

LIFESTYLE CYCLING slowmotion

issue
#02

The power of
imagination
makes us infinite.

—JOHN MUIR



cup fever

WE CAN END THE MADNESS

hygge society

DENMARK GETS IT RIGHT

absolute belly full

RUTH PRETTY SETS UP
SUMMER

BLACKWELL
and SONS^{Est 1943}

Many of our customers tell us that cycling – for leisure rather than hurtling Lycra-clad towards a finish line – epitomises the ideals and experiences they treasured when they were younger: freedom, adventure, possibility, friendship, fresh air and simple pleasures – pleasures that don't involve clicking a 'like' button on a screen.

We discovered a groundswell of appreciation and desire for this kind of slower, simpler lifestyle. And so 'Slow Motion' was born. Slow Motion isn't exclusively about

leisure cycling. It encompasses any idea or pastime that involves decelerating and opening our senses fully to the people, places and experiences around us.

The benefits are numerous and well-documented: improved health and a longer life, better relationships, deeper friendships, enhanced sensual experiences, improved sleep, reduced anxiety, and more patience, tolerance and general enjoyment of life.

So slow down, for goodness' sake, and enjoy the read!



10



22



20



27

Cover: Hall Winery on Highway 29 in St Helena, California uses a giant chrome rabbit as a weenie to capture attention from wine tasters. We love it's beauty and simplicity. Please don't get upset about our lack of bicycle helmets, which are an option in the United States. Helmets are a great idea, especially on busy roads.

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Blackwell and Sons Limited

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Design:
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Printing:
Lamb Peters Print

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New Zealand
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DISCOVERING MY INNER JOHN MUIR

Who? John Muir died over one hundred years ago, but most historians agree he was instrumental in the establishment of the American National Parks system; the same model was used to create New Zealand's national parks back in 1887. I picked up my inaugural John Muir book, *My First Summer in the Sierra* (1911), last year and that was it. Instant fan boy.

John Muir expressed open, almost childlike joy with what he observed in nature. And he translated it into written words so vividly, you could not only see the icy snowmelt-fed waterfall cascading down a cliff face during Spring in Yosemite National Park, you could also feel the billowing mist on your skin, hear its deep powerful roar, and smell the damp earth at its base. He is rightfully revered as a hero in the US, and his words have become motivating catch cries with National Park conservation groups and hiking enthusiasts around the world. Thank goodness for John Muir. Can you imagine a planet without wilderness protection?

It's really only been the last decade or so when environmentalists have not been considered oddballs. Maybe the movie *An Inconvenient Truth* kicked off climate change awareness on a global scale, and today, our attitudes to waste, pollution, fossil fuels, recycling and reversing the mess we find ourselves in has become a priority for almost everyone. Even science deniers know something's definitely up with the weather, and rethinking our relationship with the earth and its natural resources is urgent.

All of this resonates with our *Slow Motion* attitude, which in turn influences most of the products you'll discover at *Blackwell and Sons*. It's a lifestyle goal that doesn't yet achieve zero waste, and we certainly don't want to be all preachy about it. But it's a start. This year, Millie and I are cycling on our Pashleys whenever we can, we're trying to reduce garbage at home and in the shop - and that includes 'recyclables', and we're growing more of our own vegetables. So far, so fantastic. We're sleeping better, our health and fitness is improving and we're saving money (that can be repurposed for romantic dates, dinner parties with friends and hiking adventures in National Parks). Oh, and the decision to keep phones out of the bedroom? Another excellent Millie piece of genius. All of these choices connect to each other and together, create a better, happier life for my wife and I, and a more beautiful planet for everyone else. That's the goal, right?

John Muir understood the importance of real connectivity. "When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world," he said. The simplicity of those words pencilled in John's journal 140 years ago, and their connection to and influence on my life today is a gift that only the pursuit of reading can fulfil. I'll take Mr Muir's writing over Facebook connectivity any day.

A Blackwell

Adam Blackwell, Proprietor

Image: Millie and Adam at Kings Canyon National Park, California.



EVERY DAY IS A PICNIC WHEN YOU'RE WITH FRIENDS

Ever since we first fell in love, Millie and I have prioritised picnics as our favourite date experiences. I think it's because of the simplicity of just being outdoors together, without any distractions except for a glass of wine, a little cheese, a deck of playing cards or a book. And I believe food and wine tastes better outside partly because all of our senses are stimulated when we're outdoors. Outside is where we're supposed to be, getting sun on our skin, breathing fresh air and being immersed in our natural environment.

We discovered this wonderful range of picnic baskets in the Napa Valley, California in 2016. Now, they're part of our core range of Slow Motion inspired products and every year we get enquiries starting in August as to when our new range of picnic accessories will arrive. They make excellent wedding presents and are a great way to commit to a whole summer of outdoor dining!

Get them online: www.blackwellandsons.nz

① **FRONTIER PICNIC BACKPACK \$179.00** *It's a fully loaded picnic basket for servicing up to four people, with a heat-sealed cooler on the bottom, a dry compartment on top, and adjustable straps on the front capable of carrying a blanket. /* ② **MESAMIO PORTABLE FOOD AND WINE TABLE \$49.00** *How handy is it to be able to put your wine glass down on a flat surface when you're outside? Yes, very. /* ③ **BEER AND CIDER CADDY \$69.90** *Not only does its waxed cotton canvas exterior look way cooler than a cardboard box, but it comes with a retractable bottle opener built-in so you never have to worry about it walking off. /* ④ **THE WINDSOR \$495.00** *For royal drop ins this summer, we bring you The Windsor with full service for four. It comes loaded with accessories including its own blanket, a stainless steel flask, food storage containers and an insulated cooler. /* ⑤ **FRONTIER COOLER \$179.00** *This sleek two-tiered shoulder cooler comes with full cutlery and meal set for four. Serve your meal comfortably with the removable, heat-sealed cooler and carry your water/beverage easily in a side storage pocket. /* ⑥ **THE BRISTOL BASKET \$149.90** *A Pashley Rear Carrier friendly English-style picnic basket with deluxe service for two, including wine glasses lightweight utensils, ceramic plates and salt and pepper shakers (with enough room remaining for cheese and wine, of course). /* ⑦ **THE CHARLESTON BASKET \$695.00** *This is it; the top-of-the-line, wicker picnic basket that might just transport you to an era of flappers and pink champagne. And it's got everything you could wish for including a pinewood slat table and a USA patchwork quilt blanket! /* ⑧ **ADVENTURE WINE TOTE \$149.00** *This insulated tote has the space for two wine bottles and comes with wine and cheese service for two, including a portable acacia table that folds down for flat storage in the tote's interior.*



YOU BRING YOUR OWN WEATHER TO THE PICNIC. HARLAN COBAN

SARTORIALLY SPEAKING

Combine a love of slow cycling, clever catchphrases and the wonderful graphic design skills of Paul, Aaron and Nick in Christchurch who created our brand identity and continue to amaze us, and you've got your *Blackwell and Sons* summer wardrobe sorted. And the cyclist or fashion-forward person in your life, too.

These exclusive designs can only be purchased in our webstore or our Greytown emporium, but they've been spotted all over the world. \$49 each, 100% combed 180gm pre-shrunk cotton. In other words, outstanding quality at a remarkably good price.

