

We only had a couple of weeks to prepare for that and my first few efforts had my fellow students in stitches as I tried to spit out the Chinese words at high speed. In the end I think I got all the words right, but I did go a bit flat at one point. Embarrassing!



Next term I'm going to try doing the male only dance class, which is much smaller – perhaps only 7 or 8 participants – but I know they have some excellent dancers there so it will be much more a challenge for me to keep up as well as to look presentable.

In the middle of the year I joined another Facebook photo group which has been very inspiring. It's a self-help group where we're all learning together without any professional input, but obviously there are some members with lots of experience and the willingness to offer advice.

Unlike some groups, iKaizen welcomes constructive criticism and I'm learnt a lot not only from my own mistakes but from comments on other peoples photos. Loving it. But it does mean that I'm spending more time on my phone. (What?

Is that possible?) And of course the cats get to become favourite subjects!



Take care. Hope you had a lovely Christmas and the New Year brings welcome possibilities.

Lots of love from us both,

Will & Yvonne

Flickr photo selection for the year:

<https://tinyurl.com/y9qd8kut>

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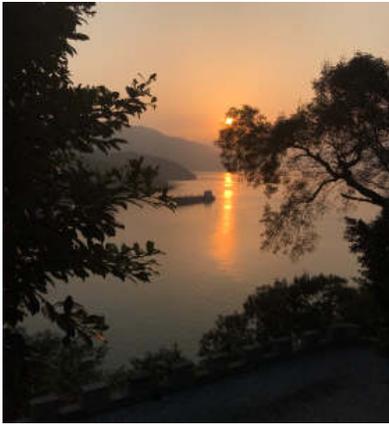
Witterings

2017



It's Friday and just two and a bit days to go! I've tested out the Creme Brulee, which worked, so I'm under a little less stress than I was. I still have a song to remember as we're all doing something of a performance. This time it's the Gas Man Cometh. I thought the Masochism Tango was a bit too complicated since I haven't played my guitar since July! 16 of us will be gathering in our house on the Sunday since the Monday is a normal working day here and we have a singing class in the afternoon.

Our end-of-term concert is in mid-January so we still have a few weeks to practice the song and the dance. I don't think I'll be leading anything this time as I effectively lost September and October to bodily malfunctions. Thankfully it's all working again and didn't need a re-boot! I was very worried that I'd still be ill when our friends Wayne and Lois visited at the end of October but I finished my last IV drip the day before and the day of their arrival was the first day I'd felt normal for 6 or 8 weeks.



It was so good to have them here for 5 days and then to go on the Yangtze 3 Gorges River trip for another 5 days. I had no idea that the Yangtze (called 长江, ChangJiang – long river) was the third longest in the world!



If you get this in time you can add that to your trivial pursuits questions after Christmas dinner. I'd known that the dam's construction was the cause of major debate across the world (here too) since 1.5 m people needed to be moved and rehoused. Apart from the flood protection and energy generation that it provides, it also made the river navigable for huge ships in addition to the hand-powered things that could only use it prior to its construction. I was also surprised that it was conceived over 100 years ago so it wasn't just a whim of the present day regime. One of the things I was particularly grateful for was fine weather. Friends of mine did the same trip 6 weeks earlier and it rained the whole time.

Since it's called the 3 Gorges I should have realised that any outing on dry land (twice a day) would involve a flight of at least 300 steps. Glad I was strong enough for them.



My July UK trip seems a long time ago now. Since Yvonne stayed at home to look after the cats, I made a point of trying to see as many people as possible. But visiting with 3 different groups of people everyday took its toll on this introvert and I came home absolutely shattered. I have wondered whether my health problems stemmed from overdoing it in July? The next time

(maybe in 3 years) will definitely be a quieter affair! But I was so glad to be present at the London memorial service for Alan Kreider who died a few months earlier.



So sad to have to say goodbye to such an influential friend and colleague, but I was grateful to be able to participate with other Mennonites from the old Wood Green church. It was quite a gathering and very special.

My sisters made it all possible, both putting me up in their homes, picking me up from railway stations late at night, and organising a wonderful week away together on the Pembroke coast.

It wasn't quiet here before I left for the UK. We had our end of summer term concert, just before I flew out, which was a little nerve-wracking but fun.

We had song and dance performances with our respective classes and, a surprise for me, a lead singing part in a male-only traditional workers song.