



Terry's Travels

TT10-1 Scarcely a month back in England 08/01/2004

I used to fly first class occasionally - when someone else was paying, but now I fly economy. When I saw "Flight Tabs" advertised to avoid DVT whilst flying long distances I thought them a good idea. You get a bottle with FOUR tablets and a BIG wadge of cotton wool to stop them rattling in the big bottle. I suppose they do it this way so you feel better at parting with some twenty quid for just FOUR tablets. Anyway I slept quite well on the 10 hour flight to Singapore and was soon in a metered taxi on the Expressway to Bangkok city centre. Interestingly you pay the tolls on the journey so have some small Baht notes ready.

I was booked in the Dusit Thani, a splendid four star handy for central Bangkok. I avoided sleeping until 10pm local time to try to adjust the jet lag but awoke with a thumping headache around 2am (the tablet?). The headache persisted badly all day and I concentrated on drinking water and had a carrot/celery juice and went for an oil massage. The headache lifted but it felt as if it was just being held at bay. I did the same the following day and felt better as I swam in the warm rooftop pool.

My hotel was just 300 yards to the notorious red light area of Pat Pong. In fact one of Bangkoks biggest tourist attractions with a busy lively market - especially after dark. The streets are dirty and smelly but the sheer exotic feel of the sultry warm nights make it all acceptable. Food is cooking everywhere and with some stunning tropical flower scents it gives your nose a real workout. I bought clothes items and of course this seasons Cartier and Omega ladies watches (these crop up later). You see lots of smiles, from the traders who are wearing out the batteries in their calculators taking your money - and the hookers who would like to!

I loved sitting on a bar stool and listening to good live music whilst watching it all happening before strolling back to the hotel. Of course I avoided looking into the girlie night clubs with the nubile teenagers finding different ways to rub themselves up and down the poles and trying to be cool doing it - KEWL.

Terry - Nelson, NZ.(my new home for a while)



Terry's Travels

TT10-2 Springtime in New Zealand 09/01/2004

I had learned that the music that I liked best was played at the Kings Garden and was sitting outside where the live band was not too loud for a conversation, when a passing dwarf stopped to talk to me. It felt really strange that I was sitting and was still looking down to talk to him. A guy with a great attitude and good intelligence - he was a barman! next door - imagine reaching up to clear the tables. He was a resident of Bangkok but his parents were from the neighbouring country of Laos.

Of course we Europeans are thought to have attractive wallets so you have to fend off the odd approach of the sometimes doll like and sometimes monkey like hookers. Keep your wallet and your pants zipped up.

The hotel had lots of decadent restaurants that I avoided and I had one really excellent Thai meal of Sea Bass with slivers of fresh deep fried ginger in a local restaurant (The Bua). The rooftop pool was well staffed and you got a complimentary slice of chilled watermelon and an icy face cloth from time to time - truly a great place to break my journey to the Southern Hemisphere. I went to an Irish bar where I was in the company of Welsh supporters when we (England) beat them in the World Rugby. They went really quiet Boyo.....

Another break of journey with friends again in Pelican Waters to the N of Brisbane OZ where they have just built an impressive house - its for sale. I found my travel agent had just gone bust (luckily with no loss to me or my families bookings - even holding tickets is not a cast iron guarantee!).

Then the final leg to Nelson, NZ where my pal Malcolm kindly collected me from the lovely little airport - I was so excited to be back home. "The Cut" had been renovated throughout during my 6 months away by friends Dennis and Chris and was almost completed - excellent and what a thrill.

Terry - "The Cut", Nelson, NZ.



Terry's Travels

TT10-3 The Cut 18/01/2004

Life in New Zealand was going to be VERY different to my usual travels - I have been 'working'. When I say working I mean working on the property called "The Cut" to make it ready to do a little B&B as well as be ready for the arrival of the family. This meant painting, tiling, gardening, seeing that the builder completed properly, having the pool people complete the solar heating etc.

