

LIFESTYLE CYCLING

slowmotion

issue
#03



street art
A NEW TAKE ON SMALL-TOWN NZ

bike-centenary
CYCLING'S 200-YEAR RIDE

facial recognition
BEARDS FOR THE AGES

BLACKWELL
And **SONS** Est 1843

Many of our customers tell us that cycling – for leisure rather than hurtling Lycra-clad towards a finish line – epitomizes 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, improved sleep, reduced anxiety and more patience, tolerance and general enjoyment of life.

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



Cover: Paul Rees’ art deco-inspired illustration of Featherston, at the foot of the Remutaka Pass in South Wairarapa, is one of a series of limited-edition New Zealand town artworks commissioned exclusively for Blackwell and Sons and available in our Greytown and online stores. See story page 10.

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Publisher:
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Editor:
Adam Blackwell

Writers:
Adam Blackwell, Millie Blackwell, Colin Barkus

Photography:
Mike Heydon, Colin Barkus

Design:
Aaron Frew

Printing:
Lamb Peters Print

Blackwell and Sons
PO Box 1, Greytown, South Wairarapa
New Zealand
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LESSONS THAT MONEY CAN'T BUY

My mother is big on manners. A slight iridescent puffiness on my left ear is testimony to the occasional failure on my part to meet her expectations in that regard.

But the older I get, the more I realise how right she is to set the bar high. Courtesy and respect are fundamental to interpersonal relationships of any kind. And the retail world is no exception.

Since experiencing life on the other side of the counter, I've learned a thing or two about being a respectful customer. I learned how incredibly hard independent retailers work to source and road-test products that will improve my quality of life. Above all, it dawned on me that whenever I enter a shop, I'm effectively a guest in the retailer's home and should tailor my behaviour accordingly.

So, here are the new maxims we live by when Mrs Blackwell and I head out on a retail binge:

- 🔒 I remember that "please" and "thank you" are desirable bookends to any interaction between two human beings. Always.
- 🔒 I enjoy conversing enthusiastically with retailers about interesting facets of their business, but I never ask about turnover or profit margins.
- 🔒 If I wish to inspect a packaged product closely, I ask the retailer for help rather than taking matters into my own hands then walking out leaving the item in an unsaleable condition.
- 🔒 If I believe an item is unreasonably expensive, I whistle quietly to myself rather than volubly vocalising an expletive.
- 🔒 If I wish to determine whether a product is cheaper elsewhere, I leave the store to investigate, rather than checking out options on my phone while providing a running commentary.
- 🔒 If there's something on my mind I feel like sharing when I get to the counter, I consider: a) the likely relevance of the subject to the retailer, and b) the length of the queue behind me.
- 🔒 I recall the formal agreement made with Mrs Blackwell that if we ever acquire a dog, it will remain tied up in a safe, shady location outside any retail premises we wish to enter. Outside.



We've all learned to respect rules designed to protect our health in 2020. We've proven we can change our behaviour if our lives are at stake. Perhaps we can also consider small behavioural changes designed to make us better human beings such as respect, good manners and acting with civility and empathy to those around us. It was good enough for our grandparents. It's certainly good enough for us again in 2021.

A Blackwell

Adam Blackwell, Proprietor



Next-level outdoor adventure

This summer, pack your Pashley, basket or backpack with all the essentials you'll need to make a day—and a meal—in the great outdoors a cut above, without being a burden on your biceps.



PORTER—REUSABLE BOWL \$39.90

Sometimes you need stuff at a picnic that suggests you'll still look that chiselled in 30 years. Like salads and, well, more salads. It's all about curating the romance my friends. It'll help if your greenery is transported in one of these nonslip, rigid-plastic masterpieces that come with a snap-tight silicone strap. Microwave and dishwasher safe, BPA free, and available in several shades of impressive.

PICNIC TIME—BLANKET TOTE \$39.90

Bring the magic together on one of these easy-clean, style-blazing, flexible picnic platforms. What? No, my friend. They're so much more than a blanket. Sure, they're all soft and blankety on top, but underneath they're water resistant, so nature's goo stays where it belongs. And they fold up into a tote with handles and a shoulder strap. Approximately 2m x 2m, which scientific research suggests is more than adequate for two Kiwi bottoms and a delectable spread.



① BAREBONES—ENAMEL CUP
(SET OF 2) \$39.90

These 14oz enamel cups are for serious outdoor sipping. They feature a steel core and stone-grey finish, much like your boss. The raised stainless-steel rim with copper-like patina finish isn't just a topic of fascinating conversation—it's designed for lip-hugging, thirst-quenching pleasure. Dishwasher safe.

② BAREBONES—ENAMEL BOWL
(SET OF 2) \$39.90

Vintage-inspired with a modern update, these sturdy, easy-clean enamel bowls are deep enough to hold lashings of tasty treats. Much like you, they're indispensable, sophisticated additions to any picnic. Dishwasher safe.

③ BAREBONES—ENAMEL DEEP PLATE
(SET OF 2) \$49.90

The curved edges of these enamel beauties perfectly complement your own curved edges (Really? Does your writer sniff *Twink*?) They're also useful, keeping juicy morsels on the plate and out of your crotch, which is usually something of a romance-killer. Since you ask, that's a hand-finished baked stainless-steel trim creating that copper-like patina finish. Dishwasher safe.



④ BAREBONES—FLATWARE SET \$39.90

Flatware—that's a knife, fork and spoon to those of us who went through the state school system—is essential for any serious, style-conscious picnicker. You could dig in with your fingers, but you'll need those later to flip through your poetry book. Made from stainless steel and matt carbon, and equipped with a steel cable loop and linen storage bag. Dishwasher safe.

⑤ BAREBONES—FOLDING PICNIC KNIFE \$39.90

Now then, in a perfect world, you'd impress her by tearing meat off the carcass with your bare hands and opening bottles with your teeth. But this world is far from perfect (except, perhaps, on your Facebook profile). This snazzy, compact piece of magnificence offers all the kit you'll need to safely prepare food and drink on the go. Features a 4-inch half-serrated blade, wine key, and bottle opener.



