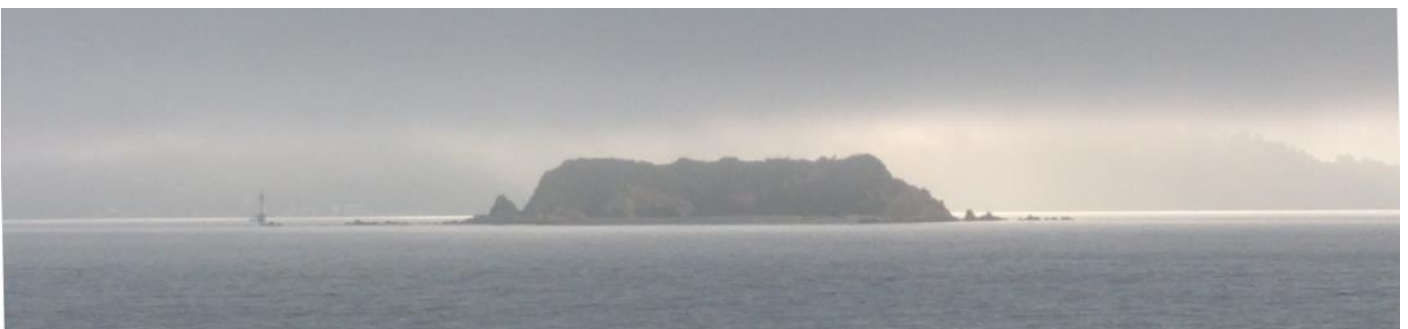


In 2016 Steph changed job and in 2017 she has settled in-
to her new job. I am glad that Steph managed to change
direction as I somehow think its easier if we are not both
changing everything at the same time. At the beginning of
the year I had been working on mobile phone software for
three years and was part of a team that worked very well
together. I have talked to a number of people this year
about how teams work and more notably how they don't.
In the first six months of this year we went from a team
that was in the sweet spot of productivity to one that was
falling apart. It is odd how quickly team move from one
state to the other, I was interested, when you are in the
sweet spot in a team you feel impregnable, you think that
nothing could ever go wrong, you were all meant to work
together. Then one thing changes and you are done, all of
a sudden you are trying like hell to hold everything to-
gether and nothing you do seems to work. Like I said I
was interested and talked to other people from teams past
and present, I was surprised to discover that almost every-
one else I talked to had the same experience, in that a team
fell apart quickly despite their best efforts, the only thing



was that nobody really knew why, or how to avoid it.

The only consistent advice I got was to move on so initially I moved to a different team in Xero. Banking integration, this is almost the opposite of mobile development; backend server work in .NET, also the team had such a bad reputation in Xero that a number of people came to see me to warn me not to make the move. I felt I had little to lose so I decided to move anyway. It was very strange to move from a very close knit team to a brand new team, all the people had worked in banking but they hadn't worked together before. I have to say I did feel very dislocated, though welcomed. As time went by I did feel that I could get back into server side development quite easily even though I had been out of it for more than three years, and that was the problem.

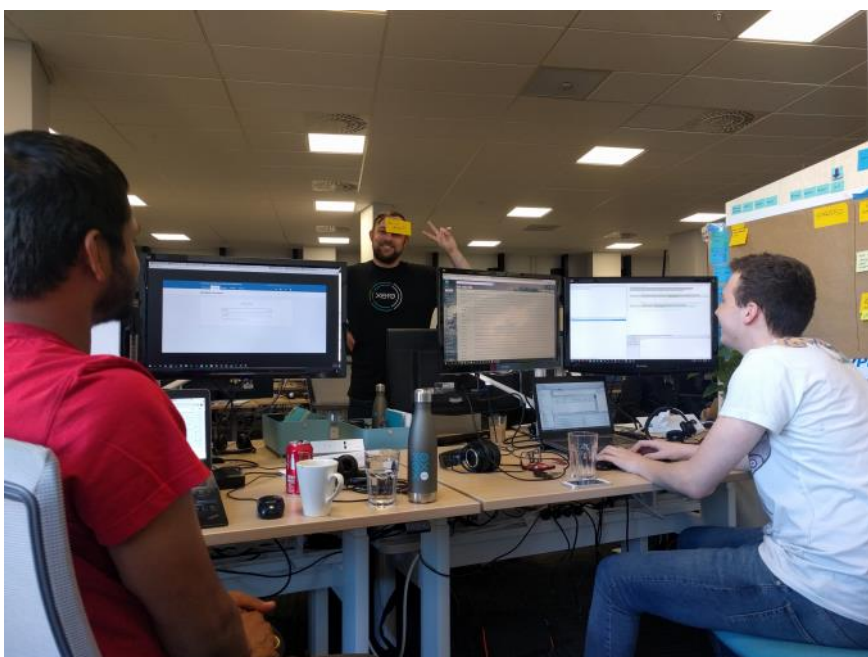
At this point in my career, I had server side development covered but if I spent more than six months to a year out of mobile development then I would struggle to get back in. Hmmm,



