

And breath in.

We've been rushing around a little bit since Christmas. Its all been a bit frantic really. We ended up in a bit of a rubbish place. Our lease was up on 3rd Feb, we had to let them know before Christmas if we were going to renew. We could renew but in the end decided to try and find somewhere for a better commute. Of course we didn't find anything over Christmas, and during the January mad rush we were looking at houses every day, we saw so many we needed to keep notes just to keep them straight in our minds. There were many that we saw that we wanted but people had taken to offering more than was being asked for the rental – we are looking around the 500 NZD per week, so about 1,000 GBP per month - so the tactic is to view as soon as possible, then offer more than is being asked on the spot and even then the chances are you end up on a short list if you are lucky.

I have to say it was all a bit depressing and I did think sometimes that we should have just stayed put. It turns out I have a special ability to find things on trade me (Kiwi eBay) and in the end I did manage to find a property that nobody else seemed to want. Now this may seem like a bad / desperate thing but the main reason that I think it falls off people's radar is that its on the beach, there is no heating, its single glazed, to move in the movers have to coordinate getting the van on the beach with the low tide and it's a five minute hike through the woods in darkness to the road. So I can see not ideal, not even possible if

you have kids.

The upsides for us are, well just take a look at the view from the sofa, its North facing so we get all day sun, the deck is

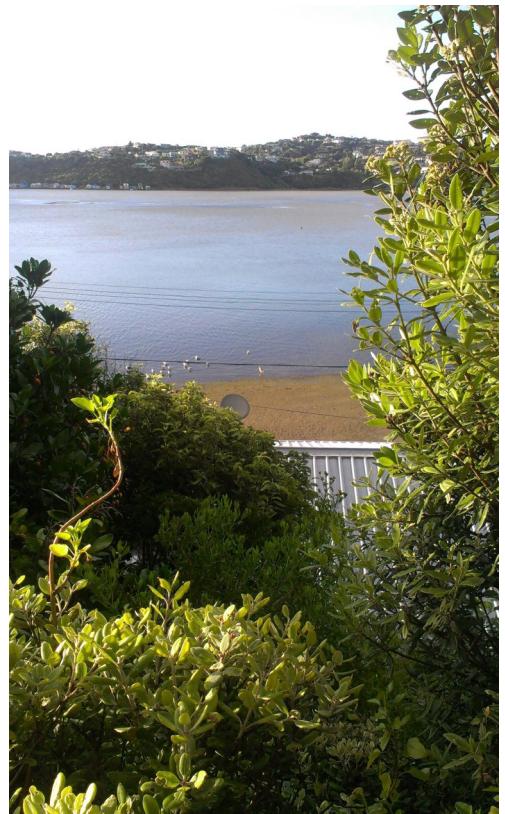


sheltered because we are not at the top of a hill so we can have breakfast on the beach. For all its remoteness I can be in the centre of Wellington at work in 30 mins

if I use my folding bike and maybe 1 hour if I walk along the beach. Steph can cycle to work in 20 mins. We have our own launch slip should we decide to buy a kayak and at low tide we can walk to the pub down the beach. The landlord says he is going to install a wood burner (but lets see if that actually happens)

I guess I am just happy that we have somewhere to go. Steph here and I am very excited by the new place. It is two bedrooomed and the smallest place we have ever lived in, but it is on the beach.

So, what else has been happening? Its full on summer here, we have had a month of pretty consistent hot sunny weather. We



have been out to watch sunset concerts in the botanical gardens. The best night was for big band jazz with Antoinette (a friend and colleague of Steph) with Francis



(Antoinette's step daughter) and Steven (Francis' boyfriend) and a very yummy picnic.

Last weekend was the culmination of frenetic activity, it was one of our three day weekends, we had Friday off, Steph had applied for the new job and had an interview at 9am. The interview went quite well and its good practice but she narrowly missed out (I have to say given that her "patch" was the south half of the north island I think there may be better jobs out



there). Then we had to finish the packing (the movers were due to arrive at 9:30 on Saturday morning), we man-

aged to pack most of the final items then it was off to the Rugby Sevens.