SIC—INSULATED DRINK BOTTLE
12OZ \$35.90 / 27OZ \$39.90

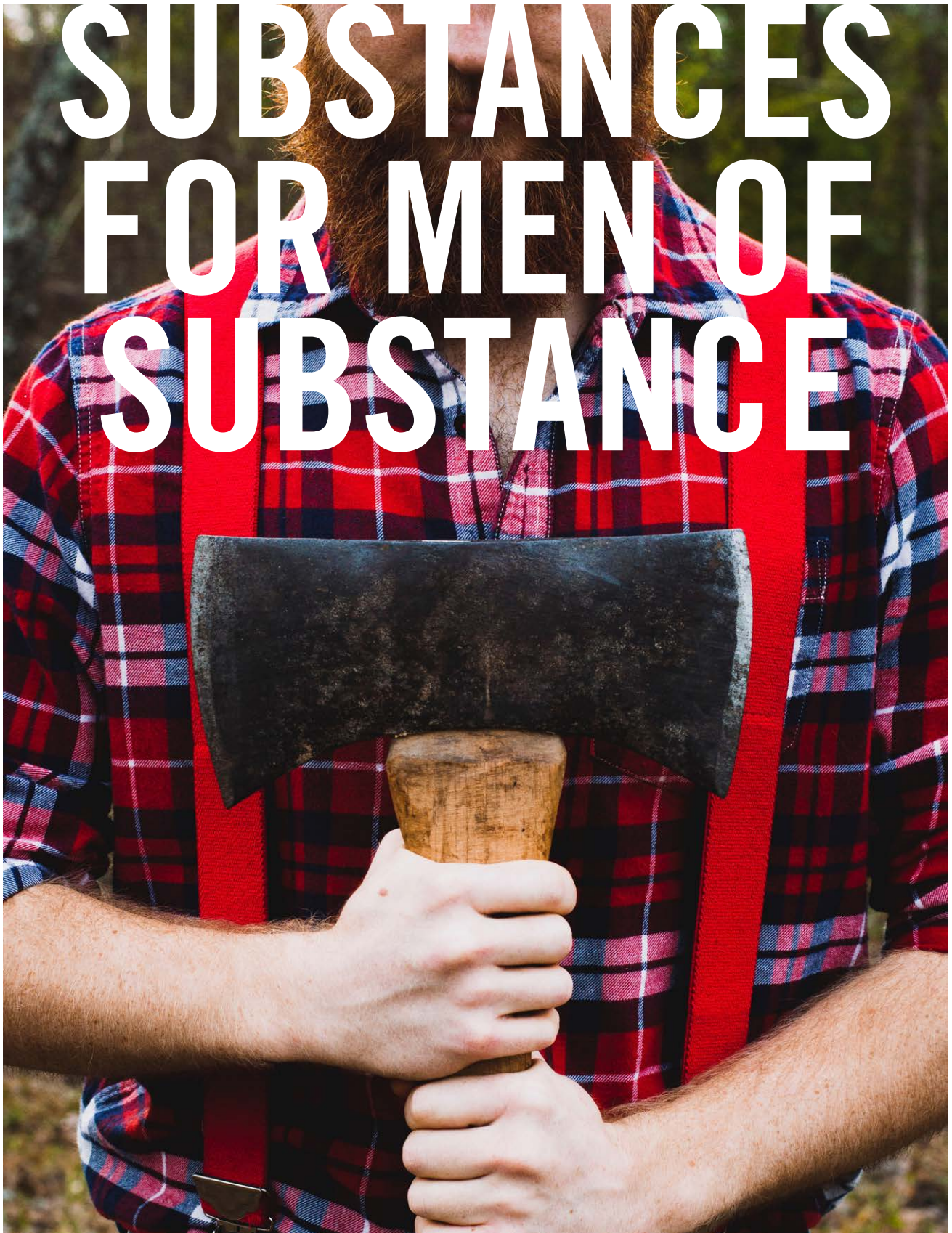
This is serious drinking technology. These babies are double-wall stainless-steel vacuum-insulated for extreme temperature retention. That's 24+ hours ice cold and 12+ hours piping hot. Because, well, you never know when you might be spontaneously delayed in the solitude of the outdoors and be left very thirsty afterwards. Two sizes, and multiple colour choices.



BICYCLE—PLAYING CARDS \$15.00 wide choice of designs

When the consumption is done and the digestive juices are working hard (stay downwind and wait for a coyote to howl if you're going to do that) while away the time before journeying home with an intimate game of cards. Be a hero. Let your partner win. But whatever you do, resist the temptation to perform card magic.

Products on this spread are available exclusively in New Zealand from Blackwell and Sons, either in store or online at blackwellandsons.nz/collections/picnicware-drinkware



IN A RECENT SURVEY, NINE OUT OF TEN ATTRACTIVE AND INTELLIGENT PEOPLE RESPONDED “EEEEOOOO”^{*} WHEN ASKED FOR THEIR THOUGHTS ON GENTLEMEN’S PERSONAL HYGIENE.

It seems masculinity and its grungier side effects are taboo, like guinea pig fight clubs. Well, prepare for the Duke Cannon Supply Co. to rewrite the laws of propriety. Here’s how modern men tame the beast.

^{*}Spelling is a phonetic approximation only. Actual responses varied.



BLOODY KNUCKLES HAND REPAIR BALM \$24.90

It doesn't matter how you get them—repairing a leaking dam, unblocking the sewer, dealing to the chin of a rude unshaven man—damaged knuckles are no fun.

That's why Duke Cannon introduced Bloody Knuckles Hand Repair Balm. Made with lanolin, it provides much-needed moisture without leaving the hands feeling sticky or greasy. And it's unscented so your hands don't smell like potpourri.

At 5oz, this is a hearty serving that will last a good long time. Formulated to repair the hands of workers, fighters, and world champions.

PROPER COLOGNE \$49.90

Duke Cannon's Proper Cologne™ will not be sold with marketing images of half-naked dudes jumping out of the ocean, but it will make a fellow smell downright fantastic.

Inspired by nature, Proper Cologne™ is made with clean, naturally derived fragrance oils, crafted in small batches, and housed in a modern apothecary style bottle. A subtle, natural scent enhancer to be discovered, not announced.

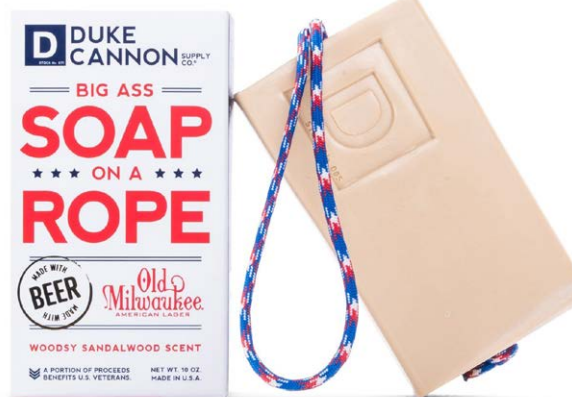
Available in a range of fragrances that smell variously like the outdoors after fresh rainfall, navigating open waters without a cloud in sight, and fear in a kunekune's eye.



SHAMPOO PUCK \$18.90

In the history of lather, there has never been a more important moment than right now. Duke Cannon, the Undisputed King of Lather, is ushering in a new age with the launch of Shampoo Puck, a super-concentrated, premium-formulated, solid bar of shampoo that smells better and lathers bigger than the rest.

Weighing in at 4.5oz, they're built to outlast multiple bottles of that liquid stuff without leaving any plastic residue behind. Packed full of essential oils, naturally derived fragrances, and big, bold lather.



BIG ASS BEER SOAP ON A ROPE \$15.90

In Duke Cannon's world, a man doesn't put strawberries or pumpkin spice in his beer. And he certainly doesn't shower with soap that smells like a bouquet of fresh gardenias.

This large, 10oz soap is made with Old Milwaukee Beer, a premium American lager, and it has a woody, sandalwood scent that smells like a man should.

The red, white and blue 550 mil-spec paracord keeps your soap off the ground to maximize hygiene and convenience. Please shower responsibly.

CANNON BALM TACTICAL LIP PROTECTANT \$13.90

When it comes to new products, Duke Cannon often thinks of the worst things in the world, and does the opposite. We can all agree the worst thing in the world is bubble gum flavoured lip balm in dainty little tubes. Cannon Balm Tactical Lip Protectant is not that.

It's made of premium, natural and organic ingredients and formulated with SPF 15 to protect against UV rays.

Tested by active-duty military personnel, the unique formulation holds up in the harshest conditions, even withstanding temperatures up to 38 degrees. Has a fresh mint taste that appeals to men, not teenage girls.



GREAT AMERICAN BEARD OIL \$49.90

The Great American Beard Oil is made with the finest organic and natural oils, and just a touch of Budweiser Beer, to help tame, condition, and strengthen a fellow's beard. (Yes, beer is good for hair.)

The warm, cedarwood fragrance subtly enhances a fellow's scent and reminds passers-by of his enduring spirit of freedom and ambition.

Duke Cannon products are available exclusively in New Zealand at www.blackwellandsons.nz
Just lay your lug wrench down for a second, and search "Duke Cannon".





Straight to the Point

WORDS MILLIE BLACKWELL

My pencil story begins at the age of about eight when, along with my contemporaries, I began the transition from pencil to pen. Cast your mind back, and you'll recall that teachers usually moved students progressively—the neatest writers going first.

