



# West Auckland Men's Rebus Club

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

## Newsletter

**DECEMBER 2022**

*The next meeting will be at 10:00 am Friday 9 December at the New Lynn Friendship Hall, 3063 Great North Road, New Lynn*

### COMMITTEE

President	Bill Mutch	<a href="mailto:president@rebuswestauckland.nz">president@rebuswestauckland.nz</a>	817 4721
Vice-President	Noel Rose	<a href="mailto:noelrose1976@gmail.com">noelrose1976@gmail.com</a>	828 1305
Immediate Past President	Bill Fairs	<a href="mailto:bill.fairs@gmail.com">bill.fairs@gmail.com</a>	627 8297
Secretary	Vince Middeldorp	<a href="mailto:secretary@rebuswestauckland.nz">secretary@rebuswestauckland.nz</a>	828 5250
Treasurer	Charles Nicholls	<a href="mailto:treasurer@rebuswestauckland.nz">treasurer@rebuswestauckland.nz</a>	6293816
Welfare Officer	Vacant		
Outings	Ian Smith	<a href="mailto:ismith435@gmail.com">ismith435@gmail.com</a>	027 4549343
Newsletter	Vince Middeldorp	<a href="mailto:vince@rebuswestauckland.nz">vince@rebuswestauckland.nz</a>	828 5250
Speakers	Noel Rose	<a href="mailto:noelrose1976@gmail.com">noelrose1976@gmail.com</a>	828 1305
Hospitality	Trevor Pollard	<a href="mailto:fayandtrevor@kinect.co.nz">fayandtrevor@kinect.co.nz</a>	817 8822
	Alan Babich	<a href="mailto:ajbabich@xtra.co.nz">ajbabich@xtra.co.nz</a>	833 6169
Membership	Vacant		
Attendance	Stephen David	<a href="mailto:sj david55@gmail.com">sj david55@gmail.com</a>	21641717
Webmaster	Vince Middeldorp	<a href="mailto:vince@rebuswestauckland.nz">vince@rebuswestauckland.nz</a>	828 5250
Photographer	John Mihaljevic	<a href="mailto:john@rebuswestauckland.nz">john@rebuswestauckland.nz</a>	098361504

### CLUB BUSINESS



*Everyone is listening to Trevor Pollard at the coffee morning on Friday 2 December 2022 at Esquires Cafe in Henderson*

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**(AKA PRESIDENT'S PRATTLE)**

**Bill Mutch**



*Bill Mutch introducing guest speaker Alan Verry at the November meeting*

It's almost the end of 2022, and it's been a tough year for many. There is an old saying, "lookup" or "onwards and upwards." It reminds us to be thankful for what we have.

I recently conducted a small funeral service for a 63-year-old lady. It was hard as I had done her father's funeral, and her older brother's funeral. The mother, who is aged 94, said to me, "Onwards and upwards; but it's tough."

We have good numbers for the Ryders Movie and Roast Dinner at 177 Riversdale Road, Avondale, but can still take 10 more. Contact Vince if you would like to go and have not put your name down on the list.

I am bringing Alan and Ann Verry. Alan was our guest speaker on Railways at our November meeting, and he really liked our club.

I have had some members ring and ask me how to contact the Railway club as the trips they have are great, so I will bring some membership application forms to our next meeting. The joining fee is \$30 and adding \$50 to it will get you the monthly magazine (hard copy) called Yarn. However, for the basic \$30 membership fee, you also get emailed a copy of Yarn. YARN stands for Your Auckland Railway News. This magazine has all the local and overseas trips in it.

The next meeting is a Member's meeting, where we all can share something. You are our guest speakers.

We all have great topics wrapped up in our brains. Some find it easier than others. Keep it to 10 minutes or less...to help you all, I will give you a topic now, "It was a great time."

A simple 1 or 2-minute talk will make you all part of the group.

I recently did a presentation to about 130 people. My topic was "Barefeet Street Kids". I have served on committees and been involved for many years, so next year I will do this presentation for you guys. It's 55 minutes.

Merry Christmas

Bill Mutch

### **CLAUDIA'S CORNER**

My old Aunt renewed her car insurance over the phone this morning. She was just about to hang up when the Insurance lady said, "Oh do you have a pet"? My old Aunt replied, "Yes, a dog called Fred". Would you like to insure Fred? was the reply. Quickly my Aunt said, "No he doesn't drive".

