

IndiaDiary2015

Parts in italics are usually saying where I am writing this.

First entry from Guest house at 7.05 Wednesday night 14th.

Sunday 11th January. Went by car (English Rose collection) at 5.0 in afternoon to Premier Inn. Motor way was fast but 12 miles of roadworks that sometimes make the journey two and a half hours long. The hotel was basic but good. I had a hot ciabatta toastie in the bar then watched Foyles War and Saints beating MU. Their manager is so ungracious and ours is so nice and honest.

Monday 12th January. Of course I woke too early and dosed until 3 alarms went off together. The car journey was about 15 minutes. The driver agreed with the hotel that it is 1 mile from terminal 5 but that is as the crow flies. Roads were very crowded near the terminal – there are sometimes queues of 2 miles long from motorway to the terminal. So glad I did the hotel trick. Of course I checked in very quickly, but had a slow progress through security because I had forgotten the rules and had a tiny amount of toothpaste in my bag. Had a nice chat with the security man about MU and Saints. Then two and a half hours to wait to fly. I did not like this at all. Feeling slightly dizzy all the time (not actually dizzy but spacially odd. Flight was fast, arriving 40 minutes early. I had an empty seat next to me so my extra space with World Traveller Plus was even more spacious. The 3 kids under 5 around me were good and quiet. I watched one excellent film (the Old Lady with Maggie Smith, and The Riot Club – based on the exclusive oafish club at Oxford the Cameron belonged to.

Tuesday 13th January. Soon through immigration and money change and baggage collection to find Moin standing, smile unchanged, waiting “Welcome to India sir”. I hardly recognised the drive to the Trident hotel as the area around the terminal was all high concrete flyovers and flyunders, and the renovated and expanded Domestic terminal amplified all this. Soon in our room with the usual highly professional welcome from staff who always claim to remember me. The young man who carried bags to our room had heard me say I was from Southampton and so congratulated me on beating MU the night before.

It is 7.20 so off to eat. Lunch had been horrible so I am hungry.

Back again, writing while listening to the flute of Chausaria.

We had to force ourselves to stop chatting to get some sleep. Half successful. Moin then had 3 indian breakfasts and I had a bowl of cornflakes. I wish I did not feel anxious all the time. The driver from Kalyan Residency was waiting and we set off at about 10. There was heavy hooting traffic for 50 minutes and then on to an excellent 4 lane road most of the way to Tirupati, arriving a bit before 1.0. We were met at the guest house by all the oldies including Sury, Kamal, Basha and 4 others. As they don't speak English all they could do was grin and laugh and wobble their heads in welcome. My usual room was all ready, newly painted as commanded by Sai Gopal 4 days previous. Everything works. It seems impossible that about 11 months has passed since leaving here. After five minutes the younger staff appeared grinning at the door with the book for me to sign – Venu, Raju and Lokesh, all happy that I remembered their names. Feeling hungry we used our car to take back to town for lunch at Sindhuri Park. Because it is Pongal, Ghandi road is blocked so we had to take a 20 minute noisy detour up towards Kapilatheertham and the road where Charlie lives. We had Kofta Panneer – little spice just creamy and minty and nice. Then ice cream and home.

We did usual setting up of my home, unpacking and then down at the Super Market where the nice owner got a bevy of ladies to help us find what I needed – coat hangers, electric mosquito killer, floor mats, soap, shampoo, crisps, cashew nuts, biscuits clothes washing stuff, water. Then to a roadside stall for bananas. By now it was completely dark and the 5.50 train was coming. To avoid the noisy and dangerous rail crossing we tried my short cut down a side road and over the

rail track but found it blocked so had to stagger back along the rail track just arriving before the train. My phone sim card, retained from last year did not work so before dinner we spent 40 minutes walking around Prakasam road to get a new one. This has to be done through Moin who needed to photo ids and he only had one. He had a tiny photo so we found a man who photoshopped it to enlarge and print it – easier than in Southampton. Then there will be a 48 hour delay before my phone works. I do feel immediately at home here, fighting in the half dark with bikes, autos, pilgrim families, more bikes, gently making our way to the corner of Nethaji road to buy a 'bedlight' – sold as emergency back up light. Excellent £3 worth although it is glaring pink. The reason that Ghandi road was closed to traffic is that it was open to hoards of people selling things, mainly clothes, in heaps on the side of the road, yelling their offers over the heads of little old ladies each sitting with a bunch of fruit. We made it through the packed crowds to Gogula stores to buy two large cotton bedsheets and a lungi at my usual friendly 30% discount before continuing the fight down to Sindhuri park for Masala dosa and ice cream. Home to long nice chat with Moin and sleep at last at about 11.30. I woke again at 2.30 and had a nice read of my spy book () set in Istanbul and Dubrovnik. That is the quietest part of the night with only occasional trains sounding like lost souls wailing, punctuated by irritated devils of express buses trying to hoot their way across the rail crossing before it closed. Also Little owls calling.

Wednesday 14th January. Woke very slowly to a cool morning, tea and idli wada. This had just arrived and did so together with 4 village boys. Manoj (English speaker), Dinesh (oldest perhaps a bit dim), his very affectionate younger brother (Madhu) and of course Barath Kumar (Balu). They did not know Moin was there having a shower so were very noisy and taking turns to hug happily, but cooling down as he emerged to a sheepish "hello sir sorry for noise sir". Moin persuaded them to ignore him and they gradually warmed up again. They were delighted with the duets with Libby and Hugh. We went out on the roof, with them complaining of the cold – it had gone down to 12 degrees last night. I packed them off soon with a promise to visit the village in the afternoon after Moin had left.

After they had gone we both lay down for a doze. I was fast asleep when a visitor came in. He looked exactly like Telly Salvelas in Kojac with completely bald head. He said how are you and I said Who are you, which fortunately he took as a clever joke – It was sai gopal. I had seen on facebook that it was his birthday so I started to be cheerful and congratulate him but he stopped me to tell me his mother had died two days ago. In her sleep at his home. I later saw that he had emailed this information to me: "Dear Dr.Chris, My mother suddenly demised today". So he had been unable to meet me at the guest house as he was at her cremation. So we had a quiet chat while he told me all about it. This included telling me about his neighbour who had been woken by 6 dogs crying. "This is bad because dogs should bark and not cry – so this is bad news coming". Moin had to struggle to avoid giggling at a professor of science believing this stuff. Then chat about plans. He is not head of department now so I had a phone chat with Dr Hema. I said that she is now my boss. "O no sir Sai Gopal will always be the boss" so I said she is boss and he is superboss. They like my incredible wit.

We then had horrible dark brown slimy lunch sent from some junk restaurant (the good ones are closed for holiday) which neither of us finished. Bananas and chocolate helped.

After more slightly sad chat with Moin he set off for his 14 hour bus ride back to Hyderabad while I sorted a few things out before setting out for Mallepalle (Balu's bit of Thumulagunta). I felt this was a bit of a test (I passed). After the usual 10 minute walk in the sun I got an auto to the village where I was first met by Said (tall quiet neatly dressed Muslim boy) who was a bit taller. I was taken to Balu's uncle's house where I had to take photos of family. He unkindly took me into the bedroom to show me his 'brother' Seshu lying asleep. He woke him up which was difficult and

produced a very bewildered looking young man as he realised who was the stranger standing there. I then had to struggle to drink a big beaker of very hot milky coffee while failing to have any sensible chat with Balu's dad who looks very fierce and has a deep voice like a typical Indian film star. On a shelf there were pictures of the god Sri Venkateshwara surrounding a framed picture of me and Balu. Eventually I was released to go on the necessary walk to the 'park' with Balu, Madhu, Dinesh and Manoj where the usual photos were taken. I had to remind them that I have another 4 weeks with them. Balu told me that the flimmers?, flybes? (I remember now it is Frisbe) were taken by someone. And also the laser – a friend had borrowed it to show family and "it was kidnapped". They are very excited because they are all going by train to Chennai to go to the beach on Saturday "sir please come with us". Not on your life. On the way back to the village a shouting teenager came running up "one photo sir" So he organised Balu to take a photo of the two of us as instructed with him doing Namaste. As we left the boys told me that "he is nice boy sir but he is somewhat mad – brain problem sir". Balu wanted to give me a ride back on his bike (which is still a great success). Instead, three of them came back in a captured auto to the guest house where I gave Balu his bird book and explained about the computer while the others (Madhu and Dinesh) played on ipad. After raiding the travel sweets off they went. I tried to give them 40 rupees for auto home but after a brief conference they said they "have money sir no problem for us". They told me later that they walked.

By now I was hungry but wrote some diary then set off for town. The road was empty of all traffic and I had a lovely walk under the trees which are lit by yellow street lights up among the branches. I had to walk the whole way to Sindhuri park where I read my kindle and ate kofta panner again before auto home to write.

Thursday 15th January. Had usual disturbed night, punctuated with reading sessions. I woke at 6.0 and played solitaire for a short time then slept until 9.0. I was told by Basha that it is a holiday so no breakfast – he is being lazy. So he got me tea to have with a breakfast bar. Although I am writing this the same day in the evening I cannot remember all events. In the morning Teena and Steven came. He explained she had wanted to stay at home playing computer games but he had promised that she would get chocolate if she came so I had to give her some and then let her play some small games on the ipad. Steven then described all the events that his father Charlie had told me a few weeks ago. Some 'friend' at college had been bullying him badly and insulting him. So, stupid boy he took a knife to school and when his mother was insulted he cut the boy who needed 12 stitches in his arm. The police had to be bribed to ignore it but the college sacked all the boys concerned and Steven now works at home. All this was told very fluently and with smiles. It is difficult to believe that he is so much at fault – but to take a knife to college was so stupid. His father says that if he does not pass all his exams he will throw him out of the house. I am expected to give advice. Steven is very likeable and seems sensible. But he says he has no interest in his studies (chemistry physics and biology). He wants to be a singer like his mother. They sometimes go to Chennai to perform but all the money goes to father. What use can I be except I might try to tell Charlie that he should not threaten to throw Steven out because he would be dishonest if he did not do it and un-christian if he does.

I had the sense to order Chinese fried rice for lunch which was ok. After lunch a past student, Chandu, came – as arranged on facebook. He did Industrial microbiology in 2012 and is now working in a big biotech company in Bangalore. Sai Gopal told him to come to see me for help in getting a job in UK. He never learns. I told him it was very difficult and that all I can do is to help write a CV that is suitable for UK. We were mercifully interrupted by Dinesh Seshu and Balu who sat quietly playing with the ipad on the bed. Then a friend of Chandu arrived – also to get advice. Slightly irritated I told them that the students I knew who were successful had done everything

themselves and did not need advice. Fortunately the offer of help with CVs is grasped gratefully. Then more chat and photos etc with the village boys who soon left so that I could have my necessary doze before my 5 o'clock walk around local campus.

They had good rain this year so trees are very leafy and there is a lot of undergrowth. I walked up to NCC Nagar, disappointed to see that the access to the horse training area is blocked by a new wall (I guess access at front will be ok). My favourite little family were sitting under the trees outside their house under the trees with one lady milking and waving at the same time and the children playing with the calves. As usual there were fewer birds in the afternoon but did see: crows, babblers, myna, koil (drinking at NCC nagar pond), water hen, beautiful Tailor bird, Indian robin, Magpie robin, paddy bird, black drongo, coppersmith.

Have just read nice email from Libby; missing her and Hugh. It is now 7.10 so off for dinner, hoping to catch an auto.

Just returned. Accidently got a shared auto (empty) down to Balaji colony then a real auto to Sinduri park. I think the holiday activities are decreasing as traffic is now allowed past Town club to Gandhi road. Had persian paneer, fairly sweet and bland followed by strawberry ice cream then rapid auto home. I shall now attempt my first DVD (Endeavour).

Changed my mind and started to watch House of cards (American version). Very gripping, hooked in the first 5 minutes.

Good night xxxx

Friday 16th January. Had awful disturbed night with crying dogs and trains etc. Woken at about 6 by sound of pouring rain (stopped by 9.30). I later put this on facebook and got clogged up with comments. So no morning walk again. Had Pongal for breakfast; some sort of ground up rice embedded with whole peppercorns, curry leaves, cashew nuts, tiny bits of chilly, served with a sort of spicy coconut mush. Very good. Sai gopal appeared as arranged (he said) at 10.30 to go to the department. While I got ready I played him our music videos which he got very excited about. We then went to meet my new boss. She is Dr Hema, the nicest and most sensible of all the staff, now occupying old Prof Srinivasulu's office who calls in occasionally but still never speaks with sai gopal. They have changed the syllabus timing so all students have done microbial biochemistry in the 1st semester and I have been allocated cell biology, molecular biology etc. Their plan is so haphazard but they are happy for me to cobble together the course I did previously and I will tell them which bits of their course plan they correspond to. After a bit of debate they agreed it would be a good idea to teach virology and microbiology together as their units are now synchronised. Lectures will be at 9.30 after I persuaded them that the hostels do not provide early breakfast for a 9.0 start.

Sai gopal has a new scooter so I have to suffer this discomfort (balance problem). We went to pay a courtesy visit to Dr Rajendra, the VC in his official residence, his office being closed for the holiday period. He explained that the very large house and extensive grounds are the biggest for any VC in the state. He is a nice man, good scientist and fun to chat with. One whole side of his home office is a cabinet containing cups and shields and framed honours. So I had my photo taken by Sai gopal with the VC and his trophies in the background. I bravely told them this is my last visit.

