

Why I Love Wellington



PICTURES
AMP
BAZAAR STORE

by
JOHN

A COFFEE BREAK BOOK



Jervois Quay

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When Mum met Dad it was in the Depression Time. Dad was a bricklayer, but had no money. Mum had come out from Scotland, and was a dressmaker. Since she had come to New Zealand, she had saved a hundred pounds.

Friends told her that if she married Dad, they would have plenty of money, because Dad was a good tradesman. When they got married, they were looking for somewhere to live, and finally discovered a quaint little house, down a lane in Newtown. The price of the house was one hundred pounds to buy. Mum thought "I have a hundred pounds" so she bought it.

My brother Stan was born in 1926. Before I was born Dad had bought a 1929 Model T Convertible.



Corner Wakefield & Taranaki Streets

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From the day he bought it, his desire was to be able to fold the roof down, weather permitting. But Mum had other ideas, to her this was a no no.

I was born in 1933, at the Alexander Hospital, and after a few days we were able to go home. Much to my surprise, and Mum's horror, we saw the old Model T come around the corner with the hood down, to pick us up. I didn't realise how loud Mum's voice was, and with a broad Scottish accent, told Dad in front of everybody, to put the hood up.

I was embarrassed and cried all the way home, wondering what sort of world I had dropped in on.

I had made my point and soon all was forgiven, and I was the centre of attention with one of my irresistible smiles. Life was lonely at the top but soon my brother and I were great friends, and we always shared his toys. We had a great Mum and Dad, they may not have had Diplomas from Varsity, but they had heaps of commonsense.

We were poor but we had heaps of fun. We were brought up strictly, but we respected our Mum and Dad, and we know that they loved us. We did not get many hidings but when we did, we got it where it hurt the most, on the bottom, and gladly say that we were better children for it. We knew where our boundaries were, and we never had any trouble with the law.

Mum came home rather late one day, when it was nearly dark. She looked in her purse and found out that she had lost a shilling. A shilling (twelve pence) was a lot of money in those days. For example, you could buy a ice-cream at Adams Bruce for a half-penny; and get about 10 sugared almonds for a penny. Mum got up early next morning, and went down the street, and there on the footpath was the shilling, shining in the sunlight. That made her day.

In Newtown, we had a Chemist called Mr McDougall, who we bought our medicine from. It was known that if I got a sore finger or tooth I would say to Mum, "take me down to Dougall". There was a little bookshop at the end of our road, and we knew the man well. He was called Mr. McPherson; and we bought our comics, and also our sparklers and other firecrackers from there.

Saturday night was picture (movies) night at the Ascot Theatre in Newtown. As no prams were allowed in the actual theatre, I slept in the pram in the foyer, and the kind lady in the ticket box kept an eye on me, and as a good boy I didn't cry.

When I got older, Dad bought a scooter for me, and later Father Christmas brought me a trike. Having no chimney in the house, I think he lost his way, and left the trike in the bathroom.

In 1939 Mum and Dad were now looking to buy a home in the Miramar area. The particular one they liked was priced at twelve hundred pounds. To buy this home, they paid a deposit on the house and took a mortgage out and paid the rest off at 5 shillings a week.

The Depression lasted from about 1929 and went on for some years. Even people in high positions, such as doctors and solicitors and other people that were skilled, were given work by the Government, to work on the roads, to make ends meet.

At the end of the Depression, Dad had got known by some builders, and started on his own. Soon he had plenty of work, brick-laying, block-laying, and plastering, building chimneys, and brick and stone fireplaces. He worked very hard, and made good money.

After work Dad would call into the Caledonian Hotel just near the Basin Reserve, for a couple of drinks with his friends. It has been known that cricket balls have gone through the window of the Hotel. When he told his friends about the house in Miramar, they said "Pat, that's too far out from the City". But Mum stuck to her guns. When Pat told his friends that they were going to buy the house, and it would cost 5 shillings a week repayment for the mortgage, "Pat you have a rope round your neck now".

Finally we did shift to Miramar, the best thing we ever did. I went to Miramar South School, and when I got older I helped Dad in the holidays. One

day Dad sent an account to the builder for the work that had been done, quoting one man and one labourer. Back came a letter saying one man and one boy, then Dad sent a reply saying “one man and one large boy”.

I had 2 friends, one lived two doors up the road and the other two doors down the road. We all went to the same school. School to me was sport, and I participated in everything: rugby, cricket, baseball, tennis, athletics. I represented the school in most sports, and one year I won the Junior High Jump, out of all the Eastern Suburbs.

After school, sometimes we would go over to the Miramar Golf Links, and hunt for frogs. Now and again we would find some golf balls as well. The big treat for me on my birthday was to invite a friend around, to sleep the night in the tent out in our back yard. We were both given two shillings each from our parents for a midnight feast. The dairy was just around the corner, and we took it in turns to stand on a wooden box, so as to see inside the glass cabinet to pick our goodies. They were carefully put into bags, and we always ended up with bottles of Thompson Lewis Orange Drink. The lady who owned the Dairy knew us well, and I still

remember her to this day, because her name was Mrs Twaddle.