problem, I didn't fancy going back to the old mobile team, Jie the team leader from the old mobile team was now over at BNZ, he suggested a coffee.

Now this was around the end of September, there then followed a succession of meetings over cups of coffee, where various people and myself chatted and tried to see if we had a fit. I think we knew we had one quite early on. They were looking to expand their mobile team and really wanted an experienced cross platform developer and I wanted to get back into mobile, add to that the not inconsiderable benefits of working for a bank and I think it was always going to fly.

In the end I finished with Xero at the end of November. Again it was strange, now in the opposite way. I had grown used to working with Akhil, Bronson, Mohan, Joe, and Lara, two Indians two kiwis and a South African. It really surprised me that I enjoyed working with them so



much and that they seemed to like working with me. Looking back, I guess that it does take time, I moved over to banking in July, so I was in the team for four

months, and now I feel similarly dislocated in the BNZ team I guess I need to remember this, it does take time.

In my time at Xero my tea drinking did become something of a

legend, I remember that JP used to laugh if anything went wrong when we were working together he would say “What do you think we should do next, maybe have a cup of tea” and indeed this was often the course of action I chose, largely it must be said so that I could have a think about what the next best thing to do was. So it was only fitting that when I left Xero that my leaving present was a rather pretty teapot and cup set.



Although I was finishing I moved to the super swish new offices, I had working for Xero for the entire time they were in Market Lane and the new offices really were very nice, all open area, wooden walls, fizzy water on tap, a gym downstairs, a proper cycle room and showers, including a towel service. Yes it was rather nice, I do remember in my last week, in my lunch hour, lying on a beanbag against a glass wall overlooking the bay listening to the start of the first Ashes test.

Anyway, come December I was off to BNZ and my commute started to settle down. It's a 12 minute cycle to the ferry and then a 25 minute crossing and then a 5 minute walk to my desk, I know I may have mentioned this before but I have to keep pinching myself to remember that this is what I actually do. Again I feel as though I don't belong. However my "buddy" for the first week was Karl who was lovely we really got on. It is as I foretold that in the future nobody will have a desk. In order that we could sit together for my first week we had to have special instructions, blue-tacked to the desk, so we could reserve the desk, but it was worth it, by the end I had managed to do something. I was determined to actually contribute something before Christmas.

In contrast the BNZ building is a bit of a comedown,



though to be fair it really does not look like much from the outside but its not too bad inside. Also, as we

catch the 7:15 ferry I am in the office before 8am and I get my pick of desks, which means that I can sit by the window and look out over the harbour, yes in this brave new office world, you snooze you loose.

