



Prism

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FAITH FASHION

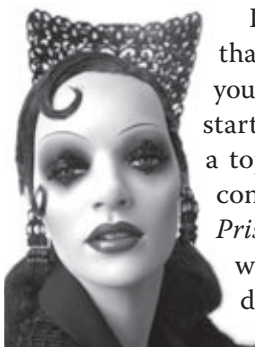


Ever since Socrates and his Method, it's been fashionable to ask questions. In this issue we're asking questions about Fashion itself. What is it? Why did we start worrying about it? How do you become a fashion designer?

Can we even talk about fashion in any sort of objective way? Recently I read an essay by C. S. Lewis called "Men without Chests". It's a neat little piece in which Lewis takes a dig at some school teachers who are discussing someone who looks at a waterfall and says, "This is sublime." The teachers remark that the man, although he thinks he's saying something important about the waterfall, is actually only saying something about his feelings. But, as Lewis points out, there's much more to it than that.

What I'm wondering is whether fashion falls into the same category? Does it make sense to call an item of fashion "sublime"? When yesterday's teenager called his pair of cargo pants "sweet", was he saying something about his trousers, or just about his feelings? When people talk about a "good wine", are they just stating their taste in wine fashion, or are they saying something about the drink itself?

Another interesting question: why are fashions so different even within the same country? For instance (with no bias whatsoever), Auckland dresses like a yuppie, Wellington as if it's at art school, and Christchurch like it's half-heartedly trying to be respectable.



I'm sure I'm asking more questions than will be answered here, but at least you'll find some interesting reading to start you along the path. It's definitely a topic that makes good dinner-time conversation. And have your copy of *Prism* handy – there's nothing wrong with a few food stains on a well-discussed magazine.

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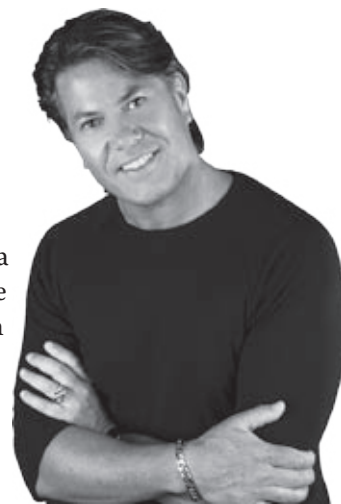
So you want a great body?

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We welcome feedback, so feel free to write in – casual or formal, positive or negative, short or long.



The Greens think he's bigoted and intolerant. Gays think he's homophobic. And, in May, Reader's Digest declared him New Zealand's least trusted person after polling 5,000 Kiwis. Not even Nicky Watson or Winston Peters could take that accolade away from him. As if all that's not bad enough, there are those who think Bishop Brian Tamaki looks like "a cross between Mikey Havoc and John Rowles".

Look at it any way you will, Bishop Tamaki is a controversial man. He's also a well-dressed Christian leader. *Prism's* **Jonathan Marinus** invites him to ruminate on the interaction between Christian faith and fashion.

What attracts people to the Gospel and the Christian lifestyle?

The spirit of Christ and Biblical values lived through credible Christians in everyday life (and all kinds of circumstances) is one of the attractive things to non-believers (Matthew 5:16).

Why do you think Jesus' lack of physical appeal is emphasised in Isaiah 53:2 ("no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him")?

There was nothing extraordinary about His physical appearance that did the "attracting", but that is not to say he wasn't good-looking either. The real attractant was inside the man, His word and His spirit – His Father who dwelt within Him (John 4:13–14).

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Did Jesus try to project a particular image?

Yes, he did portray a certain image – the image of His Father. In John 14:9, Jesus said to Philip, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

What effect does a church leader's fashion sense have on their ministry?

I minister the same in a T-shirt and jeans as in a three-piece suit – clothes don't affect my ministry, but they do complement the occasion and location when I am ministering.

You're known throughout New Zealand as a very image-conscious Christian leader. Is that perception justified?

You mean "dressed well" or having "good appearance". I personally like to dress well for formal occasions, as it is reflective of my attitude to serving the King of kings and representing the kingdom of God. I also like casual clothes. It is an attitude thing – it's an excellence thing. (Genesis 39:6 and 1 Samuel 16:12)

Black appears to be Destiny Church's colour of choice. Is that a fair?

This is an unfair comment. The colour black has not been designated as Destiny Church's colour (although it is New Zealand's colour of choice worn by our national teams in most sporting codes). There was one occasion at Parliament in 2004 where we utilised black T-shirts with white branding because it is visually effective – that's all there is to it.

Who inspires your style?

To be honest, nobody in particular. My wife, Hannah, has an eye for good fashion and colour, and she is a big influence on my style of dress; otherwise it's just my personal choice. I like stylish clothes, particularly suits and dress shoes. I also dress very casually in my private life – my style is just who I am at the end of the day!

What lies beneath

THE HIDDEN TRUTH ABOUT CLOTHING

Monday, 7:28am

Rembrandt shirt, tie, woollen vest, dress trousers, Last Footwear Company friars.

Tuesday, 7:34am

Fresh shirt, trousers, jockeys & socks. Same shoes, same tie as yesterday.

Wednesday, Thursday & Friday mornings

Ditto

Saturday, 8:46am

Crumpled T-shirt, torn Lees, bare feet.

Sunday, 9:23am

Strellson shirt, Levis, over-priced boots & flash body spray.

Is that the last word on clothing? For some, it should be. To them, getting dressed is a drag, and clothing a necessary evil. For others, though, it's a groove and a gas. It's something to get into and celebrate. For many, it's a medium for creative expression. "Take art off the wall and out of static display. Adorn the body in wildly wonderful ways," say the beautiful people at the World of Wearable Arts.

Either way, clothing and fashion are an elementary feature of human life everywhere. Here in New Zealand, they have burgeoned into a multi-million dollar industry aglow with considerable international success. Celebrities such as Madonna and Julia Roberts have been snapped wearing our labels and, in the year ending June 2005, New Zealand exported NZ\$317 million worth of apparel to the globe. Never before, it seems, have Kiwis been so chic.

Send wine and chocolates to the fashionistas, I say. Toast their success and clamour for more. After all, a bubbly rag trade creates jobs and helps enliven the otherwise drab wardrobes of proles like you and me.

That said, both the glitz and glamour of haute couture and the banal normality of everyday dress belie the essential significance of clothing. They simply "don't go there." To discover the real significance of clothing, the story of its origin must be told.

"Who told you that you were naked?" came God's sharp interrogative. "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" Adam and Eve fumble about

famously for excuses. Later, when the truth has been uncovered and the sentence handed down, God makes for the man and his wife clothing.

It's a gracious act, because Adam and Eve have, by their own doing, alienated themselves from God and become offensive to Him. He can no longer bear the sight of them as is. Yet, rather than turfing them out with no hope of reconciliation, God provides covering for the shame of their now-corrupt selves.

The new "skins" given them are not a permanent fix, mind you. They're just a temporary measure until God chooses to arrange totally satisfactory "clothing" for humanity in the person and work of His son, Jesus of Nazareth. That happens some 4,000 years later.

Significantly, it's the local wildlife that serves as the raw material for Adam and Eve's new tunics. An animal must bleed and die for their rebellion. It's a sad moment that declares the idyllic bond between man and nature to be well and truly wrecked. Man can now expect to suffer at the hands of nature, just as nature will suffer at the hands of man.

Human experience throughout space and time testifies to this unnaturally hostile relationship. For millennia, men and women have taken all manner of practical measures to cope with the enmity of nature. Housing and apparel have long been their two principal means of defence.

I'm reminded of this on a browse through Gordon's Outdoor Equipment. The racks are jammed with these coping mechanisms – gloves, parkas, long johns, possum-merino beanies. The story's no different at Paddington Coat Factory or Hugo Boss or Glassons. Neither is it any different elsewhere in the world. In Greenland, the Inuit don caribou hide. In Paris, they slip into Armani. Though climates vary and seasons change, man's need for shelter and protection from the elements is fixed and constant.

So is his need for protection from his peers. When Adam and Eve fell for reptilian rhetoric, they not only destroyed their relationship with God and with nature, they also ensured that the bonds between individuals would be forever soured. If that had not yet occurred to them, what would have left them in no doubt is the envious murder of their son, Abel, by their other son, Cain.

While the effects of murder are not something we are

all called to suffer, we do all suffer from this spoiled interpersonal spirit. And again, humanity's use of clothing suggests the truth of it.

Consider notions of modesty for a moment. Like climate, they vary greatly – from those of the West Papuans whose little men sport little more than spindly gourds to those of the Afghans whose burqas shield all bar eyes and footwear. Even female executives in “liberated” western-style workplaces must take care to protect themselves from unwanted attention. It seems that people the world over dress as though they are never quite sure when dirty old men or women are watching.

Often, of course, sexual attention is highly sought after. For many style doyens, it's a given. On this, Auckland clothing designer Kristine Crabb has said, “I like the idea of seduction that isn't really that obvious.” Others have voiced similar thoughts for years. And so clothing, from the ancient to the avant-garde, is marked by the attempt to maintain this delicate tension between attraction and deflection.