100 years ago, everyone owned a horse, very few except the rich had a car. Today, many own a car, with only the rich having a horse. I think the stables have turned!!.

Try this!.

My mother tried the Japanese method of decluttering, where you hold an item you own, if it does not bring you joy, you must throw it away. So far Mum has got rid of her Bra, a Power bill, the bathroom scales, and the treadmill.

That should make you smile,  
Cheers Claudia.

**MEETING REPORT NOVEMBER 2022**  
**Vince Middeldorp**



*Outings organiser Ian Smith consulting his diary at the monthly meeting on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022*

Bill Mutch began the meeting by commenting on the wet weather. There were 16 members at the meeting when it began; 17 once Trevor Pollard arrived. Apologies were recorded for Charles Nichols and Andrew Narayan.

There were no matters arising from the last meeting.

The Rebus Chronicles for October 2022 were recorded as inward correspondence. The Rebus AGM for 2023 is at Whanganui. There was a reminder that the Rebus name must not be used in conjunction with any fund raising. Cloudflare stopped 105 threats last month for rebuswestauckland.nz (i.e. the website).

Charles Nicholls emailed a treasurer's report for the meeting. It showed that expenditure has exceeded income by \$181.73. The reason for the loss is that a lot of members have not come back after the Covid lockdowns. Only twenty subscriptions have been received in the current year.

Trips organiser Ian Smith said that everything is in the newsletter. That is the coffee morning at Esquires and the ferry trip to Pine Harbour. Ian said that if it was an exceedingly rough day he would go to Devonport instead. The trip to Karaka Garden has been rescheduled to the 11<sup>th</sup> of January, leaving from St John Hall at 10:00 am; \$25 for the bus fare. Ian would like names for those going to Karaka.

Carols by Candlelight is at the Chapel of Faith in the Oaks at Waikumete Cemetery on 11<sup>th</sup> December at 7:00 pm. Trevor Pollard has more information.

The Christmas Function at Ryders is taking place on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December.

There is not going to be a speaker for next month (December). Members will be allowed to speak for ten minutes each.

Next meeting is Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December. John Mihaljevic said Eric Strickett was on the train with him and said to say "Hi." Waitakere Gardens are having a market day tomorrow.

Bill Mutch said we might do a January meeting but would not have a speaker. Noel Rose said he had a speaker organised for February.

While morning tea was being prepared, Vince Middeldorp talked about the website and the security measures that are protecting it.



*Chapel of Faith in the Oaks at Waikumete Cemetery*

## GUEST SPEAKER ALAN VERRY

### NOVEMBER MEETING

Vince Middeldorp



*Alan Verry speaking about his youth in West Auckland and his big OE*

Bill Mutch introduced guest speaker Alan Verry by saying that he was Alan's secretary for quite some time at the Railway Enthusiasts Society. When Bill asked how long he was President of the Society, Alan replied twelve and a half years.

Alan's parents moved to Kohekohe Street just off Lynwood Road in 1956 when Alan was three years old. In those days, Great North Road from New Lynn to Henderson was just a concrete road. His mum and dad didn't have a car until Alan was a teenager and transport was always by train or ABC bus. He went to Avondale Intermediate and Avondale College on the train. In the mornings, he would catch the Helensville to Auckland train at Fruitvale Road Station and alight at Avondale Station. It was a steam haul train with eight carriages and ran until the mid 1960s.

Alan had grandparents who lived in Palmerston North and usually twice a year the family would travel on the limited (an express train that stops at a limited number of stops) to visit them. Despite his father's modest income, the family always travelled first class. The reason they travelled first class was because of the 1953 Tangiwai railway disaster. Two of those who perished at Tangiwai were Henry and Queenie Adin. Alan's grandmother was Queenie's closest friend. Queenie was travelling in second class when the train derailed into the river at Tangiwai. Only 28 of the 170 second-class passengers survived.

Another connection Alan had with the main trunk line came via his wife's great-grandfather, Patrick Connell. He was killed in the late 1880s building the Porootarao rail tunnel south of Te Kuiti.

In 1972, the Railway Enthusiasts Society ran its steam safari, which was bringing up two steam locomotives from the South Island, one of which was J<sup>A</sup> 1250. Alan, now a late teenager, read in the Herald about the steam train going out to Glenbrook and decided he must ride it. He had not bought a ticket and jumped onboard at Auckland Station just as the train started moving and knowing it would then be too late to push him off. At Glenbrook, Alan filled out an application form and joined the Railway Enthusiasts Society.



