



# newsletter

## FRIENDS OF WAIUTA

### April 2005

Welcome to the first round of news for Waiuta centennial year - or rather the first of two years as it will be observed between 9<sup>th</sup> November 2005 (Birthday Reef discovery re-enactment) and Easter 2006 (the reunion). Sarah, our reunion secretary, has more information tucked in with this issue, so take a careful look at it.

### PRO SHAFT

For the reasons outlined in our last newsletter, the attempt by Oceana Gold Ltd to reopen the Prohibi-

tion shaft has been abandoned. The site has been cleared and an announcement of revised plans for mining the Birthday Reef is awaited. Meanwhile work on the proposed Globe Hill opencast quartz mine continues.

### 'LITTLE EARTH' INCLUDES WAIUTA

For about 12 years Alan Hunt (son of Jean, grandson of a Waiuta 'original' Mattie Dewar) has been rebuilding Waiuta in miniature. Now it's being laid out as part of 'Little Earth' behind On Yer Bike, between Greymouth and Runanga. The Empire Hotel,



*Above: It could almost be one of those Jos Divis shots from the west end of town - until you spot a full-sized wheelbarrow behind the shop at mid-right. Left: Jos's favourite view of the Blackwater Mine, with the 'grass' getting laid on the bowling green at right. All part of 'Little Earth' as above.*

South Shaft poppet head and mullock heap, the Red Huts, the Hospital, both churches and both halls are there, along with many other well-remembered places. It won't open officially until September, but meanwhile there's entry by donation - and Alan's always pleased to meet former Waiuta people.

### CALLING NORTH ISLANDERS

Michael Anderson, 83A Riverside Drive, Waiwhetu, Lower Hutt, is keen to meet other North Island members of Friends of Waiuta. It'd be great to have some get-togethers up north, so if you're interested, please contact Michael.

## LOOKING FOR NAMES

We're contacted regularly by people pointing out that there are names missing from the list of residents in the Waiuta book. As the list was compiled largely from a limited number of old directories, we're aware of its deficiencies and hope to improve it at the next reprint. So keep those names coming in.

## CHIPS FLY AGAIN

There were plenty of keen choppers on the Rec in the old days, and in recognition of the sport's popularity we've continued to sponsor the Waiuta Memorial chops at the Inangahua A&P Show. This year's results featured some well known Inangahua surnames at least: 1st Robbie Tyler (snr), 2nd Dan Gilsenan (jnr), 3rd John Bell, 4th Adam Lowe. Congratulations to all those axemen.

## OLD FRIENDS

Over from Australia recently was Ray Hazeldene, project manager when Golden Shamrock Mines reopened the top section of the Pro shaft in 1989-90 and a member of our group ever since. Ray's now in Benalla (Ned Kelly country) mining antimony, one of the "hostile minerals" that made gold saving difficult in the early days of the Inangahua quartz field, but these days fetching a premium price in China. We hope Ray has everything booked for the centennial reunion.

Also spotted on the Coast, this time in his Model A Ford, was another Waiuta stalwart, Brendon Wilshire. We don't know if it was a hostile mineral in the petrol tank or what, but at one stage he was racing - on foot - around Blackball in search of a crank handle. (Weren't crank handles standard equipment on Model A's - or perhaps we were thinking of the Model T.) Hope to see the car at Waiuta next Easter.

## NEW FACE AT DOC

Welcomed at our March meeting was Nia Rowlands who has replaced Murray Thomas as the historic

resources person for the Department of Conservation in Greymouth. Nia has excellent credentials for working in connection with Waiuta - being from Wales - and we look forward to a long and successful association with her.

## NANCY FRENCH

We are sad to announce the death of Ann Slimin (Nancy) French, née Sadler, on the Gold Coast, Australia. Nan was the daughter of Janet Jones, step-daughter of Taffy Jones, and sister of the late Dave Sadler, John Jones and Gwen Poole (née Jones). Nan arrived in Waiuta at the age of 16, worked at Barrys Hotel in Reefton for some time and later was a housekeeper for Father O'Meegan in Ahaura. She married Jack French of Waiuta in 1937 and they had a son, Alan, who now lives on the Gold Coast. Nancy had lived there four years and was aged 93.



*Nancy French (right) with her mother Janet Jones at Waiuta - a photo sent to Newcastle-Upon-Tyne in the 1940s and returned from there to FOW committee member Marg Sadler.*

## A NEW 'BOY OF JONES'

Glad to announce the birth of Ethan Jones, on 22nd December 2004 in Calgary, just east of the Canadian Rockies. He will be coming to the Centennial next Easter.

## NUMBER PLATE FRAMES

Those frames carrying the message: 'Waiuta 1906-1951, West Coast Gold Town', seem to be everywhere. Bede Cordes, the initiator of them, has buzzed off to the U.S. and other places, leaving his Mum, Jennie, to look after the enterprise. So to get your frames send \$12 per set to Jennie Cordes, 38 Gray St., Fairlie 8771. Make the cheque out to Friends of Waiuta.

## NEWSLETTERS 'ON LINE'

In centennial year we can at last offer the Friends of Waiuta Newsletter via e-mail. If you'd like to receive it as a PDF, contact the editor: [leswright@wota.co.nz](mailto:leswright@wota.co.nz)

## NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> July 2005 at 7.30pm in the Reefton Visitor Centre, entry from The Strand. It'll also be our AGM All members welcome. Remember our address: PO Box 83 Reefton.