If looking hot is important to some, then looking cool is imperative for all. The need to be accepted, loved and valued by a social group is, for most, a central theme of life. East of Eden, such acceptance is hard to come by. Conformity of dress and appearance is a common requisite. If in doubt, pick up a *Marie Claire* or a *Seventeen* and peruse the ads and articles. Cellulite is out, flatter tummies are in (when haven't they been?). Or, test the theory yourself. If you're a stylish young thing and enjoy the company of other stylish young things, drop your sense of style and start shopping carelessly. See how long it takes before the txts stop arriving. If you're a conservative Protestant pastor, pull on a pink shirt, get a facial, and jazz up your hairstyle ... then track the loss of respect from your peers. Had paradise not been lost, the security of our social relationships would have been assured.

As if breaking fellowship with God and nature and society wasn't enough, man lost true contact with himself as well. He had been at peace; he had been content and satisfied with his appearance. Then he spurned his status as the bearer of God's image. Ever since, men and women have been

hunting restlessly for new images to bear. For much of history, the source of these have been their cultural elites, their Paris Hiltons. Sometimes the images are generated by individuals themselves. Either way, clothing and fashion have long been an attempt to alleviate self-loathing and assist self-improvement. Botox and breast augmentation may be new, the urge to have them done is not.

New Zealand Fashion Week was held this month. As expected, it dazzled and delighted. When the cameras stopped flashing, it was right back to our very own workaday wardrobes and the daily deal of dressing up and dressing down. Really, it's all just an epic effort to make the best of a bad situation.

Jonathan Marinus is a mercenary, hotelier, journalist, spy and round-the-world sailor. In his dreams. The less glamorous reality is that he teaches high school students where to put their apostrophes and bad attitudes. After hours, he can be found all over town laughing and carrying on, mostly with his wife Kelly and their son Vincent.



History's peacocks

MEN AND FASHION FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE 19TH CENTURY

In one sense it would be easy to write a history of fashion in Europe over the last thousand years, tracing the sometimes bewildering numbers of fabrics, cuts, styles, lengths and colours which drifted in and out of fashion during this period. However, a simple narrative like that would yield only a very simple conclusion: fashions change. We often associate fashions with fads, thinking of fashion as being merely external, and often ridiculous in its fickleness. However, if we hold too fast to this association, we will miss the important fact that, in the past, clothing was taken very seriously indeed.

People of the past realized what we have perhaps forgotten: clothing is the bearer of many significant cultural messages. Dress could signal class, profession, religion, wealth, race, virtue and, most obviously, gender. Furthermore, people in the past had a much keener appreciation for the truth of the old proverb that “clothes maketh the man”. Clothing did not so much conceal the real person underneath – they helped to create his social persona.

Taking the political and cultural importance of dress as its theme, this article will provide a brief survey of some of the high and low points of fashion in Europe, from the Middle Ages till the modern period. We usually associate addiction to fashion with women, but I will concentrate mostly on the clothing that men wore, and how men's dress helped to both reflect and constitute the cultural values of past societies.

What not to wear, medieval-style

Authorities in medieval societies were serious enough about clothing to issue literally hundreds of sumptuary laws during the period. Sumptuary laws are essentially laws which regulate consumption. Although they were also common in ancient Greece and Rome, those were more likely to restrict elaborate wedding and funeral celebrations than clothing. However, in Europe in the Middle Ages, by far the most common type of sumptuary laws were those prohibiting certain articles of dress, or restricting certain fabrics and styles to particular classes.

These restrictions included reserving expensive furs like ermine for the nobility, prohibiting maidservants wearing trains on their dresses, demanding that peasants wear only black or grey, and requiring prostitutes to wear certain clothing. Other more peculiar laws included the edict in 14th-century Venice forbidding citizens from wearing dark blues and greens. While the aim of the city fathers in this case was to cheer up the plague-stricken

city by encouraging everyone to wear bright colours, the other examples make it clear that the main purpose behind sumptuary laws was to preserve and make visible the social hierarchy. We can see that clothing not only reflected social realities (the difference in status between prostitutes and noblewomen, for example), but also helped to maintain those social realities (for example, by ensuring the continuing distinction between merchants and lords).

The French know how to dress

As the medieval period progressed, the nobility began to pay more and more attention to fashion. With the ascendance of the Burgundian court in the 14th century, French fashions came to dominate the sartorial senses of European aristocrats. Court culture and the ideal of courtly love also helped to promote interest in rich clothing. In the early medieval period knights had been little more than mercenaries, but in this later period there was an increasing obligation to spend a lot of time sitting around looking splendid – noblemen had to spend much more time thinking about fashion and much more money appearing fashionable.

These new courtly fashions replaced the earlier unisex tunic. The famously grumpy chronicler Orderic Vitalis complained about the “over-tight shirts and tunics” which had become fashionable among young noblemen of his day. Tunics had become shorter and more colourful, and shirts and pants were slit to show a glimpse of flesh. The most fashionable shoes were those with very long toes which often had to be tied back to the ankle to enable walking (Orderic Vitalis rather maliciously claimed that they were invented by Fulk of Anjou to disguise his bunions).

Court dress reached the greatest heights of splendour during the early modern period in Europe (1450–1750). The courts were cultural pioneers, and at court the best music, art, literature and dress was displayed. The sartorial glory of Henry VIII and the famously brilliant tailoring modelled by Louis XIV illustrate the importance of magnificent dress during this period.

The suit is born – in three pieces

Beginning in England, this emphasis on rich and splendid clothing began to change during the 16th century – at least for men. A famous entry in Samuel Pepys' diary records the invention by Charles II of one of the most enduring items of male clothing: the three-piece suit. Pepys writes that Charles declared “his resolution of setting a fashion for

clothes, which he will never alter. It will be a vest, I know not well how; but it is to teach the nobility thrift, and will do good.” Thus the origins of the suit, and the very beginnings of what would flower in the 18th century as the “Great Masculine Renunciation”, when refinement in dress replaced overt display of wealth as the standard of male chic.

Historians have explained that, during the Restoration (1660 onwards), the crown was looking for a more stable foundation upon which to establish its rule. The court of Charles I was famous for its extravagance, and Charles II’s innovation was designed to show that his rule would be characterised by greater sobriety and manly restraint. It is significant that he turned to an article of clothing, both to reflect these new values and to impress them upon the nobility. He believed that this new type of clothing would create a new type of man.

Throughout the following two centuries, western Europe was consumed by discussions about who was eligible for political and civil rights. It is within this context that the Great Masculine Renunciation emerged, and with it the suit we are familiar with today. As the emerging middle classes became wealthier, money was now no longer a sufficient distinction between the nobility and the commoners. Furthermore, while conspicuous consumption was important and virtuous during the 16th and early 17th centuries, in this later period the great political vices were effeminacy and luxury. Placing too much value on rich clothing was considered a sign of addiction to luxury and labelled as “effeminate” (hardly fair, given the splendid adornment of early modern lords).

As a result, both aristocrats and the rising middle class began to adopt the suit as a mark of restraint. Aristocrats sneered that the middle classes were vulgar upstarts and addicted to luxury. They adopted the suit, advertising their own refinement. The professional or industrialist condemned the effete aristocrat (with wig, powder and lace) and also adopted the suit, advertising his manly sobriety. In the war over who was to wield power in Britain, the suit became a mighty weapon. By the 19th century, captains of industry, city clerks, statesmen, great landowners, and men of the royal family were all wearing the suit.



Liberty, equality, and the right pair of pants

Across the Channel, the great shift in men’s fashions came, unsurprisingly, with the French Revolution. The great symbolic weight attached to clothes is shown by the fact that one of the most influential factions here was named after what people wore (or rather, what they did not): the *sans-culottes*. The *culottes* were knee breeches commonly worn by the nobility, and so the radical *sans-culottes* wore ordinary

workers’ trousers to testify to their appropriately lowly background. Similarly, the revolutionary cockade (a knot of ribbons in revolutionary colours, usually attached to a hat) became an important symbol of patriotism, and failure to wear it became dangerous. There was also much serious talk about establishing a uniform for the Revolutionary Assembly (think togas). While this may seem a little ridiculous, the revolutionaries knew that as the sessions of the Assembly were public, a convincing outward appearance (aided by appropriate costume) was essential to establish the new government’s legitimacy in the minds of the populace.

In a word, fashion counts

This brief sketch of a thousand years of men’s fashions has demonstrated the extent to which clothing can bear some fairly hefty political burdens. I could go on by discussing the economic importance of the dress trade in Europe (it was no accident that the Industrial Revolution began with Britain’s textile industry), not to mention the debates over priests’ vestments, or the anatomical transmogrifications which the Victorians tried to enact with the corset. However, hopefully it’s been a good reminder about the importance of clothing and the signals our fashions choices transmit. Perhaps it will help us think more critically about what our clothes say in this modern era of fashion.

Laurel Flinn is studying for her PhD in history at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, USA. She enjoys listening to indie music, skiing and having pointy-headed discussions about historiography. She owns a genuine pair of lederhosen.

X chromosomes

Whenever I come to the part in Ecclesiastes where the Teacher says, “there is nothing new under the sun,” I immediately think of fashion. In fact, the Teacher might have just finished watching a gaggle of women making their way to wherever it was most fashionable to go in those days. Perhaps they were stylishly attired in the latest silk trousers (or whatever the Paris Hilton of the time was wearing). The Teacher might have reflected that these women were all slaves to fashion and that, where its capricious tendencies lurched, its minions would blindly follow.