*Steam train J<sup>A</sup> 1250 led to Alan joining the Railway Enthusiasts Society*

In 1982, Alan and his wife Ann went on their OE. It was organised by a little travel company in St Lukes Mall and was Hong Kong to London via train. They were the second tour group to travel overland through China in the 1980s.

The train trip took them from Beijing to Mongolia and then onto the Trans-Siberian railway to Moscow and up to Saint Petersburg. After that they travelled through Finland, Sweden and Denmark, finally arriving in London. Allan and his wife were in their late twenties, and the rest of the group of twelve were much older.

Alan learned as a very young traveller that a bottle of Scotch Whiskey oils the wheels of travel by train in overseas countries. On the Trans-Siberian one of those on the tour had a bottle of Scotch and it resulted in the carriage attendant inviting the New Zealanders to his compartment, where he pulled out an enamel mug and poured vodka into it for everyone to drink.

After arriving in London Alan bought a three month Eurail pass and then a one month Britrail pass. He stayed in the UK for just on two years and bought a few more Eurail passes. He came home on Air New Zealand's second London to New Zealand flight and had a three-week stopover in Los Angeles, which he used to go on a Trek America camping trip to Alaska and the Canadian wilds. Being keen on trains, he also took The Canadian from Vancouver to Toronto, and stayed for a few days with cousins of his wife Ann. He then resumed his Air New Zealand flight home with another stopover; this one comprised a couple of days in Honolulu.



*The Canadian transcontinental train which runs between Vancouver and Montreal*

The main trunk line in New Zealand is the one Alan has travelled up and down the most. It is recognized as being one of the world's great railway journeys by The Man in [Seat 61 website](#). This is a privately run website run by Mark Smith, a retired English Stationmaster. It has won several world travel awards and tells you anything you want to know about train travel in any part of the world.

As a result of his involvement with the Railway Enthusiasts Society, Alan has organized many train trips on the main trunk line and to other places as well. One of those trips was to Taumarunui in the late 1980s. The train stopped at Otorohunga, where Jim Bolger, the King Country MP, boarded to talk and shake hands with passengers on the way through to Te Kuiti. At Otorohunga, Dave Simpson, the engine driver, rushed over to Alan and said, "We need to get coal at Te Kuiti because we haven't got enough to get to Taumarunui." The problem was caused by the train running on Waikato soft coal and pulling twelve carriages. Alan was wondering what to do when he noticed Jim Bolger's driver, explained the situation to him and organized a car ride in the ministerial car to Te Kuiti. He then went back on the train and asked Les Munro, who was the Mayor of Te Kuiti, the name of the local coal merchant. Members of the Railway Enthusiasts Society loaded two ton of coal in sacks onto the train at Te Kuiti. On the steep incline up to the Waiteti viaduct sparks from the train set the coal sacks on fire. The train was stopped, and the blaze put out before carrying on to Taumarunui.

On the return journey coming out of the Porootarao rail tunnel, there was a blue haze all over the countryside. Sparks from the train had caused gorse to catch fire on the rail corridor, and all the local fire brigades were out fighting the fires. It was a memorable trip.

A number of years ago (2006) there was talk about stopping the Overlander. A week before the train was going to stop, Alan picked up the phone and called Toll NZ CEO David Jackson (Toll NZ owned the railways at that time). He didn't get through to him, but the next day David Jackson phoned and Alan told him the Overlander was the New Zealand version of The Ghan, which is the Adelaide to Darwin train that ranks as one of the world's great train journeys. David Jackson said to watch the news in the next couple of days because he might be pleased. Sure enough, Toll NZ announced they were going to keep running the train. Alan went down to Wellington on what was planned to be the Overlander's last journey, before the reprieve was announced, and was coerced into doing the on-board commentary for the whole of the trip.

