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Map courtesy of Destination Coromandel, www.thecoromandel.com

A quick note about the artworks in this book...



All of the paintings and drawings in this book are original works by Charlotte Giblin.

At the time of going to press, some of these original paintings and drawings are still for sale. Limited edition prints of many of the paintings are also available.

Charlotte has a comprehensive website which shows a lot of her artwork, although many of the older pieces have been replaced by more recent paintings. If you see something in this book that you love, please don't hesitate to get in touch and enquire about it! Charlotte also undertakes a wide variety of commissions, including large scale murals.

Visit www.bouncingpig.co.nz or email info@bouncingpig.co.nz (Why bouncing pig? It's all explained on the website!)

The artworks have been photographed in natural light (usually outside with some sun!) to fully enhance the colours and show them at their best. It is very difficult to replicate the colours exactly in a painting through photography and the printing process. However, photographing these artworks in strong daylight has kept the colour balance as true as possible to the original.

The only digital alteration of any of these images was lightening those that were photographed in poor light at the start of the series, and are no longer owned by Charlotte.

If you have one of these original paintings on your wall, but think "mine doesn't look like the reproduction here", just position it in really good, bright light and the colours will come to life.

Happy viewing!!

On the road ... with Charlotte

One of the great things about producing *Coromandel Life* magazine is meeting so many remarkable people. Charlotte Giblin is one of those. My 'journey' with her has been a delightful collaboration that began shortly after her move to the Coromandel while she was Administrator for Mercury Bay Art Escape. However I soon discovered that she was also a talented artist with plans to focus full-time on that passion.

Charlotte told me she had been documenting her travels to many scenic areas on the Coromandel with both her charming paintings and journal entries. Managing Editor Carol Wright and I had been planning a series of Road Trip articles so it seemed the perfect match. Charlotte would compliment this section as our featured artist and guide!

Along with our readers, we looked forward to not only her new illustrations each issue, but the whimsical descriptions of the featured locations. Charlotte literally painted herself into most of the paintings, drawing the reader into the experience even more. We were impressed when she sent her paintings of Coromandel Town's 'Star and Garter Hotel' (her first architectural illustration) and Info Centre with its grand stone archway; and later many of Thames' historic buildings and its war monument – and yes, even the renowned L&P bottle in Paeroa. We were thrilled when she then turned her adoration to our iconic beach tractors.



Over the next few years we enjoyed not only a synergistic working relationship but a valued friendship. In that time we all realised that a compilation of these 'wanderings' into a book was a fabulous idea. Carol and I felt so strongly about it, we volunteered to help.

Charlotte ran with the idea, taking a fresh new approach to her writings. What a bonus it was to read of the deeper aspects of her evolution as an artist. This captivating book has gone far beyond our expectations – "well done Ms. Giblin!"

Although some text was familiar from the Road Trips, the keen observations of life and her surroundings added a zen-like quality – bringing new life to

her personal impressions, far beyond mere descriptions of Coromandel landscapes. We were engaged throughout the entire 92 pages and, each time we read it, gleaned even more inspirational tidbits.

It is a pleasure to continue following Charlotte's artistic journey as she now explores new and exciting styles and techniques. In this process we have gained an enhanced appreciation for this incredible artist, writer and friend who has definitely chosen some 'roads less travelled'. We thank her for allowing all of us to accompany her on this one. Enjoy! We certainly did.

– Tovi Daly, Publisher
Coromandel Life Magazine

Introduction by Charlotte Giblin

The first things I noticed when I arrived in New Zealand were the clarity of the air and quality of light: all of a sudden, distant landscape seemed sharp and precise, colours were rich and intense. The next thing I noticed was how BIG the sky seemed, as if the roof I'd lived under in the UK had been unzipped to reveal a much bigger, wider, deeper version. I kept stopping and looking up, marvelling at the vastness; the highly stacked layers of clouds; the sheer depth of azure on clear days.

I've always been a story-teller and the ever-changing New Zealand landscape has become one of the central characters in the vignettes and internal dialogue that accompany my daily walks.