If he did, and if they were, not much has changed. We are all slaves to fashion in the sense that, if we can't sew, we can only wear what we buy. Many of us females remember that not-so-far-off time when there was no such thing as a T-shirt long enough to reach the top of your jeans – everyone went around tugging them down till they stretched out of shape and you had to buy another. Alternatively, you could buy stretchy bands of material (I can't remember what they were called) to put around your stomach to hide it.

Or take pointy-toed shoes, for example. You can call them “witchy shoes” as much as you like, but when celebrities, business women and your friends were all wearing them, you probably capitulated in the end and bought a pair (or six).

Of course, there are girls and women who are determined to be different, and who want to wear the opposite of what every-

one else is wearing. However, that means that what you wear is still dictated by what everyone else is wearing, only in a negative sense. There is also the significant risk that whatever unfashionable style you have created for yourself will soon become fashionable.

But all this doesn't answer the question of *why* girls dress the way they do. There are probably as many answers to this as there are pairs of X chromosomes. Some of the younger of the species just want to fit in and buy the same boots their friends buy, and put the same streaks in their hair as everyone in their class. Usually, however, this larval stage is brief, and the young ladies in question move on to develop their own sense of style. It's a glorious dawn, the realisation that not everyone looks great in skinny-legged jeans and chunky jewellery.

Most women seem to make use of the knowledge that how you dress has a huge impact on the impression you

create. In the executive world, a well-dressed woman can represent success and power. But I'd guess that even more women dress to make themselves feel good. Regardless of what she does for a job, a woman who knows she looks good will feel better about herself than one who is secretly afraid that her shoes don't look quite right with her skirt.

Jenny de Reus is studying in Christchurch and likes grapefruit, poetry, and her husband.



Made for walking

I fell in love this winter.

Solid character that exudes strength, faithfulness and longevity. Soft to touch, with tight-hugging curves and a sleek black exterior. My perfect match. I had been searching for a while when I came across them in a small boutique shoe shop. I don't frequent such shops, but I couldn't resist going in just to have a look, especially when the entire window display consisted solely of boots. My "perfect match" was a \$450 pair of black, knee-high, Italian leather boots. Exquisite craftsmanship, truly beautiful. My purse refused. I still dream of them sometimes ...

I was recently recounting this story over dinner to a bunch of friends, and the conversation grew into a large, near-heated discussion of opinions of boots – black knee-high ones in particular. Most of the females thought they were a must-have in any respectable wardrobe (mine is not respectable yet). But the males were, rather surprisingly, quite opposed to them. I was intrigued. To cut a long story short, the discussion resulted in the commission of this article by The Editor himself. My friend Sunny and I set to work, researching a small group of men to find out what guys really think about knee-high leather boots.

What we asked them was this: *In the past, knee-high black boots have been associated with the red-light district, miniskirts, and dodgy street corners. In recent years, however, they have become a must-have in every woman's wardrobe. What's your take on this?*

The overwhelming response was either a complete I-couldn't-care-less attitude (*Black boots – I have no thoughts about them at all. They're just boots.*), or the firm belief that they still belong on the legs of dangerous girls. (*Yip, they're hooker boots. Definitely skanky.*)

Some thought the boots could still be redeemed: *I think knee-high black boots do, at times, harbour those connotations, but that is no longer the rule. I don't think there is anything inherently wrong with them, but they're not for me.*

One comment was very close to my personal opinion: *There are still plenty of knee-high black boots that should not be worn outside the red light district and dodgy street corners. Boots with a miniskirt is a very strict no-no. I would probably make a whole heap of not-so-nice conclusions about a woman if she were wearing a miniskirt and high boots. However, the right boots, when worn with the right outfit, can look fantastic – on the right woman.*

We then asked the guys to describe their perfect boot, given the options in the table shown. After fairly condemning responses on black knee-high boots, I was very surprised that

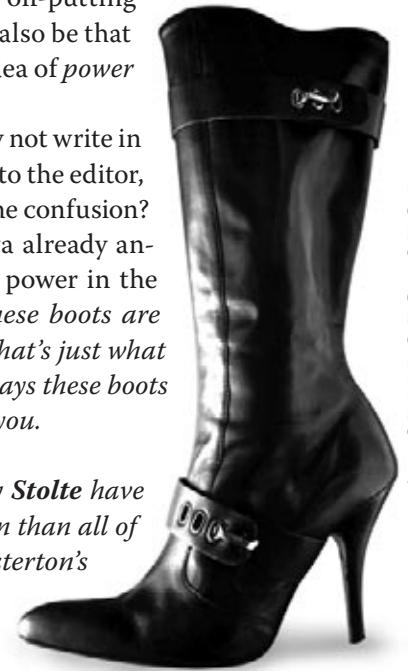
the guys knew what a good boot should look like. Yes, contradictorily, black knee-high boots were at the top of the list, followed closely by ankle-height black boots.

Something that struck me when I looked at these results was that the best-looking boot in the eyes of men was the exact boot that made headlines early last year, when US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice arrived at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield dressed all in black. She was wearing a skirt that sat just above the knee, and a calf-length coat. These boots were not hooker boots. They gave her an air of authority, yet oozed sophistication and class, with a hint of sexy femininity thrown in. (I would have loved to publish the photo here, but its copyright was nearly as expensive as my "perfect match" boots. Have a good look at <http://tinyurl.com/k9cfr>.)

I'm left with some serious questions. Why this surprising contradiction? Why do most guys say they don't like the look of knee-high black boots, yet when asked what they do like, that is exactly the boot they pick? Could it be that there is a certain magnetic pull because the boots can be sexual if worn in a provoking way, and men find them off-putting yet irresistible? Could it also be that men are scared by the idea of *power* these boots portray?

Some of you guys, why not write in and answer with a letter to the editor, and help us girls out of the confusion? Or maybe Nancy Sinatra already answered this question of power in the affirmative, in 1966: *These boots are made for walking, and that's just what they'll do. One of these days these boots are gonna walk all over you.*

Franci Hoyt and Sunny Stolte have more shoes between them than all of Christchurch and Masterton's centipedes combined. And now they're starting on boots ...



TOES' CLOTHES 9

What's the best-looking woman's boot?

colour	black 86%	brown 7%	other 7%	white 0%
height	knee 43%	ankle 36%	calf 21%	other 0%
toe	pointy 50%	square 29%	round 21%	other 0%
heel	stiletto 43%	square 36%	flat 21%	other 0%

Gardening with Madame Whitefly

In this second article in the series, I want to focus on the preparation and initial planting of your new vegetable garden.

Turn, turn, turn

If you planted a green crop (pictured below) over the winter months, or just let the land lie fallow, you will need to prepare the beds for the coming growing season. Your aim here is to turn over the soil with a sharp spade or shovel, completely burying the green part of the plants. Take your spade and push it straight down into the soil, applying pressure with your foot, and remove a section of soil the depth of the spade and set that block of soil to one side, away from the garden.

Move along the garden bed and remove a second block of soil. Then take your third spadeful of soil and weeds or green crop, and place it upside down in the trench you have created. With the side of the spade, tap the exposed soil to break up the clumps. Carry on in this way until all the garden bed has been turned over and placed carefully into the trench you have dug each time. When you have completed the last block you will still have an empty trench – this is where the original two blocks of soil need to be placed upside down. Ideally, you want to be able to leave the garden now for four to six weeks to allow the green matter to break down into ready-made compost.

I always like to wait until Labour Weekend before I begin to plant the vegetables. It is tempting to start earlier but it may prove a fatal mistake. Often the weather may seem settled before this, but then you'll get a nasty surprise with a late frost or cold patch. At worst, your newly-planted, tender seedlings are wiped out or receive such a setback that they never really recover. Or if you plant earlier when the

weather has not settled (into a steady rhythm of gradual warming), you may find that your seedlings are confused and will go directly to the flowering stage to ensure that they set seed for the season. This is called *bolting*. In the case of lettuces and cabbages they'll be rendered useless, as they won't produce a heart but will throw up a flower stalk instead. When this happens you will need to remove them and throw them on the compost stack and begin again.

The power of dung

Around Labour Weekend, sprinkle the top of the soil with a general fertiliser and some well-rotted compost or animal manure. Once again turn the soil over to thoroughly combine. Tap the clumps with the side of your spade or hand trowel to create a lump-free, friable seedbed. Smooth it out with a rake. Try not to walk on the actual soil as this will compress it and remove the air pockets within the soil structure. You may need to lay a wide plank of wood on the top of the garden to prevent this, or if your garden bed is small enough you may be able to lean over it while standing on the grass or path beside it.

A good general-purpose fertiliser is Nitrophoska Blue. You can purchase this at The Warehouse, supermarkets or garden centres. Not only does it have the basic nutrients

needed for good healthy growth (nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous), but it also contains a wide variety of trace elements essential for the soil. Compost and animal manures are ideal to use as they will build up and condition the soil and provide humus. They will encourage earthworms to come to your patch of garden.

Earthworms provide a great barometer as to the condition of your soil. They feed on bugs, bacteria and fungus found in organic waste that is decomposing



Though it may resemble an illegal plantation, this is actually a green crop of blue lupins.

in the soil. Their casts are rich in nutrients, which in turn will quickly feed the soil.

