



Terry's Travels

TT28-1 Biggest Trip Yet! October 18th 2008

Back in the UK was a very busy time of meeting family and friends, catching up with chores, service work on Mercie and dodging the plentiful rain. The weather came very good later with a wonderful weekend in Pickering North Yorkshire for a motorhome show (this time the wallet opened a little) and a great day at the East coast resort of Scarborough for some exciting m/c racing. Then plenty of stress with the financial crisis.....

It is great to have started a major trip which will take us back to New Zealand for 5 months. Via Heathrow we flew to Dubai on Virgin and the excellent Millennium Airport Hotel to take it easy with up to 36C heat, they allowed early check in and late check out. An evening in Biggles bar got us amongst the lively locals and the weekly carvery (£8). Calling the next day for a beer the owner bought us a plate of food - thought I looked like Richard Attenboro - I'll take it anyway it comes..... Dubai is more unreal than ever but the Ruler has dug into his small change to put 70 BILLION Dhs (that's Dirhams) into the banks to wave the flag for the World economy. His oil has tumbled to around \$70 a barrel - shame.

Our Round the World deal is with "Great Escapade" who use Travel2 but booked through Redfearn Travel Bradford who have ABTA/ATOL so there may be a chance that we will even get back from all our ambitious travels or if all else fails MasterCard. What an uncertain world we live in.

I suppose you could say that we are fiddling whilst Rome burns - and occasionally doing it in some style. Putrajaya is a newly created Garden City near KL airport and is the seat of Government here. It is all very splendid and with friendly hotel staff, the countryside gives a strong feeling of Florida. We are here to add viewing another motorcycle Grand Prix and circuit to our expanding list. It was free entry on practice day and even that didn't pull the crowds. We have several British riders to cheer along and the expected rain may even prove an advantage to them - we will see.

Kuala Lumpur is our next stop with Di especially looking forward to the PETRONAS Twin Towers where Sean Connery and Catherine Zeta Jones made such good use of the backdrop to their high class robbery and intrigue.....



My grandsons now can fly



Gets Coronation St OK?



Millenium Hotel and building work



Marriott Hotel Putrajaya near KL

Oct 13th: NZ via Dubai/Malaysia/Thailand/ Brisbane - then Nelson New Zealand Nov 15th. May'09 back in UK via Tonga/Mexico/Cuba Mid May '09 back to Europe July/August '09 in America



Terry's Travels

TT28-2 Malaysia October 24th 2008

We had noticed that airports seemed a bit quieter than usual which improved travel and there were some empty seats too on our flights. Over the next weeks we will see if we do better deals as we book hotels/motels along our trip. The sunflowers are watching the plane taking off at Changi Singapore airport. The outside lounging area is cooled by a water mist system and a gardener was giving the recently planted sunflowers plenty of water to combat the heat.

38,000 people were with us at the Sepang circuit, the photo shows the Italian Simoncelli (the one with wild hair) celebrating becoming World 250cc Champion. For the Brits the best excitement was Bradley Smith coming from 13th to be second in the scorching heat in the 125cc race. You can see why one of the millions of scooters here is delivering extra local Tiger beer. The heavens opened just after we got in our limo, they call it that so you pay more than for a taxi! to drive back to our hotel amongst the hundreds of drenched fans riding back on scooters .

Malaysia is a very Islamic country and Di assured me that there were signs for a "different" ladies room for Islamic dressed ladies. We also saw adverts for apartments for rent that were only for Muslims. There are many very stylish Mosques, in fact the architecture is one of the great interests in visiting Malaysia. In the UK we have seen the tourist campaign the slogan of which is "Malaysia - truly Asia" a very good theme. Many of the ladies are most beautifully dressed with some immaculate materials, some have the full head cover but must be able to see well enough looking out.

We chose a hotel right in the centre of KL within walking distance of the Twin Towers and next to the Monorail. There have been quite a few powerful electrical storms and a whistle is blown to get you out of the swimming pool. I saw a hotel just a few hundred meters away take a lightning strike, all very spectacular as we sat out the storm in bathers in the poolside bar at a lovely temperature.

Breakfast is included and is a lavish spread for all tastes and cultures, so we were into feeding our faces and knicking a piece of fruit for lunch. Lychees and Longons on wet muesli was my favourite and neither of us fancied a Madras or Vindaloo curry...



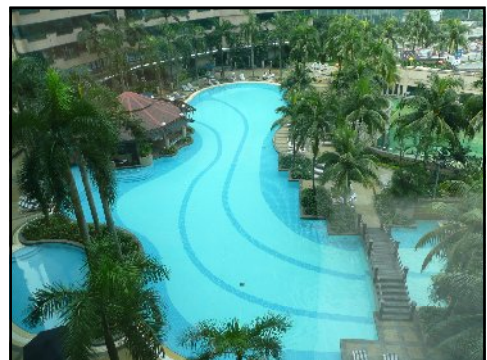
Sunflowers watch the planes



Simoncelli clinches 250cc title



Tiger (Malaysian) beer supplies



Renaissance Hotel central KL

Oct 13th: NZ via Dubai/Malaysia/Thailand/
Brisbane - then Nelson New Zealand Nov 15th.
May'09 back in UK via Tonga/Mexico/Cuba
Mid May '09 back to Europe ?
July/August '09 in America - motorhome?



