



Terry's Travels

TT7-1 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hi everyone,

I left rainy England from Manchester and had the thrill of the captain opening the throttles and jetting skyward during final approaches!! - apparently an Air France hadn't cleared the runway at Heathrow. The red eye then brought me to the new Kai Tak airport in Hong Kong, this is my first visit following China taking over. The WOW factor is still here, the new airport really is something and a new airport express train - all marble floors, silence speed and cleanliness.

I was soon 25 floors up in my hotel Luk Kwok where I could see lots more skyscrapers and many cranes building even more, I guess the recession here is relative to its usual dynamism.

Rain and mist put me off going to Macao and the racing, so I did some malls - there seems more LCD screens and mobile phones than I ever saw anywhere. The rear entrance to the hotel leads to the colourful streets of pubs, clubs and restaurants. During my walk around one block I was dragged to look at clubs - but resisted these pretty magnets. Then a hooker tried to persuade me to have a massage - I settled for a pint of Tetley's in a lively pub filled with both Asians and Europeans. Yet another approach - this time an aging hooker asked me to look after her handbag whilst she went to the loo, that's a bit obvious isn't it? Anyway she was called "Lola" and her desperate strategy was to say she needed some sleep - NO CHANCE - she left. I sat at the bar and was joined by a Swedish guy and his pretty Asian girlfriend, they were both running a 15k marathon the following day. I enjoyed the buzz and the conversation and was happy to go on with them to a music bar - local

knowledge always helps. It was a very good band at "The Wanch" and I now have a T shirt as a reminder of a good night.

My trip to Macao couldn't have been better, they jammed all the racing into the Sunday after the rain so I saw F3000, touring cars and the 49th Macao GP with bikes too, Michael Rutter did the winning easily on his Ducati.....the return ferry ride is exciting as the Turbojet stays up on the plane with the skyscrapers flashing by until the final 400 yards from the ferry terminal.

Terry - Hong Kong. Nov 18th 2002



Terry's Travels

TT7-2 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hi everyone

By my final day of the long weekend in Hong Kong I was a dab hand with my 3 day Travel Pass (Octopus) beeping my admittance to the underground Wan Chai station. I headed for the famous Star Ferry and wandered along the edge of the busy harbour front. I noticed a bag lady (vagrant) with a battered trolley and ramshackle push chair untidily packed with her ragged possessions. She was reading a newspaper as sparrows pecked away on the pavement. I sat on a bench in a small park watching her, the view, passers by and was craning my neck to watch a new 100 storey plus skyscraper being finished off. Scary looking external lifts (elevators) were helping the work. The crane on top was lowering a skip all the way to the floor. Suddenly I was aware of the bag lady sitting on the same bench. She quietly spoke good English - looking in her 50's she could have been younger. She had many layers of ragged clothing but complained of the cold (I was in shirt sleeves) - she was cold as I shook hands with "Joy". She carried a smouldering joss stick. Coming from HK the park was her home, she had a quiet dignity as we talked. I asked could I give her some money for breakfast and left deep in thought about my privileged life.

As everywhere the piers are being upgraded and I ended up at Pier 3 for Discovery Bay. I walked the red carpet that is provided for the residents of this upmarket development. Upstairs was a lovely roof garden and I had eggs on toast whilst watching as helicopters flew overhead below the high flying Jumbos all over this remarkable harbour.

I had seen "Broadband" inscribed on many access covers on the pavements and visited a brand new space age shop selling all the new technologies. The staff were over enthusiastic whilst I looked at even more LCD and plasma screens full of stunning images. The movie of choice for demos was "Shrek" - a good choice. I found an internet - broadband of course! My legs were weary from pounding the pavements so I bought a lunch box of delicious fruits and made a flask of green tea in my de luxe room whilst jotting down my many thoughts.

A drink at Delaney's Bar got you a 10% discount in the Pad Thai restaurant where I had amazing spicy sizzling giant prawns. Eating out is another of HK's many experiences.....

Terry - Lapu Lapu, THE PHILIPPINES.



Terry's Travels

TT7-3 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

Leaving HK I was again super impressed with the train back to the airport. This time I had chance to see much more of this massive new airport. It was surreal as I used many travellers to eventually reach my gate 62. It felt as if I was passing through a computer simulation - a virtual reality - but this was the 21st century REALITY. The airport shops were a display of world class affluence.

The contrast could have hardly been more marked when I stepped outside of Cebu airport in The Philippines. A third world bedlam of battered smoky transport and bald tyres. Happily my pal Crazy David and his Filipino wife Carole were there to greet me and we soon stuttered away in this old taxi with the driver trying for extra business - I didn't blame him. Soon we were at my simple hotel - it all felt more desperate than I remembered but as a put shorts on I knew I would quickly adjust to this steamy country.

