



We were sitting watching TV, nothing particularly unusual there, when Steph commented that she was surprised how much our lives have changed and continue to change over the last year or so. And its true, Steph was able to quote some examples and now that I tried so could I. Some of the changes were trivial and some less so. I think what sparked Steph's comment was that we were drinking Chamomile tea, we were and are staunch "Yorkshire black tea with a spot of milk" drinkers so for us to be drinking tisanes is unusual. Its all Catherine and Sarah's fault. We did some day-hikes with them when we practiced for the Milford Sound hike and Yorkshire tea from a flask is OK,

but not great, they suggested Blood Orange Tea and its great even from a flask, no milk I guess. The other part of the sofa sitting was what we were watching, we were "binge watching" as I believe the younger folk say. For some reason we seem to have switched to watching blocks of TV, Happy Valley, Last Tango In Halifax and Picard have been watched recently, I guess this started when we were away for long chunks of time. Which in turn is a reflection on retiring. I guess quite a lot of the change comes back to that, I always knew it would change our lives a lot and it has and continues to do so. I guess the surprise for me is that it continues to do so.

While working our breakfast would be a 20 minute rushed affair and then out into the dark cold of a car or a bike, now I can afford not to set an alarm and get up and have a leisurely breakfast. Set a fire if its cold and toast crumpets or bread. Steph chops fruit including our own figs and adds yogurt and honey. I guess its good to type this and reflect how very blessed I am. That's another change, inspired by James when we were



in the UK I have started baking pretty much all of our bread and rolls and crumpets, I know I am bias but I have to say I think my bread is pretty tasty. Steph loves as it is has so much let processed ingredients in it and tastes of something.

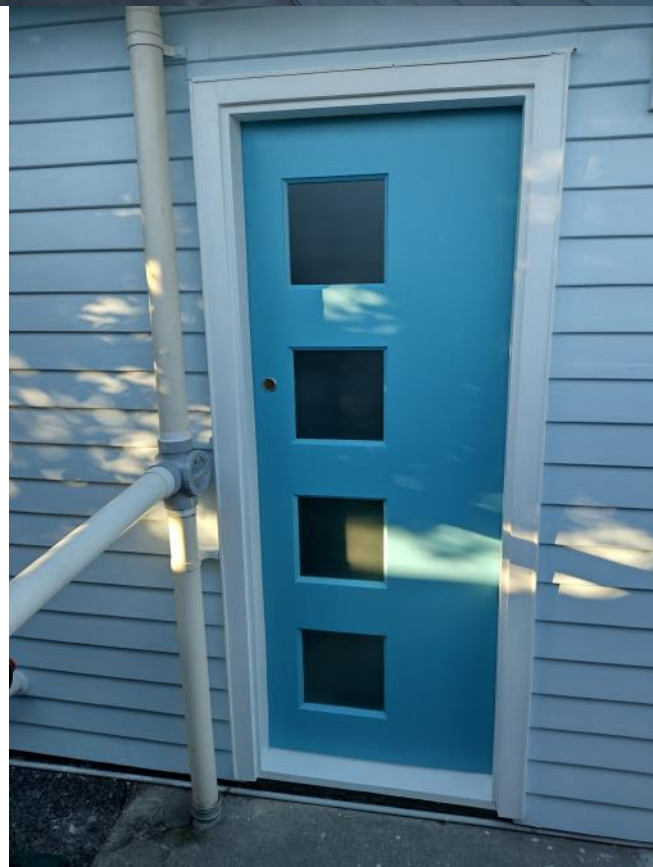
Now we have returned to the Kapiti Coast for winter, its our first winter since 2021, and the first since we had insulation and double glazing, its actually fun to discover our "new" house. Now that summer is behind us there is not much we want to do in the garden at the moment so we have returned to painting the house. We have three walls to the house, as we are semidetached the fourth wall is a breeze block fire wall and cannot be touched, we have done two of the walls, the ones people see and left the back of the house. Now we are back into it and remember-





ing the techniques we used last year its quite fun. We have divided the wall into three sections and each one will take us about four weeks to strip back to the wood and then prime and top-coat, so you can see its quite an undertaking but its not very high skill and its a pleasant occupation and it would cost upward of 20,000 dollars to have someone do it. We have made pretty good progress, we have completed two of the three sections and had a bit of a pause to fit a new back door that we bought two years ago and stored in the garage until the new bathroom and the painting around the door was done.

I guess one of the other changes we have made is that we cycle to the cinema every Tuesday, its cheap tickets for seniors, I cannot believe I do that but there you go. Its great we have seen so many things we would not usually





see (including all the films that were nominated for best picture at the Oscars) and we get to cycle along a beautiful path down the river into Waikanae. In fact this week they open a 1.5 million NZ dollar cycle bridge to deliver us into the town, it feels like they built it just for us but I guess others will use it. It turns out that if you go and see a film every week there are some weeks where we have seen everything that is being shown. On one of those weeks we still cycled but we went south across Queen Elizabeth Park to see a free concert put on by the US Marine band and our mayor even got up and joined in for one number.





They come back to a small hall in Paekākāriki as there were a group of US Marines stationed there in the war, at that time they came to the hall at week-ends to dance.



When I stopped work, Steph carried on, she was largely working on Wednesday and some of Thursday, with the occasional hour or two scattered into the other days. This gave us a rhythm to the week, we would cycle on Tuesday, I would write software on Wednesday and some of Thursday and then we were free to do our jointly planned tasks the other days, lately that has largely been sanding the house. I think I adapted to this rhythm and liked the flow, I managed to get work done on the GPS tracking software Trailblazer and started a new cricket score notification app, wrist-spin, for my phone.

Now Steph is starting to wind down, even one day of a 6am alarm while I slept on was proving to be annoying. Also the more we think about it the more we realize that although it feels like we have all the time in the world its probably later than we think and there are things we want to do. More hills to walk up, more paths to cycle and more

films to see. However if Steph no longer works on a Wednesday, in fact is now working about 10 hours a month, this is a new rhythm to get used to, probably a first world problem now I think about it.

It does make it sound like I have become a hermit, I do go out honest, but I am happy pottering sanding. I guess I used to travel into the big city (Wellington is about the size of Preston - so that's a stretch) at least twice a week for the last couple of years, now I go in







maybe once a month. I did go and see New Zealand v Australia test match at the basin reserve which was good and we were doing well as we left on the first day but after that Australia rather



romped home. A couple of weeks ago we got an opportunity to go and stay with Catherine and Sarah on their boat in the harbour, it was very sweet drinking beer, eating take away and playing cards on a Friday night. Then the next day cycling along the prom back to the car to drive around to Eastbourne where we stayed

in our old house. Steph worked with Angela who rented the house after us and she has nobody in the spare room so we went and stayed and caught up with





her and cycled down to the lighthouse and hiked our old haunts. The other attraction was lap time, we haven't had a cat since we lost Stripy 18



months ago. Angela's cat Romeo is quite high maintenance and demanding so we were able to give her a night off, in fact Romeo was on my lap while Steph was still hugging her hellos. Romeo was much loved all night as he slept on Steph. And then we went on a road trip to Napier to visit friends and play board games and cycle through the autumnal colours.

Next up is Steph's birthday and we will have to see how our new rhythm changes.