I am using facebook a lot now as that is what most people here seem to prefer. I got a message from ram telling me to contact him by phoning 100; fortunately I did not try this as it is the number for calling the police (hehehehehe as they say). After a short read in the watery sun I had same lunch as yesterday but with no tomato sauce – I must request this in future.

I slept for about an hour before being woken by balu, dayakar and manoj. Did usual stuff on computer and ipad. Main reason for visit was for Balu to borrow my small camera. The spare battery seemed to have lost its charge so I recharged it. He then insisted on finding a small strap to

put on it so no one will drop it. This is for their visit to Chennai tomorrow. I was so sleepy that Balu, looking very concerned said “what is problem Chris sir you are looking so dull”. So I livened up a bit and was led onto the roof by Balu who wanted me to give him 500 rupees (£4.50) for tomorrow. I asked if the other boys had money – “yes sir”. I then received a rundown of their parents income. His mother no longer has a salary and his father is very low paid (3000 rup month, not enough to live on). Fortunately his uncle with whom he lives is better off. I gave him the money but said he should not tell the others.

After they left and I had a bucket of tea I tried to set off for a walk. Just as I had crossed the road a hooting scooter stopped in the middle of the road and called me over, to find Balu driving Bobby to come to see me. The scooter belongs to his cousing brother Seshu. He was coming partly to tell me that the spare battery does not work. This explains why I thought the camera was faulty before I came away. This gave me an opportunity to reset the camera for lower quality pics so he can take more and not use so much battery. I got some walk in the slightly gloomy evening. My usual walk out past NCC nagar Is rather damaged by clearance of a lot of undergrowth and some new buildins. Very few birds except for red vented bulbuls. Home to write this and now off to dinner.

Back from dinner. I was pleased to get an auto all the way to S. Park. I suggested 40 rupees, driver said 50; when we arrived at Sindhuri park I thought I gave him 50 but he came galloping up the steps waving a 10 cos I had given him 60. I told him to keep it and got a huge smile and applause from the security man who had been watching. Amazingly on the way home from Gandhi road I again suggested 40 and the driver said 50; when we arrived at the guest house he grinned and said ok sir 40. So it all equalled out. I am still in the happy state that I eat too much in the evening. Tonight it was extra spicy Kaju Gobi (cashewnuts /cauliflower) causing the waiter to come up and offer me a paper napkin as he saw me wiping my tears away.

Watched 3rd episode of House of Cards then sleep.

Saturday 17th January. After one reading stop at about 3 I slept soundly, waking at 9.00, too late for a morning walk. Gopi had arranged to come today but did not say the time so I stayed in. Had a bucket bath then read Hindu in weak morning sun and wrote some of my autobiography(!). *There is a giant cockroach creeping about my feet. I guess I better buy a broom.* I have found some interesting stuff about Benskin’s brewery on the internet and also lots of old Watford pictures. The Watford in wartime site had a few brief stories including one describing destruction of the house in Sandringham road near us. I also found a picture of the men’s ward I was on in the Peace memorial hospital before going to university.

Gopi arrived at 12.30 by motorbike from his family home in Chittoor with his brother Ajay, aged 17 and amazingly thin, with heavy moustache and huge toothy smile which he tried to hide whenever a camera approached. Almost immediately Balu appeared with Dinesh and Manoj. “We missed the train to Chennai so we will play cricket”; he returned the camera and said he will be coming in the evening at 7.0 (*I am waiting now*). They stayed only long enough to introduce them to Gopi and Ajay. Lunch had to be negotiated, Basha saying there is no one to get it, so Gopi went off with him to Sindhuri park to get veg biryani and fried rice which came in big plastic buckets. Basha moaned all the way that Manasa the local restaurant is as good, but I always get the same dull stuff when they order from there. Lunch was very good although I missed my tea because someone had gone off with the key to the tea cupboard. After lunch Gopi’s dad arrived dressed in a very special silk lungi etc that had been presented to him on his recent retirement (he is 60). He is going to return to manage some land near the family village. Gopi had brought me oranges one of which we ate and then Gopi plus dad went up the road to buy me a gift of apples, leaving me to chat with Ajay who is slowly fluent and nicely chatty, not leaving me to ask all the questions. He is

at the same college as Gopi's and doing similar subject. They all applauded Libby flute and Hugh violin playing. Gopi had to return tonight to Bangalore so they soon went off, three on one bike on the 90 minute drive to Chittoor. Dad is large, Gopi standard and Ajay thin so they just about fitted. I had a nice sleep, woken by Basha with a mug of tea and bumbling apologies. It had become cloudy with a cool breeze so I went for a stroll to dairy farm which is unchanged. I saw a nice roller and kingfisher but not much else besides lots of lovely cattle egrets. I called in at the supermarket for indian chocolate [to save mine] and water and crisps and tomato ketchup to go with my leftover veggie biryani. Balu arrived with Dinesh and Manoj as planned. We then copied his photos of the village from the small camera to computer while the others played on ipad and with laser pointer. They soon left, leaving me to try to sort out the phone. It is now able to operate but first I must confirm that I am the registered user – using moin's name and address. Unfortunately I could not understand the accent of the man speaking so I will have to wait until Monday to get someone to help me. Very frustrating, with me unable to phone and Moin blaming himself.

Writing this while listening to the great Jussi Bjoeling recording of Boheme with my wonderful loudspeakers.

I could not face the slog down town for dinner So I added cashew nuts and spicy tomato juice to the leftover biryani followed by chocolate. Excellent. Then watched episode 4 of House of Cards. I tried phoning Charlie to get him to help with phone but he was out. An ex-thumulagunta boy Kotek messaged on facebook to ask when he can come from Chandragiri (16km west of here). I persuaded him to come Sunday morning to help with phone.

Sunday 18th January. Usual night but ok. I woke at 6.30 and couldn't get to sleep so read until tea arrived and I ordered idli/wada for breakfast. Another cool slightly cloudy morning so I read on the roof until Kotek arrived. I am reading (on kindle) a great book on the spy Kim Philby and the other Cambridge spies. It is slightly confusing as I have just finished a spy novel. Kotek, of course, has changed from the slight, charming boy of 5 years ago to a pudgy moustached smarmy young man who runs the night reception at a hotel. At heart of course not so different. He was immediately a success with the phone although we had to try twice because Moin has so many versions of his name. I know him as Mazahar Moin but on his official ID he is A. Majahar Mohiddin. So I now have a phone. After the usual pictures I sent Kotek back by bike to his usual daytime sleep in Chandragiri. Before he went he told me that Balu's father (his uncle) had phoned him to say that Balu is behaving badly and not going to college every day, going with his friends to the zoo instead. I phoned Moin to confirm the phone works and got Kotek to tell same story. The boys later denied this and said that Kotek was making a joke. Probably some truth in it.

I put my phone number onto facebook, inviting calls and got one before the ink was dry from Imran in Hyderabad. I told him that now I know who is not working but just playing with facebook; "no sir I have 2 computers side by side, one exclusively at the facebook page of my hero Christopher Anthony". No change there then.

I tried to test the Manasa restaurant by ordering veg biryani for lunch but they collected it from Sindhuri park.

As planned (demanded) I took auto to Mallepale for my Sunday afternoon event. Wonderful friendly atmosphere as I was escorted to Balaji's house to say hello and photos before mopping up Manoj, Dinesh, Balachandran, bobby, Madesh, Ganesh (Balu's little brother), Jogesh and Balu to wander to the park to walk along the raised circumference amongst the statues and bourgenvillea. Bobby always invites photos of him lying down or rolling down hills, Madhu hugs the statues, Balachandran (Dinesh's brother) just hugs me possessively while Jogesh, who always appears in past pictures as the strange little boy carrying a doll, now picks bunches of flowers for his photos. Dinesh is in charge of binoculars and Bobby allocates time to others on the small camera. Balu is

general administrator. They are all younger than him. I had to ban them from taking photos or using binoculars ('binoscope') to spy on a couple hugging on the small shaded hill in the middle of the park. Balu was worried that I am a bit dull sir. I felt a bit dull, always a bit affected by balance thing.

Mounish suddenly appeared – first I have seen of him- not much changed except deeper voice. I was introduced to Balu's cat, which is a very small kitten and then to a few more babies before posing astride a motorbike for photos. I was escorted to the road by Balu and few others plus 3 new ones (Chrish, xxxxxx? And pushti? The cheeky boy from last year). Before leaving they all insisted on autographs in books or on hands. Fortunately I soon got an auto driven by 2 young teenagers who asked for 40 rupees – I said 20 but gave them 30.

Home at last to tea on the roof in the last 20 minutes of daylight. It will be good tomorrow to start work. The boys are entertaining but a lot of work and I end up suffering from affection overload.

I quickly got an auto to S. Park, as there are more of them now the students are back. Roads relatively empty as it is Sunday and after holiday. Panneer butter masala then pistache ice cream. I always feel too bloated to come home immediately so had nice stroll through temple and Gandhi road and auto home. Watched DVD then bed.

Monday 19th January. Could not sleep till 2.0 but then ok till 7 ish. Very cool morning so kept on vest for walk- my first real morning walk. As the sun rose higher the birds appeared. They have built a wall that appeared to prevent access to the horse riding place but I found a place where there was a cunning overlapping bit that looked continuous but allowed access if not too fat. Immediately rewarded by 3 golden orioles, both bulbuls, Ashy prinia. Palm swifts, coucal, and female cuckoo shrike. My breakfast was breakfast bar and an apple, a gift from Gopi. I was collected by Shekar a virology research student who had been instructed to drive very slowly. The head of virology Dr Hema has arranged that I teach virology and microbiology students together (at last) so there should have been 40 students. One turned up, the others still not back from holiday. So had a nice long chat with hema about all her problems in the university. They have huge equipment grants – to buy huge equipment like NMR but no running costs or repair contingency. Crazy. Fewer students are doing virology now so she has studentships but no students. She is a pleasure to be with, always honest and humorous. She invited me to her home for dinner and I said yes but it had to be next week because I am keen to meet her family. After coffee I wandered into Biochemistry and met Thyagaraju, Murthy and the head of department Reddy. "We are waiting for you and so happy you are here". Immediately agreed to do my usual topic starting next Monday. There was a nice breeze so I decided to walk home and not avail myself of either of the drivers I have been offered by Hema (to borrow her scooter). But after 5 minutes in the hot sun I was happy to accept a lift from some unknown person who recognised me. Soon after I got back and had my tea on the roof lunch was delivered – Chinese fried rice. I just finished eating and Balachandran (Dinesh's younger brother) and little Bobby turned up to collect their promised coins, two each only. They said it is still a holiday and Balu has gone with his parents to Tirumula. Of course I had to spend time showing pictures on computer and then they got going taking photos and demanding I make a video of them dancing. Not up to Balu's standard but good fun – to Chris Barber's Careless love. Libby phoned during their visit, in a hurry as Hugh was off to work but she had to hear them saying hello. Hugh was less hurried. So nice to hear them. At last I was able to lie down for my afternoon nap but was soon woken by a new village contingent, younger boys always on the periphery of the main gang and now dressed for a special visit. Their leader Krishna was the youngest (12), beautifully dressed, Kranthi Kumar the biggest (14) and Prudvi (15) who was smallest and seen previously being very scruffy and acting gangster

like. They wanted photos and took photos and danced in sun hats and looked at pictures till I was exhausted. Krishna spoke quite good English and is clearly very intelligent. A popular picture involved me sitting down and them kneeling at my feet touching them in some sort of reverent worship or at least obeisance. Of course I took all this in my stride, assuming that is possible while sitting down. At last I drove them away and lay down, only to be roused 10 minutes later by Steven and Teena. I said that I thought she did not like to come but Steven said she was boring at home and wanted more chocolate and wanted to play online games on my computer, which she did. More sad stories from Steven all subtly or directly wanting money, including “we never eat snacks now only rice and dahl”. It is his grandmothers birthday tomorrow and they have no money ‘for snacks’. Then it seems Steven cannot get qualifications unless some money is paid to college etc etc. It is strange that the only people asking directly for money have been the Christians. I think they have been culturally accustomed to receiving financial support as a church from overseas. Apparently Steven had planned to join the army when he was 16; this required his grandfather’s written support (as an ex RAF person) but he died 2 weeks before writing it. So many sad stories. It is unlikely I can solve anything and I do not know if I want to try. I feel very sympathetic to Steven trying to do what his father should do (approaching me for support) so I gave him £10 (1000 rupees) for his grandmother’s birthday.

Welcome tea helped me to recover before setting off for my evening walk on campus towards the hills and the Vedic College. I soon had to stand aside on a small rough path to allow two youngsters to go past but they didn’t. I recognised one instantly from his cheeky smile (O. Shanmugam). For many years he was the little boy who was always playing cricket outside my nearest neighbour’s house on the university campus. Every year I took pictures of them but I did not see them last year. He is now doing BSc in engineering college so I guess he is 18 but looking 16. His English was quite good and he told me that they used to wait until they saw me before playing – for my benefit apparently.