They took me to a money changer where I got a wad of dirty used Peso notes for my 100 dollars. My accommodation was a tenth of the cost in HK - and so were the beers - with every one that trickled down I WAS adjusting.....

Charming friendly staff helped start my day with an omelette and fruit before I sat on the sofa reading in the steamy heat beside the small pool. My day drifted by between dips and a really good book. Hector Macdonald "The Mind Game" www.hectormacdonald.com is a truly brilliant first novel - to become a film.

Terry - Lapu Lapu, THE PHILIPPINES.





Terry's Travels

TT7-4 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

Life at the Blue Sky is an easy going pattern of breakfast with the place to myself by the pool, read, swim and walk on the dusty noisy road outside avoiding tricycles and taxis. A sign outside the Blue Sky says rooms available for 2 hours with aircon and cable TV for 190 Pesos. There certainly is no stream of hookers - or anyone else for that matter. In fact my pal explains that largely it would be locals with their sweethearts enjoying some hard to find privacy and (for them) up market surroundings. Alongside the road tropical fruits are for sale and the staple rice. One lady was cutting a lawn with scissors! I'm feeling less alien now and many of the children say Hi to me. Yesterday was the 16th birthday of my friends adopted daughter Cherie Ann. David's wife Carol had produced a lavish spread with a pig as the centre and the spacious 2 story local house was jammed with children teenagers and friends. Being fiesta time singers came to the door, 5 pesos delighted them - that's so little when the failing peso is 83 to the pound. The adults were drinking Tanduay - that's the local rum and it was the cheapest less potent type. I was VERY careful with it and I saw the teenagers sneaking the odd bottle of beer upstairs where they sat on the rooftop listening to their (c)rAP music.

After the party David, Carole and I were accompanied by Ernie and his pretty Filipino partner Josephine. Ernie is originally from China and speaks the Filipino dialects as well as Chinese ones. We had beers in the outdoor Karaoke bar where Ernie entertained us with his excellent voice - even a duet with Josephine. All this in the humid eighties, a full moon rising and change from TWO pounds for all of us all evening!

Terry - Lapu Lapu, THE PHILIPPINES.





Terry's Travels

TT7-5 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

A giant shopping mall over the bridge in nearby Mactan was jammed with people. Security guards check you on entry to this modern massive 3 storey mall. All the shops are taken and as well as banks, restaurants, cyber cafes, there is a 28 lane bowling alley. I went to the 8 Plex cinema to see pleasantly amusing "Sweet Home Alabama" - it delighted the audience - English is widely spoken here, whilst Carole bowled in a tournament.

One on the Philippine's attractions is the excellence of its bands. At Slobadu night club we were entertained by three good bands in one evening - and saw some pretty good dancers too - taxis are metered, cheap and plentiful and I awakened a good humoured night porter at 3:30am to get into my hotel.

A trike ride took us to the coast some 15 minutes away and we sank a beer before the noisy Karaoke drove us away to nearby Plantation Bay - this would feature in the best tour brochures and is most impressive with its salt and clear water swimming areas. It made us an easy touch for the expensive cocktails with parasols, but with overhead fans and people splashing happily all around (mainly wealthy Filipinos and Japanese) a lazy afternoon drifted on by. Carole knows people everywhere and we soon knew that it operated a 3 shift system with 450 staff.

Not far away Mactan Shrine is where Chief Lapu Lapu repelled the Spanish invaders in 1521 - this part was the most touristy and you could shop for giant lobsters fish and veggies and then pay to have them cooked and served overlooking the sea. The religion here is 90% Roman Catholic and there are small chapels everywhere. The IMPORTANT dead people having lighting over THEIR graves!.....

Terry - Cebu, PHILIPPINES.



Terry's Travels

TT7-6 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

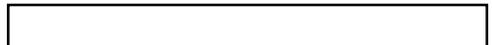
Hello Everyone

The country of the Philippines is 80 Million people on over 7,000 islands - so ferries are a part of life and can be dangerous. There are areas of danger with the New Peoples Army (NPA), the greatest danger is perhaps being kidnapped. David and Carole arranged a trip to Negro Island and staying in Dumaguete City as a sensible trip - so that's why at 6am I'm enjoying a trike ride in the fresh air to meet at their house in Lapu Lapu. A short walk to the first ferry where Madonna was blasting "A Material Girl" as we slipped down the channel to Cebu City for the Multicab - that means a mini bus packed to capacity and driven by a maniac doing 20 toots of the horn per km. Two and a half hours later they pried me out of the sardine can where I smelled of hot brakes and tyres.

The our second ferry - this time home made from washed up wood and bamboo and fastened together with clothes line. You put your name on the death list and slide down a plank at 45% with bald car tyre strips to slow you down. The orange life jackets were in plentiful supply but made for midgets (Filipinos are small people). As I looked around I saw them touching their crucifixes - but we arrived safely to Negro Island fringed with palm trees to find it was fiesta time. The pension had only a family room - not what was planned but OK.

