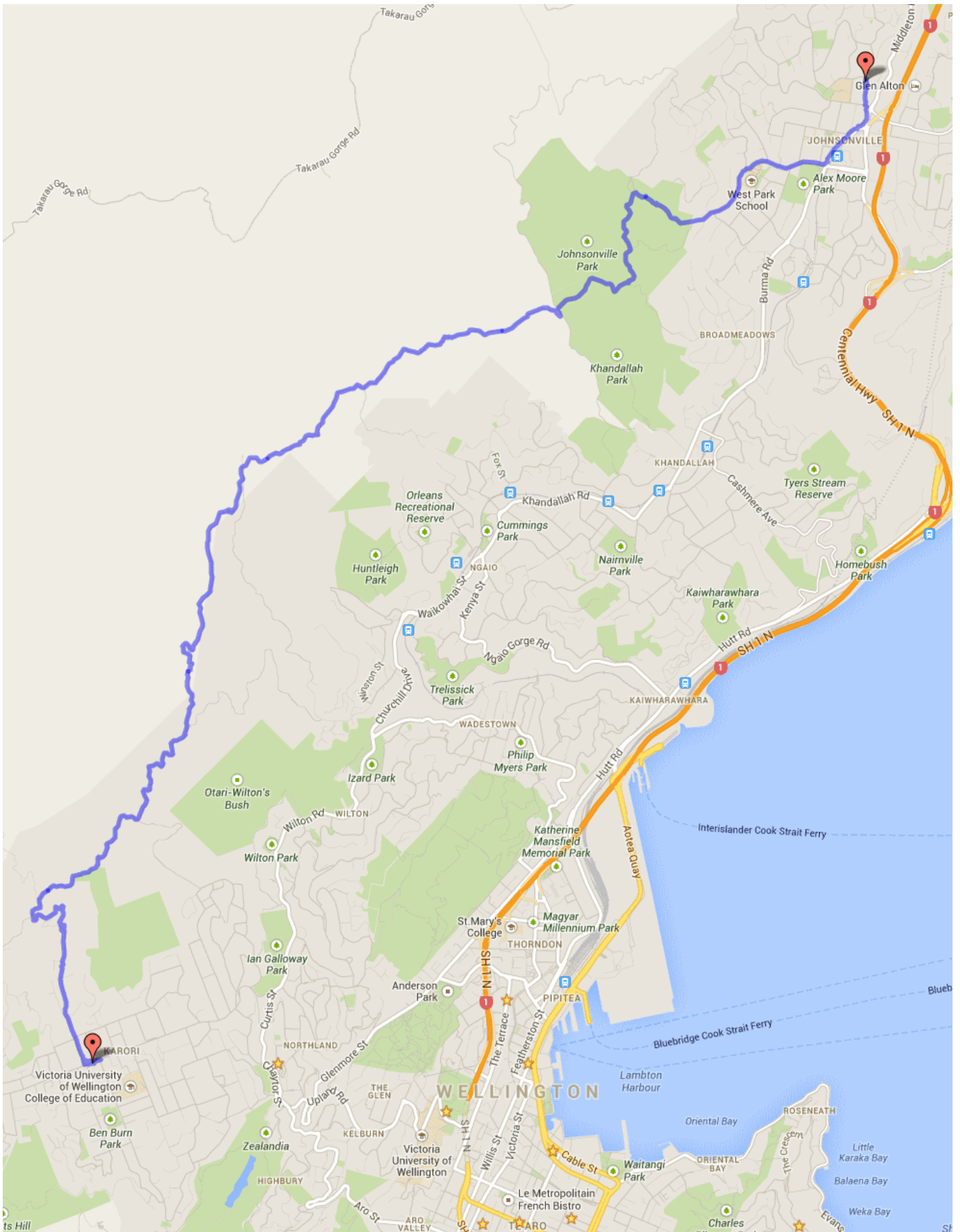


Friday on my Mind

Since we started working in New Zealand we have been working a nine day fortnight, we have every alternate Friday off. It was surprisingly easy to arrange and well worth the pay cut. We try to do something in the extra day, even if it might start off, as it often does, with tea and toast in bed.

Last month Steph needed to WOF the camper van. Vehicles need to get a WOF (Warranty of Fitness) every six months it's a bit like an MOT in the UK. They do seem particularly keen on checking for rust, I guess because there do seem to be lots of older cars here. The current campervan (the new one) is a 1991 vehicle, our previous one was built before Steph and I started going out in '87. Eventually, its rust that does for many of these old vehicles. Anyway WOF day was a Friday, so we dropped the van off at the garage and hiked up to the skyline walk. Wellington is at the end of a peninsula and the skyline walk runs is a ridge hike along the spine of hills that runs from the suburbs into the centre of Wellington. It is amazing to think this is a way of walking into town, though to be honest most people use the bus. It was a beautiful day and it took us four hours to walk into the city





and then we caught the bus back to pick up the van.
We got home for a quick shower and change and then went out

to our little local Polish restaurant and had strangle eastern European food that we didn't succumb to the vodka matches for each course.