Use the fertiliser as directed on the packet, and use enough of the manure or compost to lay a 2.5 cm layer on top of the soil. The second turning-over of the soil need not be as deep as the first time. Your aim is to combine the nutrient-rich additives with the soil and to break up any clumps.

Planting

I strongly recommend that novice growers buy their seedlings rather than raise their own. You only want to plant four to six of each variety at one time, and you want strong, healthy seedlings. So check out your garden centre or The Warehouse and look for seedlings that are around 10 cm high, that display a healthy green colour (not a pale yellow), and that are planted in a small plastic tray or in individual plastic containers. Soak the seedlings, up to the top of the soil, in a bucket of water before planting out.

Mark out rows with a piece of string secured to a couple of sticks so you can fit as many rows as is practical on your garden bed. Using a clean trowel (a small hand-held spade), dig a hole big enough to hold the seedling without bending over the roots and push back the soil to secure it in place firmly. You will need to consider how big the full-grown plant will be to know how wide to space the seedlings. Your aim is to have the fully-grown plants to be virtually touching to discourage weed growth, conserve water and maximise the use of the beds. So for lettuces and cabbages allow 20 cm between the seedlings and rows.

Considering that you want to be able to harvest vegetables regularly through summer and autumn, only plant a few of one variety at two- to three-week intervals, remembering to leave enough vacant soil for this at the start. As you harvest one row, replant it with either the same or another vegetable variety. Suggested seedlings



The lupins are dug over thoroughly after having been snipped with hedgeclippers a few days earlier.

include different lettuce varieties, cabbage, silver beet and broccoli. After planting, always scatter a few pellets of slug bait around the seedlings as greedy snails and slugs are sure to visit your garden at nightfall and demolish them! Ideally, plant during late afternoon and water the seedlings well to help them to become established in their new home.

Carrots, beans, peas and spring onions can all be grown from seeds. Store the opened seed packets in the fridge to prolong their shelf life. Scarlet

runner beans are very rewarding but will need to be supported on a tall (2–2.5 m) growing frame (discussed in my *Issue 3* article). Peas should also be encouraged to grow along a fence line or a one-metre-high support system. The more beans and peas are picked, the more they will continue to produce. Planting instructions will be on the seed packets.

Maintenance

Remember to keep your garden weed free and moist. Water once a week using a fine sprinkler for up to an hour to ensure that the root system is kept damp. This is much better than short bursts of fast-flowing water, which will mostly run off and will moisten only the very top layer of soil. Use your trowel to open up the topsoil layer to enable the water to really soak in and to remove any weeds.

Next issue I will talk about watering, feeding, and pests and diseases. In the meantime you are welcome to email me at gardening@prismmagazine.com.

Happy gardening!

Janette Bartlett has been growing vegetables almost as long as she's been eating them. She's a mother of six from Wainuiomata, and is convinced red hair is still in fashion. She works with her husband as a cobbler.

On harping

The Milk-Eyed Mender
(Drag City, 2004)
Joanna Newsom



I haven't heard the harp much on ZM lately. However, this unlikely stringed instrument, which we usually reserve for heavenly scenes, has found a home in the hands of Joanna Newsom.

Joanna, exercising the harp techniques learned since the age of seven, has developed a style distinct from that of most classically trained harpists. She sometimes refers to herself as a "harper" rather than a harpist, reflecting her refinement of a more artisanal – though no less masterly – approach to her craft.

After letting her love for songwriting overtake her initial plans to be a composer, she recorded and self-released two EPs: *Walnut Whales* and *Yarn and Glue*, before signing to Drag City Records. Her debut album, *The Milk-Eyed Mender*, was released in 2004 and features several revisited versions of songs previously found on her EPs.

Her music melds elements of indie pop with Appalachian and bluegrass traditions, inviting association with the new folk revival evinced in the music of Devendra Banhart and Sufjan Stevens, among others. But her idiosyncratic voice is a sticking point for many. Frequently described as being child-like or weathered, it can bring forth tears of joy or of sorrow.

The Milk-Eyed Mender is a sparsely arranged production, fashioned around the harp, with occasional appearances of a Wurlitzer organ, harpsichord, piano and Noah Georgeson on a slide-guitar for two tracks. The album is intimate, as if Joanna was singing gently to her listener in a quiet room. In an interview, she revealed that her lyrical

content is often "biographical – it's not necessarily literal, but it's not made up, it's not from a fairytale, it's from my life."* Joanna is the best kind of storyteller, imaginative and full of sensitivity and wonder, invoking tales of ships sailing to Cair Paravel, sleepless nights and mortality, while singing about grammar, molluscs, owls, burning boats, collections of string, balloons, cake and kin. The embroidery of *The Milk-Eyed Mender's* cover art befits its vivid and home-grown narrative.

Her lyrics show her love of words – their rhythms, their sounds, their spelling. She revels in such rhymes as "spurn/taciturn," "disaster/poetaster" and "slow/embarcadero." Alliteration is another favourite tool; "Peach, Plum, Pear" and "Clam, Crab, Cockle, Cowrie", she lists. Use of alliteration is also found in lines like "My fighting fame is fabled / and fortune finds me fit and able" ("Book Of the Right On"). She mourns ("Some great bellies ache with many bumblebees / and they sting so terribly") and she muses ("Your skin is something that I stir into my tea"), confirming that she is no poetaster.

I saw Miss Newsom and her harp live last year. She opened her set by gracefully strolling to the front of the stage before breaking into a cappella. Stunned, the crowd was silent as she quietly returned to her harp to take us on a magical journey. I relive that evening through *The Milk-Eyed Mender*.

Lynton Baird is a connoisseur of the world's lesser-known and occasionally unfashionable alternative/indie bands.

* Read the full interview at <http://www.fromamouth.com/milkymoon/article02.htm>



With over 400 billion cups consumed each year, coffee is one of the most popular beverages worldwide. Its popularity is probably a result of both its taste and the stimulating effect of caffeine. Women have indicated they drink coffee to relax; men say that drinking coffee helps them get their work done.

Of course, coffee has a social aspect too. People head to coffeehouses or cafés to sit down and enjoy their favourite coffee. All of us go out with friends and “drink coffee” – it’s just what we do! Whether we actually order coffee or hot chocolate or tea, coffee is still the primary reason we go out. It both relaxes us and stimulates good conversation.

Walking down the main street of town you’ll see hundreds of people – from rushing businessmen to punks wearing headphones, from hard-working construction men to little old ladies sitting at the sidewalk café – all sipping from their favourite brand. Everyone on TV drinks it; you always hear somebody on Shortland Street ordering a flat white. And it’s only natural for us to follow the trends (that’s what fashion’s all about). As my flatmate once profoundly told me, “It’s the drink people drink.”

It was only recently that I became passionate about coffee. As a marketing student as well as a barista, I can see what a huge consumer demand there is for a good (actually an *excellent*) cup of coffee. There are many intricate factors involved in mastering the art of coffee preparation, but the satisfaction I get from creating the perfect cup for a customer puts a smile on my face. And being complimented afterwards for making the best coffee in town just makes my day.

When I refer to making coffee, I’m not talking about thick, black, burnt coffee that most Americans drink (also known as filtered coffee). I’m talking about lattes, flat whites, cappuccinos and mochas – types of coffee made with a shot of espresso. New Zealanders are world leaders in their taste for espresso coffee. In the last three years, Kiwi baristas have reached the top ten in the World Barista Championship. Considering we’re competing against countries such as Italy and the Arabic countries (where the coffee bean was first cultivated), that’s a huge achievement.

Last month, I entered the regional barista competition – and in what better place than fashionable Wellington? It was a great learning experience. I was involved in the culture of coffee. I talked to other baristas about coffee blends, about adding flavours to match the espresso taste,

and about artistic designs to make elegant lattes.

The first step in the coffee-making process is the beans: a coffee distributor will pick, roast, blend and then package them to perfection. “Blending” is what defines different coffee brands such as Robert Harris or Starbucks. It combines the different kinds of coffee beans: sweet, acidic and caramelised, or strong, rich, full-bodied flavours. The taste of a good blend will affect all parts of your tongue, and it should be quite naturally sweet, as the roasting brings out natural sugars.

But it’s really the barista’s job that is most important in the whole process. When I prepare the perfect shot of espresso, the ground coffee has to be fresh (as a customer, you can ensure this by listening for the grinder running before your coffee is made). The ground coffee has to have a good consistency – not too fine but also not too coarse. Often I have to change the grind five times a day as temperature and humidity affect the grinding. The ground coffee then gets packed tightly and evenly into the dispenser.

The extraction of the coffee is also vital. A double shot runs for between 25 to 30 seconds and produces 60 mL of thick, dark, creamy coffee – this is the espresso, the base for any of your favourite drinks.

Steaming the milk (for a latte) requires two steady hands. One to hold the handle of the jug and adjust the steam wand to the depth of the milk, the other to hold the bottom of the jug to ensure a perfect temperature. There is nothing worse than a lukewarm or burnt latte to ruin the espresso shot. Milk froth also varies with the different coffee types.

Keeping all this in mind will produce an excellent coffee. The future of coffee depends on baristas to be professional, consistent and passionate about their jobs. Customers, tell the barista exactly how you want your coffee. It’s our job to listen.

