



West Auckland Men's Rebus Club Newsletter

MAY 2023

Next meeting: 10:00 am Friday 12 May, Friendship Hall, 3063 Great North Rd, New Lynn

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Coffee Morning at Selwyn Village in Pt Chevalier for Waitakere and West Auckland Rebus Clubs

PRESIDENT'S PRATTLE
President's Report May 2023

Bill Mutch



Bill Mutch at the April meeting



w 644 at the Glenbrook Vintage Railway

Great to get some cooler nights as sleeping is improved.

As I go to print, we have not confirmed a guest speaker for our next meeting on Friday 12 May 2023. Noel Rose is working on it.

My favourite singer who had a magic song "Island in the Sun" has passed away at the great age of 96. Who is it? Tell me, as it will be question 1 of a short quiz.

One of our retired members, Ray Hancock, turns 99 on June the first. Great news.

Recently, the Glenbrook Vintage Railway had a trip to Hamilton and back using the Ww644 steam loco. It was fully booked and for a 108-year-old coal-fired steam loco; it did an amazing job.

Coal is about \$70+ a ton now, so not cheap to use, however, the following weekend it did the same again for a private charter but on the return trip it had to spend the night in the siding at Te Kauwhata because of wheel bearing problems which were fixed overnight.

As luck happened, no people were on the train at that stage. The GVR does a lot of charter work.

I Trust we are all fit and well and ready for another NZ winter.

See you all on the 12th.

Cheers Bill Mutch

CLAUDIA'S CORNER

The Tomato family was out taking a get fit exercise walk, when Popa and Mother noticed that little Sonny was lagging behind, so Popa went back and yelled "Ketchup".

A man tells his Doctor
"Doc please help me
I am addicted to Twitter."
The doctor replies "Sorry I don't follow you".

Did you hear about the restaurant
called Karma?
There is no menu you get what
you deserve!



MEETING REPORT

April 2023

Vince Middeldorp

President Bill Mutch began the meeting by saying, *Good morning everyone, beautiful day, have we got any visitors?*

There were no visitors. Twenty-one members were present. Apologies were recorded for Charles Nicholls and Alan Verry.

Bill then said, *Now any matters arising from the March meeting? I had a good sleep in, and missed the first half.*

There were no matters arising from the March meeting.

Bill informed the members that it was a special day and asked them to sing Happy Birthday for Trevor Pollard, who is 87 years old.

Bill stopped working through the agenda and told members about the biggest shock he has had for some time.

When I was very young and going to school, I knocked around with a guy called John and we used to go to nightclubs. There was always a competition between the two of us to get the best-looking girl and he used to do better than me. In 1961 we were both working on the railways and he met this girl, fell in love and I was the best man at their wedding. After a few weeks of married life, they moved to Perth because she was from Perth. We wrote a few letters to each other but not many and we lost contact.

A couple of weeks ago, I had a ring from a funeral home. They had a request for me to do a funeral. I said okay who is it? When they told me, I recognised the name straight away. It was John, who I hadn't seen for 40 odd years and who I didn't know had come back to New Zealand.

The funeral home guy said to me, when you're dealing with the family, you've got to talk with a guy called Rex. I went to the house and found out that John had left his wife, come back to New Zealand, had been in a gay relationship with Rex for 41 years, and they lived in Henderson, which is not that far away.

Apparently he had cancer and one of the last things he said was, see if you can get Bill Mutch to do the funeral.

Vince Middeldorp said there was a bit of correspondence.

Last time (at the March meeting) the Rebus people were looking for a new chairman and no one had put their hand up. Now they have someone and his name is William Irvine. He is a builder and comes from Taupo and has served on the Plumbers Drainlayers and Gasfitters Board. William sounds like a good bloke. He is taking over from Graeme McIntosh, who set up Rebus NZ.



Outgoing chairman Graeme McIntosh



Incoming chairman William Irvine

The Treasurers Report shows \$1,039 in the Kiwibank cheque account, \$190 in the cashbox and in the term deposit \$1,200. The amount in the cheque account has gone up because I have managed to get \$300 from the old Probus account.

