



# West Auckland Men's Rebus Club

<http://www.rebuswestauckland.nz/>  
Affiliated to Rebus New Zealand Incorporated  
<https://www.rebus.nz/>

## Newsletter

**OCTOBER 2022**

*The next meeting will be at 10:00 am Friday 14 October at the New Lynn Friendship Hall, 3063 Great North Road, New Lynn*

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### CLUB BUSINESS



*Morning tea at the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022*

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**(aka PRESIDENT'S PRATTLE)**

**Bill Mutch**



*Bill Mutch speaking at the September meeting*

Trust everyone is keeping well. I have had no emails or phone calls this month.

At 6.55 pm tonight, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, the customers in the mall at Albany got a big shock when a group of robbers stormed Michael Hills and did a lot of damage and took off with stock. Many shoppers were so scared, as it's only a matter of time before somebody gets hurt or killed. My advice is to be alert when in malls.

I was conducting a funeral recently, and I thought of you all in our group. We have reached a good age but the person I was doing the service for was only 22 years old and married for only 4 months. He passed away with cancer. When I conducted his wedding, I never thought I would be conducting his funeral. We are so lucky.

At our next meeting, we have a guest speaker who has requested a minimum of one hour, so we will reduce our morning tea by 5 minutes. He will talk about telescopes. Do bring as many guests as possible as he likes big groups and is coming from Whangaparoa.

Just a friendly reminder. Help Trevor in the kitchen, please, as he wants to enjoy the guest speaker as well.

Be prepared for the following month. We should have Alan Verry, who I know really well. His presentation will be on railways.

We would like someone to put their hand up to be a welfare officer. Any takers?

### **CLAUDIA'S CORNER**

The cops were interviewing a guy. They asked the guy did you kill this man?

The guy quickly replied, "No, a bullet killed him."

Bullets are made of lead and lead comes from the ground.

With the ground being part of nature, I say he died of natural causes!!!

Two snakes are having a chat.

Snake one says, "Are we poisonous?"

Snake two, "Oh I don't know. Why you ask?"

Snake one, "Because I just bit my lip."

### **NEXT COFFEE MORNING**

The next coffee morning is at Esquires Cafe, The Boundary, Henderson, on Friday 28 October 10:00 am. Ian Smith says there are around 30 carparks for The Boundary on Newington Road and they are hardly used. Entry from Newington Road is through a door. There are no stairs and when you go through the door, Esquires is just along on your left.



*Coffee morning earlier this year at Esquires (27 July 2022)*

**MEETING REPORT SEPTEMBER 2022**  
**Vince Middeldorp**



*Members and visitors at the September meeting*

Bill Mutch began the meeting at 10:05 am by welcoming members and asking them to look after the visitors. The attendance of visitors resulted in a good sized group to hear guest speaker, James Duncan. There were 17 members and 11 visitors.

Apologies were recorded for Neil Castle, Mensto de Roos (in Holland), Bill Fairs (sick with flu) and Lyndsay Parris. All are regular attendees and we can expect a higher turnout at the October meeting.

The day of the meeting coincided with the news of Queen Elizabeth II passing away. As a mark of respect, Bill Mutch asked everyone to stand, and he read "[The Little White Gate](#)."

Trevor Pollard suggested before we all sit down, we sing happy birthday to Bill Mutch, who is now 89 years old. Andrew Geddes took great delight in getting everyone to give three cheers for Bill. Trevor Pollard gave Bill a wooden mouse that he had turned on his lathe.

There were no matters arising from the August meeting. There was some correspondence, notably an email from Mensto de Roos in Holland with an attached photograph of Mensto at a bike rack. The photo was put up on the projector screen. Mensto's comment was that it was hard to find a parking place for your bike and even harder to find it back.



*Mensto at a bike parking facility in Holland*

Charles Nicholls went through the treasurer's report and said that we were facing a deficit at the end of the year of around \$300 because of the dwindling membership and expenses of \$108 per month. Charles said listening to the news in the morning had brought back some memories. His father was in the British army in Malaysia during the Queen's Coronation and received an MBE in the Queen's Coronation List. Charles said he can remember as a four-year-old being taken in the Governor General's car to General Templer's residence where his father was invested with the MBE.