We went to this bar - had they ever set me up! The barman was introduced and he was the GAYEST of the GAY. He outrageously flirted with me and then cackled with laughter. He (Dodie) was exactly like you would see larger than life on films and all the clients were being entertained, with me as the focus. He sang very well on the Karaoke but I was the focus of all the love songs - what a laugh as I urgently pointed to the curvy ladies on the video. We left and tried a guest house - no luck - but when we got back the Pension had got me a separate room - to David and Carole's great delight. Next day we visited the market where Carole bought fish and fruit, David bought booze - of course - and we took a trike to the coral beach. We were greeted as long lost friends by this old Filipino couple living in a beach shack. The home made table was brought out with plastic stools and put under the shade tree - more people arrived. My digital camera intrigued them with pictures straightaway. The Spanish Mackerel went on the driftwood campfire and tasted delicious - they brought highly spiced vinegar for it and we finished with the best tasting (Cebu is renowned) mango to follow - fantastic. But it didn't end there. The community leader came with an invite to visit his home to eat and drink something on this fiesta day. We did and met the friendly family and even a local Captain - it was all human interaction at its best - I felt so lucky

Terry Dumaguete City, Negro Island, PHILIPPINES.





Terry's Travels

TT7-7 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

I had so much to thank Carole and David for arranging in this action packed trip - but they took me by surprise again. Two hours into the wild ride back they said we were getting out at Cara Cara. It was a busy crossroads,

blazing hot, Carole had disappeared somewhere then waved us across the busy road. A 125cc and 100cc motorcycle were our taxis. David and Carole on the 125cc and me and the luggage on the 100cc. We stopped at the bakers where Carole bought a bagful of goodies. She had all the lady assistants waving to me - what WAS she saying? Then down the road and onto a gravel road and climbing, climbing it even got a little cooler as we got deeper into the jungle. The 125cc climbed faster and over the top and down where the gravel

turned into baked soil - you guessed it - it started to rain a little. After half an hours riding we hadn't seen the others for a bit. I thought, great, I don't know where I am, where I'm going - or who I am with. Thankfully the

other bike came back looking for us and we went up another track where I got off and walked with the mud getting thicker on my sandals. David then explained that Carole had come to visit "The Spirit Man" - Japanese he came for the war and stayed - but not to worry it wasn't exactly voodoo!

'Take your sandals off and climb the bamboo ladder' - I did. The hut had 3 dogs and one cat which was lying between the sooty cooking pans. A small Alter and Crucifix and a very old lady introduced as the Spirit Mans cousin - he was not allowed a wife. Beer and Tanduay were sent for - I thought here we go again. Carole was busy translating for us. She was then given an A4 pad a sheet of which she filled with all her problems. The SM reads it - makes a potion and blesses it, and the person and then reads the list everyday and continues to bless the person. No payment can pass hence the bag of goodies. Carole also asked for something for my varicose veins - I'll give you a user report later since its for external application before sleep - is this where the ladies from the bakers

With the way the UK health service is I may be glad of this.

Word had got around that there were strangers in the jungle - white men - and many more young people came. I amazed them with my digital camera - now who's doing the voodoo?

We rode back as darkness was falling and it was amazing that the feeble electricity that was there was at some huts was powering Xmas lights. There even was a most beautiful nativity scene. Back at the crossroads we jumped on the Cebu bus for a final hour of horn blasting - what a way to travel.....

Terry - Lapu Lapu, PHILIPPINES.



Terry's Travels

TT7-8 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

I got this notion to bring Thanksgiving Day to my friends in the Philippines as a thank you for all the hospitality. I funded the feast based of course on Turkey. David found a frozen one and Carole a live one. I called the evening before and found one defrosting and the live one had thankfully been despatched just before I arrived and was being plucked. They were both to be cooked over an outdoor spit over charcoal on some corrugated tin. A man was to be hired to rotate the spit - I think his reward was a meal of it!

On Thanksgiving Day some red wine flowed but it was quickly onto the local Tanduay Rum. Two sittings were arranged to handle the great number of people - it was so bizarre with me in my Santa hat and the temperature into the humid 90's.

David and Carole came with me to the airport and as I passed into the Departure lounge David bellowed "Bye Santa" to the great amusement of all the security people.

Cebu to Manila is about one hour, but a taxi is then necessary to change terminals. The Australian and two other Embassies had been abandoned the day before in Manila (terrorism) so I was glad to rejoin the VERY high security at the airport - to the tune of "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" on the pa system.

Manila - Sydney - Brisbane was according to plan and Di and friends Helen and Bryan were at the gate to greet me. What a difference one nights flying makes - from third world to modern world

Terry - Twin Waters, N of Brisbane, QLD, OZ.

