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On yer bike: Near Sheffield in Canterbury.

Photos by: Kate Carney and Hugo Gladstone

Back in business



UPTOWN GIRL
 SARAH MCCARTHY

I CAN'T believe I'm back at work. It hardly seems fair. I honestly think I could do a much better job if I got to stay at home and read a book and not have to do my work at all.

It's also hard to believe Christmas is over and done with for another year. It feels like it's only midway through June (and the weather isn't helping with this delusion) but here I am in January, back at work, sunburn peeling and wearing the same pants I wore on the last day of work (I think - all of my pants are black so it's easy to lose track).

Sometimes I wish that our summer holidays weren't half used up with the whole Christmas palaver.

In the northern hemisphere at least people get to have a nice wee week off for Christmas and then it's back to work but at least with thoughts of summer holidays to bolster them up. But with us it seems to be all in one great big job lot and you end up wasting half of your holiday running around buying wrapping paper and sieving gravy and then before you know it you're back at the coalface wondering how much they give you on the dole (although we are struggling under a National anti-welfare regime so I'm guessing the dole consists of a stern talking-to and a bag of seed potatoes).

And I'm not really one for making New Year's resolutions, I'm more the type to suddenly decide to do something like learn to play the ukulele (no joke, I got a yellow one for Christmas from Mr mr) or resurrect a childhood dream of being an orthodontist (although stymied yet again by an astounding lack of comprehension when it comes to physics, something which apparently comes in mighty handy when trying to drag a recalcitrant incisor back in line), so I don't even have any weird new regimes to struggle with sticking to that would help me through the first, fraught days back at work, like giving up smoking or going on a diet... (just leaving a beat for my mum to mutter something under her breath).

And don't think I've forgotten the fact that some people have to work over the holiday road toll period. Those people used to be me, stuck working in a restaurant or some such while holiday revellers would breeze in, order nice drinks and nibbly bits and then breeze out again, off for a wee sleep, perhaps, or a stroll round the shops. Bastards.

And that was well before restaurateurs used to shove 15 per cent on top of everything because they had to pay their staff stat pay - we used to do it for the glory and the promise of a bottle of Bernardino Spumante. So I'm there for you too.

So, anyway, back to it.

Hope 2010 is a lot more interesting than 2009, or at least that I will work out how to be a bit more, well, pleasant.

PS: HAPPY BIRTHDAY MUMBLE.

Boxing clever

Hugo Gladstone and Kate Carney encounter some of New Zealand's more eccentric roadside sculptures.

IN October 2008, not long before we left Queenstown to travel around the rest of New Zealand, my girlfriend Kate and I embarked on a project photographing personalised home-made letterboxes.

The reason couldn't have been simpler: we liked them.

We thought they were fun. They seemed a far more interesting alternative to the letterboxes you can buy off the shelf.

The project was spontaneously conceived as we were turning our van around in a driveway on a Queenstown cul-de-sac. On the verge stood a fine

specimen of a letterbox depicting the terrace of four houses that it served. In our glove box was a camera. As a token of our appreciation to its design, we took a picture.

Over the following five months we took a lot more snaps of such letterboxes as we travelled the length and breadth of the country.

We weren't actively seeking them out; just keeping an eye on the roadside and pulling over whenever a letterbox took our fancy. From Southland to Northland, Greymouth to Gisborne, we found hundreds of them. The most frequent designs we photographed were models of animals and



Pretty in pink: Route 85 near Chatto Creek.

vehicles. Just a few days after taking our first shot in Queenstown, we drove past a letterbox near Clyde decorated with a cat. A bit further along the road -

just north of Alexandra - we found a big pink elephant to greet the postman each morning. I think it was about here we realised that there was mileage in our project.

It seemed the road network of New Zealand was one vast, random gallery of quirky, inspired, fun-filled letterbox folk art. On very few occasions did we get to meet the people whose wonderful creations we pictured.

To us, they remained as anonymous as the painters of ancient cave art.

The only clues to their personality would lie in what their letterbox said about them.

Maybe we'd deduce that they like motorbikes; perhaps they were a fisherman; a good few of the letterbox makers clearly spend a lot of time tinkering in their shed.

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Glen Nevis Station, Queenstown

↔ 2,437 hectare

Glen Nevis Station will certainly appeal to the most discerning purchaser, with outstanding views.

- The station currently runs approx 6,000 stock units with a mix of cattle and sheep grazing the high country and elevated terraces that run approx seven kilometers along the lake. Glen Nevis station comes complete with a four bed room homestead, five stand wool shed, a set of solid cattle yards, sheep yard and an airstrip.
- Rarely does such a large freehold position ever become available in the Wakatipu basin

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