

7<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Well hello one and all,

Hoping you are all well and life is treating you well.

I, Stephanie have decided it is time that I lead on the next missive and update – so watch out for life not making sense – for those of you used to my emails I do tend to miss out words and jump subjects!!!

When last we wrote we had just started a group of theatre trips. When I get an urge I tend to book 3 or 4 events at once. I joked this year that every new production would have one more actor in it. Derek mentions “Jane Austin is Dead” last time. A very humorous and insightful monologue on dating. Some great New Zealand insights – the men are not known for their romance, although we found out last night that gay New Zealand men are very romantic.

We then saw the two handed “Red”. A look at the meaning behind art and its commercial nature.

Quite a physical piece as paint was kicked around the stage. Finally we went to “Earthquake in London”. It was at the dance academy and was a third year show. There was very little dance but it was fantastic. It was about three sisters in London and their less than functional lives. Very clever set and use of a large group of actors.

This was just the start of Wellington encouraging people out in the winter. We have “Wellington on a Plate” – two weeks of cheaper restaurants, cooking classes and a burger competition. This year I was on the website when it opened as it books up very quickly. I had 7 events I want to go to and only got

tickets for 3. We started in style – “Fisher and Pyk-le” have a weekend of cooking demonstrations. It is held in the Town Hall. You sit in tables of 10 and 4 celebrity chefs do a



demonstration, of which you get to eat part of. We only went for one very enjoyable day. We got a fantastic book of the things we saw being cooked. The presenters were funny and very informative. As with

New Zealand you also had a good chat with the strangers at your table or in the coffee queue.



The Wellington equivalent of Kendals (think department store, Macey’s) is Kirkcaldies. They have a pantry and we went from work to taste wine and try goods from the pantry – very exciting food and we found a potentially good store for cheese.



They were having their big sale starting on the Saturday – but I think it all got cancelled as it was the day after the earthquake.

Finally I drove up the coast on a wonderfully sunny Saturday to learn about and eat fish. Bless they had 100 for dinner and a power cut. Somebody rushed off to find a generator but the power came back on. It made me want to learn how to fish – all that free food on your door step. I think this was my favourite event and something I would book again next year.

Last weekend we went back to do some more picture framing. John Slater – our Yorkshire teacher – had a class of 5 so we did a bit of teacher supporting and made a very complex frame for a picture we have that requires a black light. We did the final pro-



cess ourselves that we had not tried – cutting glass. It was a wonderful weekend, very rewarding and we found a fab new bar with the best tapas. Nice to sleep out in the camper van again, we did have the heater on all weekend!!!

Work wise we are both busy. Another unusual thing to New Zealand I suddenly find myself with a new job. It all happens very quickly here and was mainly achieved by a few e-mails. I went for an interview last Friday and they offered. I have now done the hard bit and told everybody where I am currently working that I am leaving. As often in Brain Injury we are a very close team and you do feel a bit disloyal by going for a new job. So it is bitter sweet, I really will miss the team and work but am now excited by the new role. I am going to be the lead Occupational Therapist for the Wairarapa and Hutt hospitals. The two hospitals have just merged and are likely to merge with the Capital and Coast unit soon too. Derek refers to me being “the mother hen”. I have 27 OT’s in the Hutt who I will professionally and operationally manage and 25 OT’s in the Wairarapa who I will professionally manage. It is whole range of services from acute admissions, heavy workshop, equipment store and cardiac rehabilitation. I get to choose some clinical work to do each week too – a bit of supporting while staff are on holiday and my special interest. No start dates yet as I have no paperwork through. I have never been to interview with so many holiday dates booked in before I start.

At the end of October we are going to the top of the South Island. We have basic plans and a week in the



campervan. It started with us wanting to walk the Queen Charlottes Trek over Labour Day weekend. Then it was, well why not take a whole week off, since we are paying the ferry fare anyway! So I think it will be walking in the lakes around Nelson and a bit of city culture in Blenheim.

Then Andrew is doing a charity cycle around Taupo, around Liz's Birthday so we have a long weekend of walking and cycling. We are not as brave as Andrew to do the very hilly cycle.

Then Australia for Christmas. It might be a bit hot but we intend to be down in the Melbourne area – having said that we have done very little planning of this holiday – only got the tickets for the Boxing Day Cricket Test.

Then a long weekend in January with Ed, over for the weekend. We think he will be dragged to the Waiararapa for wine tasting, chic cinema and excellent food.

Then I think it will have to be a period of work!!! We are planning to come back to the UK for a visit next year. We still do not know if it is for 4 months or 6 weeks. If we can both work and sublet here we would like to try the 4 months as it will seem less of a rush and give us a better impression of life now in



the UK. If we do the 4 months (which my new job have said is OK) then we are likely to fly in via the USA and see Derek's sister Bunny and Allan in their new home in Houston. We will then have a break mid working travel to France and Germany. On the way back we would plan to do a three week holiday in Laos and Cambodia. Prior to arriving in New Zealand we went away for 3 weeks every year. It will take some planning and all rests on Steph being able to get work – Derek should be no problem. If this work is means we would come to the UK May to August and miss winter here and not see a winter for 18 months – you can see the attraction. We are hoping that we have not jinxed life by missing the good summer in the UK this year!

If that does not work then we will take 6 weeks out of work and change the whole plan.

Well with thought of next year I have to go as we are going to learn how to make Mozzarella this afternoon and I have the household tasks to do. We have had some cold stormy weather and this means the windows need cleaning as they have sea spray misting them.

Lots of love to you all.

Steph and Derek