We have continued our picture framing. In fact John Slater, who's studio we use to frame has been suggesting that its not just about taking the picture and framing it but that we should be able to crop and process our pictures

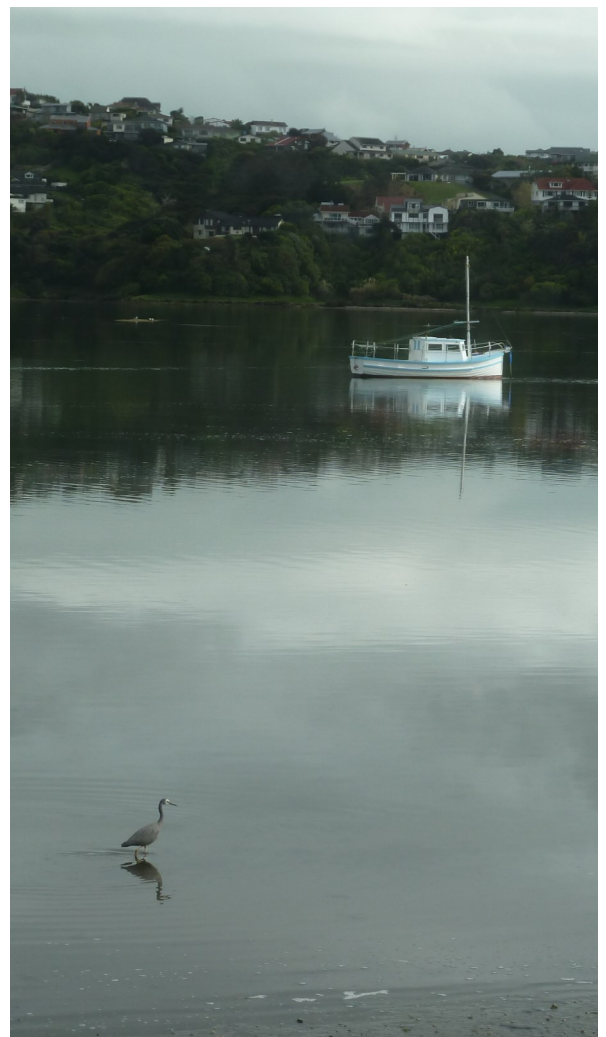


as well. So today as I type this we are heading over the Rumatka's in blinding sunshine for a Photoshop course. The winding roads and sunshine are not making that a very easy operation even with giant text. Last month we finally completed our most complex frame. We bought a picture in Canada 10 years ago that needs a UV light to see it properly and after storing the picture and carrying it around for years we have finally build a frame that incorporates a light and even hung it up – hurrah.



A particularly wet and rainy Friday we headed off to our local cinema. The cinema is a strange little thing. Its part of a chain of three cinemas and it's a very kiwi sort of a thing in that it's a lovely café in the middle of a wildlife sanctuary attached to a small cinema. Its only ten minutes round the corner so we do go on cheap Tuesday evenings sometimes. We have been to see films there where the staff have said that the film will start when they have made our coffee as we are the only people watching the film, I did passingly wonder if they would stop the film if we needed to use the rest room. Anyway its completely different on a Friday, where do all these people come from? We got the last sofa in the cinema at 1:20 on a Friday afternoon to watch Mr Pip. Really very good, managed to capture that feeling of being immersed in a book wonderfully well. I rather think I let the stiff upper lip down by blubbing like a girl for the last 20 minutes of the film. Yes tissues needed.

Speaking of wildlife. I guess I've mentioned how much we enjoy living by the sea before but as the seasons turn and the wildlife we saw last summer has started returning. The herons are back and a welcome sign of summer to come. We seem to have been adopted by a couple of seagulls we seem to regard our



house as their territory, they even squawk and dive-bomb Steph when she goes swimming. I was standing in a friend's house the other day, just staring out the window. It looked normal but strange at the same time I finally worked out that at home when I look out the window I can see the sea and ducks and swans but in other houses I see roads and cars and that's started to seem odd to me now.



Its not all Fridays. We have been out for some quite strange Saturday's as well recently. All instigated by other people so we had no real idea what to expect. We went to an Oman festival celebration and then were treated to 17 south Indian curry dishes all on the same place. It was very strange there was dancing and sports results and then eating. Pauline, who invited us then decided that we should go out for a beer as the festival had been dry, and took us to the Library, which was hidden away in a tower block. Once inside there was all



sorts of booths with sofas and leather chairs and even a bath all surrounded by bookcases floor to ceiling, a very odd bar.

