

July 2024

Greetings... from a very positive and happening Friends of Waiuta society.

Our well attended July meeting was busy with news on matters accomplished and of those happening. Details of both follow but firstly, before the meeting we successfully launched our recently updated and reprinted 'Friends in Chains' written by Teamster Bob Henderson, and signed by his grandson Peter Henderson.



Peter signing the book written by his grandfather Bob Henderson

Peter Neame of Cobden gives a glowing report of the book. In the Grey Star he writes, “.. *It is, in my experience and reading, the greatest West Coast book ever written. ... and .. this is a great read of man and animal working together in the pioneer days of the Coast. .. many Coasters will recognize friends and families of 4 to 6 generations ago.*”

This is high praise indeed.

General Business and DOC News

Casey Rhodes, DOC, Historic Ranger was able to report on recent progress.

He reported that with the Police Station renovation nearly complete that DOC have approved of landscaping around the site for the opening in November.

In general business it was noted that with this completion the ceremonial opening will be on on Friday 8 November 2024 at 11 am.

This will be followed our general meeting the following day on Saturday the 9th at 2pm.

There is a proposal that a Red Hut be erected in Waiuta and it was suggested that we use the

milled red beech timber recently donated by Federation Mining to FoW. Casey has already since quantified and costed the materials for this.

Police Cottage Restoration

Note that it has yet to receive its final coat of paint, **Pioneer Red**, which will be close to its original colour.



A resplendent cottage awaiting opening. Below: opposite angle - view from the bowling green



The Economisers are now in place..

Firstly, we are often asked, ‘What is an economiser? From Graeme Richardson, our man from Ferrymead who has a deep knowledge of steam machinery and also instigator of their delivery to Waiuta explains it thus... *‘it’s a type of heat exchanger that recovers heat from flue gases to preheat the water that is about to be turned into steam thereby increasing efficiency of the boiler (about 8%)’.*



A tight fit - careful manoeuvring required

What an experience this was to observe (and record) The grounds were still wet and marshy, the truck and crane were heavy and there were two economisers each weighing 8½ tonnes one of which required careful positioning into a space 'with only centimetres to spare'. One was placed within the flue brickwork surrounds and the other was placed at the edge of the green area where an explanatory plaque will be attached to it.

Things could easily have gone wrong at many stages. However with calm confidence and an impressive exhibition of their skills in moving such weights in compromised circumstances this was all achieved with nonchalant panache - and humour. To observe such competence was a pleasure and an education.

Reefton Crane Hire are to be complimented on the completion of such a professional job.



**Our team L-R.
Casey Rhodes - Historic Ranger, DOC. Graeme Richardson and Greg Harris from Ferrymead.
Missing are the crane operator and his assistant.**

For a many more large pictures of the police station and the economiser placements enter this address into your browser
<https://www.icloud.com/sharedalbum/#B0sGAfJYVGf8pIZ>

Snowy River - Federation Mining:

A recent update informs us that they currently employ 60 people and have continued to progress underground with 162 metres of decline development and 736 metres of diamond drilling completed. Significantly too, they have commenced the dewatering of the historic Blackwater mine workings having pumped 14,700 cubic metres of water out of the mine in July. The site team have also commissioned the concrete batch plant.

During July they have added new members to the team in the Geology and Sustainability teams. Looking forward they are actively recruiting to fill positions in technical, sustainability and operational roles.

During the last financial year, Federation spent over NZ\$39 million dollars in the New Zealand regional economy with NZ\$13 million of that total on the West Coast and NZ\$8 million dollars on their employee wages.

What a great positive impact this company is having in NZ and especially in the Reefton / West Coast region.

On a lighter note: we note that were pleased to report Waiuta has welcomed the Grey Walkers group. FoW member, Tony Fortune escorted them about the town pointing out its significant features. They were especially impressed with Jos' cottage resulting in some asking about joining FoW.

We have also had Karoro School spend some days at Waiuta. A talented Year eight student, Aalia Robins, was moved to write this poem seen at the bottom of this newsletter ...

Margaret is go to a school assembly in August to present her with some of our books.

Things to look forward to in the near future.

As well as the construction a Red Hut we have number of projects either under way or planned. They are...

1. **A Shelter over the Bakers Oven.** This prominent feature has been deteriorating slowly over the years and it is time it was covered so it can be cleared around, opened out, its decline halted and a sign marking existence erected. We hope to have this realized this year.
2. Our book - **"Waiuta The Gold Mine, the Town, The People"** was last updated in 2012. We are currently updating this with a new chapter and photos - think of all that has happened in the last 12 years. We

hope to have it ready by the end of the year.

3. **Brochures:** these excellent giveaways that introduce visitors to Waiuta had become quite dated and now are being revised with many changes added. We hope to have ready them by the end of the year.

Meetings for 2024

- Friday 8 November 2024 at 11am - ceremony to mark the completion of the Waiuta Police Station restoration project.
- Saturday 9 November 2pm - General Meeting at the Lodge.

- Saturday 15 March - to be followed by our AGM and General Meeting

Our Christchurch Gathering

- Our Christmas Gathering this year is on Sunday 8 December at 10.30am.

Usual rules apply - 10.30am for a cuppa - bring something for morning tea.

Lunch at 1 pm - bring nothing but note that the cost has risen to \$20 due to inflation.

Tuesday, July 9, 2024 - 7



Waiuta,
place haunted by time
No more church
No more school
Homework forgotten
My head filled with thoughts,
filled with quiet reflection
Whispers from forgotten guests of
the old Waiuta lodge

A ghost among us, loud but unheard
A lifeless ghost town
A scary sight
An old night
faces with an empty smile
Did you stop like me,
to remember what used to be
to listen to the wind give a mournful
sigh...

Aalia Robins- Year 8