I still carry the trauma of that time with me. When my day finally came, my southpaw and I were quickly and unceremoniously sent back to pencil. It's tough being a lefty, as you're always dragging your hand through the freshly applied ink.

The experience made me think that the pencil doesn't deserve second-class status, and I've had a love of wooden pencils ever since.

I like that they're a largely natural product—wood and graphite. I enjoy the act of sharpening, and use a daily "system" made famous by John Steinbeck where I sharpen

a dozen or so each morning and as one gets blunt, I set it aside and move onto the next.

So, there's never anything inconvenient about using them, which seems to be the main objection I hear from other people.

I love the almost infinite variety among pencils. There's the quality of the graphite and how that plays on the paper stock you're using. There are the different paint colours of course, and shapes... hexagonal, round or triangular... and whether it has a ferrule and eraser or a naked top.

Without doubt, there's a pencil for everyone and every mood.

What? Stop looking at me like that, Mr Blackwell.

See why Mrs Blackwell gets so excited, at: blackwellandsons.nz/collections/books-and-fine-stationery

SPEED 5

PATH RACING REVIVAL

The Speed 5 is Pashley's tribute to the heyday of gentlemanly British cycle racing. This was a time when riders would come together in the noble pursuit of record-breaking times with only the satisfaction and thrill of success for reward.

A British racing green and gold colour scheme hints at this heritage, as does the frame-mounted number plate, while the traditionally slack frame geometry gives a dynamic riding position for maximum speed and performance. This sense of lineage is bolstered by hand-built quality. Every Speed 5 is meticulously constructed by Pashley's dedicated craftsmen from legendary Reynolds 531 steel to produce a bicycle that will last a lifetime.

The quality of construction is matched by the components chosen for this special cycle. The wide diameter Sturmey Archer hub brakes allow you to brake late for corners and have ultimate control over your speed, and the classic Brooks Swift leather saddle gradually forms to your shape for a high level of comfort and full range of movement.

The Speed 5 is not simply a revival of path racing tradition but an advancement of the sport, embodying the principles of the early pioneers with a refined design.

Available exclusively in New Zealand at Blackwell and Sons.





AN ARTISTIC LEGACY

WORDS COLIN BARKUS

Paul Rees' artistic talent first turned heads when he was barely out of nappies. It's a gift he inherited from his parents, who encouraged their son to ever greater achievements. Today, Paul heads a Christchurch graphic design agency renowned for its breathtaking visual narratives, and his clients are his new biggest fans.

It's a childhood experience that Paul Rees will never forget: Saturday mornings spent learning the rudiments of oil painting with a clutch of other young artists in a musty Brighton attic.

"I just loved the atmosphere and the smell of the paint," he recalls. "I couldn't wait for the weekend to come. The elderly lady who taught us was so patient, and her husband would frame our masterpieces if we wanted."

Those lessons were one of countless ways that Paul's parents nurtured their son's precocious talent.

And that talent came as no surprise. Paul's mother, Carma, was a gifted artist in her own right but, says Paul,

she was never encouraged when she was young. "I think that made her extra determined to help me in any way she could. She made room in her tiny kitchen for me to set up my easel, never complained, and always inspired."

Inspiration aplenty came from father, Owen, too. Originally a builder, Owen contracted polio and lost the use of his legs. With determination, he retrained as an architectural draftsman and went on to design countless houses and schools.

Animals were an early subject of choice for Paul – elephants, bears (his first oil painting, which he's still got, was a bear's face) and birds. But in time, he learned to imbue his works with deeper meaning.

"I used to cycle past an old house in Sydenham almost every day and noticed there were always flowers in the window. It caught my attention late one afternoon when the lighting was perfect... the juxtaposition of the old, decaying house and the glorious flowers... and I decided to paint it.



“I called it ‘Inward Renewal’... though we grow older by the day, our inner selves can be rejuvenated through daily communion with our creator.”

Paul’s faith is a constant source of inspiration.

The painting went on to represent New Zealand at an international competition for young artists, held in London.

A career in graphic design seemed a natural progression and, in 1998, Paul took the plunge and opened his own agency. While many graphic design companies fly by night, Paul’s (now called ‘Cube Design’) has flourished and adapted to the changing needs of its clients.

Paul says he loves bringing the vision of clients to life. The art deco-styled limited-edition town illustrations (see opposite) that have proven so popular around the country were the idea of a certain Mr Blackwell. As well as undertaking some of the illustration himself, Paul’s job was to provide direction so his talented assistants, Aaron Frew and Nick Williams, could help with the work.

The business keeps Paul endlessly busy and fulfilled, but there’s still time to paint for pleasure. “In fact,” he says, “with the encouragement of my family, I’ve picked up the oils again. They’re water-based now, so they don’t have quite the same nostalgic smell, but the clean-up is easier.

“I try to be a bit looser with my brush strokes now. I’m steadfastly resisting glasses, so I can’t paint with the same fine detail that I used to... but I’ll occasionally pull out a magnifying glass!

“As a first effort to get back into the swing of it, I painted my younger daughter, Amillia.”

Carma and Owen would undoubtedly be proud.

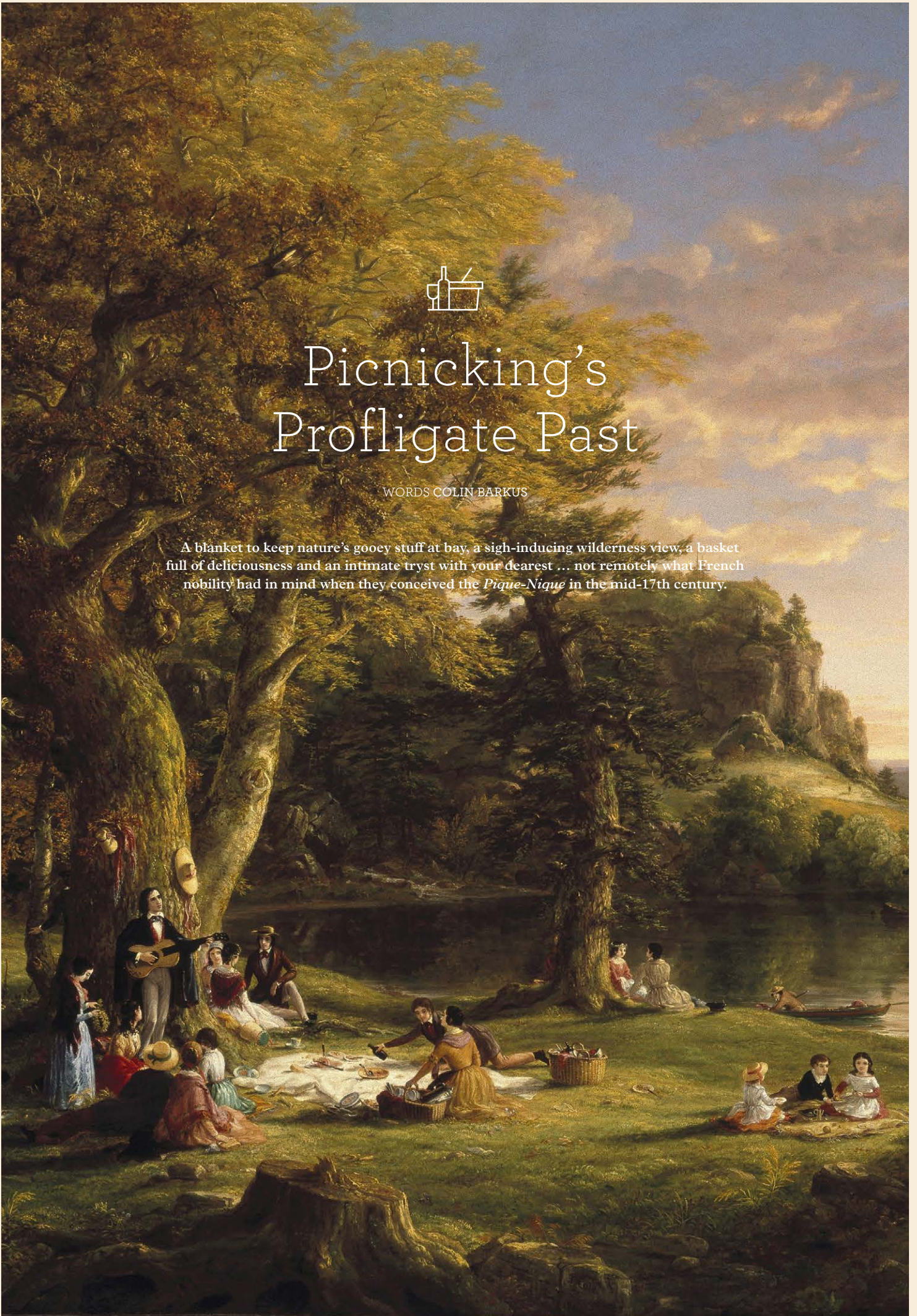
RETRO TOWN ARTWORKS \$39.90 *Art-deco-inspired and eminently collectable, these beautiful and exclusive limited-edition A2 prints by artist and designer Paul Rees (see opposite) are perfect for framing. Each depicts romanticised scenes reflecting life in South Wairarapa’s much-admired towns. Available in store or online at blackwellandsons.nz*



