

NEWTOWN NEWS



FEBRUARY 2017
Brought to you by the Newtown Community and Cultural Centre



K I A O R A N E W T O W N



Welcome to the first edition of our little zine for 2017! A new year fresh with opportunity and promise! I've been lucky enough to spend the holiday break missioning about the North Island glamping ("glam-camping") in my van. I've caught up with friends over a beer in the sun, bush n' beach walks and while dancing at festivals or gigs. A great time!

I'm a firm believer in goal-setting, so each year I come armed with an enthusiastic list of things I want to achieve for the year (I guess you could call them resolutions, huh?). One of my goals is to ditch sugar. We're spoilt here in the office so already I've had to turn down a handful of treats from lovely visitors. Keep trying to tempt me... I won't cave to the crave and everyone else here would love to be treated!

We're a curious bunch so drop us an email to tell us what resolutions you are keeping this year, and let us know if we can help you out with any exciting Newtown community projects or initiatives.

Last year was hectic for the community centre with our dance hall being out of action due to the earthquake. Big thanks for everyone's understanding and patience. It should all be back to normal in April (fingers crossed it's earlier).

This issue celebrates the holidays, travel and escaping from the rat race! Zoe chats couch-surfing while Campbell meets Notorious Newtowner and photographer Kent Blechyn-den. You can't shush me up - so I share some things I learnt about Chile on a recent visit.

Flick to the back page to read "What's the Haps?" which tells you what Newtown has in store for you over the coming month. We're starting to get amped and excited for the Newtown Festival which falls on Sunday 5th March - make sure you save the date and get your dancing shoes ready!

Ngā mihi,
Eryn Gribble
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Cover image by Guy Moskon,
Design by Rocio Santos



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

Notorious Newtowner

CAMPBELL MCRAE HAS A CHAT WITH THIS MONTH'S
NOTORIOUS NEWTOWNER KENT BLECHYNDEN.

Professional photographer Kent Blechynden has travelled the world but is proud to call Newtown home. For the last decade, Kent and his cameras have been constant residents of Newtown. Kent started his career as a photographer in 1992, working for the Huntly Press in the Waikato. Photography has meant Kent has rubbed elbows with famous musicians such as, Keith Richards from the Rolling Stones, Robert Plant from Led Zeppelin and Canadian singer-songwriter, Neil Young.

Kent describes his seven year old son Jimmy James, as a 'true-blue' Newtowner, born and schooled in Newtown. When asked what he most likes about living in Newtown, Kent replied "I love the multicultural aspect of Newtown and it has a lot of character." Kent thinks that Newtown is a very friendly place, and tries to capture these qualities in his photographs.

Kent has witnessed the rapid advancement in photography, where anyone that owns a cell phone can take photos and upload them to social media. "There are definitely a lot more photos out there, but they are of a lesser quality." Kent says. As a fan of surfing, Kent would love to travel to Hawaii with his mates and photograph the famous big waves.

When not busy taking photos, Kent can usually be found guzzling coffee in one of Newtown's many cafes. He loves the cafe vibe, and finds it a great place to meet people from all walks of life, if he's lucky, he can pick up some new clients.

He has noticed small changes in Newtown over the past decade, but thinks in general that Newtown is a better place for its new inhabitants and their respective cultures.

Kent never really enjoyed taking photos of politicians, thinking that they were 'cheesy.' He has however photographed four New Zealand Prime Ministers, John Key being the fourth. While working in Europe he photographed prominent members of the Royal family, including; the Queen and Prince William. He has also been sideline at numerous All Black test matches, rock concerts and even travelled to Beijing Olympics in 2008 as a photographer for Fairfax Media.

Although photography has been very good to Kent he warns it can come with some struggles, "It can be very hard to make a living, and sometimes there isn't a consistent flow of work."

