

Thursday 16 February 2012 – Hong Kong - 16° mist

Last night we collided in the gangway of our room and I was sure that I would wake up to a black eye but the damage is not as bad as I feared or felt it should be as I am sporting cuts on my nose and under one eye. We awoke to being surrounded by sky scrapers enveloped in mist, not sure if they are still called that, and they stayed that way for the rest of the day. The harbour terminal building was absolutely enormous with shopping mall after shopping mall. I spied a plug for my laptop and we sat there for hours downloading my emails and trying unsuccessfully to download some more photos that Jen had sent. Our last visit to Hong Kong was in 2005 and we can't believe how much has changed since then, everywhere was buzzing. The main change is the people appeared much more affluent and bigger and there were designer shops everywhere. Every street there were more and more of them and I have never seen so many expensive jewellery shops. I wondered if there were enough people in the world rich enough to buy all that jewellery. Sharon assures me there are as the Chinese government have stopped people on the mainland buying second homes. They now come to Hong Kong at the weekends with suitcases full of money and these shops are packed. A casino has been built similar to the Las Vegas Venetian and it takes more in a week than the Las Vegas one takes in a year. After a visit to the Space Museum we spent the afternoon window shopping. Another change since our last visit is that prices have gone up and I am not so sure you can get a bargain now. I would have like to buy a cashmere jumper but there was nothing around like that, everything seemed to be aimed at the young, fashion conscious Chinese. We found an excellent wifi connection in the park and after looking at Jen's wedding pictures again I had an urge to hear her voice using the mobile phone skype. Of course it was only 7.30 am in London and she wouldn't wake up.



I mentioned Sharon just now, well she and Martin live in Hong Kong and whenever we are there we look them up. It was a shame but Martin was in China on business but Sharon arranged to meet us outside M & S in Central. We've been out with Sharon on many an occasion and it nearly always ends up the same so we went well prepared with a copy of our passport should we miss the boat, credit cards to buy for the air ticket we would have to purchase and emergency money should we get separated. It was great to catch up on all our news and we were relieved to hear that Martin has recovered well from his serious illness and was even managing to down the pints again. This was related as we drank several cocktails and went onto a Thai restaurant with loads of wine. We should have stopped there but Sharon insisted we visit another bar. Everywhere was heaving with young people and she said it stays like that until 5am when they then all go off to work. It was getting a bit late by now and we had to be back at the ship by 12.30 am. Sharon's taxi dropped us off at the Star Ferry but we had missed the last one which went at 11.30pm. We had spent all our Hong Kong dollars even our emergency fund and Rick was desperate for a pee. I was asking a Chinese man about the ferries but he was shouting madly at Rick who was busy

peeing in the sea.. Somehow we got into a taxi with some other men who paid the fare for us. We had to run all the way back to the ship and managed it with 10 minutes to spare. A night out with Sharon is still much the same!

