



# newsletter FRIENDS OF WAIUTA

PO Box 83, Reefton 7851 [www.waiuta.org.nz](http://www.waiuta.org.nz)

## December 2011

Greetings for the last time in 2011 - or (if we're late getting this into the mail) for the first time in 2012! As usual there's plenty to report, so let's get onto it.

### NOVEMBER MEETING

To Hunters we went again - it's becoming a habit, but a healthy one. It was good to see Jennie and Martin Cordes all the way from Fairlie, but the Christchurch contingent was sadly and understandably missed. Even our ever-dependable secretary Graeme Farrant was missing, but he has to work for some \$\$\$ some-time - as a change from all that freely given time at Waiuta - and that was the week he had to do it. Thanks to Lynn Anderson for offering to take the minutes while everybody else laid low and pretended they hadn't heard the call for volunteers.

### WHAT'S UP FROM DOC

As usual, Jim Staton from the Department of Conservation had plenty of news about work going on about the place. Again he's managed to engage some top class voluntary skills for various projects. Stefan Minar, a student in spatial development and natural resource management from Dresden, Germany, has produced technical drawings of Rimu Cottage, plus some of Jos Divis's home that Callum McCorkindale, a Wellington architectural student, will use in a conservation plan. The Conservation Corps will continue a valuable history of help at Waiuta under a new name - On Track - by maintaining Skip Road and the Powerhouse Walk for two days every 10 weeks. Students from the DOC Ranger School will also be spending time there - we have no details on their projects at this stage, but there's plenty of scope for their labour and skills. Meanwhile DOC staff have done a lot of spraying lately, reducing the tangles of gorse, plain old blackberry etc.



***About as far as he could get from Dresden, geographically and architecturally, that's Stefan Minar measuring up Rimu Cottage. (Graeme Farrant photo.)***

### HOPS

Talking of introduced plants, there's been some recent interest in the hops that flourish about the place, with even a suggestion that they could be harvested for use. Does someone remember anybody growing them or making beer from them? We'd be very interested to know. Incidentally neither the hops nor the Italian blackberries, that were certainly used for wine, will be affected by the current spraying programme, but it would be good to know where they grew, for future management.

### MINING NEWS

We were sorry to learn that Gareth Thomas is no longer with Oceana Gold, following a restructuring. During his time as operations manager up at the Globe Gareth's been a welcome contributor to our meetings, while his interest in the Reefton area's history has been a local asset, and we wish him well for the future. Drilling has resumed up at the Prohibition and we hope to have further news in our next newsletter.

### BOOK REPRINT

This hasn't quite happened. A plan to completely revise the book (a big job) was gradually whittled down and finally given up in October in favour of a new chapter covering 1990 to the present and about eight new photos. Unfortunately the printers have had problems with the rest of it because of the massive changes in print technology that have occurred since the last reprint (let alone the original printing). However we hope it will be ready, and looking very smart, early in the new year.

### BACK ISSUES

Does anybody keep their newsletters? To complete a set we seek: March/April/May 1988, March and July 1993, March/April and December 1994, April/May 1999 and December 1999. Thanks if you can help.

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## MOONLIGHT MEDAL

At the recent launch of a very good book on the Moonlight district, Ian Moonlight, a great grandson of the namesake prospector, had a display of family mementoes including one with a Waiuta connection. It is a gold medallion with this inscription on the reverse: 'Presented to John Moonlight by Inangahua Miners Union for services rendered at Waiuta 1916 to 1920.' It's great the way these pieces of 'new' information keep turning up.



**Both sides of the Moonlight medal.**



**This great photo of Blackwater pupils and teacher outside the local hotel comes from Helen Booth (née Bannan) via Graeme Farrant. Sitting, Laurel Woolhouse. From Left: Unknown, Ashley Bannan, Ngarie Hill, Frances Palmer, Ngaire Bannan, Dudley Palmer, ?, Margaret Palmer, Janette Woolhouse, Pat Palmer. In front: Natalie Palmer, ? Hill.**

## KIDSPIC, LAST ISSUE

Thanks to Lance Dean for adding some names to those we had with the photo of Waiuta children in the last letter. That was Ron Smith behind Terry Smith, the girl at the back was Tina Robertson (later Green) and next to her, Doug Robertson. The photo was taken on Deans' front lawn, with the billiard room above Top Road in the background. How does Lance remember so much? The photo was taken on his fifth birthday, in 1936. Which of course means he was born (at Blackball) 80 years ago - many happy returns, Lance.

For this issue we have an old one from Blackwater - with most of the names. We're keen to hear about any memories it may stir. Good to hear from Helen Booth that her Blackwater book is coming along.

## WE'RE ON THE AIR

A chance to be on Radio New Zealand National's 'Summer Report' programme was eagerly seized by Frances Hunter and Les Wright, who headed up there with RNZ's Nelson-based reporter, Geoff Moffet. A great day it was, with plenty put on record about life and work at Waiuta, either side of lunch courtesy of Fran's catering skills. Unfortunately Geoff returned home to the Nelson floods which forced him from his home (just temporarily we hope), and added an unwanted personal touch to his reports. At the same time he was editing the Waiuta interviews, for broadcast between 7 and 9 on a weekday morning over the summer holiday period. That sort of work ethic would have served him well in a Blackwater Mine stope. When we get the broadcast date and time we'll send it to people on email, so word should get around.

## NEXT MEETING

As much as we enjoy Hunters', we're off to Waiuta! That's right - it'll be time for our annual outing on 24 March 2012, two weeks before Easter. The meeting will be at 3pm, but no doubt there'll be plenty of catching up, ambling about and reminiscing before and after. As usual we'll provide meat for a barbecue tea - just bring a salad to go with it. Be sure to let's know if you're coming, especially if you're bringing others - extras are always welcome of course. Until then, compliments of whichever season this finds you in.



**"We lived just over there, by the willow trees." Frances Hunter along Bottom Road with Radio NZ's Geoff Moffett.**

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