

# NEWTOWN NEWS

The community zine by Newtown, for Newtown



HAKIHĒA / DECEMBER 2019 &  
KOHIĀTEA / JANUARY 2020

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE  
NEWTOWN COMMUNITY &  
CULTURAL CENTRE

# KIA ORA NEWTOWN

Kia ora e hoa mā! Hello friends!

This Newtown News is for both Hakihea / December AND Kohitātea / January, as Eryn and I (the coordinators here at the centre) are off on a break over the summer. So please enjoy the whakaaro / ideas in this edition until you get your next fix in Hui-Tanguru / Feb. This edition is about **consumerism**, or to be more specific, **anti-consumerism**. Christmas can be a really hard time, for many reasons - the pressures of family dynamics, the loneliness of not having friends or family around, the pressure of having to buy gifts, the pressure of having to have a 'nice time'. We send love and solidarity to anyone having a hard time rn - if you're not sure what to get up to on Christmas Day, head along to Everybody's Christmas - it's gonna be lovely (check out the deets in What's the Happs on the back page).

Capitalism also goes into hyper-drive at Christmas, with the pressure to **buy buy buy** ramping up. I walked down Lambton Quay recently (not something I often do tbh) and the 'Black Friday' sale stuff was intense. There are xmas laybuy signs all over town and just general encouragements to buy more even if it means getting into debt. If you're feeling the pressure, I reckon checking out Newtown Budgeting Services could be a good idea (read about them in the Notorious Newtowner!)

Even as someone who hates capitalism with a passion, I feel the societal expectation to get and exchange nice gifts as a way to show love for my friends and whānau. In reality I know my family love me and wouldn't want me to feel the stress of trying to find the perfect thing - especially when money's tight over the holidays.

I hope this edition helps you, as it's helped me while I've been putting it together, to think about this stuff more deeply and consider whether buying stuff actually brings anything good to our lives. Or should we get out there and build something better than capitalism?

## NEWTOWN SURVEY FOR 16-24 YO

ARE YOU 16-24  
LIVING IN  
NEWTOWN?  
TAKE THE SURVEY  
WIN A VISA GIFT CARD  
50 BUX

SCAN ME  
FOR  
SURVEY

TELL US  
WHAT YOU WANT  
SHAPE OUR YOUTH PROGRAM

CLOSES  
FEB 2020

LOVE, THE NEWTOWN COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CENTRE

Basically, whether you celebrate xmas or not, and however you spend the next couple of months, I hope you find some joy and some rest outside of the stresses of capitalism.

Ngā mihi o tēnei wā uaua,  
Ellie

P.s. we're very excited to launch our NEW youth survey for 16-24s!

**CHECK IT OUT!**  
[bit.ly/newtown1624](https://bit.ly/newtown1624)

Amazing anti-consumer cover art by Antonio Hernández!

Thanks for the support of our amazing local businesses! Please support them back!



Baobab Cafe

Peoples

MOON

*The views and opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the original authors and other contributors. They do not necessarily reflect those of the Newtown Community & Cultural Centre.*

# Notorious NEWtowner

*Anna busts budgeting & beneficiary myths, talks helping people achieve their dreams and dreams of putting herself out of a job, over soy hot chocolate at her regular haunt, Baobab!*

Anna De Roo might not have imagined ending up the manager of the Newtown Budgeting & Advocacy Service (NBAS), coming from a background of English lit, library work and environmental campaigning, but she is certainly passionate about it now! Anna's journey started by chance when a Volunteer Wellington ad for an advocate role at NBAS caught her eye: "I saw the difference that the financial mentors were making and the warm lovely team...so I stuck around."

Sticking around led to Anna shifting from volunteer advocate, to financial mentor, and now to managing the whole service. NBAS just have a small team, but they really pack a punch: "We're completely free, our aim is to people who are in financial hardship - budgeting is one part, but we also help with finding affordable housing, food support, converting high interest loans, applying for hardship loans and even tenancy and consumer advice." They help around 500 people a year to reach their financial goals and find that most of those people feel more able to manage needs, reduce debt, meet goals and manage their own finances after support from NBAS!