Today, coffee is as popular as ever. New studies always come up, telling us of the health benefits or risks of drinking it. I just ignore them (as do the majority of the world). Coffee is delicious and stimulating – what more could you want?

Monique Kloeg makes coffee by day, pours beer by night, socialises with the locals of Masterton, and, of course, wants world peace.

Wine: God's gift to man

Marsanne, Syrah, Viognier, Tempranillo, Chenin Blanc, Verdelho ... anyone intimidated by these suspiciously foreign-looking words? I was once, but let me reassure you that all of the preceding terms are no more than harmless varieties of grape (or "varietals" as they call them in the wine game), so fear ye not. In fact, each one of them tastes delicious in its own unique way.

Sure, there's some terminology to get around, and it's much easier to just get "the one in the red cardboard box", but I tell you now that while curiosity is a vice which may have killed the cat, in the wonderful world of wine it is a virtue which invariably ends in infinite reward. And if you think all the different words with funny pronunciations are a waste of time, remember the wise words of Aussie wine guru Matt Skinner: "Wine is like an exotic foreign country that you really want to explore. Like most exotic countries, it comes complete with its own language, and unless you know more than just the token handful of lines to get you by, getting maximum enjoyment out of that country is going to be a hard assignment." Bone up on that lingo, amigos.

I am a self-proclaimed wine amateur, but I really have drunk a fair bit of the stuff (in moderation, of course). I will make no apologies for my lack of expertise. On the contrary, I revel in it and hide behind Matt Skinner's comforting phrase, "the best thing about wine is knowing you'll never know it all."

No one can doubt that wine is in fashion. It has long been a symbol of aristocracy and culture, it's an integral part of celebration and festivity, and it's an undeniable instigator of mirth and felicity. You could even say it's the new black, but really it's the old black. Ever since the day some enterprising young whippersnapper found out that fermenting grapes gave you more bang for your buck, our friend wine has been popping up pretty much everywhere: in the Greek symposiums and in the Norse legends, from the finest claret in the nobleman's castle to the home-brewed grappa in the peasant's earthen hut. It gets around,

does wine, guest-starring in numerous occasions of importance. One need only recall Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana. Apparently it was quite the vintage, if we take the guests at their word (the Bible doesn't say in John 2, but I reckon it was Pinot Noir). Don't listen to the sceptics who say it was grape juice. They're only half right; it was grape juice – for adults.

Anyway, I'd better get down to business and attempt to impart some knowledge. Firstly, wine is primarily about fun, so learn to throw your hat over the fence and have a blast. It *is* possible to look past the Chateau du Cardboard to buy yourself a bottle of something you can hardly pronounce, and just give it a go. It can be daunting when you depart from the tried and true Corban's White Label or Banrock Station Chardonnay, but you'll get used to it. And if you're ever really stuck, ask the nice man at the counter of the liquor store. I've generally found that people in the know are more than happy to take you under their wino wing. It's a sharing, caring environment in the wine world.

Now for a few tips on wine fashion. Are you going out to dinner and wanting to buy a bottle that's as boring as your mates at the chess club? Get a Merlot – it's as complex as an amoeba, and drinking it is about as interesting as watching paint dry. Uncool. However, it blends very, very well with Cabernet Sauvignon, taking the edge off and delivering some fruity goodness to the mix. Cab Merlots are a safe bet and almost invariably go down a treat. Check out some of the fragrant Cab Merlot offerings from Margaret River in Western Australia. They're excellent and they're pretty cheap in New Zealand, too (I recommend Palandri or Howard Park).

If I had to name the steeziest (that means best, kids) white varietal of the moment, my money would be on Viognier. It's the white wine to be drinking right now because it has an impressive sounding name (*vee-on-yeah* or *vee-on-yay*), layers of lush apricot and peach on the nose (have a good schniff), and gentle orange-blossom

on the palate, not to mention an oily texture which goes down oh-so-smooth. It also tends to have a high alcohol percentage, generally rating in at about 15%. If you want to try a Viognier without burning a hole in your pocket, the Yalumba Y-Series drinks nicely, and can had for around ten bucks.

As far as reds go, my personal favourite is Pinot Noir. As well as being able to bore dinner guests with tales of how delicate the grape is, it also has the advantage of tasting delicious – important, I feel. The Martinborough and Central Otago regions in New Zealand do some fantastic mixes just bursting with cherry and other dark fruit and berry flavours, but they often come with a price tag. If you don't mind parting with around \$18 dollars (stop whinging, it's not that much) then I'd recommend either Te Kairanga Estate Pinot or Stugglers Flat Pinot. They're both wonderful examples of what the Pinot Noir grape has to offer.



At this stage it's probably appropriate to emphasise just how imperative it is to be open-minded; don't get too fixated on any one region, estate or varietal. Parochialism may have got your grandfather through life, but it will only hamper you in your search for fine wine. For instance, the other week, in a heady moment of cavalier curiosity, I became the tentative owner of a bottle of Mills Reef Reserve Pinot Noir. I was dubious as to what a Hawke's Bay Pinot might shape up to be. Expecting a good Pinot from the Hawke's Bay is like expecting a good meal at McDonald's, but my experimental nature was rewarded with an eminently drinkable and, I dare say, quite good wine.

This motley mishmash must end somehow, so I charge all of you to get out there and try as many different wines as you can afford to get your mitts on. See a half-drunk glass at a function? Wrap your laughing gear around it. (No, don't do that if you want to avoid facial herpes, but do try those wines, won't you.) Spend at least a couple of seconds contemplating what you see, smell and taste in your glass. Read, think and drink about it. Let the brave amongst you go visit wineries – you'll get free tastings and learn insane amounts about wine and other interesting stuff. Bring friends if you feel a little overwhelmed. Remember, we all start somewhere – as a first year student I thought Jacob's Creek Shiraz Cabernet was a top drop, and it doesn't pain me to say that I'm glad I was able to enjoy it at the time. Cherish each varietal as it slides down your grateful throat, and let the satisfied smile gracing your face bear testimony to that which can only be described as a special gift from God to man.

*With a personality which blurs the border between that which is ludicrous and that which is not, **Richard Steenhof** is a concatenation of pompous law student and rascally wine-bibbing jackanapes. In his spare time he plays sports, chills with his bro Si, and gets affianced to Rebecca Jayne Wierenga. Beware: a little of this man goes a long way.*

An interview with Francis Hooper, designer

WORLD is a New Zealand fashion label that really lives up to its name. Prism editor **Ben Hoyt** chats about business and fashion with their chief designer, Francis Hooper. (An audio recording of the full interview is available on our website under Issue 4.)

How did you come up with the name?

We wanted something that wouldn't box us in ... something timeless. We didn't want a name that would just conjure up pretty-girl dresses or whatever. With WORLD we can pretty much do whatever we want underneath that name, from sublime to verging on ridiculous. But of course the other side is the fantasy. We wanted to be world-wide.

Do you also try to incorporate a sense of Kiwi in your design or business processes?

Well, in the sense that it's from here, but we don't wear the badge on our lapel. It just becomes too parochial or political, and you kill the spark of creativity. We don't go "Kiwi" or "Aotearoa" – that can take away from what's great about the product. But we proudly say "Made in New Zealand" on our labels, and I believe it's obvious where we're from because of the way we approach things.

What inspired you to take up fashion design?

I fell into it, really. I'm not trained and have never taken a fashion course ... I used to be a DJ. It was amazing, I just needed a job, and ended up at Commes des Garçons, and then with John Galliano, who's now of course world famous. I was lucky.

News articles make it sound like it was really easy for you and your wife Denise to start WORLD back in 1989. What's one key piece of advice you have for starting a business?

Really easy! [laughs] They sensationalise. They talk about us as one of the "big brands". Of course we were a big brand, but only because we were one of the first. My advice is to work really hard, that's the only key thing. If you think 40 to 50 hours, that's a [fashionably colourful language] Victorian unionist ideal ... try 70 to 100 hours. Oh, the second thing is, just have a real belief in your talent.

What are some of the unfashionable things involved in starting a fashion business?

There's nothing unfashionable, really, it was a clean slate. New Zealand was uneducated in fashion, and we're always trying to convince and educate the NZ public and the global public. We knew we had to do this if they were going to take us seriously.

WORLD is usually described as being "avant-garde" or "experimental". Are these labels you'd use yourself?

"Avant-garde" is kind of a redundant word. Fashion's gotten so slick, and it's become a bit of a lie, really, so much of it's just bull[snip]. We're still leaders in our field of fashion, but we do so much more – menswear, children's, women's, accessories. To say "avant-garde" is too limiting.

So who would your major buyers and wearers be?

Everyone, really. Our average customer is 30 ... well, we have lots of 20-somethings, but equally we have a lot of women up to their late forties. They want colour, something different, great shape. And men from 20 to 50 come to us. But we don't really design clothes for a specific sector, we're still very "true" as designers. We don't do market research and focus groups and all that – I mean, we're not McDonalds. And I think true fashion should be like that.

RILED

How does a particular design get from the catwalk to the buyer?

Why it's succeeded for us is that we run our own stores in New Zealand. There's a true honesty there – if we believe in something, we'll make it and put it in our shops and show it to you. Internationally it's different – the catwalk is totally different from the store. All you'll ever see is a very watered-down version of the brand, so they lose it. We often stand out like a sore thumb, and the bad side is that you could hate it!

