

## Newsletter No.2

Its time for another cameo for friends North South East and West.

Perhaps not quite in the mould of the first offering, but still with some memorable moments.

Another frantic drive to Jomtien midway through February to collect the now thoroughly relaxed Cyndy and Chris. A very nice hotel, the Jomtien Garden Hotel, even though one had to be very alert with towels on the loungers. Yes, it was full of beer swilling, weisswurst gobbling Teutons. Fortunately, C and C had befriended a six foot four ladyboy who looked after their (nearly) every requirements. In fact the entire staff seemed to be of the same ilk, at least around the garden bar. No wonder the Germans were there in abundance !!

Back to paradise in Silom for a couple of days and the pollution levels reached new heights. A delightful sundowner on the terrace at the Shangri-La was just the answer for an extended stay. An extra week was booked with the help of the resourceful Phil and Khun Tony. Good health prevailed and the intrepid chimney stacks became available for sightseeing tours to remote locations around the area. A visit to the historical, and quite beautiful, old capital Ayutthya was organised by Tony. A drive of 90kms took a mere 45 minutes, and it was a great delight to peel off the safety straps and stagger into the 104 degrees of heat. Hot or what !!!

After three minutes of walking past the sleeping Buddha, yours truly was searching for anything that would support his carcass in the shade. A rickety iron chair, wedged between a strange looking gourd and an ancient wall, did the trick. The gourd, apparently, was some sort of spittoon. Needless to say not many folk attempted to take on the giant red-faced and very sweaty farang in case their expectorant was ill directed. C and C meantime had gone on the tourist track to Buddhas, Wats and other ancient artefacts.

Five minutes later, and the coughing and spluttering got louder and louder. It was like watching survivors from Flight of the Phoenix, the plane that crashed in the Mongolia desert. Tony, thats enough was the call. All the rest of the sightseeing will be done from the safety of the car (regardless of how quick you drive !!!). Sensibly, a short journey to an idyllic restaurant on the river (Pong??) returned normality to the party. Khun Paa showed the way to eat a combination of prawns in sulphuric acid and gunpowder, Cyndy tried the blackened Thing from the Lagoon, and the boys stuck to noodles and rice. Your favourite old hack realised that a serious amount of the finest Johnny Deng would be needed to propel his jiggered knees up the side of the hillside that would have tested a mountain goat !!

Return to Bkk at breakneck speed and a weary party settled in for a quiet one, or two, or ten. A few more pleasant days out and visits to fine watering holes, not including the Duke as the chef was still on the payroll, saw the end of C and C's holiday. Another exciting journey to the huge Suwannaphum airport and it was time to bid farewell. As the pair meandered through Immigration and down the escalators towards the shopping areas, the smog magically lifted across the whole of Bangkok. Once again the skyscrapers could be seen and the birds flew into view. It was like some theatrical moment when the mists of time suddenly give way to reality. Yes, it was necessary to get back on the circuit.

Calling in to The Witches Tavern, and on to the best Pool bar in town, the Rack 'em Up, on Petchburi Road. Good venue, especially when the sharkettes take a beating. Cheap Deng and proper tables. Definitely a place for the boys later in the year. Time to try out the Roadhouse on the corner of Rama IV and Suriwong. First class. Fine menu with decent wine, saw several visits over the next couple of weeks. Highly recommend the Bajan Prawns in hot skillet, the rack of ribs (half or full) and the Cab Merlot (Aus).

Back to the Duke of Wellington as it really is our local, and Mark (uk), Mike ( Cali) introduce us to

Nick - all the way from Long Island. Usual question was quickly answered so it meant a liquid dinner. This time the place was chokker, it was the Liverpool vs Man U match. Khun Paa was oop norf in Suphan Buri celebrating the twins second birthday, so Tony and I were rooting for a scouse win. We all know what happened next and I was even subjected to a series of calls from Paa taking the proverbial. I got to get a phone jammer !!!!

Nick is the main man for the Duke and he operates a couple of sports bars in Bkk. One, called The Big Mango, is situated in Nana Plaza on the first floor. Nana is a seriously sleazy place with go go bars and other distractions, but the Mango is a decent pub overlooking the entrance to the Plaza. Tony and I set forth and arrived in time to get pole position and enjoy the sights. As usual, the hostesses hover around asking the usual questions- 'where you from, how long you stay, buy me drink'. Sketch is that they cant quite weigh Tony up. 'You Thai, jabber, jabber, etc'. No, says Tony, I'm from Scotland. In fluent English. Now I become the Thai interpreter. Very limited mind you. We carried this off for a good hour. Eventually we couldn't go on - finally Tony spouted out a load of Thai and the place disintegrated. Never seen Thai girls rolling around in so much humour. Great stuff.

Finally, just had a call from von Giblet. Life down at Lakeside Lodge is as quiet as the grave ( hard to believe seeing there is a major construction site ten feet away). No customers, no diners and no fun to be had. Hmmm, strange that, its still high season in Pattaya and hotel rooms are at a premium. Perhaps he needs a new PR manager and not rely so much on the African Grey.

Its great to hear news from you all so please feel free to ask questions and let me know what's going on in your neck of the woods.

Here are some excellent websites which will give a great insight in life out here :-

[www.bangkokeyes.com](http://www.bangkokeyes.com) [www.mangosauce.com](http://www.mangosauce.com) [www.thethaibutterfly.com](http://www.thethaibutterfly.com)

[www.bangkokbargirls.com](http://www.bangkokbargirls.com)

It will be a great pleasure to entertain some or all when you next visit.

JB