J&M4-1

"God, I detest flying nowadays"
We're at 36,000 feet give or take, bouncing about in turbulence in an interminable flight from LHR to GIG, Rio de Janeiro.

It's eleven hours and some.

I used to love the whole experience but these days I'm afraid I find it very tedious indeed.

It is the 9th of October (or the 10th in old money) and somewhere between 11:30 pm and 3:30 am. I couldn't vouch for that but it's what the in-flight infotainment system tells me. My phone however saying that it's 1:27 am. You might understand my hazy grasp on reality just now...

We are on the first leg of our journey to South America. Starting in Brazil.

I quite frankly, struggle now ethically with the whole flying thing. I find it extremely difficult to justify the damage we do to this planet by our continued habit of dashing about the place leaving trails of poison. I feel however, rather alone in this view. Consensus seems the be that there's no problem with burning half a million tonnes of CO^2 to ferry 300+ people half way round the world and back again. Mad, isn't it?

Ok. Soapbox moment over for now.

Preparation for the trip has been long and quite hard. One particular element of the itinerary needed some considerable effort, namely our five days trek. This is still a couple of weeks away but for pretty straightforward reasons, some degree of fitness and stamina needed to be developed. We have therefore done a great deal of walking though almost certainly not enough!

We left home about 5:00pm and our very generous neighbour Gary ferried us to LHR. A feat unto itself given the Friday night M25 traffic.

Check in was smooth and easy and "security" was relatively painless. Jessa got her bags turned over but she does look dangerous! (only kidding).

T5 at Heathrow is a remarkable place. Long subterranean walkways lead the passenger away from the bright light selling opportunities of "duty free" (not the money saving thing it used to be) underneath the runways to the boarding area. Enormously long escalators ferry one down what feels like hundreds of feet from the second floor departure lounge to this home for troglodytes tunnel system only to be born back to the surface and then some for the actual boarding gate.

Again, boarding the aircraft went along "quite nicely" all the cabin staff are very pleasant

we've been fed and watered in much the same way as livestock are supplied

Long long flight down to Rio, but a not bad breakfast to come around to. It was a pretty bumpy flight as a result the seatbelt signs stayed in for much of it. A further result was no hot drinks with breakfast.

One of the nice things about Brazilian airports, at least the ones we've experienced so far, is that they have special lanes for oldies.... Priority boarding and much shorter passport queues so on. There has to be some benefits doesn't there?.
The downside is that everyone around you recognises you as an oldies. Bit of a double edged sword.

The walk between arrival and passport control is miles although much of it coupled with powered walkways though we chose Shank's pony.

Security has been rather harsh on Jessa, maybe her wrist metalware has caused a problem. At Heathrow she was told it was nothing to do with that but something triggered a problem resulting in 'carry on' bags being opened and examined. I, with most of the same stuff, sailed straight through. Not a traditional result for me, I normally get held up for something or other.

Coffee at Messrs Starbucks was a bit naff, Jessa's long life milk cappuccino tasted vile to me and they don't do decaf either so my oat latte tasted good but I don't do so well on non unleaded coffee..

The departure lounge looks out over the airport to "Sugar Loaf" mountain (we think). Couldn't see it because of the thick cloud cover or sea fog. There we are. Such is life.

Again, the walk to the departure gate goes on and on, through labyrinthine corridors. I guess it's careful use of real estate, putting everyone down below the run and taxi ways.

Our next flight was delayed a bit but we're now on our way to Iguacu as I write. A couple of hours there and someone is supposed to be waiting for us.

So all of this has been about the trials of actually getting across the Atlantic to Brazil. The next part of our adventure will see us at the Iguacu Falls, one of the wonders of the world. Looking forward to it, the pictures we've seen, perhaps you've seen look extraordinary, comparable to the Victoria falls of Africa. Tomorrow will tell.

For now, I'm looking forward to some solid sleep. It didn't feel like we got too much last night and that always colours one's viewpoint negatively.