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Terry's Travels

TT7-9 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

GDay!

The Brisbane area was hot and humid - the locals said the heat had come early this year. We settled into going out locally to wineries, garden centres, malls and of course the local pub called Trader Dukes for food and socialising. Here a most amazing co-incidence happened. The local Estate Agent Ron, a pal of Bryans was in the pub and had overheard that someone else from Bradford England was in the pub. I went and introduced myself - it turned out he had lived just 150 yards from me when I was seven years old in 1947. I asked his name "Brian Lerner" - the name produced SUCH VIVID recall - my late mother had stressed that I was NOT to play with him! It made me imagine that he really was bad - in fact he was twelve at the time - that's a big age gap for a seven year old. How different today and it was fascinating to swap names, he remains a pal of Nigel Boocock the speedway rider. He was quite emotional about this meeting at opposite ends of this SMALL world.

Other highlights were visiting a Ginger Factory, seeing the beautiful varied blooms as the various varieties were growing and then seeing them boiled in big cauldrons as they were processed into various products including crystallised ginger. The shop had some good T shirts " Want to get Laid? " crawl up a chickens ass and wait!

We all went in Bryans Land rover for a 30km drive up the scenic beaches, we had a picnic having found shade at Rainbow Beach, so named after the multi coloured fine sands there.

A party gave us a further chance to meet people including the builder that is building Bryans third house in 18 months - he is building and selling in the financially hot market. Even hotter was an artistic glass blowing factory. A highly skilled couple were busy creating works of art in a specialist workshops with roaring furnaces.

Just five minutes away was Sunshine Coast airport where Virgin Blue have just started flying, we took their efficient service to Sydney where a train and taxi took us to wait for other friends Greg and Sheila coming home from work. We sat on their patio overlooking the pool. Sheila and her brother have painted the patio in "Tumbling Blocks" affect which is all about very effective optical illusion (you need to see the photo). We had a good night out together at the excellent local RSL club and back at their house we enjoyed the CDs of music from the Heartbeat TV series (I must get these CD's). Sheila drove us back to the airport the following morning and we passed through the parched and scorched outer areas of Sydney. The bush fires had been disastrous with over 40 homes destroyed despite valiant efforts of home owners and the volunteer fire-fighters. Happily its raining.....

Terry - Kaitaia, the far North, New Zealand.



Terry's Travels

TT7-10 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

Favourable winds gave a short 2 hour 10 minute flight from Sydney to Auckland. We are so lucky to have friends around the world and David and Maureen were waiting for us. Security everywhere has slowed down getting

into different countries and after a long line through passport control luggage was again sniffed and X-Rayed. But then in no time at all we were meeting David's dad for the first time. He emigrated to NZ over 46 years ago

- disenchantment with the UK government was part of it. Despite this I have seen a sticker here that reads

DON'T STEAL

the government does not like competition!

- same the world over?.....

As we sat enjoying the barbie whilst looking out over the farmland and hills I felt very at home in NZ. Our hosts now have a large impressive aquarium, Di was fascinated seeing the coral hiding a pretty red prawn - she vowed she would never eat another! - fat chance. We were also introduced to the litter of 11 puppies that their Rottweiler had given birth to. With a Rottweiler in the yard my BMW motorcycle was just as I left it. It even started after being left for ten months. I got the equivalent of an MOT called a Certificate of Fitness - not for me - but for the bike - and rang for some insurance to be a bit legal. The starter relay played up but tank off and a polish of the contacts seems to have done the trick. Riding North over Auckland Harbour Bridge everything felt so good again and when it rained Orewa on the Hibiscus Coast was near and a motel with an outdoor spa allowed us to soak in hot water whilst watching the warm light rain falling.....

Further North as we approached Whangarei I saw a medical centre. I had been having a problem with a bunged up ear since the Philippines. I saw a lady doctor immediately and then a nurse diligently syringed my ear - a big improvement for \$NZ45. Now we could start our weekend with a musical pub crawl. First a glass of wine at an upmarket bar in the yacht basin (boring), then onto The Jovial Judge, this was much better with the band

playing Three Steps to Heaven - with good beer, one TV screen showing England v OZ and the other NZ v India I could believe it. This legal themed pub had toilets called 'Chambers' - so I suppose I made a 'Deposition'.

There was a painting of a female barrister throwing a "V" sign - it looked like "Cherie Blair" to me. The next was a trendy Rynoz Bar - again with a band and Di was first to spot that it was a largely Gay bar. Perhaps it was

the big 'lady' that gave her the eye. It was interesting to people watch - Di reckons she saw some drugs being passed - I saw it as sporty condoms - we will never know. A shared KFC ended our Friday the 13th.

Then it was Saturday night out in Keri Keri after brilliant riding through the Bay of Islands and a cheese, fruit and wine meal on the balcony at the motel. We went out at 10pm and were listening to the band in the car park

before deciding to go in, the bouncer came and told us it was free entry and we enjoyed a set of the band called "Smells Like Fish".

