

Steph did describe this trip to the UK as being like a slow whirlwind, well I think its picking up speed as we start to spiral towards the end. We have found the rhythm I was looking for in that Steph walks to the MRI and I potter off to Halifax every day and we hire a car for the weekend and go a visiting. But now as the time here starts to run out it seems to get more precious and scarce.

I find it quite odd to write this. When I used to send these last year I was pretty much just sending a letter to Mum but one of the things I have begun to realise is that this does seem to be read by people so I find myself a bit



nervous about its reception.

So this has been a experiment. An experiment in many ways. We wanted to find out how we feel about living in the UK again. We wanted to maintain friendships and keep contact with people. We wanted to see if this sort of nomadic lifestyle is possible and I guess ultimately we need to decide where we want to live. Well it's a big ask. How has it gone?

The UK. Well I have to say that was one of the bit that I felt most apprehensive about. All we had to work on was BBC radio and the somewhat bias view of other people who have decided to leave. Well the UK is perfectly nice. The next generation see like well-spoken and likeable people who bear no resemblance to the hooded knife bearing thugs of the media. Likewise we have been surprised and touched by the kindness of



strangers. The man who saw Steph struggling with her heavy bag on the underground and helped make sure she was able to get her train just one of many examples. However there are downsides. People are far more routinely rude in public in the UK. And not just swearly rude, apparently educated people can be just as rude. Don't get me wrong, it



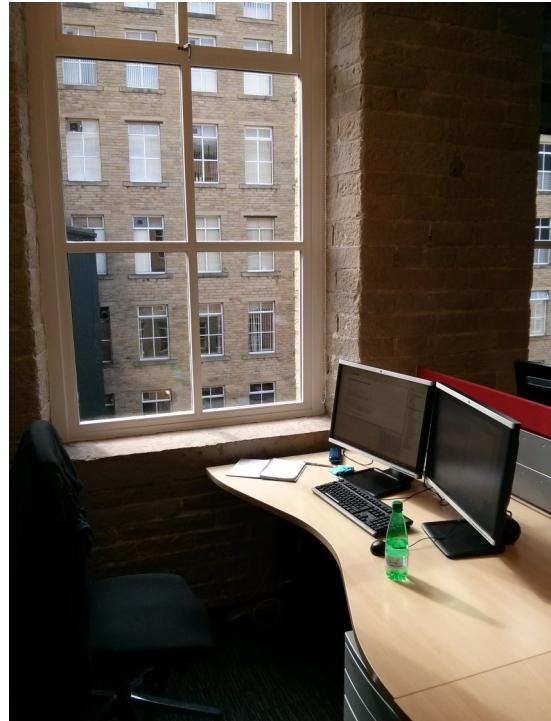
doesn't happen a lot but when it does it really shocks and saddens me.

One of the biggest things I have noticed is the smell. The smell of England in summer is something I remember but haven't experienced for the last couple of years. It must be the vegetation or something. It seems particularly evident in the long twilight around dusk and that half-light is something else I have missed without realising it.

I am working in Halifax, I think most of it was built before Europeans went to New Zealand. I work in Dean Clough which was built in the 1830's and was one of the largest carpet factories in the world. Part of the industrial revolution in



the north of England. It somehow seems right that these old brick monsters are now being used as a venue to write software in the 21st century. I am a contractor, a number not a free man, and in some ways its quite liberating that I don't have to be responsible. I can just concentrate on the mechanics of writing code. It is good to give myself the time to practice my technique but I think I am bored now,



I'd like it to stop. The rhythm of catching the train to Halifax has been welcome and it seems odd that its drawing to a close. It really has made me appreciate how much I enjoy working for Xero in Wellington. I work with a supportive and bright team who care about what they do and for a company that care enough to allow me the freedom to do this, I am very lucky.

I could work in the UK, not at this job but at the moment I love working in NZ.