More at blackwellandsons.nz







LIFE BEGINS THE DAY YOU START A GARDEN

This perfect little Chinese proverb exemplifies the simplicity of gardening pleasure. Millie and I have both received good gardening tuition from our green-thumbed parents, who have understood the wonderful returns gardening provides in fruit and vegetable yield for many decades. Gardening also comes with bonus features like exercise and stretching (natural yoga, right?), direct contact with healthy soil microbes, sunshine on skin, and the deep pleasure of feeling closely connected with seasonal cycles.

Using well designed and constructed tools increases gardening productivity. Dad still uses some of the tools his father was using in the 1940s and 50s; that kind of product

durability should be something all manufacturers strive for, not because it's highly profitable, but because it's the right thing to do. *Barebones* in the United States is a company that has a long-term perspective on what's important, creating high quality items designed to last. We found their products at a store in Calistoga, California and they have become one of our most trusted suppliers.

Millie and I use *Barebones* gardening and outdoor products in our Greytown garden, and we're thrilled to have them available for our customers.

Get them online: www.blackwellandsons.nz



① BAREBONES HARVESTING AND GATHERING BAG **\$129.00**

Versatile, hard-wearing and easy to care for, the bag's multiway straps allow for comfortable carrying on your chest or back, while its drop-out bottom makes quick work of emptying the harvest. Constructed of weather and water-resistant waxed canvas, complete with a removable liner. / ② BAREBONES PRUNER AND SHEATH **\$69.00** Inspired by old world Japanese design, these durable steel pruners with classic copper accents and a weather-resistant waxed canvas sheath make them a lasting staple of indoor and outdoor gardening. / ③ BAREBONES SPADE - WALNUT **\$49.00** Ideal for digging, turning and

spreading soil, prepping beds, and planting seedlings, this spade is constructed with an ergonomic stainless steel blade and comfortable handle: a duo capable of a lifetime of use. / ④ BAREBONES LARGE SCISSORS - WALNUT **\$55.00** These rust-resistant large garden shears have an ambidextrous grip that allows you to harvest leafy greens quickly. Wide handles accommodate a comfortable fit with or without gloves. / ⑤ BAREBONES CULTIVATOR - WALNUT **\$49.00** The robust tines of the cultivator rake through dense, rocky soil and remove weeds with ease. Its strong handle makes for comfortable clearing and grooming, while its stainless steel tines ensure years of heavy and efficient use.

WE MIGHT THINK WE ARE NURTURING OUR GARDEN, BUT OF COURSE IT'S REALLY OUR GARDEN THAT IS NURTURING US. **JENNY UGLOW**





Shane and the Art of Pashley Bicycle Maintenance

WORDS SHANE KELLY, GENERAL MANAGER

My apron and I are inseparable. I'm at peace with that, in a renaissance-blokey kind of way. It lends a certain svelteness to my physique. It also makes me 'look the part'. Looking the part is important because, when it comes to Pashley bicycle maintenance, there's really not that much to do.

A bit of routine care and maintenance is all that's needed to ensure your Pashley is ready for action day after day, season after season, year after year. You don't need an advanced mechanical mind either – just a few simple tools and a commitment to keeping your precision machine in top-notch order.

You can check out my maintenance videos (and apron) on blackwellandsons.nz, where you'll also find a maintenance booklet to download. But here's a quick look at the essentials:

PRE-RIDE CHECK

A pre-ride check is always a good idea. It means you get to place your Pashley on the driveway and show your feckless, screen-addicted neighbours that you're an active, sustainably inclined trailblazer who's going places in style. It also ensures a hassle-free ride.

- ☐ Check that the handlebars, wheels, pedals and saddle are secure.
- ☐ Check that you know how the gears and brakes operate.
- ☐ Check that your tyres are inflated correctly. If possible, use a gauge and inflate to the level printed on the side wall of your tyres.
- ☐ Check that the handlebar stem bolts are tight by holding the front wheel between your feet and attempting to turn the handlebars.
- ☐ Check wheel security, particularly the front wheel. Axle nuts may loosen over time and with use, so check that they are tight before every ride.

GEAR ADJUSTMENT

Now, if you're like some of my mates, you probably giggled childishly at that subheading. But gear adjustment is a useful skill to have, as gear cables can stretch with use.

To check gear calibration on a Sturmey Archer 5-speed hub mechanism, set the gear shifter to 2nd gear and check the coloured markers on the chain side of the rear axle. The markers should line up precisely. If they don't, rotate the adjusting barrel on the gear cable (where it attaches to the gear shifter on the handlebar) until the markers align.

On a Sturmey Archer 3-speed mechanism, select 2nd gear and turn the pedal crank forward to ensure the gear is engaged. Look carefully into the hole in the rear axle nut through which the gear cable is visible. There's an indicator rod on the cable where it passes through the axle into the hub. In 2nd gear, the rod should sit flush with the end of the axle. If it doesn't, adjust by loosening the cable-adjusting locknut then rotating the adjacent barrel located on the cable. Once you're satisfied with the position of the indicator rod, retighten the locknut.

BRAKE ADJUSTMENT

Years of cycling have taught me that, generally, stopping is just as important as starting. Some people I know will stop to look at small dogs dressed in tartan. Personally, I'll stop for a two-for-one pie deal, a sale on fishing gear, or an earthquake of M6.0 or larger. Not much else, until I reach my destination.

Brakes are just the thing for stopping. And, like gear cables, brake cables can sometimes stretch with use and create too much slack in the brake levers on the handlebar. To tighten, first loosen the locknut near where the brake cable enters the hub, then rotate the adjacent adjusting barrel to shorten the cable. Once you're happy with the amount of movement in the brake lever, retighten the locknut.

And that's about it, Pashley pedallers.

If you choose, you can add a touch of lubricant to your chain links, brake lever pivots, gear-shifting chains and 3-speed shifters (but not 5-speed shifters).

Keep your Pashley looking sharp using car shampoo and a soft cloth or brush (be sure to keep leather saddles and accessories dry) – and you're ready for adventure!



CUP OF KINDNESS

(for the sake of humankind)

Every year, the world sups its way through 16 billion single-use coffee cups. Check out the zeros: 16,000,000,000. Every. Year. That's an obscene quantity of tree-destroying, non-compostable nonsense, isn't it? And it needn't be that way, people.

Look. We understand completely. You need your caffeine fix. How else can you stay sharp during that sustainability planning meeting? And heaven forbid you make do with the dross served up in the office kitchenette.

Besides, it's a good look ... striding along Lambton Quay, phone pinned between shoulder and ear, MASSIVE takeaway coffee held out front. It speaks volumes for your insatiable appetite for work; the sheer get-out-of-my-way importance of the professional circles you move in.

Here's the thing. Only a few short months ago, global headlines carried an equally mind-boggling statistic that slackened jaws and opened eyes to the crime that was single-use plastic bags. As a society, we waved a finger and said na-ah. We demanded action, and now those indestructible wind-wafted turtle-asphyxiators are on their way out.

We can rid the world of single-use coffee cups with even greater alacrity, caffeine freaks. And rest assured, there'll be no diminishment of your street cachet as a result.

Sure, it'll take a small change of habit. But if that wasn't possible, we'd still be emptying chamber pots into gutters from third-floor windows.



Here's what you need to do:

Make your way to a certain cycling lifestyle emporium in the fetching South Wairarapa village of Greytown. Enter with anticipation. Watch your step, as your eyes will be drawn hither and yon by all manner of dazzling delights (Shane and Michelle foremost among them).