I wanted to get further away from the road so tried to follow a track past the Engineering hostels which are surrounded by eucalyptus trees filled with roosting crows and rubbish discarded from windows. I stopped when I realised I had reached the end and was approached by three students “where are you from, where are you going, where do you live etc”. When I told them I am from Southampton they said they do not like that because Southampton is above their team Manchester United in the premier league table. Small world. They were the nicest (almost adult) people I have met here and I will meet them again this evening if they do as planned and come to the guest house. When I commented on the rubbish they enjoy around them they said that they are an “undeveloped country that does not allow kissing but allows pissing”. Good summary. Names: Peter, thin dark spotty skin and glasses; Babu, young looking with nice gentle laugh; Mahesh, handsome and intelligent (I write this now from memory to help if they do turn up later). So home through the crow-loud campus (thank you Dylan Thomas) warm and breezy with nice smells and sounds and feeling good. Passing Shanmugam’s friends house they came running out to ask my room number in the guest house so I guess we might meet again. Then a final “hello sir how are you sir fine sir” from a young slightly creepy pudgy teenager going into the Atomic research guest house opposite my guest house. “I have seen you every year sir but I was too small to speak”. He is living with his uncle there as his father is a poor postman; he is studying to be a nurse. At last I am home. As the students may come in 40 minutes there is no time to go to town so leftover fried rice with added cashew nuts followed by Christmas cake and perhaps an orange.

The engineering students all turned up exactly on time; the three previous with added Sunil. Good company but of course tiring so quite pleased they had to leave after an hour to go to a party to celebrate the end of their exams.

Tuesday 20th February. Slept well with only one reading pause. Woke at 8.0 to cool morning. I always feel it is a bit of a duty to get up and out for a walk but always pleased I did so. I went up towards NCC nagar then looked for the place where blue faced Malkoha lived last year. They are starting work on a road there – so far only scrub cleared and a line of posts. Lots of bird song, mainly bulbuls and magpie robin, with the gently bopping of coppersmiths. I followed the line of posts back and found it led to the new wall around the horse area and also the beginning of a small road, complete with heaps of rock, sand and ladies in saris resting from their work. Returned to breakfast of pongal with more than usual strips of chilli-no problem. Shekar arrived at 9.30 to drive to my lecture; a good slow driver. Two students (virology boys) turned up so I started to chat and then 2 girls from microbiology. The girls had been taught in English medium, the boys in telugu. So I told them a bit about me then bit about my research as I did not want to start proper lectures as Hema had said she expects many more tomorrow. After, I called in to chat with Hema, always pleasant and helpful. She arranged for me to have an extra mattress; on the phone I could hear, scattered amongst the rapid Telugu, clues about the discussion – now a bit old, back, mattress,happy.....guesthouse. They came and did it as soon as I got back. One of last year's virology gang is still here as a research assistant. Of course it was the one I liked least as he was always a bit too keen and pushy (Koteshwararao). Now he is usefully pushy and keen to please and drove me back to the guest house.

After 20 minutes finishing the Sunday paper on the roof my usual lunch was served – Chinese fried rice followed by curds and very nice juicy orange segments. I am re-reading Clive James book of brief biographies and criticism. A bit irritating as I cannot remember the title, having just read an essay on how important and informative of the author a title is. He is a wonderful writer and I always feel a better person after reading him. I read this first while on France holiday 2 years ago. Now I am reading on kindle. After afterlunch sleep I did a bit on my biography. It is strange how one memory sparks another, especially after writing about it. I suddenly had a powerful recollection of the smell of the grocers Charles where I worked when I was 14 and this provoked memory of my dislike of working in the cellar with the big paper sacks of sugar, the sandpaper scratch of sugar on my fingernails and the horrible cockroaches. While having tea on the roof I saw a Shikra hawk in a nearby tree so crept back to get camera and got excellent picture of it. I then wandered about and still it sat there, presumable wondering why I had been so unnecessarily creepy.

After tea I set out to explore out on the far edge of the campus by the Vedic college. Up near the lake two small boys were pushing a third in a small wheel chair. He had tiny withered legs form polio I suppose. One photo pleeeese sir. One of the boys reminded me I took his photo when up a tree rescuing his kite earlier in the week. I managed to get a picture of all three boys without the wheelchair being in it and they were delighted. I had seen them previously playing with a kite, so happy. All this area is being expanded with new small roads and buildings but retaining most of the trees. Near the bigger building projects there are small makeshift villages of low huts made from palm leaves, corrugated iron and plastic sheets, all with ladies cooking dinner on open fires, and washing babies in what looked like cooking pots; I assume the activities were not connected. There were remarkably few birds (only crows and mynas). I walked and walked and walked, always with the assumption that I would come out on the far side of the campus but I went much farther, arriving at the Women's hospital and medical research place. I was shocked when the auto driver said it is 80 rupees but I was very tired and needed a pee so I accepted and found out how far I was from home (80 rupees worth). We were high up on the road towards Kapilatheertham so we drove all the way down to Balaji colony and then back up past the University to home. Worth every rupee.

I am writing this at 7.10 in evening trying to decide whether or not to trek to town. I think I have to as I do not want a second dinner of leftover Chinese rice. Let's hope for a prompt auto. The ice cream is a major attractant; I guess it sends off pheromones.

I did go and had nice dinner of stuffed alloo (potatoes) and strawberry icecream. I seem to have a routine – a stroll out of Sindhuri park, through temple, down Gandhi road and part of Prakasam road then auto home. The DVD of Wire in the Blood has a lot of background noise and one of the DVDs did not open at all. I started to watch these as I did not want to finish house of Cards too soon.

Wednesday 21st January. I had my first uninterrupted sleep, probably cos of extra mattress. As usual this meant that I was a bit groggy as I stumbled to the door to agree to tea. I walked in nice gentle morning sun and breeze up to NCC compound and walked through it and over the bypass road towards the hills. Very few birds except a black headed oriole (great exception) and some very noisy birds in the bamboo near the hills that I failed to see. On the way back I saw an expression of what seems to be typical lack of knowledge of the natural world here – a large 'conservation poster' urging 'Return my habitat' with a picture of a huge lion, whose habitat is away in Africa. While looking at this a young chap came up with usual questions. I assumed he would be military but he just works there. Lives in Tirupati itself and likes nature. He let me go eventually but then came running up again to tell me that if I needed animals for research he can get any animal within 24 hours. Then the usual warning to be careful as there is a tiger here in the evenings. It is either a leopard from the hills or the jaguar said to have escaped from the zoo. "They eat the dogs sir". They're welcome. But Word wanted to change this to "They eat the dog's sir"; that is me I guess.

Breakfast of dosa masala. Not as good as fresh and very little contents, but good to make idli/wada attractive. I had about 30 at my lecture. Oddly enough one of the 2 boys from yesterday was absent (he has work sir). As usual they were slow to get used to me, giving blank stares when I asked questions. I started on the genetic code which they knew a bit of so I had to bully them into taking notes. By the end they seemed to like my stories and shouted Thank you sir as I left. A good start. One of the staff drove me back to have a bucket bath (after he left) and a wonderful morning reading Kim Philby spy book on the roof in the sun with a nice breeze. Early lunch came – Chinese rice. I asked them to get me a menu so I can choose something different; they understood and agreed but didn't get one.

After a nice sleep Steven and Charlie turned up. I was expecting a difficult debate about me providing money for Steven but it wasn't. Charlie's threats to throw Steven out had only been made in irritation. After a lot of debate I said that it seems it might be a waste of money helping you and Steven said "yes uncle it will be a waste". So I gave a 5 minute speech encouraging him to work hard for his exams so he will have his Intermediate certificate. I think he believed me. There was talk of £180 that would pay for the proper registration of exam which I did not understand and which Charlie then said is not necessary. I am sure this is not the end of it but we have some weeks to sort it out. Charlie's problem is that there is less demand than previously for his sort of music band because people save money by using recorded music. He has a small flute-selling business in Chennai which provides enough to pay his small flat there and he earns enough for the family to survive but he is worried that his earnings will decrease and he will not have enough to help Steven if there is some problem in future. Kiran, who I have not seen for years, has a good government job but is not interested in helping anyone in the family.

My evening walk was up toward the Agriculture college parallel with the railway. At the far end where there was a bit of a river there is now a dry river bed so no kingfishers. Sad. A long walk and

felt a bit damaged at end but lovely anyway, with cool breeze, chats with cricketers and the relaxing sight of the home-going crows.

I am re-reading Clive James's book of essay *Cultural Amnesia*. It is providing me with nice quotes to put on facebook:

Today's thought from Tirupati: Albert Einstein and Charlie Chaplin were together at some event where the crowds cheered endlessly. Chaplin said to Einstein "They cheer me because they all understand me, and they cheer you because no-one understands you. My students here applaud me for both reasons.

Second thought for the day (quote from French revolutionary writer Chamfort): "If it wasn't for me I would do brilliantly"

Third (also from Chamfort, perhaps applicable to some current religious fanatics) defining the 'fraternity' of the French revolution: "Be my brother or I will kill you".

These have already attracted likes from Hugh and Claude.

I have just called Chandu (the student who lives in Tirupati past the rail crossing and who helped me a lot last year. He is in the lab and says he will be here at 7.30. It will be good to catch up again. I have seen him twice but both times when he was in a lecture and could only wave. Of course now I may not get to town for dinner so will hit emergency rice leftover or send him for something. That may be cruel but I have sometimes to be cruel to be kind (to me).

Chandu turned up exactly 7.30 from the lab with his cousin a Btec engineering student from Renigunta. Chandu works part time in the job he had before starting the course, in a path lab in the hospital and he had to go off there. By the time they left it was too late to face the trip down town so I had my leftover rice with cashew nuts, crushed in their poly bag with the padlock from my door, with tomato checkup (?kechup). When hungry this is excellent, then some of the cake I bought from the supermarket – a sort of lemon madeira cake.

Tonight the DVD Wire in the Blood worked ok. I remember seeing one previously and deciding it was not for Libby – too much gruesome murder, solved by rather imaginative unlikely pseudopsychology. I shall not watch many I think.

Libby just called. Nice. Goodnight all.

Thursday 22nd July. *I am writing this after a very long tiring walk. I collapsed and looked at my emails, very pleased to see I had one from John Guest. Am now feeling shattered as it was to tell me that Barbara was admitted to hospital before Christmas then discharged so they had a nice Christmas, but now diagnosed with oesophageal cancer with only a couple of weeks to go. So I have spent half an hour struggling to send a reply. Nothing can be suitable but it is necessary to send something. Now trying not to think of it.*

In spite of my mattress I had a more typical disturbed night. At some stage the elephants came by with their warning bells but this time accompanied by huge roaring as heard from miles away with David Attenborough. I have never heard this before. It was another lovely morning so I wandered my usual places, starting with the horse grounds where I was held up by 12 golden orioles, male and female. Strangely I have not heard their song this year, only their jay-like screeching. Mynas, babblers, both bulbuls, rufous bellied babbler, indian robin, 4 koils, palm swifts, spotted dove, coppersmith, cuckoo shrike, sunbirds.

When I got back I asked for tea and tiffen. The tea came but no tiffen and I realised I had not asked before I set out. So it arrived later together with Shekar, come to collect me for my lecture so I grabbed a breakfast bar and Shekar took my idli wada down to the staff. Much consternation. When I asked if they had got a menu from Manasa hotel for me to choose lunch because they said the hotel will not give it. "What do you want sir – we will get". "I don't know what I want cos I do not know what they do". So I asked for rice and dahl to see what will happen. Shekar then talked

for a few minutes. Later I found that he had made a good suggestion. One of the staff stole a menu and got it Xeroxed nearby then returned the menu so I now have one.

All 35 students were at my lecture on time. The genetic code. It went well I think – mainly judged by % of smiling students and cheerful waves at the end. After my lift back I sat reading in the sun for 30 minutes when early lunch arrived. Plain rice with a dry unidentifiable spicy good veg and excellent oriole-yellow dahl. Then sleep, sun, then biography, starting with a clever plan of downloading street maps of relevant bits of Watford. These were very effective at stirring up memories. It is likely to be long and the details probably only of real interest to John and Richard, if that.

I set out at about 4.00 in hot sun to the small temple to get an auto to the Uparapalle checkpoint on the bypass. The driver was very grumpy and wanted to drop me at Mallapalle, suggested by one of the other drivers I think. I hadn't the nerve to ask him to keep going so I had the long slog through the village out towards the cool fields. For a change I was stopped frequently by little schoolgirls wanting photo uncle. On I went dispensing joy through the afternoon. It remains as nice as before but even more walls making it difficult to find the best route. Saw usual drongos, roller and a pompous coucal striding along the top of a wall. Of course there were all the usual birds including swallows and many parakeets screaming across the sky. I found my way to the little village with its lime green temple so I did not have to retrace my steps. From the upper part of a half built house I was called to take one photo uncle – of two small boys with a baby goat they were feeding from a bucket. Then a very long trudge in the setting sun over the bypass and onto the road past Upurapalle. This is the other small village I used to see on the edge of a long track which is now a busy road. My tiredness was relieved by the occasional stop for photos and then really relieved on getting an auto from Mallapalle entrance road (I saw no one I knew there) back to home.

When I opened my email I saw the awful news from John Guest.

