



newsletter FRIENDS OF WAIUTA

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

February 2010

Greetings from the Golden West for the first time in 2010. We're a bit later than usual; no doubt you've heard how the computer bug that didn't strike as expected in 2000 actually turned up this New Year - well our editor can't even use that for an excuse. He just lost his notes that were written with pen on paper.

The year didn't get off to a very flash start weather-wise, but members who stayed at the lodge had a great time regardless. On 11 January (about the time most people were turning their thoughts homeward) the weather came right and stayed that way for the better part of four weeks, with temperatures occasionally in the 30s. Plenty of blackberries were coming on but not ripe - maybe late March will be the time.

NELSON MEETING

A good number of ex Waiuta people from as far away as the Coast and Christchurch gathered inside the Richmond vanue and got busy reminiscing. Simon Nathan was over from Wellington to talk about his Jos Divis book research and pass around Divis photos for comment and interest. Sincere thanks to those who organised such a great day.

WEB SITES

There was some discussion about linking the Divis website to ours, but no need because it already is - just look at the 'thanks and links' page. Note that most of the newsletters since 2003 are there too.

LODGE THEFTS

Saucepans are the latest things to be borrowed, stolen or otherwise removed from the Lodge. We are to make another sign to let people know that many contents are paid for by Friends of Waiuta, so pinching things isn't a way of getting taxes back via DoC.

Something more valued will be returned when the Anglican Church altar, carefully repaired by Graham Hunter, is taken to the Lodge. We trust it will be given due respect, although another sign could be needed.

BLACKWATER SCHOOL.

We've received an estimate of a bit under \$10,000 to repile the school - now it's just a matter of finding the money. Margaret Sadler has a few ideas in that direction, so here's hoping. The subfloor looks reasonably sound, but of course the walls, roof etc will need attention once everything's right down below. We can make further applications for those jobs.



Now there's a Waiuta-type car, albeit modified a bit. This 1935 Ford coupé was among a splendid lineup of vintage cars and hotrods photographed by Graham Hunter outside the lodge recently.

LANCE'S TREES R.I.P.

Late last year, Lance Dean provided several pages of words and drawings in response to our request for information on houses. While describing the Deans' house up Side Road he mentioned:

'When I was 17 years old I worked for the forestry in Reefton. They had a nursery where we grew the radiata for the plantations in the Nelson Conservancy. I took some seedlings home to Waiuta, hence the one at our old gateway. That was in 1949 and it has never been pruned, so today it is a gnarly old bugger - just like some of us, eh?'

Sad to report, the tree, and an equally big gnarly companion, stand beside the gateway no longer. A massive wind storm in January ended their 60-year reign. We've retrieved some of the timber in case Lance wants it to make some of his famous woodware; the rest will probably warm the lodge and no doubt a good few homes over years to come.

Fortunately the trees didn't fall on any of the house remains and little other damage has been spotted around town - just some iron on the barbershop roof that the Department of Conservation will soon fix. On the plus side, a shrub that blew over near the top of Side Road exposed some evidence of, we think, Mrs Cole's shop.

GUESTS LOVE WAIUTA

A great place to stay around Greymouth is 'The Breakers' overlooking Nine Mile Beach up the fabulous Coast



One of the felled giants at what was Deans' gate up Side Road.



A view up the south shaft chimney showing new supporting steelwork mentioned in our August 2009 newsletter. Santa still didn't use it.

Road. Jan McDonald, the 'main host', tells us:

'When we have guests stay three nights we recommend Waiuta for a visit and it always gets rave reviews. Something similar elsewhere in the world, particularly U.S., would have barriers everywhere, so they really love that they can get up close. Snowy battery walk is always a favourite.'

Thanks Jan for helping promote our town. Incidentally, there's another connection as 'The Breakers' was started by an original Friends of Waiuta committee member, Tony Pupich, in what was previously the home of former Greymouth mayor, Dr Barry Dallas.



One of several places around town that Conservation Volunteers New Zealand have done a great job of clearing recently: the original manager's house, (later Mosleys'). Thanks to James Washer from C.V.N.Z. for the photo.

NEXT MEETING

Saturday 27th March as part of a big day out at Waiuta! We'll have rambles around town all day, particularly to the places that have been cleared by Conservation Volunteers New Zealand and others. They'll include the school remains, the original manager's house chimneys and section, and the short-cut track alongside Greek Creek from the Middle Track to Side Road that our hard-working secretary Graeme Farrant has spent a fair bit of the last three seasons clearing. We want as many former residents as possible along to tell their stories about the spots visited.

We plan to get started at 1 pm, straight after lunch (bring your own picnic) and have our meeting at 4 pm, followed by a barbecue tea. As usual we'll provide the meat - you bring salads, desserts etc, plus plenty to drink, as we're hoping for a nice warm early autumn day. See you there, we hope!