Some of my earliest memories are of the imaginary characters I created and the fantastical tales that involved them. Family holidays in the UK were richly coloured with adventures that unfolded in my head during our long walks across moors, through forests and around lakes. They were also the perfect opportunity for long discussions which covered a myriad of topics.

Walking has always been the most wonderful way for me to engage with others – shared moments filled with conversation. Or to escape – disappearing into my own thoughts. My day-dreaming routine has never left me, and I regard it as a real gift: I can dip in and out of “alternative worlds” whenever I want to, and these places have become fertile ground for sorting out problems; working out practical issues; thinking up art projects; dreaming ahead...

When I moved to Whitianga I found a whole new world to explore. I've always been drawn to water (but at its edge – I am not very comfortable in or on it!), and the stunning Coromandel Peninsula coastline that I am lucky enough to call a “local vista” has provided a wealth of creative subject matter. It was here in 2012 that I was finally able to return to painting, while working part time as the Administrator for Mercury Bay Art Escape Trust, and in 2014 I “took the plunge” and stepped aside from my administrative role to focus fully on my career as an artist.

‘Big Skies’ is a series of work that emerged when I moved to Mercury Bay. I started documenting my adventures, as I wandered around



the local landscape, capturing moments that had significance for me. My camera was a constant companion in my backpack, and sifting through the images afterwards brought the thoughts; dreams; ideas and conversations from each walk flooding back.

I carefully chose the images that became my

paintings, and a visual diary started to emerge. It has amused me that in the past few years 'selfies' taken on mobile phones have exploded as a phenomena, becoming the favoured contemporary way of documenting life. I suppose one could say these paintings are my 'selfies', mixing a modern trend with a far more antiquated way of image-capture.

Soon my paintings found their way into local galleries, and were spotted by Tovi Daly from *Coromandel Life* magazine – who understood instantly what I was trying to say with these whimsical illustrations – and a new regular feature in the magazine was born: the Road Trip. Over two years I formed a close creative relationship with *Coromandel Life*, travelling around the Coromandel Peninsula to different towns and areas, documenting my experiences in paintings and the “postcard musings” that would accompany them. The Big Skies series had always been designed as a journal, and this was the encouragement and supportive first step that I needed as a ‘new artist’. A lot of the text which accompanies the pictures within this book is taken directly from these “Road Trip” features.

Now the Big Skies collection has become so extensive (117 paintings between 2012 and 2015) it seems the perfect time to create a compilation. It is a significant summary for me: not only showing my development as an artist, but also my emotional development as I have settled, changed and ‘emerged’ into my New Zealand home over these past few years.

I paint myself into every picture and am usually in the same outfit, worn on my first walk when I decided to start this series. It has become part of my creative signature, which is a little humourous and tongue-in-cheek, but also carries more depth of meaning. I didn't want the clothes to become any kind of focus, the pose and position of the figure are significant, not the outfit.

By including myself in the picture I'm inviting you to remember your own experiences, thoughts and conversations which may have taken place in these specific areas, but also to be part of my story, watching me stride past or pause for thought– imagining what the back story to each painting might be. I may even be in your way, blocking the beautiful view, but that's part of the story too.

Here's to many more years of wonderful new memories, stories and dreams.

Charlotte Giblin,
November, 2015



Cathedral Cove



Towards Cathedral Cove, 2012

The experience captured in 'Towards Cathedral Cove' was on a hot day, with just enough breeze and cloud cover to keep things tolerable. This day stands out particularly for me because we never made it all the way to the bottom!

It was during Pete's magical mystery tour of the eastern Coromandel Coast, and on this occasion I was unprepared, not realising it would take 45 minutes to descend to the spectacular rock formation of the Cove below us. Signs on the way proclaimed the distance and I realised my backpack didn't contain my usual staples: bottle of water, granola bar and sunscreen.

Starting to feel a little panicked and parched at the prospect of a steep climb in the hot sun without any vital refreshment, and learning from prior instances when I hadn't fared too well in similar circumstances, we walked half way and then turned back. It didn't prevent me from appreciating the stunning panorama on the way, and I was able to save the full descent for another day with backpack stuffed to the gills with my usual "just in case" items.



