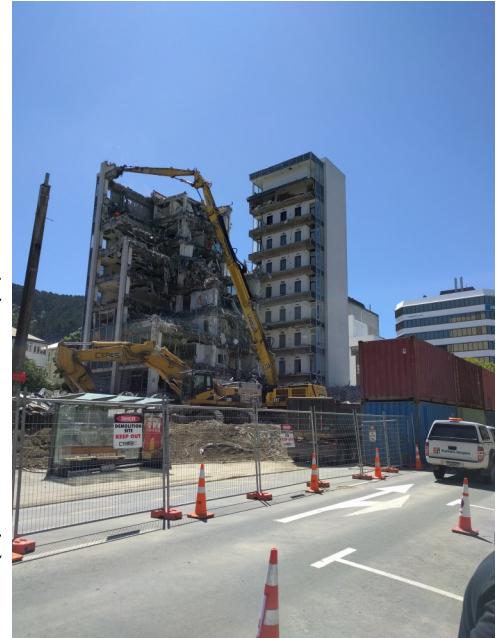
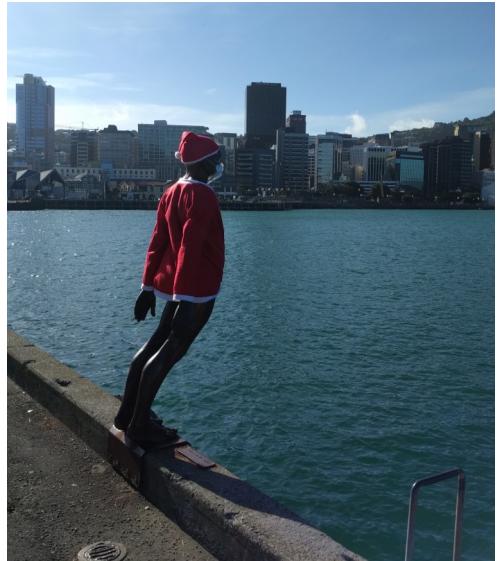


Well we did get what we wanted for Christmas, we got to be at home on the beach, read, potter and get out hiking. It felt good to close out the year by finishing some tasks. Steph spent days preparing and then passing her Prince project management qualification. It meant that the pattern over the holiday break was that we spent time in front of computers and then when we had had enough we went out for some exercise.

We did also manage to get out and go and see a carol and brass band concert and work here continues to pull down buildings damaged in the earthquake and even went to see some cricket at the Basin Reserve.

Steph got me a camera, which explains some of the arty photos and I got her a smart watch. I really didn't know if it was a good idea, she has often said she didn't want one and hasn't worn a watch for 20 years (naked from the elbow down in