Picnicking's Profligate Past

WORDS COLIN BARKUS

A blanket to keep nature's gooey stuff at bay, a sigh-inducing wilderness view, a basket full of deliciousness and an intimate tryst with your dearest ... not remotely what French nobility had in mind when they conceived the *Pique-Nique* in the mid-17th century.



Count Francois de Chambord-Mercineaux* had it all. His chateau was the epitome of baroque chic, his wig was widely admired for its buoyant splendour, his courtiers were spectacularly fawning, and his General Manager of Pampering and Debauchery was unquestionably the best in the business.

But still he felt something was lacking. What if he hadn't reached his full potential for gluttony and excess? What if his peers were secretly laughing at him?

Waving away his Senior Toenail Maintenance Advisor, the Count got to thinking. "I must conceive something decadent, extravagant, history-making... an event for the ages!" he mused. "My brilliance must be the envy of them all.

"But I refuse to lift a finger in preparation or pay for any of it," he sneered, tapping his fingertips together. "There must be food and liquor—lashings of it—and ladies, many ladies, and much wit and frivolity..."

Finally, it came to him in a dream: He would host an enormous open-ended feast in the Great Hall, attended by the landed gentry of the province and their retinues. And the pièce de résistance? They would all bring their own food and liquor!

You read that right, ladies and gentlemen. The original picnic was a grand act of aristocratic hubris, held indoors, and catered entirely by invited guests.

And so, the Count had his day in the limelight and many pigs, ducks, turkeys, deer and paupers suffered as a result. It wasn't long before copycat events took place throughout France—each trying to outdo the last in size, extravagance and raucousness.

History doesn't record who gave such occasions their ironic name (from the French verb piquer—'to peck' and nique—'a small amount', or 'nothing whatsoever') but, during the 18th century, the Pique-Nique grew into a favourite pastime of the aristocracy—always held indoors either at home or in hired rooms, and increasingly reinforcing the excessive ways of the rich and powerful.

Then came the French Revolution.

The French elite scattered throughout Europe, Britain and even America to escape the uprisings. Desperate to hang on to old ways of life, they took a few favourite traditions with them, including the Pique-Nique.

The events flourished in their new surroundings, becoming even more boisterous. In London, a group of wealthy Francophiles founded the 'Pic Nic Society' in 1801. After dinner, there would be singing, dancing, cavorting and gambling, followed by a staged play.

The industrial advances of the 19th century saw the emergence of middle classes keen to make their own mark on society. They adopted the Pique-Nique but—perhaps in protest against the excesses of the aristocracy—modified it into a simpler, more refined affair.

“ The original picnic was a grand act of aristocratic hubris, held indoors, and catered entirely by invited guests.

Increasingly, the middle classes took their gatherings outdoors and, as rapidly growing railway networks enabled families to escape from grim industrial towns at the weekend, into the countryside. The English 'Pic Nic' quickly took on far more genteel and romantic characteristics.

Picnicking spread through America too and, as the continent opened up, it became associated less with gentle country excursions and more with intrepid escapes into the wilderness.

Meanwhile back in France, following restoration of the monarchy, the Count's original indoor concept of Pique-Nique re-established, although the pastime spread down the social scale following breakdown of the old order.

It wasn't until the 20th century, and the emergence of new modes of transport including the bicycle and motorcar, that the outdoor picnic we're familiar with today predominated worldwide.

So, this season, in honour of picnicking's founding father, why not hoist an ostrich drumstick into the air and crack a bawdy joke before relaxing into a bit of languid footsie in the grass with your lovely someone...

* *Probably not a real person.*



Image left: Thomas Cole—*The Pic-Nic*, 1846.



FLAWLESS AND FOREVER

WORDS COLIN BARKUS

The view from Stuart and Carmel Ferguson’s kitchen window, out across neatly manicured lawns, through an artful gap in the hedging and along the clean lines of a water feature, is impeccable.

The return view takes the breath in equal measure. Graceful, heritage-listed Wyett House commands attention with her trim white weatherboards, latticed windows and authentic period adornments – the scene framed magnificently by mature deciduous trees standing sentinel along Greytown’s celebrated Main Street.

Such picture-perfection is no accident. The Fergusons set forth on a quest for excellence on the day they laid eyes on Wyett House in 2004.

“It was love at first sight,” says Carmel. “We saw, we fell in love, we bought.”

“The house was in just livable condition at that time,” recalls Stuart, “but we had a vision to bring her back to her former glory. At well over 100 years old, she was showing her age a bit and there had been some unsympathetic alterations over the years.”

Drawing on Carmel’s expertise as an interior and bespoke furniture designer, the couple began an ambitious restoration

“ The Fergusons set forth on a quest for excellence on the day they laid eyes on Wyett House in 2004.

project. Four years of planning preceded the spadework, which entailed gutting the interior, including the kitchen, and rebuilding that on the original footprint in authentic turn-of-the-century style.

A second staircase was added, leading to a brand-new private wing added to the southwestern corner of the villa. “The addition was seamless,” says Carmel. “You’d never know it wasn’t part of the original structure.”



Equal attention was given to re-establishing the expansive country gardens surrounding the house and stand-alone cottage at the back of the property. Little was left to chance. The couple bought the neighbouring house and section, and used the extra land to establish an allotment of abundance—brim full of fruit and vegetables and a dazzling array of picking flowers.

It soon became apparent this was more than a love affair with the property.

“The more time we spent in Greytown, the more we felt we belonged here... the people, the ambience, the shops and cafes,” Carmel says. “It’s where we felt at home.”

So, after initially reopening Wyett as a managed guesthouse and visiting from their Auckland home over Christmas and holiday weekends, Stuart and Carmel moved in permanently. They knew they had the skills, energy and desire, in their own right, to share their love of the property and the Greytown lifestyle with discerning guests.

Finishing touches were added, including an impressive temperature-controlled wine cellar which, says Stuart, “somehow developed a few holes during the Covid lockdown.”

The couple also acquired brand-new Pashley bicycles—his a Roadster, hers a Princess—that fitted perfectly with their uncompromising focus on timeless, classically styled accessories that would enhance the Wyett experience.

“Not that we’re too eager to offer the Pashleys to our guests!” laughs Carmel. “We’re very happy to keep them to ourselves! It’s a delight to ride them down the road to the boutiques and cafes of Greytown or around for dinner with friends, giving us the fresh air and gentle workout we need.”

