

## **Part 323 for Cathy's blog**

**Wednesday 7th January to Friday 9th January, 2026**

**Wednesday 7th January, 2026.**

Today is a national holiday. It is Victory Day. This is the day the Khmer Rouge were defeated. The resulting government has been problematic ever since.

But the people themselves are friendly, funny and warm hearted.

There was no school for David, so we rode into Angkor Thom and walked from the South Gate to Prasat Chrung SE.



We found these (new) red flowers... still working out what they are called.



**Some butterflies around. This one is common but usually they flutter about and are hard to photograph.**



**These smaller dragonflies are usually nervous too.**

**Perhaps it is the colder morning.**



**It is two months since it rained, but many of the trees are growing new leaves. Perhaps these ants are looking to build a new nest with the new leaves.**



**This white grasshopper is a new one for us.**



**More dragonflies.**



**Prasat Chrung SE. It is quite overgrown at the moment.**

After our walk, we rode on through Angkor Thom and out through the North Gate to visit Krol Romeas, the “elephant circle”. There is a wide expanse of flooded forest to cross to get to see the laterite “oval”. For many people, it’s Just take off your thongs/flip flops and wade through, but we wear our hiking shoes.



**It is as big as a school oval, if they kept elephants in here now, they would eat the trees before they grew this big.**



**The laterite wall is thick enough to hinder elephants.**



**David standing in the previously flooded area.**

**Thursday 8th January, 2026.**

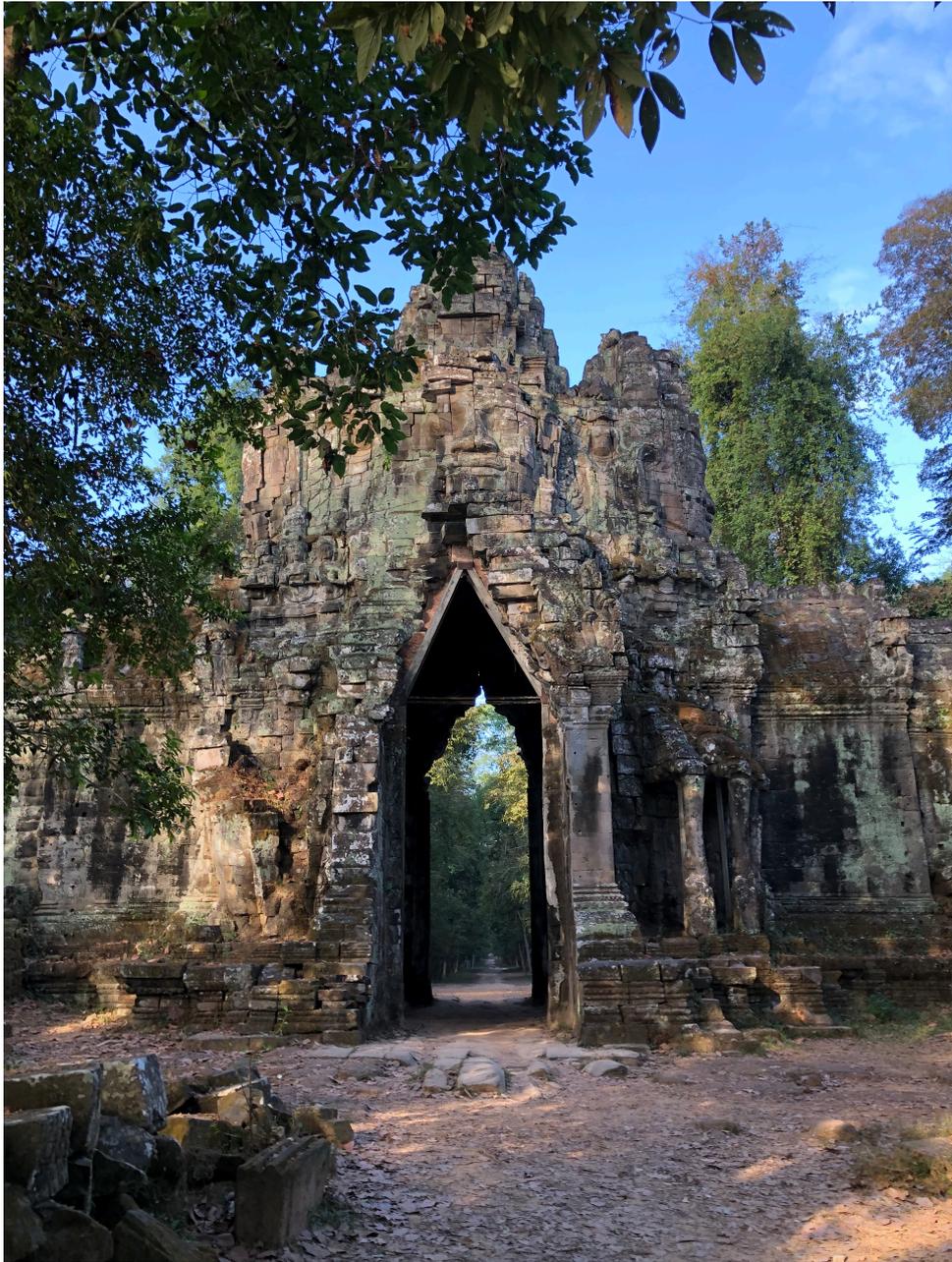
**Temple Day : Gate of the Dead to the Victory Gate**

A shorter walk along the wall, but we walked into the forest around the Gate of the Dead. They have opened the water lock to allow the water to move from one area of the moat to another.

We always hope to see otters, but they weren't there.