Kent is about to start a new project, featuring photos of only Newtown, trying to capture that rare 'Newtown magic' that he loves. Pop on by Black Coffee on Riddiford Street in March to check out some of his work gracing the walls! To meet the man behind the myth or to view some stunning photos go to www.kentblechyndenphotography.co.nz



W O N D E R I N G S

on

W A N D E R I N G

✿ By Rachel Miranda Evans

I wouldn't be offended to be described as having a decent dose of wanderlust. Perhaps it is due to the quantity of fantasy fiction consumed in my formative years, or perhaps simply a manifestation of a far deeper human instinct, but the call of adventure has a monopoly on my heartstrings. It comes in phases, starting in my toes. . . those itchy feet, that wandering eye, the call to a place where the stars fill up the sky.

Writing from the comfort of my Newtown nest, the only foreseeable quest I'll be undertaking this evening will be locating some form of dessert. But give me a quiet enough week at work and I'll be dreaming of undertaking the Te Araroa trail or bicycling from Belfast to Budapest.

Oh, the things we dream of! Whilst I hope to do both someday I do question these desires. Am I experiencing an ancient desire to undertake a hero's journey or responding to a Facebook feed that reads like a Kathmandu catalogue? It's true that we peoples of Aotearoa, whether Tangata Whenua or Tangata Tiriti, are the result of many great voyages across sky and sea. Our ancestors were

travellers, adventurers, pioneers and so it is only natural that we too seek our own passages and frontiers.

It's also true that I have reached that point in my train of thought where I may be about to reference globalisation, modern technology, consumable experiences and millennials in the same paragraph. Sincere apologies.

As our connections across the globe strengthen and our ability to travel quickly and cheaply increases, so do our expectations. Our perception of distance is radically different to the days before industrialisation. With a New Zealand passport in one hand and not even phrasebook fluency in the other, the dominance of the English language enables us to go almost anywhere in the world (except perhaps North Korea). The Apple corporation has sold us a Zen aesthetic in which we renounce our 'worldly' possessions in favour of a hi-tech tent and follow the maxim "take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints" to the maximum. After all, with the current state of the housing market why not



quit your minimum wage job and be a Baht billionaire residing on a beach somewhere?

But the impacts of even 'Ecotourism' run deep and the carbon cost of jet fuel isn't cheap. 'Voluntourism' has been the cause of much controversy as to whether it does more harm than good, and the question of whether tourism boosts struggling economies or merely reinforces colonialism is often not fully understood. According to Wikipedia even 'Metaphysical Tourism' is a term and it turns out I'm not the only person who has a picture of Machu Picchu on their vision board. After all, pilgrimage is prominent part of many religious traditions and Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca which is one of the five pillars of Islam) results in what is considered to be the largest annual gathering of people in the world.

Whilst it's important to question, let our critique not crush our curiosity or criticise our seeking. For who am I to begrudge your bet that bagels taste better in New York?

I recently had an adventure closer to home, in Otaki. A weekend there contained all

of the elements of a great adventure; the discovery that my camping gear was miraculously mould free, a kindly older gentleman at the bus stop commenting that my pack was twice my size (I chose not to retort that I intentionally never carry more than a third of my bodyweight). I had barely disembarked before I began purchasing souvenirs (outlet store sandals) and experiencing a wave of culture shock (habituated to the niceties of Central Wellington suburbs I forgot that people yell at you for being female as they drive past).

Surrounded by trees I was reminded of what travel was about (for me). A curiosity about place coupled with the removal of distractions. A chance to connect with different people, to share stories, to marvel at the diversity and absurdity of this thing we call life.

Whilst the stimulus of a new environment does wonders for shifting the mindset, I wonder how I can bring this sense of excitement into the life that I am currently living?

For we will never see it all but how can we explore more? Explore big, explore small. Seek the wonder. Wander for all.

CHICA *in* CHILE

✱ By Eryn Gribble

Hola!!! Summer is synonymous with travel for a lot of Kiwi's and many of us this season will be getting on a plane or jumping in the car to spend some time away from home! I recently returned from an amazing month in Chile. I had such a rad time that I thought I'd share some of the interesting things I learnt about this lush, generous and colourful country.