Ian Smith said that there was a coffee morning next Friday at Huckleberry's Café in New Lynn and on Wednesday 28th September there was a bus trip to Howick Historic Village. The bus fare was \$15, and he needed the names of those going.

Noel Rose, under general business, showed a copy of the NZ Listener and said the article on computer scams was very interesting. He said the magazine was worth buying just for that one article and computer scams are fraud.

The date for the next meeting was set for the second Friday in October (14th).

Without trying too hard, Bill got through the business part of the meeting in 15 minutes. The tea break was followed by James Duncan talking about trams and the beginnings of MOTAT. The meeting closed at 11:55 am.

## **GUEST SPEAKER JAMES DUNCAN**

### **SEPTEMBER MEETING**

*Vince Middeldorp*

Bill Mutch introduced James Duncan, who has been at MOTAT since the 1970s and was Operations Manager for the tramway at the Wynyard Quarter.

James started by saying that some people considered the electric tram to be the best public transport system that Auckland ever had. They served us for 54 years, from 1902 through to 1956.



*Guest speaker James Duncan at the September meeting*

The presentation we heard from James is the third of three and is about Graham Stewart's efforts to save a tram, leading to the founding of the Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT).

Graham Stewart, now 90 years old, is the author of several books including, "The end of the penny section: When trams ruled the streets of New Zealand." His book covers all modes of tram transport: horse-drawn, cable, steam and electric.

James digressed to talk about an extensive steam tram operation in Auckland. It was the Takapuna Tramways and Ferry Company's system and opened in 1910. The tramline went from Bayswater Wharf, up the hill to Belmont, and all the way to Takapuna. The long-term plan was for the line to be electrified by the Auckland Electric Tramways Company. When in 1919, Auckland's electric tramway system was sold to Auckland City Council, these plans were dashed: Auckland City Council would never electrify a tram line on the North Shore. The steam tram service closed in April 1927.



*Steam tram at Bayswater, passenger cars pulled by the trams and ferry SS Pupuke*

New Zealand's first electric trams were bought from the Brush Electrical Engineering Company in the UK. Later, the wooden bodies for the trams were built locally by firms such as Henderson and Pollard, DSC & Cousins & Cousins, and coach builders at the Auckland Transport Board workshops in Manukau Road.

In September 1949, Graham Stewart, then seventeen years old, rode on the last tram to Herne Bay. The next morning, the trolley bus service started. During the next six to seven years, all tram services in Auckland were replaced with the trolley buses.

In 1956 Graham Stewart was in the offices of Ray Gribble, who was Managing Director of the Auckland Transport Board. He asked if it was possible for the Transport Board to save at least one tram for future generations. Graham suggested the tram should be number 253, which was one of the last of the streamliner trams built at the workshops in Manukau Road.



*Tram number 253 (The Queen Mary) entered service in 1940*

Tram number 253 was fitted with four powerful electric traction motors, which enabled it to achieve remarkable speeds. The tram was nick-named the Queen Mary after the ocean liner that was breaking speed records across the Atlantic.

Tram 253 was also fitted with regenerative braking so that when slowing down, the motors switched to generators and fed power back into the overhead lines. On weekends, with not many trams in service, the back feeding of power went all the way back to the substations and blew out the arcs in the mercury arc rectifiers, causing power failures. In 1950, tram 253 was withdrawn from service and converted to standard control.

In 1957 Graham Stewart, now recently married, again met with Ray Gribble and was told the Transport Board could not find a home for tram 253. Graham's in-laws, the Stirlings, came to the rescue and set up a trust called the "Old Time Transport Preservation League."

A large shed was constructed in Matakohē and tram 253 was trucked there and stored with tram 248; another rescued tram.



*Tram 253 being driven over twisted unsealed roads to Matakohē*

Soon after the two trams were safely installed at Matakohē, news broke that the Wellington City Corporation Tramways were stepping up their tram to trolley bus conversion program. Graham Stewart, his brother Ian Stewart and Merv Sterling (a cousin of Graham's wife) travelled to Wellington and secured three more trams. One of these was a Wellington double decker that could seat almost 100 passengers.