It required some will power to set out to walk again – to go to dinner but fortunately my feet and legs seem to be getting tougher and anyway I got an auto before reaching the university. He did not know the way to Sindhuri park so I directed him and he thanked me for my English education when we arrived. Spinach panner (Palak paneer) rotis and pistache icecream. I couldn't sit at my usual table as it was next to an oafish looking crowd in baseball caps watching very noisy cricket on an iphone. I returned immediately to the guest house by 9.00. In the morning one of the microbiology boys asked me to go to their hostel tonight so I agreed but I did not have the energy to go. So I phoned and suggested they come here. After some debate they said there are 2 guest houses and we do not know which one. I told them but they said they did not know where it is so I told him. Please sir visit us. Sorry I am very tired you please come here. Sir it is not possible as we have no transport. But I also have no transport. OK sir please come here. I told you I prefer you to come here. Sorry sir no transport. Ok forget it. Ok sir. A bit pathetic. Not wanting to watch DVDs every night I phoned Mahesh (one of the 4 engineering students) Hello Mahesh I am Chris Anthony. Hello sir are you well? Yes thanks. Shall we come to guest house sir. Yes please. Both of us? Yes of course bring everyone. Ok sir we will come now. So perhaps I can avoid house of cards tonight.

They arrived after 10 minutes: Mahesh (tall, thin, glasses, smiling very bright); Babu (slight beard, handsome, speaks very fast so I don't understand – Mahesh says Even we don't understand him sir); and new friend Ganga, serious and slow. They stayed until 11.0 and were very good company with good sense of humour especially about Hindu superstitions. Somehow we got onto history and they told me that many less educated Indians think that Hitler and Stalin were great

men because they opposed the British. Even they did not know much about their horrific atrocities. They are very keen to keep in touch and to entertain me whenever I like.

Friday 23rd January. Had a good night with only one stop. Went for a short stroll but saw very few birds. The security man at the start of the long road out to the agic college stopped me and said something aggressive in Telugu. I patted my camera and mimed going for a walk. He pointed out the security camera so I blew it a kiss and walked away smiling, so he gave in and waved me on. I went to the nice little fields nearby where I have seen the minivets and many others but was frustrated by a worker there having a wash/bath in the corner so I was limited where I went. A beautiful morning with nice breeze. Idli wada. Shekar collected me early as my lectures are now at 9.30. Only my original 2 students were there but gradually they all came. Mechanism of protein synthesis – difficult but therefore worth doing carefully. Today is the day of commemoration (?) for Sai Gopals mother where food is served and priests do a lot of stuff. I told Hema I did not want to go and she said “No you should not go – I will tell Sai Gopal that you are unable to come and even I may not come as I prefer my lunch here”.

Back to a bit of clothes washing, reading in the sun, lunch of Singapore fried rice (chosen from menu) then ‘biography’. I remembered that I have previously written a lot of memories of school for a survey of WBG School in the time of Harry Ree. So it is galloping along.

I am enjoying Clive James’s Cultural Amnesia very much. Here is a long extract from an essay on the jazz band leader Duke Ellington. It is about the jazz saxophone player John Coltrane. I once spent a very long day being driven around Japan by a friend who had only 2 CDs – John Coltrane and Cello unaccompanied Bach (brought especially for me). As a courtesy I insisted on repeatedly listening to his Coltrane, thinking that maybe I would learn something; I learned only that I really disliked it.

So here is Clive James: “Listen to Coltrane subjecting some helpless piece to ritual murder. I won’t waste time trying to be funny about Coltrane because Philip Larkin has already done it, lavishing all his comic invention on the task of conveying his authentic rage. There is nothing to be gained by trying to evoke the full, face-freezing, gut-churning hideosity of all the things that Coltrane does. There is not a musical phrase that asks to be remembered **except as a lesion to the inner ear**, and the only purpose of his repetitions is to prove that what might have been charitably dismissed as an accident was actually meant”.

SO: we now know how I got my inner ear lesion. Of course I think James meant the middle ear.

I went for my evening stroll and saw and hear only crows, mynas and babblers but had a nice cool wind to accompany the setting red sun on the hills. As I set out past the security man again he just waved. I wave back and got an unexpected response of about a dozen men and women working on making a new wall there, so then had to take their picture. Lokesh’s house remains as attractive as ever, with more calves and chickens and milking cows in its garden. His nice sister was there and she told me that Lokesh is away in Vellore visiting the Lakshmi temple there but will be back tomorrow. I saw the strange botany professor directing some workers in his garden and accepted his invitation for his wife to make me some tea and to admire his one year old granddaughter.

After writing diary I ate leftover rice with cashew nuts and cake then got auto down to first gate and to Block B. As I arrived microbiologists and virologists pounced and took me off to their room filled as usual with steel beds. I got the one chair and soon there were at least 12 students on beds and floor and standing round doorway. Hard work to get going but pictures on the ipad were a great help. Then of course photos of them and then out came the phones for photos of me with them etc. As I went into the hostel I got a phone call from a loud aggressive sounding man who I think wants to come to Tirupati to meet me. He is a professor from a different university and

I think he wants me to go there. Of course this won't happen so all I could think to do was to say give me a call when you arrive in Tirupati. Then in hostel I got another call this time from someone called Peter. So I passed the phone to a student to sort out but all he got is that Peter is my friend. Then inspiration he was the engineering student Peter – wanted to visit tomorrow so I postponed him till Monday after Moin has gone. When I left a gang wanted to come with me but I told them to save their energy for another day and come to visit me. I think it was worth going but I wish they could be a bit more active. Perhaps they will get better as they become accustomed to my accent. The boy who seemed to understand me best was a spare chemistry student who wandered in.

Just watched House of cards which I am finding a slow plod with side plots usually involving dull or unpleasant people.

I see it is 5.30, time to collect Hugh. I miss that.

Good night.

Saturday 24th January. *I am writing this on Sunday morning while waiting for Moin to get lunch.*

I had a short pleasant walk in the sunny morning up past the train crossing to the Super Market but they were closed. Took lots of pictures of early morning activities, like the fruit sellers on the raised sidewalk, with colourful stacks of oranges, grapes, apples, pomegranites and melons; and the boy selling chappals, arranged all over the pavement most neatly, all with their boxes. I found the shop does not open until 10.0 so I had a nice wander around the small streets of posh houses nearby. Most of the boys who said they would be at today's lecture were not there, I was told later that they had gone home because tomorrow is Sunday and after that is Republic day – another holiday. Protein synthesis. During my lecture I had an incoherent phone call from Balu saying somehow that he would come at 11.0 to guest house. I was called to Sai Gopal's office to tell the results of that morning's faculty meeting. It is necessary to give more lectures per day to make sure the syllabus is finished on time. So lectures will now start at 9.00 but Hema will give this and I will have the second at 11.20. I had planned to lecture in biochemistry from 11 to 12 so will have to renegotiate this. Sai Gopal "dropped me" and I got him to come in for tea. I was so glad I avoided his mothers 'event' when the priests come and say prayers with everyone sitting on the floor etc. Sai Gopal is exhausted from ferrying relatives back and forth.

Balu arrived at about 12 with Seshu and Harsha. I was glad he came because I had not seen him since Monday and was a bit concerned there might be some problem. There was. He was on a motorbike driven by Mounish with Bobby behind him and they crashed. The others were thrown off but he was trapped and dragged along the road giving him horrible wounds all down his thigh, calf, shoulder and arm. "IT was painig too much". They took him by auto to hospital. I think it will be ok, he is going again in the afternoon. So no Balu dances for some time.

Harsha is the brother who has phoned sometimes with Balu and he also came on facebook to say he is coming to see me. He is doing a BTec in computers/information technology and has his own laptop so will be helping Balu. Seshu is a brother I have met before who has an audition for films. For this he needed some photos to email somewhere. So out on the roof or Harsha to take a huge number of suitable poses. I resized them to use on email and put them all on Balu's pendrive. My dahl/rice lunch came and I was bullied by the boys into eating it, first finding crisps and shortbread and apples (from Gopi's father) for them. They left, extracting promises that I would "come to my village Sunday sir".

After they left I had sleep and washed clothes, read, sat in the sun, tidied room until Moin arrived just as I came in for mosquito time at about 6.00. So good to see him, looking tired and happy. He was coming from his home at Tadpatri so we had wonderful chicken biryani, talked and talked all evening.

Reading Clive James's Cultural Amnesia I find wonderful quotes which I feel will be wasted if I do nothing with them so I have started adding them to my facebook page as Thoughts for the day. Here are some of them:

Quote from Egon Friedell): Electricity and magnetism are those forces of nature by which people who know nothing about electricity and magnetism can explain everything. Susan Penny Liked it.

Another: (by French revolutionay writer Champfort): "If it wasn't for me I would do brilliantly"

Another: from Chamfort (perhaps applicable to some current religious fanatics) defining the 'fraternity' of the French revolution: "Be my brother or I will kill you"

Another: Tom Stoppard, after the successful premiere of his play Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead was asked what the play was about: "It's about to make me a lot of money".

Sunday 25th January. I thought I had a good night but Moin said I moved around a lot and was hitting at the mosquitoes that were keeping him awake; my Good Knight antimosquito thing is out of stuff. A fast fan solved the problem. We had a lovely slow rising with tea brought noisily by Basha who negotiated a breakfast order which was good. I tried to have uttar uppam (sort of pancake with onions but I got the nearest they could get to this which was a dosa with masses of chopped onions wrapped up in it. A new item for future breakfast. A Moin was trying to prove something. He watched me shave and wash, a process taking about 4 minutes. He then said I am going to clean myself and he was in the bathroom sloshing water about for at least 15 minutes. We had a nice walk to the Pure N Sure Super Market in gentle warm sun with good breeze. I bought a grass broom as the sweeper who did the room yesterday was not at all thorough so I want to do it. Also toothpaste, water, biscuits, crisps, cake, Good Knight recharge. When we got back Moin set out using internet and phone to order us pizzas from Dominos! But they "did not lift the phone". It was too late to get staff to do anything so Moin bravely rushed down by auto to Manasa and got paneer, and Gobi fried rice. Both were excellent *I am about to eat the leftovers for todays dinner.*

Yesterday we used the 5 metre extension cable for my internet dongle and led it across the corridor to outside so the internet connection is much more stable.

After lunch, which was finished with Moin's mother's sweet things we had a doze, woken by a huge noise like gravel being tipped out into our corridor, and then the sound of mighty rushing water which turned out to be just that. I had thoughtlessly left the water heater on and as usual it heated the water to steam and as the tap was closed i guess pressure had built up and it caused the flexible hose to come off its tube, pouring boiling water into the buckets. The tap on the water pipe to the heater was jammed closed so all I could do was to wait till cold water is coming through and reconnect. Moin then got staff to look and they called someone but he did not have the right spanners as it is a holiday. I told them to leave it until Tuesday. Manoj and Said then arrived but after a bit I sent them away, explaining that he was only with me for another hour so off they went – after I promised (as arranged) to come to the village (Balu is paining sir and he wants you).

Sadly moin went off on his 14 hour journey to Hyderabad and I went to the village. No need to describe it as I have done it all before. Large scalding coffee in Balu's house while he played Smash Hit on my ipad. Then to see Balaji and up on the roof of Balu's house by which time everyone was there. I really dislike climbing the outside concrete stairs up two flights to the roof with no handrails. Seshu got more pictures taken for his movie career. Twelve of them escorted me to the road where their screaming chorus of shouts and whistles dragged an auto to us. The driver

explained to them that he knows it is 30 rupees but he charges more for foreigners (50 rupees is ok).

I tried to make arrangements for Republic day tomorrow by calling Mahesh, the engineering student, to invite him to dinner but not possible as he is away at home. He then sent a text to say that he could not hear me on the phone and he was worried if I am ok. So a series of text messages arranging for him to come Tuesday night. Edwin had said he may come tomorrow but when I phoned he said it is not possible. So I shall have a gentle drifting day. As requested I put Seshu's pics on the computer then resized and put them onto Balu's pendrive for him to come and collect at 8.30. They arrived at 8.20 (Balu Seshu and Manoj). Seshu wanted me to photoshop his pimples away but I showed him that he didn't have any. I said I am sorry Balu cannot dance – "Sir for you I dance like this and he hopped energetically about till I stopped him, worried that he would fall and open his wounds. As I was sorting out Seshu's pictures on the computer I was fed bits of cut off apple by Balu. This seems to be a common way of demonstrating affection in the village. So as I tried to use photoshop I was regularly interrupted by gentle taps on the cheek from behind to open mouth for more apple. Suman phoned Seshu and said he wants to come and see me here. I hope he does. After a gift of biscuits they all left so it is now 9.20 and time for me to eat something. I ate the leftover gobi fried rice and Moin's mother's sweets then watched House of Cards. It is very well done and I want to know what happens but so many of the characters are unattractive I might give it a rest and start to watch my series of Endeavour (ie Morse junior).

Monday 26th January Republic Day. A strange day. I had a full night's sleep with the resulting discomfort on getting up, soon dispelled by wandering about shaving. I set off in the sun at 8.30 and returned at 10.30. I was about to photograph interesting birds on 3 occasions as I walked up towards NCC Nagar. The first was a fantail, interrupted by Hari Krishna, a boy from 2 years ago, now a spindly youth, very pleased that he remembered my name. He had been Lokesh's neighbour but had moved away.