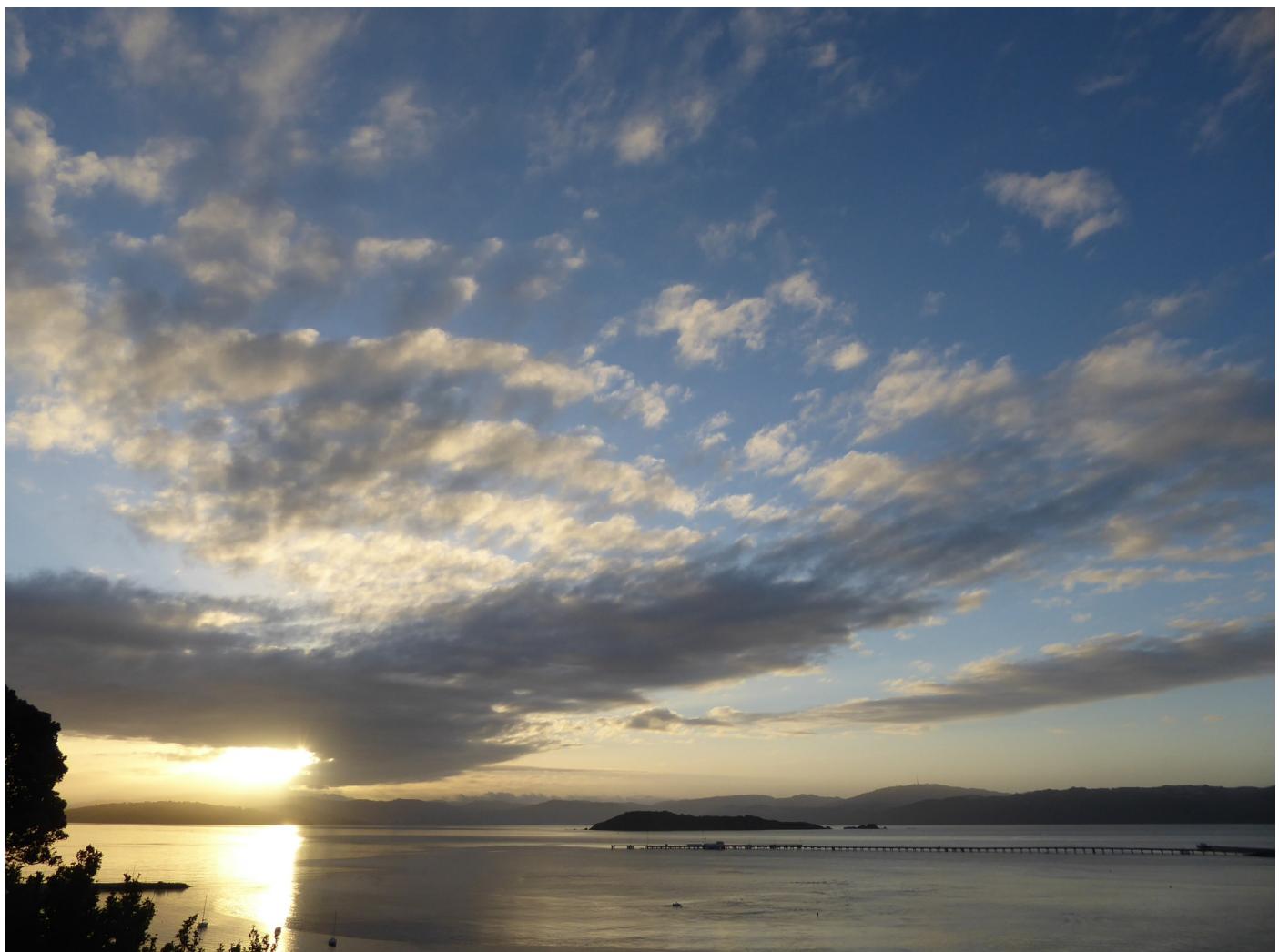


healthcare, infection control). Also I got her a Pebble and handily enough they went out of business just after I bought it. So a little trepidations. As it happens she loves it, she can leave her phone in her bag and still keep up with what is going on. Also she loves the other half of the present, I (with lots of help from Andrew) put together an app the takes the shopping list from Google Keep and put it on her wrist, now she can go around the supermarket checking off items on her watch. This was what I did



while she was doing her Prince course. Yes Steph it an odd one sometimes, I am not sure many women would appreciate a Christmas present of a better shopping list, but she loves it. Just to prove I can be just as odd one of my favourite presents that I got from Steph was gravy, I love roast potatoes and gravy and Steph made gravy for me and “hid” it in the freezer, I’ve still got some left and its lovely.

Exercise has been important and fun this summer. Some-time I have found getting older to be very trying, I do the same things I have always done but my body reacts differently. It’s much easier to put on weight and it takes





longer to recover than I used to. It's taken almost a year for me to get back to something like normal after coming off my bike. I mention this to Mum and she laughs, apparently according to her its not going to get any easier. She is right and it helps as now I think about it although I do find it harder now than I did in my twenties, I will look back on my time now when I am older and wish I still had what I have at the moment. So I should get out there and enjoy that I am not totally decrepit yet. It might not sound it but it does make me feel a lot better.

Like I said it's so much easier to put on weight as you get older and Catherine has a theory that being in the southern hemisphere make it harder. In the north we tend to eat too much in winter what with the cold and Christmas but in summer we eat better as we eat salads. Here we still eat too much in the winter, but the summer has Christmas so eat too much then as well. It might be overly simplistic but I am putting on weight. So we have decided to do something about it. I have been trying to eat well since Christmas, this largely means no cheese or beer but it has started to work and as a consequence we are both cooking

some exciting and different things.

Because the summer holidays coincide with Christmas January is a month where lots of people have holidays, Wellington council make a real effort to have a summer city, there are Star Trek performances in the park and free music concerts in the Botanical Gardens.

Summer here has been patchy, if you are feeling charitable; others here have more colourful words to describe their contempt for the weather. It's been wet and windy for a lot of days, but interspersed there have been some beautiful days. We have needed them. We have been out ridge walking get-





ting in practice. We walked the escarpment walkway, lots of steps and beautiful views across the Tasman Sea. We have been up and down our local hill: Colonial Knob at least three times.

