Cathy's Ongoing Blog. Part 300 : Thoughts so far.

Another 100 blog entries have been completed. We have seen and done many amazing things. We have also spent many quiet days at home, working on smaller tasks.

Our more exciting events have included three visits by family and friends to Siem Reap. We hope they enjoyed the hot weather, the town itself with the river and bright lights at the markets, Pub Street, and the friendly local people and their food.

In addition to visits to us, we have completed two trips to Australia, one involving a wedding and one involving a grandchild. Another trip overseas took us to Europe, which had been planned for many years and finally came true.

We enjoyed the cooler weather over the dry season, which enabled us to take the smallest tracks across the rice fields to visit some of the outlying temples. We also got to revisit some of our favourites.

Phnom Kroam, December 2024, in the middle of the dry season.

Phnom Kroam in September, 2025, after the wet season.

With our temple visits and walks around them and through the trees and bushes, we get to see many different insects.

Just three of the butterflies we have seen.

Just three of the flowers we have seen.

And three of the fungi.

We are also still photographing and researching the temples.

Angkor Wat is the only building on a nation's flag. It is the symbol of Cambodia.

While Angkor Wat is huge and magnificent, Neak Poan lying in the sunshine offers a different yet still stunning view.

This year, the Siem Reap River fountain was built and turned on.

The fountain is about half way into the town from our apartment and has coloured lights and a short range of water patterns. The water rises quite high (and you can see it from our balcony).

Another night feature, annually, is the Giant Puppet Parade.

Different community groups build these puppets which have some movement.
They are carried along the streets by children.

Our language lesson continue, sometimes with clear progress and sometimes we seem to get stuck.

Our daily chores continue and it is surprising how untidy this two bedroom apartment can get, but also how quickly it can be tidied and cleaned.

And this year I began riding the motorbike. This came about partly because of David's back injury in February. It is important that I can ride well enough to get the bike home should an injury occur when we are out and about. My skills have progressed, but I wouldn't say I am ready for much city traffic yet.

A series of concerning events due to border conflicts raised tensions, caused refugees to come into Siem Reap itself and closed the border with Thailand. The local people were upset (and still are because the soldiers taken by Thailand have still not been returned).

The closed border has seen tourist numbers decline and difficulties in moving certain foods (particularly milk) into Siem Reap.

The land border remains closed.

This picture shows you one of our struggles, perhaps due to the border closures. Australians will understand.

We are still kept awake some evenings by (bad) karaoke, woken over night by dogs barking, and woken early by the chanting of the monks at funerals. Recently, the main road through town, Sivutha Boulevard, was half closed by two marquees set up for a funeral.

And the marquees and decorations are up for the Water Festival, Bon Om Dtuk. The locals have been inundated with Cambodians from other provinces. We have never seen so many cars, people and such (bad) traffic.

This festival is celebrated in the villages too, with these carts (drawn by motorbikes) heading out to the villages with their helium balloons.

We now have less than 7 weeks until Christmas and then just 4 more weeks before we return to Australia (for the arrival of another grandchild). That is hardly time to settle back into our routines.

Thank-you for sharing our journey, the boring things, interesting things, the funny things, the unexpected things and, of course, the time spent with Cambodians in this small city of Siem Reap.