Lets lock the basics down. Chile has a population of 17.6 million people who primarily speak Spanish. This South American country has diverse landscapes that ranges from the Antarctic region of Patagonia, to the deserts of Atacama Desert to the metropolis that is the Capital city - Santiago (population 5 million)

Here's a few nuggets of knowledge and random thoughts that I picked up along the way:

- The currency is the Chilean Peso. 10,000 pesos = \$20 approximately. Unfamiliar money is very hard to deal with the more 00's and decimal points there are! My "top tip": Write the approximate conversion in the corner of the paper money, this makes for a quick reference.
- The entire fire brigade throughout Chile are volunteers! All of them! And they provide an effective and professional service. Total heros!
- The sewage system can't handle toilet paper being flushed down the pipes so all toilets are

accompanied by bins specifically for used toilet paper. Sometimes however, autopilot kicks in and you feel very guilty if you accidentally flush the loo paper!

- Chileans are passionate advocates! Protests are common and very well attended with thousands turning up and many streets blocked off. In one week I witnessed three protests about: women's rights, pensioners rights, indigenous rights and celebrating the Mapuchi culture.
- Unlike some other South American countries the Chilean police are not corrupt (... they did not pay me to say that...!)
- I learnt that the hit 90s song "The Macarena" is still a pretty big deal.
- Stray dogs are super cute, but they shouldn't be patted. Unlike our desperate-for-affection New Zealand pooches, the Chilean street dogs aren't needy for your attention.
- Street-stall food is the best food! Trust in the BBQ's made from shopping trolleys.
- You can buy bagged loaves of sliced bread that have all the crusts cut off! (It's sacrilege!)
- Pisco sours (from neighbouring Peru) are lemony flavoured cocktails - topped with an egg white. I Recommend trying one (responsibly and if you're over 18!)
- Chile reminded me that you don't need a shared language to have real and meaningful connections with people.



Gracias Chile - You were a great time!

NEWTOWN HISTORY FILES

OUR BELOVED ADELAIDE ROAD...IN 1934!

✱ *Chris Rabey*

Adelaide Road up to Hall Street is now mostly semi-industrial/commercial. The days of little wooden buildings and quaint cottages have gone – though happily a few remain, perched amongst modern buildings and car sales yards.

In the 1930s, Doctor Smyth's surgery sat on the corner of Hospital Road, and in later years a kindergarten was established behind the surgery. Further up towards the hospital the old Post Office was on the corner, with Sanders Drapery further along (closed in 1982). Next to the drapery was a cakeshop where Syd Salmon did all their baking.

Further along, past an alleyway, was a fruit shop then Castle's the Chemist, with the taxi stand close by. Green Cabs Ltd were around in 1934 and the charge was 9 pence per mile! All big American cars stood for hire: Chevs, Fords, Buicks and Plymouths.

Dr Shirer had a residence and surgery here, with the local children's playground next door (now part of the Hospital complex). Past the hospital was a block of shops with living quarters above. In the block were a couple of fruit shops, a book exchange, a fish & chip shop run by Mr Windsor, and a picture framer, Mr Stevenson. Bell's Bakery was at the Mein Street corner, still standing in 1984.

STORIES FROM THE COUCH

✱ *By Zoe*

The theme this month is travel, which got me thinking not just about travelling myself, but about the pleasure of hosting people in your home.

As a hitchhiker and couchsurfer I've travelled a long way on other people's goodwill, so when my flatmates and I set up in Newtown, we decided to be open to travellers who wanted to see Wellington!

This week we hosted two friendly and lovely Korean backpackers. They cooked us a giant meal of kimbab (a little like sushi) and came back every day with stories about what they'd seen in Wellington.

Hosting travellers is like seeing through a different window into your own city. We got asked questions ("How do people live here when there's so much wind?"), learned about places we didn't know existed (ie. Mercy Park), and generally had the chance to appreciate the place we live. We also learnt lots about Korea – and will have some enthusiastic hosts if we ever manage to get there!

