

Thursday 2 February 2012 – Sri Lanka 33° Sunny with Haze at times

We were late arriving because the tide was against us making the sea a bit rocky. It's the first time P & O have been to Sri Lanka as tourism didn't really take off until the end of the war in 2009. They seem to be recovering well as there is lots of industry and internet everywhere except at the port. I'm trying to think where it reminds me of, but we like it. It's a bit like the Caribbean and maybe Mauritius, lots of rice and fruit trees, loads of little shops, some slums, okay homes and many new buildings taking place. The traffic was terrible and we just about made it to Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage to watch the elephants bathe in the river. The orphanage was established in 1975, most are healthy, one is blind and one has lost her front leg due to a land mine. Rick was in his element feeding the elephants bananas and watching the babies being bottle fed. I felt a bit uncomfortable taking photos of the blind and one legged one same as I don't like taking photos of the slums, it just doesn't feel right. We had lunch in an hotel overlooking the river and then on the way back to where the elephants are kept we stopped for a photo opportunity at the snake charmers. I don't like them, they look evil. Nobody wanted anything to do with me as somehow I managed to tread on an elephant poo, it looks all dried but treading on it released all the liquid! It was a long, hot, sticky journey back. We were told there was internet in the Port Terminal Building, however it was all shut up. Adjacent to it was a circular, two story building with a man brandishing a broom chasing an enormous rat the size of a squirrel. He beat it to death, we said well done and where was the internet. He pointed to the building and said to go up the stairs. There was nothing but bird poo everywhere and when we got upstairs there was just a Buddha statue and loads more poo, he then demanded money. We heard about the tragedy in Port Said, I have to say that Egypt is not my favourite place. A Nile Cruise is great as the temples and tombs are fabulous but the country is dirty and the Arabs well In fact you can't beat Europe but you need to see the rest of the world to make sure you are right. We haven't seen Hilly and Stu since Mumbai because of Rick's cold and we had a bit of catching up to do. They are foodies and spent the day at The Hilton in Colombo eating and drinking. You won't believe this but they think we are very restrained and Hilly gave me their room number should I fancy a real good drink. I am disappointed that Kate Adie didn't want her first talk recorded as it could be taken out of context and put on YouTube. We have to make sure we see tomorrow's talk. Tonight we have been entertained by The McDonald Brothers who were on the 2006 X Factor. I love the hot, steamy weather and as Pirate precautions finished tonight Rick is enjoying his first cigar on the balcony looking at the stars, I know I am going to be crap at Bridge tomorrow as I have told too many people that I have improved.



Friday 3 February 2012 – Bay of Bengal 29° Sunny

It was choppy in the night and the boat continued rocking throughout the day and evening. We started off quite well by dosing ourselves up with homoeopath sea sickness pills but they didn't

work. Somehow we managed Bridge, a spell in the sun and the Kate Aide lecture on women's roles in the war. It's such a shame we missed her first talk as despite being one of Rick's heroines he still slept through most of it. Then it was flat out on the bed occasionally trying to read - felt funny, play cards - felt more funny, look at the excursions brochure - felt dizzy again and then slept – best cure. Couldn't make the restaurant, tried all the above again with same results so just slept and slept. Maybe the homoeopathic pills were really sleeping pills.

Here's a couple more cruising jokes:

When the Captain was asked if he knew where he was going, he replied “Off Course”

So the Captain will soon be in the dock, that's more than be said for his ship

Saturday 4 February 2012 – Bay of Bengal 29° Cloudy + 30 mins now + 7 hours GMT

Health update – Rick's cold almost gone and our sea sickness is much better but the ship is still rocking – not with partying but swell. Bought some proper pills from Reception, wish we knew about these yesterday. Had a go at meditating which was funny as Rick couldn't keep awake long enough to get the instructions. Kevin's growing on us and Jeff has improved a lot but they are not fun like Julia and Brian. We've only got one more session of bridge with them as they both get off in Singapore. I haven't been homesick yet which is unusual but on reflection we are now both thinking that a month away at a time is probably enough. We're in the right place as we hear it's really cold at home and we have 30° in Phuket to look forward to tomorrow, then it's onto Singapore, Cambodia and back to Thailand. We should be out of this choppy bay by tomorrow. We are warming a bit to P & O, stern of deck 9, that's the smokers deck is our favourite now as they have live music. We are still disappointed with the food which makes up for a large part of a cruise, it's very average

. Rick is showing interest in his painting again and spent this afternoon planning his picture. The new sea sickness tablets have got to me and I am having difficulty keeping awake. We have a new gym instructor, an Eastern European girl who made me get into positions I never thought possible. I did a double class to make up for yesterday so am looking forward to one of the Thai beach massages I have heard so much about.

For those of you who want to check out the photographers pictures of Jen's wedding here is the link to the website. chrisgilesphotography.zenfolio.com/wedding-galleries Password is “Bailiffscourt”

The password is case sensitive. Please let me know if you have any access problems. Jen has all the photos on disk and we have about 700 further pictures to come from Tim. Hopefully Tim's pictures will show a lot more of the guests. All these and others will be available for download after we get back in mid March.