



Terry's Travels

TT32-1 Misty Yorkshire - Tropical Dubai 2nd November 2009

Five days in England passed in a flash but we got to celebrate my grandson James 13th birthday – so now I'm a granddad with a teenage grandson!, he handled the embarrassment of singing Italian waiters very well. Plus we had more family and friends stuff, a rush but nice.

The photo (from my new to me phone/cam W995) L to R is James-Lindy-Dan on our walk with the four dogs in the autumn mist of St Ives Estate in Bingley, UK.



James, Lindy and Dan

Emirates got us to Dubai from Manchester and into 30C+ heat on the first leg of our Round the World to NZ trip, we chose the Golden Sands apartments as low (relative) cost which worked just fine, it has an excellent value restaurant too and the fancy no alcohol cocktail is mango/guava/strawberry which was welcome after some pool time.



Di with tropical drink

Abu Dhabi has just completed a fantastic new motor racing track and opens it with the last Formula 1 race of the season. We rented a car and drove in about 1h40m to the park and ride, jumped on the free bus service and were driven some 5km to Yas Island where the new circuit is. We enquired about buying tickets but it was a sell out. They marketed them at around 370 pounds for a 3 day pass with concerts by Beyonce, Jamoraquai and Kings of Leon, tickets for children were the same price. Ticket touts would have had difficulty (good) as the tickets are chipped and you have to show ID. We walked around and everyone was shocked we had got to the island without tickets! Seeing the enormity of it all just being created from flat desert was amazing. The photo shows the hotel that bridges the track – note how recently it has been completed. The LED roof lighting is amazing.



Yas Island Race circuit

We watched the actual F1 race on TV at the Jockey Club near our apartment, very aptly named since it was packed with "fillies" – what a brilliant night/day race and this obviously lifts the bar for what's expected to market to the rich. Poor old UK will be lucky to get a race in 2010 even though we have Jenson Button as world champion.

The last photo shows the world's tallest building (the crane driver got 6x usual pay for this almost 1km high extravaganze) disappearing into the mists of pollution and the motorway with auto tolls – when you rent a car they phone the toll people – we paid 20 Dirhams for passing 4 toll gates (5Drh=1 pound). Despite all the impressive stuff I'm still left with a feeling of desperation in this unreal world! The credit crunch has struck here too with property rental rates down 40%.



Terry - Dubai, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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TT32-2 From Desert to Paddyfields 5th November 2009

First here is the photograph that somehow was missed from the last TT32-1 showing the needle like tallest building. The crane driver was called Babu Sassi and lived in the crane for some of the time!! It took too long to get to work, the high speed lift will make it fast now. Ask me if you want more info and photo in construction.

We used the superb Changi airport Transit Hotel again at Singapore as our stopover to allow us to leap (well perhaps that is a slight exaggeration) out of bed at 2:45am for our cheap (and good) Jetstar flight to the Kingdom of CAMBODIA which becomes my 61st country visited. The free wifi at the airport worked well and passed the time. As we flew into the small Siam Reap airport we saw acres of flooded paddyfields – what a contrast to the deserts of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, a contrast that is the very essence of travel. We managed to be about the last of the small planeload of largely backpacker type younger travelers into this delightful airport. There was plenty of paperwork plus US\$20 per person for a 30 day visa. The money exchange gave us hundreds of thousands of something for US\$60. US\$7 for a taxi and we got a laughing Mr T to brighten our ride to our hotel. We knew that a tropical cyclone had hit the Philippines and gone on to Vietnam the country alongside Cambodia and the light rain falling was the aftermath, it was the final day of the Water Festival and we saw some of the returning boats that had competed in paddling races along the local river. The heavy rains had flooded the roads to a depth of around two feet but had fortunately now retreated to big muddy puddles, Mr T seemed highly amused that people coming out of 5* hotels were straight into this.

Cambodia is building its tourism after the recent troubled times and we passed many new and well designed hotels on our way to town.

Di had researched and chosen the Somadevi Angkor Hotel at around fifty pounds per room per night inc breakfast, a delightful place with lovely staff, good local furnishings with colorful tropical plants all around and our balcony overlooked the pool.

Yes you could walk around the streets which were packed with hordes of mopeds and small motorcycles, many pulling chariots where the European tourists looked oversized for such minimal transport as they dodged potholes and puddles. We did our usual thing of people watching (and vice versa) whilst having a drink on the pavement, some sort of mobile phone promotion with a microphone and music was across the road and they seemed to be amused playing music we recognized that had us foot tapping – it doesn't take much.....

We had come to see the massive Angkor Wat and decided that seeing the Killing Fields was too harrowing for us.

Terry – Siam Reap, CAMBODIA



Tallest building



Siem Reap Main Street



Somadevi Hotel



Transport in Siem Reap

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TT32-3 Angkor Wat and other temples 16th November 2009

I first heard more detail of the Angkor Wat several years ago when reading about the Mayan culture which we then visited in Southern Mexico – it's suggested that there are links. I will give you a few statistics that apply only to this most famous of the Temples. Cambodia, formerly called Kampuchea (the Khmer language) was visited by an Indian in the first century and the current Temples were largely built around the 12th century. Three BILLION tons of stone were transported some 45km and a third of a million people were involved in its construction – yes it's BIG.