In 1959, the Old Time Transport Preservation League's collection had grown to include a whole range of transport and technology from all over the country and they came into contact with the Royal Aeronautical Association. The two organizations set up a meeting at the Town Hall and invited other organizations with historical collections of equipment. The meeting was attended by 27 different organizations and chaired by Auckland's mayor, Dove Myer Robinson.

Following this meeting, the Auckland City Council made land available at Western Springs for a Museum of Transport and Technology. It was around the site of the large pump house building which had provided Auckland's water supply until the 1930s and housed a very rare steam driven Beam Engine. The museum opened to the public in March 1964.



*One of MOTAT's double decker trams from Wellington on Motions Road in Auckland*

The year 1964 was also when Wellington's tram era ended. The Shell Oil Company donated three Wellington trams to MOTAT and paid for their transport to Auckland. MOTAT then set about building a short section of line for the trams to run on all done with volunteer labour. The Auckland Regional Authority, which operated the trolley bus system, provided overhead lines and 550V DC electricity to run the trams. The MOTAT tramway opened in 1967 with two trams operational: the Queen Mary (tram 253) and a Fiducia type tram from Wellington (tram 257).

MOTAT's tramway is unique in the world because it runs on two different width lines. Auckland trams used the international gauge of 4ft 8½" and Wellington trams used a 4ft gauge.

Work on a tramline extension to the Auckland Zoo in Motions Road began in 1976 and was completed in 1980. In April 2007, the tramline was extended further to MOTAT 2 in Meola Road, where the aviation collection is housed.

The number of passenger carried on the MOTAT tramway has exceeded all predictions and four Melbourne trams are now the workhorses on the line. They have wide aisles and wide doorways and are perfect for today's oversized prams.



*Melbourne Tram 1032 leaving the tram barn of MOTAT's Great North Road site*

James ended his presentation with a 6 minute video that showcases all the trams he talked about. It can be found on YouTube by searching for "Western Springs Tramway." The URL is [https://youtu.be/v-4\\_yV42-l0](https://youtu.be/v-4_yV42-l0)

## RECENT EVENTS

### TRIP TO HOWICK HISTORIC VILLAGE

*Vince Middeldorp*

When we arrived back at the St John Hall and stepped off the bus that had taken us to Howick Historic Village, I overheard the bus driver say it had been a great day out. He had joined us walking on the gravel paths around the village in the fine weather and sitting out on the deck at the café.

Both the bus driver and I had never been to the village. Maybe that made it such a good day. Unlike those who had been there before, which was just about everybody on the trip, seeing the village for the first time is a real eye opener.



*Gravel paths and houses at Howick Historic Village*

I did not realize that there was a place in Auckland where many historic buildings from the surrounding area had been brought together and set out in such a way that people can walk around from one to the next, looking at them and even walking inside to view the interiors.

The village shows the lifestyle of the early settlers on the outskirts of Auckland. Walking around you see their homes, shops, schools, workplaces, church and courthouse.

One home, a rather majestic structure from the outside, belonged to the McLaughlin family. Inside and you find a dingy home with many tiny rooms and a wood-burning stove in the kitchen. A visit to the village makes you appreciate all the comforts of our warm, dry, healthy homes and how wonderful it is to have modern appliances.



*McLaughlin's homestead at the Howick Historical Village*

The village shows how life was lived in Howick less than 200 years ago. It makes you marvel at the pace with which Auckland was transformed from a bush clad wilderness to productive farms and municipal boroughs and now through to a first-world city.

We really owe a debt of gratitude to the hardworking, churchgoing, law-abiding people who migrated from the other side of the world and ended up living a harsh life by today's standards. They laid the foundations for the modern city in which we now live.

### THE STORY OF JOSEPH SYMS

There is a gravestone in the Howick Historic Village with a brown wooden plaque next to it that tells the story of Joseph Syms. A more detailed version of this story can be found on the genealogy website [geni.com](http://geni.com). There are some slight differences between the two versions of the story. The genealogy website one is more correct.

Joseph Syms was a tailor by trade. He served in the army as a member of the 2nd Dragoon Guards stationed in Limerick for 11½ years. He was retired because of ill health. His pension was sixpence per day.