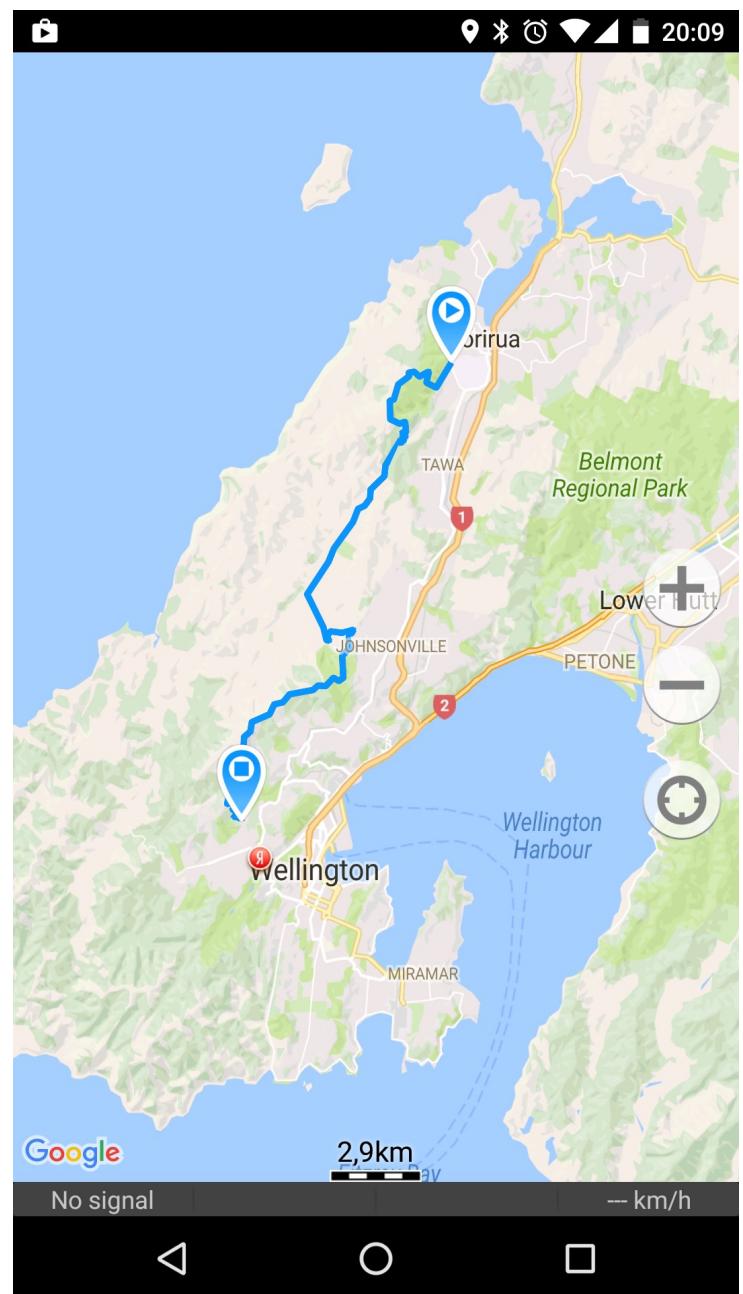
On one of the occasions, New Year's Eve we walked for about 5 hours and then we caught the train into the city to meet up with friends. It was a lovely evening though after that walk it got progressively more difficult to get up to go to the bar. It does give you an idea how small



town Wellington can be, we walked into a bar at 8pm on New Year's Eve and got a window table and were served food within 15 minutes, we had to leave the previous bar because they closed at 10 pm - on New Year's Eve! Apparently the staff party took precedence over profit, lovely. We made our way home on the train for a welcome Spa on the deck overlooking the lagoon at 11pm, after the walk and the spa we were so tired that we were asleep before midnight, what party animals we are.

Steph has a plan to walk from Porirua, our local town, up and over Colonial Knob, through Spicer Forest, along Ohariu Valley then using the Old Coach Road and up and over Mount Kau Kau and then down the Skyline into Wellington. We even get to stop off in a café for a delicious lunch en-route.

The walk is pretty exposed, we are on the ridge above Wellington for a lot of the walk, so if its windy we



risk being blown away. This has given us a objective, which has meant that not only do we get the benefit of the actual walk but also all the cycling and walking we are doing to practice. Come the proposed day, the weather was perfect almost completely windstill. Windstill is new word to me, Johan assures me that it's a perfectly good South African word and he seemed surprised that its not part of the English language, well I am happy to adopt it.

It was a fair walk, we did 30 KM (almost 20 miles in old money) and it took almost 10 hours. Suffice to say we were quite tired by the end and we were grateful to make



it to Catherine and Sarah's house. They had promised us access to a bath. Our bones were very grateful and we had lots of protein, red wine and some silly

games. Early bed and lots of sleep but a wonderful day.

Now Steph works in the centre of the city we can meet up for lunch, which we do occasionally. Also



we can put the bikes on the back of the car, drive to the bottom of the huge hill on the way to work and cycle on the last 10 KM to work and then try and coordinate getting back to the car at the same time in the evening.

It does feel as though we have completed lots of things that have needed doing and that we have got more exercise and eaten better but now it feels as though its time to start new things, what's next ?