



# newsletter

## FRIENDS OF WAIUTA

### DECEMBER 2005

Another year nearly gone and so much to tell you about - so greetings and let's get on with it.

#### BIRTHDAY REEF 'REDISCOVERY'

On a brilliantly fine 9th November 2005, 100 years to the day since Waiuta's Birthday Reef was found, a party of 'prospectors' struck it again.

They included a nephew and two grandsons of members of the original discovery party. The crowd that assembled to witness the event included former mine workers, ex-residents (among them Eric Harris back after 58 years) and their descendants.

There were well over 100 all together, boosted by a party of American tourists who had been diverted from a Reefton heritage walk by their guide, Paul Thomas. After the re-enactment many had their photos taken in front of the Blackwater Mine chimney. Then it was over to the lodge for a Friends of Waiuta barbecue.



*Right: Some of the crowd with 'prospectors' in front.*



*Above: 'Prospectors' at the point of discovery (from left): Malcolm White, Les Bannan, Jack Meates and Ian 'Jimmy Martin' Davidson. Kevin Meates is obscured.*



*Veterans on parade (from left): Leslie Black, Bill Gidley, Jack Robertson and 'Mayor' Tim White.*

The Department of Conservation and Oceana Gold Ltd were presented with clocks mounted in rimu timber retrieved from the Prohibition mineshaft, beautifully turned and polished by John Askin of Reefton.

Conservation workers had put in a mighty effort to have the town in a splendid condition that matched the weather. Oceana also provided some cheer with an assurance that the mine reopening is still in the company's sights.

David Sims, producer of the Waiuta movie 20 years ago, was there again to record the event as part of a new film that will also cover the centennial at Easter.

## LOST MAIL

Apologies to people who didn't get correspondence from us in Spring. For six weeks a new courier failed to clear the box we use at the Visitor Centre.

## GILLS COTTAGE TRANSFORMED

Some sort of record was set by volunteers who painted Gills Cottage in September. After cleaning and completely priming it on a Friday they managed to have the top coat on by afternoon tea the following day - just as well, because it rained on the Sunday. Many thanks to them as well as those who provided paint, sustenance (whitebait... beer... ) and advice.



*Some of the Gills Cottage painting team (from left): Alan Stephens, Graeme Farrant, George Lindsay, Ewen Hammerich and Eddie Stancombe.*

## BEREAVEMENT AND MEMORIAL

We are sad to announce the passing of another well known former Waiuta resident in Myra Sutton, née Chandler. Myra was a member of the original Friends of Waiuta committee that organised the 1986 Waiuta reunion and will be greatly missed. Our sincere condolences go to her family.

It's been suggested that we have a board at Waiuta with names of people whose ashes have been scattered there. Ideas, plus names are welcome.

## NEW BABY

Congratulations to our members Ronnie Buckman (treasurer) and Paul Thomas on the birth of their daughter Emily, just in time for the Birthday Reef celebrations. We'll have a picture in the next newsletter.



*John Bywater of Oceana Gold with a Waiuta clock. FoW president Frances Hunter is at right and Paul Thomas left. A similar clock will be raffled at Easter.*

## CONSOLIDATED GOLDFIELDS HQ

During his rambles around London, Bede Cordes has located the former HQ of Blackwater Mines. We await news that he's nipped in and nabbed a donation.

## CHOPPING PRIZE

Next year's Reefton A&P Show will feature the South Island woodchopping championships, plus the Waiuta Centennial Chop with \$250 prize money.

## NEXT MEETING (NOTE THAT IT'S A MONTH EARLY!)

Tuesday, 28th February 2006, 7.30pm at the Reefton Visitor Centre. Everybody welcome. meanwhile compliments of the season to all our members.



*Our man in London, Bede Cordes, outside the former Consolidated Goldfields HQ.*