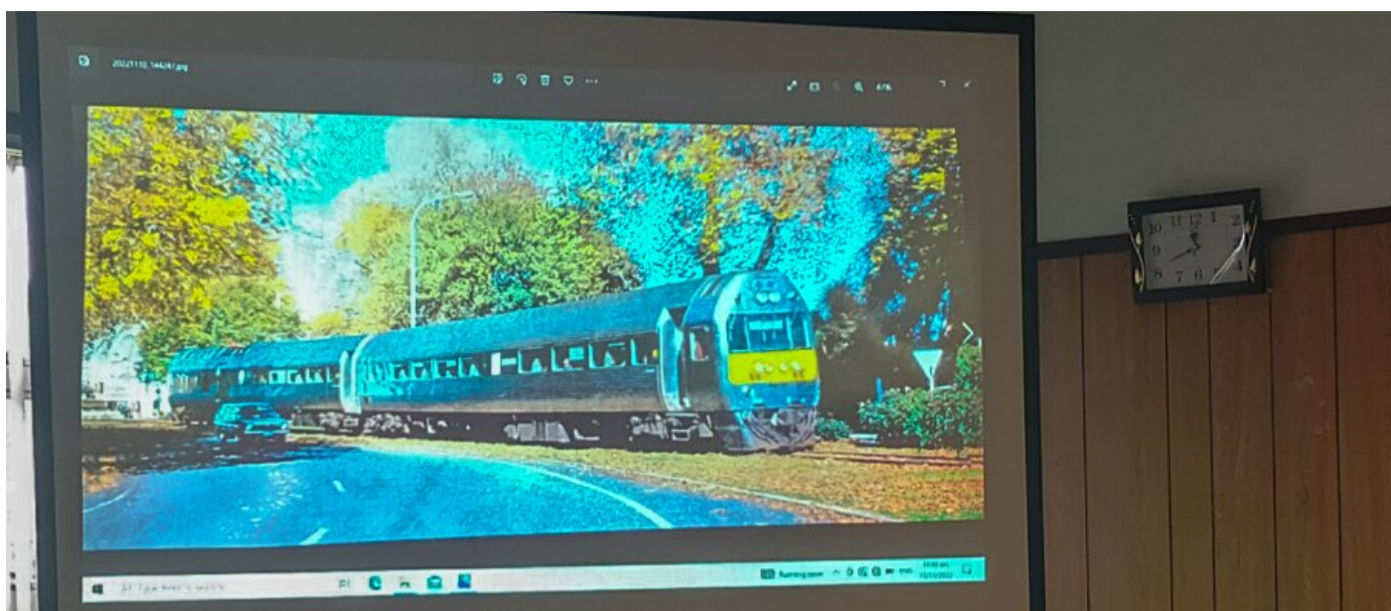
Alan brought with him several slides showing activities the Railway Enthusiasts Society had been engaged in over the last fifty years. Many of them were of steam trains, others diesel locomotives and one was a Silver Fern railcar. The photos all had a story behind them.



*Alan Verry holds up the Mitsubishi Motor Sports Annual which featured the spectator train at the World Rally Championship*

Being a Westie, Alan said you can't be anything other than a petrol-head. When the tenth round of the 2001 World Rally Championship was being held in New Zealand, he got the idea of running a train to the rally stage up north. The first year, the train had 189 passengers and the following year, 500

passengers. It was so unique that the 2001 Mitsubishi Motorsport Annual, which covered motor sport throughout the world, showed the trip. They were able to park the train by the finish line on the special stage that ended at Mareretu. Four-time World Rally Champion Tommi Mäkinen competed in the event.



*Silver Fern railcar on Cambridge branch line in the Autumn*

The Railway Enthusiasts Society was the first group allowed to charter and operate Silver Fern railcars. The original plan was to run a steam train to Rotorua on Queen's Birthday weekend, but they couldn't get the numbers required to make it viable. When Alan went back to the train controller and said they would have to abandon their plans, the reply was, "Why don't you take the railcar?" The railways had three Silver Fern railcars and one was available because it wasn't being used on the Auckland to Wellington route. It was expensive to hire the Silver Fern railcar and resulted in Alan sitting in the Radio Geysersland studio advertising railcar trips to Mamaku and Putaruru.



*Double header train at the Ferrymead 125 celebration*

In 1988 there was a one week celebration in Ferrymead to mark the 125th anniversary of New Zealand's first ever rail service which ran from Christchurch to Ferrymead. Glenbrook Vintage Railway's J<sup>A</sup> 1250 steamed the entire way down to Christchurch with two AA wide-body carriages. The first excursion during the event was a return excursion bound for Timaru. It was a 20 total train with most of the carriages coming from The Otago Excursion Train Trust (more recently known as Dunedin Railways) and was hauled by Glenbrook Vintage Railway's J<sup>A</sup> 1250 and Mainline Steam's J 1211.