While it might be time for the Fergusons to slow down just a little (guests are mostly now hosted only in the self-contained cottage and the allotment has been sold off), the lifestyle they’ve worked so hard to achieve is, they say, “forever.”

“This is the epitome of life,” says Stuart. “We’re loving every minute of it.”

www.wyethouse.co.nz



IN PRAISE OF THE NANA NAP

WORDS ADAM BLACKWELL

Some urges should be steadfastly resisted. Like reaching for another cracker with double cream brie and a little fig jam.

But when that delicious post-lunch sopor seduces you, experts reckon you should give in to it wholeheartedly. Forty winks in the afternoon will, they say, do wonders for your alertness, reaction times, mood, memory, productivity and stress levels.

A 15 to 60-minute daytime doze has the equivalent effect of a caffeine or sugar fix, but without the undesired side effects of long-term dependence, troll teeth and belt overhang.

Research has shown that motor learning—where neural pathways change in response to learning a new skill—is significantly greater among regular daytime nappers than non-nappers. An early to mid-afternoon zizz is best, but any time is fine if the urge strikes.

The Spanish have known this for centuries. The modern-day siesta originated in Spain, partly as a way of conserving

energy during the hottest part of the day. The tradition spread with the Spanish conquistadors to colonies like Mexico and Chile, and is also widely observed in Italy, Greece and The Philippines.

But day napping actually dates much further back – to ancient Rome and early Islam. In fact, siesta stems from the Latin for “sixth hour” and refers to circadian rhythms, the natural cycles of sleepiness and alertness that affect our brains over a 24-hour period. The sixth hour (after dawn) is when cognitive function starts to slow again, and a restorative nap is most beneficial.

In this flexible, post-Covid, work-from-home epoch, scheduling a siesta has become considerably easier than it was in your open plan office with clear line of sight from your boss’s office. So, do yourself a favour and put the feet up, let the eyelids droop, and drift... drift...

Mmmmmm. Cheese on crackers.

PARABIKE

GET AIRBORNE

The sporty, compact, duplex-tube-framed Parabike's unique design harks back to the paratroop Airborne cycles used by the British Army during World War II. Talk about tough. Carried by British paratroopers dropping into occupied France, they would use these cycles to get around both city and countryside on their important missions.

For city rides, the Brooks B67 saddle, weather resistant mudguards and an upright yet dynamic riding position all make for an efficient and relaxed

ride. The further addition of robust Schwalbe tyres with extra puncture protection, reliable Sturmey Archer hub brakes and wide-ratio 5 speed hub gears means you and your Parabike can head out of town on all sorts of adventures, safe in the knowledge that your bicycle can stand up to the rigours of even the most rural of rides.

Available exclusively in New Zealand at Blackwell and Sons.



A Single-minded Vision

WORDS COLIN BARKUS

Ten years ago, when a career crisis struck, Nebraskan artisan Chris Hughes sat down and took a long hard look at his options. Tired of corporate life, he envisioned a business of his own creating finest-quality products that married utility and timeless design. There's been no looking back since.

The global credit crunch bit hard in America's Midwest. Like thousands around him, Chris Hughes found himself out of a job and standing face-to-face with an uncertain future.

"It was the best thing that could've happened to me," he says. "It forced me to think hard about what I really wanted to do.

"I cleared my mind and wrote down three lists: things I love to do, things I'm genuinely good at, and things I could make a living from doing."

Craftsmanship, timeless design and utility featured prominently, and the dots quickly connected to form *Artifact*. Chris would turn his creative eye and DIY skills to handcrafting bags and other high-quality personal accessories for a discerning market.

Initially, *Artifact* was a one-man, spare-time enterprise. Chris worked a placeholder job during the day, then spent evenings and weekends in his basement workshop honing leatherworking, sewing and riveting skills and figuring out how to scale up production without compromising workmanship.







That dedication paid off. Within 10 months, the day job was history and *Artifact* was a full-time gig.

“There was a fortuitous confluence of events,” Chris admits. “After the recession, a strong heritage movement emerged. The ‘Made in America’ idea became important to more and more people, and the products I was designing and handcrafting really seemed to resonate.”

Demand for his proprietary range of totes and backpacks, made using high-grade locally sourced leather and canvas, accelerated. It soon became clear the basement workshop was no longer fit for purpose. Chris transferred *Artifact* to a studio in downtown Omaha, and began recruiting local craftspeople to help pick up the pace of production.

And with growth, came new opportunity. The striking artisan aprons that Chris had designed for himself and his staff were now on full show to studio visitors, and became an instant hit.

“I hadn’t designed them with sales in mind, but customers absolutely loved them,” he says. “We had orders rolling in from mechanics, woodworkers and even chefs. They’re particularly popular among professionals in the public eye, who need to consider aesthetics as well as practical needs.”

Word about *Artifact* quickly spread, and growth continued apace. By doing his homework and listening to the ideas of staff—now 11-strong—Chris expanded his product range to include wallets, coasters, belts, luggage tags, toiletry bags and pencil cases. A range of apparel is now also on the radar, and items are exported around the world.

It hasn’t been completely without hiccups.

“Earlier this year, we released a line of passport holders right around the time international travel tanked,” Chris laughs. “You can’t win them all!”

The same circumstances that closed the door on that opportunity also created a new—and pressing—need.

“Turning our attention to facemask production really didn’t take much thought,” Chris says. “First, I just wanted to design a mask for my own use, but then the urgent wider demand became clear. I consulted the medical community to ensure we designed something suitable, and we just got on with it.”

Chris looks back on the last ten years with enormous pride. He says it’s extremely gratifying to see his original vision realised and those first designs still making customers happy today.

“I’ve been able to stay true to my principles of quality, utility and timeless design, and I see no reason to change that in the next ten years.”

“ I’ve been able to stay true to my principles of quality, utility and timeless design and I see no reason to change that.



Artifact products are available exclusively in New Zealand at Blackwell and Sons.



Bi(ke)-centenary

Just over 200 years ago, a German civil servant knocked together a prototype two-wheeled, human-propelled vehicle out of wood and a bit of iron. It's been quite a ride since then.



1839s

Kirkpatrick Macmillan, a Scottish blacksmith, adds mechanical propulsion using a crank and connecting rods similar to a steam train.



1817

Baron Karl von Drais masterminds the Laufmaschine, a two-wheeled, steerable contraption made almost entirely of wood and propelled in the manner of the Flintstones' car.



1819

Clever marketing briefly makes the velocipede fashionable in London high society. Commoners remain unconvinced, scoffing at its foppish male riders (hence 'dandy horse') just as commoners today scoff at businessmen riding e-scooters through the Viaduct.

1818

The idea is picked up elsewhere in Europe, and variously renamed the Draisine, velocipede, hobby horse or dandy horse. Public feedback is generally unflattering. ("My good man, if you wish me to climb aboard that, you'll need to add more wheels... and perhaps a pony up front.")

1860s

French engineers refine Macmillan's design by adding rotary cranks and pedals on the front hub. Riding speeds increase, but so does the crash rate—proving detrimental to both rider and machine.

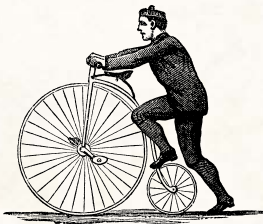
1865

French metalworker Pierre Michaux builds the first cast iron frame, later modified with a diagonal brace for strength.



1870s

The 'Penny Farthing' (huge front wheel, tiny rear wheel) design emerges, aimed at increasing speeds attainable using pedals on the front hub. However, the combination of greater height and speed results in the frequent loss of limbs, top hats and Victorian dignity.



1900s

A new step-through frame design opens the market to women, who can now mount and dismount without provocatively flashing their undergarments.