We seem to have ridden lots of gravel roads and passed through many Maori areas and the scenery has been quite magnificent before we arrived in the Far North and the small town of Kaitaia.....

Terry - Dargaville, The Kauri Coast, N Island, NZ.



Terry's Travels

TT7-11 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

After picking up some 28 people in Kaitaia the bus started North by road calling at white silica sand beaches on the Pacific Coast. Through farmland with dairy cattle, avocado orchards (they like sandy soil) and lots of Kauri tree stumps that have been in the peaty soil for 50,000 years or so. Some logs are worth \$NZ15,000 and can be up to 160 tons. The farmers here are largely of Dalmatian (Croatian) descent having come with nothing to recover the Kauri gum for exporting to the USA for varnish some 150 years ago. We called at a Kauri Wood Factory and climbed a spiral staircase carved in a massive trunk which took us upstairs to a furniture showroom.

Even better was an exciting drive down a streambed with quicksands - the driver kept his foot down. Alongside were steep sand dunes where you could toboggan down - the fast ones shooting into the stream. This was access to the famous 90 mile beach. The spectacular beach is rich with fish, shellfish, scallops and there are lots of birds including oyster catchers. Islands have seals and there are penguins. The giant dunes have been successfully planted with grasses and evergreens and now are home to wild horses, pigs, turkeys and deer. The possum was introduced here for its fur many years ago - some escaped and now there are a problematic 85 million. Full time hunters try to destroy them.

Our Maori driver was a bit like Ainslie Harriott (the chef) in voice and humour. He told us that Maoris had been cannibals generations ago and didn't much like Europeans - too salty!

Dinner at the Beachcomber that night was very special (5*) with local shrimp, local avocado, scallops, snapper, salad bar and a bottle of Otara Sauvignon also very local. I can stand more of this life in NZ. The food tastes so good, clean air, good water, and so laid back and friendly, quiet roads, such good value compared to Europe or the USA - sorry if this sounds like an advert.....

Terry - Helensville, N Island, NZ.



Terry's Travels

TT7-12 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

I confess that as I write this I am lazing in a thermal pool in the Mineral Pool Motel. The pool is in the small yard of the room and is like a giant clay plant pot fed with the hot springs - in I had to add cool water - it was

too hot. Lunch will be a chicken sarnie with avocado - left from last night's rotisserie chicken. We ate in the room and watched Paul McCartney on TV. We've already seen the Dusty Springfield, Elton John and Elvis stories since being in NZ. we plan some Cinema visits too one rainy day - especially Lord of the Rings Twin Towers since it was made here. I also picked up the paperback "Goldfinder" by Keith Jessop. He is the guy that successfully dived for 100 million pounds worth of gold. In fact I have met him briefly since he lived just 5 miles from me in Keighley England. Its well worth reading.

I also read the latest Kiwi Rider motorcycle magazine and found that Ted Simon who wrote the very popular book "Gulliver's Travels" of his round the world biking trip had been riding in NZ as part of his travels again - pretty good at 71 years old. Perhaps he had some influence on my biking trips - if so, a BIG thank you to him.

This morning's call was another milestone in my life. Fieldhead, our house for 25 years has been bought by my daughter Lindy and son in law Chris. They have lived there with my grandsons for the last 5 years. Their previous smaller house is now owned by Di so we can still accommodate and welcome any visitors to the UK. My grandsons have been watching over the wall as the builder builds the new house to be called 'Woodghyll'. They excitably told me that the chimney was finished - obviously important with Xmas nearly here! It will be a good year or so before the new house is fully completed - no hurry with numerous travel plans made for the whole of 2003.

We are privileged to be invited to our friends for Xmas Day so we will head back to Mangatawhiri for that, we then have tickets for the Boxing Day cricket between NZ and India - guess who we will be cheering for

A very Happy Xmas and Happy New Year to everyone in the 12 countries that these Emails go to.

Terry & Di

PS www.THinnC.co.uk now exists thanks to my injured pal Neil - the New Year resolution is to get it much better in 2003.

THinnC was Terry Hainsworth Inc but had to have an extra 'n' to get it.

Terry



Terry's Travels

TT7-13 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

Xmas day here in the Southern Hemisphere was sunny and hot but traditional in the sense of turkey and stuffing. The morning started with champagne poured over a strawberry. David's 89 year old dad commented "its all reet is this stuff but it does get in your mouth". I really enjoyed talking to him, his health is failing but not his sense of humour or memory. I donned my Santa hat and did the Ho Ho Ho stuff with many presents to distribute.

