

March 2023

Greetings.. where do I start ? There's so much disparate news - Waiuta is humming on many fronts... read on.

If you are reading this then I assume you are interested in this, in goldmining, in NZ history, or specifically in Waiuta then this documentary is compulsory viewing. I may be biased and am often stoic in matters that excite others and will usually eschew melodrama as a sign of emotional incontinence. However this is a time I go against my nature and insist you go and see this documentary.

Having been captivated by Jos' photography for many years, after viewing this I became even more aware of many new aspects of his life, his skill, and of his creativity that ultimately left a body of work which in time enabled the bequeathment of his life's work, a gift to himself and his family, to FoW, to Waiuta and to NZ history. We are in his debt.

The overview on the advertisement of the documentary describes it well

JOS:

The Forgotten Photographer who saved a Town

The forgotten photographer who saved a town

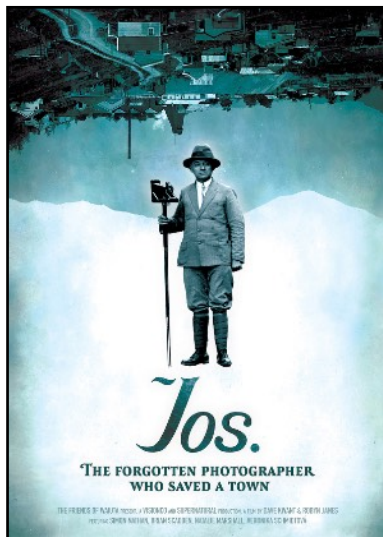
For nearly 100 years the name Jos Divis was missing from histories of New Zealand photography. Now a wrong is being righted.

Some call him the 'inventor of the selfie'. A street photographer

ahead of his time he pioneered techniques to capture images of ordinary people and their working lives in a way no-one else could.

Imprisoned for his beliefs, he lived his last years alone in the ghost town he helped bring to life, his family believing him dead.

JOS is a journey of discovery following a historian, a photographer and a museum curator all working to give Jos Divis' the recognition he deserves.



A film by Dave Kwant and Robyn Janes - 46 mins
Of course, none of this would have happened if it weren't for the foresight, initiative, skills and drive of Simon Nathan, Dave Kwant, Robyn Janes, Brian Scadden and of course, Les Wright.

We acknowledge and compliment you all.

For a one minute trailer go here:

<https://vimeo.com/802923170>

Or for a 4 minute Seven Sharp go here:

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/seven-sharp>

Note you will have to go down several pages to locate the segment.

The documentary will be shown in cinemas from May 4th.

Also, it is very important that FoW acknowledge and appreciate all of the organizations who have funded our two recent documentaries. Without them these would not have been possible and shows the trust they have in our group and our ability to successfully conceive, action and complete our projects. Long may this continue.

Arising From our Meeting

It was our AGM and as Pauline Barnett and Paul McGirr did not seek re-election there were a couple of vacancies to be filled.

The results for the election of officers were:

President: Margaret Sadler

Chairperson: Peter Kerridge

Vice President: Peter Kerridge / Alan Stephens

Secretary: Margaret Sadler (Acting)

Treasurer: Peter Kerridge (Acting)

Newsletter: Graeme Farrant

Management Committee Members:

Graeme Farrant, Dave Grantham, John Melville (new member) Simon Nathan, Hank Scott, Oliver Young and a DOC representative.

DOC News

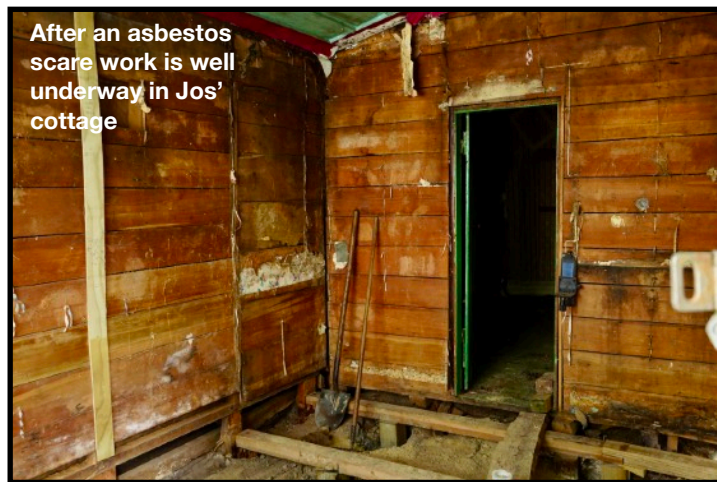
We were pleased to meet with Chris Hickford, our new DOC officer. He is the Operations Manager of the Regional Operations Group in Greymouth.

He reported that:

- That their main focus has been on Jos' house which by its nature is a slow and somewhat painstaking operation as the building is actually made of four rooms that were built independently. It is slow, tentative work which despite all its problems, including a recent asbestos scare which proved to be false, is an edifying and

informative job. Luckily the roof is in good order. They are now at the stage of considering the its future look inside and out as they want it to be representative of the period when Jos lived there. Hence they'd like to use wallpaper and lino of that era. It is anticipated that the official opening will be on a week day in or early November.

