



newsletter FRIENDS OF WAIUTA

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

August 2010

Hello again from Waiuta where winter's been eventful with plenty more to follow. Relics have been located and returned, more remains have been unearthed or found in the undergrowth, further stretches of road and track have been cleared, and more is to be revealed of the reef underneath that might be mined again before long.

JULY MEETING

The 14 who gathered around Hunters' dining table included a strong contingent from Christchurch, among them Bede Cordes whom we hadn't seen for quite a while. Those present were treated to a video presentation by guests Gareth Thomas, operations manager for Oceana Gold's Globe Hill mine, and two of the drilling team who are to probe the Birthday Reef away below the Prohibition workings, Roger Mustard (from Australia) and Jonathan Moore (from Otago). They outlined not only plans for drilling near the Prohibition (detailed below) but also the fascinating work done in building up a three-dimensional model of orebodies in the wider Inangahua quartz field.

As a bonus, Jim Staton showed a film on the Department of Conservation's restoration of the Lord Brassey battery over at Kirwans, which can be seen on U-tube by anyone with access to the internet.

DRILLING PROGRAMME

From Gareth we learn that OceanaGold has two sites prepared near the Pro and is planning to drill on both at the same time, starting with one rig within the next few weeks. Consents for drilling are in place. A 'parent' hole will be drilled from each site to intersect the Birthday Reef well below the old Blackwater mine workings. The drill string will be pulled back after

intersecting the reef and two more branches will be drilled by 'wedging' off the parent hole to reduce the total amount of drilling required. Using this method, six 'intercepts' of the reef are planned. The results from those will assist with decision-making for the next stage of development. If the reef is consistent with what is expected, then most likely it would lead to a decision to drive an underground exploration and development decline tunnel off the portal site previously selected in the Snowy River valley. The decline will provide access for close-spaced drilling over shorter distances from underground positions that will allow the ore body to be adequately modelled in three dimensions and a mine design prepared for possible mining below the old mine workings. Each stage will depend on results



Errol Clements between the two impressive fireplaces on the Herbie Woods house site which he came across recently. The one at left, which housed a range, has a small window in the centre, mostly hidden by gorse.

of drilling and on the gold price projections at the time. It will take about 7 months to undertake the initial drilling, and development leading to a decision to open up mining would take at least another 2 years. It is difficult to envisage mining re-starting in anything less than 3 years.

MORE FIREPLACES.....

The inventory of long-hidden house remains continues to grow. Recently, Waiuta resident Errol Clements guided Les Wright through thick gorse and manuka to a pair of concrete fireplaces that we understand to have belonged to a house occupied by Herbie Woods, out behind Reece and Bill Gidley's. If anybody can remember anything about the house we'd be interested to know.

... AND A DUNNY!

While seeking out unwanted seedlings for volunteers to eradicate, Jim Staton stumbled on the concrete floor and foundation for a toilet block at the Greek Creek end of the Rec, also adjacent to the public tennis court. It has what appear to be three men's urinal stalls and possibly room for a WC at either end. Again, any in-

formation on this, and whether there's a corresponding women's toilet or traces of any other amenity still to be found somewhere in the scrub nearby, will be most welcome.

OTHER FINDS

Efforts by International Student Volunteers and Conservation Volunteers New Zealand have uncovered a few other interesting remains. On the original manager's house section (later Mosleys'), where CVNZ did some great clearance work around the chimneys a while back, they've since brought a nice concrete path and rockery to light, down towards the front. We guess there were steps from this path up to the front verandah, but it would be good to hear from anyone who remembers for sure. There's also a nice mullock path up toward the back where we suspect there was a vegetable garden.

A major part of the student volunteers' work has been helping DOC clear some of the Lawson cypress trees along Top Road. This work has improved access to places like Larcombe's and the company flats where there are all manner of interesting bits and pieces - more details in future letters.

VOLUNTARY HOURS

Besides the organisations already mentioned, Tai Poutini Polytechnic outdoor recreation students and the West Coast Conservation Corps have put in time at Waiuta, making a staggering total of 190 volunteer days over a period of one month.

Other work has included upgrading the Waiuta-Big River track, which is to become stage one of the Reefton Goldfield Journey, stretching all the way to the Inangahua and passing through places like Murray Creek and Kirwans Hill on the way - also something to tell you more about in some future newsletter.



The lock-up sitting in the DOC compound at Reefton, awaiting some attention and a likely return to the Waiuta.



The toilet block near the Rec, with the concrete floor in the foreground and the cubicles silhouetted in the bright Waiuta sunshine.



Sue Findlay, who's been in charge of the CVNZ groups, standing on the recently exposed path at the original manager's house section.

SAINTS AND SINNERS

Items relating to a wide range of life at Waiuta have made their way back to us in recent times. Latest are some of the Stations of the Cross from the Catholic Church which have been looked after for many years by Jane Ryan, a descendant of reef co-discoverer and pioneer storekeeper William Meates. Part of a series of 14 pictures depicting the final hours of Christ, designed to help the faithful make a spiritual pilgrimage of prayer, they are now in safe keeping at Reefton awaiting a decision on their future home. A possibility is Waiuta Lodge in conjunction with the altar from the Anglican Church, mentioned in our last newsletter.

Also back in the region after a long absence is the lock-up, another item that featured in the last letter. Since then, the guys at Reefton Crane Hire have lifted it from a backyard near Nelson and brought it all the way down for just £600 and the Department of Conservation has provided space for its storage, until we can arrange restoration.

Waiuta books and some beautiful pens crafted by Lance Dean from Old Prohibition shaft timber have been sent to those who carried out the move and members of the Brough family who made it possible. Nothing's happened yet with the Blackwater School repiling, but the paperwork is being tackled.

JOS DIVIS BOOK

Almost ready, all delays having been in the interests of greater quality. We'll be sure to let everyone know once it's available - or keep an eye out for news of it on the Waiuta website.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 25th November 2010, 7.30pm, at Frances and Graham Hunters', 31 Victory Street Reefton. All members and other interested people are welcome. Please remember too that \$10 subs were due mid-year, payable to the address at the top of this newsletter.