The cricket on Boxing Day was fun even though it was low scoring - NZ won. Next day had us riding South with a night on the Southern tip of huge Lake Taupo. Kids were daringly jumping from a high bridge into the river enjoying their main holiday time. We headed over the desert road -decidedly cool at over 3,000 feet and arrived in the capital Wellington with time to ride some of the spectacular coast. It was windy as usual but we enjoyed coffee at the 'Chocolate Fish' overlooking the sea, this is where the film crew of Lord of the Rings spent some leisure time - stylish.

We took friends Des and Steph to dinner in Wellington and called into the cinema with Golum looking out over us. The premier of the final film Lord of the Rings is planned to take place here next December giving credence to the towns new name "Welliwood".

A night on their couches before a perfect 3 hour ferry crossing to South Island via the staggeringly beautiful Marlboro Sounds. You arrive at a scenic harbour at Picton which is having a terrific face lift and expansion.

Nearby Waikawa Bay has a new marina and the place was buzzing.

We had an invite to stay at a friend of a friends friend. Arriving in Parra Valley - he owns most of it - felt like paradise. Grant is a successful commercial fisherman and was looking after the five children of him and his partner. The two middle boys selected two trail bikes from the extensive stable of toys, fired up and splashed through a clear stream before racing over lush meadows - what a life. Grants partner Lisa soon arrived home to be told she had guests! and it was a delight to be in such company for a family dinner.

Nelson was our destination and passing through Havelock we visited the "Mussel Boys" to have the best green lipped NZ mussels for brunch. The Northern coast of S Island has a Mediterranean climate (English winter is their summer) so it is the peak holiday time at Xmas and the New Year - lets hope we find accommodation.

Terry - Ashburton, S Island, NZ.



Terry's Travels

TT7-14 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

From any direction the journey to Nelson is impressive since it is located around the middle of the North coast. It is also the centre of NZ. The town was VERY busy and our idea to go to the big hotel with many rooms didn't

work, since it was one location of the Nelson Jazz Festival that was in full swing. The hotel staff were not hopeful that we would find anywhere in Nelson. We didn't - but found by persistence a B&B down a side street in nearby Stoke. We felt very lucky to have found Almond Cottage which was immaculate, if a little small. Di briefly met one of the owners friends called Malcolm who hails from Lancaster and found out his local! We walked later to 'The Honest Lawyer' in the bay and had a most enjoyable evening nattering. When invited for morning coffee too, we were delighted to accept. Our breakfast at the Almond Cottage B&B included home grown plums that had been grown to music and tasted delicious.

Soon we were having coffee with Malcolm and admiring his restoration and building project right on scenic Monaco beach. In fact a very high tide stops access to the front of his property and his garden has a dinghy

lay-by. It was great to make such a contact and we met again, further widening the circle - people make the difference everywhere in the world. The information centre helped us get a bed in nearby Richmond, it turned out

to be a quite old lady, on her own, but extremely interesting and knowledgeable. Obviously from a significant family of fruit growers it was a magnificent house. Di was longing to get up and do the toast and stuff for

her - in fact I think she has aspirations of doing something like this.

We spent New Years Eve at El Taverna, which was packed - the very slow service didn't matter with so much to watch and the food was really good. A good idea was a children's room with giant windows to the restaurant for supervision.

New Years Day was quiet! - especially in the morning and we toured looking at houses, before calling at a family fair where we munched a sausage sizzle and a bag of sweet cherries as we walked around. Then it was a very professional (and free) Jazz concert in the park. Malcolm found us and surprised us with a pint glass made of polycarbonate (he used to manufacture these) and a can of Boddingtons - Oh Yes! we will keep in touch.....

The latest James Bond kept us very amused that night - Halle Berry looks stunning - but perhaps my testosterone was more plentiful in Ursula Andress' day!

Terry - Ashburton, NZ.



Terry's Travels

TT7-15 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

In Stoke is a new attraction called WOW. It is based on 'wearable art'. We had a look in the reception area of this super modern new building, paid and went in. Against matt black backgrounds were artistic but wearable clothing displays. It is hard to describe, since I had seen nothing else close to it. Imagine ANYTHING that could be visually striking - and worn by a human - and that's it. There is an annual competition - one class being 'Bizarre Bras' so it's about fun too. You sit alongside a catwalk in one gallery where to excellent music 'models' suspended from a motorised rail twirl and strut their stuff. There is a small theatre which has a film of past winners giving a choreographed stage show - worth a visit? - you bet. It also has a classic car display, again given a different slant with movies mounted in the cars showing how the car was used in its day - far from a dusty and dreary museum.