On 20 June 1847, Joseph was accepted into the Royal New Zealand Fencible Corps, and with his family, on 4 July 1847, sailed from Cork on board the ship Sir Robert Sale. They arrived in Auckland's Waitemata Harbour on 11 October the same year.

The fencibles waited several weeks for officialdom to decide exactly where their planned settlement would be located and were eventually transferred by water to Howick Beach. There they found a hastily erected barracks (subsequently described as totally unfit for pigs). These temporary dwellings had to be endured until sufficient timber and other materials could be supplied and manpower found to erect a village of fencible cottages.

After two or three years, Joseph found there was insufficient work for a tailor in Howick. He moved to Auckland and set up a business on Wakefield Street. He also became a Sunday School teacher at St. Matthew's school and was active in the establishment of the Salvation Army in Auckland.

Fencible soldiers were required to attend church services on parade regularly in their allocated settlements. Failing to attend more than twice was a mutinous act. Joseph, plagued with ill health, found the weekly trek to Howick over 15 miles of dirt road very difficult to handle.



*The gravestone and wooden plaque with the story of Joseph Syms*

Joseph had once done some work for Governor George Grey in Howick and, when sent to make a suit in Auckland for the Governor, was recognised and asked after. Joseph seized the chance to explain his problems and ask the Governor for written permission to attend the compulsory church parade at the Auckland barracks instead, which was readily granted.

In Joseph's mind, this made him immune to threats of land and pension confiscation for non-church attendance that came from Major Kenny, the Howick commander. But Kenny refused to accept Grey's pass and in 1853, Joseph, along with other military and nautical pensioners, had their land confiscated. This land was the one acre that all fencibles received as of right. Kenny also stopped Joseph's pension and made him repay the passage to New Zealand.

In 1858 a committee set up by the Provincial Council to investigate Major Kenny's actions, found that the pensioners were given no proper opportunity of refuting the charges brought against them and that Major Kenny had been the accuser, judge, jury, and inflicter of punishment.

As compensation, the committee recommended that the Provincial Council award Joseph Syms a right to select 100 acres of country land in the Province of Auckland.

The Provincial Council did not adopt the recommendation to grant 100 acres of land, but Joseph's pension was reinstated and he received two acres of Howick land in lieu of the one acre that had been confiscated. Joseph preferred to stay in Auckland and the land in Howick was eventually sold.

### **VIVA LA DIRT LEAGUE**

When walking around the Howick Historic Village, we came across a film crew with some high quality professional equipment. They told us they were a YouTube channel called [Viva la dirt league](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) and their channel had two million subscribers. Channel content was described as comprising short, humorous skits.



*Camera Crew at Howick Historic Village*

When I returned home and looked at YouTube on my computer, I found the channel actually had 4.1 million subscribers.

The skit filmed on the day we were at Howick Historical Village was uploaded that same day. It is titled, "[The problem with being an inventory hoarder.](#)" Eight days after being uploaded, it had a remarkable 886K views and had 3,668 comments.



*The Viva La Dirt League video made on the day we were at Howick Village*

I am blown-away at the success of the Viva la dirt league channel and amazed at the results they are achieving, both in terms of film production technical quality and the number of views their videos generate. These views would come from all over the world.

As for the content, if you are not a member of the younger generation, you could not appreciate it. I haven't subscribed to the channel.

### **RECENT EVENTS CONTINUED**

#### **COFFEE MORNING AT HUCKLEBERRY CAFE Vince Middeldorp**

Huckleberry café has changed since we last went there for a coffee morning. The tables with the plastic stools around them are all gone. There is now less seating and people are more spread out.



*Margorie and Trayton Wickens at the far end of the table*

There were fifteen people at the coffee morning, including Trayton Wickens, who we haven't seen at our monthly meetings for some time. His wife Marjorie drove the car to the meeting. Trayton is looking a bit more frail, but otherwise fit and well.

Bill and May Fairs walked in when the table we were all sitting at was full. Instead of trying to squeeze in around the corners, they did the sensible thing and started a new table. It didn't take long before they were joined by Andrew and Janet Geddes and then Noel and Merilyne Rose.



