

Him, Me and the dog.

By Jaylene Seabrook

My husband got hooked on trout fishing some 10 years ago or so and is quite the keen angler. You can be rest assured that nearly every opening weekend he is there - come hail or shine, change work shift if needed, licence bought, gear all checked, new line, new flies tied, old ones rejuvenated - he must be the tackle shop's delight at the start of the new trout season. For me it is a bit of quiet around the house and the anticipation of fresh trout to enjoy.

But... I have been able to go on the occasional fishing expedition too. When our children were younger we accommodated the Bronte shack on the odd occasion, and had a couple of camping trips to Arthur's Lake. All our trips were memorable and I'm sure the children would agree. Dad even ventured out in the boat with children on board in the hope that they would catch a fish. Sometimes they all did - but not often. As for me I was quite happy to stay on dry land and while away my time - the knitting, the tapestry, a good book and lots of walking - and of course, the occasional daytime siesta were all options.

As the children grew older, there was more reluctance to go on the family fishing expeditions. He went on his own mostly and I seemed to have missed out on a few years of visiting Bronte and Arthur's, BUT... now we are "empty nesters".....

Over the past couple of years we have been on a few trips together - the three of us - him, me and the dog. Bronte is good during the colder months - that log fire and the creature comforts - hot running water, the toilet, the shower, light are all very nice and welcome. The pleasant walk up to "Wombat Flat" - I call it Wombat Flat as every time I've frequented that spot there has been a rather large wombat wandering in our midst. But I have experienced the "roughness" and delight of camping with no creature comforts, but the roughness only adds to the experience.

You see - now we have been - him, me and the dog - to Arthur's and have found a cosy campsite - away from everyone and everything - my appetite to keep going on these experiences is surely whetted. Every time we go - believe me it is an experience.. for instance, I get to drive the Hilux in uncharted waters, so to speak, and by myself. Having to navigate over rocky terrain and uncertain if the right track is being taken, and if that's not enough there is the boat trailer on behind. I manage very well - in fact in the words of "him" - I did goodly.

Then you get to marvel at our native fauna - the platypus swimming in the lake - not an unusual sight at Arthur's but still a marvel, and the echidna that came waddling along the rocky foreshore snuffling for ants. That was an experience - I was sitting on a large rock by the water, reading a book and had hold of the dog on his lead - as "him" was fishing just in the bay within dog swimming distance. The dog couldn't decide whether to swim to "him" or just keep his eye on the creature that was waddling along the rocky foreshore - and near our campsite. (The dog keeps our campsite protected from the possums so anything that moved that didn't belong there was fair game.) Hence the echidna was being watched carefully, and "him" as well. Well - "him" decided to venture in to shore, but the dog saw that now "him" was in, the echidna was fair game after all. The dog was OFF and I was nearly dragged after him, and only ended up with a battered finger and a bit of cussing. The echidna was too quick and headed for the bushes and proved not to be fair game after all.

I could ramble on for ages over the many experiences we have had camping together - just him, me and the dog - like the time I was allowed to put a fishing line in and nearly caught a couple - yes - I can tell you a tale about the ones that got away. Or the time there was

thunderstorms and lightening and the inside of the Hilux was just as wet as outside, or when the outboard motor wouldn't start ...

I guess the best part about the roughness of the camping experience is the joys of coming home to all the familiar creature comforts - the running hot water, the toilet, the shower, the instant light - and of course that one piece of luxury - OUR BED. But once we are home there is that yearn to experience it all over again - and so darling - when are we going again? Just to experience the "roughness" and the delight of camping in a secluded spot - away from everyone and everything - where the fishing is good, and the company exceptional - just him, me and the dog - is something I will always enjoy and enjoy to the utmost.