infrastructure (such as the Beipanjiang Bridge) to early efforts in robotics (farmer Wu’s homemade contraptions) to China’s logistics revolution (at least eight million food delivery drivers on the roads today). And perhaps you remember the hotel that was built in six days in 2010?

From astronauts to Shaolin monks to Mickey Mouse and pandas... all are featured here. Hopefully the photos will stir some memories and give some food for thought on how much China has changed in the past decade or so.

Steven Irvine
Editor
Early efforts in robotics: Beijing farmer and inventor Wu Yulu shows off his homemade robot in 2009
A 2009 white goods campaign in rural China to stimulate sales via subsidies

Flying squad: paramilitary policemen train in Yinchuan

Traditional Chinese Medicine has grown in popularity over the past decade
In perfect unison: China showcases its military during the 2009 National Day Parade
CCTV complex: television HQ known in Beijing as ‘the Underpants’

President Barack Obama visits the Great Wall during his first term in office

A smoker ignores the signs: in 2009 Chinese puffed 1.7 trillion cigarettes annually
Tiger Woods and Lee Westwood prepare for the HSBC Champions golf event in Shanghai in 2010 – at the time there were estimated to be one million golfers in China.
Former President Hu Jintao welcomes French leader Nicolas Sarkozy in 2010

The Chateau Laffitte Hotel near Beijing – it cost $50 million to build

The 1,341-metre Beipanjiang Bridge between Yunnan and Guizhou

Four of China’s 8 million food delivery drivers: they work for Alibaba’s Ele.me
Looking for love, and a man with a very big car: around 9.5 million Chinese couples tied the knot in 2019 but 1.3 million also divorced
Dashan, aka Mark Rowswell, at the $45 billion Shanghai Expo in 2010

Where’s my cut: Liu Zijun, ex-Railway Minister, was jailed for corruption

The Ark Hotel: the world marvelled at online footage showing its construction in just six days in 2010
The then six-year-old Jiang quadruplets from Shenzhen in 2012: their parents shaved numbers on their heads so their teachers could identify them.
Wuhan-born tennis ace Li Na won the French Open in 2011

Former Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao eats noodles at a UK car plant in 2011

Over the past decade China has built 30,000km of high-speed train track

All the right moves: Jeremy Lin became an NBA sensation in China in 2012
By 2019 China had raced ahead in facial recognition technology, with Megvii and SenseTime becoming two of the leading firms in the field.
Liu Xiang, China’s most famous athlete, before the London Olympics in 2012

When the Luo family refused to move out in 2012, this was the result

Much of Hong Kong’s drinking water comes from Wanlü Lake in Guangdong

A businessman from Lushan paid $16,000 to bathe like “an emperor” in 2013
Henan-based WH Group is the largest pork company in the world – its boss Wan Long was hailed in 2013 by China National Radio as the “Steve Jobs of Chinese butchery”
Tencent founder Pony Ma Huateng: his WeChat app has 1.2 billion users

A rare 1970 bottle of Kweichow Moutai auctioned in 2019 in Hong Kong

The other Ma: Alibaba founder Jack Ma sings at a Taobao event in 2013

The happiest place in China? A smiley face formed by 3,800 students in Jilin
In percentage terms China’s use of coal peaked in 2013 when it constituted 67.4% of electricity produced versus 57.7% in 2019.
Star rivalry: China’s most famous actresses Fan Bingbing and Zhang Ziyi

British Airways made its debut flight to Sichuan’s capital Chengdu in 2013

Asian football champ: Guangzhou Evergrande’s coach Marcello Lippi

First ladies Michelle Obama and Peng Liyuan at the Forbidden City in 2014
Air-mageddon: shocking air pollution in northeastern China in 2013

PHOTO: REUTERS
In 2009 the Chinese drank 1.1 billion litres of wine; in 2019 it was 1.8 billion litres

We’re back: Chinese astronauts return to earth in 2013

Huawei’s early push into smartphones; it was global leader by sales in April 2020

Spot the ball... Shaolin monks show David Beckham how it’s done
Nobody does it better: President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan are entertained at Buckingham Palace in 2015 by Queen Elizabeth II
Pay by phone: notes and coins are no longer needed in Chinese markets and shops

Disney opened its Shanghai theme park in the summer of 2016

Liu Tao and Hu Ge starred in the hit TV drama Langya Bang

Exposed to the elements: a motorcyclist braves snowy roads in 2016
A robot monk debuts at Longquan’s Buddhist temple – meanwhile Shunde-based Midea paid $5 billion for German robot leader Kuka in 2017 (see photo on page 27)
Jia Jia, the oldest panda in captivity, was put to sleep aged 38 in 2016

President Donald Trump in the obligatory tourist pose during 2017 visit

Zhang Dayi: one of the country’s top livestreaming e-commerce stars
Room for one more? A swimming pool in Sichuan – the downside of a fast-growing domestic tourism sector is massive overcrowding of sites.
Tesla opened its new Shanghai electric car factory at the start of this year.

Made in Germany, owned by China: Kuka’s robot pours a pint of beer.

Drowning in rubbish: the flipside of China’s consumer boom.

Xi Jinping: football loving leader visited part-China-owned Manchester City.
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