

Newsletter

Friends Of
WAIUTA Inc.

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July 2020

It has been a long time since our last meeting in November - that's last year!. The Covid pandemic has much to answer for. Not only did it force the cancellation of the March meeting but it has slowed and delayed, ongoing or about to happen projects. Evidence of this is recorded below.

However when we all met for an early meeting and lunch in the warmth of George and Carol's lounge it was a great to see so many 'new' faces - helped of course by the premiere of our documentary 'Whispers of Gold' which screened later that afternoon.

DOC Developments - Sam Symonds

Sam was able to reel off an impressive number, of projects that were under way, some of which have been held up by the 'lockdown'...

- \$10,000 has been secured for exploratory investigations into the evaluating Jos Divis' cottage.
- Landmark Status for Waiuta or Tohu Whenua (*Places that tell our Stories*) The launch is tentatively planned for the 2nd week in December.
- The long anticipated new interpretation panels should be installed in September.
- The Big River to Waiuta track has been tidied up after recent damage.
- After many years of witnessing the slow decline of Rimu Cottage progress has been made with LINZ enabling it, legally, to come under under DOC's aegis. Planning can now begin on restoration work.
- Vandalism continues to be a problem both at the Lodge, Jos' Cottage and in Waiuta generally. Consideration is being given to the installation of cameras and warning signs in the vicinity of the Lodge and on the Waiuta road.
- The economisers (heat exchangers) currently sitting at Ferrymead where they are unwanted, have been offered free to us - we have the funds to transport them to Waiuta and have made preparations for this. More details later.

Premiere Documentary - 'Whispers of Gold'

What a journey it has been to get here but what a success. The 46 minute film was preceded by Jos Divis' historic photos shown on the screen.

Producer Dave Kwant, Director Luis Castanon and Scriptwriter Robyn Janes were in attendance.

Special guests were: the Hon Damien O'Connor - MP for West Coast - Tasman, Jamie Cleine - Mayor of Buller District, Mark Davies - Director of Operations Western South Island for DOC and Margaret Sadler - FoW president. Nigel Slonker - Underground Project Manager for Federation Mining.

All gave brief speeches.

Margaret was worn out. She'd been working day and night for weeks and credit needs to be given for the huge effort she has made with the general organisation of the screening and then with the marketing and distribution of the documentary throughout the country. The results are nothing short of outstanding. Thankyou is an easy word to say but in this case it is said loudly and sincerely.

She had a great team behind her, parts of which may be seen in the photos below.

Thanks too to Peter Kerridge who not only made a very professional Master of Ceremonies but rounded this off by wearing the dux medal given to his father by Waiuta headmaster, Len Ching in 1925.

Thanks too to Phil Young for his assistance with the sound and the presentation of the historical photos, mostly Jos Divis pictures on Anisy's projector.

You'll have seen an initial review by Bruce Watson sent out recently and I include another below by Tony Fortune from the premiere.

The interest was so high that a second screening was shown soon after the first had finished.

All up about 200 attended the two showings.

For the film trailer click (or copy and paste) the following into your browser. Go to page 2

<https://www.whispersofgold.com>



Peter, Master of Ceremonies, welcoming guests and public - note his father's dux medal.



Amongst the dignitaries Margaret doesn't look too tired - it caught up with her the next day.

Tasman Mining - reopening the Blackwater mine

Project Funding Progress

Federation Mining (Federation) is pleased to advise that the NZ government has formally approved a NZ\$15 million loan from the NZ Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) to support the development of the Blackwater gold mine.

In December 2019 the PGF announced the loan which required Federation to secure co-funding before it could be finalised. Federation has recently sourced additional funding from an Australian investor with an application given to the New Zealand Overseas Investment Office earlier this month. This potential funding, along with the PGF loan, will allow site works to commence at Blackwater later in 2020. Federation Managing Director Mark Le Messurier said he was excited to receive the news and is grateful to the NZ Government for their strong support for the project.

The Blackwater project will see opportunities for local people and businesses to participate and support the establishment of site infrastructure before commencing tunnelling operations in late 2020.

Federation is planning to recruit its own workforce to develop the mine and will need truck drivers, equipment operators, mining professionals, safety & environmental professionals and maintenance staff who will be supported by specialist contractors and businesses.

Mr Le Messurier said: "The project would employ approximately 40 local people, both Federation employees and specialist contractors over the coming three years."

"The project will be a boost for the regional economy, and we look forward to commencing site operation in the coming months."

Subscriptions

Paul our treasurer says that despite a big number getting their subs paid a number remain outstanding.

This probably arises out of our moving our financial year to be the same as a calendar year. Please pay soon. As usual here are requisite details

- our bank number is 02 0880 0037433 00
- and next to **Particulars** to write '*Subscription*'
- and next to **Reference** to write your name

Waiuta Meetings for 2020

Here they are for the entire year. Mark these in your calendar. A reminder will go out some weeks beforehand.

Sat - 21 November 2020 - AGM at Waiuta

Sun - 6 December 2020 - Christmas Function gathering at Paul's in Christchurch

Working Bee - Usually this segment occupies several hundred words - but not when we're fighting coronavirus. However on his way to the Reefton meeting Brendon Wilshire called to help Colin McMasters with painting repaired Blackwater School windows at his workshop

General News

The Purton family have recently donated an outdoor table on a concrete pad out by the BBQ area.



Rest in Peace

- Belle White, wife of Tim, honorary 'Mayor of Waiuta' passed away at her home in Reefton on March 5th. After her service she was laid to rest with Tim at Burkes Creek Cemetery.
- Diana Calvert, granddaughter of Tas and Blanche Hogg died on 19th March after a long battle with cancer that she fought courageously for a number of years. Diana will be remembered for her strong commitment to Waiuta and for her generous sharing of the invaluable Hogg family papers that she inherited and later secured in Black's Point Museum for later generations to access.
- Kath Davies, a frequent attender of our Christchurch gatherings. She was daughter of Jack McNamara, publican of Blackwater's 'Rose and Thistle' Hotel from 1927 - 1945.

Very Long Term Planning - - - 9 July 2021

That day marks 70 years since the mine closed. Note that this is a Friday. We will probably have a remembrance activity on the Friday with other activities moving onto the weekend.

Mark this in your diary.

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