

Saturday 14th December to Thursday 19th December 2024

Saturday 14th December, 2024

As usual, we walked to the supermarket.

Today we had less grocery shopping to do, but some souvenir shopping. Careful reading of the Kampot Pepper packets and jars on sale is needed. This is because we need to be sure it will get through customs (despite being told commercially packaged pepper is allowed in, we had the peppercorns confiscated and only the crushed pepper allowed in. Funny, but the pepper corns in the grinder were allowed in...as if you couldn't get them out!).

Then it was a quiet afternoon, in preparation for the Anjali Language School Christmas party in the evening.

The Christmas breakup at our language school is a good chance to catch up with people we have met over the course of the year.

There are half a dozen little craft stalls selling things (cashew nuts / snacks like banana chips, honey, hand sewn pencil cases, and candles). The \$10 ticket covers your tea and \$5 worth of (photocopied) Riel to spend at these stalls.

They have a coffee shop (a separate small building) with a range of drinks and a few snacks.

The food for tea included Vietnamese rolls (the rice noodles and assorted green leafy herbs and some cooked sliced meat... make the rolls yourself), cold spring rolls (meant to

be cold!) and hot ones too, curry, some salads and a round fried donut and fruit.

This year, they had a dozen or more Khmer students who are learning English. These young adults are friendly and have quite good English already and are happy to chat with us (in English).

There was a speech by the founder of the school and several speeches from students (some have been learning for seven years!) Then students were presented with a certificate according to the level they had reached (I have finished level one).

There were games and dancing too, and they sang happy birthday to me and gave me a cake (4 slices...soft and overly sweet, and cut into about 2cm pieces to try to go around...even then I missed both my teachers, so they didn't get a piece).

Sunday 15th December, 2024.

After the Christmas party, we had a quiet day at home (yes, we are old).

I kept working on a series of writing exercises to do in the plane and in Australia.

Monday 16th December, 2024.

Temple Day : Suor Proat and the Death Gate (Gate of the Dead)

Suor Proat temple include the laterite towers opposite the Elephant Terrace. Some are quite well repaired (but others are in danger of falling down).

The sunlight and the clouds have been great for photography this week and with the green of the grass, the red in the laterite stones and the blue sky, we have taken some good photos.



The photo above, looking south. This photo (below), looking north.





Transport? No. Brooms used to sweep the leaves off the grass.





Can you see the dog in the sunshine?

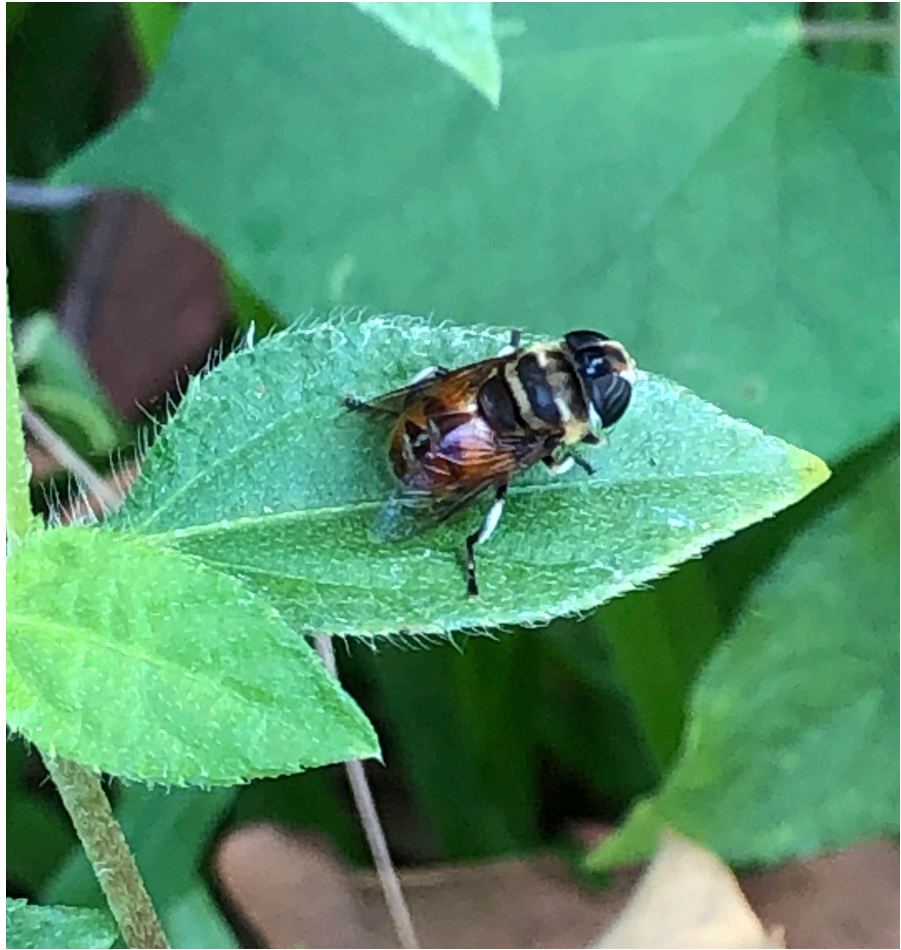


Behind the Suor Proat towers are the Kleangs (north and south). These are big warehouses built of sandstone.



The grass, even though it is kept quite short, has many mini beasts.







After walking around these ruins for more than an hour, we rode on to the Gate of the Dead with hopes of seeing the otters (which we didn't).

We did see these water hyacinths.





And the Gate itself, with some of the elephant trunks still present (the three headed elephant Airavata).

Tuesday 17th December, 2024.

Temple Day : Phnom Krom and Tonle Sap

A short trip for us today. Phnom Krom is about eleven km from home.



There is a modern pagoda on Phnom Krom with the ancient temple on a higher part of the hill (Phnom or “Mount”).

There are concrete steps from the pagoda up part of the hill. A small shrine is at the top of these steps. I am not sure who this is but he wouldn't look out of place in a neat garden.



Further up the hill is the Angkorian temple, made of sandstone which has significant erosion (perhaps from winds across Tonle Sap?)



Three towers of Prasat Phnom Krom.



Flooded fields and Tonle Sap on the distance.



In the small orchard behind the temple we found these bees, as big (and as noisy) as bumble bees.

***Xylocopa latipes*... the broad- handed carpenter bee.**



An aeroplane above the sugar palms by one of the towers at Prasat Phnom Krom.

Wednesday 18th December, 2024.

Anjali day and cleaning

The apartment is very tidy and we are nearly ready...just some washing to dry.

Thursday 19th December, 2024. : departure day.



We managed to lock ourselves out of our apartment (when taking a Christmas present to the workers here at the building)... but other than that, it was easy to get ready and get ourselves to the SAI airport.

Time for more than three weeks of drinking red wine, eating (lots of meat) and seeing family and friends. Australia, here we come.