But despite these successes, Anna's big dream is to shut down NBAS and put herself out of a job. In an ideal world, no one would need NBAS because they'd be able to thrive on what they have. Unfortunately, as Anna says "the housing crisis has put pressure on everyone. People are struggling with high rents or aren't able to find homes at all. The media interest has tailed off, but the issue isn't solved - people are still living in their cars while they wait for homes. It's not okay."

Anna really wants to disrupt misconceptions about beneficiaries: "I'd challenge people to actually try living on a benefit. I think people who aren't could be a little more empathetic and understanding" and also misconceptions about budgeting services: "we're all very friendly and non-judgemental...we don't tell people off, we are there to serve people and support them in achieving their chosen goals."

Anna's English Lit degree still comes in handy at work - "I get to write letters to WINZ", she jokes - and also when she has a minute off from her busy job, she's into creative writing! She also enjoys sneaking out into Newtown "I love the food in Newtown - and I feel like people are a bit more non-conformist here. There's more creativity, plus it's colourful and diverse!"

**So go along to NBAS and they'll do their best to help you reach your dreams! NBAS is a small NGO and always appreciates more support - financial or voluntary! Check out [www.newtownbudget.org.nz](http://www.newtownbudget.org.nz) - if something catches your eye, you might be able to have a journey a little like Anna's.**



**The friendly Newtown Budgeting team, L-R: Ali, Anthony, Anna & Averil - aka the 'A' team!**



# BUY YOUR WAY TO A CLEANER PLANET?

**By Zoë Deans**

We've long been told that the best way to make change is through what we buy, from energy-saving lightbulbs to KeepCups. There's often not a lot of talk about other ways to make change: lobbying government, striking, calling out polluting companies. Which makes you wonder - who stands to gain from us believing that buying things will save the world?

In 1971, several food and drink packaging companies (including Coca Cola) banded together and launched the heartfelt Keep America Beautiful campaign, admonishing Americans for not picking up their litter. The campaign's slogan? "People cause pollution. People can stop it."

But the campaign came hot on the heels of the 1970 Earth Day protests, which were firmly targeting the companies that produced throwaway containers and packaging. The Keep America Beautiful campaign was designed to shift the focus away from the makers of litter and onto the consumers who didn't pick up the companies' litter, allowing packaging companies to evade blame.

Corporations now are still benefiting from this strategy. 70% of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by just 100 companies, and yet most of the action we're told to take is still focused on small individual changes. Changing your habits at home feels good and is relatively easy, but it needs to happen in tandem with pushing for better laws that regulate, ban or transition companies and industries away from polluting practices.

Individual environmental actions are trendy at the moment, with Tesla electric cars being a status symbol and fashion

designers scoring environmental points by releasing limited edition reusable bags. Reducing your own waste is a great start, but sometimes we lose track of the eventual goal.

A friend of mine recently described her journey to going plastic-free for the environment, and asked what she should do with all the (perfectly usable) plastic Tupperware containers she had replaced with brand new stainless steel containers. By throwing out useful items instead of continuing to use them, she was actually creating more waste and fuelling companies' narrative that consumer change is the best way to make change.

It can be hard to know what to do, but it's worth keeping in mind that you're more than just a consumer - you're a citizen and you have power and a role in shaping our society. Call up your local MP and demand they change permissive laws that allow companies to keep polluting.

Organise in your community to oppose polluting industries. Make do with what you have and repair and reuse items wherever you can. If you do need to buy, take a look in your local op-shop to see what you can get second-hand (they almost always have reusable drink bottles and KeepCups at op-shops!).

