

# FRIENDS OF WAIUTA

PO Box 83, Reefton

## April 2003 Newsletter

GREETINGS FOR ANOTHER YEAR which we realise, with a shudder, is already one third over. Plenty has happened since the last newsletter and there's a fair bit to do ahead, so let's get on with it.

### COMMITTEE MEETING

Glad to report a strong turn-out for the late March meeting, including five from Canterbury. There was a warm welcome for Kath Barrow, who's been ill recently, and it was good to hear that our other vice-president, Nelsa Rollerson, is also out of hospital and on the mend. Our newsletter editor hangs his head in shame for omitting to mention in the last edition that the November meeting was the first Kath Had missed in the 17 year history of Friends of Waiuta – a wonderful record of service.

### AROUND TOWN

The lodge is looking spick and span thanks to continuing fine work by the caretaker, Kathy Lintott. The Department of Conservation is seeking quotes for a roof at the east end of the verandah and wider steps on the north side where people, naturally, like to sit. Some information panels will be erected at the adjacent hospital site and at the entrance to town. There are also plans for an information shelter on the hotel site, designed to be reminiscent of the original verandah. Over between the post office and south shaft the new toilet which FOW put \$10,000 toward is going well and suffered only one water supply failure during a summer of high demand. Large numbers enjoyed the revamped panels beneath the 'school roof' on the post office foundations.

Up at the Pro, DoC is fencing the shaft off following attempts to prise open the grill that covers it at present.

Out at the main Reefton-Greymouth highway, new signs are being erected, pointing to Waiuta.

### NEW BOOK

Childhood reminiscences for our proposed new book are slow in coming, but those we've received have been very interesting. A short piece on schooldays that Frances Hunter wrote for another purpose has also been snaffled, and we're hoping she may even expand upon it. One great feature is that lots of photos not seen before by our editorial team are turning up, courtesy of Margaret Sadler and the Hurst family. While the publication date (Easter 2006, when the Waiuta centennial is celebrated) is well away, it'll creep up quickly enough, so start thinking about something, or digging out those

pieces old relatives wrote years ago. They don't have to be epics – brief anecdotes on individual events will be welcome. Ideas for a title are also needed.

### OTHER PUBLICATIONS

The Waiuta book, the restyled 'Our Own Correspondent' and the Reefton School of Mines book have all been selling steadily, while Big River has just about sold out. We have accepted a quote of \$9632.81 including GST from Craigs Publishing for a reprint of the Big River book, including four altered pages. Incidentally, DoC has also been busy at Big River, installing a new car park and information panels, the latest of them at the old sawmill.



*Remember this house? The last letter bearing the Waiuta postmark is believed to have been sent from it. (Photo courtesy Margaret Sadler.)*

## Bereavement

The ranks of former Waiuta miners thinned with the death of Cliff Rodden recently. A member of one of the town's best known families, Cliff lived his later years on Waiheke Island. Our sincere sympathy goes to Cliff's family.



*World famous in Greymouth: The Greymouth Evening Star mural by Les Holmes has become a real tourist attraction, and Waiuta is on it!*

## ROLL OF HONOUR

The closure of the Reefton RSA has raised the question of where the Waiuta RSA roll of honour is to go now. We will make inquiries. The RSA is to amalgamate with the Workingmen's Club.

## MORE MEMORABILIA

Vi Thorn keeps coming up with little gems, this time Fred's medal for good attendance and good conduct at Waiuta School, 1917. We're arranging a photo for a future newsletter and our 2006 book.

## NUMBER PLATE FRAMES

These are to bear the words: 'Waiuta 1906-1951, West Coast Gold Town.' Bede Cordes is organising them and information on how you can order them will be in the next newsletter.

## INQUIRY

Dennis L Brown of Porirua seeks information on his forebears who were at Waiuta in the early days. His grandfather, Walter Isaac Immanuel

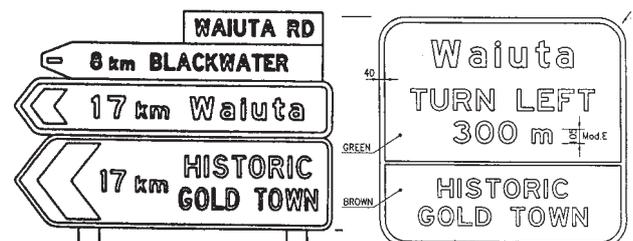
Brown is believed to have left Tasmania about 1909, soon arriving at Waiuta where Dennis's father, Lennard Walter Brown, was born on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1912. Walter Brown, as he was known, was a union stalwart, (as a Wellington watersider he was involved in the 1951 strike) and may have been involved in union activity at Waiuta. If you remember him, please contact Dennis at PO Box 57-135, Mana 6230, Porirua.

## GOLD NUGGET

We've been offered a nice gold nugget by a former Reefton man, Trevor Johnston, who suggests having it mounted in a glass case that will magnify its size and displaying it in the visitor centre. It's sure to prove another glittering attraction, so we're looking at the costs involved in making the display.

## REEFTON PROMOTIONS

Plenty is happening in the Inangahua's other major town, which is always of interest to Waiuta people. The US-based Grand Circle tour company is sending 61 groups of Americans this year to spend half a day around Reefton and Blacks Point. ITP-Reefton Promotions are busy planning the reconstruction of the 1908 and 1935 power houses, plus interpretation of the 1888 original, installation of original-style street lighting and upgrading of shop frontages in authentic styles. We look forward to some great results if the restorations of the courthouse, Oddfellows Hall and railway engine shed are examples of what can be achieved.



*Signposted from SH7: Proposed new signs to Waiuta north of Ikamatua.*

## NEXT MEETING

Our AGM on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2003 at 7.30pm will be followed immediately by a normal committee meeting. Everybody welcome at the Reefton Visitor Centre, entry from The Strand. Following the success of the last get-together, a weekend barbecue and meeting at Waiuta is to be an annual November event.