Rudimentary gearing emerges, initially using different-sized cogs on either side of the rear hub. To change gears, riders would stop, remove the rear wheel and flip it over. Soon derailleurs make an appearance, followed by hub gears pioneered by Sturmey Archer (who are still in business and whom your grandfather will remember well from his childhood, and recount a long story about).

The popularity of cycling soars in Europe, but declines in the US where the automobile begins its reign.



Pashley



1868

Solid rubber tyres and ball bearings greatly increase rider comfort, and the craze begins to take off.

1890s

In a huge breakthrough the 'safety bicycle', with now-familiar rear-wheel chain drive and pneumatic tyres, is developed. Speed, safety and comfort increase dramatically. Mass production and active marketing begins, and the classic 'roadster' design completely supersedes the Penny Farthing.

1920s

Bicycle manufacturing companies that will become household names are founded, including Pashley.

1939-45

Bicycles are widely used for transportation by Allied paratroopers and German ground forces during the war.

1960

The government-approved 'Flying Pigeon' triggers the cycling explosion in China (um, don't actual pigeons fly and bicycles, well, don't?).



1971

BMX bikes emerge, causing thousands of young men to shed bell-bottoms, don stubbies and Bata Bullets, and make for the nearest wasteland. See their long locks fly!



1981

The mountain bike begins mass production (although, in truth, few real mountains have ever been harmed in the making of that craze).



1958

Lycra is invented and quickly adopted by middle-aged male riders in the belief it will hide their pie bulges and make them very attractive to much younger women.

1969

The 'Chopper' is designed in the US to clearly distinguish society's tough young men from nerdish boys who ride Raleigh 20s.

1977

The Healing 10-speed becomes the cycle of choice for teenaged boys to commute to school and anywhere else teenaged girls are located.

1994

Wearing helmets while cycling becomes compulsory in New Zealand. The number of cyclists begins to decline steadily.



2016

Blackwell and Sons, the perkier little cycling lifestyle emporium in the known universe, opens its doors at 101 Main Street, Greytown.



2020

The global bicycle count is estimated at 2,000,000,000.



1992

Although first invented in the 1890s, electric bicycles begin commercial production in the US.



2000s

After a global slump in popularity, cycling's renaissance begins – driven by health and environmental concerns, traffic congestion, the expansion of cycling infrastructure in many countries, and the rise of e-bikes.



2018

Blackwell and Sons, the perkier rapidly growing cycling lifestyle emporium in the known universe, opens its doors in new digs at 110 Main Street, Greytown.





Beardology

WORDS COLIN BARKUS

Beards are mysterious, multifarious and, sometimes, utterly ridiculous.



No-one's quite sure why nature endowed gentlemen with whiskers in a sweeping curve from ear to ear, encompassing cheeks, lower jaw and upper lip.

Some reckon it's a throwback to much chillier times, when our forebears needed ample natural insulation. But why only blokes? Rumour has it, women feel the cold too.

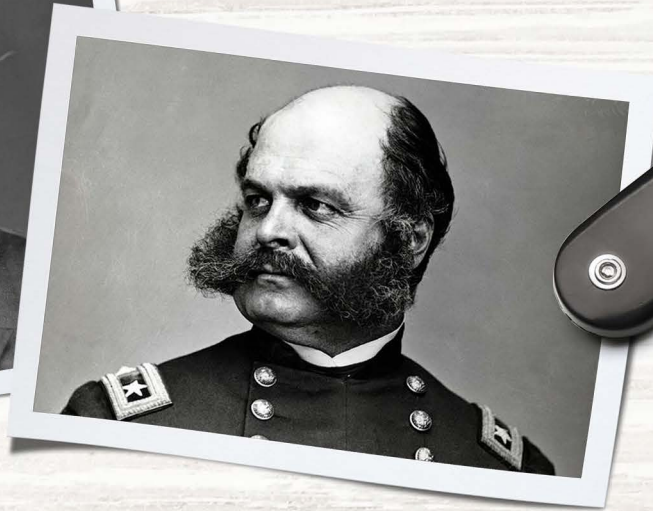
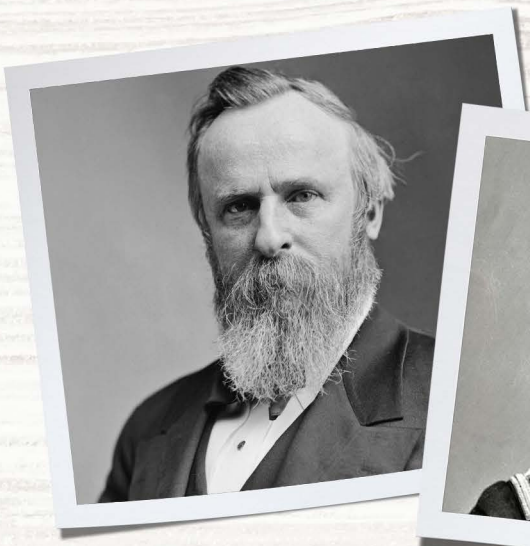
Others assert that a luxuriant beard, like a lion's mane, signals alpha reproductive status to potential partners, and warns lesser suitors to withdraw to the model train set in their mother's basement.

The problem is, there's no correlation between the splendour of a man's beard and his ability to sire offspring.

What's more, surveys consistently reveal a bell-curve of opinions on beards. Some love them, some loathe them, but the vast majority say it depends on whose face they adorn.

In other words, the beard doesn't maketh the man, the man maketh the beard.

At some point in history, gentlemen shrugged their shoulders, gave up asking why, and asked why not instead. The male face became a canvas for ever-changing whiskey self-expression...



VICTORIAN MAGNIFICENCE

Victorian gentlemen committed fully to bold statements in facial hirsuteness.

Beards in the late 19th century were long, lavish, multi-dimensional and spectacular, and carried equally impressive names like ‘dundrearies’, ‘mutton chops’, ‘Piccadilly weepers’ and ‘the doorknocker’. Pop on a stovepipe hat, and a man’s head could occupy a full metre of vertical airspace.

This golden age of whiskerage dawned partly because barbers of the day shaved customers with an intimidating device called a cut-throat razor, which probably made many men nervous. “Um, what’s that now?” “Cut-throat, sir. I’d be honoured if you’d be my first.” “Ah, wouldn’t you know it! Just decided yesterday to let it grow...”

That all changed in the 1900s with the invention of the disposable razor. De-whiskering became a lot less risky, and beards went into decline. New wartime practicalities like wearing gas masks reinforced the beardless fashion, which lasted for over half a century.

SLOVENLY SIXTIES

In the 1960s, beards returned as a side-effect of wholesale slovenliness.

Thousands of young men gave up on grooming, hygiene and social responsibility on the pretext that nuclear annihilation was nigh. The unkempt sixties beard wasn’t so much a fashion statement as a natural accompaniment to sweat stains, toenail fungus, mind-bending substances and general indolence.

But Armageddon never came, and hippies eventually felt compelled to get clean (on many levels), go home to their very proud parents, and get jobs. Beards largely went down suburban drains, and stayed there for a number of years.

Then, in the 1980s, a pair of fictional Floridian crimefighters with a penchant for pastel suits and socklessness popularised designer stubble. Worldwide, women (and men who admire men) went gaga because their blokes looked like they’d just spent the night fighting wildfire or searching for lost children.

The fad slowly declined because a stubbly face takes more maintenance than a smooth one, and men are fundamentally lazy. Women (and men who admire men) resigned themselves to their blokes looking, once again, like they’d just reconciled a spreadsheet.

In the 1990s the goatee rose to prominence, and proved especially appealing to three types of gentleman:

1. Those plagued by patchiness, who found they could now compete on an even footing because gaps tended to exist further back on the jawline and cheeks.
2. Those bearing the after-effects of a diet weighted heavily towards macaroni cheese, who found the goatee a useful means of redefining a chin that had long since transitioned from formidably chiselled to, well, loosely tented (think Al, the toy magnate, who steals Woody in Toy Story 2).
3. Serial killers.