**Moss growing on the carvings at the Gate of the Dead.**



**Standing outside and looking in through the Gate of the Dead.**



**Causeway at the Victory Gate. This area was recently renovated and needs time to revegetate. The workers directly below (you can see their motorbikes) are still working, sorting and stacking blocks.**





**These black birds are smaller than crows. They have long tails and they flit around through the trees. They have beautiful songs that ring through the forest.**

**(One of many species of “drongos”!)**



**Pretty butterflies, one white and black and an orange one (different shaped wings and no “eye” in the patterns).**



**The Victory Gate from the wall.**



**Although we didn't see the otter family, we found this one at the moat around Angkor Wat (on our way home).**

**Look at those teeth!**

He was chasing the monkeys, who kept clear of him. He is used to people and comes right up to them. He doesn't bite them, but it is an interaction with wildlife that is frowned upon.



It has been two weeks since my last language lesson, and we spent the whole time talking. Topics included forest fires (news from Victoria), Thailand (the continued occupation of Cambodian land and the looting and destruction of Cambodian homes) and world politics (who is going to look out for “smaller” and “weaker” countries now?).



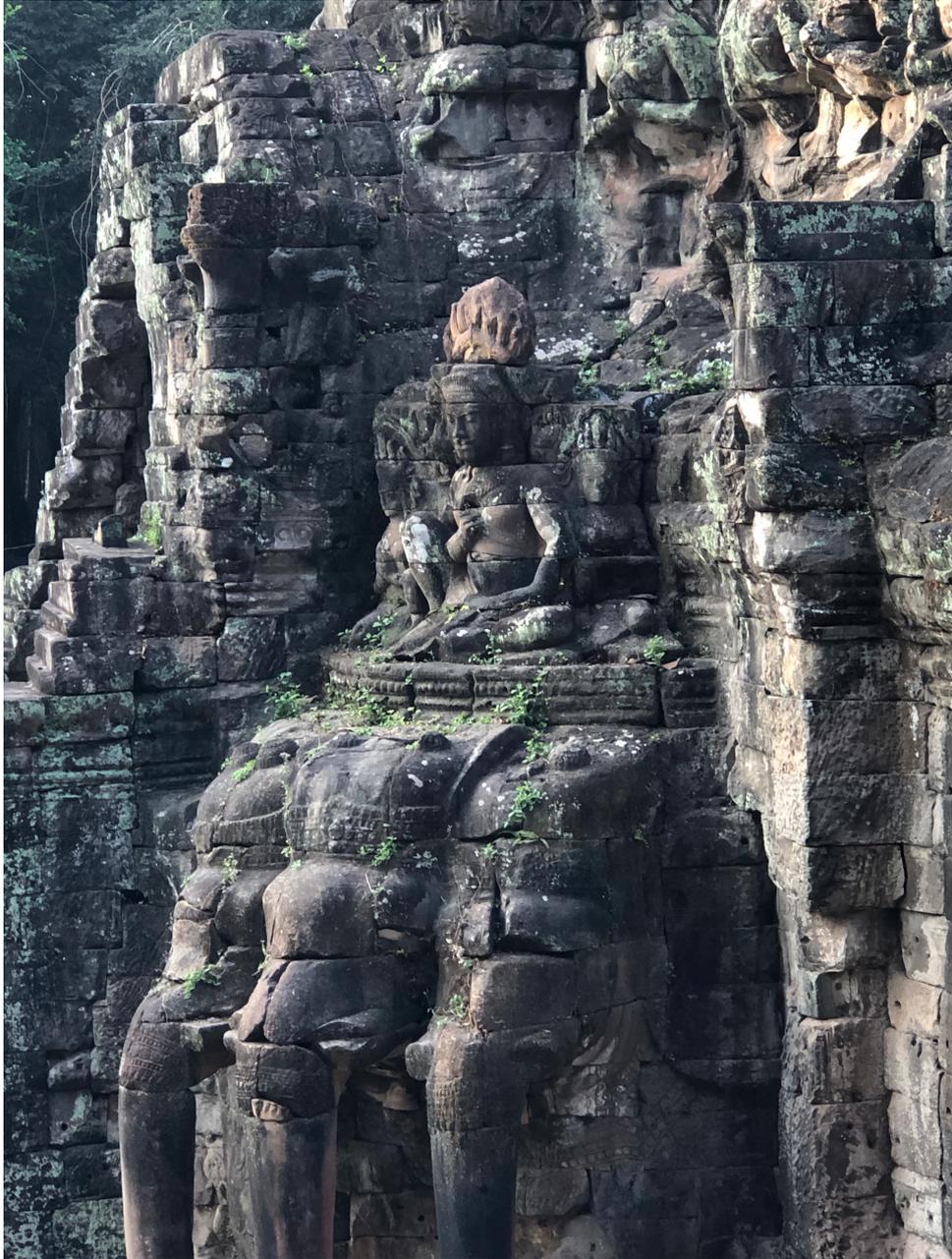
**This Golden Retriever lives on Road 63, the River Road. He has a toy giraffe. Today, we saw him going for a ride on a motorbike!**

**Friday 9th January, 2026.**

## **Temple Day : West Gate walk to NW Prasat Chrung**

The west side of the wall is well shaded in the mornings (very useful in the hotter weather) but the insect life was still hidden away in the early morning.





**Indra riding Airavata, the three headed elephant. This is part of the gate.**



**Several strangler figs and David (wearing a coat!)**



**Patch of moss at Prasat Chrung NW.**



**More moss on carvings... it is nearly dry now.**



**An hour later and the sun has brightened things up. The dogs are enjoying the sun too.**

Then it was home, in time for washing, David to cook lunch and our afternoon language lessons. After Friday's class, it feels like the weekend and after five temple visits this week, we have plenty of photos to sort and posts to organise.