Has technology and the Internet affected your business?

At present it's made it harder for us, actually. We're still old-fashioned, we work on patterns, we work on cloth and cutting. We don't sell on the net ... you need to see the cut, the colour, the feel.

Getting philosophical, what do you think is the purpose of fashion design? What about the purpose or meaning of clothing?

Fashion is to seduce, to excite, to create beauty and sexiness in both men and women. You can't walk

around naked, you just can't do that. Fashion is the sexy end of clothing, and a reflection of society. Most people don't realise how important it is to global culture. Society at present places huge value on fashion – rightly or wrongly.

My wife and I are expecting a baby, and have to start looking at kids' clothing. What are some of the special things you have to think about with WORLD Baby?

First of all, we're running a business, so it's got to be practical, washable, wearable ... we only use natural fibres. Basic practicality actually comes to the forefront. A baby has to be fireproof and warm. We play to the adult, but we make sure baby is protected. But we don't go too crazy. My concern is that mum and dad don't go out and spend \$900 on baby.

How do you balance work and social life, or work and family – or are they too intertwined to talk about balancing?

They have been, yes. If you go back and do the timeline, we got married and opened the business all in the same month, and then had a daughter in the same year. I have been accused of not being able to switch off, though my wife is a lot more departmentalised.

How do you and Denise complement each other in your design efforts?

Denise is the serious one and I'm the silly one, we're really chalk and cheese. We've succeeded because we respect each other's opinions. Trust is the most important thing, and this involves money, time, direction. And also, we're married, not just partners in business, and that means forever ... at least we hope it does! [laughs]



Francis Hooper and the latest models.

When thinking about textile science, it is humbling to think that the first recorded instance of clothing manufacture was Adam and Eve taking leaves and covering themselves. If the Fall did not occur, would we spend so much of our lives toiling for the clothes we wear? Would we have made such an impact on the planet, and disrupted our mandate to care for the earth? And would we have had such extremes of temperature, and the need for clothing such as that taken to the ice and to Everest?

No, this is not really the stuff I ponder when developing my next clothing creation, but it is the stuff which fleetingly jumps across my mind as I carry out my work (often when hanging out the washing).

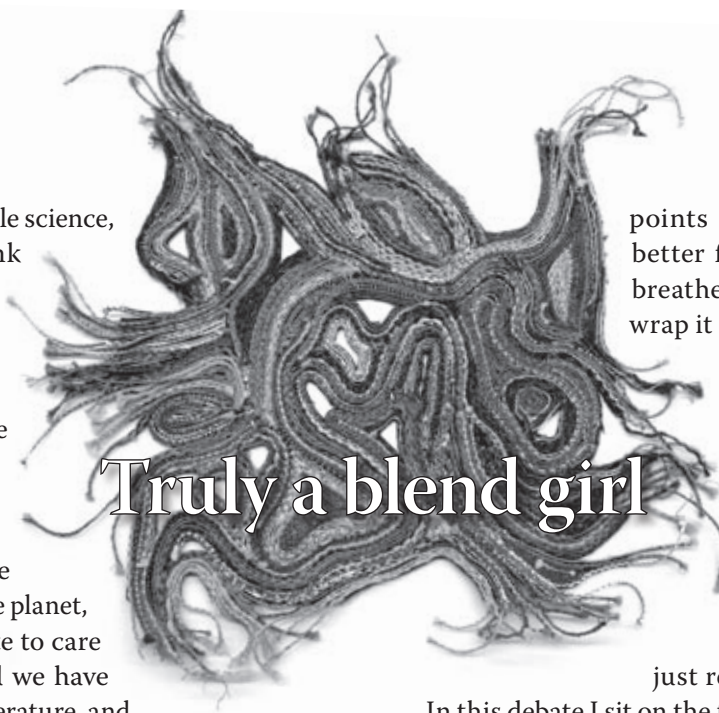
So what is textile science? In round terms, it is the study of the manufacture and properties of the fabrics we wear. Textile science, or, as *we* knew it at school, clothing.

For the last few centuries, the advances in clothing have been about improving the throughput of production, in particular the machines which allow us to process more fibre – quicker and higher quality.

But just around the corner lies a large, sleeping giant. This is the aspect of pollution – from the growing, processing and manufacturing of textiles. It has been estimated that cotton alone uses 10% of the world's pesticides and 25% of the world's insecticides.

We must be fair, however. A small crop infestation can wipe out the production of all fibres from each affected seed pod. It can also reduce their colour and quality (measured in fibre length). Perhaps the biggest issue, though, is the waste from the dyeing process. Dyeing is a water-intensive process in which the various chemicals are dissolved in water, and which the fibre (or finished cloth) is either bathed in or jetted through. Once this process is complete, the water becomes a waste product, with all the left-over chemicals still in solution. This issue alone has kept many a technologist busy over the last half-century.

It just wouldn't be right to talk about the current state of textile science without discussing the merits of natural fibres versus the synthetics (in other words, cotton, wool, and linen versus nylon, polyester and elastane or lycra). This discussion can come from two



Truly a blend girl

points of view. Firstly, which is better for your skin: to allow it to breathe using natural fibres, or to wrap it in plastic? The second point is that of origin: natural fibres are by nature a sustainable resource – they don't come from a limited resource like oil, as the synthetics do. (Yes, that's right – thanks to the work done by Mr Du Pont and his friends, synthetics are just reconstituted oil.)

In this debate I sit on the fence. I quite like wearing my merino and cotton clothes, because they never have the body odour problems my polyester clothes have. However, nylon and elastane add some very useful properties because they are *filament* fibres (they go on “forever”) as opposed to *staple* fibres (which are cut to length from a sheep's back). This greatly adds to the wear capabilities of your socks. These days, you'll find that some of your sock just disappears, but the knit will be thinner – visible but not broken. What happens is the filament stays but the staple goes.

The other property you may find useful is elasticity (when fabrics bounce back after being stretched). Elastane can stretch to five times its original length, handy for those days of overeating. Things have got very clever in this department. These days we can wind cotton or wool around the elastane, and the result has the stretch of elastane but breathes like natural fibres. This all means I am truly a blend girl.

For those of you who don't like wool because it's prickly, your argument will only hold till you invest in *quality*. The finer the diameter of the fibre (measured in micrometres, μm), the less chance of you feeling it. In fact, textile scientists have even figured out at exactly what diameter you start to feel individual fibres.

Moving forward, I guess the exciting part of all of this is the possibility of using bio fuels as the raw materials for synthetics, thus making them a renewable resource. And this takes us back to the very first synthetic produced – rayon. Rayon is otherwise known as “artificial silk”, and is made from *wood pulp* (how renewable can you get?).

Funny how we have come full circle.

Margaret Haverland is a mechanical engineer, seamstress, mother of five, and owner of a Christchurch sewing shop. She's also got some sweet kayaking skills.

Blanket man

If you happen to be walking through Cuba Mall or Courtenay Place in Wellington, you might come across a man – a sinewy, vagrant, dreadlocked, Māori man sitting by the side of the road. It's quite likely you've come across him before. "Blanket Man" is one of Wellington's most recognisable icons.

You can't help but put yourself in the shoes (if he had them) of this vagrant who sits before you, attired in nothing but a loincloth. His possessions seem to include only a bright purple blanket, an iPod, and the occasional peace pipe. Instead of inciting general disgust or revulsion, Blanket Man is a subject of intense curiosity. Though unkempt, he does not present a hygiene problem; he does not beg, he does not rifle through rubbish bins, he does not pleadingly raise his eyes to passers-by in mute helplessness. (However, he was forcibly removed from government steps by Winston Peters, who objected to the view from his office window, not to mention the desecration of our glorious city.)

