

22/09/17—and chill.....

Steph here for a change from Manila. We are on our summer holiday. Yes no boxes to unpack, nothing to sell,

swimming every morn-

ing and I have already finished my first book. I needed to go to Rehabilitation Conference in Christchurch for a weekend, so we managed to steal that time and add it to the weekend after to sneak a proper holiday in Manila, The Philippines, where Bunny and Allan are currently



stationed. It really feels like holiday – it is warm all the time and there is no rush to get it all done in a day. Bung the driver takes us out, thankfully he has to understand the road rules, not us.



The local transport are the jeepneys, quite individual medium sized 'buses'. They all have a God will get you there safely slogan and a 'how is my driving'. We saw no accidents to our amazement. We take our books in the car as the traffic is the

worse – it is easy to spend half the day in a car!! It was worth it at the destination, but you would not just pop to the fabric market!



We have seen such contrasts, the locals shopping mall, where be brought material for Derek to have trousers made and me material to cover the dining chairs. Then the expat mall, that could have been anywhere in the world, with a Marks and Spencers.



We adventures of finding new fruit—laqort and jack fruit. The laqort was not ripe so we never got to eat it. The best fruit salad for breakfast. The tailors helped in our art of negotiation— They could do it but did not have the material, we bought the material, they could not do it in the time (even thought they knew the time before) Finally ace trousers but Steph will become tailor and put the pockets on once home!!!

Since we got back from the UK we have been very kind to

ourselves. We have booked little into weekends and made sure we walked or cycled somewhere every weekend. This has led to some fantastic movie visits. Outstanding films that I would highly recommend, both very different, like nothing I have seen before. “Baby Driver” and “Dunkirk”. We go as it is my favourite cycle from our current house, around the boardwalk of the inlet and there are a couple of great cafes.

Culturally we decided to give the end of year show for the local opera school a go. “The Cunning Vixen”. It was in the theatre we had not been to before and I got a bit distracted as it was above a shop and the seats near the roof, in a torrential downpour. I think the summary was; some great voices, some who will just not make it, amazing set and paper animal masks, BUT we do not really love opera.

I think we could tell this more as the week before we had been to the Salford based play ‘Hobsons Choice’. Our local amateur dramatic group, tiny theatre, usually a decent show. And it made my heart sing. OK the accents were a very mixed group. God bless the South African who started or English, went Australian and definitely ended up as South African in the



second act. How can I speak when I would not get up on stage.

I have also been creative. I have finished a hand knit jumper after 3 years of work!!! It is not the most flattering design, I look like a telly tubby. It is snuggley and warm, important as we have had some cold spells through this winter. Thinking it will be quite a trauma when we go back to New Zealand tonight!!! 20 degrees cooler than sat by the pool. Actually not too bad back home.

Having finished a jumper I have allowed myself to sew. Cannot remember when I last made clothes. There was a \$5 a meter sale just next to work and I was enticed by three pieces. When we

left Manchester, I had to give away a trunk of fabric I had collected over the years as I could not sell it. Glad a sewing circle got some exciting projects. Now I need to

finish the skirt as I have the dining chairs to cover – 8 of them!

Somebody Derek used to work with wanted to learn how to wallpaper – something we are good at together and I



love. They learnt really quickly and we got to find out about all the new gadgets in this area – a felt smoother and cling film that sticks to the floor to protect it and not rub up. We also go to find out



how expensive wallpaper is here and the fact they just do not carry basic stock in the shop. We underestimate the room size and they had to wait 5 days for the 2 extra rolls. But it looked great. It made me realize that the houses are damp here and that is a big reason not to wall paper. Our new house should not be damp and the cheap designer paper we brought back in the UK will be unique. They even have more choice of wallpaper here in Manila – we did not buy more.



I also went with Antoinette's Mum exciting place near where we are having the house built. It is called a 'Remakeary'. It is a group of charities that recycle things. Quite varied – the prisoners make bee hives to learn a skill, you are taught how to

look after bees and are given a hive to put in your garden. You get half the honey and give the rest back to sell. There was also a 'time bank' you give time to do things you are skilled at or you ask for time for something you need e.g. Somebody wanted to know how to garden. There was also a place to give your old bikes, they repair them and then they lend them out. As you can tell it spoke to my occupational therapy nature.

We also went to Winetopia, a Christmas present to us both. We had never been to anything like it before. 50 New Zealand wine producers. It was very interesting I learnt I was into aromatic wines. We found out all about how they import vines from around the world. They have to gamble and wait 10 years to find out if the vines sent are what they were expecting. Here we are being taught about these new varieties now grown here.

Houses – the buying and the selling has all gone too quiet. We still get people looking at Greenhill, but nobody offering. In New Zealand we have somebody making the plans detailed, but it is taking too long. It is a time when we can do very little. So for now all quiet. We are looking at moving to nearer the build – we do not want to leave our beach hut but there are lots of reasons why it is a good

idea. Not many rentals come up so we have to move when we get something. Do not really want to upheaval – and the thought we will have to move again when the house is built – BUT IT MAKES SENCE.

Then hot off the press we are moving. Here it is 21 days notice, and we have to move when there is a low tide—that make the move 7/10/17 weekend. Just like in all the best soaps that is all you get for this time:

Well our new address (still renting) will be

43B Pukatea Street

Eastbourne

Lower Hutt

5013

New Zealand

Work not willing to write about as it has been exciting but very busy. I have been very strict and not looked at work e-mails while I have been away, I really needed a break. I hope it has worked. When I arrive back we will have a new member of staff, so we will be able to charge forward – well here's hoping.

So with that I will sign off and see what Derek has to say. We go back to spring and public holidays arriving. We long for good luck to sell the house and hope we

have not used our luck up finding a new place to rent nearer Eastbourne. I suspect our quiet life will come to an end – but life is all mix and match.

Love Steph, miss you all and think of you all often.