Swing right, admiring the elegant sweep of the Victorian staircase and strike-a-light magnificence of the wooden merchandise table as you go. Look left. There. No, up just a touch. Yes, there.

SIC cups and Porter mugs. The only hot beverage receptacles you'll ever need, for the rest of your darling-I-simply-must-have-caffeine existence. The style choices are timeless. The colour range breathtaking. They come with lids, are dishwasher-safe, and sized to accommodate standard café servings perfectly.

Hear that? It's the planet sighing with relief.

Can't make it to Greytown? Commiserations. But you can head here instead:

blackwellandsons.nz/collections/picnicware-drinkware

An Emporium of Wonder Evolves

WORDS COLIN BARKUS



Back in April 2018, news broke that the lease on *Blackwell and Sons'* perky little cycling lifestyle store on Main Street in Greytown couldn't be renewed. Children cried and birds stopped singing. But proprietor Adam Blackwell shrugged

his shoulders and got busy. He soon found an opportunity to completely reimagine his retail proposition – and reimagine it he did.



“We got a bit lucky,” admits Adam Blackwell.

As time ran out on the lease at 101 Main Street, where *Blackwell and Sons* had forged its reputation for high-class service and products of impeccable quality and style, another era was ending less than 20 metres across the road.

The long-term tenants in Greytown’s old Borough Council Chambers – a Victorian masterpiece that had housed an assortment of enterprises since the Council vacated last century – were ready to move on.

Word gets around fast in Greytown, and Adam didn’t hesitate to enquire.

“When I first set foot in the old Chambers building, I immediately saw the possibilities,” he recalls. “With the help of local architect James Mackie’s vision and experience, and the wisdom of my wife Millie and colleagues Shane Kelly and Colin Barkus, I imagined a glorious open retail space that would exploit all of the charm, atmosphere and idiosyncrasies of what is an incredible building.

“It would be a quantum leap for the *Blackwell and Sons* business. It was a no-brainer.”

The building was already on the market, but a few productive meetings with its owner saw the hoardings come down and a long-term lease secured.

That was the easy bit.

“From the outset it was clear this would be no ordinary project,” Adam says. “There were the practical challenges presented by decades of additions and adjustments to the interior layout of the building that we needed to negotiate to create the clear canvas we were looking for.

“ From the outset it was clear this would be no ordinary project.

“But there was also history to consider. The building is a treasured landmark that’s stood in Greytown for over 125 years. We knew we couldn’t ride rough-shod over the past to meet our business needs. We wanted to add to the building’s story, not destroy it.”

Key to achieving that aim was early engagement with Heritage New Zealand and Greytown’s own Historical Society. Consultations quickly established that compromise was not only possible, but could be the catalyst for creating something truly game-changing for the business and the town.

Plans were drawn up that would showcase the building’s original matai floors, ceilings and mouldings and, using a series of clever short partitions, tracing the lines of the internal walls as they appeared on original 1890s blueprints.

Colour schemes were conceived that were in keeping with both the era of the building and the striking theme that Adam wished to express throughout the store.

Display boards would celebrate some of the quirrier aspects of the building’s colourful past.



External signs, handmade by local craftsmen, would echo a bygone era and hang in complete sympathy with their neighbours in the middle of Greytown's quaint shopping precinct.

"We collectively created a vision, marrying past and present, that we were all excited about. There were a million things to consider and, as the politicians call it, much 'robust debate'.

"Then Joe and the team from Holmes Construction set to work making it a reality."

Essential seismic strengthening was the first step, which entailed the installation of massive steel beams throughout the opened-up downstairs space.

Over the ensuing weeks, a symphony of construction noises reverberated around the building. Quizzical locals and visitors strained for a glimpse of the action through teasingly shrouded windows.

There were hiccups. The biggest came late in the project when a sample of the building's old matai floorboards tested positive for asbestos. That set a phalanx of government officials into a frenzy, but despite their best efforts, all subsequent testing came back negative.

"It was a false alarm that cost us two weeks and, just quietly, quite a lot of money," Adam says.

"No matter. Thanks to a Herculean effort by the team, we got there. And the end result is everything we hoped for, and more."

At about 1.30am on Friday 16 November 2018, the finishing touches were made. *Blackwell and Sons'* new retail

headquarters opened for business later that morning.

"Our new emporium is beautifully crafted to showcase our Pashley bicycles and amazing range of accessories, picnicware, apparel and outdoor items. The cabinetry is fabulous. The lighting incredible. It even smells good, which Shane claims most of the credit for," says Adam.

"One of the things I'm most proud of is the personal hand that each member of the team had in the project," he adds.

"On top of my thematic vision, brought to life by James and Joe, Shane was able to design a practical space for storing, assembling and maintaining bicycles utilising the annexes at the back of the building.

"Colin used his carpentry skills to build us a fantastic rustic display bench that sits inside our show workshop in the store. His sharp wit is also on show in some of our interior signage.

"And Millie brought her incredible eye for presentation to the fore in our amazing merchandise displays that show off our range to fantastic effect. She also individually steamed, tagged and catalogued several hundred T shirts in the days leading up to our after opening!

Adam says that while the move might've been enforced, and has taken the business just a few metres over the road, it's enabled light years of advancement in terms of the space, sophistication and sensual experiences he can offer to customers.

"I'd like to think that some of the characters who've occupied this amazing space over the years might be looking on with approval!"




Timeless products, personal aspirations and warm welcomes

Some of the most satisfying comments we hear from our guests at *Blackwell and Sons* state how beautifully we have merchandised the store with items they have never seen before. Creating something so unique is deeply rewarding.

When Adam and I first came up with the concept for *Blackwell and Sons*, we agreed on product criteria that would set us apart from others. We also took inspiration from other independent retailers who had a bold vision for creating something special. Our idea for a store was based on what we wanted our lives to be: making sure we made times specifically to be with each other, staying active and healthy (so we could be together for many years to come), being environmentally considerate and having a 'buy-it-once' rule to get back to the same low-waste mindset our grandparents lived by.

Our British Pashley bicycles are *Blackwell and Sons*' foundation product. They represent beautiful design, durability and function. They're not racers and they shouldn't be ridden wearing lycra. Pashleys are for commuting to the village, picnics in the country, a trip to the farmers market and after-dinner rides on warm summer evenings. If this sounds a little romantic, I make no apology. These moments are what Adam and I love most about being Pashley owners.



The incredibly robust Pashley Parabike's unique design harks back to the paratroop airborne cycles used by the British Army during World War II.



Adam loves technology and these rechargeable Barebones lanterns provide eight hours of light from a single USB charge.



Our own reusable market bag is super strong with a waterproof lining, very comfortable to carry, and we love the design of course!



We discovered the SIC brand of rugged reusable cups and bottles at Sequoia National Park in California.



We selected 100% heavy cotton fabrics for our range of proprietary tee shirts, including this very popular design.



Adam and I take Bicycle brand playing cards everywhere we go, so we're always ready to compete during down time!



Adam discovered the Duke Cannon range of mens grooming products in Montana, and it was an instant man crush moment.

