

## Te Awanga

Get away from it all -----Find peace at the beach!

The salt will brush clean. The tans may fade but memories will last forever.

These quotes ring loudly in my head as I recall happy days spent at the Arrell beach house at Te Awanga first as Sam's girlfriend, then as his fiancée and later as his wife with our family. A real beach bach designed and built by Sam's Dad and his three boys Joseph, Samuel and John. A true labour of love which occupied them for many weekends. Nothing flash but built with enthusiasm, hard work, sweat and probably some tears. The supervision was meticulous with no excuses accepted for slap dash workmanship or absences from the site. Joseph Arrell Sam's dad was a strong willed Irishman who worked hard always and expected his sons to do the same. I can only imagine that often the threat of World 3 was not too far away as together they dug and then lay foundations with well used materials to create this holiday home which still stands today looking out over the Pacific not far from its pounding sea.

Gradually and over a long time it developed into a true family holiday home. Forget the so called holiday homes of today referred to as "the bach" which have all mod cons, carpets, tinted windows tiled roof and top class indoor and outdoor furniture, the latest gadgets in the kitchen and landscaped relaxing areas. No 'siree' this was a place built with love for the family to relax, have fun and enjoy days where sun, sea and the sand and even the stones lifted your spirits and renewed your energy. A TRUE KIWI BACH. Visitors could arrive unannounced and be welcomed. Time did not matter. Each day was for living to the full and at night you slept without a care and woke in the morning to the slap, slap of the tides ready for another adventure or just to laze around.

Fishing was the big deal at Te Awanga. The pride and joy of the boys and their Dad was the family boat. A clinker built open boat named the Orsova after the immigrant ship which had transported that strong willed Irishman to New Zealand in 1919.

He left Ireland because the family farm was always inherited by the eldest son and no exceptions were granted and so with his three brothers Joseph set out to make a better life in USA. Joseph changed his mind in London and with a friend came to New Zealand on the immigrant ship Orsova.

The Orsova was as solid as a rock, very heavy to launch but I firmly believe it would have been capable of making Australia if the need arose. Attached to the stern was a small seagull motor which when fired up by a pull on a rope was the means by which the Orsova rode the waves to the fishing grounds off Cape Kidnappers. An early morning start was essential with a suitable time set which was absolute and no tardiness ever accepted. At the appointed time the boat was loaded with essential

gear. A bag of lines, fishing hooks all shapes and sizes, heaps of handmade sinkers and smelly bait. Rations included several thermos flasks of hot tea, a jar of sugar, bottle of milk, homemade sandwiches, water and a tin of malt biscuits - homemade of course.

Launching the boat was an exciting time and anyone not going was expected on the beach to help prepare and cheer these gungho fisherman on their way. Most of us stayed on the beach until they were out of sight. If the weather and the fishing was good, they would be out all day. Most days several boats were launched and set off for the Cape, all with high expectations of bringing home a great catch.

Those left behind wandered back to the bach. After all beds had to be made, floors swept, dishes done and washing sorted. A woman's lot I guess while our brave sea warriors brought home the bacon (well fish actually). Girls were never invited to go fishing. My daughter Kerry never understood why and now when I think about it neither do I!! Perhaps something to do with the following:

### FISHING RULES

Bait your own hook  
Clean your own fish  
Tell your own lies

YEP! I guess that says it all!

I do so admire Sam's Mother for her acceptance of her role as she set about sorting out her day. Her main priority planning a meal in case no fish turned up. How many for she never knew as visitors just turned up and were warmly welcomed. No one ever left hungry. Of course, we all helped but the responsibility to make sure a good meal would be ready was hers. She was our leader, our much loved, Matriarch. The day soon disappeared as we sunbathed, wandered along the beach talking to neighbours, read or just watched the gulls squabble and soar over the sea.