I was not really aware of this before we came to Wellington but you simply cannot live in Wellington and not go the sevens, its just a massive weekend party, with a bit of Rugby. Fancy dress is a must, we managed to put together a cowboy for me and schoolgirl for Steph, we got the bus along with two Elvis's a Freddie Mercury (weirdly carrying an inflatable killer whale), and a bunch of bananas – they sat at the back singing “The wheels on the bus go round and round” Group costumes were the norm, we saw groups of police, groups of lady birds, loafers and Lance Armstrongs



(complete with syringes) and lots and lots of bananas.

I had been warned that it can all be a bit drunken and loutish at the sevens so I was a little concerned that we would not enjoy



it, I need not have worried, it was quite gentle people did sing a bit but it was largely groups of people wandering around and



chatting, there were defiantly groups who were here to watch the game and groups that came to chat and party but both accommodated each other. It was fun to watch the Lance Armstrongs chatting up the lady birds.

We completely failed the Tebbit test as we cheered (quietly) England win against the All Blacks, to be fair England were pretty good).

Steph here, we have never really followed Rugby so I had to ask for some rules before we went. We both loved the game. 7 minutes each half and the fact everything could change with the last play. I think I am hooked and will be following the series. I loved that it was a sell out event but half the seats are empty. Often people had their back to the game!!! We were entertained by the New Zealand Brass Band – they were fab. They did a full range of music, including Ganaam Style!!!

The following morning the movers arrived at 9am half an hour early, three hours later the house was empty and in a very nice



storage unit. Apparently one of the movers did the job as part of his rugby training.

Steph here, I just did not look at their manual handling – three piece sofa on one mans back!!!! They were really nice guys and so shocked when I pushed a tip on them. Is age catching up with us at last - first time we have had removers!

We cannot move into our new place until the 22nd of Feb so we have a three week gap between houses, we are lucky that a colleague of mine at work is off in the South Island for two weeks and he lent us his flat, so we are city kids for a couple of weeks.

So after moving all our stuff into Store-It, a vast facility dug into the side of a mountain we went into the city, out for a very nice meal and then back to the flat to



watch England win and then a crash to sleep.

After the hectic weekend I've had a bit of man flu and had a couple of days off work,



largely sleeping. On Wednesday it was Waitangi Day (this is the public holiday to mark the anniversary of the creation of New Zealand) Nick and Pauline, friends we know via Phillipa decided to have a street party for everyone to get to know each other. They do live in a cul de sac and they had asked the council (however not having heard anything they decided to go ahead anyway. It was a good laugh there was a quiz where everyone had to find information out about each other (I think Pauline should have been an OT). There was a musical hats game (a bit like musical chairs) which Steph won (I thought she was a bit



mean but she said that the kids needed to learn about losing)

This weekend we have been city kids, Friday evening we had

drinks at my work and then pottered across the road to see Alan Davis (an advent tree present from Steph to me). He was a bit formulaic stand up but he did make me laugh, the venue on the other hand was colossally hot. Saturday we cycled to the French delicatessen to buy some camembert for Sarah's birthday as she loves cheese. We went out for very authentic Vietnamese with Sarah and Catherine (Steph used to work with Catherine when we first arrived here). It was a lovely evening though Sarah bought us (me) some Wallace and Grommit Wensleydale, probably cost more than our gift. Today we went to a café on Cuba street for scrambled eggs and bacon for breakfast and then cycled 35 KM round the bays. Now we are chilling and cooking a roast chuck.



I think I will find it much easier this month as we know what we are trying to do. Another week here in the flat then we go to Napier for the Art Deco festival, including a black tie dinner. Then a week in the camper van and we are in our new house. Steph again – the summer has been better than last year – and

we thought that was good. It has been so good living in the city – but might get expensive with all the meals out we are having. I quite enjoy my walk to the station and train to work. I thought I would cycle but 10 minutes walking means it is not worth unlocking the bike. We did look at some places in town but were pipped at the post.

Right off for that chuck. Love to you all Derek and bits from Steph

From 22 Feb 2013 we will be at

37A Seaview Road

Paremata

Porirua

5027

All visitors still very welcome.