We carry a beautiful range of country lifestyle products for women, but I get a lot of joy in selecting complementary items for men, using the criteria already listed. Oh, and one extra check point: would Adam love it? My husband isn't into receiving gifts, and like most men including my Dad and my brother, he shuns knick-knacks. But presented with a handmade canvas and leather trimmed bathroom bag, or a beautifully finished deck of playing cards in a collectable tin, Adam's already sparkly eyes widen with excitement. Our home feels very much like our store; if the products we love pass our road test, we're thrilled to make them available to our customers.

Getting to know the producers of what we sell is an important part of the equation. We love small businesses that have stood the test of time, because the owner's heart and soul goes into what they make. You can feel it in the quality of what you're holding. Sure, you might pay a little more, but what you buy represents the care, craftsmanship and experience of a person that put their name to that product.

Please take your time to browse around our online store, or pop into our Greytown emporium the next time you travel through the Wairarapa. We'll always make you feel welcome and if you're interested, share some stories about the products we are so proud of.

Millie Blackwell

Millie Blackwell, Co-Proprietor

‘CYCLING LIFESTYLE MERCHANTS’
BLACKWELL
 And **SONS** Est 1943
 AUTHORISED *Pashley* RESELLERS

110 Main Street
 Greytown, South Wairarapa
www.blackwellandsons.nz



MICHELLE 101

*Blackwell and Sons' dynamic
doyenne of sales*

A talent for corralling dogs and dairy cows, an unwavering social conscience and an admiration for Arnie make Michelle Brown a fascinating person. A ton of experience, a creative eye and a flair for merchandising make her *Blackwell and Sons'* dynamic doyen of sales.

A few decades ago, in a house on a hill in far-north Masterton, a crafty girl (crafty, that is, in the sense of cotton wool and glue guns) got together with her sister to establish 'shop days'. The pair made knick-knacks in their mum's studio, put them on display, and offered them up for sale.

In truth, the profits weren't spectacular. But the experience would certainly prove formative.

"Since then, I've always enjoyed the buying and selling process of retail and the creativity of merchandising and creating great displays."

That crafty girl's name was Michelle Brown. Actually, it still is. She's *Blackwell and Sons'* newest recruit, welcoming and assisting customers in the Greytown emporium, designing spectacular product displays and supporting the flourishing online business.

It's the culmination of a decorated career in retail, which includes six years running her own streetwear store in Upper Hutt, and getting up close and personal with customers as a professional hairdresser.

Perhaps not what you'd expect from someone who, with kids all grown up, chooses to spend much of her spare time in the company of dogs, cows, chickens and rabbits?

"I adore animals, but I also love working at *Blackwell and Sons* because I'm dealing with happy customers. I enjoy working for a business that sells quality products, not landfill, and that chooses to deal with businesses that care about the environment and have a corporate social responsibility."

That's a legacy of deeply involved and caring parents.

"My dad earned a QSM for his voluntary services to the community. He always said: 'if you're going to do a job, do it properly.' He taught me that when you've got enough, you share the rest*."

There's a long-standing appreciation for the joys of cycling too. "My first bike was a trike. I was pretty excited to get a red Lowline for my 8th birthday and we biked to school almost every day. We had a really steep driveway which I could never bike all the way up, but I could fly down. Amazing!"

So, what's with Arnold Schwarzenegger? "Sport and fitness are really important to me. I think Schwarzenegger's drive, determination and commitment to reach the pinnacle of his sport are outstanding."

Good answer.

** Sorry dear readers, Michelle will not be giving away free Pashleys. Ever. AB.*



A WORLD FIRST: THE ELECTRIC-ASSISTED PASHLEY

We can now equip our most popular Pashleys with enough electric oomph to take you up hill and down dale without so much as a muffled grunt of exertion.

The glorious Britannia, Briton, Roadster Sovereign and Princess Sovereign are now available as the best-looking e-bikes in the world.

Electrification is elegant in the extreme: a clip-on, clip-off 36 Volt lithium ion battery encased in a sleek pouch that sits unobtrusively on the seat stem, a high-torque 300 Watt mid-drive motor placed tidily under the pedal crank, and the most compact handlebar console you've ever seen. The system offers five pedal assist levels and a throttle for a burst of power when you need it. It senses when you change gear, and adjusts the motor output up or down accordingly. You can ride for 50 or 60km on a single battery charge, and even plug your phone into the integrated USB port.

It can be yours; outstanding technology with no style compromise.

blackwellandsons.nz/collections/electric-bicycles

*A Pashley Princess Sovereign and Pashley Roadster Sovereign, with electric assist.
Thanks Lorraine Hall for the use of your beautiful back yard!*



Getting Hygge With It

WORDS COLIN BARKUS

The good people of Denmark are perennially ranked among the world's happiest. It's all down to a concept called hygge. A deeply ingrained cycling culture is key, and Danish authorities are intent on deepening it further.



The annual World Happiness Report ranks 156 countries by the happiness levels of their citizens, and Denmark is always a top seed. Unsurprisingly, the rest of the world is keen to know why.

Denmark consistently scores highly in all six of the report's key wellbeing variables: income, healthy life expectancy, social support, freedom, trust and generosity. Other countries do well by some measures, but it's in the less tangible – trust and generosity in particular – that many fall short.

In Denmark, it's all about *hygge* – a cultural construct sometimes charmingly translated as 'cosy'. A better definition, according to Danish tourism authorities, is 'intentional intimacy and trust', which happens during 'safe, balanced and harmonious shared experiences'.

That might be coffee by the fireplace with friends, a summer picnic in the park, or a communal journey by bicycle – in the fresh air, to and from work, school, the shops, cafes or the park – along dedicated cycleways that keep things safe and agreeable.

Danes use their bicycles in much the same way that Kiwis use their double-cab 4WD SUVs, only without the tailgating and finger gesturing.

Nine out of ten Danes own a bike. They cycle, on average, 1.6km every day. Over 35% of adults cycle to work at least once a week. Nationwide, a quarter of all journeys under 5km long are made by bicycle. There are 1,800 GPS-equipped e-bikes in central Copenhagen that are free (yes, free) for anyone to use. Most hotels in the city also provide bikes for their guests to use.

More tellingly, 44% of Danish households don't own a car.

Cycling is so deeply ingrained in Danish culture that newcomers are encouraged to learn as soon as they arrive. Danish children are usually on two wheels well before they start school. Until then, they're carried in seats attached to mum or dad's bike.

It wasn't always that way.

During the prosperous 1950s and 60s, Danes – like most Western World citizens – believed the future belonged to cars, trucks, motorcycles and ever-wider highways. But the oil shocks of the 1970s changed all that. Car-free Sundays were introduced in Copenhagen, and residents decided they rather liked it.

Since then, support for cycling as the preferred form of inner-city transport has only increased. Concerns about

“ Danes use their bicycles in much the same way that Kiwis use their double-cab 4WD SUVs

pollution, climate change and healthy living have aided the cause, as have – undoubtedly – Denmark's high taxes on petrol and automobiles.

But just as important as why, is how.

Danish authorities have long recognised that good infrastructure is key to keeping cycling a popular and viable means of getting around.

Denmark is less than a third the size of the South Island, but boasts 4,233km of official cycle routes. New cycleways in Copenhagen are at least 2.5m wide – enough for three cyclists to ride side-by-side with room to pass – thanks to a recently introduced standard. All lanes feature a curbstone edge that separates cyclists from cars.

And now authorities are doubling down.

'Cycle superhighways' are under development in major urban areas to ensure cyclists are prioritised on key routes from residential areas to places of work and study.