I am writing at 6.30 while exchanging text messages from Chandu. He is the final year virology student who works part time at the hospital. He had said he would come this evening but later said he is 'out of station' – actually in Bangalore. So I was planning to do a standard dinner trek. But then a message asking if I have a problem cos he can send someone to help. I told him no problem. But just got message from Chendu that someone (I do not recognise the name) is coming. I hope it is soon as I am getting hungry.

My next bird was the beautiful little olive coloured Tailor bird, interrupted by the NCC worker who had offered to get me animals for my research. Nice but irritating, keen to show me a plant whose leaves close up when you touch them; impressive.

Third bird was a blue-faced Malkoha, in a place very near where I saw it last year. This time I stubbed my toe on a rock just as I saw it and then instinctively grabbed a thorny branch and then had a phone call from Moin. I still got a picture – with one hand. Moin was calling to say he was safely home in his lab. He had a sleepless 14 hour train journey. Luckily I had insisted that he takes 1000 rupees (£10) when he left yesterday, for any emergencies, as he found the fare had gone up and this was essential. A fourth bird was a large cuckoo not yet identified. There were enough birds to dispel my thought that they had all abandoned the area but still fewer than I remember: all 3 bulbuls, crows mynas coppersmith babblers, tailor bird, fantail, indian robin,

Just had a phone call from the unknown person sent by Chandu.

I had breakfast bar and an apple for tiffen then tidied the room and gave it a good sweep, excellent start to what promises to be an empty day. None of my plans worked and it seems Balu's plan to visit did not either – he had merely said that they would come, and I am happy they did not as I do not want to bore them or be bored. I had a nice read in the sun, interrupted by a young

man from Hyderabad who is working for an IT company, installing new programmes for running the university accounts etc. The person he is working with is Balaji from the village who had told him that I am here. This explains why this person had found it necessary to walk past me 4 times, hoping I guess that I would chat which I eventually did. He was quite hard work until I got him to speak more slowly. He is here for many weeks.

I had gobi fried rice again for lunch followed by curds with chopped plain dark chocolate; wonderful. Then a sequence of sleep, biography, read in sun, sleep etc. Finished with a short stroll at sunset around the local houses then reading more of the account of the spy Kim Philby on the roof till mosquito time. On the way back from my stroll I then thought I met try to get a coffee invitation from Lokesh's family as they told me he would be here today. His sister called to him to come out which he did for a nice chat but no invite so he went back in to watch republic day parade on TV.

Chandu had told me he would come this evening but then later said he is out of station and sent texts checking I am ok. I said I am ok but he then told me he had arranged for the 1st year virology student Bhuvaneshwar to come which he did. We arranged that he would come later with other students. I went by auto to S park for Dum Allo and strawberry ice cream then hurried home to make sure I am here by 8.30 as promised. When they were not here by 9.15 I phoned and he said he had gone to a friend's room instead so I said ok and rang off. He phoned 3 minutes later to say he is coming. Perhaps he had been going to the friend to collect him to come. Of course he may not come.

My eyes have been poor most of the time here. This is usual for the first few days, with difficulty in focussing left eye but this morning and most of the day both eyes have been poor at long distance. Must get them tested when I get back.

Bhuvaneshwar came eventually with another virology boy. They were hard work as they are both farmer's sons, were brought up in small villages and were always taught in Telugu medium. While showing them photos I could not find my favourite videos of Balu dancing to Chris Barber last year. They were on my iPad but have disappeared. I am so sad. And angry with myself for not copying them.

Tuesday 27th January. As usual now I seem to have a complete night but wake up a bit too early at 6.45 feeling stiff. No real problem of course. Remarkably, having mentioned my eyes yesterday they are much better today. Perhaps for that reason I saw more birds, but I don't think so, this is merely luck, random distribution etc. Except for the remarkable thing that opposite Lokesh's house, as happened last year, there was a paddy bird, a female Paradise flycatcher, a fantail and my favourite Forest wagtail which according to the books belongs only in the north. My photographing was curtailed by the younger brother of Lokesh coming up to point out, with energetic sweeps of his arm some obvious common bird, sending the interesting ones diving for shelter. I could not dissuade him from keeping me company for a bit. He has grown from the quiet small boy to a moustached teenager in one year. Wandering further towards ncc nagar I saw my usual tailor bird and the bulbuls etc etc. No orioles today. On the way back I saw the flycatcher again and a brilliant kingfisher. So all seems to be well.

Masala dosa for breakfast then a relaxed preparation for my 2 lectures. The first from 10.20 to 11.40 to virology and microbiology was on the final part of protein synthesis and the start of Transcription. They changed the timetable to fit in more lecturing time so I cannot loiter. Then to Sai Gopal's office for tea which was waiting for me, poured by tall dark assistant who I remembered from previous years who made a great fuss of pouring my requested small cup. Then across to Biochemistry by way of the only civilised loos on campus in the PURSE centre. Some of the staff saw me coming and came out to say hello; I must visit more thoroughly later.

Reddy was reasonably ready for me, taking me up to the class which was 70% present to lecture on mitochondria, bioenergetics etc. Far more girls than boys, all a very responsive friendly lot. Vijay Kumar a research student I have known for many years has been allocated to me to provide anything I need and so he drove me back on his motorbike then came in for chat about his thesis.

Lunch was rice and dahl, with interesting unidentified vegetable – all good. Then sleep. During my lecture this morning Sai Gopal had taken my key and presided over the repair to the water heater, replacing the hose and fixing it properly – excellent. So I celebrated by washing a couple of shirts, then continued with my memories of early life. Moin is very enthusiastic to read them so I shall probably send them in instalments.

After tea in the cool wind on the roof I went for my evening wander, arriving near the engineering hostels. I am keen to do something instead of Auto to town, dinner in Sindhuri park, auto back to diary and DVD so I was keen that social arrangements work. Mahesh was supposed to be coming to dinner tonight but I had not heard from him so I went to find their room in the engineering student hostels where I had visited with Sahir last year, amongst the huge flocks of gossiping roosting crows. I failed to find Mahesh's room so I phoned him, getting a slightly embarrassed reply that he is still at his home and will come tomorrow night. So failed again! On the way out one his friends who had come previously (Ganga) came running over and then introduced his friends. There is usually one student out of any six who stands out by appearance or confidence or intelligence and in this group it was a final year student called Komal, who asked if they could come this evening to the guest house. I told him that these arrangements often fail so I gave him the responsibility to make it succeed. He is enthusiastic so will probably come. On the way back I met Shekar, a neighbour and friend of Lokesh who reminded me that we had met for the last 5 years. But he then remembered that they had first seen me when they were little boys playing cricket nearby. I remembered it well because they were playing where I had hoped to see the golden backed woodpecker, but they had atoned by being especially charming. He asked to bring the others to visit some time after his exams and an important cricket match this week.

So it is 6.45 so off to town for dinner.

I love the atmosphere from University first gate down Balaji colony to prakasam road, full of students strolling about and a nice relaxed atmosphere. I see reading this that a wrong impression might be had. The roads are noisy with bikes and autos and irritated screaming jeeps. The pavements or sides of the roads crowded with people chatting or ladies sitting selling huge piles of flowers or tiny heaps of fruit, the air full of the smell of dust and wayside cooking and wafts for jasmine. At S. Park I had masala dosa and pistache icecream and then quickly home in case my new friends come on time. The very good autodriver who stopped near the station immediately agreed 50 rupees (usually 60 but asked for 70 or more). After a few metres down Nethaji road he picked a nice young lady who perched on the front seat with him. Then the usual auto driver conversations "what country sir" "why here sir" "how is india sir". He then told me the lady is his sister.

At 8.34 (4 minutes late) Komal arrived with 2 friends. "how will you remember which we are sir"; Komal tall as Clive, slim, fair skinned, no moustache lovely smile and intelligent; Abhashek, also tall but very dark with moustache and penetrating look of dark eyes searching out of a dark face; Sumanth, pale, fatter, dull looking, glasses, trying to make an impression. They enjoyed my pictures of Tirupati past and Thumulagunta present. Komal very keen to be friends on facebook (*Komal Vendidandi* invited next day).

Wednesday 28th January. I had a one stop sleep, awake at 7.00. The clouds over the red hills looked threatening and it was quite windy - as seen on my visit to bathroom where I keep the window open for this purpose. I set out at about 8.0 up my usual road and, amazingly saw the

paradise flycatcher (female) and fantail and forest wagtail. Just as I was about to wander off a coucal rose up from a few feet away and perched hidden in a bush but I did get a wonderful picture of his burning red eye and threatening beak. Many bulbuls and I also saw my little flaming minivet and green and white common iora. On my way home a bald serious pompous looking man came up on his scooter and asked something in Telugu which eventually turned into “one photo sir”; I obeyed but I don’t know why he wanted me to have it. A bit later a man outside Botany Sudarshan’s house called me over to take a picture of his mate who was mixing cement on the path. Stupidly I did not take a picture of Dr Ganga when he came by. He is the Esperanto friend of Surya who is a professor of Aurevedic medicine and a very nice man.

Breakfast delivered by tall smiling venu “this is extra place sir near railway crossing, very good chutney and samba with idli/wada”. It was good but too many idlis. Then a good 40 minutes to prepare my lectures which went well although I had no coffee break between as Sai Gopal is out of station. 80 minutes on transcription to virologists etc followed by 70 minutes on redox potentials to biochemists. Vijay Kumar was not available to drive me back so another student was grabbed and given keys to a clapped out hero Honda to drive me nervously back “sorry sir I am worried with this bike as I have not driven it before and it has no brakes”.

Lunch of rice and dahl and unidentified good veg. Sleep. Read on roof then emails. An Indian lady in bright orange sari paced about the roof for ten minutes before daring to ask where I am from. She is with her husband who is a physicist with a collaboration with someone in Southampton on optical fibres (invented in Southampton). A very nice man, from Calcutta, who is likely to be visiting Southampton in the spring so he has my card to visit (name is Dr Tarun Kumar Gangopadhyay). My wondering if Mahesh will come tonight was interrupted by him calling and arranging to come at 6.30. Very pleased, as I can get him to help me go to KT Studios who may agree to print my bird book. *It is now 6.35.*

Mahesh then phoned at 7.0 to say he would be 10 minutes as he has to have a shower. He arrived at 7.45. After walking for 10 minutes he nearly turned away the only auto we had seen as he wanted 50 instead of correct 30. I always pay 50. Auto drivers are not rich. We were held up in Tilak road near the temple area as there was a procession coming. Mahesh wanted soup, so I joined in with Ginger soup, followed by butter roti and paneer and icecream. Wonderful but bloating. Mahesh is BTec in civil engineering age about 20, tall thin, glasses and very talkative so good company. His main interest is in reading English novels some of which I had heard of. Fortunately he was happy to join me on my usual wander through the temple area and Ghandi road. To my irritation he insisted we got a shared auto as it is cheaper. Four on the bench facing forward, two on the back of the drivers seat, one sharing his seat and three on the back outside seat always likely to be ejected from the back if the driver accelerates, which is highly unlikely with that load. Beside the discomfort I don’t like them as the only view out is limited to a height of 4 feet off the ground. Mahesh came back to the guest house with me for a short time as he was called out to solve a friend’s emergency; the ATM was not working so he needed Mahesh to take him some money. He said he would be back in 10 minutes which was obviously very unlikely- he didn’t return at all. No problem as I was talked out.

I watched an episode of House of cards. I am curious about what will happen and Kevin Spacey is a great actor but I like so few of the characters, and not only because they are American. While watching there was a notification beep telling me there was someone messaging me on Facebook. It was Komal – the tall nice engineering student who came yesterday evening, wanting to chat so I did, as he was very witty. He asked me what is my description of him etc Then after more questions he asked me if this is called flirting in English. I told him this is usually used for boys

chatting to girls to get them to like them. “ok sir then this is pseudoflirting cos I want you to like me”. Easy.

I have now finished the story of the spy Kim Philby (on ipad) and my paperback of a complicated novel set mainly in Afghanistan which I found confusing as each chapter started without identifying either the person or the time (present or flashbacks). By the author of the kite runner so beautifully written. Half way through Cultural Amnesia (kindle) by Clive James; wonderful.

Thursday 29th January. *Writing this while waiting for Chendu to collect me for dinner at his house, while listening to the glorious last act of Der Rosenkavelier.*

Two stop night. Left eye not so clear as yesterday. Cloudy. No birds where I usually see the paradise flycatcher but up the road next to the isolated house in the woods there were many. Golden orioles were singing, a wonderful sound taking me straight to France. So list of today: Coucal, both crows, usual babbler, rufous bellied babbler, both bulbuls and white browed bulbul, both sunbirds but far fewer than usual as no sun, Tree pie, spotted doves, black headed cuckoo shrike, cuckoo, myna, koil, magpie robin singing, indian robin singing, palm swifts.

Back to pongal for tiffen then preparation of lectures. Shekar collected me and my lecture started on time. There seemed to be more girls than usual as they had to get extra chairs. My favourite topic – Operon theory, finishing with my naked man attacking monkey with towel story. After, a group of girls around the water dispenser told me they had come to my lectures last year; they are from the local further education (or teachers training college) “We are your fan club sir”. No one in Sai Gopal’s office so no tea between my 80 minute lecture and my 60 minute biochemistry lecture on electron transport. A nice gang of students. During my lecture I had a message from Moin (hello sir please have a nice day) and from Komal asking if he can call to see me after lunch. Vijay kumar drove me safely home to rice and dahl with spicy beetroot item (as they say).