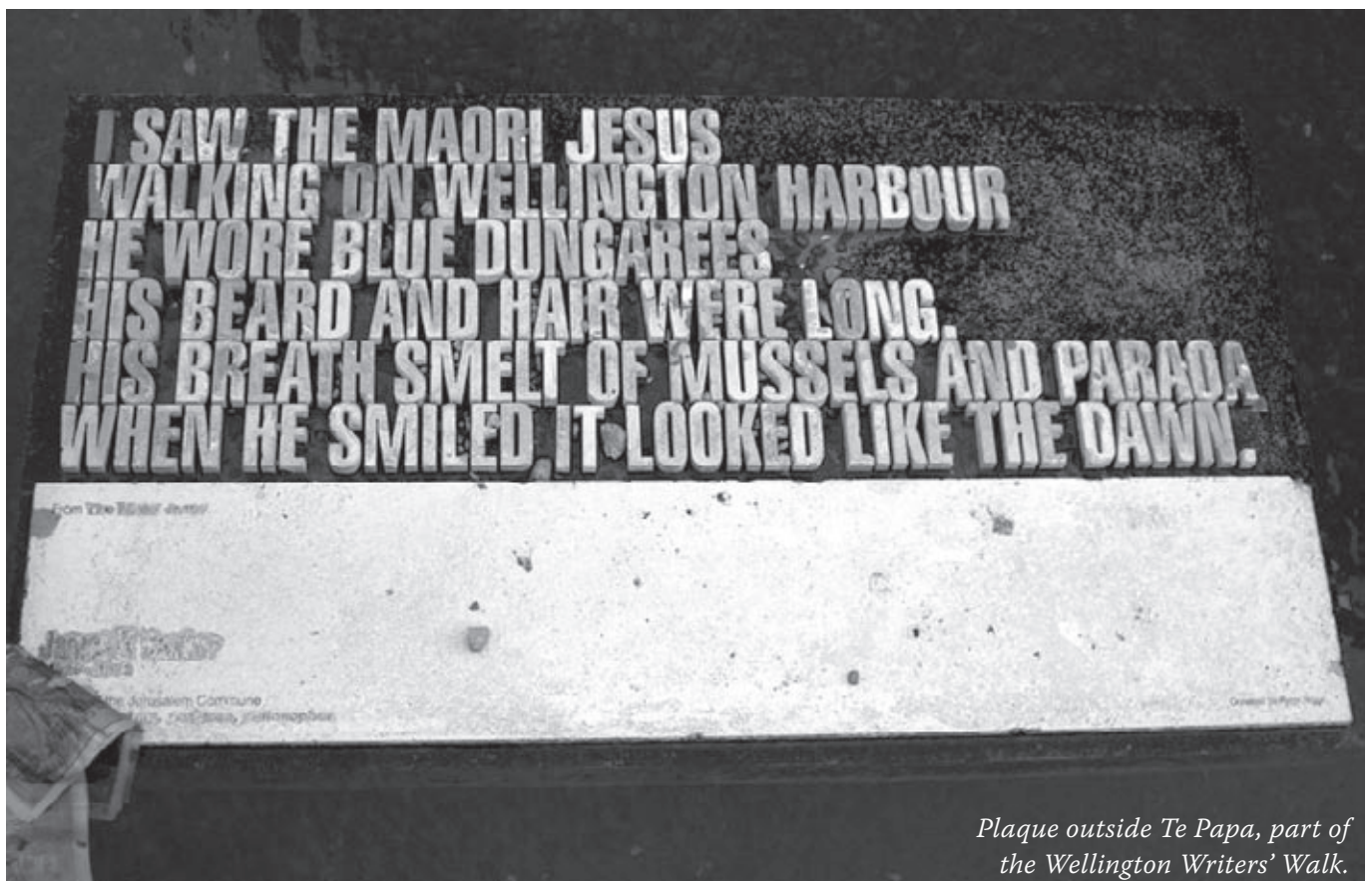
You will find him jamming to music on his iPod (he likes rock music) and staring despondently at the traffic. He will smile at you if you smile at him. He'll greet you and accept your cigarettes. It's not only his apparel and attitudes that make Blanket Man a subject of such scrutiny, but also the

fact that, since 2001, he has *chosen to be homeless*.

His name is Ben Hana. He subscribes to no system, eschewing especially the pervasiveness of capitalism with its consumer-producer values. Ben believes that social systems and social pressures are damaging to us, individuals who are misunderstood and undervalued by the system. Put simply, Ben is a non-conformist. He believes in the supremacy and healing power of nature, particularly the Māori sun god Ra, which is why you'll often find Ben sunning himself on traffic islands. He believes no one should hold power, that power is the earth's alone, and that all men are free to be free.

Ben is the homeless man with something to give. Ben's fashion (or lack thereof) and his minimalist attitude toward life remind us in a roundabout way of some really important issues – peace and social justice. Ben gives a face and name to many of the increasing number of homeless who roam Wellington's fair streets. So consider your material possessions. Then consider our very own Blanket Man, and take what you want from one who owns very little, Ben Hana.

When Esther Zorn isn't researching Blanket Man, she can be found on park benches reading about ancient Greek gods.



Plaque outside Te Papa, part of the Wellington Writers' Walk.

Silver Circus kids' clothes

When people ask what I do, I often say that I'm a full-time mum and a part-time artist. But to be a bit more accurate, I make clothes. The artist bit ("artist" in the traditional sense) was kind of left behind when I was pregnant. Solvents and paints are super-toxic and messy.

So I spend my time hunched over a sewing machine and surrounded by mountains of fabric, with a mission to create original kiddy clothes. They're often unisex, or at least are not all pink flowers for girls and blue trucks for boys. I use vintage fabrics and natural fibres (including hand-dyed hemp and handmade felt), and I dabble in screen-printing (mainly New Zealand plants such as cabbage trees, flax, kowhai and nikau palms).

I make children's clothes because they are smaller and faster to make. They use less fabric, and I feel I'm getting more done in the limited time I have – before my gorgeous girl settles herself on my knee to play with the moving needle.

Recently I set up a business for making and selling the

clothes under the label *Silver Circus*. I work from a studio space at home (the biggest room of the house) and sell my work mainly at markets, fairs, and boutique shops. The main fuel for *Silver Circus* is not the possible income, it's more the expression of creativity. I have a constant desire to be creating something and, according to my mum, always have had.

If I'm not sewing, designing or printing, I find myself feeling a kind of unconstructive uselessness, or hanging the washing in rainbow sequence, or making muffins with a bizarre mix of ingredients, or just getting *too* into Lucy's play dough.

I just *have* to be doing something. Sitting on the couch watching TV or reading a novel gives me pangs of guilt about not doing anything practical. I have an itch to sew, and the only way I can afford it is to sell it.

Angela Holtslag's house has wooden floors. partially obscured by thousands of pieces of fabric.

Tender loving car

Just like fixing a rip in your favourite pair of jeans, repairing cars also requires a bit of TLC to avoid being a fashion disaster. Fortunately, working on your car is a long way from threading needles on a sewing machine.

This issue we repair a bumper that went rabbit hunting at 100 km/h. The owner's car has creases in the right places again, and fixing it is much more fun than ironing.

If you're DIY-ing, you first need to be realistic about the kind of issue you're trying to solve. If you now have a port window where you once had a door, visit your local Pick-a-Part. They're especially good for cars ten years or older. For modern parts, a great source is New Zealand Car Parts. Recently I picked up some side skirts for my car (it's a girl, you see) for \$95 as-new.

Ideally, the problem will be a hole or dent no larger than your fist. Tears in bumpers are easy to fix, and our rabbit kindly gave us a working sample.

If you're repairing a flexible part, such as a spoiler or bumper, fibreglass will give it original strength without cracking when flexed. Otherwise, bog (also known as "body filler") is perfect for fixing rust spots smoothly, or helping with dents on metal. Our bumper was torn in the middle on the lower lip, so fibreglass behind the lip will make it as good as new.

Your choice of primer (the base coat applied before any

coloured paint) depends on the surface you're spraying. Fibreglass requires a plastic primer to adhere to the surface, whereas zinc-based primer is a must for rust. Rust loves zinc, almost as much as it loves 1987 Honda Accords. But I hope your car is still mostly metal – rust is not a fashionable colour. I bought a plastic primer from Road & Track (Repcos also have reasonable quality paint). While I was there, I also had my paint matched up – costly, if you have the misfortune of owning a pearl-white car.

First of all, clean the area thoroughly. I like Bug & Tar remover. Then prepare the surface with 80–120 grit sandpaper to get the paint and rust removed rapidly. Once the worst is gone, move quickly to a 200–240 grit paper so that you don't make coarse marks in the surface – they can be hard to remove or fill in later. You may even want to skip the rough paper. I used a polishing sander and 240 grit paper to quickly sand the area around the split lip. A sander gives good control when working with plastic and fibreglass. Make sure any rust is gone from the diseased area, and lightly sand around the vicinity so the paint is flush with the surface.

Prepare the fibreglass, taking time to follow the instructions. A fibreglass kit, available from Repco or Super Cheap Auto, will give you everything you need for about 30 to 40 dollars. The latex gloves are essential. Make



sure all fibreglass strands are covered with resin, even if they aren't going where you want them. It's much easier to hack-saw or sand hard fibreglass than to remove soft fibres if no resin was applied. I also put resin in all the tiny cracks that fibreglass wouldn't fit into, as it hardens on its own, and is near impossible to tell from the original once sanded and painted.

Bog is much simpler. But be careful with the hardener. Too much and the bog will firm up quickly yet crack later. Too little and you'll be renaming the saying to "watching bog dry". The bog should turn slightly pink. (If I was a real fashion writer I'd call it *pale salmon*.) Once you've filled in the hole, use a putty blade to smooth the bog, but allow it to stand out a little so you can sand it back to be flush with the surface.

Bog normally takes an hour to dry, and for my fibreglass to harden properly I left it overnight. Once it is completely dry, you'll be able to manipulate it by sanding very easily. This is the hardest part, and it has everything to do with patience and nothing to do with skill. Sand flat, and if you have any little pock marks or cavities, Repco sell a "tube putty" that can fill in any blemished surfaces. Again, allow at least an hour to dry, preferably more.

Spray on your primer once the bog or fibreglass is finished, again making sure the area is clean before you start. Primer dries quickly, normally within 15 minutes in the sun. Just ensure you have a smooth coat and there are no runs in the paint. A few coats will do the trick.

Now you're up to the real painting. If you have an

expensive paint, you might like to paint on a cheaper base coat first, using a similar shade to the real paint. (I used Super White II from Repco as my base coat.) That way you don't have to waste expensive paint trying to hide pink bog or yellow fibreglass.