*Steam train in the early 2000's crossing Hobson Bay in Auckland*

In the early 2000s, excursion trains used to start at The Strand and run circuits on the East Line to Otahuhu, where the train would be turned on the triangle and come back over the hill. The complications involved in organizing today's excursions are more difficult than they were in the past. In the old

days, Alan would wander into the Auckland Railway Station then sit down with the train controllers and plot a route through the trains that were running and agree on times. The railways would supply a train and carriages or a train and crew, then it would be marketed and filled with Railway Enthusiasts Society members or the public and away they went.

Now KiwiRail has to be contacted to gain access to the tracks and make sure there are no shutdowns, then Auckland Transport and Auckland One Rail have to be contacted. Penalties apply if Auckland One Rail does not run their scheduled commuter services on time, so they don't want to be held up by heritage trains.

At the stations, there are turnstiles to stop fare evaders. They open with an electronic fare payment card (AT HOP card) and make no allowance for people trying to get onto the platform with a paper ticket. Alan said the whole way through there have been arguments about having to consider other operators on the rail network.

The most recent excursion on the Auckland network was on Saturday 15 October 2022. Four sold out trips were run around the Auckland network with Steam Incorporated's J<sup>A</sup> 1271. It was the first time steam locomotives have been allowed on the Auckland network for well over ten years.



*The Strand Station on Saturday 15 October 2022 for Auckland Steam Supreme*

## **RECENT EVENTS**

### **TRIP TO PINE HARBOUR**

**Vince Middeldorp**

The trip to Pine Harbour on the high speed SeaLink ferries was always going to be a great day out. I was certain of that because we went there in February 2020 and my memories of the day are still vivid.

As per usual for a Gold Card trip, we travelled in the last carriage on the train. In the event of bad weather, Ian Smith had a plan B, which was Devonport on the Fuller's ferry. Looking out the train window, the sky was overcast and there was not a patch of blue anywhere. The weather forecast was for strong winds of 35km/hr.

At the Ferry Building, we decided to go to Pine Harbour. The sea was looking smooth and the high winds had not eventuated. There was no need to switch to a shorter trip and the larger Fuller's ferry.



*Window seats are better than aisle seats*

The best indoor seats on the SeaLink ferry are at the tables by the windows. John Mihaljevic told me port side was the left and starboard side the right. So, using the correct nautical terms, those on port side saw Devonport, Mt Victoria and Rangitoto. Those on starboard side saw the container wharves, all the beaches along Tamaki Drive and the coastal cliffs that appear after passing St Heliers.

At about the halfway point on the ferry trip, I phoned through all the lunch orders to Zara at Pepperjacks Restaurant. In 2020, there were 15 on the trip and everyone ordered fish and chips. This time there were seven on the trip and it was five for fish and chips; two for mushrooms on toast.



*Ruth, Pam and Sandra looking at a screen with Ian doing the same*

When seated around the table in Pepperjacks and waiting for our meals to arrive, a few of us ordered drinks: beer, wine and coffee. Others were content with drinking the complementary water.

This time, all the staff at Pepperjacks were pleasant to deal with. It was a change from 2020 when the manager was an old grouch with an attitude so bad we wondered how he stayed in business.

The fish and chips Pepperjacks served looked beautiful on the plates. There was deep fried beer battered white fish, and chips which were somehow cooked to a deep brown colour. I have never seen fries like that before and they tasted delicious. I have no idea what those who ordered mushrooms on toast thought about their meal.

Looking back at the files on my old computer, I see for fish and chips in February 2020 we paid \$20. This time, two years later, we paid \$26. In fairness to Pepperjacks, it now has new owners and the \$20 was a special price (in 2020, the menu price was \$28.50).



*Plenty of empty red seats on the ferry headed back to Auckland and Ian not wearing his N95 mask*

On the return trip, the sun was breaking through, and the wind had picked up. Very occasionally, there was a loud bang as the ferry bounced on the waves. I think this effect is called slamming. Some heavy downpours could be seen in the distance.



