

## **Farewell Cambodia.....'Leah song hai protei Kampuchea'**

Well, it's my last day here – as I sit on my bed in the Angkor Bright hotel room in Phnom Penh, I am looking at the two bags that all my possessions are in, and I feel quite sad. As much as I am so excited to come home to the UK and see all the friends and family that I have not seen for so long, It gives me a very heavy feeling in my heart to say goodbye to my friends here. In some respects I have tried to fend off the 'goodbye' with my thoughts of coming home and how excited it will be to see everyone again, but now there is no escaping the byes and my phone keeps ringing. I am just about to go to the market for last minute shopping and then to send this e-mail, prior to heading off for a relaxing massage this afternoon. I have arranged to meet Judi, Nikki and other friends later at the Foreign Correspondence Club (very posh!) as they promise to give me a good send off.

In my full contemplation mode I come across quite serious and sad, but this is no bad thing, I would much rather feel the way I do now, than to not care – and I am sure you would all agree! When I came to Cambodia two years ago, I came because of the opportunity to work in the community to help woman and children to improve their health. I came to a job that sounded challenging and rewarding, where I knew that I would need to adapt but looked forwards to the whole experience. What I got here was so much more – I got to feel valued and treasured by the 'family' at PFD, I made a great friend in Judi, I worked out in the community and truly felt that I was helping people and all the time I found it stimulating and very much rewarding. On top of that, I adapted to a culture that is so different to my own, I learnt to speak another language and I made friends with so many people who just needed to work with me, but choose to be my friends. My heart was breaking and the tear were flowing when I left my home of two years, because of the generosity and compassion of the people who have been in my life for all that time. I hope to go back one day, but could not make any promises and that was tough.

Now I think to home, I know I will need to adapt again to come back, and I have a lot of things to catch up on with the people who I said goodbye to so long ago. What I want to say to the people back home who were always more than a list of names on each e-mail; to say thankyou to you all. You know I could never have come here, nor done the work that I have if it were not for you. You helped to model me to be the person that I am today, you gave me the strength within myself to take anywhere in the world, and that helped me to stay and work here. Now as I come home, I know that you will be there to welcome me home too. Several people told me that I was brave become a volunteer in the first place, but in reality, it would have been braver to stay because I was in need of a change in my life and this was the perfect opportunity to learn about myself. As other volunteers would probably agree, it is tough to be away, sometimes more than others, but it is those back home who care about you who help you to do the good work that is so much needed in a place like Cambodia.

I feel like the luckiest person alive today, lucky to have lived here, and now to be going home to the people I care for in the UK. I have felt lucky for most of my time here in fact. Lucky that I have lived the life I have led, full of opportunity and security, with a lovely family and fantastic friends throughout my life. I am so proud of myself for having of done this, and having of made so many friends here along the way, as I think that it is love and friendship that make the world go round!!! I will never forget my time in Cambodia, it has been a time that I have really got to know about me, and I have had a great time in doing so!



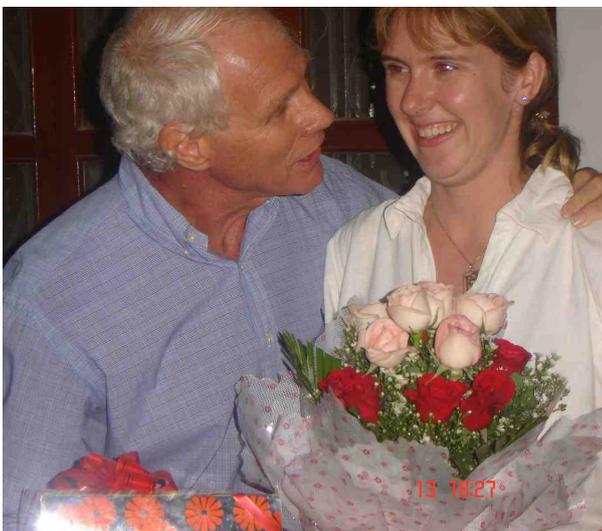
So no more seriousness – onto the fun stuff – the parties:



In Kratie at 'Red Sun Falling'



In Chhlong, we had a big party in the street outside my house – with a marquee, massive speakers and lots of food, beer and dancing. Unfortunately, the rain came too – all night long!



And Finally, in Phnom Penh we had food and games at the office.

So this has been Kim Chadwick, reporting to you from Cambodia each month, and loving it!

Each newsletter has allowed me to be in touch with more people than ever before in my life. I hope that this does not end now my time away is about to!

All my love, see you real soon, love Kim x