



newsletter

FRIENDS OF WAIUTA

JUNE 2006

Welcome to the second hundred years! The Waiuta Centennial at Easter was a great success, with people coming from all over New Zealand and even half way around the world to meet up again and talk over the old time, present times and the years in between. Oldsters included 'Mickey' Broderick, Johnny Jones, Alf Saunders and Pat Stephens - all nonogenarians or close to it - while at the other end the great, great grandchildren of former residents had a great time too. Bill Gidley, who's also cruising toward his 90th year and has been such a stalwart of our committee and an invaluable source of information on the town and mines, was made an honorary life member of Friends of Waiuta. There's a lot we could tell you, but we need to leave room for photos, so we hope they'll tell at least some of the story.

THANKS ALL ROUND

First of all, thanks to all the people and firms who did so much to make it all possible: AMI Insurance (raffle prizes), Bank of NZ (raffle prizes), Broadway Tea Rooms (short bread - yum), Griffin and Smith (pens), Monteith's (raffle beer prize) and Solid Energy NZ (gift bags). Robin Hill, Dave Hamill, Ian and Joel Davidson and Barry Shaw-Williams (Saturday night musicians), Tuiana Davidson and Molly Wright (sellers of merchandise and raffles). The wood choppers and others who organised the Saturday sporting events. The Reefton Union Church for the inspiring Sunday Service and reviving barbecue that followed. Our secretary Sarah Clarkson (how will we manage without her) for organisation, and our president Frances Hunter for so much in that respect, as well as the superb catering. Have we forgotten anyone? Very likely. Thanks to 'children' who brought their veteran parents and also of course to everyone else for coming and making it the success it was.

FURTHER GRANTS

We are also grateful for two generous grants that have just come our way. The Grey Valley Lions have given \$1270 in financial assistance for David Sims of Solaris Films to come and record our reunion. We look forward to seeing the film later in the year. Oceana Gold have donated \$2000 toward the cost of printing our new book, launched at the reunion.



Pat Stephens and Alf Saunders did the honours when the time came to cut Waiuta's birthdaycake at the Saturday night 'do'.

PRO TIMBERS

Among the big talking points were definitely the many different items of woodware crafted by John Askin, Rex Crook and Graeme Hunter from timbers salvaged by Oceana Gold from the Prohibition shaft. It was hard to believe that timbers which had been underground for maybe 80 years or so could be made into things of such beauty. We hope to have a list of items and prices by Christmas at least.

BEREAVEMENT BOARD

A brief note in our December newsletter has brought results, with five names to put on a board commemorating

people whose ashes have been scattered at or near Waiuta. Names so far are Kath Barrow, John Cave, Eddie Chandler, Muriel and Bill Stancombe and Tosh Stephens. Martin Cordes has built us a beautiful rimu board that will feature in a newsletter once the names are on. More are welcome and we'd also like to get in contact with the relatives of Kitty Coulson.

NEW BOOK

'Our Own Fun', the book of children's reminiscences published for the centennial, helped stimulate enough memories to fill another volume (which we plan to produce before too long). Besides lots of good reading and heaps of memories through all 144 pages, there are plenty of photos, most of them previously unpublished. Books are still selling for the special introductory price of \$25, plus \$2 for packaging and posting, so don't miss out on yours.

OUR BOOKS GO NATIONAL

Elaine Bolitho, author of that fine Friends of Waiuta publication, the Reefton School of Mines book, has been asked to give one of the Friends of the National Library lectures for Heritage Month. It will be on Tuesday 27 June, 12.00 – 1.00 pm, in the National Library auditorium, where Elaine will be speaking about the School of Mines, including stories about the research and writing phases of the book. This will be accompanied by power point pictures (which her husband Ian is getting ready) and Friends of Waiuta books will be on sale. Congratulations to her on such high recognition and thanks for promoting 'our place' so well. Already Elaine has had a number of enquiries from interested folk, and says: "It's amazing when you say "Reefton", who pops up!"

HAPPY CHOPPERS

We had a nice letter from the Buller Axemen's Centre thanking us for sponsoring the South Island Woodchopping and Sawing Championships during summer. They said our support has ensured the continuing success of the championships, which is good to hear as it was an important Waiuta sport.



Former workers in and around the mighty Blackwater mine: Leslie Black, Bill Gidley and Jack Robertson at back, Alf Saunders and Joe Cooper in front.



**Above: Ian Davidson, alias 'Jimmy Martin'.
Below: 'Mickey' Broderick enjoying a catch-up with young Tim White.
Below right: Another sack race away under the eye of starter, Don Neale.**



Conversations continued at every opportunity.



REUNION NAMES

Lists of the people who attended the Easter reunion are available - just send \$2 extra with your next subscription. Which leads us to....

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Yes, our AGM has come around once again - must be our 21st in fact. Thursday 27th July, 7.30pm, at the Reefton Visitor Centre (entrance from the Strand) - all members welcome. We'll be needing a new secretary and other officers.