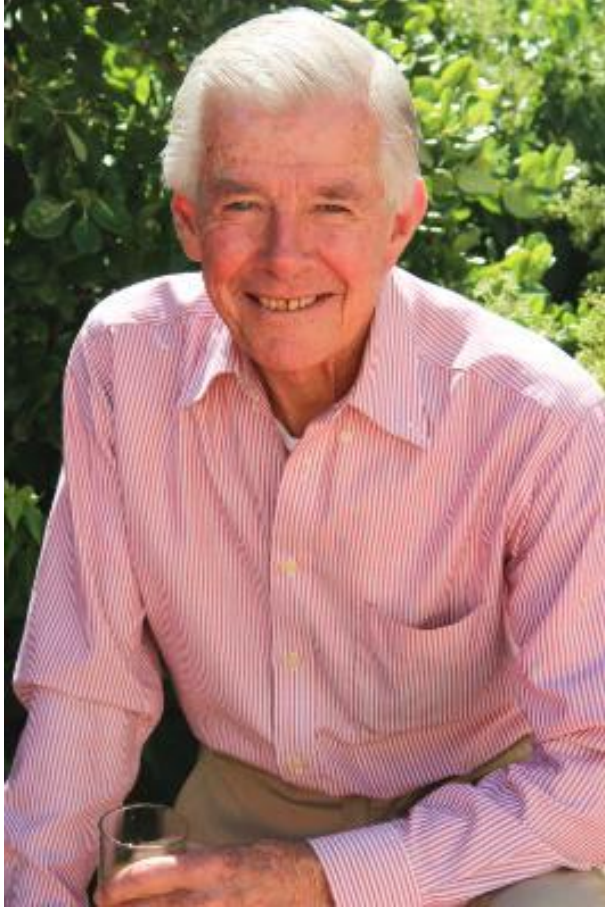


**Memories of the Kamberg**  
**By Joylon Nuttall**  
**Culled from the January 1967 Field and Tide**



I know of no fine incentive to the city type in getting through the grind of Monday to Friday than the prospect of a Weekend on a trout stream at the end of it.

In the old days, with roads and cars being what they were, it was necessary to leave at 4 o'clock on a Saturday morning to reach a trout stream by 10 a.m. and that was if there were no punctures en route. And the journey back had to begin soon after noon on Sunday in case a thunderstorm broke and made the road impassable for three days.

I can just remember making such a trip somewhere round about 1942/ 43 when, for a small boy, to be woken, and be 'instantly alert, at about a quarter-past three in the morning, was the height of excitement. There was an early morning mist wreathing the streets of Durban as we set out at four and the figures of my father and his companion in the front seat seemed large and comforting.

But it was many hours later before we reached our river in Underberg and by then, with a hollow in my stomach and, dust in my teeth, the magic of the dawn start had faded in the hard light of day.

Now, of course, one nips up after work on a Friday evening, arriving about 8.30 p.m. in time for beer and sandwiches before a good night's sleep. And one leaves again at 4 pm on Sunday after two full days fishing.

Then it is Monday again.....

But perhaps it's better this way. Perhaps it is better that the trout stream is not constantly at one's doorstep, inviting one all day long to flick a fly on its glinting surface.

Of all the farmers I have known who have had trout streams on their properties, only a handful have been anglers and they have been too busy mostly to ply a fly.

Some of them have said, "I'll wait until I'm old, and my son has taken over the farm. Then I'll fish all day."

But sometimes there has been no son, or else the spark has gone when old age has been reached and there has no longer been the wish to pit their skill against the trout.

Distance, it seems then, lends enjoyment. And more than half the pleasure lies in the anticipation and the pleasant rigmarole of simply going to the scene.

I have that same anticipation in me now, as I write, for in two days' time I go to the Kamberg Valley. This is the sweetest, if not the most spectacular, of the Parks Board waters, and I have known it since the days of Auntie Potts.

Auntie Potts, in formal terms Mrs. Potterill, ran a guest farm on the site of the present Parks Beard camp for many years. The oaks that she planted still stand.

She was a rare personality and any shortcomings there may have been in the running of her guest farm were more than compensated for by her force of character.

Take, for instance, the eiderdowns. Auntie Potts had one pair of exquisite eiderdowns. And when guests made their first visit to the farm, there were the eiderdowns in all their splendour and the beds. But when the guests had been there some days and settled to the whimsical ties of the place, and there were fresh guests due, off came the eiderdowns with a flourish and a faint apology to be borne off to the beds of the newcomers where they made that vital first impression until, in time, the fame of the eiderdowns spread almost as far as that of Auntie Potts.

In her day, the Mooi Riven swarmed with trout, mostly little! chaps of less than half a pound with two- and three-pounders lurking in the depths. They made a fine contribution to Auntie Potts' housekeeping budget.

When my father, in the course of three months' long leave, caught over a thousand trout, his hostess was ecstatic.

Thus the memories every time I go back to the Kamberg valley and thus part of the joys.

The trout are still mostly small but - thanks to the efforts of the senior Game Warden, Bob Wright - there are more and more trout over half a pound and a goodly number chasing a pound.

And the valley is as enchanting as it was in the days of Auntie Potts. In fact, at my last visit the beds had eiderdowns of the highest quality - and no favouritism in their disposal was shown.

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