Leaving the Shadowed Path, 2014



Looking Down on Lonely Bay, 2015

Lonely Bay

Lonely Bay is a favourite spot for locals, and I see why so many of them want to keep this gem hidden away. It's visible as a sliver of beach from the perch of Shakespeare Cliff, but it isn't immediately obvious how to reach it.

Lonely Bay is accessed by a small path which leads off to the left from the peak of Shakespeare Cliff and it splits a couple of times on the way down, as it winds along the edge of the bush. The first time I went there I was guided by a close friend, and then I was able to show my Dad this idyllic spot on his first visit to my home in Mercury Bay.

I was a little unsure of which fork to take when I was leading Dad to the beach, and as I umm-ed and aah-ed by one split in the pathway I was reminded a lot about our choices in life, the paths we take and the destination that you just can't see yet round the next corner. Of course, some of the most spectacular views "unfold" before you, and part of the excitement is the process of getting there, the journey.

There was no-one else on the beach during either of my two first visits, which made it seem even more isolated and private. Dad and I sat on a log eating our sandwiches while we looked out at the clear blue water, sighing at the beauty.

It feels important for me to stop and look at the scenery, as if there's a danger I'll become immune to how beautiful it all is. I definitely make a point of really trying to see *all these views*, and being able to study them and paint them helps me to understand how real this is. It's not from a film, it's actually from stills taken during my life!

The pink and hot white/yellow of the sand was particularly noticeable on these bright clear sunny days.

When I first moved to New Zealand the quality of light was what fascinated me most: the clear, crisp definition of landscapes in the distance; the warmth of the light and the clarity of objects under these beautiful skies.

I just love the way that the bright sun filters through trees, creating enchanting and complex patterns of dappled light against the dark shadows defined by the dense leafy boughs.

The old, gnarled, twisted limbs of my favourite trees give them so much personality and character, as if they have “been around and seen it all” and have many a tale to tell.

The branches twist and weave around themselves, wrapping around their own trunk: it looks like they are giving themselves a comforting hug after weathering so many storms and watching so much evolve around them. Sat on this serene bench, I couldn't help thinking to myself “if only this tree could talk”...



Twisted but Calm, 2013

About my materials...

I always use acrylic paints, although sometimes I water them down to get washes similar to watercolour paints, and other times I'll layer them really thickly. As you can see from my "painting table" shown left, I use a very wide variety of brands of paint, and – yes – I mix them all together! As I am a very prolific painter, there have been years when I have only used cheaper types of acrylic, with very successful results. These days it's a mixture... on the table right now are the following:

Daler-Rowney, Derivan, Golden, Liquitex, Reeves, Windsor & Newton

I have a huge number of brushes too. All sorts. I love my big flat brushes with green handles (Da Vinci Hobby Brushes) which are fabulous for large areas.

All the outlines are done at the end, when the painting is finished. For most of the first half of the series the black outline was drawn with a waterproof, non-fade laundry marker and then I discovered fantastic Molotow One4All refillable acrylic pens! So I could get a consistent, continuous line with acrylic paint, and it transformed the drawing process for me. I use the "extra fine" tip.

The first 70 or so paintings were done on A3 300gsm watercolour paper and I sat at the dining table. Then Pete set up a studio for me in the garage so I could stand at an easel, and I now paint standing up, using 300 or 500gsm stretched watercolour paper, board or (very high quality) marine ply. Although I have to sit down to do the outline as the acrylic-paint-pens only work when held vertically!

Any of the paintings, which aren't framed behind glass, are sprayed with three layers of an Archival UV-protect varnish. I use a matt version (Golden archival varnish or Schmincke Matt-Film archival UV protect) which allows the viewer to really see the painting without any reflections, and get right up close. Using a clear varnish like this also means that the paintings are extremely user-friendly, becoming wipe-able, so the surface can be easily cleaned.



Using stretched watercolour paper or board (with gesso underneath) to paint on.