Superhighways ensure a smooth ride with minimal stops. They're equipped at intervals with air pumps and footrests, and when they must intersect with a road, slower traffic light sequences give cyclists plenty of time to cross safely. All routes are indicated by signs, as well as orange way-markers on the asphalt.

Many cycle superhighways pass close to rail or bus stations, making it attractive to combine cycling with travel by public transport.

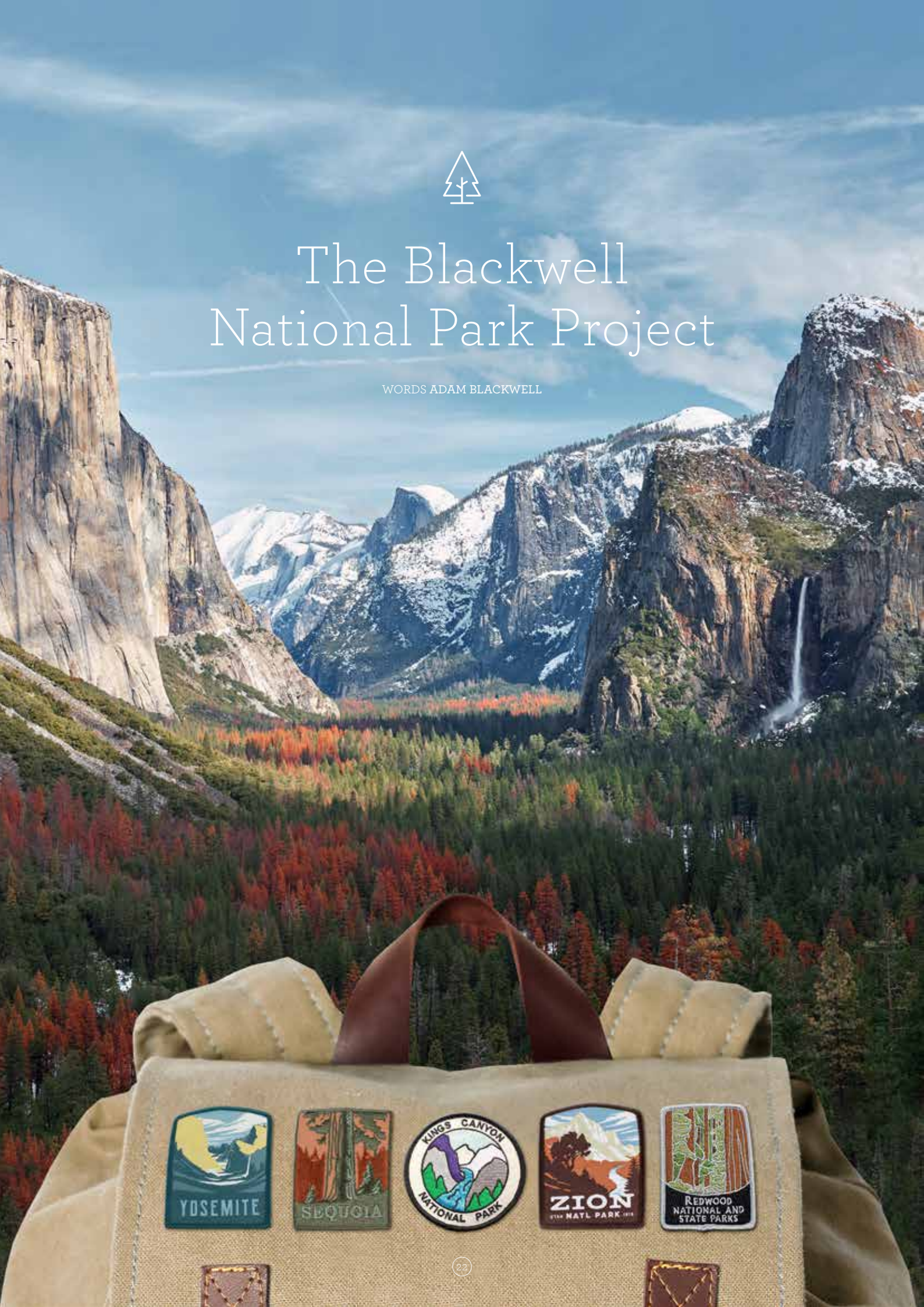
Typically, the opening of a new superhighway sees a 20% jump in the number of cyclists in the area.

Now that's a safe, balanced, harmonious shared experience if ever there was one.



The Blackwell National Park Project

WORDS ADAM BLACKWELL





GOING TO THE MOUNTAINS IS GOING HOME. JOHN MUIR

“Let’s set a goal of visiting all 61 Parks,” said Millie to her husband with her signature enthusiasm, in May 2017 at the end of a spectacular day of hiking in Zion National Park, Utah. And that was a moment that changed their lives in ways they couldn’t expect or plan for. The grandeur of America’s national parks is already famous and well documented, but being physically immersed in nature at that scale is more than just a photo opportunity. As a couple, their shared experience of the parks they have hiked, paddled or flown into (23 so far!) has brought them closer and created a clearer path for their future, shaping their thinking across business, politics, environmentalism and personal responsibility. One little day-hike for Millie and Adam, one giant leap for their personal development.

“We’ve become deeply aware of negative human environmental impact, and that has turned us from being merely ‘conscious’ to ‘committed’,” says Adam. “We’re doing everything we can to eliminate waste, like disposable cups, because they’re easy habits to create. Solar panels at home and an electric vehicle are our next goals for change in our day-to-day living.”

In their businesses, Millie has initiated the *Showcase Forest Relief Fund* that plants New Zealand native trees based on the active use of the *Showcase Presentation App* she co-founded in 2012. Over at *Stun*, Adam’s creative agency, a brand new *Climate Action Toolkit* product is being launched during 2020 to help companies unify and motivate their employees to bring positive changes to their home and work lives.

“The National Parks have been creative catalysts for both of us,” says Millie. “Everyone needs to feel they can make a difference in the world, and for us, our park quest has opened our minds to bringing good business and worthwhile missions together. In fact, most of our best ideas actually happen on a park trail. At *Blackwell and Sons*, we’re recycling all of our packaging and sourcing attractive, practical merchandise, like reusable shopping totes, that help our customers make small everyday differences. Oh, and nothing beats a Pashley bicycle for carbon-free transport of course!”

Aside from environmental preservation, the Blackwells have also discovered the beneficial properties of trees. “You feel refreshed and at ease in a forest, something many cultures have long been connected with, but western countries are only now understanding the benefits of,” says Adam. “Some quiet time hiking or reading in a grove of 2,000 year old Redwood trees is restorative and calming.

At the current visitation rate, seeing the remaining 38 US National Parks should be achievable by 2023. “Well, then there is Canada, South America, Europe and, um, if you remember that TV campaign from the 1970s called *Don’t Leave Home ‘Til You’ve Seen the Country*, I think we have some local New Zealand exploring to do as well,” suggests Adam. “A beautiful evening bicycle ride or walk through the rural surrounds of Greytown is also a perfect remedy for a busy day. And it’s even better if your sweetheart is with you every step of the way.”

Left: Yosemite National Park, California / Top left: Lassen Volcanic National Park, California /
Bottom Left: Glacier National Park, Montana / Right: Arches National Park, Utah



A Wartime Love Story

WORDS COLIN BARKUS

A true tale of passion, heroism,
sacrifice and honour.*

**Some creative interpolation between points of
verifiable fact might've occurred, here and there.*



Wailing air-raid sirens threw Corporal Monty Hyde-Bannister's plans into total disarray.