*Leaving Pine Harbour on another memorable day out*

Instead of catching the train at Britomart, Peter Cox and I caught the double-decker number 18 bus that goes up to Karangahape Road and then along Great North Road to New Lynn. Despite getting on at the second stop, we were able to sit on the top deck front row seats. They are usually the first ones to be taken because they provide the best panoramic views. These views are much better than what you see looking out the train windows on the Western rail corridor.



## **HAROLD FARNSWORTH**

**WHO PASSED AWAY PEACEFULLY  
IN HIS 98TH YEAR ON 6TH NOVEMBER**

**Vince Middeldorp**



*Harold Farnsworth at the Armistice Day ceremony in Thames in November 2016*

Harold Farnsworth was the 26th member of the Probus Club of New Lynn. He joined at the second monthly meeting of the Club. The meeting was held on 18 November, 1991.

When Harold announced in 2016 that he was moving to a retirement village in Thames, Neil Lindstrom rose and said some very nice words which members supported by acclamation.

During Harold's time at the club, the format for monthly meetings was a club speaker before morning tea, followed by a guest speaker after morning tea. On the occasions when Harold was club speaker, he talked about his working life and a trip he made overseas.

The following are items taken from the minute books of the Club. They are reproduced verbatim.

### **TEKAPO HYDRO SITE (FEBRUARY 2010)**

**Tom Lowndes**

Harold Farnsworth was heading for some skiing at Mt Cook in 1949 with a friend on their motorbikes, when they came across the Tekapo hydro dam being built. So they stopped and had a look, were taken on as carpenters and it was four months later when they gave it away to carry on with the skiing.

They had no gear but were given a plan and some labourers and told that the west wall had to be built by Labour weekend. Harold described the hurried building of a cement shed and the concrete batching plant. The single men's quarters and houses for the senior staff had to be built from units sent up from Christchurch, but the last one wasn't up to scratch, having been built from whatever was left over.



*Lake Tekapo in the Mackenzie Basin in the South Island of New Zealand*

Construction at Lake Tekapo in winter required mixing concrete with warm water to stop it freezing and Harold spoke of hot-water pipes to keep equipment from freezing.

There were advertisements in the Christchurch paper to work for big money at the Williamson site, but some were fired after a few hours. They had to be happy with transport each way and a few meals.

The Tekapo dam was finished in 1950 and in 1971 was drowned by a far bigger dam.

During a trip to the area in 1998 and gazing into the depths, Harold had occasion to remember some old ghosts.

### **MURAPARA BRANCH RAILWAY (FEBRUARY 2007)**

**Tom Lowndes**

Harold Farnsworth was driving a bulldozer on the construction site of the Murapara branch railway in 1954 and told us how they went about it.

The line was 57km from Murapara to Kawerau and was built working from both ends towards the centre. Harold drew some sketches on the whiteboard to illustrate how the railsets were transported and laid and explained how this progressed as the earthworks were completed. He also sketched how the two sections met and the joining process.

On the day when the two ends were to connect up, it wasn't a grand occasion, no MPs seeking a photo opportunity but a big event all the same and they did have some gold painted fishplates.



*A fishplate is a metal connecting plate used to bolt the ends of two rails into a continuous track*

Harold and his mates wandered over to witness the historic event and described how the action was arranged to take place on a curve. The final railsets were lifted by crane and positioned on the earthworks (the ballast came later) and they finished up with an eight-inch gap. No problem, says Harold. The fishplate bolts for a few sections were loosened and the whole track around the curve was gradually eased towards the centre of the arc until the railsets came together and closed the gap.

Harold had the opportunity to pass through the area in 1984 and what with all the forest growth, the place was unrecognizable.

The interest shown in Harold's talk was evident by the number and variety of questions he fielded. President John's thanks were soundly endorsed by the members.

### **BUILDING ROADS IN NEW GUINEA (FEBRUARY 2001)**

**Tom Lowndes**

Harold Farnsworth spent some time in the Western Highlands of New Guinea in 1958 surveying and setting out roads between isolated villages. Conditions were primitive in that there was no machinery, no wheelbarrows and the currency was salt.



*Plane at landing strip in New Guinea*

He and his mate flew in by Cessna to the second highest airstrip in the country and had their plane unloaded by three murderers, who were returned to a locked grass hut when the job was done.

Harold gave an enthralling account of life and conditions in the villages, including details of the food, dress, sleeping arrangements and meeting ceremonies. The road building was an amazing sight, with hundreds of natives with spades and sometimes with the aid of cut-down 44 gallon drums fixed to poles for handles.