*Bill and May Fairs started up a second table*

One of the waitresses who delivered coffees to our table must have been called in to help. She was old enough to have retired and came over with two cups. She asked which one was the flat white and which one was the cappuccino. The one with the chocolate sprinkled on top was the cappuccino. She was very friendly and pleasant.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### PRESENTATION ON JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE

Vince Middeldorp

The guest speaker for October is Dr Chris Benton, from the Auckland Astronomical Society. He will talk about the James Webb Space Telescope.

To try and get more people along to the meeting, last Friday I went out putting flyers up on notice boards at Community Centres and Libraries. Flyers for this meeting are now up at the Mt Albert, Avondale, New Lynn, Blockhouse Bay and Henderson Libraries. They are also up at the Mt Albert, New Lynn, Blockhouse Bay and Te Atatu Community Centres. How many people do I think will turn up because of these flyers? My answer is a pessimistic zero.



Flyer up on the notice board at Henderson Library below the West Auckland Linux notice

I have also managed to get a listing in this week's What's On column in the Western Leader. The speaker's name was spelled wrong, and it wasn't my mistake. We often get a listing in this column. Most times, it does not result in any visitors.

In a phone discussion with Bill Mutch, I said I would contact the Auckland Astronomical Society and get them to advertise the talk to their members. Bill thought it was a good idea.

The way to contact the Auckland Astronomical Society is through the contact form on their website. So I did that and received the following reply, "Thanks very much Vince. It will be a very informative talk. Best Regards. The AAS Team." The address information showed it had been sent by Chris Benton membership@astronomy.org.nz



Dr Chris Benton after winning the Beaumont Prize for the best article written in the Auckland Astronomical Society journal

If you haven't worked it out, Chris Benton, our speaker, is the membership person at the Auckland Astronomical Society. We ended up asking the speaker to get people along to hear him speak. How awful.

We have another excellent speaker this month and want to see more than the 16, 18, and 17 members who have attended our last three meetings. We therefore need visitors. Realistically, the only way we are going to get visitors is if individual members make the effort to invite people along to hear the talk. Fingers crossed.

## **CHRISTMAS FUNCTION**

*Vince Middeldorp*

At the meeting on Friday, we need to make some decisions about the Christmas Function.

Ian Smith, the outings organizer, was talking about going to The Brigham Restaurant and Café in Whenuapai. He had also looked at Soljan's Estate Winery in Kumeu but they are now too pricey.

Going to The Brigham has fallen over because they will only accept a maximum of 25 people. Ian Smith is also the outings organizer for Waitakere Combined Rebus Club. A combined Christmas Lunch is not possible with so few places available.



*There are two restaurants at The Brickworks where we could go to for Christmas Lunch*

Ian Smith has suggested we choose one of the New Lynn Restaurants. Some I can think of are the two at The Brickworks in LynnMall: Goode Brothers and Cleaver & Co. There is also Black Salt in New Lynn and a new restaurant called The Attic where Lone Star used to be in the circular brick building that started out as Ceramco House.

Having been there on two occasions with New Lynn Men's Probus Club, my preference for Christmas Lunch would be to go back to Swanson RSA. The setting next to the golf course is picturesque, the building is modern; the inside is spacious and the costs for a buffet lunch is very reasonable.



*Swanson RSA located at 663 Swanson Road*

Another possibility is Ryders Cinema and Roast Dinner on Riversdale Road Avondale. Trevor Pollard has been talking to Alison Turner about going there. We need Alison to get other groups together, such as the Avondale-Waterview Historic Society, to make up the numbers needed for a booking. Trevor will tell us on Friday if Ryders is still an option.

## **OTHER**

### **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE**

**Charles Nicholls** is a JP, and has offered fellow members his services as such, as per:

I am available to assist members with any documents that need a JP to sign. Our services are free. I can be contacted on this email [cdnich300@gmail.com](mailto:cdnich300@gmail.com) or on my landline 09 6293816 or as a last resort on my cell phone 02102551937.