He had no right to be there that evening, out in the thickets on the perimeter of the WAAF Area HQ at Sudley Marsh. If his superiors at Divisional Base found out he'd commandeered a combat support bicycle and traversed seven miles of uncharted, mine-riddled heathland, in near darkness, he'd be in hot water.

But what could he do? His brain was awash in a chemical tide since first he laid eyes on the delectable Penelope Ashton-Waugh.

Elite RAF paratrooper training had granted him supreme self-control, but tonight he cared little for propriety or consequence. Primeval forces drew him to her, oblivious though she was to his incendiary desire; his bitter-sweet torture ... his very existence, in fact.



And now, here he was, sideline witness to an unfolding calamity.

“Dash it!” he muttered to himself. “Bally war. Bally enemy.”

Already the low drone of advancing bombers penetrated the air in ominous counterpoint to the howling sirens. Before him, panicked commotion set in. Stiffly coiffured WAAF officers issued shrill orders. Home guard heroines – unprepared for this – darted back and forth, torn between duty and self-preservation.

And then it was on. The first bomb landed at some distance, but Hyde-Bannister felt the shockwave course up his legs and into his midriff. A fireball cast an ethereal candescence across the scene.

The second bomb found its mark. In an instant, what was once an orderly administrative office became a formless heap of shattered mortar and iron. Fire tore greedily at anything it could reach, hurling its tendrils left and right.

Storage crates ignited, then foliage, and vehicles. And then, with a thump that knocked Hyde-Bannister clean off his feet, drums of fuel stacked around a quadrangle at the centre of the base.

“Beastly,” he thought. “Simply beastly.”

Dusting himself off, his thoughts turned quickly to the reason he was there. Where was she? Had she managed to escape all this? Was she hurt ... or ...?

Fate answered in a trice. There, in the midst of it all, silhouetted against the arcing fury, was the unmistakable form of the girl who’d occupied his dreams since first he saw her at the combined services dance six weeks ago: the comely curve of the Air Force Blue uniform she wore so flatteringly; the tantalizing upsweep of rich blonde hair, tucked elegantly under standard-issue WAAF beret.

Her distress wasn’t instantly obvious to him. But then, as his senses cleared, her predicament hit home. She was completely surrounded by blazing drums, with no clear escape and no hope of quelling the inferno.

“ He hauled the bicycle’s sturdy 26” wheels off the ground and rose up and over the final hurdle – a collapsed crate that burnt with undiminishing anger.

Instinct kicked in. He grasped the soft-touch cork grips of the bicycle and swung his leg over its hand-built duplex tube frame. Ramming down on the right pedal, he immediately felt its wide Schwalbe tyres bite the turf beneath him. He was away, through the tumult, dodging smouldering debris, whirling his neck against pulse after pulse of sickening heat and smoke. He made straight for her.

He had no plan. He hauled the bicycle’s sturdy 26” wheels off the ground and rose up and over the final hurdle – a collapsed crate that burnt with undiminishing anger – and was suddenly beside her.

Her face betrayed confusion, terror and relief in equal measure. A dashing handsome man – out of nowhere – amid the searing confusion and chaos. Was this some sort of bizarre fever-driven dream?

Hyde-Bannister assessed options, as his training had taught him to do. He looked to all compass points, but danger lay everywhere and time was fast running out. Then – sweet miracle – he saw it. Against a half-toppled wall, illuminated by the conflagration, stood another combat-support bicycle, almost like his own, seemingly untouched by the assault. In a flash he was there and back.





“Get on!” he screamed, “and ride for that break. Go!”

She was in no position to question. It'd been years since she'd ridden, but the bicycle's trusty Sturmey Archer gears responded to her foot's tentative touch, and she was away. On she pushed, through an obstacle course of unimaginable menace, with her enigmatic liberator right behind.

Now – inconceivable – a new threat. Enemy paratroopers. He knew the crackle of their furling shoots as they alighted like he knew his own laugh – their arrival accompanied by a spray of bullets from on high.

“Shift up to third gear, now fourth. Go, go, go!” he bellowed. “Ride, Penny, ride! Head for that barn! Quick as you can!”

The question nagged her so much that, despite their absurd peril, she simply had to ask. All-weather hub brakes gripped hard, and she came to a sudden but smooth halt. “I say, h-how do you know my name?”

“Gad. Ah, gosh, cripes,” he fumbled. But there was no time to answer. Bullets strafed the thickets beside them and they simply had to move on. They hurtled, swerved, dipped and darted, finally entering the barn and collapsing, breathlessly, beside bales of freshly cut hay.

The relative safety and calm unnerved them for a moment but slowly, as oxygen flowed and muscles relaxed, they regained composure. She opened her mouth first.

“Thanks awfully. But who ... how, then ... you...?”

He needed no translation, and tried his best to respond to the questions she struggled to articulate.

“Penny, I saw you at the dance. I... I... gosh, I think you're simply the tops. I came here tonight to ... and then ... gosh, simply dreadful...”

He paused, took a deep breath, and let his feelings flow.

“Penny. Darling Penny. I cannot eat, sleep or think straight. If I could, I would gather the sands of time and return them, grain-by-grain, to the top of the hourglass just for one more moment by your side. I would command the west wind to whisper the truth of my love in your ear as you lie sleeping on a summer's eve. I would counsel the stars to stay shrouded at night, for they could never outshine your...”

Suddenly, a sniper shot. Shattering barnwood, then flesh. A young life ended.

In another century, and another corner of the country, bright June sunshine danced through Venetian blinds and fell upon a cluttered studio desk. Behind it sat a young man, attention captured fully by two images – blueprints – positioned side-by-side on a computer monitor.

Beside him, tired elderly eyes fought hard for focus on the same images.

“There, that curve.” The voice was weary but determined. “Tighten it just a little.”

“Like that?” His dexterous hand followed the instruction.

“Yes. Perfect,” the voice more distant now. “That's how I remember it. It saved my life, that bicycle.”

The young man leaned back and interlocked fingers behind his head. “I'm going to call this one the Penny. But this one ...”

An emotion-ridden sigh. “I never even knew his name, you know.”

“I know Gran-mama, I know. How about we simply call it – the Parabike?”



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Summer Picnic Sensations

WORDS RUTH PRETTY

While summer seems to be conventionally labelled Picnic Season, the truth is that any day worth venturing out in can be accessorised with a delicious picnic lunch, enjoyable outdoors or in your vehicle, parked up with a glorious view of nature.

Here are a few of my most popular picnic recipes.



DIET-BE-DAMNED BROWNIE

makes 40 squares

INGREDIENTS

105g flour
60g cocoa, preferably Dutched cocoa
340g butter, cubed
590g castor sugar
5 eggs, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla extract or essence
560g Whittaker's dark chocolate, preferably 72%, nibs or tablet coarsely chopped
icing sugar, for presentation if you wish

METHOD

Preheat oven to 180°C. Lightly grease base and sides of a 33cm x 23cm sponge roll tin. Line base with baking paper.

Into a bowl sift flour and cocoa. Place butter in a saucepan over a low heat, add sugar and stir until sugar is dissolved. Cool slightly, add eggs and vanilla and stir until combined.