If you have a couch, a bit of house room and you're open to strangers, try getting onto Couchsurfing or Trustroots. Hosting people is a great way to travel while staying put – and if you're lucky you might get some kimbap out of it as well.

WWW.COUCHSURFING.COM
WWW.TRUSTROOTS.ORG

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

AFRA DANCE

Heather Grant from Afra Dance is starting a bunch of amazing African Dance classes in Newtown. Explore playful, rhythmic movement inspired by the culturally rich communal dances of Africa. All classes are on Mondays at the Newtown Hall on Daniell Street. 10am: pre-/post-natal mums, dads and babies. 3.30-4.15pm: 3-6 year olds, 4.30-5.30pm: 7-12 year olds & adults: 5.45-7pm. Various prices. Contact Heather Grant on 0272777784 or heathergrant@afradance.com for more info and to enrol.

RANGIWAHIA BIG GIRLS WORKSHOPS

Rangiwahia Environmental Arts Centre (REACT) are running an intensive creative weekend making 'Big Girls' giant puppet representations of women who call Aotearoa New Zealand home. You'll learn some fantastic new skills including how to work with reused and recycled resources (all provided) to make the puppets. No charge to join in. Workshops are on Sat 11th & Sun 12th February 2017, 9.30 – 4pm. Finishing workshops are on Mon 13th & Tue 14th. email: reactcolours@gmail.com or text 021 088 16334 to register.

WALKING WELL, FEELING WELL: GENTLE DANCE EXERCISES

This six week set of classes are designed to help build strength, confidence and self esteem. They will focus on posture, gentle movement to music, and how to feel great about yourself. Partnering up for the lessons will be optional. A cup of tea at the end of class is included. Thursdays, 1.30-2.30pm, commencing 16th Feb 2017 at the Newtown Community Centre (Cnr Rintoul & Colombo Sts). \$5 unwaged, \$7 waged. Contact Ishbel Clark to register: 3891365.

NEWTOWN NEIGHBOURS DAY AT NEWTOWN PARK

Come along for an evening of free food and free fun at "Newtown Neighbour's Day 2017". Take the opportunity to enjoy games and activities for all

ages, share a meal and a friendly word with your fellow Newtonians. Tell your neighbour! Friday 24 February, 5pm - 8pm at Newtown Park (at the end of Mansfield Street, next to the Zoo) Rain or Shine!

NEWTOWN SUMMER BIKE WORKSHOPS

Been hanging out to get some help to fix your bike? Nows your chance Newtown! Head on down to the Newtown Community Centre (Cnr Rintoul & Colombo Sts) on Sat 25th Feb from 1-4pm and get some assistance from the experienced mechanics from Mechanical Tempest. FOR FREE! Workshops open with a half hour safety check & diagnostics session followed by a drop in bike repair assist. Please be on time for the safety check, but drop in anytime after this is done. BYO BIKE! Contact Renee for more info: newtown.community.centre@paradise.net.nz or 3894786.

ERYN'S GARAGE SALE

Aro valley community centre was lucky enough to have this jumble-sale of bargains last year, this year it's our turn! On Saturday 18th Feb from 9am-1pm swing on by the community centre and rifle through bric-a-brack, books and loads of clothing. Cheap as chips as most items only a gold coin koha! All proceeds go towards founding "Opportunity Arts"! Contact Eryn for more info: eryn.nccc@clear.net.nz

TOOL LIBRARY REPAIR CAFE

We throw out a lot of stuff. It ends up in our rubbish, clogging up our landfills. At Newtown Tool Library, we think that we can make better use of our things, repairing them when broken to give them a new lease on life. Head on down to the NCCC (cnr Rintoul & Colombo Sts), Sat 25th Feb, 11-2pm with your broken stuff (e.g. household items, clothing, jewellery, small electrical goods) and get some assistance to fix it right on up! Don't despair, just repair! Free/koha. If you have some repair skills up your sleeve and you'd like to get involved, send us an email at Newtown.Tool.Library@gmail.com