



newsletter FRIENDS OF WAIUTA

PO Box 83, Reefton 7851 www.waiuta.org.nz

August 2009

Greetings again from the Golden Coast where Spring is showing signs of arriving - and we don't mean it's raining all the time! There's plenty happening, and you'll want to know what the chopper photo below is about, so let's get started.

25TH AGM

In the cosy comfort of Hunters' living room nobody was in the mood for a coup, so all officers were returned. Continuing on that theme, next year Frances Hunter will complete 25 years as president, which is only half what Senor Castro's had in Cuba - so we hope for a good few more years from her yet.

All the necessary processes were gone through to change the annual meeting date to a Saturday in March, so we can keenly anticipate Graham firing up the barbecue and others exploring old haunts, sharing memories. A date that doesn't clash with Easter will be decided at our November meeting.

Meanwhile, brilliant financial management (thanks Tracey!) has kept our subs at the original 1985 figure of \$10. The bad news is that they're now due.

NELSON GET-TOGETHER

Details are on a flyer inside, so check before you recycle the envelope. We are looking forward to our day in Richmond and hope as many as possible will be able to go. We hear a car-full will even be venturing out of Christchurch to check whether Nelson gardens really are better. Simon Nathan will be there also, searching for more photos and memories for his book about Jos Divis, so please help if you can.

WELL DONE AGAIN DoC...

Over recent years we've seen some wonderful work on historic gold mining structures by the Department of Conservation - the Big River poppet head and winding house and Golden Lead battery being just two (well three actually, with the Big River sawmill another). Now

Waiuta has been the scene of surely the most notable achievement yet, stabilizing the 90-plus-year-old brickwork of the South Shaft boiler house flue. This vital work was done to strict standards set by some of the country's top engineers in masonry conservation, and we look forward to seeing the brick flue reclining (as it's meant to) with the tall steel chimney standing on top for many more years.

On a less ambitious scale, Roy Bartlett's barber shop has had some timely repairs and so has the South Shaft shower shed (try saying that quickly while eating a cracker). Also, the track down the Snowy has been cleverly re-routed around a monstrous slip near the power house end.

...AND THE VOLUNTEERS

Meanwhile, people from many parts of the world, working with Conservation Volunteers NZ, have provided

a huge boost in the growing battle to keep town sites free of gorse and other growth. To those places mentioned in recent newsletters they've added the teacher's and the original mine manager's (later Mosleys') residence sites, as well as Averys' chimney up behind the Anglican Church - all features that couldn't be reached until recently, and found to be in excellent order. Nita Soster (Read) was one who enjoyed being able to revisit the school site recently, thanks to the volunteers' efforts.



Placing a steel mesh on the South Shaft chimney before renovation work. A safety barrier suspended from the mesh was to prevent anyone working down in the flue from getting crowned if any of the brick lining in the chimney came loose. Nothing did.

PLUS OTHERS

Must not forget our secretary, Graeme Farrant, who's proving the saw is mightier than the pen when it comes to clearing growth along the little short-cut track by Greek Creek. (Well you try cutting gorse and stuff with a pen.) Our newsletter ed observed his efforts and even gave him a hand one day, as well as clearing a way through gorse down Dwyers Road, past Chapmans', so it's possible to reach the creek once again.

Just as this newsletter was 'going to press' we heard that a group of international student volunteers had continued the clearing work on the school site. They were fascinated to hear some stories from DoC's Lindsay Barrow, whose mother (as Kath Absalom) walked up to school from Hukawai in the 1920s.

ALTAR BACK

As many will know, Waiuta's St Barnabas Anglican Church was taken to Dobson and later burned down. What hardly anyone knew was that beforehand the altar had been taken to the church at Ahaura. Fortunately, when that church was being closed a few months ago, Jack Becker recalled where the altar had come from and let us know. Now it's at Hunters' where Graham is doing minor restoration (it's been well looked after) and it could return to Waiuta as a table or book case for the lodge. Thanks to the Ahaura Anglicans for the recovery of this wonderful relic - we'll have a photo of it for the next newsletter.



Conservation Volunteers NZ at work on Les Harvey's bread oven. Thanks to Better Earth team leader Sam Rye for the photo.



Above: Another old pic that's come to light, from Margaret Sadler's collection, showing her held by Julia Harvey with Percy Darby holding another wee tot. They're outside which building, opposite the hotel? (No, it isn't Mrs Cole's.)

Below: Restored brickwork and steelwork on the South Shaft flue where there'd been a large gap for more than half a century.



BOOKS

The reprint of our Waiuta book is coming along when other things (like this newsletter) don't get in the way. The aim is to have it for Christmas, which he possibly said last year, but at least he's saying it with a look of guilt this year. If there are errors in the present edition that should be rectified, let's know very quickly. All the other books are in good supply and great as gifts.

TOWN SURVEY

We're still getting valuable information on Waiuta houses and other buildings, but would like to hear about yours. The odd riddle has arisen - for example we always thought the Women's Institute Hall went to Cobden as a scout den, but now hear it only travelled as far as Blackwater where it remains today as part of a house.

COMING UP

We have two bus loads of folk from Nelson coming up to Waiuta on the 8th December, and an unknown number of photographers during their Southern Regional Convention in Greymouth at Labour weekend. Let's hope they can get some of the lovely views - or at least some of the dramatic moods that can be there when the sun isn't full on.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 26th November at Hunters', 31 Victory St Reefton, 7 .30pm - hope to see you there!