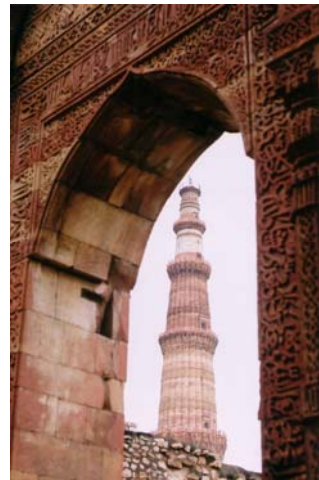




## THE EIGHT CITIES OF DELHI

1<sup>st</sup> August to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2010



After many requests we have decided to offer a trip to Delhi which coincides with the UK school summer holidays and although it may seem a strange time to visit Delhi (the British after all left their capital for the hills at this time of year) it can be an enchanting time to see Delhi. It is warm certainly, but after the monsoon breaks the days are clear as the rains wash the smog out of the atmosphere. There are few tourists around and one can experience the true magic of this vast sprawling and wonderful city.

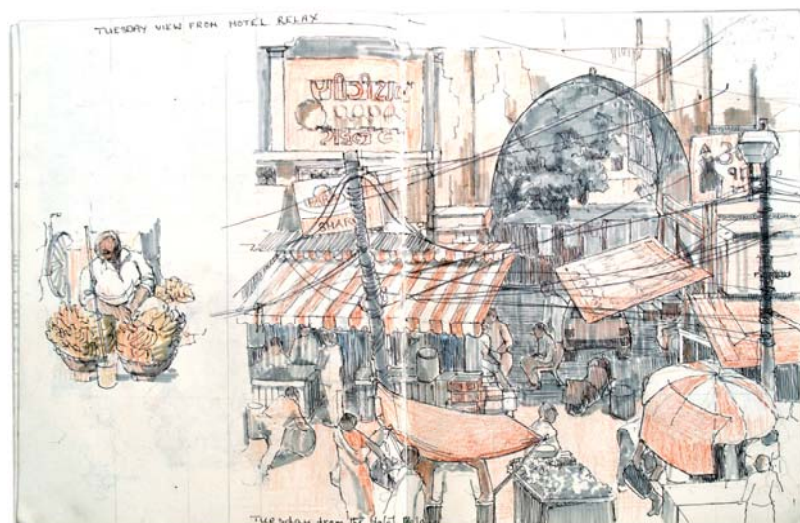
In many ways this brochure is going to seem one of the most frustrating (or original) you will ever have come across! Our trips are planned in such a way that each group can discuss and formulate each day to suit themselves. This way everyone gets to see and do what they want and you are not subjected to your guide being stale! Please, therefore do not take the following 'itinerary' as writ in stone and instead treat it as a rough plan on which to build.

On first impressions Delhi is a disorientating mass of tower blocks, mosques, forts, temples, tightly packed streets and colonial mansions. Making sense of it to begin with is difficult and it might help to think of it as the accumulation of seven different cities. Our first evening will in all likelihood be spent sitting in a rooftop restaurant watching the sunset and planning the coming days. This will not be easy as there is a vast amount to do and see.

We will have the use of an air conditioned vehicle so will be able to explore right to the outskirts of this vast city.

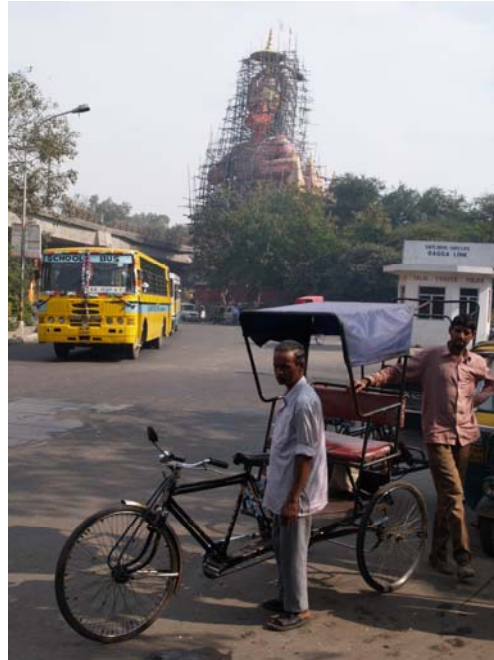
**Day 01** *Pick up from Delhi airport and transfer to Hotel.*

Our Hotel is a comfortable family owned establishment that sits to the side of a bustling fruit and vegetable market on the boundary between Old and New Delhi. The rooms open off a comfortable communal lounge area that leads to a balcony overlooking the market place. An ideal spot for early morning tea or to relax in the cool of the evening.



**The view from the Hotel balcony by Ann Wilkinson who accompanied us during October 2008 North India trip**

**Day 02** Close (ish!) to the hotel is Lakshmi Naryan Mandir it is a bizarre mix of holy place and play park. Not far off is the nearly completed Hanuman Temple, surely one of the most weirdly extraordinary buildings in the world!



Combining the two makes an easy introduction to the glories of Delhi.

