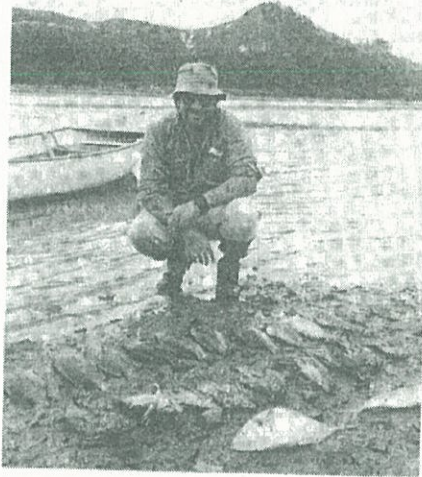


(King, 1999)

King, ~~2003~~ 1999 (239)



*Wharekawa Harbour proves every bit as generous a provider of seafood as Paremata was half a century earlier.*

For myself, life is inescapably conditioned by the Irish-Catholic childhood, by the love of words and music that that background bequeathed to me; as it is by the passion for history, and for the life of the bush, the coast and the sea that grew out of my early years at Paremata. These fundamental experiences provide the magnetic core which has attracted and held the iron filings of additional influences — my formal education, my interaction with other New Zealanders, my encounter with Maori, travel abroad — which combine to make up my character and my own brand of New Zealand Pakeha identity.

For me, then, to be Pakeha on the cusp of the twenty-first century is not to be European; it is not to be an alien or a stranger in my own country. It is to be a non-Maori New Zealander who is aware of and proud of my antecedents, but who identifies as intimately with this land, as intensively and as strongly, as anybody Maori. It is to be, as I have already argued, another kind of indigenous New Zealander.

Like George Bernard Shaw and, indeed, like almost anyone with a knowledge of the past behaviour of our species, I feel that the history of humankind is shameful; but that there are grounds for hope in bits



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