**Because even though it's companies that cause pollution, people can rise up and stop it.**



School Strike 4 Climate in Wellington showing us how to take action for the planet! Photo credit: SS4C-NZ

# ANTI-CAPITALIST SUMMER READS

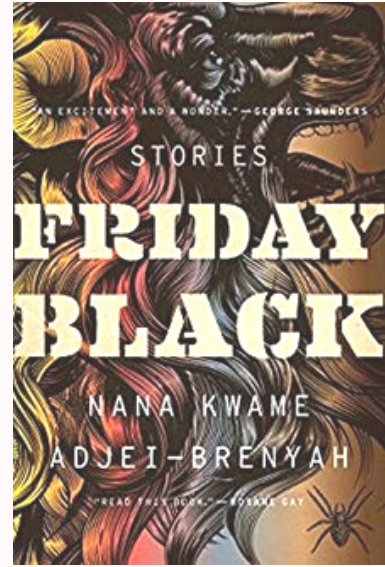
Here's some chunky anti-capitalist fiction - all available in the library - to get your teeth into this summer. Why not wrap a library copy up and give to your loved one, the gift being the story rather than yet another thing? Just make sure they get it back before the due date!

## **Friday Black by Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah.**

**Library link - [bit.ly/2Kfd6Yj](https://bit.ly/2Kfd6Yj)**

These short stories are super smart, funny, gripping and important, but also very dark. They're dystopic, but only just - they're based in real life happenings (the murder of black teenager Trayvon Martin feels close by during several of the stories), and I can imagine some aspects coming to pass (terrifyingly). Adjei-Brenyah tackles race, social justice, capitalism and more. 'Friday Black' - the story after which the book is named - was one of my favourites. A satirical look at extreme consumerism during a 'Black Friday' sale in a mall where the shoppers are just an eensy bit more zombie-like and desperate than we are now.

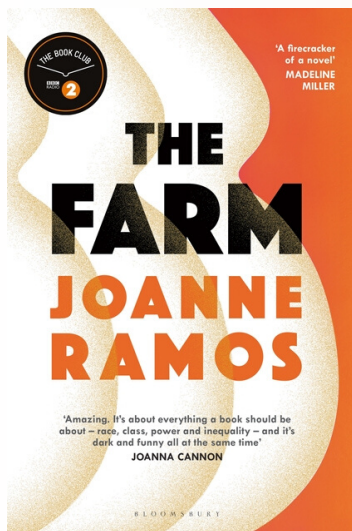
**Recommended for:** someone who loves Black Mirror, dystopia, dark humour and social justice. Content warning for violence and death.



## **The Farm by Joanne Ramos. Library link - [bit.ly/2CA7TWL](https://bit.ly/2CA7TWL)**

Another dystopia (sorry, not sorry) about a world where 'Hosts' are paid to carry the babies of the rich and powerful, those who don't have time ("but my career!") or desire to become pregnant ("oh the stretch marks!"), or some who aren't able to (or in some cases just say they're not able to). They're confined to a facility known as a 'Gestational Retreat' - or more crudely to the Hosts as 'The Farm'. Like any work under capitalism, the work of a Host is exploitative, controlling and invasive - particularly as the majority of the Hosts are migrants - but the novel takes it to a hyper-capitalist extreme...although if I opened the paper and read this as a news story, I would be frankly unsurprised.

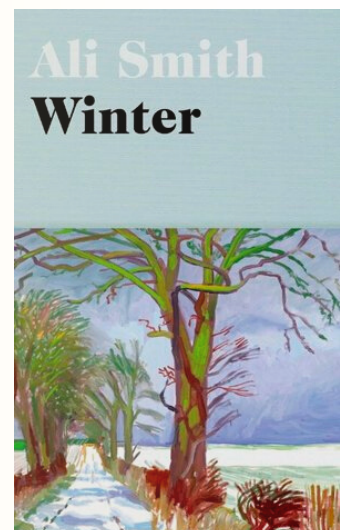
**Recommended for:** someone who loved Handmaid's Tale - I can imagine a world where 'Hosts' were the seed which grew into 'Handmaids'.



