

newsletter FRIENDS OF WAIUTA

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May 2008

Welcome to what began as the April newsletter before that particular month slipped away from our editor. There's been plenty going on, so let's get started before he loses another month.

MARCH MEETING

Our meeting at the end of March was notable for a few things, including Bill Gidley's absence - the first time he had missed a meeting for many years. We hope to see him over again before long. Bede Cordes, back from a few years overseas, didn't make it either, so that's another piece of catching up we're looking forward to.

Our Department of Conservation rep, Jim Staton, was there though, armed with a great set of photos covering the department's reforestation of the Golden Lead

battery which is between Big River and the Lewis Pass road. Jim, who organised the project as well as working on it, and Dave Hawes who directed operations on the ground, have quite a list of other big jobs they intend to tackle, including one at Waiuta - more details in the near future. In the meantime a small job's been attended to further up the road where the horse trough has been cleaned up and repairs are scheduled.

Other news at the meeting included receipt of \$800 from pub charity to help run our website. Also on the subject of communication by computer, our president Frances Hunter can now be contacted by email: franandgraham@xnet.co.nz is the address. Perhaps we should publish a Friends of Waiuta email list.

WAIUTA LODGE

Many thanks are due to the family of Cheryl Judson, whose parents were Bob and Bette (née Ward) Campbell of Waiuta. The family gave \$500 towards equipment for the lodge - enough to buy a large picnic table, two seats for the veranda, some cutlery and other items. The lodge veranda is now nicely filled with seats thanks to these and other kind donations.

The name of John Keenan will be added to the memorial board following the scattering of his ashes at Waiuta recently. John, who died last December, was a grandson of Granny Keenan whom many will remember as a midwife at Waiuta.

BLACKWATER SCHOOL

First stop for visitors on their way up the winding road to Waiuta is often the Blackwater School which the



Some of the team who reforested the Golden Lead battery. From left: John Edwards, Dave Hawes, Jim Brooks, Joe Wedgwood, Jim Staton and Les Wright (who mostly watched and took photos).

late Jack Burrows gifted to the Blackwater community. Unfortunately there's nobody at the township to look after it these days, so it's likely that Friends of Waiuta will take over the building. Repiling will be necessary soon and it's hoped that the Conservation Corps will repaint it as they have a couple of times in the past.

JOS DIVIS

While it's too early to confirm right

now, it seems likely that a selection of Jos Divis's Waiuta photos will be featured in an 'exhibition' on a major internet site hosted by a national agency. While we are thrilled at the prospect of such recognition for the man who recorded our town and mines so well, we realise how little background information there is on him - so please send any anecdotes etc.

OLD PHOTOS

Quite incredibly, historic Waiuta photos just seem to keep on turning up. The latest collection comes from John Hammond, a geologist in Perth, with whom we made contact through an associate working for Oceana Gold at Globe Hill.

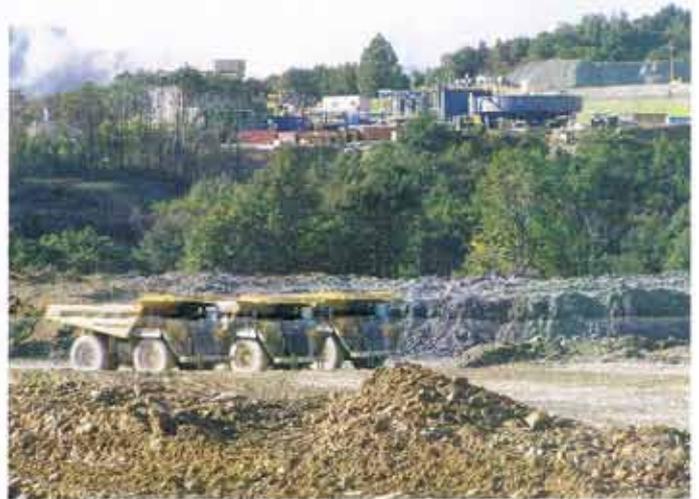
John's grandparents, Sidney and Margaret Hammond, lived at Waiuta from 1911 or 1912 until around mid-1915 and their photo album contains some classics including the best early shot of the Snowy battery we've seen and a very informative early view of south shaft. There's only room for one (below) this time, but we'll aim to include more in future.



The Hammonds outside their home somewhere in Waiuta about 1912. If anyone can identify the cottage, with its distinctive window above the door, we'd be pleased to hear.

PAT STEPHENS

We were saddened to hear, just before going to press with this issue, of the passing of Pat Stephens. A Christchurch lass, Pat Halsey was married to Stan Stephens in Waiuta's Anglican Church in 1937 and they proceeded to raise a fine family of three girls and two boys before leaving in 1949. For several years they owned Gills Cottage, which three generations of descendants have recently helped maintain. One granddaughter, Lynn Anderson, is a vice-president of Friends of Waiuta. An accomplished athlete in her younger days, Pat remained active into her nineties and was a regular attendee at Waiuta events - snapped at left amidst the 2006 centennial crowd in her trademark Waiuta hat. Our deep sympathy is extended to Pat's family.



As promised previously, another glimpse of the Globe Hill mining operation - this one looking across the pit (since deepened) to the processing plant on the old Cornishtown site. 'Around the Globe' mine tours are proving popular, and of course Waiuta always gets a few mentions in the commentary.



We caught up recently with Ian Davidson doing his 'Jimmy Martin the Waiuta prospector' routine - this time for Reefton Area School 13 year olds. The place: inside the tunnel near where Jimmy found the Birthday Reef in 1905. The photo was taken using only the light of candles that 'Jimmy' supplies to those who want to venture in.

NEXT MEETING

Our annual general meeting on 31st July will be held at Frances and Graham Hunter's, 31 Victory St Reefton. It will be at the earlier-than-usual time of 7pm for the convenience of those travelling in the winter cold afterward. As always, every present or prospective member will be welcome.