

Newsletter

Friends Of
WAIUTA Inc.

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

March 2021

The Covid pandemic has delayed and frustrated us for a year now but we have gone from strength to strength in all ways and I now regard the Friends of Waiuta as being as strong as it's ever been in terms of past and projected output. There was a great muster at our recent AGM and we elected a number of new and past representatives to our offices. It is great to see some new blood here. Those elected are:

President: Margaret Sadler

Vice Presidents: Alan Stephens and Peter Kerridge

Treasurer: Paul McGirr

Secretary: Pauline Barnett

Committee: Graeme Farrant (Newsletter), Tony Becker, Oliver Young, David Grantham, Hank Scott, Simon Nathan

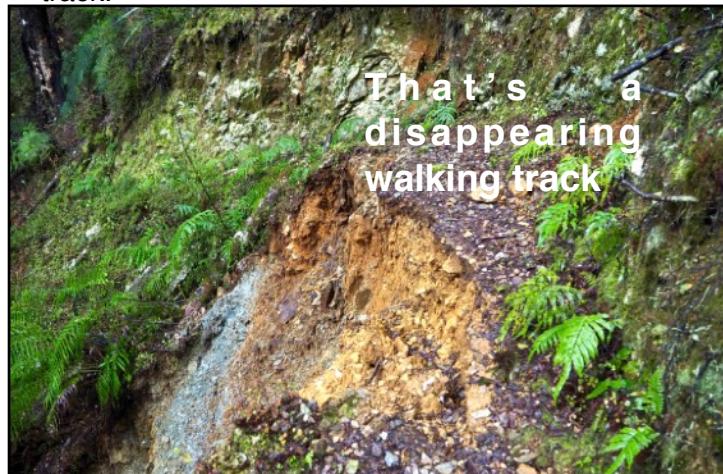
We decided that our subscription remains at \$15 p.a.

- attached find the renewal details.

DOC Developments - Sam Symonds

Sam reports that our recognition as Tohu Whenua (a place of historical importance) has had the result of more people visiting Waiuta as indicated by tourists visiting to experience the town and by increased use of the Lodge.

- the Snowy Battery to Powerhouse track -- as there are multiple sites along the track where it is unsafe due to unstable rock threatening safety it has been decided to permanently close this section of the track.



- a conservation architect has now been engaged to undertake remedial work specifications on Jos Divis' house, on Rimu Cottage and on the Police Station. After many years of concern this will start a process that will safeguard the cottages as important heritage structures with the history and significance of each identified and proper processes for safeguarding each prescribed.
- The installation of our new signs designed by Janet Bathgate are progressing. The existing ones, which are a huge improvement on the old, are only the first step and when more finance becomes available her complete plan will be implemented.

General News

Before our last meeting we took up Nigel Slonker's kind offer of a tour of the work underway in reopening Waiuta Mine. An enthusiastic group of about twenty of us accepted and were treated to a fascinating tour of the workings underway. The Greymouth Star and the Westport News reported it this way....

'Before the meeting we were treated with an extensive tour of the newly established workings at Hukawai of the Snowy River mine project, where Federation Mining are tunnelling 3.3 km towards the deep gold seam over 900 metres beneath Waiuta. The old Prohibition Mine when it ceased working in 1951 was operating at 879 metres below at the 16th level with further exploration occurring below that.'

We were taken in small groups to the two mine portals by Bernie O'Leary and Nigel Slonker who explained the considerable infrastructure visible about us. This ranged from the administrative and associated buildings, to the water treatment ponds, the sewerage system, communications, electrical and water infrastructure, drainage, roads and the all-weather access with the bridge over the Snowy River. Multiple local businesses have been involved in the construction and installation of these.

When we got to the Main decline tunnel, now nearing 200 metres in length we were able to see the new Epic ST18 loader which was busy hauling waste rock from the portals. Standing nearby was the shotcrete machine which will be used for projecting a concrete mixture at high pressure onto the tunnel walls.

Tas Hogg, the Mine Manager when it closed often said that there was as much gold left in the Waiuta mine as they took out. That amount was 750,000 ounces. Federation Mining have done their core sampling, decided that this was certainly feasible and are well on the way to getting that amount again. It's

just that the extraction methods are different. Tas Hogg would have loved to have been with us. Our thanks go to Nigel and Federation Mining for arranging this for us.

Epic ST18 Loader



Jos Divis Documentary

The success of our 'Whispers of Gold' documentary has also spawned the making of a further documentary relating to photographer Jos Divis. His life largely spanned that of Waiuta bequeathing us with a treasury of world class photographs have done so much to publicise Waiuta - the town, its mine and its people. There has been an enthusiastic response to this proposal and already various steps have taken regarding funding proposals, of interviews with those who knew him and of contacts with relatives in his birthplace, Orlik, is near Prague, which these days is part of the Czech Republic.



Jos' gravestone in Reefton Cemetery

Gill's Cottage - 'The Jewel in our Crown'

It's not finished yet but the working bee over the weekend had us complete a milestone - we completed the painting of the exterior of Gill's Cottage. Remember that this wasn't just a 'paint job' for this was a building that was lichen infested, had lots of wood rot and borer and hadn't seen paint for many years. It has required the efforts, skills, time and donations of timber, spray, equipment from multiple people involving many thousands of donated dollars - all this barely recognized, and that can only be humbly acknowledged with a loud - **Thankyou**.

It looks great. To look back over photos of the past ten years and to make a 'then and now' (see below for this) comparison is edifying. To see this photos of enter this into your browser. They are only in rough order - I can't figure out how to order and put comments below each!