Mr Blackwell having the time of his life at a Florida Georgia Line Concert in Northern California, 2019.

ILL-ADVISED EXPERIMENTATION

Most gentlemen eventually came to their senses, but the practice of selective shaving used to craft a goatee prompted a decade-long era of experimentation.

One day, a bored gentleman from the town of Stoner, Alabama, (or it might've been Huntly) captured a dung beetle and gave it a quick chew. The resulting murky pulp dribbled from the centre of his mouth, and congealed. A few of his feckless cohorts admired the effect, and replicated it by growing that purposeless tuft of whiskers just beneath the lower lip. Thus began the shameful reign of the soul beard.

Meanwhile, in nearby Sausage, Louisiana, (or it might've been Timaru) a bold few experimented with a completely shaven scalp and upper lip, but fully whiskered jaw. This gave the impression that the head was installed upside down—designed, perhaps, to confuse aggressive dogs or territorial magpies.

Elsewhere, trailblazers opted for a crop of short whiskers on the very point of their chin which, from afar, suggested

an unfortunate head-over-handlebars incident or the sudden onset of post-lunch dooziness in front of a bowl of barbecue sauce.

RETURN TO GLORY

During the last decade, however, the beard has come almost full circle.

Male baristas and digital marketers the world over decided that big and bushy was the perfect accompaniment to their skin-tight T shirts and tattoos of Elvish proverbs—and so the hipster beard emerged.

The hipster has given beard traditionalists hope that a return to full Victorian glory is nigh. However, a counter-culture of fussier, carefully sculpted efforts remains.

Whichever way you wear it, gentlemen, own it. And tame it with some high-class grooming products from Duke Cannon. Because (sorry hippies) a beard doesn't have to feel like seaweed or smell like a teenager's sock.



DUKE CANNON—BEST DAMN BEARD KIT \$79.00 Duke Cannon's Best Damn Beard Kit represents the Triple Crown in premium beard goods. Featuring Best Damn Beard Wash, Balm, and Old Milwaukee Big Ass Beer Soap in a travel case, it's literally everything you need to cultivate the beard of world champion, not the uncivilized brush of a crazy mountain drifter. [Get it online at blackwellandsons.nz/collections/gifts](http://blackwellandsons.nz/collections/gifts)



Britannia

PASHLEY BRITANNIA; MILLIE'S ORIGINAL PASHLEY BICYCLE

Few bicycles epitomise the romance of cycling like the glorious Britannia. Its graceful looks, striking colour options and stylish front-mounted wicker basket are sure to turn heads.

In true British fashion, the Britannia is suited to all sorts of weather, with the chainguard and mudguards keeping you clean and looking your best, whilst the reliable hub brakes and gears are effective no matter what the conditions. Based upon the model produced by Pashley since its very earliest days in the 1920s, the curved frame is coupled with a classic sweeping handlebar to give you an elegant upright seated position that lets you glide along through the countryside in comfort.

This comfort is enhanced by the inclusion of a handmade Brooks B66S saddle, which gradually shapes to your form to become a truly customised and supportive seat. A front dynamo headlamp completes this luxurious lineup, never needing batteries to keep you safe at night.

All this is brought together with Pashley's long-earned experience and British craftsmanship, making the Britannia a gorgeous and reliable bicycle equipped to be a lifelong companion.

Available exclusively in New Zealand at Blackwell and Sons.



A Deep-rooted Fascination

WORDS ADAM BLACKWELL





The front garden of our Greytown home boasts a 100-year-old Californian Redwood tree. It's a mere baby compared to some of the giants Millie and I have seen on our travels along the west coast of the US, but it's still an impressive lump of biomass.

My admiration and respect for that tree grows by the day. Quite apart from the beauty it contributes to our outlook, it's an ever-present visual reminder of the miraculous—and poorly understood—arboreal world we humans inhabit.

Recently I read a book by an American science journalist, Jim Robbins, with the suitably florid title: *The man who planted trees—a story of lost groves, the science of trees, and a plan to save the planet*. It tells the true story of David Milarch, an eccentric American journeyman who, after seeing apocalyptic visions of Earth during a near-death experience, sets about cloning the “champion” trees of the world (the largest and longest-living of their species) to create a “living genetic bank” for the benefit of future generations.

Robbins cleverly interweaves Milarch's story with incredible—occasionally mind-blowing—facts, theories and beliefs about how trees serve and support other lifeforms, communicate with each other, and adapt to the various assaults that human beings make on their habitats.

Here are a few of my favourite snippets from the book:

🌿 Tree roots draw mercury, dioxin, ammonia, oil and gas, nitrates and other toxic wastes out of the soil and water. If you want to repair polluted land or waterways, plant trees. Officially that's called phytoremediation. Now you know.

🌿 As well as sucking up carbon dioxide, trees filter many other undesirable substances from the atmosphere, including toxins like benzene, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and lead.

🌿 In a 1960s experiment, a polygraph (“lie detector”) was hooked to the leaves of a plant. When a leaf was harmed – and even when harmful intent was displayed by the researchers – the polygraph displayed a spike in electrical resistance similar to the response of a human who is emotionally distraught when lying.

🌿 There's growing scientific support for the theory that trees “feel” in this way—and “see”, “smell”, “taste” and “talk”. A professor of forestry at the University of British Columbia believes trees try to help each other by shuffling carbon and nitrogen back and forth, and by communicating via electrical waves. A researcher set up electrical detection equipment in an Oregon pine forest, then pounded a nail into a tree. The equipment detected a slow-moving wave emanating from the harmed tree that was echoed by adjacent trees—as if a warning signal had been sent and received.

🌿 The willow tree produces abundant quantities of a chemical called salicin, which is an antibiotic, analgesic, anti-inflammatory and fever-reducer. In 1899, German chemists created an artificial derivative of salicin called acetylsalicylic acid—a bit of a mouthful, so they called it aspirin.

🌿 There's no easy way to age yew trees, because their wood is so dense and they sacrifice their heartwood in favour of outer growth. Many living specimens are believed to be ancient, and a credible scientific theory exists that yews have no natural reason for dying. If left alone, they could live forever.

🌿 Meticulous science has proven that trees have a two-weekly “pulse” which changes the shape of new growth buds in direct relation to the alignment of the Earth, the moon and planets.

Whatever you believe, it's clear there's much more to trees than meets the eye. Planting, nurturing and simply admiring them is a naturally rewarding way to spend your day.

TWO WHEELS, TWO SPEEDS

WORDS COLIN BARKUS

It's fair to say, Warren Chalmers doesn't let the grass grow. Give the man two wheels and an open road or trail, and watch his dust.

Not just any two wheels though. There's the Ducati Superbike. Or the Harley Davidson Tourer. Or the Vespa 200. And when pedal power is in order, there's the glistening Peugeot racer, or perhaps the bespoke Ritchey steel-framed mountain bike due for delivery any day now.

Obsessive? Fanatical? Out-of-control addiction? "Probably all of those things," laughs the 59-year-old. "I'm beyond asking why."

Moving at speed on two wheels has given Warren, a Senior Commercial Manager with TSB Bank, experiences he'll treasure for life. Fresh back to his Cambridge home from an Adventure Motorcycling tour of the South Island "with a bunch of lads talking nonsense and just being in the moment", he says cycling and motorcycling have become the centre of his social world.

"They've given me unforgettable adventures in the US, Asia and Europe—and all around New Zealand—and I wouldn't have it any other way."

An instinct to go fast on two wheels emerged early. Growing up in suburban Hamilton, he'd often gather in the street with other kids on pushbikes pretending to be racers. By his teens, it was the real deal—motorcycles were a "thrilling fascination."

