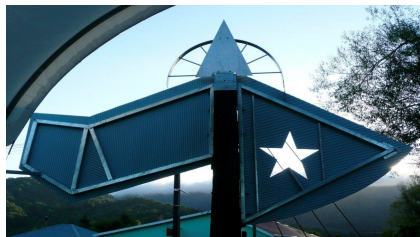


**Mahi Tupuna (*the work of our ancestors*) –
Blackball Museum of Working Class History Trust**

PO Box 2, 47 Clifford Street, Blackball 7804, Ph: (03) 732 4010; Fax: (03) 7324015; e-mail wkultur@ihug.co.nz

www.blackballmuseum.org.nz Charities Commission registration CC31731

supported by Development West Coast, Trust Power, Blackadder Trust, Lion Foundation, Pub Charity, Grey District Council, TEU, Dairy Workers, MUNZ, Te Papa National Services, West Coast Community Trust.



Newsletter 2, June 2011

Mayday 2011: A good turnout of over a hundred people attended this year's Mayday celebrations. On the Thursday, the union movement held a Workers Memorial service at the museum site, with speeches from Andrew Little, Bernie Monk, Tony Kokshoorn and Helen Kelly, before a memorial stone to the Pike River Miners, from the NZ Union Movement, was unveiled.



Laying of wreath at Workers Memorial Day service

On Saturday, the Workers Memorial Wheel, dedicated to those killed in the mining industry since 1990, was opened by Labour MP Darien Fenton. This wheel features tiles made by the Pike families, and is a beautiful art work,



Darien Fenton opens the Workers Memorial wheel
much appreciated by the families and the general visitor.



Pike River families designing the tiles

As well, the new exhibition, Greymouth versus Ron Brierley, was opened by NDU organiser, Paul Watson. This exhibition focuses on the closure of the Lane Walker Rudkin clothing factory in Greymouth in 1990 after it was taken over by Brierley, and gave an opportunity to visit those sorry days of the neo liberal decimation of the manufacturing sector.



Paul Watson and local woman, Lorna Hynes at exhibition opening.

A pot luck dinner followed, with items from the local choir, *The West Coast Wobblies*, and 10 minute pre election speeches from MPs, Damien O'Connor, Kevin Hague and Chris Auchinvole. Earlier in the afternoon we held a forum to look at election strategy.

This year we combined with the Runanga Miners Hall committee for Mayday, agreeing to alternate Mayday celebrations between Blackball and Runanga.

Schools Programme: We are ready to pilot the draft programmes, funded by Te Papa National Services. Our theme is the power of collective grass roots action and we will have three programmes on offer. The first, *Without our brain and muscle* involves Year 7&8 students becoming 1908 coal miners, being given work at a local coal mine (there'll be some shovelling involved), with the pay not meeting the family needs. They will then be expected to begin bargaining for better pay and conditions. The second, *Making Change*, once again for senior primary students, begins with a role play based on child labour. From there students will be encouraged to look at current issues. The theme is an ethical one: if we have something of value, do we necessarily exploit it. The third programme, *People Power*, designed for Year 9 & 10 students, role plays a work place situation in which students will be expected to discover the necessity of unionism. They will then look at work place rights, and finally move to campaigns on topical issues such as climate change. These latter two programmes can take place either at the museum site or in their school. Shantytown, who have a fulltime EOTC team have agreed to umbrella the publicity side of things, as long as they can count our numbers within their outputs. It will be possible, in the future, to tour the second two programmes.

Next exhibition: The next exhibition, opening on Labour Day, will focus on the Care industry and once again focus on local stories. It will be curated by Board members, Sandra Quick and Denise Kilpatrick.

Wheelchair ramp: We have funding to build a ramp, and will have it in place by spring. Meanwhile, local carver, Tony Manuel is carving a piece with the words, Mahi Tupuna (*the work of our ancestors*), to go above the doorway of the museum.

Fundraising: Believing that the Memorial/Museum should not have to go to the corporates for our basic infrastructural costs (\$2500 annually), we approached the major unions late last year, with a disappointing outcome, only the TEU and the Dairy Workers coming to the party. We have once again approached the unions and have so far, received a very generous donation from MUNZ. We do believe that the movement should fund cultural developments such as the '08 Memorial/Museum, given that the cultural sphere is of such importance in the modern world. James Ritchie of the Dairy Workers Union came up with what seems to us a good formula for unions with a Coast presence: \$1 a year for each union member on the Coast.

Publicity: We have continued to punch above our weight, receiving a favourable review from Te Papa's regional advisor, which in turn led to an article in Heritage Matters, the main heritage magazine. In March, we presented the museum at the Trust power national community awards function with good feedback. Finally, an essay on the problems funding the project was selected for a US/UK scholarly publication on working class heritage, shortly to be published by Routledge.

A farewell: We were saddened to farewell our Chairperson, Matt Winter, but wish him well in his new venture, working in mine safety in Queensland.

In solidarity

Paul Maunder Garth Elliott
Secretary Chairperson