**Day 03** New Delhi (British Delhi) is centred on Connaught Place a glorious circular walkway covered against the glaring heat of the early summer and the monsoon rains of the late. Exploring New Delhi is a fascinating cross-cultural experience as you constantly switch from India to an Edwardian/ Elgarian Britain! It allows a good close examination of the work of Edwin Lutyens who in the UK is chiefly remembered for the elegantly simple design of the cenotaph in Whitehall but whose legacy is New Delhi.



**Day 04** If New Delhi is British then Old Delhi is undeniably Indian! The Red Fort is central to contemporary India for it was from the ramparts that Indian independence was declared and from where the president gives his annual state of the nation speech on Independence Day. Behind the ramparts lies a magnificent series of palaces which sadly, but thanks mostly to the British in past ages.... now requires a sustained imagination to see as they must have once been.... an anonymous visitor in the 17<sup>th</sup> century wrote

*'If there be paradise on the face of earth  
Oh it be this, it be this, it be this'*

Close by is the Jama Masjid, India's largest mosque, and surrounding it are the teeming streets and markets of Old Delhi. The best 'shopping' of the trip!



**Day 05.** A visit to the Lodi gardens where the monuments are dated to within a hundred years of the battle of Bannockburn! It is an attractive spot.

**Day 06.** Humayun's Tomb is one of the wonders of Mughal architecture and sits in increasingly well-restored gardens. .

**Day 07** Humayun's Tomb is often seen as a precursor to the Taj Mahal in Agra, which lies 200km south of Delhi making it just in reach of a day trip. We will leave Delhi in the early hours of the morning (6am or earlier!) to avoid the early morning traffic and drive to Agra stopping at a roadside café en route for breakfast. The road south to Agra is a good two-lane motorway full of exciting and unusual traffic with it not being unusual for elephants and camel trains to join the mass of colourful Tata trucks. The roadside stops are populated with hawkers with performing monkeys (my sensibilities recoil and yet I find myself glad to have seen them!) Up until very recently there were also several dancing bears but these (fortunately) have been made redundant by no less than the Government of India. We will visit the incomparable Taj and have lunch before returning to Delhi.

**Day 08** After the rigours of a day travelling a quiet day will be called for and I suggest a wander round the National Gallery of Modern Art and then after lunch have a look at the very impressive Crafts Museum which not only holds a fine collection but also hosts a crafts village where one can watch artifacts being made and chat to the craftsmen. Across the road is the Purana Qila, this was where Indraprastha, the first of Delhi's cities was situated nearly 3000 years ago.

**Day 09** Safdarjang's Tomb was built in 1753 by the Nawab of Avadh for his father. It is one of the final examples of Mughal architecture to have been completed before the empire collapsed.



Delhi street traders from one of my sketch books

**Day 10** 15 kilometres from Connaught Place is the Qutb Minar Complex. The Qutb Minar itself is a soaring minaret, which was started in 1193 and completed in 1368. At the foot of this startling tower stands the first mosque to be built in India. In the centre of the mosque's courtyard stands a seven foot high pillar of iron. A six line Sanskrit inscription seems to indicate that it was originally erected as part of a temple to Lord Vishnu and was raised in memory of Chandragupta the second who ruled between AD375 and 413. What is startling is that this iron pillar has never rusted despite being subjected to the elements for over 2000 years. When I first visited it was possible to touch the pillar and even see if you could place your back against it and see if you could encircle it with your arms ... a feat which, it was said would enable your wishes to be granted. Sadly it is now protected by an iron fence ... which is rusting!  
Tughlaqabad, the third city of Delhi lies close and is well worth a visit.

**Day 11** Another trip to outlying parts. The Lotus Temple, completed in 1986, is a Bahai Temple set among fine gardens. All are free to enter and pray or meditate silently according to their own religion. I find it a strange place for while many of the places we will visit are undoubtedly "thin" places where the spiritual meets the temporal, this, to me, misses. However it is a spectacular building and looks even more wonderful at dusk or at night when it is floodlit.

**Day 12** Delhi's second city - Siri - was situated where one of Delhi's more chic suburbs now sits. Haus Khas is the home to art galleries and boutiques and is

well worth exploring. Also near by is the Moth–ki–Masjid said to be the finest mosque in the Lodi style.

**Day 13** A day for last minute shopping and present buying!

**Day 14** Transfer to airport for flight home.

**PRICE £1375 (excluding air fairs)**

Rob Fairley has been a professional artist ever since leaving Edinburgh College of Art and has exhibited all over the world. He has written two books on the history of watercolour painting and also the critically well received “Drawing Hands and Feet” an idiosyncratic look at anatomical drawing. Since 1987 he has been leading expeditions to India and Nepal, which have varied, from mountaineering trips on 8000m peaks to expeditions in Delhi, Mumbai and Kathmandu for primary school children. He is credited with being the founder of Room 13, though he would probably argue otherwise! His own work varies from detailed studies in egg tempera to large oil paintings and watercolours. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and has an abiding fascination with Indian History and tradition. This holiday is probably most suitable for intermediate students and experienced artists who feel they will benefit from a supportive small group environment and from working alongside Rob. Individual guidance will be provided when appropriate. You may choose to work (or not!) on your own or with the group and in any medium.