The big advantage with being here alone for a few weeks was that I could choose what to do on any day. I was soon into a routine of doing a days work and then down to "The Honest Lawyer" (my local) for a jar with my pal Malcolm - he was working on his beach property. It has been all very pleasant working in lovely weather and stopping to watch as ships passed through the man made channel nicknamed The Cut to give access to Nelson harbour. Yes this is what I named my property after.

Its proving so much less hassle to accomplish things here without the difficulties of traffic - and everyone is so friendly. The car had started OK after being left but the motorcycle sulked a bit before starting. Surprisingly the bike has not distracted me from doing the work - yet. With the family expected soon I have a deadline.....

Terry - Nelson, NZ





Terry's Travels

TT10-4 Family arrival 22/01/2004

An outdoor concert in the local park was a highlight but there has been lots of live music to enjoy. Most Sunday afternoons Jazz is played live on the jetty just a few minutes walk away and with the splendid view of the Tasman Bay it has become another regular place. Renting DVD's to play on the Home Theatre system has been another pleasant break from the 'working'. Sky brings in the rugby and cricket so the time has flown.

The family were stopping at Singapore and then Sydney - it was so exciting to get texts as they got closer to me in NZ. Finally a message from Auckland to say they were getting on the small propeller plane to Nelson.

I was waiting for them to land and got into conversation with a man from Halifax who has bought a house here - what a small world. I was able to shout to my grandsons as they came out of the plane, its such a tiny airport (still about the 4th busiest in NZ). What a thrill to greet Di, my daughter Lindy and son in law Chris and of course James and Dan my 7 and 5 year old grandsons. They were full of it - completely unfazed by flying half way round the world. The electronic games and movies on the long flights had done the trick.

A short drive and we were together with Xmas coming in a few days.....

Terry - Nelson



Terry's Travels

TT10-5 Family Xmas 23/01/2004

The solar heating had been hooked up for a day or two and with the powerful sun the pool had attained its programmed 27C. The grandsons loved it and quickly learned to Kayak in it with their early Xmas present. The local beaches were also a great hit - and pitch and put and a GIANT slide. But of course the biggest expectation was Santas visit.

5:30am Christmas Day and the patter of tiny but not quiet feet had me out of bed. Lindy was up yawning and Chris supervising the opening of presents. The reindeers had half eaten a carrot and Santa had drunk his drink when delivering. A ship was leaving harbour in the early dawn light and we needed a bit of flickering gas fire to make it feel like Xmas. Leggo took Dan's imagination and a talking Golum accompanied by "The Ring" had James bouncing with glee.

Later we had a tasty traditional turkey dinner outside on the sunny verandah - first pulling the crackers. I had 'doctored' them so that an Omega watch dropped out for Lindy. Then a Cartier for Di (I'd been to Bangkok remember). Then it was my pal Malcolm's turn to find only a toilet roll centre, with all the paper used (I mean with no paper left!) - my sense of humour.

Did we miss the traditional English Xmas? - not one bit. The following Boxing day was open house and amongst the many guests was a 5 year old. All the kids got on well and were in and out of the pool for 5 hours. Dan learned to swim - WONDERFUL.

We barbied, went to an outdoor carol concert and we babysat, but all too soon the family were leaving to stop over in Sydney for the New Year fireworks before Singapore and back to school and work.....

Terry - Nelson, NZ.

Despite promises Dell had failed to deliver the computer for Xmas (more later)





Terry's Travels

TT10-6 Into 2004 27/01/2004

We celebrated New Years Eve with a trip to the Honest Lawyer (I must buy my lawyer in England a cap from there!). The band outside were playing very well and the braziers were burning, giving a pleasant woody smell. The staff came out on the stroke of midnight to enjoy their celebrations. A lovely start to the New Year - with a drive back 'home' with the top down with the moon beaming down over the Bay.

Most of the work in preparing "The Cut" is now completed - even down to the detail of having a flagpole. Via the internet I bought a flag of St George (England - a red + on white) and a Union Jack. The flag raising ceremony will happen when I get clips to the halyard. We had a lovely weekend with friends from Ashburton who rode here on their BMW K1100 - Andy was ready for a late evening splash after a hot ride.