I had about 15 minutes sleep before Komal arrived, to stay 2 hours till 4.30. He is 20, tall slim enthusiastic fair intelligent nice smile. Doing mechanical engineering BTec. He hopes to go for MTec in Germany. Father is in some government job and is nice and friendly to his children. This seems to be a common feature of those students who are easiest to be friends with (Moin, Edwin, Karthik, Gopi). He is a higher caste and so the reservation system does not apply to him. So for him to get into a good place for Mtec in India he has to get extremely high marks (twice what a lower caste student needs - hence the Germany plan.

After he left I was tempted to slob about but resisted and set off for the dairy farm. It was cloudy so nice and cool. While waiting for the rail crossing to clear Chandu came up on his bike and asked me to visit his house. This gave me a good opportunity; I was a bit concerned that I had heard nothing of Balu for some days and hoped his leg was healing ok but I did not want to go to Mallepalli just for that. So the deal was to go to Chandu’s and he would give me a lift to the village and then home. Just as we launched into the noisy flow, setting off after the bar lifts, a car came up stopped beside us and lady tried to lean over to communicate. Great hooting of horns to get her out of the way so Chandy got her to drive on a bit and then stop. She got out of the car and came up to me smiling and talking fast german. She had mistaken me for someone she met here previously – from Germany. “It is an easy mistake because you have a German nose”!! Chandu lives about 2 km along the Chadragiri road but this is still Thumulagunta. His father and mother and relation were there with small boys playing and squabbling over a pedal car. Awful noise – you

don't get that in my village. They invited me to come back for dinner at 8.30. I accepted on condition that they did not prepare anything special and that they must understand I eat very little etc. From the chat that followed I think I am due to have fried egg and chapatti.

We drove a short cut way to Mallepalli which was mainly on unpaved bumpy dirt tracks , a really uncomfortable long cut. It is strange going into the village with none of the boys there. It seems lifeless. All the ladies (mothers aunts sisters cousins) were in Balu's home, leaping up smiling a happy welcome. I got Chandu to enquire about Balu. His leg is much better and he has gone to his 'other village'. This is an uncle's village that we used to go through on the way to Chennai and which I have resisted visiting with Balu. So I feel happier. The good mood was nearly cancelled by the bike ride back over the busy rail crossing; I would enjoy it if I were the driver I think, though I would have to discard all feelings of courtesy to other road users.

I cannot believe there is any music more beautiful than the 3rd act of Rosenkavelier and the great waltz can cancel any moping mood. I do not feel like going to dinner but this has raised my energy levels. That reminds me of a great quote from an essay by Clive James, (quote from Egon Friedell): Electricity and magnetism are those forces of nature by which people who know nothing about electricity and magnetism can explain everything.

As planned Chandu collected me at 8.30 and drove to his house a few km from here. We had a egg fried rice with a little dahl and one chapatti; perfect. It was served to me on a little stool acting as a table while the others wandered into the kitchen to collect a plate of rice. It was a bit hard work as the TV was on fairly loud with the usual singing dancing rubbish. I was delivered safely back at about 9.30 to watch House of cards and bed.

Friday 30th January. Had interrupted night and woke early to a cloudy day. I set out on a long walk through NCC area, over the bypass and up into the hills. As I passed where my little smiling friend from years ago lived he came out to say hello. He told me the little white terrier that was nervously looking round the fence and barking is "my own dog do you want me to get him?" Of course. When I put out my hand to pat him his master quickly pulled him back and mimed that he would bite me. Took usual photo. It was very humid so not so pleasant to walk and not many birds. A black plastic bag under the bamboo thicket turned into an interesting black pheasanty bird which ran off before I could see it properly. Had a nice phone chat with moin on the way home to my wada (no idli today please). My phone had stopped working last night and moin had emailed to tell me to take out battery and sim card and put them back. IT worked!

My 10.20 lecture was full to overflowing and they have decided to move us to a bigger theatre in microbiology. Two enjoyable lectures on operon theory and allosteric enzymes and then cytochrome chain. The biochem boys asked to come to the guest house. I chose the one who is always on time at lectures and always seems to understand and told him he was responsible for getting people to the guest house on time. Called Raju. He accepted.

Vijay kumar drove me fast and safe back (I guess I mean fastly and safely) to lunch of kaju fried rice. Very good. Then washed a shirt and had sleep then a bit of biography. At 5.30 I walked down to Balaji colony to see if I can get my bird book (and perhaps Tirupati history) printed cheaply here. A wonderful walk with all the good things about Tirupati – interesting traffic, occasional student friends, cricket and basket ball on the SVU stadium and on the Muslim sports ground. At Balaji colony tall dark thin Mahesh appeared with his huge welcoming smile. He is the student who left my room to help his friend, promising to come back in 5 minutes but never returning. I told him I am still waiting. Took photo of him with his friend then hunted for a printing place. I was told KT studio is good and Mahesh offered to take me there. I stupidly said I knew where it is but I didn't. This is the bit where there are many Xerox places etc. it is unpleasant to walk there as a drain runs under the pavement which has many large holes in it; these are usually covered by a loose stone

slab but not always. I found printing place where the manager spoke good English and was very helpful. But he said the quality of my book, that I had taken to show him, could not be produced in Tirupati. He could produce a ring back one like my thinner one for identifying birds but it would not be gloss and would cost 30p per side. Twenty pages of 60 p is more than in uk so forget it. Perhaps I will have another go at finding KT studios. At town club I got an auto to Sindhuri park which was fast until nearly there when we were held up by a political meeting in the middle of the road with a speaker talking about the party of Rama Rao of 1982 with the large hand as its symbol (Telugu Desam I think). The tank festival is going on so had to watch the god on his boat ride until I was driven away by a slightly drunk man trying to buy dollars from me.

In S park I showed the waiters the bird book which made them all excited, rushing off to get friends from the kitchen to see it. I disbanded the gang by the usual photo – all lined up like an official photo. Masala dosa and strawberry ice cream; beautiful. I had a rather hectic walk to the station, the road being packed with autos and cars and bikes with slightly bewildered and frantic pedestrians like me filling in all the cracks. Someone in the half dark gave me a big shove and I was about to respond irritable when I saw it was one of the two elephants that stand patiently amidst all the noise to bless people; I tried to explain to the elephant and his minder that I was blessed enough but walking away was the only possible action. At the station quickly got an auto home where I am writing this and waiting for Raju and biochemistry students.

They were due at 8.30. As no sign of them at 9.15 – “sorry sir we had some work at hostel”. Why they did not phone I don't know. Luckily Hugh phoned from Ben and Jens to say their tour is going well. Raised my spirits as Hugh's phone calls always do. Gave myself a treat and watched Endeavour (early Morse) which was a wonderful antidote to US House of cards.

Saturday 31st January Had usual night. Went for walk in glorious sunny morning. My eyes were perfect today. On the way to NCC area I saw my forest wagtail but was interrupted so no picture. I walked up beside the new wall by the horse parade area and at last got a good picture of a black Koil with his glowing red eye sitting in the sun. I later achieved the same thing with a Coucal. After wandering about the birdless area where they have dug out the red clay soil I set out towards the Zoo on the long stony road. Such walks have an extra dimension since Clive told me that he had bought a stone polisher for Kenny and asked for me to look out for nice stones. The path down from there to the agriculture college was blocked by a high bank (bund) which I staggered up and then very nervously down the other side. Then realising that I had been gone about 2 hours I was lucky to get an auto down the very very long road from the agriculture college back home. I had told them no breakfast but I had time for a brunch bar before my lecture to a packed group in the micro department. For some reason they felt I had to be re-introduced – by Sai Gopal with the lady head of microbiology nervously standing by. All a bit odd as I had been introduced in virology department previously. Nice lecture on regulation and then over to Biochemistry for Mitchell theory. The boys who had failed to turn up last night were not there so I had girls only, a pleasure to lecture to. Vijay Kumar 'lifted me back' for dahl/rice lunch and a delicious sleep. I was woken by the quiet muttering of boys outside the door. I assumed it would be Balu but it was two small boys Prudvi and Pvasu. Prudvi is the dark small cheeky boy who lives in the tiny house on the corner who the other boys say is a thief. He looks 12 but is 17, while Pvasu is 12. I had not seen or noticed him before and he wanted photos and then to look at past photos so I left Prudvi to show him. After 20 minutes there was another knock and there was Balu, Dayakar and Kalyan who I had not seen previously. They all walked up to Prudvi and gave him a little slap on the head which he seemed to expect; I did the same before sending him and Pvasu off waving and grinning in delight. Balu had come with Sheshu twice yesterday but I was out. His leg is healing well. He is pleased that the skin around the edge of the main wound is white like mine. He was jumping around a lot so it

seems it is all ok. More photos and a promise to come tomorrow. He wanted to show me his skill at Smash hit on my ipad, scoring about 4000 (I can only get 3000 maximum). He has got much better at trying to speak English so we had a nice quiet chat while the others played. Of course I had to agree to come tomorrow for my usual Sunday walk to the park. I think that one day I will go there and find they have tired of this distraction and I will slink back home alone.

After they left I dozed again then did some sorting before tea on the roof. I love that place with the tall Ashok trees murmuring in the evening breeze and the five o'clock express wailing its way out of Tirupati Junction. I could hear a lot of music and general noise in the direction of town so went for a wander to investigate after 5.00. The road was packed as were the pavements. There is a famous singer (from films) coming from Hyderabad this evening to perform on a big stage in one of the sports fields, the others being used for bike and car parking. It was a very happy chaos with police out in force to direct traffic and holding back the crowds pushing at the entrance gate where they were filtering in a few at a time. It was a happy mix from young oafish teenage boys to students to puzzled old men looking after their granddaughters. To prevent boys getting in over the wall these were manned by army people wielding metre long sticks. They were almost the only people I have met here who were not delighted for me to take their photos. I wandered down the side of the field on the road to Tirupati West station which I have only ever seen before from the rail track. After the long uphill slog I got back by 6.15 as Suman was supposed to come at 6.30. He didn't but Kormal arrived 3 minutes before his time of 7.00. He is the nicest of the engineering students who I chatted with on facebook a couple of nights ago ("I think we are flirting sir, I think so"). He is the tall fair boy with a very relaxed smile and very good English. He is from a higher caste and so has to get impossibly high marks to get an MSc place in India so is planning to do an MSc in Germany. He has an old school friend who wants advice on her MSc application which has to have a SOP (statement of purpose); this was sent yesterday for my comments by Komal. It was typical flowery stuff in which she claims to be a masterpiece of education. I told him she cannot be a masterpiece before her masters degree.

I shall pause this to watch some more Endeavour

I had seen this episode but of course did not remember much, sleeping at different parts this second time around. The young Morse is such an attractive character – especially after the general nastiness of the US House of Cards.

Sunday 1st February. *Writing this as usual at 7.0 waiting for Suman who said he will come at 6.30.* Woke early after a good night. For a nice change someone knocked and asked if I want tea. I did. I decided to have a break from morning walk and so slowly tidied the room then swept it. Pongal for breakfast. At about 9.30 I did go for a walk but it was very hot so I made it short. Very few birds about except nice view of a warbler (perhaps Willow warbler). I could not remember if I was due at Charlie's so phoned them. It was to have been today but there is some function for Charlie to play at. So Steven came to chat; it was much nicer than when Teena comes, playing games and wanting chocolate. As it is Steven kept on about her expecting him to bring some back with him. I said I would bring tomorrow evening when I am expected for dinner. He reminded me I had once brought him a present of binoculars "every day uncle I cleaned them after watching the moon in your memory, but now I think I am too old for you to bring presents". I told him this had caused problems with other people if I did not give them presents so I do not bring any presents. Real reason is that I do not like this asking for things. He said he has been working hard since I talked to him last.

Lunch of gobi fried rice, half of which I kept back. Then ate my large bowl of curds with some Christmas cake which I had almost forgotten. Sunbathe then sleep till three. Spent some time on history then off to Mallepalle as promised. I only had 1000 rupee notes so called in at my friendly

supermarket to change one. No problem, I get the impression they like to help always. I arrived rather early as everything had gone so smoothly (rail crossing not too busy and instant auto). I was met near the little temple by a young chap I half recognised – we had met a few years previously. His English was quite good, as he said he often was able to help foreigners with things. They are lucky I said. “Yes sir please can I help you, it is not a problem for me to get a girl for you sir”. No thanks – with a cheery wave. OK sir anytime.

