

An Australian Icon reborn



**MORPETH
SOURDOUGH**
A & S ARNOTT, BAKERS

Emotions ran high when Australia's own Arnott's Biscuit Company was taken over by the US conglomerate Campbell's in the mid 1990's. There was an outcry and people felt that this True Blue Aussie Company should remain the property of the Australian public. This giant baker touched everyone growing up in this country at some stage in their life and everybody had their own favorite Arnott's biscuit and indeed Arnott's story.

In simple terms what had happened is that the last Managing Director of Arnott's - Geoffrey Arnott had invited his good friend Mr. Campbell - Owner of the giant American Campbell's Soup Company - to take a substantial shareholding in the company to prevent a takeover by the Bond Corporation. When Geoffrey Arnott died in the late eighties, this emotional bond died with it and as it goes in the world of big business, Campbell's were hungry, made an offer for the company, which was accepted by the shareholders and the company fell into American hands.

Now, 142 years since brothers David & William Arnott baked their first loaf of bread in the then bustling port of Morpeth, Stephen (Geoffrey's grandson) Arnott and wife Allison have bought back the original bake house and are baking the most beautiful of sourdough breads at the same location.

The original bake house still exists but is in dire need of repairs. Stephen and Allison have lodged an application with the Heritage office to restore the bake house and are looking for funds to go into trust to assist with the cost.

Allison holds a Master's degree in "Food Microbiology" and Stephen obviously has baking powder running through his veins and is finishing his diploma in Baking & Pastry cooking as we write this article.

MORPETH SOURDOUGH is the new name of the business, Allison and Stephen understating the Arnott's bloodline. Focus is very much on producing the best products using the purest

of ingredients (no artificial colourings, flavourings, baker's yeast or preservatives) and they are taking the region by storm. Demand for their 13 lines of sourdough products is huge. Everything is now produced in state of the art ovens and the shop front is the old living quarters where the Arnott brothers lived in 1862.

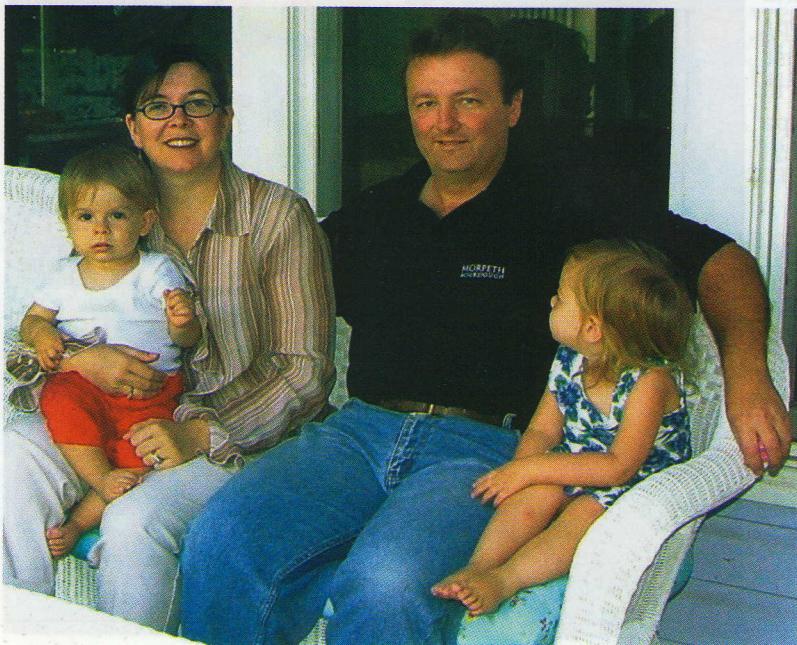
Allison tells me that there is not a day that goes by without someone coming into the shop with some anecdote, most famous being the one of the pillowcases full of broken biscuits Arnotts was selling cheaply during the great depression in the 1930's. And

then there is the 90 year old lady, who brought in an old biscuit tin that had been sitting in the cupboard for 70 odd years and wanted to return it to the rightful owners. Stephen's father, now living in Queensland, worked his way up through the various areas

of the business from raw materials to research and development manager and is always willing to part with good advice. Stephen told me that his Arnott's library contains reference books written by Arnott's employees dating back to 1894. With this pedigree and Allison's food technology background, their combined enthusiasm you can say we are witnessing the rebirth of a great Australian story and wish them every success their forebears have enjoyed.

You will find MORPETH SOURDOUGH at the historic village of Morpeth - 148 Swan Street Morpeth 2321 or at exclusive outlets around the region.

Phone: (02) 4934 4148. They are open Thursday through to Sunday every week.



Steven Arnott with the original oven