Add flour mixture and chocolate and combine. Pour mixture into prepared pan and bake for 40-45 minutes, or until crusty on top and firm to the touch. A skewer inserted will come out slightly sticky.

Gently run a knife around the edge of tin to loosen brownie. Allow brownie to cool before turning out onto a cake rack. Remove baking paper.

Place on a firm flat board and trim edges {cook's perks}. Cut brownie into 4cm squares.

Place brownies into an airtight container with greaseproof paper in between each layer. Store at room temperature for up to 1 week, or in the freezer for up to 3 months. When you are ready to indulge, allow brownie to come to room temperature if it has been frozen, and if you wish, dust with icing sugar.

Warning: this is addictive.



HERBED CREAM CHEESE AND VEGETABLE SANDWICHES

makes 12 sandwiches

INGREDIENTS

225g cream cheese, at room temperature
¼ cup finely chopped Italian parsley leaves
1 tablespoon finely chopped thyme leaves
2 teaspoons chopped French tarragon leaves
½ teaspoon flaky sea salt
pinch freshly ground black pepper
50g (½) carrot, peeled and coarsely grated
60g (2 -3) radishes, coarsely grated
100g (1/3) cucumber (leave skin on if it is tender), coarsely grated
1 baguette, cut into 7mm thick slices (need 24 slices)

METHOD

To make Herbed Cream Cheese: In a medium bowl place cream cheese, parsley, thyme, tarragon and salt and pepper. Mash with a fork to combine.

Place carrot and radish separately onto paper towels, cover and press firmly to release moisture. For the cucumber, similar but wring it.

Lay out baguette slices on a chopping board and spread each slice with a heaped teaspoon of Herbed Cream Cheese. Top each baguette slice with a mound of mixed vegetables. Gently top with second slice of baguette. Do not press down on sandwiches.

If preparing ahead of time store in an airtight container in refrigerator, with greaseproof paper between each layer. Bring out of refrigerator at least 30 minutes before serving.



Photos: Murray Lord

CHICKEN PISTACHIO PIES WITH SPRINGFIELD PEAR CHUTNEY

makes 3x 10cm raised pies, or 16x large muffin-sized pies

INGREDIENTS

egg wash (1 lightly beaten egg yolk mixed with 1 tablespoon water)

9 {or 16} fresh sage leaves, washed and stems removed

500ml chicken stock liquid reserved soaking liquid from cranberries in Chicken Pistachio Pie Filling

Springfield Pear Chutney, as condiment, available at *Blackwell and Sons*

CREAM CHEESE PASTRY

285g flour

¼ teaspoon baking powder

125g cream cheese, chopped into 5-6 pieces

170g butter, diced

2 tablespoons iced water

1 tablespoon white vinegar

PIE FILLING

50ml chicken stock liquid, heated

2 heaped tablespoons dried cranberries

2 tablespoons olive oil

325g chicken tenderloins, tendon removed, diced

½ small onion, finely diced

1 clove garlic, finely chopped

175g ham, preferably in one piece off the bone, diced

¼ cup pistachio nuts, toasted and roughly chopped

1 tablespoon finely chopped sage leaves

1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest

¾ teaspoon flaky sea salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

MAKE PASTRY (MAKES 630g)

Place flour and baking powder in the bowl of food processor fitted with metal blade and pulse. Chop cream cheese into 5 or 6 pieces and add to flour. Process until coarsely chopped. Add butter and process until butter is the size of small peas.

Add water and vinegar and process until dough just begins to come together. Tip onto a lightly floured board. Gently mould together by hand. Work into a ball and flatten with the palm of your hand. Wrap in plastic wrap and rest in the refrigerator for 1 hour or overnight.

MAKE PIE FILLING

To hot stock add cranberries and soak until cold. Into a heavy-based fry pan over a medium heat add oil and when hot add chicken. Gently toss around in oil. Cook for 3-4 minutes, or until chicken is half cooked. Add onion and garlic and cook 3-4 minutes, or until onion is soft but not brown, and chicken is fully cooked. Transfer to a bowl and cool.

Drain cranberries and reserve liquid. Add ham, pistachios, cranberries, sage, orange zest, salt and pepper to chicken mixture and combine. Cool and fill pies.

MAKE PIES

Preheat oven to 190°C. Lightly grease pie tins or muffin tins with baking spray. Lightly flour pastry bench and roll Cream Cheese Pastry to 2mm thickness.

Cut pastry in rounds to fit base and sides of chosen tins, adding in 2cm to diameter. Any pastry off-cuts stack and then roll out. Repeat for pie tops. Cut a 5mm hole in the centre of pie top.

Push bases into prepared tins leaving a 1cm overhang. Fill bases with Chicken Pistachio Pie Filling to about ¾ full.

Using a pastry brush, brush under-side edges of pastry lids with water and place on top of filled bases. Crimp edges together to form a neatly rolled edge.

Rest pies in refrigerator 20-30 minutes. Brush tops and rolled edge with egg wash. Arrange 3 {or 16} sage leaves on each pie and brush pie with egg wash. Bake in oven 30-40 minutes until pastry is golden brown and cooked. Cool.

Pour chicken stock and reserved cranberry liquid into a saucepan over a medium heat. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer until stock has reduced by two-thirds. Cool.

Pour stock into a squeeze bottle and squeeze stock into each pie, through the hole in the lid, to the top of the pie. Refrigerate pies until stock has jellied. Serve with Springfield Pear Chutney (available at *Blackwell and Sons*).



Beautiful design, durable materials and small town hospitality

One of the greatest joys of looking after merchandise presentation at *Blackwell and Sons* in Greytown is knowing that we hold sustainable quality in such high regard. Some large scale retailers talk about *fast moving units*, or *high margin items*. We talk a lot about beautiful design, long-lasting durable materials and how much waste can be reduced by a product that's made to last. It's very personal to us, and we consider it a privilege to provide our customers with items we genuinely appreciate ourselves.

Millie and Adam Blackwell spend a good part of the year based in the United States managing their technology and marketing businesses. In the weekends, they often visit small towns and discover wonderful new lifestyle products that most of us in New Zealand would never get to see. After extensive Blackwell road-testing, the very best of the best are ordered for *Blackwell and Sons*, and arrive each year just in time for our busy summer season. Opening up a shipping container of unique, high quality items ready to display in our store and on our website is on the one hand daunting - where are we going to put it all? - and on the other hand, it feels like Christmas morning! Seeing the faces of our customers light up when they discover something new, exciting and exactly what they need, makes working here so rewarding.

I take a lot of pride in being able to answer customer questions and having the knowledge needed to help find the perfect picnic basket, a suitable travel mug and of course the ideal Pashley handmade British bicycle (now with optional electric assist!) for those that need extra help. We aren't there to sell, because our products take care of that themselves ... we just make sure that small town hospitality is alive and well in our famous little emporium. Please come in and introduce yourself the next time you visit Greytown.

Michelle Brown

Michelle Brown
Merchandising Manager



Our very own rugged canvas bathroom bags and lunch totes are handmade in Omaha, Nebraska.



These fantastic USB rechargeable lanterns look beautiful hanging from a tree or frame in your outdoor dining area.



Shane skilfully models our hand sewn, heavy duty canvas and leather aprons made by Artifact Studio in the US.



Beauty meets practicality with these gorgeous Porter coffee or tea ceramic travel cups, wrapped in cool-touch silicone.



