



February Newsletter

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Cycling for... 615 days

Pedalling over... 20210 km

Through... 27 countries

Currently... in Thailand !

Raising so far... £10,843

This month we've visited

We crossed the Vietnam border at Ha Tien on the 10th February into Cambodia so there were no more coastal routes for awhile. We headed in land and went straight across Cambodia into Thailand. On the way we followed part of the Mekong River to the Capital Phnom Penh where we stayed for a few days whilst our Thailand visa was being processed. From Phnom Penh we made our way to Siem Reap home to the Angkor Wat Temples, along the hot and dusty roads, with many hot sleepless nights in the tent. We finally arrived in Thailand on the 27th February after a three hour wait at a very busy unorganised passport control border crossing. They wouldn't accept Chris's passport so we had to go to a side room and sit there for awhile whilst they flicked through the pages of his passport, then they finally decided to stamp it and let him enter. All border controls are different, you never know what's going to happen or how you are going to be treated. The Thailand border didn't check any of our bags or bicycles, but we are very happy to be in the country. We are now living off coconuts that are sold everywhere along the side of the roads, passion fruit by the kilo and pineapples.



Below are links to our films...

<https://youtu.be/h-rj2uBSSPk>

<https://youtu.be/btm3glsfmg>

The most beautiful area has been

Surrounded By Temples.... Now we are in Thailand we cycle past many amazing temples with grand elegant elephant sculptures guarding the temples entrance. Chang, meaning elephant, is Thailand's national animal. The Elephant symbolism represents sensitivity, wisdom, stability, loyalty, intelligence, peace, reliability and determination, which are all seen in the animal's nature when observed in the wild. Elephants are gentle giants, who show great care toward their herd, offspring and elders.

The Thai Buddhist temple or monastery is not just one building, but a collection of buildings, shrines, and monuments within a courtyard that is enclosed by a wall. Around 30,000 Buddhist temples are consecrated in Thailand. Thai Temples have very architectural design and style. A temple may include not only congregation halls but also a monastery, shrines, school and sports grounds. We have to stop at each Temple entrance to have a photograph as each elephant is always different to the last.



Angkor Wat....In Cambodia we planned our route so we would be able to stay in Siem Reap and spend a day visiting the famous Angkor Wat Temple.

Angkor Wat is an enormous Buddhist temple complex located in northern Cambodia. It was originally built in the first half of the 12th century as a Hindu temple. Spread across more than 400 acres, Angkor Wat is said to be the largest religious monument in the world. Its name, which translates to "temple city" in the Khmer language of the region, references the fact it was built by Emperor Suryavarman II, who ruled the region from 1113 to 1150, as the state temple and political center of his empire. The general appearance of the wonder of the temple is beautiful and romantic as well as impressive and grand it must be seen to be understood and appreciated, you stand there mesmerised gazing up at the enormity and you ask your self how did they build this? How was all this rock lifted so high? The amazing detail that has gone into all the sculptures and designs that are carved everywhere .The west entrance begins with steps leading to a raised sandstone terrace in the shape of a cross at the foot of the long causeway. Giant stone lions on each side of the terrace guard the monument. Looking straight ahead, one can see at the end of the causeway the entry gate with three towers of varying heights and with collapsed upper portion.

For me it was the trees that have been there from the beginning that have rapped themselves around the stone pillars, they look like something out of a sci Fi film, it looks like lots of long arms stretching out and holding around one of the temples. A very piece full place and a place to reflect.



The most unusual things this month

In our western world if we want to buy anything we can just go to the shops and purchase anything we want or buy on line and have it delivered the next day. Here in Cambodia it is a very common sight to see people selling items from their scooters with a trailer on the back. People don't go to any fancy fashion stores or large modern shopping malls here. I saw a guy with racks of clothes hung off the back of his trailer, another selling all different types of plastic tupperware, plastic chairs and sweeping brushes. We saw a lady selling meat, the ice man, he has a huge block of ice on his trailer and he will saw you a block of ice off. Then there is the ice cream man and the vegetable lady. They all play different music and have recorded talking blasting out of a speaker so the people in the near by villages and those living in the fields beyond know they are there and all the local villagers come out to buy what they need.



Below are links to our films...

<https://youtu.be/tculKMwhYck>

<https://youtu.be/zplWqcUroEM>

<https://youtu.be/T9IUuLwedew>

The most challenging part....

The most challenging part now is dealing with the heat, it is now around 42c, so through out the day we have to make sure we are drinking plenty of water, when we can we put ice in our drinks bottles to keep our water chilled. We stop every so many miles to get out of the sun and cool down. There has been times when it was too hot and I was feeling sick, so I had to keep stopping and taking shelter. It's great when you hear the music of the ice cream man coming along the road. At night in the tent it has become unbearable even with the outer tent off and just sleeping in the inner tent it is still like a sweat box. It doesn't cool down at night so some nights you don't really get a good nights sleep and it's not long until the sun is shining bright down on you again. Mosquitoes and biting ants are everywhere now and it is very difficult trying to keep them out of the tent, no matter what sprays, smelly candles, creams, you name it we have tried it and nothing stops them.

Below is a link to our film....

<https://youtu.be/RH9j7nwTx7o>



A special highlight this month

We had just cycled for hours in the middle of know where with no roads only a narrow single dusty track through forests and fields, I don't know how we ended up going this way but we did, it was good fun as we came across a lovely couple living in a wooden hut with their cows, dogs, chickens and many banana trees, they kindly let us stop, shelter and gave us water. When we made it out of this area we knew we would be on the Mekong river and thought we would be able to camp easy enough by the water, but all the way along people were living there so we found it difficult to camp and it was getting dark by now so we decided we would ask if we could camp in the garden of what we thought was a hospital, but it turned out to be the Town Hall, so that night we were invited to have dinner with the Mayor and the towns council, chef of police and head of the hospital. We were even given permission to camp on their field near the river. So when you think you are going to be cycling all night with know where to stay, we always find someone kind enough to help us out.



Below are links to our films....

<https://youtu.be/FflRzWlr1Qo>

https://youtu.be/Wuzuchzs7_M

Next, we are heading to

We are heading to Bangkok, this is a great achievement for us to arrive there on our bicycles, as four years ago we arrived after cycling 5000km around South East Asia and we always said after that we would come back again by bicycle. We will cycle South of Thailand along the coast making our way to Malaysia, this will probably take us a couple of months. We are heading to Singapore as this is the place where we have to stay and get our new passports as we will have run out of pages, we will have no more space to put any more visas.

Thoughts and feelings

I cant believe we are now in Thailand we have being talking about this moment for along time. It is hard to believe we are here and all the way on our bicycles. When I finally arrive in Bangkok at Magic Max's were our love for bicycle touring all started and Chris proposed to me will be a very emotional, happy day and it will be six years to the day that me and Chris met and we haven't stopped cycling since and only been apart for the couple of nights I was in surgery. So my big thank you this month and every month is to **Chris** he has been by my side and has never left my side even through all the hard times I have put him through and he still continues to care for me and thinks of my needs constantly, like my medication, he want give up until he has organised a hospital that will supply it for me, he is constantly trying to come up with new ways and avenues on making our fundraising more successful whilst we are on the road, he never stops or gives up. I wouldn't of made it this far with out him he is the most **AMAZING** person ever. **THANK YOU CHRIS XXX**