A career move to Auckland saw Warren briefly lose touch with cycling. He lost condition and put on weight. Getting back on the pushbike offered therapy and release, but there was that instinct again: "I'd be drafting buses between home in Papakura and work in Manukau, always looking to go faster."

When he met a colleague keen on motorcycling, the fire was well and truly relit. And that sparked an urge to collect—but only the very best: best quality, best specifications, best looking, longest lasting. His new partner Daryn caught the bug too, and the collection quickly gained his and hers components.

But now, Warren sees value in occasionally slowing things down.

That realisation came at the start of a Harley Davidson tour of the US in 2008. He and Daryn landed in California and hired pushbikes to get used to maneuvering in traffic on the right. The slow, 'sit-up-and-beg' way of getting around really struck a chord.



"We could see things we wouldn't see from the Harleys," he recalls, "...interesting people and sights. We could hear and smell things, and just take in the here and now."

The same thing happened on a holiday in Vietnam, and when they returned home it was clear a new branch of the collection was in order.

"I'd always liked the look of classic English bicycles," he says, "so I did some research and found Pashley."

"Everything about them fitted with my cycling values and desires. Their tradition and quality, their hand-built lugged steel frames, their looks. They are moving art."

Warren contacted Shane at *Blackwell and Sons* and talked over the options. They agreed the lighter-framed Countryman—in dazzling burgundy—was the perfect fit, and now it takes pride of place among Warren's many other treasures.

"It's ideal for the trails and low foothills around the Waikato. I'm a visualiser, and when I'm out on the Countryman I find I can easily think problems through and find solutions."

The Countryman, Warren says, probably won't be his last Pashley. In fact, he's got his eye on a Guv'nor already, "but that one needs to pass the Daryn test."

Chances are, the deliberation won't take too long.

The lighter-framed Pashley Countryman is the perfect fit for Warren's slower-paced outings on two wheels. He is a big fan of the Waikato's growing network of cycling trails.

COUNTRYMAN

A HANDSOME TIMELESS CLASSIC

With its movie star looks and 8-speed Alfine hub gears, the Countryman is the perfect bicycle for the discerning urban gentlemen rider. Built for manoeuvrability about town, the Countryman's lighter construction and full-length mudguards make it the perfect commuter cycle—in all weathers. The Countryman is the ideal companion to the Aurora.

Hand-built from the very best Reynolds 531 steel tubing, the Countryman features narrow, lightweight Mavic alloy rims and flat, swept handlebars with a slight curve specifically designed to give an efficient and comfortable ride.

The Countryman is even suited to long-distance touring, equipped with a classic Brooks B17 leather saddle that naturally shapes to your form, high performance dual pivot brakes and braze-ons for a rear luggage rack.

It is this huge adaptability that makes the Countryman a unique proposition, being both versatile in its design and unrivalled in its quality; a true all-rounder that will give you many years of reliable riding. pleasurable cycling.

*Available exclusively in New Zealand at
Blackwell and Sons.*



CYCLING LIFESTYLE MERCHANTS
**BLACKWELL
& SONS** Est. 1843
AUTHORISED *Pashley* RESELLERS

Everything's better when you cycle in the same direction

Millie and I have never felt so fortunate. Of course nothing went to plan this year and in many ways, the uncertainty we all felt brought us closer together. Looking out for each other, supporting our local businesses, being more patient in situations that could test us ... these were lessons of 2020 that helped us grow into better human beings. As a couple, we made big decisions about prioritising happiness, health, education and doing more to be positive members of our community. Even little steps of change created new friendships for us, and set our future in bold new directions. What made it work was planning our future as a couple; moving in the same direction always makes us, and our relationship, stronger.

I am fortunate to be surrounded by beauty; Greytown is one of New Zealand's most beautiful small towns and our emporium occupies one of its jewels, our handmade British Pashley bicycles, like this Old English White Britannia, are works of art designed to last a lifetime, and well, my wife Millie exudes beauty in every way you can think of. This image would indicate that she appears to like me too.



Our classic hand built Royal Red Britannia pictured here at Greytown's beautiful Cobblestones Museum.



This year, we created a series of festive decorations celebrating our town and our sister villages in the South Wairarapa. Trish painted them!



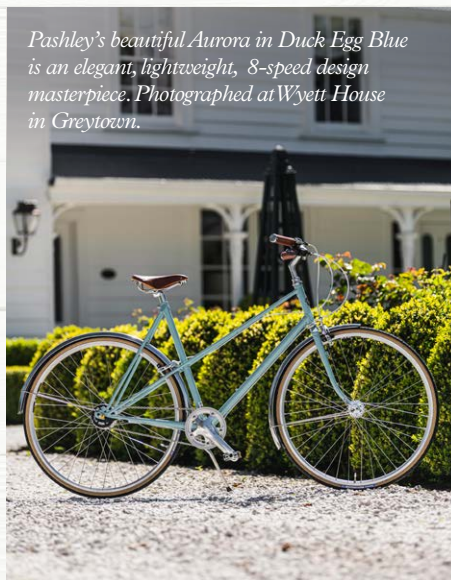
Our Barebones Vintage Flashlights are rechargeable and perfectly practical in outdoors or around home use.



Our Barebones Pruners come with a smart holster so they can be safely stashed away while attending to non-pruning chores.



Being somewhat vintage himself makes Mr Blackwell very attuned to the aesthetic of vintage design fused with modern technology, like these rechargeable Edison lanterns available in Copper, Bronze and Red.



Pashley's beautiful Aurora in Duck Egg Blue is an elegant, lightweight, 8-speed design masterpiece. Photographed at Wytet House in Greytown.

Our little Greytown bicycle emporium also went through some big changes in 2020; unprecedented demand for bikes after lockdown continues today, and we have brought Trish in to help Michelle with guest care, and another Adam (the team refer to him as *Young Adam* so we all know which one is which) to assist Shane with bicycle assembly and maintenance. Is it possible to find the most talented and dedicated people you could ever wish to work with in a town of just 2,500 people? Well, yes. It is.

2021 is going to be our most exciting year yet at *Blackwell and Sons*. We've got our eye on two new store locations in Christchurch and Cambridge so we can speed up our delivery service and make it easier to give our guests the chance to see our hand-built bicycles in person. We're also designing a *Blackwell and Sons Workshop* franchise that will enable couples with small business aspirations to create service facilities in their own towns, looking after bikes in their community. We believe the world has radically reprioritised cycling, with a focus on health for both the riders and the planet that we ride on. Many more people are cycling than ever before, and we hope that the bicycles they choose will be ridden for a lifetime. Looking after and maintaining bicycles makes *B&S Workshop* a way of keeping everyone's bicycle investment healthy.

What won't change is our emphasis on providing quality products that support a 'buy it once' philosophy. Millie and I work hard on eliminating waste, by purchasing products that are designed to last. We know many of our *Blackwell and Sons* guests support this approach and we are thrilled to share our road-tested discoveries with them, in our Greytown emporium or online at blackwellandsons.nz

There's a better chance than ever we'll see you in the South Wairarapa this summer. Please come in and introduce yourself. It's lovely to get to know our guests and where they're visiting from. Millie, Shane, Michelle, Trish, Young Adam, Old Colin and I wish you and your families our warmest festive regards.

A Blackwell

Adam Blackwell, Proprietor

CYCLING LIFESTYLE MERCHANTS
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AUTHORISED *Pashley* RESELLERS

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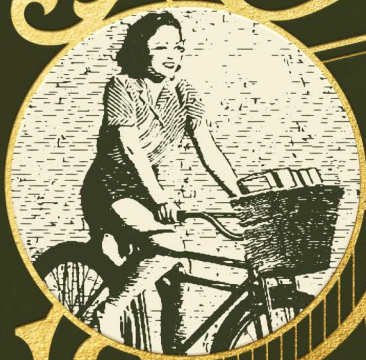
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