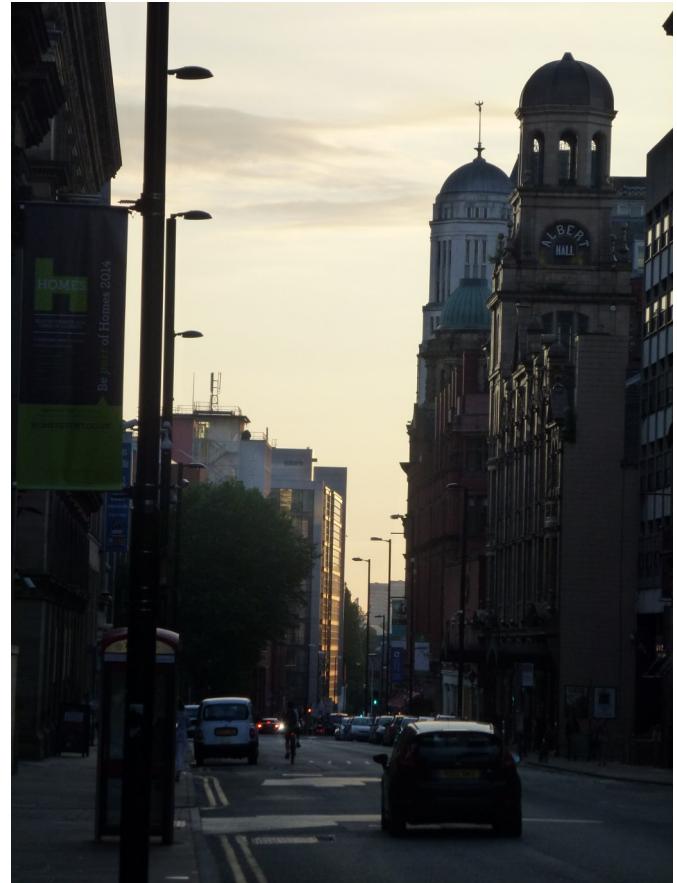


Steph seems to have fitted back into the MRI. The NHS seems to still be working (though from talking to people your mileage may vary). Many of the people there are still there from two years ago. I think she has found it nice to be remembered and respected by the staff but like me has found that being a jobbing OT can struggle to stretch her.

Meeting friends has been the joy in this summer. We knew that we came back to sort out mortgag-



es and setup carers for Mum and do UK paperwork that is tricky from NZ and all that has been very much more time consuming than we anticipated. However it's all been worth it to see friends. To potter and walk through the countryside and chatter. To be able to see people multiple times so that mostly we have not had to say hello and goodbye in the same breath. To be able to catch up with people and to have time to find out where people are up to. We have not been able to see eve-



ryone, unfortunately some arrangements either went awry or didn't come together but we have seen lots of friends. We have played badminton most weeks which I have to say is one of my highlights even if it would appear that I have got worse or everyone else has got better or both. Thanks to Ian for trying to get me to stand up for my serve. We have even managed to hike up Pendle Hill on one of the hottest days of the year. I did this on my 30th and 40th birthdays but it was a little bit of a trip for my 50th.

Staying with my brother has been good. Bizarrely we do seem to have taken to chatting on Skype more since we went to NZ but it is good to be able to spend some time in the same country even though sometimes it can be days



between meetings. I am sure that Roger is looking forward to getting his space back but his help has been essential I don't know how we would have done this without his generosity.

All four of Mum's children were back together for a meal with her for the first time in about 5 years. We are rather spread around the world so meetings of us all are tricky to arrange.

Is this life possible? Hmm, tricky. Well this trip certainly is not repeatable. I will end up doing a 10 week contract which I am not sure people will wear again. I probably could talk work into letting me work from the UK but



I think Steph would struggle to get this much time off. So my guess would be yes, if Steph was changing job and I could get to work from the UK, watch this space, maybe in a couple of



years.

So the big one, where do we want to live. Well, we could easily live in the UK and may well do so again but for the moment we are enjoying our time in NZ and we will set off to return there next month. I think I am missing it more than I ever thought I would, I want to sit on the deck and watch the sun set. First



we are off for a proper holiday, not this, this is very much not a holiday in the any sense of the word I understand. Don't get me wrong it's been great fun and I have enjoyed it immensely but I am looking forward to a more conventional holiday. Roll on France, Laos and Cambodia.