## **Winter by Ali Smith. Library link - [bit.ly/33Ghd7j](https://bit.ly/33Ghd7j)**

Smith's book Winter is the second in a quartet named after the four seasons (so read 'Autumn' first!). The writing is beautiful, taking you along story which meanders from women chaining themselves to fences at Greenham Common as an anti-nuclear protest, to jarringly real Christmas-time family dynamics, with a baby head floating around sprinkled in - all set against a backdrop of xenophobia, fear and division. Despite the Trumped up, Brexiteering world, Winter still felt gentle, smart and even (almost?) hopeful.

**Recommended for:** People who are dreading the dynamics of Christmas with family - hopefully it will reassure you that this Christmas lunch is most likely worse than yours.



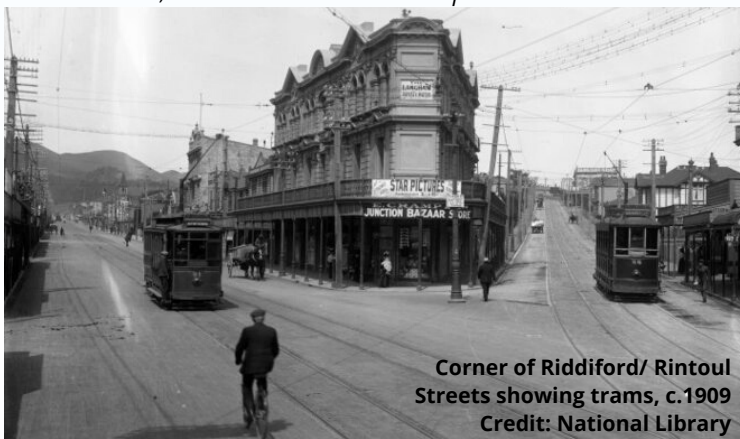


# HISTORY FILES By Chris Rabey

Newtown was profiled in a Wellington Almanac of 1886. This extract comes directly from there!

*"This part of Wellington consists of an extensive flat stretching from near the harbour to Island Bay. The flat rises on each side into terraces and hills. while some distance southward there is sloping and table land. The flat is opened up by the Adelaide Road and a number of streets running parallel and across to it. Merchants shopkeepers, tradesmen and mercantile employees all live in this locality, but the main portion of the residents consists of mechanics and working men. There are well appointed residences and handsome villas in the main thoroughfares, as well as hosts of cottages of more modest pretensions. The more crowded parts of the flat and numerous back streets present some of the shanties and small houses always to be found in colonial cities, though all are comfortable and well-appointed.*

*About a mile and half out of the Adelaide Road is the suburb of Newtown, which contains about 250 houses, chiefly inhabited by tradesmen and their families. Newtown possesses an hotel, a school, church, and several shops. it is connected to the city by the tramway. This is worked by a combination of steam or horse power from the Railway Station at Pipitea Point, along Lambton Quay, thence by Manners Street, Cuba, Vivian Streets, and the Cricket Ground to Newtown, every 15 minutes. The Wellington Hospital has accommodation for 112 beds, and...housed 80 patients."*



Corner of Riddiford/ Rintoul  
Streets showing trams, c.1909  
Credit: National Library

# GIFT, HUMILITY, SOLIDARITY & JOY

**By Richard Noble**

*Touchstones from the birth of Christ for a non-consumerist Christmas.*

**Gift** - Jesus is the supreme Gift from the boundless love and generosity of the Sacred Heart of Life (a.k.a 'God'). As the Gospel of John puts it, 'God so **loved** the world that he **gave** his only Son' (John 3:16, emphasis added).

**Humility** - Jesus describes himself as coming to serve others rather than be served by them (eg. Mark 10:45), and he demonstrates this the night before his death by washing the feet of his own followers (John 13:2-5). This divine Humility is anticipated in the humble circumstances of his birth, with the newborn Babe laid in an animal's feeding-trough because there was no room at the inn (Luke 2:7).