Looking back, Harold considers he was in the right place at the right time and you couldn't have those experiences now. We would like to have heard more, but morning tea intervened.

## ***BUILDING ROADS IN NEW GUINEA (MARCH 2015)***

***Tom Lowndes***



*Caterpillar D4 bulldozer*

Immediate Past President Harold Farnsworth spoke of another country, another time, another lifestyle. He was in New Guinea, aged 32, one of a team of three, there to survey and make roads in a primitive country that had no roads.

Several plane loads of equipment were moved to an area behind Mt Hagen to establish a camp at 9,000 ft and where he met the two other members of the party, which included a surveyor. They had three servants, including a cook whose fire was contained in a hole in the ground. The villagers needed the roads but couldn't erect the tents, which were useless anyway, but grass huts were no problem. The men put up the bamboo frame, and the women cut the grass needed for the wall and thatch, and it was all done in a few hours. No nails, everything tied together. A five gallon drum held the water for the shower, which had to be taken in the afternoon as the evenings were too cold. Their diet was almost exclusively sweet potatoes, which looked like kumara and was tasteless.

Harold used a whiteboard to show us the surveying and road building methods and described the leveling instruments. There was no machinery, and all vegetation had to be cleared by hand. Cut down 44 gallon drums with wooden handles were used by the villagers to carry the earth. Later, a D4 Cat bulldozer was flown in, in bits, and driven from a site 80 miles away. That was a story on its own.

Harold also told of an occasion where he was required to visit the Commissioner's Office on the coast, a three-day walk, or a 12 minute flight if it could be arranged.

To conclude, Harold noted he had heard recently that the road to the coast is now completely tar sealed all the way. And that earned generous applause.

## ***TRIP TO RUSSIA AND EUROPE (OCTOBER 2008)***

***Tom Lowndes***

Harold Farnsworth spoke of the trip he and his wife took to Russia and Europe. They had a stopover in Hong Kong and flew by Aeroflot to Moscow. He spoke of the bus tour of Moscow, including a visit to the Kremlin full of art treasures and of the metro art work.

It was with some trepidation that he put his debit card in to a Russian ATM to get some roubles and hoped that he would get his card back. After a short time while it checked back to his account in New Lynn, he got his Russian currency and as well as his card and felt happier.

Harold described the extensive canal network that links with rivers and the intricate system of locks to enable boats to travel long distances. They eventually arrived at Saint Petersburg in the north. In this city is the Winter Palace, originally built on swamp land with very thick walls and containing many art treasures. A short distance away is the Summer Palace, which was occupied by the Germans during World War 2.



*The French SNCF TGV Sud-Est fast trains were built to run at 270 km/h and later upgraded to 300 km/h*

From there they went to Prague and then to France by train, as it had been a long ambition of Harold to travel on the very fast trains there. At first there were some difficulties with time-tables and seat bookings and eventually he got his extremely fast train ride to Paris.

Harold gave a good account of the trials and tribulations of travelling in foreign countries.

## 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.

### COSTCO HEARING AIDS

**Vince Middeldorp**



*Costco Wholesale at Westgate*

Costco is now open at Westgate, and if you need hearing aids, that is great news. Costco is the biggest private provider of hearing aids in the USA. They sell premium quality hearing aids at unbelievably low prices.

Last month, I bought a set of hearing aids from [Costco in Westgate](#) for a family member. I paid \$2,000 after the government subsidy of \$1,000. The hearing aids I bought were Jabra Enhance Pro hearing aids (over the ear type) with custom earmolds, i.e. made after an impression of the ear was made with a soft molding compound.

The audiologist at Costco Westgate is [Paul Catlow](#). He gained his Masters degree at the University College of London before completing his Doctor of Audiology degree in the USA. Paul Catlow has been fitting hearing aids since 1991 and has worked in big London hospitals such as Great Ormond Street Hospital, and the Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital.

Paul Catlow says he loves working with the elderly. He also told me the hearing aids I selected would cost \$5,800 for an audiologist in New Zealand to buy from the manufacturer ([GN Store Nord A/S](#)). I didn't ask him what the customer would have to pay after the audiologist's mark up and fitting expenses were taken into account.

### 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 first meeting next year is Friday 13 January 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.