Once you've sprayed evenly and smoothly, and the colour has come through strongly, you'll be ready to think about sanding with fine sandpaper (such as 600 grit) and adding more coats. This is handy if you made a few mistakes, and it will give a strong layer of paint. Or you might be ready to finish with a top coat for a gloss finish. Gloss paint is a pain, but it can make the difference between an off-white and the real white of your car. It can also run very easily, so take your time.

Well done – you're probably looking back and admiring your work already. Hopefully it doesn't look like the first time you discovered hair gel (I'd recommend the Wearable Arts for worst cases). But it's *experience* that's valuable. Soon you'll be looking for all the rips in your petrol-drinking "jeans". You'll be proud of your own mended fashion.

Adian Wojtas is an ex-Southern man who, after his move to the Capital, severed most ties in order to embrace city living. Despite the Ben Sherman shirts, hints of the Mainland still reveal themselves ... the DIY, the grunty cars, and the smug look every time Canterbury wins. He works as IT manager of a telecommunications company in Wellington.

Cinderella Man II

AN INSPIRATIONAL TRUE STORY

SOON TO BE MADE INTO A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE

From drab to fab, from wallflower to wildflower, from caterpillar to butterfly, from whatever is stink to whatever is cool ... who doesn't love a good, old-fashioned Cinderella story? Or even a little attempt inside Transformation Station oneself? In whatever shape or form, a makeover is always an exciting way to reinvent one's image. My friend discovered this for himself not too long ago. This is his story, shared so that others may be inspired by the courage and fortitude of one solitary young man. My workmates were touched by his story. If he could make it through, as deeply entrenched in wardrobe malfunction as he was, anyone can.

"Before his metamorphosis," I explained to my colleagues gathered around the water cooler, "my friend owned a treasure." Yes, as a woman's glory is her long hair, so my friend's glory was his long tresses. His hair cascaded in an abundance of curly splendour that was the envy of all women, and it was more than enough to make up for whatever was lacking in his wardrobe. His similarly-cascading beard (that was *not* the envy of most women) helped to keep him very different, and very splendid indeed ... or so one might have thought. This modern-day Rapunzel forgot one thing – that hair maketh not the man. He needed clothing as well.

The country town where he was born was not the best start. "Can anything good come out of Masterton?" questioned the resident cynic in my office when I told her about my friend. Another declared, "The fashion sins of the town should not be visited upon the children of any generation." A third co-worker wondered if somebody ought to lead the children to a better place by piping them over the Rimutakas into Style City beyond.

We all ruminated on the dangers of raising someone in a country town – a question that will be better debated in a future issue of *Prism* – until Lance, our male fashionista, lisped, "The poor daahling can't have spent all his *life* there, surely. He must have met somebody to help him along!"

Alas, my friend needed some good fashion sense or a female helpmeet, and Dunedin was not the place to find either.

So what *did* happen in Dunedin? His hair grew to epic proportions. He wandered in that fashion wilderness, eating chemicals and honey, girding himself in garments of polar fleece and polyester. Four years of Dunedin styles

would leave even fashion guru Donatella Versace bereft of any ideas, other than Speights rugby shirts, or maybe an "Otago University" hoodie. If nothing amazing had happened to my friend, he would still be there, wandering around university with his hair and beard mingling. Fortunately, something amazing did happen. He left.

Gasps were heard around the water cooler as I related this to the office.

"Did he find a girl?"

"Did he find his mojo?"

"Did he find a mirror?"

"He found hope," I announced as grandly as I could. They were all very impressed. Hope. Such an inspiring word. I didn't elaborate ... somehow telling them his real

reasons for moving didn't seem like a good idea. When it came to the city slickers in my office, it was only ever "fashion for fashion's sake."

Once in the teeming metropolis of this fair city, he started to blossom. "Like going from winter to spring?" asked the receptionist, who was particularly fond of gardening.

The short answer is yes. The long answer is that, as subtly as winter creeps away, bowing before the slow approach of warmth and light, so fashion ignorance was being melted by the warmth of awareness – awareness that one

person did not look like the others. Radical changes toward conformity began. "His hair was shorn – and his beard," I said sadly. "It was for the best ... for the best," somebody said, patting her own long curls protectively. There was a general murmur of sympathy for the rejected tresses.

He even progressed to a shopping trip to buy clothes that were brand new, from Hallensteines no less (everyone in the room nodded to this important step toward style). Then more trips to more stores, and soon it was jeans, T-shirts – really anything that wasn't cargos or polar fleece. Within one year of moving to this city he had made the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly.

With sighs of satisfaction, those gathered around the water cooler started to disperse with a renewed sense of hope. They realised they could all make a difference just by living what they believed. Clearly, they believed that one's style is an important statement: they could each do their part for the world in different ways. Some could contribute meaningfully to the world by dressing





Some would say this desire is wrong, others that there's nothing wrong with it, but I tend to take the middle road (perhaps a sign of weakness) and say that it's fine in moderation. Either way, this article will steer happily clear of that particular issue, and instead address what to do if you *do* decide to shape up for the summer.

And summer is only just around the corner. I, for one, would certainly like to be bigger than Ben Hur when I crack out the singlet and stubbies for the next half-year. So, with hundreds of others, I will very soon be making a pre-emptive strike on my winter misshapeness, renewing my gym membership and attempting to improve my physique before summer actually arrives. And I'll be doing this all at the local gymnasium.

There is a problem, though. Visiting the gym is easy. Visiting the gym with *style*, however, is a whole different ball game. Here are some tips to ensure the attempt to sculpt your body for the warm season doesn't become a fashion disaster.

There are some things you definitely should do at the gym. The first is to bring a towel to wipe up your sweat. Benches, rowers, treadmills and cross-trainers all accumulate a lot of moisture during a workout, and it's up to you to clean up the mess. Wiping is a courtesy.

Ladies, to maintain decorum, wear a sports bra. Jordan Wilson, gym-goer of almost six years, described to me the consequences of not: "I once saw a woman riding an exercise bike so vigorously that her breasts flapped.

It wouldn't have been so bad if it wasn't accompanied by constant grunting."

Wear deodorant. I know of people leaving a gym because of an individual's body odour. It's not fashionable to be that person.

There are also a number of don'ts for the budding Dan Carter or Mandy Smith. Like don't wear lycra. I once heard of a woman wearing a blue lycra bodysuit, coupled with tan stockings, to a Victoria University Fitness Centre pump class. Unlike mullets, lycra has not made a comeback since the '80s.

Another clothing item to avoid is the ripped singlet. In fact, try not to wear anything ripped. Unless you're going for the Chuck Norris look, checkered shirts with the sleeves torn off are a particularly unwise choice. Whether you like it or not, the term *poser* will immediately be thrown your way.

Speaking of posers, don't make loud noises while you pump that iron. Grunting does not make the weights any lighter. An example is a character at my gym – he's nicknamed Grünter due to the exceptionally loud groans that escape his lips at every bicep curl or bench press.

Grünter breaks the final rule too – don't boast about your body during your workout. I'll never forget the day I overheard, "Mate, when you have an arm girth of eight inches you can start telling me how to lift weights!" Grünter then went on to explain to the gym that he was once nicknamed "Chopsticks" because of his "massive" upper arms.

Have fun in the gym this year, but remember, you now only have yourself to blame if you make a fashion faux pas.

"Tim Sterne is an exquisite juxtaposition of rural ruggedness and mild metrosexuality. He writes with a peremptory snort. Simply sublime." – Daily Telegraph

in Nike, supporting third world countries. Others could contribute by dressing in synthetics, so as not to waste our earth's precious resources. Whatever way chosen, they knew that what they wore affected what others wore, and that made their self-esteem grow strong. Like Cinderella's fairy godmother, they could each make a difference.

So, if you are currently swimming in the mire of stylistic uncertainty, take heart. Stay away from little towns (not to mention big towns at the bottom of the

country pretending to be cities). Remember that your choices make a difference.

As for my friend, he has just come back from a modelling session for Gucci in Europe – he was discovered after starring in a world-wide fashion convention in Hungary. Fairy tales really do come true.

Courtney Wilson, otherwise known as Miss Tongue-in-Cheek, enjoys Wellington, well-shorn Bairds, and coloured-rimmed glasses.

On wearing dignity

Today was the funeral for the Māori Queen
Dame Te Atairangikaahu
child of the Kingitanga
all present said she was a woman
of great dignity

Dignity can not be worn
like a feather cloak
hanging off the shoulders
encircling the body
cannot be bought or traded
like land

Sometimes it is lost
like language

Taonga of true beauty
are hard to find
there is a cost in carrying them
to the end

Is one born with dignity
or is it something earned?

One Chief said
*She moved among her people
Sustaining her people
With her presence*

Dignity
not a cold hard thing
a mantle of memory
woven together
over many years
each thread a tribute
to humility
and a generous smile

In a lifetime
Te has rebuilt
a forgotten highway
her steep path turns from aggression
and the tools though sharp
have never been clenched
with violence

Peace has its own way
of cutting

Dignity commands your respect
your attention
though it seldom made the news

And now at her death
the news tells us she was a woman
of great dignity

And gradually,
little by little we notice
when she turned the last bend in the river
her wake still spread out in sharp lines
trails for us all to follow

big waka to fill
long way to paddle

*Joel Carpenter likes surfing at Lyall Bay,
organising poetry evenings and baking bread.
He has a fine head of hair.*

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