



Contents

Countdown	1
A day in Newcastle	2
Farewell half-maraton.....	3
London night	4
Checking stocks.....	5

Countdown

Three-two-one, thirty-one-thirty-twenty-nine, twenty-four-twenty-three-twenty-two, sixty-fifty-nine-fifty-eight. I don't really believe in counting down, I think the life happens in the moment. But the time doesn't really care what I believe in, and all the clocks are serving it and making me aware again and again how much month, days, hours and minutes left until the travel to the Antarctica. And this moment no matter what I think of life is definitely the most equally important between all the equally important moments. So there's

nothing to do but counting down, saying good-bye many times, tilting awkwardly between the two worlds stretched by the hardness of leaving and the pull of the distant, waiting for coming of what is already destined, which gives a lot of time for useless thinking about things I already thought through, but the brain doesn't accept the lack of need and keeps spinning. Well I am really not a little Buddha. I feel like standing on the top of a giant slide waiting for my turn to give



myself to the rush: the peacefulness of being the object of irresistible forces. Tomorrow I get on the plane and will start my year and a half long slide. Definite destination, clear tasks, five meal a day. No matter how wild the route will be the walls of the slide are strong and they border a narrow path with only one way to go. Two weeks ago I wrote enthusiastically about freedom, not I do the same about giving it up for the daily routine, the bottom of the hierarchy, the fix environment and company for the the whiteness and the darkness. Well that shows how much sense my diary makes. But there might be a bit of a ration in it. Maybe this will take me closer to being a little Buddha. Maybe this this is also a way for getting free.

A day in Newcastle

On Friday I was to Newcastle visiting the university with my boss, David, to learn about the instrument I will service on the summer field trips from the Berkner Island. The GPS and seismometer devices installed on rocks standing out from the icefield – called nunataks – are collecting data in the whole year about the movement of these sites using sun and wind power, while nobody really knows whether they are working well or stopped on the second day after the installation, wasting tens of thousands of project budget. So the annual visits are followed with quite an excitement. No wonder the induction was very detailed, while it was mainly about disconnecting plugs, and downloading data from memory cards, not more complicated than the use of your camera. Circumstances matter. At the Antarctica even the simplest tasks



can get very complicated, so I try not to get too confident. The university guys were very open and professional, it was great to work with them. I also had a chance to have long talks with David, who is quite undepletable of Antarctic stories, so I quite enjoyed this long and tiring day. Especially because the city was nice too. Nobody can accuse me being too emotional about England, but how they recreated this city, which was built in the Victorian age of industrial revolution, destroyed in



the World War and bankrupted by the fall of the heavy industry, was really amazing. In the spring I thought that Birmingham was a special case, but now it seems that it's more than that. Newcastle showed a very similar change: cars removed from the centre followed by blooming pedestrian areas with pretty shops and booths, street musicians and sculptures. The refurbished river bank full of tourists, hotels and museums with large office buildings in the background. The clever footbridge becoming an icon of the city. Youth all over from England travels to the city to the Friday night party. Even though the last ship was built decades ago, and there are no more ferries to Norway from Newcastle, the city is active and attractive. Well done.



Farewell half-marathon

It wasn't really planned to run this half-marathon but it turned out quite good. I saw its advertisement when I was going home from the BAS office and since it was the right race in the right time I immediately knew that I'm up for it. And so did my Kata, she liked the idea so much, she bought the tickets the day after. Later it turned out that the race is outside of Cambridge in a village called Lode, but it didn't change anything, a half-marathon is a half-marathon. So two days after we said good-bye to each other in Stockholm, we said hi to each other in Cambridge. We ate in an Italian restaurant, got on the bus and went to an AirBnB near Lode to have a rest before the race. The room was fantastic, it was in the house of a young couple, who are doing athletics too, so we got a topic to talk about too. There was warm shower, equipped kitchen and a giant double bed, everything we could wish for. They even let us to have a shower on the other day after the race. So on Sunday we woke up rested, walked to the race HQ, which was a small building next to a football pitch. We registered, warmed-up and waited for the start in the cold autumn air. And then we started, the first miles went easy and quickly, the pace was good, the track was comfortable, the wind wasn't strong either. Kata got further and further away with the leaders, while I joined a peloton in the middle. At the half distance I still felt great, I only slowed down a little a few times, but regained my pace quickly. Kata turned behind three men. I was waving to her, but she was struggling. Shortly after I learned why. Strong wind was blowing from the other direction and it really slowed me down and took a lot of energy. I couldn't regain my speed again, on the second half I was losing speed slowly but continuously. At the end I had to start the rockets only to finish the race, instead of having a fast last section. I finished at 1:35, far from my best, but I fought for it hard, there was no more in me on this race. Kata finished first as a woman at 1:25. We were both happy and content. After a short ceremony we walked back to the house, had a warm shower and ate. There was no bus service on Sunday, so we started to walk towards Cambridge and tried to hitch hike that 10 km, but nobody stopped. It was raining and it was cold, so we stopped and called a taxi, which took us to the train station for an affordable price. All in all it was a perfect farewell program for us. Something we can remember and smile.