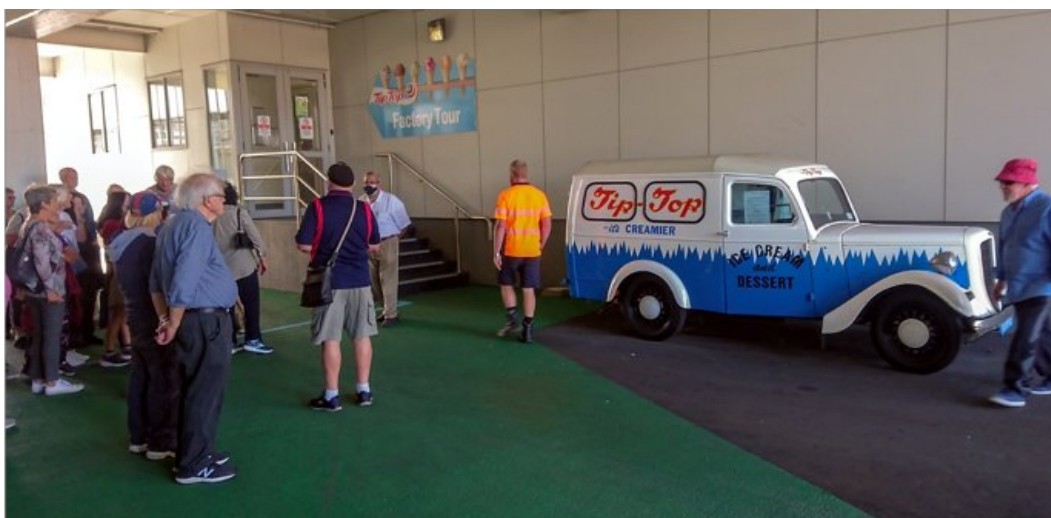
Bill Fairs said, *Can I just interrupt for a minute. Can we give Vince a round of applause because getting the \$300 out of the BNZ was a mission. It's been going on for, I can't remember how long, and he's actually done it!*

Trips and Coffee Mornings.

Bill Mutch said to Ian Smith, *I believe you had a very quiet one with Huckleberry, and handed the microphone to Ian.*

Yeah, Huckleberry's wasn't that great. Quite a lot of us turned up, and the place was closed until ten thirty. It's apparently got new owners and they're not doing a good job. I don't think we'll be booking there again.

We had a really good trip to Tip Top. It was very interesting seeing all the packaging happening, and the waste that was going on as well. There was an arm that pushed aside the containers that didn't reach to the right weight and they took them to a bucket that was for feeding to the pigs. It was Kapiti ice cream on that chain.



Members who went on the trip looking at Tip Top's Bradford delivery van

I'm thinking of organising a trip to the Devonport Museum for next month. We're trying to get this thing going at Selwyn. As far as I know, we'll go on that. Coffee mornings at Selwyn Village, Wednesday 26th April.

Bill Mutch asked, *Have we got any general business?*

There was no general business.

Bill Mutch said, *We'll have a half hour break for the morning tea.*

CLUB SPEAKER

RAYMOND BARRETT

Whisper AI transcription

I had a super dad. He was an incredible man.

My dad was one of nine. When he was thirteen and his dad had an accident and died. Dad at that stage went to work. I'm unsure of the detail, but he did end up doing his time, I think with International Harvester Company.

In December 1941, Japan attacked America at Pearl Harbour. America thought it should have supplies down in New Zealand, and created the storage facilities at Silvia Park, which everybody knows about.

But there was also Camp Bunn, in Glen Innes, by Pilkington Road. Dad had a strong tie-in with the Americans at Camp Bunn. The Americans had a saying, T-Y-B, try your best. Dad, with his kiwi humour, interpreted that as thieve the yanks blind.