Suddenly someone would spot the Orsova coming in. Everyone converged on the beach watching intently. The question was?????could anyone spot an oar hoisted into the air?? If so, we knew a Hapuka had been caught by that boat!! Hapuka or Groper was considered the King of any catch and a special prize. Not only for its flavour but as it was a difficult fish to catch being able to avoid being caught by escaping into very deep water. Personally, I preferred the Blue Cod which in those days was fairly plentiful. Snapper was also more than acceptable. I cannot remember many days when there was no fish to share around. Beaching the boat was a tricky manoeuvre as the high tide had often come in and the waves were quite high. The theory was that safety was assured if the Captain counted the waves and the helmsman came in on the seventh wave. If he missed, they would go out and try again repeating the manoeuvre until it was safe to beach. We all held our breath until

the boat was in safe water and could be pulled onto the sand. The catch was then inspected congratulations or commiserations expressed. Excitement and loud yahoos reigned and the stories from the day began. The fish was taken up to be prepared for our meal. It had been gutted of course but now had to be skinned and filleted. Sam's mother was the expert at this and with help she prepared and cooked it for whoever turned up at the table. Fresh fish straight from the sea, mashed spud creamy and white and a green salad. Food fit for a king! Probably followed by fresh peaches, strawberries or raspberries grown on a nearby orchard served with ice-cream purchased from the local store which serves the community still today. What a deal!!!

After dinner the dishes were done – no dishwasher of course just lots of hot water and detergent with many hands and dry tea towels did the trick. Later sitting in the lounge with a drink or two we would hear the fisherman's tales. How many sinkers were lost, how the waves built over the day and just how well the Orsova performed and of course all about the big one that got away. Each fishing day had its own tales, exaggerations and excitements. Plans for the next adventure would be finalised. That stress is caused by not enough fishing was definitely part of the Arrell family philosophy.

Food preparation and fishing were not the only pastimes. The laundry attached to the garage was a science laboratory where a home brew still was set up by brother John. Large glass bottles bubbled away connected by rubber tubing lovingly attended each day until after much scientific consideration and tasting it was judged to be ready for bottling into scrupulously clean bottles capped and labelled ready to be stored before use. Naturally it was deemed the best beer ever brewed. I personally could never vouch for it as I have never been a beer drinker. A wise decision methinks

Sam was an expert on the surf ski and could paddle on it for hours enjoying the solitude and adventure of riding the waves. He would become just a dot on the ocean but always returned safely.

Swimming was an anytime pleasure for us all. Such fun to wade out into the waves to swim along the beach and feel the pull of the tide. What could be more invigorating on a hot H.B. summer's day. The kids loved to surf in on their polystyrene boards and our corgi Heidi loved to do the same. She was a cracker at it.

I have special memories of festive celebrations at the beach. Guy Fawkes night we sometimes gathered with friends on the beach to mark the occasion with every kind of fireworks we could muster. The previous weekend we had built a large Bonfire of driftwood and anything available for burning. Crackers banged, fireworks lit the dark sky and sparklers circled around to make a glowing pattern. When all available fireworks had gone up in smoke, we retired to the back ready for a hot drink and special treat, perhaps homemade lamingtons, followed by the best Fielders Cornflour sponge baked by Winifred Martha Arrell (Sam's Mum) a treat for which she was

famous. Fireworks are not P.C. now and far too expensive and so another family celebration bites the dust.

Christmas was well celebrated with a full-scale Christmas meal with all the trimmings. The ham was boiled for a very long time in an old fashioned copper set up on the section. It boiled all day and came out falling off the bone spicy and delicious.

Sam's Dad was the cook and the rule was that the boys collected wood while he stoked the fire. I can assure you the supermarket productions are not a patch on this copper cooked delicacy.

New Years Eve was a real adventure with first footing a must do. As baches were visited the parade grew and the singing became louder and more raucous. The walking developed into a shaky wobble. Greetings of Happy New Year reverberated into the night air and kisses were the order of the night which turned into day unnoticed. Somehow, we made it back to our bach to climb into bed happy we had celebrated well and that all was right with our world.

As a family the bach at TeAwanga continued to give all of the Arrell clan happy family times for many years until sold but remains looking over the beach today having man withstood many storms and much beach erosion. What stories it could tell.

I quote from Jacques Costeau to emphasis my love for the sea and the great times we spent at Te Awanga.

Joseph and Winifred Martha Arrell with their three boys Joseph Johnstone, Samuel Henry, and John Alexander, lived at 806 Frederick Street, Hastings. Joseph owned a truck business until retirement. He was responsible for the maintenance of many roads around Hastings as well his carrying business. Joseph immigrated from Ireland and was well known as a staunch Northern Irishman. Winifred Martha worked for many years as a secretary typist in Queen Street and later in a similar role for Farm Products.