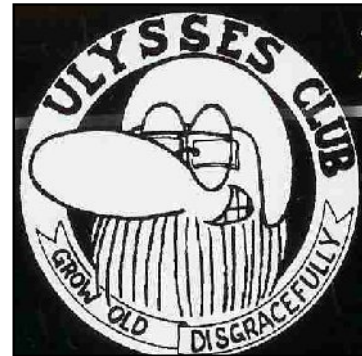
Last week we had quite an evening with our neighbours above including a near 80 year old who was quite outrageous after she had a few bubbles - we ached with laughing and watched as our B&B guests got back home sooner than we did!

The B&B has been interesting so far with an adventure biker from Brazil, computer technicians from Taiwan, a Japanese guy with his mum on a wine tasting mission (he tried 21 different ones and finished up confused) - a lawyer from North Island and a young couple from OZ who had been kayaking in the Abel Tasman National Park. We have found that sending guests to the Honest Lawyer reduces their breakfast requirements.

Nothing much else to report other than tourists staying nearby seem to strip off totally on what they believe is their private balcony. Di is quite offended - but keeps spying to give me an update. I have joined the Ulysses Club (MOTTO: 'Grow Old Disgracefully') - more later.

Terry - Nelson, NZ.

PS The next DELL saga - yes its still going on - should be fun - they want ME to ring their technicians in INDIA to solve THEIR problems!! - more later.....

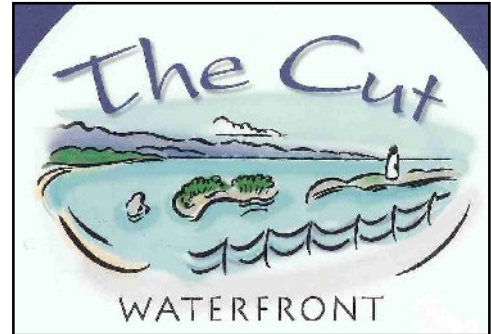




Terry's Travels

TT10-7 Convoy through the Lewis Pass 29/01/2004

The Triumph "Bonnie" was ready to collect from Ashburton, we toured down the East coast on a bright cool windy day seeing a chilly 13C over the high spots. In the car this was comfortable travel. Passing through Blenheim we are now getting familiar with many of the names of the excellent wineries here. The hills are looking scorched, but the irrigated vines a lush green. Winding down the coast was pretty and we saw the big seal colony and lots of gulls where the vast kelp beds attracts the most fish. Hundreds of black heads bobbing out of the water and caravans which offer fresh crayfish cooked to your liking - and affordable. We headed on and stopped for a bowl of chowder for lunch at Kaikora, this is the whale watching centre.



Further south we avoided the centre of Christchurch, the largest city in South Island and about an hour later arrived at Ashburton. This is a flat plain area with lots of farms and very dry everywhere compared to England, so lots of huge irrigation methods were working away

My pal Andy had put Bonnie in one of his containers from Iowa USA and she was now uncrated - in fact he and a pal had taken her for a spin and were quite impressed. Andy now is back on two wheels on a BMW K1100. After a couple of days around Ashburton (there is a good museum with working steam trains) I was ready to ride back to Nelson via the Lewis Pass.

After a cool and cloudy start it got better and better and by the time the turn inland to the mountains came, it was perfect. Bonnie was loving the sweeping curves and good surfaces and I had to be careful with the overall 100kph restrictions. Di had the roof down on the Saab to enjoy driving through this part of Godzone. Hamner Springs is a thermal pool area high in the mountains, we had thought we would overnight here but after a cuppa we were happy to keep going. This whole area is so packed with natural beauty and so untouched. A further stop at Springs Junction where I got talking to a spritely 75 year old who was riding a BMW side car outfit, his wife comfortable once she settled into the sidecar. I rode behind him for a while before we powered past with a wave before our final stop at Murchison. This time a Brit couple had noticed our small 'convoy' arriving and heard our voices. He wants to buy a house here and his wife does not - Di reckons she will win!