**Solidarity** - The New Testament Letter to the Hebrews describes Jesus anthropologically as the 'great high priest' - 'he tino tohunga nui' - for all humanity who, by virtue of his death on the Cross, knows what it's like to suffer (Hebrews 4:14-15). Jesus embodies divine Solidarity with the human condition.

**Joy** - According to the Gospel of Luke, the birth of the Christ Child is heralded by angels as 'Te Harinui', glad tidings of great Joy, embodied in peace and goodwill (Luke 2:13-14).

I wonder how each of us might express these heaven-sent virtues of Gift, Humility, Solidarity, and Joy, in our own celebrations, whether Christian or pagan, religious or secular, this Christmas season?

# GIVE ME HOPE, JACINDA

By Rex Paget

walk down the only part of newtown / that hasn't been gentrified / yet / boarded up  
worship halls line the street / rickety houses that look like loose teeth in / the rotten  
mouth of / white supremacy / baron concrete streets / littered with poverty / counsel  
flat luxury / housing the hustle / pick up a fifty to get me through / my dealer makes  
me avocado on toast / says they were going cheap / brews a cup of tea / i don't have  
the heart to / tell her i don't like avocados / so / i eat her welcome with a smile / ask  
her how job hunting is going / she shakes her head / i didn't get the last couple i  
applied for / but it keeps Winz off my back / yeah, it's tough out there these days /  
but / something will come up / i reassure / wearing my kathmandu jacket / she  
laughs / at me / yeah, yeah, something will come up / her voice / a flatline of hope /  
on my way out / an older brown woman looks straight through me / her face / a  
forgotten wreck / sinking in polluted seas of / white supremacy / i hold the door /  
offer her a smile / she doesn't say anything / why should she be thankful?

## TIME ON THEIR SIDE

By Tessa Johnstone

*This is an excerpt of a story which appeared on Shift Change, which tells stories of people doing sustainable stuff. Read the full story on [www.shiftchange.org.nz](http://www.shiftchange.org.nz). The Wellington TimeBank office is based in the Newtown Community Centre. Come and sign up to get time on YOUR side!*

Sonya Cameron has been there since the start. For her, Wellington Timebank's origin is inextricably tied up with the Christchurch earthquakes. The first meeting of people interested in starting a Timebank in the capital was held a day after the second Christchurch earthquake in 2011, and Sonya feels it was why WCC supported the initiative from the outset.

But Sonya had her own motivations for getting involved. "For me it was around the idea of alternative economies. It's almost like the way the world should be. "Edgar Cahn, the founder of Timebanking, talks a lot about it being an alternative monetary system that values things that matter. Like people caring for each other, all of those skills that the existing monetary system doesn't value."

Sonya, who has made more than 100 exchanges in the eight years the Wellington Timebank has been running, says that although you're still making a transaction with a person, it's totally different to one in which money would change hands. "When you trade with someone from the Timebank, it's almost primarily connecting with that person, as a person, and secondarily you're having an exchange of skills. "What's nice about it is the more you do these exchanges, it creates community... I've learned stuff that I can't pay for, or couldn't afford to pay for."

Sonya feels one of the benefits of Timebanking is in building community networks that build resilience. "[It's sustainable] in the sense that you are more grounded in your local community... I've learned a lot of stuff that's enabled me to make my own things and be more self-sufficient." It's the sort of resource people can tap into at times of crisis, or even economic downturn, says Sonya. "It's hard to articulate, but I think a future world is very much going to be local, and the stronger connections we have at a local level, the better. The better we know our neighbours, the better we're able to support each other with that stuff."



Sonya Cameron & chook!