[<https://www.icloud.com/sharedalbum/#B0JGJDfWGgLfYA>](https://www.icloud.com/sharedalbum/#B0JGJDfWGgLfYA)

At the conclusion of the painting we had time to resume our rediscovery of heavily overgrown school

site. Great progress was made on this particularly when Alan and John Melville (a recent volunteer) got to work with their scrub cutters. We are slowly reclaiming this to something resembling the area after the buildings were removed. Copy this link for photos past and present for this site

<<https://www.icloud.com/sharedalbum/#B0JGlcgc2K1nI5>>

Did You Know:

Context: the easing of the laws in NZ surrounding cannabis use.

Late last year when staying alone at the Lodge a visitor arrived looking for Hempseed's Store. He had read the name and came to the obvious conclusion that this would be a great place to purchase seeds for growing his personal marijuana supply. It was with a wry smile I pointed out where the store was sited and wished him luck. 😊

Thinks to himself - note to treasurer - is there money to be made here?????? 💰 LOL

In Memoriam

It was a year ago that Diana Calvert died. She was remembered in a ceremony at her brother's house on 20th March. This was followed a day later with the spreading of her ashes at the site of her grandparents, Tas and Blanche Hogg's Waiuta house site.

We also send our sympathies to the White family in recognition of the passing of Belle White on March 5. Belle was the wife of Tim - onetime informal 'Mayor of Waiuta'.

And our sympathies too, go to the Ramsden family - in September last year we omitted to notify you of the passing of Patricia Mountford (nee Patsy Ramsden) who lived in Skip Road

70th Remembrance of the Mine Closure 9-10 July

You will have received a note from Margaret regarding memorialising the mine's closure 70 years ago. Planning is well under way but for this to be successful we need you to notify us of your intention to come.

Associated with this is a proposal from Peter Ewen (Writer/Regional Councillor) that a reunion of Waiuta School pupils happen on this weekend.

Details for this will be found by contacting Peter at: Ph 03 762 7859 // Email: prewen@hotmail.com

Forthcoming Waiuta Related Meetings

Mine Closing Commemoration:

Friday 9 July 2021 at Waiuta from 11.00am onwards - see attached form for details - which is followed Saturday 10 July 2021 at 10.20am at the Reefton Theatre there will be a screening of 'Whispers of Gold' which is to be followed at 11.30am by our general meeting.

Our Next Meeting is on Saturday 20 November At Waiuta Lodge at 2 pm

Next Christchurch Gatherings

When: Sunday 18 July

Where: Paul McGirr's house - 9a Wittys Road - Avonhead

Time: 10.30 am - finishing about 3 pm

As usual bring a contribution for morning tea / lunch.

Our Christchurch Christmas lunch is scheduled for - Sunday 5 December - Cost \$15

Reminders and details will be sent out for both of these closer to the time.

Happy Birthday Helen

This nearly slipped in under the radar — that it was Helen Young's 70th birthday on the day of our AGM. It was given away when the beautifully presented birthday cake was spied being quietly laid upon the meal table after our meeting.



Economisers (another name for a heat exchanger)



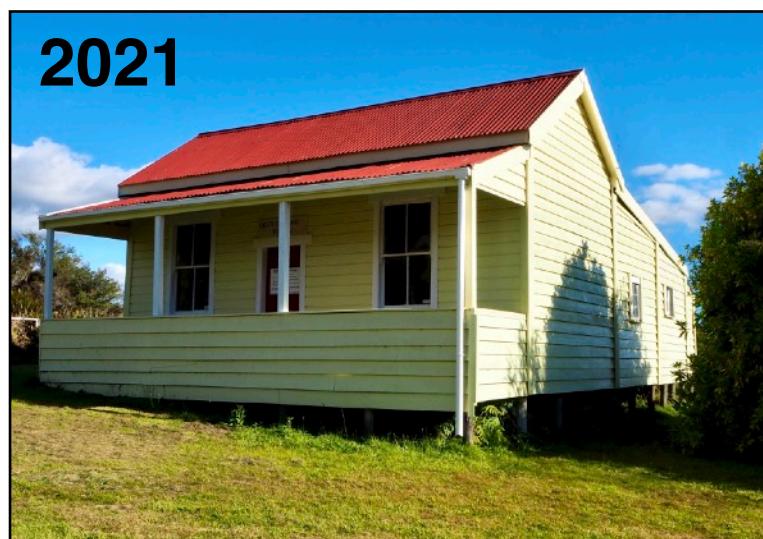
You will recall that last year we were offered two 8 tonne economisers from Ferrymead Industrial Park in Christchurch. Originally from Smithfield Freezing Work near Timaru they are the same as the one originally in Waiuta.

Last week Crofts Transport unloaded them in Waiuta.

One will be put back in the flue area and the other will be mounted outside with an

explanatory interpretation panel. Our thanks go to Ferrymead Industrial Park for the donation, for the cost of transporting them - and especially to Graeme Richardson, from Ferrymead, whose knowledge and enthusiasm are why they are now here. Last year Graeme came to Waiuta to take the appropriate measurements and will be here again to ensure that the precision lowering of it into its chamber goes without any problems.

I include these before and after photos for those members who don't have access to a computer for viewing the various photos offered in this month's newsletter



And finally, John Tan, photographer extraordinaire, and friend of Tony Becker, recently spent an afternoon in Waiuta with his camera and UAV.

Enter this address into your browser to feast on these marvellous images.

I love looking at my never-before-seen view down South Shaft and thinking that this is where and why Waiuta began and why it ended.

< <https://www.icloud.com/sharedalbum/#B0JJu8EH6ySiMk> >

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