The village was not as busy as usual. Balu was watching TV. He leapt up “ok sir you are on time. I started to wait at 3.0 then 3.30 then 3.45 then 4. Now success sir. We wandered down to Balaji so I could ask about his son – his visiting colleague in the guest house told me he had taken him to hospital. No problem only small fever all ok now. He agreed to help Balu with his computer, teaching him excel etc. Balu said he will use it to learn to type English. Good idea. He then walked out and shouted just like the old women shout at their goats and cows, resulting in Madhu and Manoj appearing from nowhere. We accumulated a quorum eventually with little Jogesh and Krishna to wander over to the park. Of course loads of pictures with both cameras. It was quieter than with Bobby and Said etc but had nice chats with Balu. After more photos I set out to leave and bumped into Suman who had been playing cards with Seshu as explained by Balu and Manoj. He said he would come to the guest house at 6.30. *I am writing this while waiting at 7.35.* My feet still ache a bit from my long march yesterday so I was not enthusiastic to walk all the way home so was delighted to have an auto pull up beside me. I had not shouted as I saw he had two small girls in the back. They were his very sweet little daughters who shifted to make room for me. He was uncertain about the guesthouse so stopped a cyclist to turn out to be Balu’s father, Had a bumpy ride in a fast machine back here.

I cannot face setting out to town for dinner so will eat leftover rice, crisps and Christmas cake. Then DVDs if I do not have the energy to do anything else.

Komal phoned to see if I had done anything with his friend’s SOP as she has phoned him to say it is urgent. I said I would do something as soon as possible. I watched House of Cards 2 episodes then bed/

Monday 2nd February. I woke up at 6.30 with traffic noise then got up and looked at Komal’s friend’s SOP. I had written many comments on it but decided this might be demoralising so I used mainly her words to write a shorter less flowery version. At about 9 Komal came to collect it on a pendrive to send to her. *I am writing this at 6.30 in the evening, hot and tired but encouraged by Beethoven’s 2nd symphony.*

My micro lecture was particularly difficult – on Attenuation in regulation of the trp operon etc. I felt we had had enough after 70 minutes so asked if I should continue with research story for the last 10 minutes. No response. I couldn’t get any sense of if I should do it or not. So I said please tell me if I should stay and talk about my research. Still no response so I walked out. So I have broken my rule – never sulk. I called in to Dr Hema to ask if I can come to dinner on Wednesday to avoid going to a wedding with Imran but she has a sudden invitation to a holiday in Singapore for a few days. The micro staff are very enthusiastic to welcome me to have coffee there before going to biochemistry, always nice and relaxed. In biochemistry there were only the girls plus one boy – Raju. “Where are the others?” “They are absent sir”. I gave them a little lecture on courtesy – Raju had cancelled their visit without telling me last week. As I pretended to beat him about the head the atmosphere became very friendly with the girls calling More sir. They got more Mitchell. Lunch of rice and dahl. Good.

As I sat with my beaker of tea reading Clive James on Thomas Mann and falling asleep there was the usual gentle muttering outside the door then a high pitched Ok to come sir? It was Krishna who had bought his friend M Prakash, the 12 year old brother of Manoj come to see the early

pictures of Thumulagunta with pictures of his brother etc. I found the place to look at the pictures on the computer while I dozed and read to the whispered background. After they left I tried another sleep but was woken by Steven with a confused message about this evening – I am going to dinner with them “please be in the guest house at 7 as daddy will pick you up at 8.0. Then the usual parting shot Remember the chocolate for my sister.

Had a lovely bathe then tea on the roof and off to Dairy farm. As always when I feel tired I force myself to go somewhere and I am never disappointed. At the rail crossing a motorbike crossed the road to offer me a lift. It was the brother of Venu my nice tea man. It took some persuading that I did not need one as I was going to the farm. There was quite a wind blowing so nice and cool. At the little pump house in the middle of the fields there was a family group celebrating mother’s birthday (Dad mum medic student daughter and son, Indra Reddy a software engineer). Please join us sir and have some cake. So I was fed a slice of sponge cake with thick cream etc, my hands then being washed with their drinking water. Had a nice chat and photos of me with mother. I forgot to take a picture myself but rectified this by their car on the way out of the farm. Lots of cattle egrets of course and paddy birds, drongos, mynas, and coucal, kingfisher and roller. When I met the family on the way out they persuaded me that they should take me back to the guesthouse, a very welcome suggestion. I took Indra’s email as he wanted to see my pics of Tirupati Past. I have an irritating problem. Although the internet connection seems to have a good signal it breaks easily; it shows the headings of my messages but does not show content and there seem to be some important messages. Perhaps they can help at the PURSE centre.

I read in the Sunday Hindu that there are more cases of Swine flu in the state but we were reassured by the hospital that there is excellent homeopathic treatment available. Very reassuring.

Yesterday amongst all the hooting of bikes and autos in Prakasam road a car was reversing very clumsily into the flow of traffic, its reversing warning a rather synthesised version of Schubert’s song The Trout.

Just got back from Steven’s home. He arrived exactly on time to collect me at 8.00. He irritated me by reminding me that I must take chocolate for Teena. We got a rattly full shared auto down to Balaji colony then a proper auto to his house, a fifteen fast ride out towards Kapilatheertham with Steven chatting all the way, every 3rd word being uncle. Most of the rest seems to be saying how he had no money to get an auto on the way. I did not get full story but I think Charlie was out playing at a wedding so he had cooked biryani before going out. Grandma was in bed a little bit ill. Teena just came in and unsmiling sat waiting for her chocolate; I eventually relented. I looked at Steven’s books – physics and zoology; the physics was packed with equations but the zoology looked easy. Dinner was Puris and palak paneer (spinach) followed by too much biryani. Steven then went somewhere to get ice cream. After a couple of photos (Steven says it is a picture of him with his lifelong friend!?). Hugh phoned to say they were safely home but disappointed that his computer power supply seems to have a problem; very nice to hear him. I was wondering how to escape when I got a phone text from Raju the Biochemistry student saying that they are the guest house. I rang to say I would be there at 10.00. He said they would come another day but I used it to escape. Walking to the auto I was begged for £10 to buy sandals like his father’s new ones; this amongst a lot of other hints of needing money. I gave him the 1000 rupees and he got me an auto home. A very long rather cold journey but well driven and I was happy to accept 40 rup change from my 100 when it should have been 50. I don’t know what to make of Steven. He makes a big fuss of me as Uncle this and that but it feels a bit impersonal and contrived, especially as money or chocolate always features large.

Tuesday 3rd February. I went to sleep early only to be woken by a group arriving at about 12.30, shouting until well after one o'clock. It is not the noise that keeps me awake as much as the irritation of them being so irritating. I woke early and got up to look at my lecture notes on my 2 most difficult topics Regulation of Lambda phage and Mitchell's Q cycle. Went for a short stroll up to NCC nagar in early morning sun. Saw a Shikra hawk breaking off a twig presumably for a nest as its mate was nearby. Two wada for tiffen then I rewrote the phage lecture in script big enough to see. I was concerned that my class would be smaller after yesterday but it was even bigger with about 50 there. They seemed very lively and liked it when I told them how I like to hear the sound of there chatting coming through the window as I approach. I talked about my research after giving them the choice of staying or leaving "we call that voting with your feet". They seemed to like it. As I passed the other lecture theatre there was a big shout Come sir – it was last years students saying they wished I was teaching them.

I collapsed exhausted when I got back; it is getting hotter and two and a half hours is a lot of walk talk and chalk. With one minute Dayanda appeared to say they had been waiting for me so in he came followed by Balu, Kalyan, young Krishna and cheeky Prudvi. Balu insisted that they all go outside so that I could be peace for bojanum which was boring panner fried rice. They did usual stuff of going through old Thumulagunta pictures, games on ipad and photos. Balu had his hair cut so it looked like mine in the picture of David smiths wedding, rather oddly spiked up in the middle. The computer teacher from Hyderabad arrived as we were doing photos on roof so insisted that they take pictures of him and me together. He is teaching some computer stuff to university admin staff including Balaji. Balu was wearing Seshu's ripped up jeans. He is always a pleasure in his concern that I am happy with everything. I collapsed on the bed at some stage and he appeared with penknife, cutting up an apple to feed to me for my health. As they had not had lunch I fed them on masala crisps and madeira cake, cut up and thrown to each of them by Balu like fielding practice, none being dropped.

After tea I went for a walk directly towards bypass past NCC Nagar on a small forest path. For a change there were a few birds; babblers, Indian robins, magpie robins, coppersmiths, and a bird I cannot remember seeing before smaller than a sparrow, with a white patch above its eye but I cannot identify it. On my return I saw an interesting man wandering on the roof. He is Sasidar, here wasting a month on some training course in economics, necessary for promotion, although he already has a PhD etc. he came in for a nice chat. Komal phoned for a chat. Said he is working on some project while his friends have "gone roaming in the forest".

Nice thing I read in Clive James when pestered by autograph hunters said "Sorry, not possible it is Thursday". A bit like the GK Chesterton character who to escape embarrassing situations walked off, calling over his shoulder "little dog".

I went to Kalyan by auto, necessarily driving past the Sindhuri park tank where the festivities are continuing. A desperate drive through packed autos bikes pedestrians cars all hooting in competition with the extremely loud religious shouting loudspeakers. Ravi was not there to pay for the car but they called him and he appeared in the restaurant within a few minutes. He says he prefers cash so I will thak 3000 next week; I booked our car for going to Chennai. The restaurant is not as good as Sindhuri park and is more expensive. I got an auto for the repeat match my the tank to get back in time for the engineering students – Kolam, and who shares Kolams single room where they both sleep on the floor. They are really good relaxing company. They are all of a higher caste and so do not get reserved paid for places and so cannot get on good MSc courses so will leave the country; so so crazy. Mahesh turned up a bit later. He is a great comedian and likes the challenge of making me laugh I think. After they left I was too tired to do anything so went to bed at about 11.00.

I am writing this Wednesday evening waiting as usual for biochemistry students half hour late so far.

Wednesday 4th February. Woke early and was delighted to get early tea from Venu. Then walked to the same place as last night but very few birds except for the beautiful bulbuls. Lovely atmosphere but it soon warmed up. Imran phoned to ask when he could come so we arranged 2.0. I gave the last of my micro and biochemistry lectures (both very enjoyable) but have agreed to give one more to each on my research. As soon as I arrived back at the guest house lunch was delivered and two of the smaller boys arrived cheeky Prudvi and charming Krishna who understands my English and is always very careful to check that I am happy. I collapsed on the bed to sleep while they played on iPad – Smash hit which provides a soothing background of braking glass. Imran then arrived. The boys enjoyed chatting with him and took photos of him on the iPad which horrified him looking fat “sympathy with my expectant wife Chris”. We sent the boys home and Imran went into serious mode. He said that we seemed to have stopped being friends since he borrowed some money from me a couple of years ago. I told him I had not noticed so he told me that is because I am not as sensitive as him. I had forgotten this money but he wants to pay it back now. I said he can pay back half. I shall pass it on to Moin who needs it more than him or to Balu although I have not decided what to do about him.

Imran tried to get me to reconsider going with him to his friends wedding but failed. I told him it is impossible anyway as some of the biochemistry girls are coming at 5.0 and Subamanyam is coming in the evening. I then phoned Subbu to check when he is coming only to be told “I am coming in the evening sir”. When I tried to get a time out of him he said he cannot come as he has work to do. Fortunately the girls then turned up. Five of them looking so nice and colourful. Their English is good and they were great fun. Gave them pictures of family and friends in India then took photos. They then had a session with their cell phones of me with all of them, then me with each in turn. They say they are coming again in the afternoon tomorrow “You are more important than our practical class sir”.

As soon as I left I set out for a lone dinner at S park. There were no autos but I was saved the walk by a member of Virology staff on his scooter down to Balaji colony where I got an auto. As I sat down a man came up to introduce himself; he was the friend of Chowdappa who came with us on my first town visit in 1982 and who told me I am Chowdappa’s guru and god. Straight back home for meeting with biochemists who were only 25 minutes late. They were only 4 boys, the leader being Raju, always there at every lecture. The others were Basha, Anand and Saran. I cannot remember which is which. One was dark and very quiet and dull. Three of them were village boys, all sons of farmers and all good to chat with. The shyest one wanted to explain that he had not come to some of my lectures because he had a family village problem “Sir you are so special to me I am sad if I made you angry”. Very sweet, responding to my ‘no problem’ with a request for one photo with you sir’. They were very enthusiastic to chat and asked to see photos which then took up much of the evening. I have to be careful not to just go on automatic pilot and chat at them. They were responsive enough and also interesting for me to avoid that. House of cards until late and then bed.

Thursday 5th February. An irritating day so far (*writing at 5.0*). I walked to my newly discovered area past NCC towards the bypass but very few birds. My morning walks are always punctuated by ‘one photo sir’ by little boys, parents with kids on front of bikes and even old men. Pongal for breakfast. No lecture preparation as I am giving final lectures to both groups on my research stuff. Both enjoyable lectures. Between lectures I met Prof Reddy, an emeritus microbiology professor who has been asked to advise on the microbiology syllabus; “there are so many overlaps and unsuitable sequences etc”. I told him that I had been asked to do the same thing a few years ago

and it was completely ignored. So I am going to sort out my old suggestions so that we can compare notes and try to achieve something. Before the Biochemistry lecture I had to go to the Virology office to sign papers. These were taken from a file about 4 inches deep, the papers wrapped up into a sort of folder tied together with tape, sadly not red. A total of 9 signatures was required, one of which had to be repeated because the clerk said that it looked different from the others. After Biochemistry lecture I was told by the tubby incompetent (probably only bad English) research student that I should stay in the lecture theatre as prof was coming. After 10 minutes one of the girls explained that there should be a presentation as it is my last lecture and I must be given a shawl. Back came tubby to say that the presentation can be at the guest house. I said it cannot because the student are not there (idiot). After another 10 minutes tubby came back again to say I must come tomorrow at 12 when the professor would be there definitely as his fever will have stopped. Lift home by Vijay Kumar who wants to take me to his hostel this evening. I explained that this strange professor from near Kuntur is coming this evening. Because of that I made no other plans. I later got a phone call to say he is coming tomorrow morning. I just got a jabbering voice when I answered his unidentified number. I had to shout STOP and tell me who you are. Slightly embarrassed when he told me. Then he sent text message that he would be here at 8.0 am.