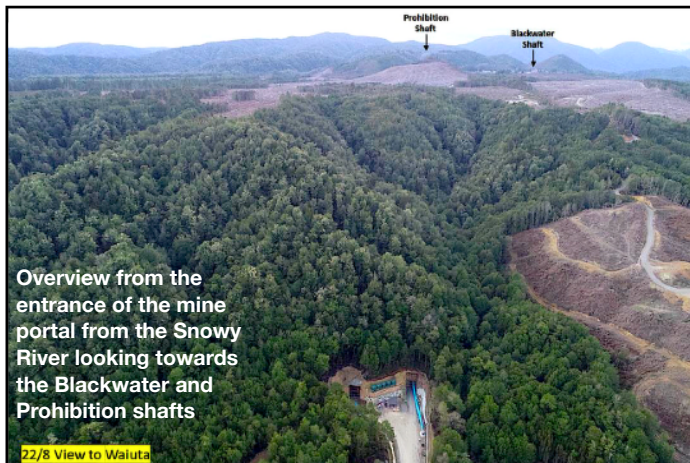
- Other recent general work has included weed control and gorse spraying about the town and up at the Prohibition site
- the Wagener Fairburn multi-fuel stove promised months ago is due from the manufacturers soon. Those promised hot scones sound perfect for a future cold July inauguration.



Snowy River - Federation Mining: Decline Development

This is such an exciting development with each meeting presenting blossoming progress. Here are a few illustrative bullet points...

- two decline drives, each 3.2 km have now been completed.
- they are now within 250 metres from the old Blackwater workings.
- a long term approach to water management has been adopted with a dewatering



programme to clear the old workings due to commence in April.

- Narrow vein mining: due to the narrow nature of the ore bearing quartz vein narrow mining equip meant has been purchased. This means that drive size is lessened and less waste is produced.

There are some who denigrate the activities of mining operations but under modern operating conditions, consider that Federation Mining have planted around 11,000 plants onsite at Snowy River this year as well as 700 offsite. Consider too that the current Snowy River workforce is expected to grow from 50 to 150 - that's great news on the Coast.

Volunteer Workers Report:

There were 4 of us who presented for work. Being aware that attention is moving towards the preservation of the Police Cottage we concentrated on clearing the the encroaching foliage that has been brushing its sides and surrounding outhouses. A half day saw this soon accomplished, exposing a water trough, the old outhouse and its predecessor, a long repurposed building that became as a general shed. Hidden in the overgrowth was a Masport push-mower that stubbornly refused to reengage with its designed function.

That afternoon saw us investigating the path to the Lighthouse on the top of a small mound to the west of the township. Using the



Hank, John and Alan at he chimney base of the Lighthouse

coordinates Les Wright compiled some years ago, we thought we'd accomplish this in 15 minutes. It took over an hour and much hard work with the scrub cutter. However we were then able to see where those photos overlooking the town from this direction were made.

The next day, Friday, being wet, while others of us did 'inside' work John got busy with his

window cleaning equipment and cleaned all the windows, inside and out, of the Lodge,.

And finally, on Sunday John and Alan attached a very classy new mirror, made by Colin McMasters, to the wall of the ablution block above the outdoor basins.

And finally, for this is not one of our usual volunteers but his efforts are effectively the same. In February Andrew Gill, of the Waiuta Gill family, who now has a paint and paper business generously spent some days repainting the signs around Waiuta.

What a difference he has made. Where they were becoming faded and had different colours according to the time they were placed, they are now uniform, clean looking, and eye catching. It has smartened up our town.



Example of Andrew's work

Jos Divis Cottage Opening -

The current plans for Jos Divis' cottage to be ready for an official opening later this year. We are keenly looking forward to this and with it the visit of Veronika Schmidrova, his great niece from the Czech Republic. She will be accompanied by three other members of her family.

Update: 'through the eyes of a miner'.

Author Simon Nathan has recently completed a third edition of this marvellous book. Significant new additions are the inclusion of new information about his early life, of the identification of a number of postcards of the Blackball era and of the digital colourisation of a selection of his black and white photographs, adding a life like quality to them. This book is highly recommended.

In Memoriam

We respectfully acknowledge the passing, in Kaiapoi on March 17 of Peter Anderson, younger brother of the late Michael Anderson.

Meetings for 2023 and 2024

- General Meeting - Saturday 8 July at ? time at St John's Hall in Reefton
- General Meeting Saturday 18 November at the Lodge in Waiuta
- AGM and General Meeting - Saturday 16 March 2024 at the Lodge in Waiuta.

Christchurch Gatherings in 2023:

- Sunday 31 July
- Sunday 3 December - Christmas lunch
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Members Subscriptions

This remains at a very low \$15. Our recent push to clear the backlog of non-payments has had positive results. In fact after the meeting there were many who paid then often for two or three years in advance.

And finally, looking back over this newsletter (and of many past) and reflecting on the diverse range of activities from documentaries to books published, to historic building renovations and to many always changing volunteer activities including those of many unacknowledged individuals, to many in FoW, who quietly have given of their time and skills one can only be humbled and honoured to be part of this group.

As one historic person commented recently *'what other charity in NZ has produced two documentaries in three years.'*

This says it all doesn't it.

Stop Press

From Margaret our President comes this late notice that will interest those of you in Wellington or Hokitika or who have friends or family there.

Here is an opportunity to see the our documentary this month.

The Friends are delighted to let you know that a Preview of JOS "The Forgotten Photographer Who Saved a Town."

It will be screening at:

- the Light House in Cuba Street, Wellington on Sunday 30 April 5pm.
- And at the Hokitika Regent Theatre on when???? at 3 pm

We would like to invite friends and support of the Friends to this Preview.

If you could reply please with name & contact details of the person or persons that you think we or you would like us to invite.

Kind regards

Margaret.

027 237 0794