

Newsletter

Friends Of
WAIUTA Inc.

P.O. Box 493
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www.waiuta.org.nz

November 2018

Some of us had been in Waiuta for a couple of days working the ongoing remediation on Gill's Cottage and generally catching up with how our town was going. It was with a sense of purpose that we welcomed the extra visitors from the Paparoa (Punakaiki) Visitors Centre to our meeting for an escorted tour of the town, for the launching of another book related to our town and for our general meeting.

DOC Developments - Gavin Collis

It was a pleasure on arriving to see that lawnmower had recently been in action. The town was looking very tidy. We mentioned last newsletter that the Barber Shop was in for renovation; well this time we arrived as the workers were finishing for the day and so got the chance of a close inspection. The photo below says it all(a picture equals a thousand words)



Alan freely offering advice on the finer points of the renovation

We look forward to the reinstatement of the barber's chair as the centre piece in the shop, this time securely locked up. (FYI Some years ago I was phoned anonymously asking how much we wanted for that chair!! 😬)

- A few weeks ago DOC had a working bee where a general tidy up and tightened security on Jos Divis' house and Rimu Cottage was effected. Other work included clearing / tidying around the swimming pool and the Prohibition sites.
- we were delighted to learn that ElectroNet have advised DOC that the Lodge should be on mains electricity in the first months of 2019. While the generator served its purpose, the constant hum of a diesel engine with the resultant exhaust was something that is inimical to the ambience of what we like Waiuta to be.

- Money has been allocated for the renovation of the South Shaft bathhouse in the coming year.
- In our last newsletter we mentioned that Waiuta is likely to receive Landmark status. This is moving steadily forward and will be a huge fillip in all areas when achieved. Recently there have been significant developments that will greatly enliven a visit to Waiuta. There'll be more in our next newsletter.

Book Launch

With all the books written about Waiuta or written under our name we are indeed a literary group. Illustrating this was the launch at our meeting of "**Hard Won Gold - Stories from Waiuta and the Reefton Goldfield - Essays in Memory of Les Wright**" edited/written by Ross and Pauline Barnett.



Pauline, Margaret, Ross and Paul share some levity at the launch

The Grey Star review gives it high praise and concludes with... 'is a more academic look at goldfields history and will serve the Coast well in future years as an accurate historical record.'

Craig's Printers have an excellent summary of the book's contents book here:

<http://www.craigsdp.nz/book-hard-won-gold/>

To buy it from us send an email to Margaret at:

Waiuta1951@gmail.com - Cost \$57

or by post to the address at the top of this page.

General News

It was great to see Nigel Slonker at the meeting. This represents solid evidence that developments are under way. Tasman Mining have appointed Nigel as Blackwater's project manager including site preparation and decline development. He has attended our meetings when leading the past ventures and it's great to welcome him and his partner Jackie back.

- Recently Margaret met with Mark Le Messurier (Tasman Mining) and Nigel to introduce herself (and us), to welcome them to the Coast and establish future warm relations.

- **Reunion DVD.** We've seen an early version of this. It's well done and will be available by our next meeting.

“Tasman Mining to redevelop the Blackwater Mine” –

is the headline fronting the proposed developments. Details are now emerging of the development plans. They have been granted a 20 year mining permit during which \$500 million may be spent in extracting up to 700,000oz of the estimated gold left. (*that's just under the 750,000oz produced up until 1951*) Surface preparation is to begin within 6 months with the decline tunnel work taking two to three years to get into actual gold production. Initial work would employ about 30 people with 100 employed at its peak.

Processing the ore to extract the gold into rough 'dore' bars would happen locally. As access to the mine and the ore processing will be sited near the old Millerton Mine site, several kilometres away there will be little or no surface footprint at Waiuta itself of the activity occurring nearly a kilometre below.

Gill's Cottage

As has become the norm, Alan S. and myself went to Waiuta a couple of days early so that work could continue on the restoration. This time we were joined by another volunteer, Paul Elwell-Sutton, who hails from Haast. As can be seen below the exterior is showing the effects of our efforts - it is looking wonderful. Also noted were the effects of the anti-lichen spray that Sandy Pupich donated to us recently. The weather boards are looking much cleaner and ready for painting.



A satisfied Paul surveying the finished side of Gills Cottage. This involved weatherboard replacement and painting. There are two sides to go.

Reminder: there are still a number of 2018 membership fees outstanding. Please pay soon.



Wishing you and your family all the happiness of the season with a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Yet another book! Or Two!

As if we don't have enough going on in our small group, Jim Staton (DOC) is in the process of collating and preparing for publication a book actually largely written but not completed by Les Wright titled:

“Of Mice and Mining Men... The Story of Alborns Coal Mine at Merrijigs, Reefton Coalfield”

While it is not about Waiuta directly it is our district's history and is to be published under our name with proceeds going to us. And of course it is yet another of Les' books. Enough said.

Requiescat in Pace

We note with sorrow the passing Alf Bannan (he lived to 99)



You might recall the sudden passing of Gail Birt in mentioned our last newsletter. Keep a lookout for this plaque on School Track where some of her ashes are spread.



Margaret with Noelene Magee

We were delighted to recently catch up with an old Waiuta identity. Noelene is the daughter of Alf Magee. Alf was a builder, a miner and most importantly, an accomplished dancer. Because of this he was keenly sought as a partner at at the Saturday night dances. Envious workmates therefore sought his help with the various dance moves resulting at grub time, hundreds of metres down in the mine, in Alf teaching burly hobnailed miners the finer points of the waltz, the tango and the foxtrot. My mind boggles.

Stop Press! We are world famous in NZ. Look is address!
<<https://www.stuff.co.nz/travel/destinations/nz/109074599/waiuta-gold-mine-could-reopen-as-ghost-town-gears-up-for-tourism-revival>>

Next Waiuta Meeting - AGM and General

When: Saturday 27 April 2019

Time: 2 pm

Where: at Waiuta Lodge

Please: as usual, bring a salad or dessert. There will be a BBQ at which we will provide meat.

The printing of this newsletter is kindly sponsored by the Anisy Funeral Homes, Greymouth and Richmond, Nelson. This is very much appreciated.