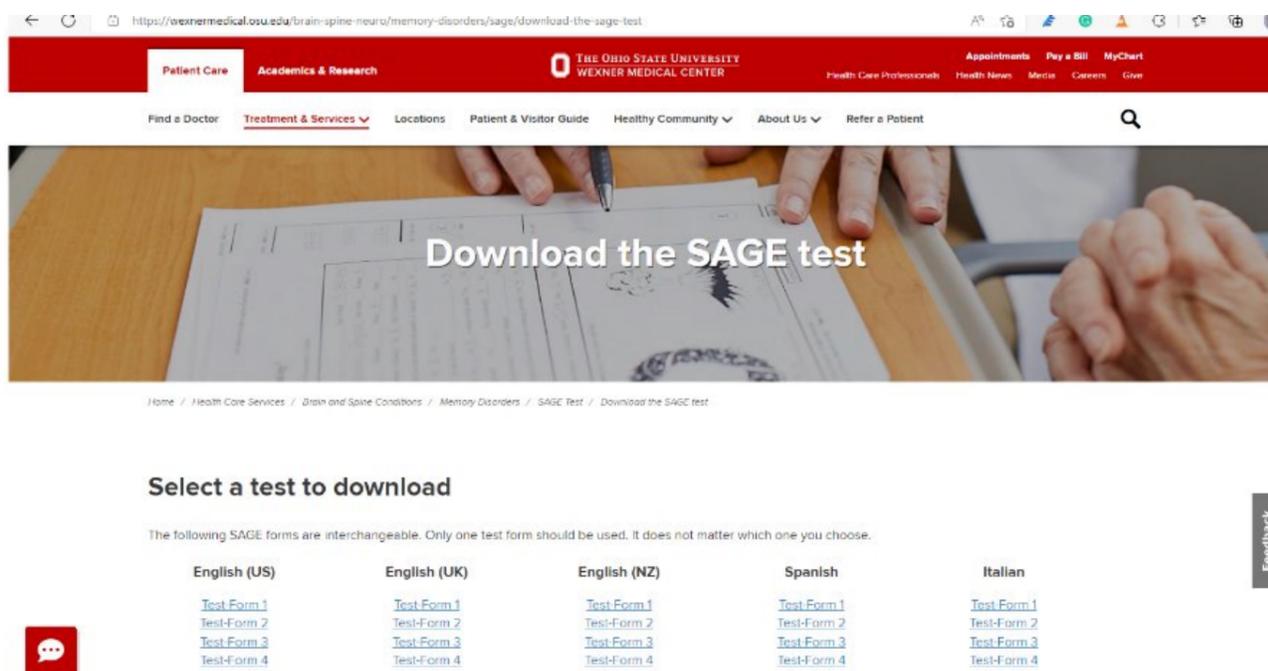
If members cannot get to my house, I will visit people in their homes or meet them at one of our meetings. Services are free. If members want a JP and for some reason I am not available they can access the following website <https://justiceofthepeace.org.nz/>.

While all JPs can act, I recommend that clients go to one that has the word accredited by his/her name as that means she/he has kept up with recent training.

### **DRIVERS LICENCE RENEWAL** *Vince Middeldorp*

There have been some horror stories in the letter's to the editor column about the cognitive tests doctors are now giving to seniors renewing their driver's licences.

If you, like me, can't recall names quickly and are forever looking for your keys and cell phone, then you might be worried about this unwelcome development.



To find out how close you are to failing one of these tests, you can download a Self Administered Gerocognitive Examination from Ohio State University. I did so, ended up with one question wrong, and scored 20/22. A pass is 17/22 or better.

You can download four Test Forms in New Zealand English [Download the SAGE test | Ohio State Medical Center \(osu.edu\)](https://www.osu.edu/health-care-services/brain-and-spine-conditions/memory-disorders/sage-test/download-the-sage-test)

### **SUPPORTERS**

**West Auckland Mens Rebus** gratefully acknowledges the support and assistance of:



The Society is always there for us, with help, advice and encouragement.



We are all grateful for their support.

***Our meetings are held on the second Friday of the month  
at the New Lynn Friendship Hall 3063 Great North Road***

***The November Meeting date is Friday 11 November 2022***

If anyone has any views, opinions, information, requests or questions they want to share with members, please do not hesitate to send them to [vince@rebuswestauckland.nz](mailto:vince@rebuswestauckland.nz), so that they can be included in the Newsletter. Remember, it is YOUR Newsletter: feel free to contribute to it as you will.