Terry's Travels

TT28-3 Kuala Lumpur October 29th 2008

The PETRONAS Twin Towers was built for the headquarters of the National oil and gas company who have drilled offshore on the E coast of Malaysia. This building is used to project the face of modern Malaysia. Built in 1996 it was the world's tallest tower at that time (425m). Clad in stainless steel it is very impressive. A ride up to the Sky Bridge is a popular free attraction and we had to queue for an hour with the crowds but it's worth it. Having just seen a film on our ecology called "The 11th Hour" which is presented by Leonardo Di Caprio I can only see fossil fuel companies as the BIG baddies of the Earth - do see this film.

A super modern monorail is cheap and efficient to ride, we used it to ride to the end of the line to get to Central Station. We have bought rail tickets for later in the trip to get into Thailand. On the monorail we were able to people watch, it really is a most interesting mix of races and cultures, Chinese and Indian are clear to see but there are many more variations. As the track is elevated you get to see the teeming life and mad traffic below.

We were lucky that a Food Festival was taking place within the Tourist Information compound opposite our hotel. We sampled a few tit bits and then sat at the bar whilst the musicians entertained the crowds in the marquis, again we saw both men and women in their finery. The bars are always quiet which is part religion but also alcohol must carry very heavy taxes, a pint of good draft is usually £4+.

We had booked a rental car for the next week so took a taxi to Hawk Car Rental, the only one that allowed drop off in Penang our future destination to the North. The office was shut! But a phone call rapidly got an apologetic young lady. We didn't need the International Licenses that we had been told we needed but got a very detailed look at the car. It's a worry when there is an excess for damage. Maps and guidance were given then it was into battle with the City Centre traffic. Talk about canons to the left of us etc it was more like mopeds to the right, Kamikaze mopeds to the left and deep pot holes to avoid whilst a wagon is 2" from your bumper - but we have survived so far and even arrived at our next destination the Genting Highlands. First hotel wanted £150! For a night but Di took a number for the queue to book one at £40.



PETRONAS Twin Towers



From Sky Bridge on Tower



Monorail Kuala Lumpur



Regional Food Festival

Oct 13th: NZ via Dubai/Malaysia/Thailand/
Brisbane - then Nelson New Zealand Nov 15th.
May '09 back in UK via Tonga/Mexico/Cuba
Mid May '09 back to Europe ?
July/August '09 in America - motorhome?



Terry's Travels

TT28-4 Malaysian Highlands October 27th 2008

The Genting Highlands are very unusual, perched at the top of mountains at around 6,000 feet it is much cooler an advantage from the sweltering heat. We were lucky to get good visibility but also got heavy mist and rain. The different hotels here are interconnected and with some 6,000 bedrooms claim to be the world's largest hotel. With an amusement park on the outside positively dwarfed by the Las Vegas like gambling inside it was interesting to visit to see the strange contrast with nature.

We had an amazing drive down back to the plains drove a 100km on the modern E1 motorway N and turned upwards again to the Cameron Highlands. This was a much smaller road into the jungle following a river. Work gangs were clearing mud slides and it was VERY windy so made for really slow careful driving and made this a highlight of the Malaysian trip. We stopped at a waterfall and bought a bunch of plantain bananas which were delicious. We had seen one monkey cross the road in front of us and could try to give the next one a treat.

Afternoon tea was very welcome as we reached the Cameron Highlands and gave us a Raj like feeling as we slowly sipped. Another young Brit couple stopped for tea and we chatted and took their advice of the next hotel to stay. Tana Rata is one of the small towns in the Cameron Highlands and we stayed at the Century Pines Hotel which proved to be good with a room with a balcony overlooking the park.

We got the room for the first night at a lower price but got stung for the next two nights at what they called Peak Peak rate since it was a holiday weekend celebrating Deepavali. The staff were very friendly and could not have given us better service. We chose to eat at the hotel and tried the "Steamboat" where you cook on the table in your own cook pot with two different stocks, one was the very spicy Tam Yam soup and the whole experience was really special - in fact a feast costing about £8, a normal good meal was £2. The town was interesting but still quite poor and scruffy looking.

We left to drive through more of the Highlands and the roads were extremely busy with the holiday traffic. Lots of people movers were packed with people - in fact large families seems to be the norm here.....



Genting Highlands



Misty Genting



Climbing to Cameron Highlands



Tea overlooking tea plantation

Oct 13th: NZ via Dubai/Malaysia/Thailand/
Brisbane - then Nelson New Zealand Nov 15th.
May '09 back in UK via Tonga/Mexico/Cuba
Mid May '09 back to Europe ?
July/August '09 in America - motorhome?