I am writing at 5.30 after waiting all afternoon for the biochemistry girls. They said they will be here at 4.00.

I have been sitting thinking what I would most like to do this evening and it is to meet up with the engineering students again as they are so relaxed and genuinely interested I think. But I saw them recently and don't want to overdo our interactions as they say.

As the girls did not turn up I decided to go to town early and perhaps call in to the hostel to see the final year microbiologists who I have only seen when they wave to me during their lectures as I walk past the open door. So I had a nice walk in the late evening twilight. I set out with low morale and up it shot as soon as I was walking down the road. Past the university I saw 2 girls waving on the opposite side of the road so I braved the traffic hurtling out of town to the high central reservation, clambered up on to it with the help of a young tree and then down the other side. It was two of the biochemistry girls. Ramya, the short lively leader and Farhana. Had a very nice chat and very useful as they told me that I am expected at 12.0 tomorrow in the department for a farewell thank you function. They translated Raju's odd message: "today we are not coming tomorrow in our class itself at 12 on we will have honour get together".

As I reached balaji colony a final year microbiologist came up and insisted on coming with me. I drove him away eventually as I wanted to take photos. It put me off going to their hostel this evening. In the cricket ground there was the annual book fair with booths all the way round and a concert of girls singing classical stuff. I videoed it a bit, stopping when the young stall holder next to me came up to admire the camera. I think he was bored out of his mind. Then out of the relatively peaceful ground into Prakasam road. Did a bit of video opposite Hanuman at the junction of Nethaji road and Ghandi road. IT certainly makes the walk more interesting if I walk with the camera, flash up, taking pictures of stalls and shops. I was surreptitiously taking a picture of an old man with a cartful of bananas but he saw so I had to show him the picture to his huge delight. In the temple area there was a teenager selling what looks like candy floss in small poly bags tied to a stick. He saw the camera and called his friend over, with his stick, so got nice picture. They said they did not speak English, only Hindi. I tried to ask if they are from Tirupati but of course they laughed and said no English uncle, attracting an elderly scholarly looking man in a dhoti who offered to translate. The boys tried to give me a packet but I stupidly rejected – I could have put it into my bag for later. I fought my way from Tilak road down to Sindhuri park, the most noisy

congested part of my evening journeys, but finishing in the cool dark silent basement restaurant where I had masala dosa and wonderful vanilla ice cream. £2 only. I wandered into the station to remind myself of the drama of train travel. Squabbling families parked on the floor, rows or clumps of bodies in blankets excited chaos everywhere. Three shaven headed young men were clearly having a worrying time searching for their names on the passenger lists pasted by the door of the carriage.

When I tried to negotiate an auto the elderly interesting looking unshaven driver said it is 80 as it is late. I usually pay 60. I offered 60 then walked away as he shouted 80. Off I went with him trailing. So I said I would give him 70 but NO 80 80. I Walked away again and after 20 yards he drew up and told me to get in, indicating I had won. He was an excellent fast driver and never used his horn. To test him I gave him a hundred and he gave me 30 change with such a grin that I gave him the ten back. So he won but I was morally superior.

Disaster: I just spent 40 minutes writing next bit of diary but it somehow turned off without saving.

Friday 6th February

Notes only. Up early to meet Prof Baskhar Reddy who had come from Guntur (750 km) the night before. He had wanted me to visit him and this visit was an alternative. He came at 8.18. Very nice man. Many friends in common. I made his visit worthwhile by agreeing to act as external examiner for some of his PhD students (they are doing sensible projects and he is a good biochemist

At 12.00 I should have had my postponed Biochemistry students' farewell function. They texted to say they are waiting at 11.45. I phoned vijay to get me. He said there is a problem as the staff were in a meeting and would be 5 minutes. Go to end of story: students kept waiting nearly an hour. Staff did not come or tell the students or me. Postponed till tomorrow at 10. I was very annoyed.

At 1.00 went with Reddy and his old friend Parthasarathy and his brother by car to Bliss hotel for huge force-fed lunch. Saw Balu's SieCom college on way back and took photo. Arrived back 2.30, given sweets by Reddy. Slept 10 minutes. Steven arrived with auto to go to his home. I was not looking forward to it as I expected more money talk but there was none, very small dinner as requested, recorded Steven singing and back by auto by 7.30 to microbiology students to arrive at 8.30. As the auto arrived Honey Shree phoned and she, balu and Kotesch all said hello and Kotesch said he is coming to guest house with balu. They arrived 10 minutes later with Ramamurthy, Balaji's cousin. They started looking at web pictures of Thumulagunta. Of course I did not think when taking photos of heaps of small boys and girls in the village so many years ago that they would be roaring their heads off at the pictures of themselves and their friends so many years later. Balu detected that I was tired so made a big thing of checking I was happy all the time. Needless to say the microbiology students did not turn up so I was delighted that the boys had come.

They left at 10ish. I then found that my facebook page was changed to Kotek's and I could not find out how to get it back. I was very irritated as he had not asked if he could access his page. I phoned but he failed to explain how to remedy it so said he would come in five minutes. In 15 minutes the door opened and there was Balu again with Seshu (not Kotek) and he showed me in ten seconds what to do. After a bit more chatting off they went. From Balu as he whispered goodnight –"bonus visit for me".

So, a day full of irritation but in retrospect good. *Having powercut which loses fan, showing how hot it is.* They told me today it is first day of summer.

Saturday 7th February.

Writing this while waiting as usual. This time for Edwin. He said originally he is coming the weekend. Then changed to coming Saturday afternoon and leaving in the evening. It is now 6.40 and he is not here. And I have my optical migraine which I am ignoring to write this.

They say that summer is here and it was a beautiful clear summer day at 7.45. by nine it was a bit too hot. I walked up my favourite bit towards NCC Nagar and was sorry to see that they have cleared a lot of the undergrowth and small trees for about 2 metres either side of the small road. I thought this might be part of some project I was told about where they are making a proper road out of my nice long walk parallel with the hills out towards the Agriculture university; this is being done to make it easier to apprehend the rustlers of the valuable red sandalwood tree. But when I asked about this of a man watching and directing a digger machine I was told it is to make the road safer because of the tigers (leopards). I think it will just give them a better run at their prey. More birds today including very noisy bulbuls, babblers, both drongos, coppersmith, rufous bellied babblers, and blue face malkohar.

My function was due to at 10.0. Nice tiffen brought by Venu from new place up the road. 3 wada with red soup which as Venu had said was excellent with lentils and stuff. All ready to go at 9.50. no driver. Phoned Vijay who said it was delayed till 10.30. he took me there and mooched about waiting. They were busy clearing a room for me plus staff to have tea before the function. I asked why cant we start as the students had been waiting since 10.0. Good Thyagaraju leapt up and said good idea. So I had to sit on a throne in the middle with the professors all sitting in a row in front of the class which was full – with some final year students also, while he gave a little speech. Then I was presented with a shawl and a present which I unwrapped. It was a 3D picture of a bunch of roses springing out of a heart "it tells about so many beautiful things coming out of your love for us and our love for you (sir)". I started by picking out Vijay Kumar who bore the brunt of my irritation yesterday and this morning, to thank him for being such a good go between. Then I plucked up energy to do a big comic turn which they all seem to like. They always like the story of Madam coming to see if I have another family in Tirupati. In the middle Moin phoned so I got them all to shout Hello Moin to him. They liked my teasing of their professors. So did they. Such a pity they cannot be relaxed themselves to the students. Good childish fun. Then loads of photos. I even managed to get a picture with all profs laughing their heads off – except for Murthy of course. I got them all to sign the back of the picture. I will miss them.

I wandered into virology department to say hello to Sai Gopal as I had not seen him recently. When I asked where he is the girl there shouted Placenta sir Placenta. As I trotted off down the stairs I realised he was probably in the PURSE Centre. He was – chatting with the Jeol engineers installing the NMR machine. We arranged my farewell to micro and virology students for next Thursday and for him to bring money on Monday.

Dull dahl and rice for lunch, sleep, shirt wash, sunbathe, sleep. Then loaded recent pictures onto computer and sorted them a bit. Barath and Kalyan turned up in the early afternoon as I was sweeping the floor to borrow the small camera to get pictures of "my gang leader sir" who is playing football. They were both dressed very well and Balu was driving a bike. Later I expected knocks on the door to be them or Edwin but the first was Dr Ranga, Surya's ayurvedic medicine professor. A really nice man. He bought me a small ayurvedic medical dictionary he has just published. We had a nice chat about the stupidity of Homeopathic medicine. I was about to take his picture for surya when a biochemistry research scholar (S.N. Sivudu) appeared. He was horribly obsequious and wanted his picture with me to go on my website. We used him to take a picture of me with Ranga who immediately left, leaving me to almost shove the student out the door in the middle of him telling me what a wonderful man I am etc.

All are now gone leaving me to write this, still no Edwin at seven o'clock.

Eventually he phoned to say his boss had made him work late. Why he did not phone I don't know. He was of course very apologetic. I watched the DVD of The Book of Eli which I got because it had the great Frances de la Tour in it. Sci Fi ok.

Sunday 8th February I woke too early again so got up. Looked at my email finding one from Ranga telling me that a journalist from a Telugu local paper wants to interview me and would come this morning. I went for usual walk out towards the hills finding that summer has really come as I had to take off my shirt for the journey back. Quite a lot of birds but no good pictures. There were 6 magpie robins doing their stuff displaying their white rear and offering snippets of song. Surprised to see a Forest wagtail up in a tree in the NCC quarters. *Relief I have just taken my shirt off as overheating at 10.30 at night with fan going.* I staggered in at 9.30 for my 2 wada, interrupted by GR Naidu the journalist. He looked just what I feared. Age about 50 with a beard (or grossly unshaven face) with thick glasses half hiding bloodshot eyes, bald in front and wild at the back. I made him sit and wait while I finished tiffin the sat him in a white plastic chair with me in the armchair. First impressions can be misleading. I have never met anyone who knew so much about Indian history AND he agreed with everything I think – about history, reservation, splitting of AP, government etc. He had left home at 13 to travel all over india and had continued slightly crazy ever since. Anyway he is coming tomorrow with recording stuff to interview me to write an article for his paper. He had chatted with the staff here on the way in to find about me. Most of it seemed good. He stayed for 2 hours. Balu and Kalyan soon arrived to return the small camera that he had borrowed and to tell me to come to the village later. Balu told that he had come twice but seen his posh shoes outside the door so had left so he would not disturb. I told him he must always let me know he is there and I will decide about disturbance.

I sorted photos and did a bit of biography then dull dahl and sleep. I set off for village wondering if they must be bored with me by now as I might also be. One of the BTec engineering students saw me as I crept under the barriers at the level crossing and gave me a lift to the village. No point in trying to describe my visit. It was as usual, welcome by Balu, him yelling to get Balachandran and Bobby. They took photos. Then with crazy yogesh added we went to the park. Better than usual as only a few of us so had nice little conversations with Balu and Balachandran as we strolled along the raised path cooled by the breeze, surrounded by Bourgenwillia and palm swifts zooming overhead. On the way back I fixed a private chat with Balaji and arranged that he would email me if ever any of them need special emergency help in future. One of Balu's cousins gave me a lift back on his bike. I vetoed Balu coming as well which was a good thing as there was a road block near the guest house where they were checking licences and catching and fining 3 on a bike.

Komal, Mahendra and Sumanth arrived exactly on time and we crowded into an auto to Sindhuri park for nice dinner and chat back here afterwards.

Hello

How can we forget you sir, you are our special guest.

It is really a great feeling for me to see the change over of my birth place and thanks for the collection of photos.

You were and are really very handsome

Pleasure is our's meeting you sir.

K.Indrasena Reddy

On Sun, Feb 8, 2015 at 3:37 PM, Anthony C. <C.Anthony@soton.ac.uk> wrote:
Hello

Do you remember, we met on your mother's birthday at the dairy farm.

D

Arctic Summer by Damon Galgut

Atlantic £8.99/ebook £10.99

IN Arctic Summer, the South African novelist Damon Galgut (the Man Booker-shortlisted author of The Good Doctor and In a Strange Room) writes about the gentle, witty, Bloomsburyish novelist EM Forster. It may not seem like the most obvious pairing, but within a few pages it is clear that the themes of Forster's life (his direct experience of "the first loosening of Empire" in India and Egypt, his "hidden and smothered" emotional and sexual impulses) will make a gripping story. It follows Forster mainly during the years he was writing A Passage to India (1912-24). Galgut is extremely good on Forster's anxieties, his loneliness and his unworldliness. The portrait is beautifully subtle, a mixture of bold, colourful strokes and delicate little flicks of the brush.

<https://archive.org/stream/thecalvinlaboral01moserich#page/n103/mode/2up>