The next weekend we went out with Simon and

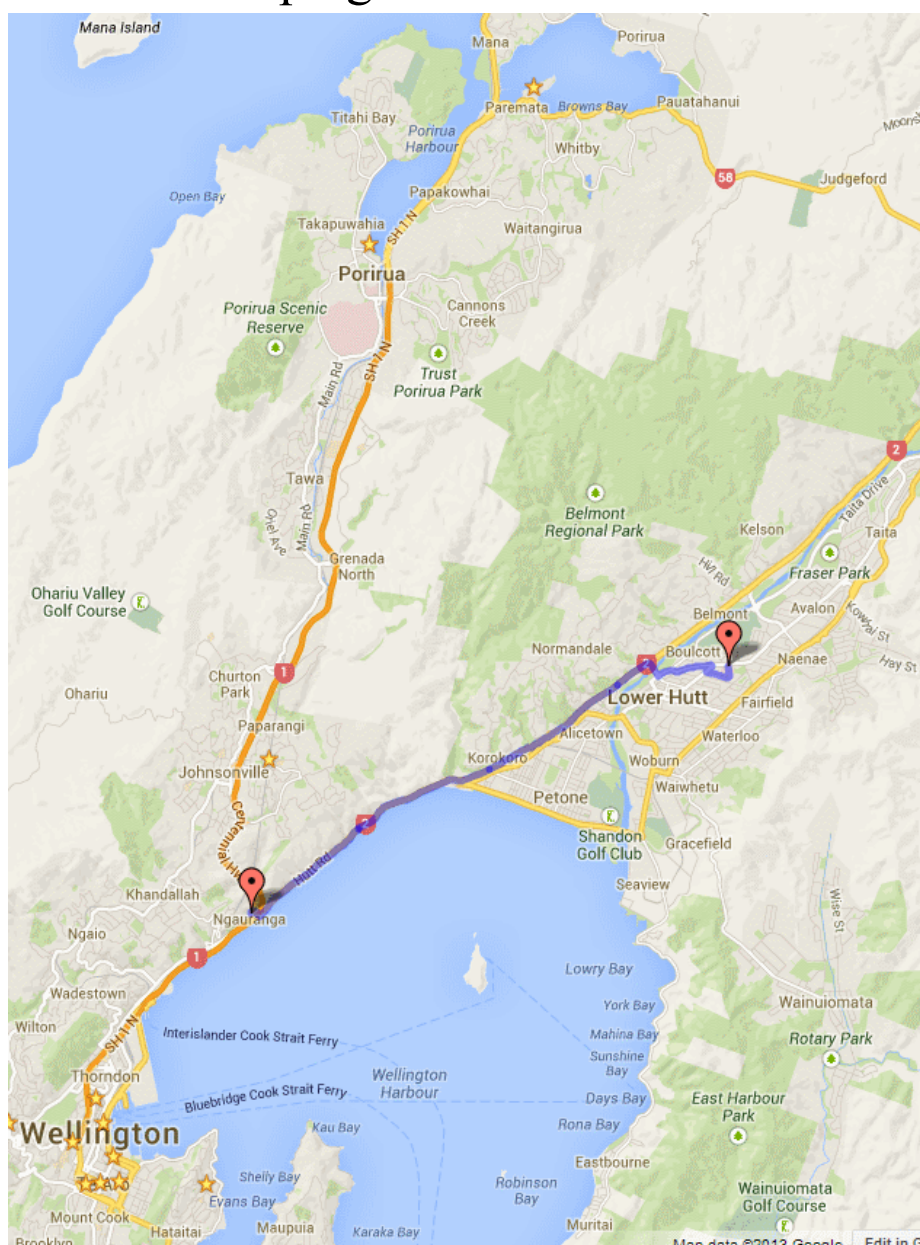
Katie, who also work at Xero. Katie is quite keen on going to the gym and has friends who compete in Body Building, so we went along one Saturday evening. It's a strange sort of thing. I am amazed what people can achieve. I am not completely sure about making all the women come back out in high heels, and having classifications where women cannot clench their fists, seems to me we make up new ways to be sexist. I understand



that muscle definition is better when you have colour in your skin but some of the tanning seemed bizarre. It was very interesting, not done anything like this in a while.

Steph went to see WOW, the World of Wearable Art, it's a bit of an NZ institution. It's a show of cloths as are, you are not going to see this in the local shop anytime soon but she seemed to like it.

So, this weekend is a long weekend for Steph before she starts hew new job on Tuesday. For the last six months since we moved we have been able to cycle to work together. We basically cycle to Stephs work and then I get on the train and go to work. In her new job we cannot cycle together, but we have a cunning plan to drive to the half-way point between out two jobs and then Steph goes north and me south. It's a 25 KM cycle for



Steph so we may on-ly do it once or twice a week. We tried it out this weekend and it is a nice cycle along the waterfront to a very smart looking hospital.

Last Friday was Stephs leaving do from work. We got dressed up and met up with her soon to be ex colleagues. It was very sweet, they are a nice bunch of

people. We went for a very nice meal, stopped off for an excellent pint of proper hand pulled bitter brewed by a man from Salford in the bizarrely named Hashigo Zake, they even had the test match on in the bar very strange.



Then it was Stephs special treat – Boogie Wonderland, a nightclub that John Travolta would feel at home in, where is my white suite when I need it, dancing until 1am and then onto the train to bed.

Right now time to go – with all this gadding about we need a good Sunday roast and maybe a spot of Strictly Come Dancing, more guilty pleasures.

Have fun