

Blog: 8/8/2025

END OF FLOODING!

Unfortunately, I can't say that for the Clevedon Flats, all the rural streams around us, and your own squelchy backyard, but I can tell you our front courtyard will finally be sorted in the next month. No more getting out of the car into that big puddle! No more sunken bump and splash as you come in the driveway.

We just have to finalise where the new drain goes as we don't think it is sensible that it just drains off into the street gutters, especially with these wetter spells we have been having in the last few years and with the heavier downpours we get. Once we sort out with our drainlayers and Watercare about connecting directly into the stormwater system Tama and his crew are all go. The underlying problem is despite the previous landlord blatantly telling me more than once to my puzzled enquiries that all our drains went into pipes feeding into the stormwater system, they didn't and never had. They are all just shallow sumps as we found when we tried to suck out what we thought was just sand and debris blocking the pipes.

In summer they more or less work but when the water table is high in the winter they can't work. Afterall we are built on the edge of what was once an island in the middle of a kauri swamp: that's why the military milepost and soldiers quarters three sections down were built there for the Land wars{and why we made sure the land was fully blessed before opening by such important people as Uncle Sir Monita Delamere, Rua Cooper, and the Rt Rev Manuhia Bennet]. When the back part was excavated in 2006 to extend the building, there was 3m of the richest, blackest, most beautiful soil I have seen until it was down to solid clay. When the new stormwater pipe went in along East St a few years ago, the re-laid pavement got raised at the same time leading to increased flow from the street into our place in heavy rains. We are addressing this with better drains laid through the concrete.

Tama's crew are going to remove the current paving [1986] and concrete extension [2005] and replace the lot with concrete. The stairs and ramp will be done at the same time

incorporating secure new steel handrails. He thinks it can be done in a week, weather permitting, and while there will be some parking disruption it will be very worthwhile. There will still be parking down the back and staff will clear out to the street over that time to increase space availability but there will be stairs to negotiate. We will warn all patients about dates ahead of time, and anyway we can always come out to the car if needed like we did over covid lockdowns and still occasionally do now when someone is infectious.

Our team went out to a lovely dinner at Red Earth last night to make up for cancelling the usual Midwinter Christmas dinner at my place when I went down with Influenza A. This time Meriana has missed it with the same. This year there are more cases than I ever remember since the effective fluvax coverage started in the last 1990's. which minimized transmission and season duration. While from an individual perspective it isn't a very effective vaccine- that is it's a bit over 60%, ie one out of three who have been vaccinated will still get it- having it does reduce serious complications like cardiomyopathy and death. It also makes die out quicker for lack of new victims. The Public Health Doctors and Epidemiologists, whose job it is to watch emerging strains and their virulence, did get it right. This year's vaccine did cover the current strains of mainly Influenza A and some Influenza B. We know as unlike practices dependent on the minimal reporting they get from community labs, we are part of a nationwide surveillance system which has been expanded to involve 30 different sites run by what we still call ESR [though the cumbersome new name announced in June this year is to be the New Zealand Institute of Public Health and Forensic Science which while maybe more accurate, it will be less memorable and will cost a lot in rebranding everything from websites, stationery and signage]. The swabs we do get reported in far more detail and covers many more viruses, which helps the doctors to predict the course and treatments better.

I'm off to Christchurch this upcoming weekend as there is a large GP conference there which has a number of independent speakers discussing Artificial Intelligence in General Practice. Dr

Dom's trial of using it to help write up more extensive notes- that AI is known as Heidi-is very positive but, as the Irish husband says often, just to be sure before we introduce it to all doctor's workstations. I'm not looking forward to one aspect at all: I am going to have to clean up my desktop and clean out my drawers to make room for a second screen, speaker and microphone. That will take a lot of work! It is starting to get noticeably lighter in the mornings before leaving for work and light often when we leave now so hopefully the worst of the wet and cold of winter are behind us. Be well, be safe. Jacqueline and team.