When I was twelve I was invited to my cousin's farm at Levin for the school holidays. I travelled by train on my own to Levin and I remember Mum saying that "once you get to Otaki, look out for Manukau, then Ohau, and then Levin, where you get off". My auntie was always there to meet me, and take me to the farm. I enjoyed it on the farm, getting up at dawn, with my cousin and having a cuppa in the kitchen. Then we would send the dogs out to round up the cows. My cousin had about a hundred cows, I helped him by bringing the cows into the bail, chaining them up, and putting a leg rope on them. We always seemed to get more milk when we had the radio on. I have heard of musical chairs but not musical cows. Sometimes you got a grumpy one, that did not know the ropes, mainly young heifers. The times I was there most of the milk was separated into cream and what was left was skim milk, which was fed to the pigs and calves. My cousin and I got on well and Friday night was town night. And my big moment was when my cousin bought me a pair of gumboots, to use on the farm.



Newtown c1910



At home Dad had made a fowl house, and we had six fowls. I had a white rabbit called 'Snowy' and a black cat called 'Blackie', but sometimes we would just say "here Puss" and he would still come. I had a Pomeranian I named Toby that Dad bought me for four pounds (twenty shillings in one pound), and after a bath, he looked so small you wondered where the four pounds went! I also had 2 budgies, which we could not get to talk to us, but we suspected they talked to each other behind our backs.

When I was on the farm, on Sale Day, we would go down to the sale yards at the end of the road, in the horse and cart. I found it very interesting, looking around while my cousin was bidding for stock for the farm. One day I was looking around and I came to a pen, where there was a lot of ducks. While I was there, people were bidding, and one man bought the lot. I was only about twelve, and I didn't know the man who bought the ducks, and so I went up and asked if he would sell me a duck and he did, and it only cost me four shillings and sixpence. My cousin got quite a surprise when I turned up with a duck in a box.

The duck was well travelled by the time I got back to Wellington, then I had put the box in the back



Miramar cutting

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of the tram all the way out to Miramar. When he quacked, people thought they were in the country, instead of going through the city of Wellington. I used to pretend that I was on the farm, and took Toby in the cart, and we would go looking for food for the rabbit. I looked after the fowls and of course my well travelled duck, who used to roam around the garden quacking. I remember the time when we used to get on well with the our neighbours, but since the duck woke them up early, things were not quite the same. I used to collect the hen eggs for Mum and Dad and now and again, would pop in a duck egg.

A friend and I began to take an interest in homing pigeons. I thought that they were amazing birds in flight, and it reminded me of the Spitfires in World War II. My friend and I built pigeon lofts. Then later we both bought a pair of pigeons each, a male and female. I kept my pigeons in the loft for about a month, feeding them on pigeon peas and fresh water daily. Then I let them out to fly around. We had a special trap door - once they came in, they could not get out. For a start they did not fly very far from the loft. After a couple of months we took them up to Plimmerton and let them go. This was

about 15 miles from home, they circled around for a few minutes then flew off in the right direction, to go back home. It almost seemed that they had a built-in compass. Then we took them to Levin, and the same thing happened.

Well, time went on and nature took over and we had lots of baby pigeons. Years went on, and we had a loft full of pigeons. By that time, I was growing up and had other interests. Somebody said “why don’t you take the pigeons to the market at Courtenay Place, and sell them in the auction?” So I did and people bought them. But lo and behold, some days later they had all flown back to my place.

In the beginning the Bible said God created the Heaven and the Earth. The power that God used was called the Holy Spirit. In six days God created every thing that was in the World, including Man and Woman. God said every thing He made was good. That was being modest. It was no less than perfect. God loved Man and Woman. He was a God of Love, but God wanted to be loved back. He could have made Man and Woman as robots, and pressed the button, and they would say “Love you God!” But He didn’t. He made Man and Woman with a mind of their own, so that they could Love

God of their own free will. Thanking Him for the wonderful lives He had given them, and all the things in the world to enjoy. God had done His part, now it is up to us. Everything that is made in the world has to be looked after and maintained.

God gave Adam and Eve boundaries, but unfortunately in the end they broke them. This was a heartbreak to God. Because in the end He had to send JESUS down to die in the process of healing US FROM SIN, because HE LOVED US. To us it is still optional. But if we don't get healed and forgiven we will end up by destroying this miracle body!

We have only been given responsibility of one life, what are you going to do with it? The Bible says we are eternal creatures to live forever. The opposite to healing is suffering - the ball is in your court.



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Getting the best out of life? You can do what I have done, and even better! Life is for living, so trust in the Lord and **Go, Go, Go!**

Phil. Ch.4, v13:

I can do all things through Christ that can strengthen me.

John, PO Box 14487, Kilbirnie, Wellington 6241



Newtown c1910
SC Smith Collection
Alexander Turnbull Library 19563-1/1