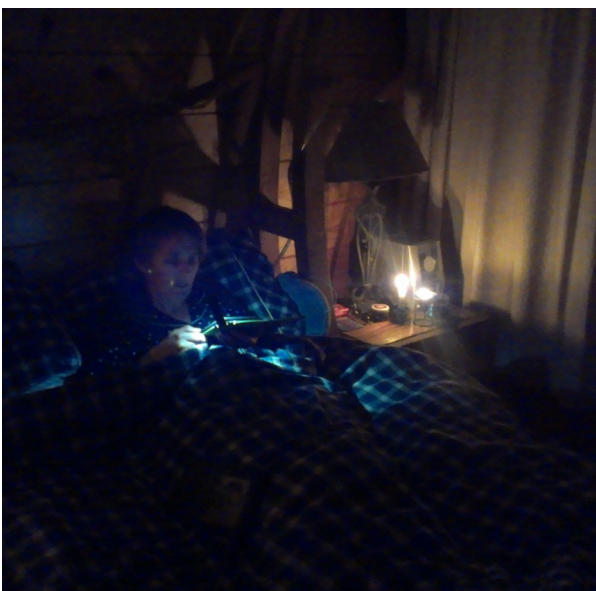


Shelter from the Storm

Well we are in winter big time while the northern hemisphere is bathed in sunshine. The storms have arrived and at the end of June we had 200 Km/H winds, which as far as I can tell is basically a hurricane. Luckily our little house is on the beach but sheltered close to a steep hill that protects us from the southerlies. So while the rest of Wellington struggled with the storm we took shelter, mind you at the height of the storms we lost power along with thousands of other houses and had to retreat to bed to read by candle light. A weird combination: reading kindles and tweeting by candlelight. We were lucky, it was our Friday off so we could just hide from the storm it wasn't any fun for the emergency crews out reconnecting power and getting the rail system back together.



We may have been sheltered but the little shed we build at the top of the hill was less so, even with a car battery tied inside it, it got blown around and needed a bit of hammering to get it back square again.



We had a bit of a staycation while the weather was rough and tried out some of the museums, the last time we had a storm this bad was 1968 when the ferry the Wahine sunk, and

going back even further in 1909 the Penguin was lost, going down in 30 minutes with the loss of 70 of the 100 people on board, somehow today's travails seem easier to cope with. The Cook Strait is apparently one of the most treacherous stretches of water around.

The museum was fascinating, it covered Wellington in detail from 1900 to 2000 and before that there was precious little here. In 1900 33% of the people in New Zealand were born abroad. Mind you even today almost 20% of the population were born abroad.

Mind you as I said between storms we get beautiful weather, its unbelievably sunny today and 15 degrees. So we are still able to grow lemons even in winter and we have taken to making our own lemon curd. Its actually very simple even I can manage it.

Speaking of making things, we have had another go at making cheese and we are getting better with each try. This time Paul and Annie from Steph's work



and Simon and Katie from my work came round and we made a day of it with some cheese we bought and some we made and a dip in the spa.

And now just for balance we have had a proper earthquake. We always knew that New Zealand was prone to earthquakes. On the Friday there was a quite large earthquake, it sounded and felt like someone was clumping around on the deck, by the time we



had worked out it was an earthquake it was all over. It was out Friday off and we had a lovely day. We did a bit of internet pot-

tering in bed (after the quake) and then we went into town for a bit of shopping, Steph decided that the only way such a nesh person was going to get into the sea was in a wet suit. Well who would have thought we were



people who would have a kayak and a wet suit. We walked along the front and saw the world's fastest big boat (58 knots apparently). It made me smile that the newspaper had a front page story saying that the ship was coming in on Friday to refuel. I have to say the ship did look a bit like a car park as a catamaran. Then we went for a massage with Tasha, a very nice dinner on the front and then to see a play (Steph periodically decides we must go to the theatre). The play was "Jane Austin is Dead" a



one woman play about trying to find Mr D'Arcy. All in all a great Friday, this 9 day fortnight was a great idea by Steph.

The wet suit really does work, Steph has been into the sea once or twice a week since buying it.

Then on the Sunday we had an even more impressive earthquake. Well for everyone else that is. We were doing a lovely bush walk, unbelievable that we were only 5 km from the centre of Wellington and here was a 800 year old Rimu tree.



We were travelling back home on the highway when we had a

5.6 earthquake – everyone was very upset, we were all told to stay out of Wellington while they inspected the buildings in the CBD. So I worked from home for a day and then we were allowed back, more cracks in the roads and in some of the buildings but nobody was hurt. And now this weekend it's so sunny and nice that you can almost feel spring.



After a month of staying put and pottering we are planning more travels now, we are off to Auckland next weekend, off to the South Island for more hiking in October and then we have tickets for the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne, it should be fun having Christmas in Oz.

OK enough it's getting late and we are having a roast dinner and a film this evening and its not going to cook itself.