Heading South as we left the lush North coast the hills started to be dry and scorched. What a contrast between these and the irrigated vineyards of Renwick and Blenheim. Once South of here the roads became quiet even though its the busy season, but with less than one million population its sparsely populated. There are figures of 30% plus being mentioned for tourist growth - that's visitors and locals too. We saw a vacancy sign in Cheviot and stopped. It was manic inside this restaurant/motel with 120 people loudly chattering and drinking - it was a funeral. I haven't said much about the old BMW motorcycle but with a shot of lead and 96 octane she has been carrying us comfortably and reliably - and we are approaching 2,000 miles happily ridden on this trip so far. We took a loop to Gore Bay with lots of Bachs (weekend cottages) and wonderful simple camp sites along the rural coastal bays. It truly is turning the clock back 50 years or so. We had missed busy Kaikora with the whale watching attractions, but we had seen the growing colony of fur seals. NZ is busy protecting wild life and countryside to further help the great future potential of tourism. There is talk of flights from UK being lowered to 400 pounds in two years.

Andy (my pal who helped me import the bike) had booked us into a motel in Ashburton and we had dinner with his wife Jenny and friends. Dinner was outdoors in the main street with the railroad across the road. We were entertained by the young locals just cruisin' - with their cars all fitted with EXTREMELY noisy exhausts - still, I suppose they need them to hear the car over the megawatt hifi systems - I was young once, but with less money! With no local transport the parents here buy the first car for their children, I had overheard a discussion on needing one with a sun roof, it turned out to be not for the sun but for night time possum hunting.....

Next day Andy, Jenny and their two children went on holiday to the Gold Coast of OZ. Di and I moved into their splendid 4 bed roomed house to house sit for a few days - someone's got to do it!

Terry - Ashburton, NZ.



Terry's Travels

TT7-16 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

Our house sitting has been a chance to sample normal living in NZ. Watering the garden (it's been dusty dry) feeding the cat, laundry (Di greatly admired the Fisher & Paykel made in NZ appliances) walking to the local

shops, cooking just what we fancied of the excellent produce and even watching telly - its been very pleasant. Also a short ride to the shingle beach and marvelling at the HUGE farm machinery in this productive area. We

are also getting used to the tin roofs that are on most houses here. Everyone is friendly with a few passing the time of day as I gave the bike a much overdue wash. England even won a test match to the great delight of the

Barmy Army (that's their faithful enthusiastic and well appreciated fans) - even by the Aussies.

Of course washing the bike brought the overdue rain but we left Ashburton and took the inland route back North, heading over Arthur's Pass with dense cloud, it was surprisingly warm even near the snow capped top. John Travolta had just been to the cafe that we called in - he flies around the world in his own Boeing 707 that is even plusher than the American Presidents (Yes, but is he happy?) - we got back astride the old Beemer. The drop down over the new viaduct has you hard on the brakes even on a bike, before rounding Death corner and further West as we approached Greymouth we stopped at a horse race meeting - it proved to be the popular Kamara Golden Nugget. Everyone there was wet inside and outside and we rode into Greymouth where a scarcity of rooms pushed us into the best motel. The attached excellent restaurant gave us the chance to try the local delicacy "White Bait Patty". This is regarded as (and priced as NZ caviar). Its subtlety was lost on us -

we wouldn't chose a fishy omelette again!

Breakfast came at Westport (cheap property here still) before riding the Buller Gorge - really great riding before a storm struck us and we were glad to arrive at Atawai, Nelson where we had rented a house with stunning views over the Tasman Bay ready for friends to visit.....

Terry - Christchurch,NZ.



Terry's Travels

TT7-17 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

David & Maureen, our friends from Auckland flew in early and picked up their rental car at the small modern Nelson airport. There is also a good motorcycle rental service close to this airport which connects to about a dozen domestic and three International airports. After a pleasant day exploring locally, a meal and a drink had us all ready for an early night. A bright start the following day had us heading for Farewell Spit on the NW corner of South Island. The day out takes in such wonderful scenery as Takaka Hill and Abel Tasman National Park, named after the Dutchman who was the first European to explore the area in the early 1600's. Wonderful beaches, quiet roads and a birdwatchers paradise means that all this is not to be missed. Good job everyone was tired and hungry that evening as I was duty cook.

David & Maureen went Gold Panning or "Fossiking" - they also are into "Updoodacky overs" - that means climbing a stile! They came back with a bit, I could clearly see it under the microscope, but they aren't giving up their day jobs! Di and I went property hunting, learning much in the process. We then had a dinner party in our rented house and invited our new local friend Malcolm. The starter and wine went well but there was a three bottle delay on the main course due to the halogen hob not working like a gas one!!!

Back on our own again it became quite domestic even to renting a video, "Bend it like Beckham" - worth seeing with the interplay of Asian (meaning Paki and Indian) culture meeting Western culture. Di caught up with the first "Lord of the Rings" and I am nearly finished reading the book of the "Fellowship of the Ring". We watched the Louis Vuitton Cup getting won by Alinghi (Swiss) beating Oracle (USA) and qualifying to compete against Team NZ (www.teamnewzealand.com) in the Americas Cup in February.

