

Tuesday 17 January 2012 – At Sea 9° cloudy

Rick forced me to play a Bridge game – panic, panic, but I made the contract - 5 Diamonds. Then it's all about Pirates as between 19 January and 2nd February we will be sailing between the Red Sea and Colombo. The Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean are areas well known for piracy. The armed guards that joined offshore near Malta are on-board in case of attack! We had a passenger pirate drill this morning when we had to return to our cabins and as we have a balcony we had to sit in the corridor. This gave us a chance to meet our neighbours. Jackie is a Ghost Writer and is accompanying the chap next door to help him write his biography. She says she gets most of her work through word of mouth and cruising is a good way to meet interesting people. Whilst sailing through the area prone to piracy the promenade is going to be closed from dusk to dawn. During the hours of darkness only essential deck lights will be on and we have to turn off cabin lights when not required and keep our curtains closed. Had our daily dose of the cinema and today it was *Amistad* a Stephen Spielberg film. I couldn't do the gym as the thighs are still causing me grief. Tonight was the best ever, we had front row seats for Clem Curtis from the Foundations. He's 71 and has had five wives and he is still performing as he has to support all those ex wives. He says black people have to pay alldmoney. Everyone was up singing, he has such a smooth melodic voice, I just loved it. Needless to say Rick slept through most of it.

Piraeus to Port Said 589 nm

Wednesday 18 January 2012 – Port Said 16° – sunny

Port Said is the gateway to the pyramids and that is where most of the passengers are heading for on a 2.5 hour coach journey each way with armed guards either end of the convoy. All tours to Cairo Museum have been cancelled because of the political unrest. We've decided to stay in Port Said as we have already had an in-depth view of all the major sites with Mike and Thyra about eight years ago. We had our daily dose of cinema watching "The Help" at 9.30 after breakfast! Port Said was founded in 1859 and was intended to be a working camp to house men working on canal. It's not the most inspiring place to be, mostly high rise apartment blocks but it does have a Military Museum, a Mosque and some reasonable shopping. We could have gone to an hotel as the beaches here are not very good. Instead we just took a short walk around the town whilst being continually hassled.

Egypt has so much history, 5000 years ago whilst we were still stone age hunters living in caves they were brewing beer, baking bread, making pots, casting copper and drilling beads. Our conclusion from our last visit to Egypt is that the majority of Egyptians haven't really progressed much since then. Giza was built 2680 - 2180 BC during the Golden Age of Egypt. Here are a few interesting facts about the pyramids:

The great pyramids north-south axis is aligned to within 0.05 of a degree of true north-south, more accurate than Greenwich Meridian.

In 2500 BC the Kings Chamber southern shaft aligned straight at the brightest star in Orion's Belt.

The ground layout of the pyramid is a perfect image of Orion's Belt as in 2500BC

The Sphinx gaze is set due east and equates the exact position of sunrise at dawn at that time.

It was warm enough to shed a jumper and sit outside for a while. A couple we sat with at lunch have been on 72 cruises, like us they really prefer smaller ships. It's casual tonight and we are having an Indian Buffet. Rick's had poppadoms every day so far, he's in good shape though as he's been visiting the gym. Most of the staff are Indian and our waiter is looking for an excuse not to get off in Mumbai as he has a bossy fiancée waiting for him – not his choice, it's to be an arranged marriage.