# WHAT'S THE HAPP'S?

## At Newtown Community Centre (Corner Colombo / Rintoul Streets)

### Summer closure dates!

We're shutting up shop! We'll be closing on Friday 20th December and not re-opening until Monday 13th January. Join us to say mā te wā / laterz for a festive Free Soup Friday on our last day here, Friday 20th @ 12pm.

### Community Jams and Kai - Friday 6th, 13th, 20th December 11-12pm

An open-to-everyone opportunity to play music and ignite your creativity. For ten dollars we provide an arrangement of instruments, activities and a shared kai. Come sing, dance, play or simply relax and listen every Friday from 11am to 12pm. More info at: [bit.ly/37S65GS](http://bit.ly/37S65GS)

### Newtown Artist in Residency - Applications open 13th December and close 31st January.

Wanna make art, but ya bedroom is too small and you keep getting paint all over ya pillows? Then you probably want a free studio space to make/create in! We have a space for one awesome artist/art facilitator/art project lead/art organisation for 3 months February - April 2020. We don't have enough word-count to fill you in on all the ins and outs of this exciting opportunity (we're offering more than just free rent)! So if this interests you, please please get in touch to receive an application form & guidelines: [opportunityarts@gmail.com](mailto:opportunityarts@gmail.com)

## At Smart Newtown (9-11 Constable Street - next to the Library)

### SMART NEWTOWN Services: Helpdesk and Holiday Hours

SMART Newtown offers FREE internet access, it also offers a FREE "help desk" service and one-on-one computer/internet support. Some examples of issues they would love to help you with are: Transferring files, system restore, virus checks, installing software, solving internet issues, internet issues. Drop in anytime during opening hours, check the christmas hours here - [smartnewtown.org.nz](http://smartnewtown.org.nz)

## Get a Job! A free CV writing workshop - Tues 17th December 4pm-7pm

Learn how to write a CV to apply for a job that you want! You need to be familiar using Microsoft Word - the rest you'll learn. Places limited - you must register. To register: email [smartnewtown@gmail.com](mailto:smartnewtown@gmail.com) / call (04) 380 0143 / fill in the online form at [bit.ly/2KSRXn2](http://bit.ly/2KSRXn2)

## Elsewhere in Newtown

### No Sh\*t Giftshop - Sun 15th December 11am-4pm @ 199 Riddiford (next to Newtown New World)

Enjoy a feast of creativity and generosity from the Wellington Timebank community. This is a unique pop-up gift store where people can buy locally made (and sustainably made) gifts as well as vouchers for fun stuff and useful services. Support local artists and come learn more about the Timebank Community! Plus, cheap snacks and banter! [bit.ly/33MYu9z](http://bit.ly/33MYu9z)

### Everybody's Christmas Lunch: 25th December 12pm @ Newtown School

Everybody's Christmas Lunch is brought to you by the 'Newtown Collective' a group of awesome Newtown orgs who want to make sure everybody has somewhere to be and celebrate Christmas (no matter what they believe)! All are welcome - folks doin' it tough, locals who are far away from family, community members who just wanna come on down. Free kai and good vibes.

### Freedom Shop, inside Opportunity 4 Animals op shop - Saturdays 11-4

Grab your 2020 *Plan B diary* (\$10) from the Freedom Shop, featuring important dates in the radical history of Aotearoa! (Anarchist and radical literature also available!)

### Carrara Park Christmas Sing-along! December 14th 6.30pm

Come celebrate Christmas in Newtown, under the Carrara Park Christmas Tree and have a carol sing-along supported by the Mighty Ukes. All voices and instruments welcome! Carrara Wet weather venue is under the canopy of the old Caltex station - 224 Riddiford Street.

## GET IN TOUCH!

[www.newtowncommunity.org.nz](http://www.newtowncommunity.org.nz)  
[www.facebook.com/Newtown.Community.Centre](https://www.facebook.com/Newtown.Community.Centre)  
04 389 4786 / [ellie@newtowncommunity.org.nz](mailto:ellie@newtowncommunity.org.nz)