London night

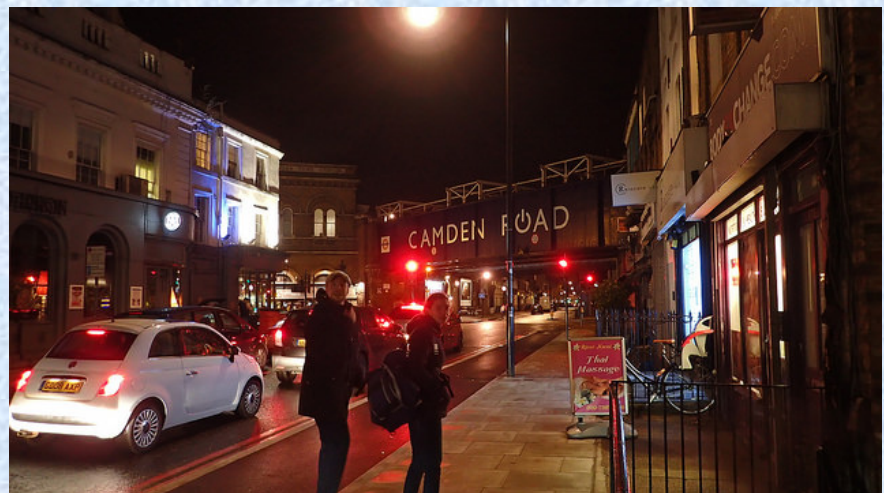
But that wasn't the end of the day. From the train station we directly travelled to London, where we met an ex-colleague of mine. Till he turned up, we quickly went to the centre to make some photos, but that was nothing compared to what he showed us. He knows well the „dark side“ of London, which is in fact much more fun than the usual tourist attraction, so he led us to Camden Town and showed us around the world of quality graffiti, rock pubs, and international cuisine.

After the walk-around we sat in a pub and had an ale and a burger to salute for the unhealthy English lifestyle and had a good chat sharing our stories of London, Cambridge and Stockholm. Around 8 o'clock Kata had to go to the airport, so we said good-bye at the Kentish Town station. We hugged each other long compared to the place but

short compared to the situation.

There is no real good way to say good-bye for a year and a half. So she went off with the sub and we went to a rock pub, where a Swedish girl band played AC-DC-like songs with lot of enthusiasm and terrible amplification. I stopped at two and a half beers, but Sipi drank another two. After the concert we freshened in the cool night of Camden Town and then we started towards his place before midnight. Sic transit gloria mundi, but I'm not in my twenties any more. On the way

home he showed me Kings Stone, which is a nice suburban town close to London with a river and a park on the other side. I landed on the couch after midnight tired after a long day. A bit further away Kata slept on the Gatwick airports café couch. The next day started early for both of us. She flew to Copenhagen first and then from there to Stockholm, got on the airport bus, and got on her bike in the city, she arrived just in time to her exam. I travelled back to the city by train then to King's Cross by sub, there I got to another train to Cambridge, where I took a bus to BAS. It took me almost the same time to get to the office than for Kata to get to the University. Tired but full with experience I started the last few days of packing and administration before getting on the plane to south.



Checking stocks

I couldn't resist to open my kit bag before start. That contains all the clothes BAS provides me for the Antarctic summer and winter. I placed all items on the table one by one, trying to learn them all. I wasn't a small amount I have to say. Two sunglasses, three hats, four scarfs, eight gloves, underwear, trousers, overalls, coats, shoes, boots, giant boots, uncountable socks, I think I would even survive in the space with all this. After checking them I packed everything back to the bag, which weights 24 kg on its own. Besides that I had my own 23 kg bags and 10 kg hand luggage with the laptops, so it was more than 60 kg in total. It weighted more than Kata. I thought I should rather leave the clothes and take her with me.