It was made a World Heritage Site in the early 1990s and since then many countries have contributed very necessary reconstruction via UNESCO. Hindu and Buddhism are part of its history and whilst there has been war damage most of the dilapidation is simply nature and the passage of time. Incidentally the Mayans predicted the end of the world in 2012 (Dec 21st) which some reason is also stated by the rather obtuse Nostradamus . I notice that Hollywood has just launched a new disaster movie called 2012. They have launched now to ensure there is time to milk it worldwide, then get the Blue Ray and DVD sales before 2012 just in case!

Here are the faces of the nearby magnificent Bayon Temple

Damaged badly by vigorously growing kapok trees it was the busiest but also the scariest because it felt really unsafe with displaced huge stones

Terry, Siem Reap, CAMBODIA ; but now arrived "home" in Nelson, NEW ZEALAND



Angkor Wat



Note detail



Bayon Temple



Kapok trees—massive damage

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TT32-4 Brisbane and Nelson NZ 19th November 2009

Whilst we were in Cambodia I picked up a heavy head cold (not Swine 'flu!), so there I was coughing and sneezing in a tropical country. We wandered the streets of Siem Reap which is just developing with shops that are catering for both tourists and the locals that are doing better, the actual designer labels are a rip off (fakes) but many of the clothing items are good quality and well worth what you can get them for after a little bartering, especially in the market. There is also a street called Pub Street with bars and restaurants that really buzz at night, the local Angkor draft is just US\$.50 cents and good food is inexpensive all served in a really pleasant ambience – similar to Thailand but without the sex trade. The backpackers were here and mentions of the Lonely Planet and yes we would happily come back and choose the same hotel.



Siem Reap

When we were in Cuba where the Swine 'flu caused us to become stranded, we met an Australian couple Troy & Jonette from Brisbane, good comes often out of adversity and we were calling to see them next. We arrived at 2am and had a few hours sleeping in an airport motel, Di had started with the sniffles when Jonette kindly collected us. They have just bought a splendid house right on the side of South Moreton Bay. The hospitality was just great and here we are a short ferry ride across the bay to North Stradbroke Island with Jonette driving us around in her 4X4 – wonderful and a perfect day too.



Jonette—Stradbroke Island

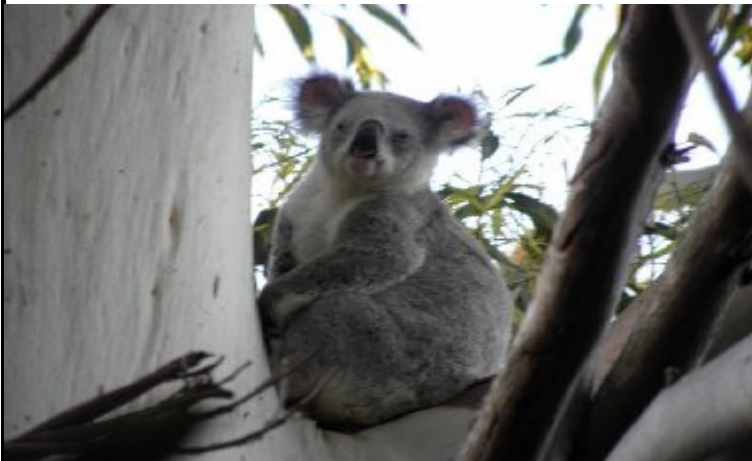
Stradbroke Island was a joy to visit and we also managed a chatty lunch together with old friends Bryan & Helen who also live in Brisbane.

Jonette knew where we may see a Koala in the wild near her father's estate also alongside Moreton Bay. I can't tell you the thrill of suddenly seeing one in the wild. My 26x zoom lens was put to good use....he (or she?) was sitting contentedly high up a gum tree.



4x4 fun on the island

Our 15 day journey to the Southern Hemisphere was over and now we are living as normally as we ever do back "home" in our house alongside Tasman Bay in Nelson, New Zealand – we are such lucky buggers, we have had great tenants here and plan a social meet with them, friends Henry & Val collected us from the small Nelson airport and the diary of social events is filling and many friends are expected to come to stay



Kapok trees—massive damage

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Many more photos with captions and previous travels on my website www.THinnc.co.uk



Terry's Travels

TT32-5 Socialising and Domesticity 31st December 2009

It still feels very strange to me to have hot sun in the build up to Xmas. Here you see Derek one of my riding buddies trimmed up and ready to join 450 bikes for the Toy Parade where we all take a toy for underprivileged children, with crowds lining the streets to see all the trimmed up bikes it is a popular Nelson event run by our Ulysses motorcycle club.

Di has had quite a social whirl too and this is one of her creations to take along to a girlie evening out.

You can see that our bougainvillea has flowered perfectly for Xmas, we planted it over 6 years ago and our lemon tree is in front cultivated by my personal attentions! - note the new flag of St George fluttering in the breeze. Di now has a veggie garden with beet-roots, broccoli, corn, beans, parsley and lots of herbs, spinach, tomatoes etc. Here you see her holding a cabbage which was transformed into coleslaw. Frittatas are coming out of the oven – talk about domesticity.

Santa came to us early too, I had mentioned I felt a chill in my wallet but we now have an impressive wall mounted HD TV and upgraded hifi and in doing this got rid (hidden actually) the tangle of wires.

Friends arrive next week as the Jazz Festival starts so we shall start the New Year with a musical extravaganza as we settle into full summer with the children on their holidays throughout the month.

We would like to wish you all a Happy Healthy and Prosperous 2010 – and make a special mention of our friends in various parts of the world who are battling with health problems – all the very best to everyone.

Terry & Di- Nelson, New Zealand



Derek at Ulysses Toy Run



Di's creation



" The Cut "



From Di's veggie patch

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