Back 'home' in Nelson by 7pm it had been a wonderful journey of about 320 miles - I already knew that Bonnie loved her new home at "The Cut".

Terry - Nelson, NZ.



Terry's Travels

TT10-8 A garage full of bikes 11/02/2004

With Bonnie in the garage much of the shopping and visiting friends has become a two wheel pleasure. The usual Saturday morning natter down at the Ulysses gathering becomes even better as I get to know more friendly bikers. We have had our first biker guests to arrive on Harleys. One was a couple on a Harley Deuce in beautiful magenta and his brother and lady on a Low Rider. Of course I left the Saab out and gave them garage space. The Deuce rider had a V-ROD too but his parting shot was to come visit in North Island and he will take me and my video camera up in his aeroplane! Our B&B idea looks like being really interesting.



I have been introduced to the owner of the local hifi shop (good quality) - so that takes me back a bit and I have now played The Moody Blues with the London Festival Orchestra in full 5.1 DTS surround sound - interesting, especially 'The Nights in White Satin' track. My plan is to audition more gear that can play my DVD-Audio and SACD discs - I think it will be some time before my wallet feels the icy chill of parting.



My new printer/scanner/colour copier is great, it reads cards from digital cameras too, its a HP2510 - one day I may even have a computer to go with it that works right.

Some of the buskers came to Nelson from the big event in Christchurch - they were mainly English and one impersonated Ozzie Osbourne!! whilst being the Master of Ceremonies. Two rather more cultured guys (anybody would be) did a good comedy balancing act and we rounded off the evening with a stroll back home on a balmy evening.

The flag of St George now flutters above "The Cut" showing the Brits are in residence. Since I've been adding new readers this Terry's Travels goes to 96 people in 15 different countries.

Terry - Nelson, NZ.



Terry's Travels

TT10-9 Some techie stuff - and BOB 28/02/2004

February is summer here and normally the sunniest month, but after several months of great weather it has been cool and wet with only a bit of hot sun. All around the world we keep hearing "the weather - it's not normal".

However, the computer has kept me busy indoors. After fixing a floppy, changing a DVD drive, two motherboards and a BIOS update the hardware seems OK. Then a Windows XP repair and its working - well nearly. It seems that there is an issue with MS Outlook 2002 not liking a Gig of RAM or more - so I'm close to a fully working system - even the speakers (sound good) came from Dell Malaysia/Australia/Auckland after their third promise. Buyer beware - I was debited for all the system Dec 1st and got working well into February, I did get a few freebies for my trouble.

Once the drive was working I have been making slide shows with music, editing my DV movies, scanning, downloading my still camera cards. I have burned CDR, CDRW, DVD+R and now I am into the lack of compatibility of playing them in ordinary DVD players - the potential is fantastic - the REALITY is tricky - still, onwards with it all.

In between all this stuff my pal Bob arrived from England. We have had barbies, swum, biked locally including to Lake Rotoiti at 2,000 feet. I had snowed down to about 4,500 feet - and this is summer! Hot soup was VERY welcome. Then a lovely sunny day when I rode with him East along the North coast before he headed South on Bonnie to start his adventure. Text messages have told me that he has - whale watched, swum with dolphins, overnighted in a thermal area, jet boated, bungy jumped?, helicoptered and flown around Mount Cook - all in 4 days. I look forward to his return in a few days when we plan to ride more of the North coast.

We have had more interesting B&B guests including one character who has invented a product called "Rip Off" It removes champagne corks fast and easily. Six years in the developing, he gave me one in silver and one in gold. I took one to my local where I told Tracy (the bar manager) that I would "pop her cork".....I didn't get to do it.

Terry - Nelson, NZ

PS Please cheer for "The Ring" in next weeks Oscars. The NZ ers deserve to beat Hollywood this time.