The topics in the news here are problems with leaky homes. Some 10 years ago apparently "The Greens" encouraged the use of non treated timber (avoids poisons) this was fine except when a leak caused bad and fast rotting, balconies have fallen off etc! leaving people rightly suspicious. Even here terrorism is a topic. In fact a story of a guy of Arab appearance who forgot his wallet with \$NZ5,000 in it - returned and gratefully tipped the honest waitress - telling her to avoid Viaduct Basin (the centre for the Americas Cup) and don't drink coke. I have heard this story in another country - but Di isn't drinking coke.

The Maoris here are finding "Ghosts of their ancestors" in trees on land planned for development - but pay money to them and they can make the ghosts go away.....

Terry - Christchurch, NZ.



Terry's Travels

TT7-18 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

I am slowly learning more about the highly technical and complex racing that is the fascination and highly competitive nature of the Americas Cup, the most expensive cup in the world. The event starts soon in the Hauraki Gulf off Auckland. Alingi (Swiss) and Team NZ (NZ) will race in a series of races with super specialist racing yachts and super fit and smart teams. The buzzword here is LOYALTY since the locals see that New Zealanders have forsaken their country to race for the opposition. It will be a hard fought and contentious and competitive event.

To give some idea of the yachts, their total weight is under 25 tons and 19.5 tons is lead in the keel. This is burnished and coated and polished to give a smooth flow through the water. All the masts and fittings are super streamlined. Its the Formula 1 of yachting, in fact head up displays and telemetry figure just like F1.

We left Nelson after wonderful weather and were quickly in cold and unpleasant rain. The Beemer had had new points since it had misfired slightly, progressively it got worse and we limped into Murchison and got a motel. I got the bike under cover and investigated. It proved to be the condenser on the contact breaker - I had a replacement and fitted it. A short test the next morning told me that I had found the problem and we left to head over the Lewis Pass. The bike ran well and the sun came out - wonderful. Then we saw a spectacular rainbow followed by VERY threatening looking clouds - minutes later an unbelievable storm struck. I pulled to the side of the road as sheets of hail quickly covered the road. We sheltered under pine trees and under a sheet of tarpaulin. It was incredible how the temperature dropped - if someone had bid for the bike they would have had a bargain!!

It was scary too as the lightening flashed and the thunder was continuous. The locals told us later it was the worst storm in over 30 years. The tea and shelter later at the nearest cafe was marvellous. You have to take the good with the bad.....we then rode on to Christchurch and quickly had the motel room looking like a Chinese laundry.....

Terry - Christchurch,NZ



Terry's Travels

TT7-19 Hong Kong/Cebu/NZ 18th Nov 2002

Hello Everyone

Christchurch is South Island's largest city. The cold Southerly was predicted to blow for a few days keeping temperatures low (for summer) with some rain. The Beemer had run well with the new condenser but it was nice to be able to walk and explore the city. The Bella Vista motel in Bealey Avenue was ideal for this. The weather badly affected the International Buskers Festival but we caught the final evenings performance at the Arts Centre which was hilarious and highly entertaining. Two cinema visits had us watching "Lord of the Rings - The Two Towers" - better than the first and deserves the acclaim and Harry Potter 2 which we found a bit disappointing but will delight and scare children. The local paper told of an "Open Day" at a Funeral Parlour! I can imagine that most of you don't want to know about this, but read on Being a large progressive upmarket business it was departmentalised.

BURIAL Dept

The coffins here are wonderfully crafted in a variety of solid timbers - well you wouldn't want your backside through in three weeks would you?

Exquisite solid rosewood, kauri, rimu with pine as a budget option. Solid handles of chrome, brass and stainless (well you want to keep looking your best). There are adjustable reclining models - so people don't look up your nose on your big day - that must be well worth the 15,000 dollars or so that they cost. Drawers can be built in to allow you to take with you what you need, jewellery and beer are popular choices. What about condoms? - positive thinking.

Of course there is an immaculate washroom where the staff wear white gum boots and aprons before you go to the Beauty Parlour. It must be a different range of cosmetics since I didn't see any Revlon or Avon.

There's embalming essences which need to be used with care since some are OK on white skins but turn dark skins bright green!!

CREMATION Dept

The ready made coffins here are made from MDF (chipboard) and are nicely veneered. Mass produced there is a selection of sizes to ensure the best fit. The handles look good in chrome or brass but in fact are plastic - and yes they do burn them too.

There are several finance schemes including easy payments but generous prepayment discounts apply. Me being me I had to find out about less costly alternatives. Yes you can get a stout cardboard coffin as a self assemble flat pack, you can be chucked on the back of a pickup (Ute) for a DIY job.

There are some areas where you can have a DIY burial and a tree planted over. Wintertime is the Funeral Directors busy season but I couldn't find anyone mentioning a "Red Dot Sale" in the quieter months.....

Terry - Christchurch