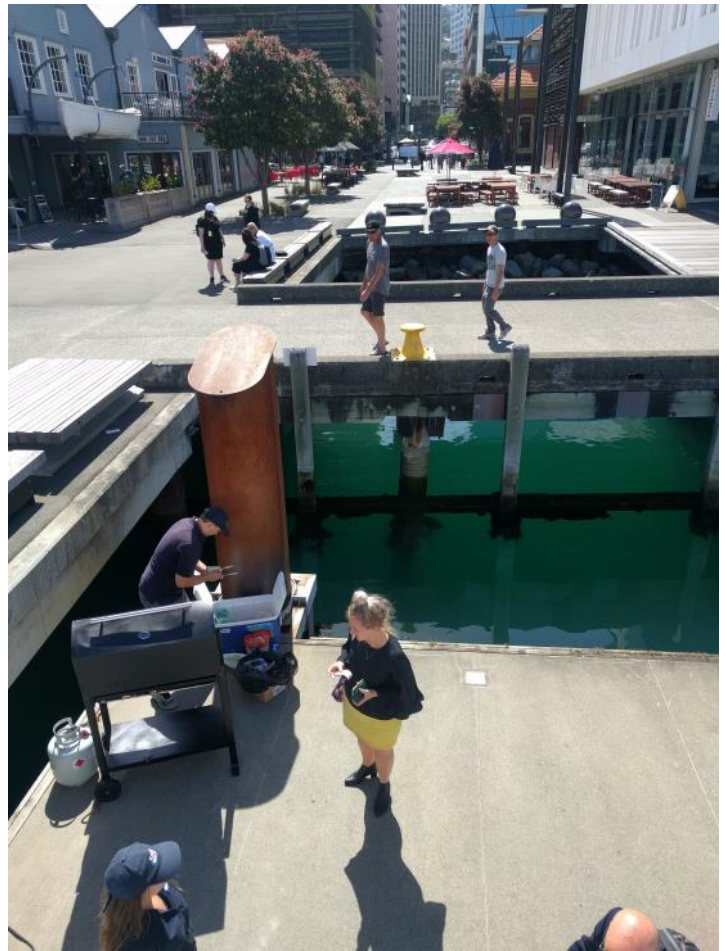
Mind you, on the commute, I think we have been lulled into a false sense of security. We have been commuting over spring, and a very good spring so that when winter does arrive we will be in for a bit of a shock. It has mostly been all bright sun and loveliness crossing the harbour however there have been one or two bumpy rides, which gives us a bit of a taste for winter, on one it was so choppy that I was getting regularly showered with waves but it was so bouncy I didn't fancy trying to get down the steep stairs without



injury. The week before we broke up they were giving away sausages as we boarded and there was cheap beer as well, all too late for me as I had been at BNZ induction all day and could not eat another thing.

It's a whole new rhythm of life that we have to get used to. The house we lived in on the beach was so idyllic that

I did think when we were there that when we left we would be disappointed by the move. Are we disappointed,



well yes and no. Yes we have no sea view, and indeed it would be hard to compete with the view we had. However there are some unexpected benefits, we have a lovely quiet courtyard that we make a lot more use of than the outside space in the other house. Carpets are really nice, we had a cork floor at the old place, and

it's a little bigger, 85 square meters rather than 75, it just give all the rooms a little more space to breathe. There are some completely expected pleasures, a bath, we have missed having baths and I think after we moved in we were having a bath daily. I think this will come into its own even more in the winter.

And then it's the end of the year and Christmas. We still have our advent tree and even after all these years seem able to fill it with some cracking presents: Christmas pulp book,



bath bomb, Frisbee golf starter set, walking tours of Wellington, waterproof Bluetooth speaker for the bath, Santa pillowcases. We went to local am-dram of Christmas a play which was really quite good, a popup carol concert straight off the ferry on the way home which was a little shouty. Steph bought me a footstool to go with the rubber garden chairs, it works very well in out courtyard, I got Steph an impact driver and drill set (yes she really wanted that).



Bunny (my sister) and Allan came out to see us for Christmas. Its good to be able to spend some time with them.





It's a long way to New Zealand from anywhere so not everyone can make it. We managed to combine our different needs from a holiday. Steph and I needed to get some exercise everyday and that wasn't completely when Bunny and Allan wanted. So we had some lovely combination days like we hiked up a hill and met them at the café at the top. On Christmas Eve we cycled through the bays to the cinema to watch Paddington. The wind against

us all the way there but on the way back we were blown home. Bunny taught us a new form of canasta, who knew there is a modern American canasta? So our days were pottering around New Zealand and our evenings were playing cards.

So here we are at the end of the year. It feels as though we are making some progress. We live 600 meters from the plot of land



we own so we will be able to monitor the build. The house in the UK has been dressed to be sold;



now all we need is an offer to buy. We are both currently enjoying our jobs. I think the year coming is going to be a lot more complex but I guess I feel as though we have



cleared the decks and we are ready to get going. Hopefully resource consent will happen this month. Its funny I think that our life is full of change but I guess the age we are at means that there are many people we know that are going through just as much, if not more, change. They have children leaving, careers coming to an end as retirement starts, so I guess this change stuff is all relative. Anyway, we have started to get into the swing of the New Year and that new rhythm is good to feel.