Mr Blackwell endorses quality socks as an everyday luxury, especially these stunning sets from London Sock Company.



We are the exclusive NZ retailer for Weathergoods bags from Sweden; they look great on and off your bicycle.



Special announcement; most of our incredible British Pashley bicycles now come with optional electric assist, so you can peddle up hills and into headwinds effortlessly. See our website for details.

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Deal with your Darling

WORDS MILLIE BLACKWELL

I well remember the first time Mr Blackwell and I played cards together. He was on full romantic throttle: a wintertime retreat at a secluded Lake Taupo bach, beef bourguignon working its slow-cooked magic in the oven. We had little idea what game we were playing (on so many levels).

Since that first delicious evening, playing cards together has always made me feel in the moment and engaged with my wonderful husband. We share laughter and, when we keep score, we do so simply with a pencil and paper.

Our game of choice is one that Mr Blackwell introduced me to on that very first occasion. We've always known it as 500 ... only, it isn't.

I looked up the official rules of 500 for this article, and found the game we were playing bore little resemblance. No matter! It'll always be 500 to us. In fact, according to The Google, our game is something more like Rummy.

So, here are the rules to an unofficial but seriously fun card game: 'Something Like Rummy'.

You'll need: A deck of cards and a pencil/paper to keep score.

OBJECTIVE OF THE GAME

Collect matched sets of cards. Sets can be groups (three or more cards of the same face value, mixed suits) or sequences (three or more cards of the same suit, in sequential order). The winner is the first player to collect 500 points. Read on for details on how to score.

THE DEAL

The status of dealer passes between players, so decide who will start. Deal one card at a time face down – beginning with your opponent – until you both have seven cards each. Place the rest of the cards face down in a pile on the table. The top card in the pile is turned face up and this becomes the start of your 'discard pile'.

THE PLAY

Beginning with the player who was not dealer, either draw the top card from the face-down pile, or take the face-up card from the beginning of the discard pile. Add it to your hand. Player 1 can now lay down on the table, face up, any groups or sequences they have. If they don't yet have any groups or sequences, they discard a card, face up, onto the discard pile. It's then the other player's turn.



The discard pile should be laid out as a row of cards (see photo), as you want to see everything that has been discarded as the game progresses.

The second and all subsequent players can pick up either one card from the face-down pile, or pick up from the discards. You can pick up anywhere in the discards but you must pick up all the other cards in front of the discard that you actually want.

In the example pictured, if you want the 5 of clubs, you must also pick up and add to your hand the J of diamonds and K of spades. You can play the extra cards immediately if you want but, at a minimum, you must play the 5 of clubs (i.e. it must complete a group or sequence in your hand). You can pick up cards you previously discarded yourself and/or cards you passed up on previous rounds. Each player must always make a discard at the end of their turn and this is the signal to move to the next player.

You may add one or more cards from your hand to any other player's group or sequence and those cards count toward your point score, not the score of the player whose sequence or group you're adding to.

For example, if your opponent has laid down the 10, 9, 8 of hearts – you may add J, or 7, or Q, J, 7, or 7, 6. However, you can't make additions to your opponent's cards until you've laid down at least one sequence or group of your own.

When one player has no cards left in their hand, that hand is over and you count your points.

Any player with cards left in their hand deducts the value of those cards from the value of the cards they've laid down as sequences or groups. It's possible (and likely, especially in our sometimes-ruthless games) for players to end hands with negative scores.

Continue playing hands until one player has reached a cumulative score of 500+ points.

SCORING YOUR CARDS

- › K, Q, and J are all worth 10 points.
- › 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 are all worth their face value.
- › A - if the A is in a group of 3 or more Aces OR part of a sequence that includes the K, each A is worth 21 points. If the A is part of a sequence that does not include the K, the A is only worth 1 point.

FOR EXAMPLE

- › A, K, Q = 41 points
- › A, A, A = 63 points
- › A, 2, 3, 4, 5 = 15 points

This is a great two-person card game, but works just as well with more players. If you have more than two players, pass the role of dealer clockwise. Likewise, deal the cards one at a time in a clockwise direction. If you have 4 or more players, I suggest adding a second deck of cards.

I wish you many happy card-playing hours!



LENGTHENING THE LOCAL LIFELINE

WORDS MILLIE BLACKWELL

Mr Blackwell and I are on a quest to see all 61 of the USA's National Parks over the next 10 years (see page 22). Most parks aren't located near major cities, so a happy side effect of our travels is that we get to support small-town businesses. We like that idea a lot – and here's why.

As small-town retailers ourselves, we're always curious to see what kinds of enterprise people bring to life in their own communities – many of them similar in size to Greytown. We also know first-hand how valuable it is for us to spend as much of our travel budget as possible locally.

So, for discretionary shopping as well as food and other essentials, we make a point of searching out independent stores instead of chain brands whenever we can.

On a recent stop at The Red Barn Creamery, a small ice cream store in Show Low, Arizona, I got chatting about this preference with another guest and it occurred to me that, unless you're a small-town retailer yourself, you're probably unaware of how much impact your spending choices have.

So, here's a little insider knowledge: on a very quiet day in a small Kiwi town, it's not unusual for an independent store to turn over just a few hundred dollars. A good day – depending on the average value of their merchandise – is likely a few thousand dollars.

So, if you spend \$50, \$100 or \$300 in a store, that's a really noticeable difference to the business owner, even on a good day.

Here are three other reasons why you might consider prioritising your spending with independent store owners in your town, or seeking them out when you travel.

1. MOST OF YOUR DOLLARS GO BACK INTO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

A bunch of studies show that when you buy from an independent, locally-owned business significantly more of your money is used to make other purchases from businesses and service providers in the same town, strengthening the local economy. One study found that for every \$100 spent at a local business, \$68 remained in the local community, compared with only \$33 of every \$100 spent at a chain retailer.

2. LOCAL BUSINESSES PROVIDE BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

As well as spending money locally, business owners generally hire local people as employees, who in turn spend their money in the community. Many local businesses also sponsor community efforts and events. For key service businesses like the supermarket and pharmacy, there's flexibility to move with the needs of the community rather than carrying products dictated by a corporate head office.

3. LOCAL BUSINESSES KEEP COMMUNITIES UNIQUE AND INTERESTING

When a town has interesting businesses, people are more likely to visit. Think of whenever you're out of town. Are you likely to visit businesses you could easily patronise in your own town? You're more likely to seek something new and exciting. When a community has a number of local independent businesses, it's different and more interesting.

Image: One of our favourite small towns in the United States and our second home for the last five years is St Helena, in the northern part of the Napa Valley, California. Here's Adam and I on a quiet Sunday morning in Autumn, grabbing a coffee (in our SIC and Porter cups!) from Model Bakery.



millieblackwell



Mrs Blackwell's Tip for finding gems in small towns



33,297 likes

Mrs Blackwell's tip for finding gems in small towns. As a millennial, it's my instinct to start with social media and for me that's a hashtag search on Instagram.

The hashtag for the name of the town is a good start (e.g. #greytown) and will usually point me quite quickly towards a more specific hashtag if one exists, like #greytownvillage. There I can get to know the local retailers and what's on offer.

That's exactly how we found ourselves at Red Barn Creamery. The fact that I ate approximately my own body weight in ice cream is a story for another time. [#icecream](#)

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