

Wednesday 28th March: 10° 26' south, 106° 09' west

We are now approximately half way across the Pacific Ocean, heading for land at Callao, the port for Lima. On a bearing of 0903° we are, to all intents and purposes, travelling due east and, with about 2000 (statute) miles to go, we expect to be in Peru just before sunrise on Monday. Apparently the doctors on board breathe easier as we get closer to South America as there is no way a helicopter could get here should there be a medical emergency.

We learned in a lecture today that the entire land mass of the earth can be fitted within the area taken by the Pacific.

There was a celebration on deck before lunch preceded by an ice carving demo by one of the Philippino Galley staff: music with the Black Watch Band in the sunshine, fortuitous as there was cloud earlier in the day and later. While the dancing went on the water in the pool sloshed around dramatically, throwing those brave enough to enter to and fro from one end to the other.

This afternoon we both went to a Zumba fitness class lead by one of the young professional dancers on board. It was great – a whole body workout, so an improvement on line dancing. Nick was so sweaty after taking part (too much information!) that he thought he might shorten his gym cardio workout.

Thursday 29th March: 10° 48' south, 99° 01' west

Today I lost out on the sunshine; by the time I did my line dancing, a lecture on the combination of circumstances that cause plants and animals to become extinct, and the washing, the day had clouded over. Then it was tea time (just tea for me, 2 cakes for himself [+260 calories]!) it was time for an afternoon classical guitar concert. Since then Nick has done gym [-185 calories] while I've done Sudoku and quizzes, and listened to BBC World News and the news of George Galloway's success in Bradford. Remarkable! And it seems we might return to drought and a petrol crisis. Will we be able to get out of the Savick Brook and head south and homewards?

We are now only a few days away from Peru, where we will be sad to say farewell to our dining companions who have become firm friends so that we regularly share a fair part of the day with them. And we have already pin-pointed the one or two folk we would **not** like to find ourselves seated with! Thankfully it's just a few, as most people are lovely! Tonight is Rock 'n Roll night for which I have absolutely no gear! Then tomorrow I'm almost set up with my pirate gear for our Shanty Concert; I trust it's better than the Choir Concert last evening which left a lot to be desired – at least we all sing in unison with a number of Shanty Men and one Shanty Lady! Oh well, it's time to get ready for dinner and Nick is planning to have a sirloin steak for the n'th time – when we get home there will be no red meat for a while! In spite of eating well he is maintaining his weight and looking quite good! His grey chest hair is altogether more acceptable with a tan behind it or is that too much information!! P'raps I'll be buying him some fake tan when it starts to fade!



Friday 29th March: 11° 07' south, 92° 19' west

I'm just back from the grand Shanty Choir which seemed to go well; we made ourselves sailory and looked the part. It's sad that Lennard, a Finn, who sings twice weekly in a shanty choir in Finland, is resting for the next leg having lead the group for the previous three legs. One song had its second public performance today. It's about the history of a steel hulled, four-masted ship with an amazing history and a sad end. In the war she was all but sunk in thee Pacific by a

submarine, but the Japanese captain was unable to give the order because he considered her so beautiful in full sail. After the war, when she could no longer compete economically, the German Navy bought her and used her as a training ship for young cadets. Eight years later she encountered a terrible Atlantic storm and sunk; only six of the eighty-six men aboard survived. The final song, 'Rolling Home' seems appropriate for us. Thankfully we are not rolling as much as a sailing ship, but we're doing a fair bit: and there was a fair bit of careering around in line dancing this morning and it was important to stand, feet apart in the concert this afternoon.



After dinner this evening we walked out on deck, with a couple of hundred others, a clear-ish night sky and a lot of music and dancing conspired to make it a charming end to the day.



Many thousand miles behind us,

Many thousand miles before.

Ancient ocean heave to waft us

Rolling home, rolling home,

To the well remembered shore

Rolling home across the sea

Eastward, eastward, ever eastward

Rolling home to dear ol' England

To the rising of the sun,

Rolling home dear land to thee.

We have steered for ever eastward,

Since our journey has begun

Saturday 31st March: 11° 21' south, 87° 00' west

A big day today – tho' Fred does try to make each day special! It's the penultimate day at sea. After the fun and games at sea last evening, today we enjoyed a champagne breakfast; we have only just learned that on Formal Dress nights that it is always available at breakfast. I only just made it, having overslept and arrived at Line Dancing late. After Nick's concern about the nine days at sea he confessed at lunch time that he's enjoying them. I was delighted that one of the ship doctors with whom we sat this lunchtime thought the shanty singing was excellent – far superior to the choir concert. That means I'll stay with folk and shanty singing for the next leg and not embarrass myself or Nick by joining the choir. The same goes for the drama performance we've just seen! In spite of that I'm full of admiration for all those who have a go!

Tonight's another big night – another captain's cocktail party and then a dress yourself up night. I'm not certain what I'll do with my hair which gets drier and coarser by the day. I'm almost tempted to buy the on-board coiffeur's magic stuff to help matters but not £15-tempted! Just about to zoom off to zumba – it will kill me but I'll die happy!!