Camp Bunn, named after Lt. B M Bunn of the US Marine Corps, who died in the Solomon Islands

Shortly after the war years, mum and dad lived in Papatoetoe. Dad, with no building experience, built a couple of extra bedrooms onto the house. He was the sort of guy that could do anything.

And then, he bought a section in Waiau Pa, around the corner from Clark's Beach. Dad had purloined, probably from Camp Bunn, a little lean-to pre-fab. We would come out on Friday, the five of us, and stay in that for the weekend.

Somehow and from somewhere, dad acquired a vibrating system for making concrete blocks. Mum would sieve scoria, the concrete mixer would be going and we would make blocks. They would harden up over the course of the week and next weekend dad would lay them.

There was no power on site initially, so we had a JAP motor to power the concrete mixer. By JAP I don't mean Japanese. It was an English motor made by J A Prestwich.

We enjoyed an idyllic lifestyle at Waiau Pa. We would get our milk from a local farmer and first up got the cream on the porridge. We called Clark's Beach our beach. Dad was a very social animal, and every Guy Fawkes would make this huge bonfire on the beach, and all the locals would come down to the beach.



Mum Dulcie, myself Raymond, my hero dad Les, older brother Bob and big sister Val

Dad had a great love of fishing, and we were one of the very early people to have a plywood dingy. Dad would bang the JAP in the boat, take his gimpy mate who had a bad leg from polio, and drive up to the estuary at Te Toro. They would set their combined nets to cover the whole estuary, which is totally illegal,

and do some plonking, which is smashing hell out of the water with a length of tea tree. It would drive all the flounder into the nets and dad would come home with a bulging coal sack full of flounder.

In the late forties, there was very little refrigeration. Dad would go off to the neighbouring families and give them some flounder. About three hours later, he would arrive home because he did like a wee drink.

Dad had a love of boating and came across a derelict launch called the Wanganella lying on its side. Dad stole it or pinched it and brought it home. Then with a couple of his mates, he set about caulking the hull with hemp, soaked in pine tar. They used blunt chisels and special hammers to drive the caulking into the seams between the boards in the hull. Caulking with hemp resulted in a boat leaking like hell for two or three days, then the boards would tighten up and you had a waterproof boat.

From the love of that boat, we ended up with a 37 ft, wide beam boat, powered with a big Chrysler Crown motor and we had fabulous holidays going to Mansion House Bay, right around Great Barrier Island and up to the Bay of Islands. It was a fantastic time.



The Roof was dad's 37ft, wide beam motor launch

In the late 1940s, dad quit servicing tractors in the field, and with Ted Copsey created Franklin Tractor Service. Ted had the dollars and dad the mechanical knowledge. It was one of the first companies to bring in Ferguson tractors. They had a three point linkage system for attaching farm implements, were fitted with hydraulics, and revolutionised farming in New Zealand.

Dad was the salesman. He'd load one of the tractors on a truck and go up to Northland, and down the east coast, demonstrate them and make sales. My 18-year-old sister was working in the company at that stage. There were a lot of Chinese and Indian growers on Pukekohe Hill. Dad would go up there and demonstrate a tractor. The Chinese would zip out the back, and get a couple of cake tins, and in them were rolls of cash.

There was this really decrepit house on Pukekohe Hill, and dad managed to buy it for a song. He cut this building in half, grabbed a couple of derelict truck chassis, and then moved the house in two 22 km trips from Pukekohe Hill to Waiiau Pa. I was in the Waiiau Pa school and the whole school emptied out to see Mr Barrett and his home-made trailer with a half house on it. He had a Ferguson tractor at the front pulling, and another behind pushing.

So things are going smoothly. We're going away with the other partner, up to places such as the Bay of Islands, and something happened. My brother Bob thought that maybe the other partner put the word on my sister and it didn't go down well. It resulted in dad selling out of the partnership, and setting up his own business. The Roof was sold to raise funds for the business.

Dad looked around and there was this vacant garage on the intersection of Patumahoe Rd and Woodhouse Rd. He bought that and was probably there about two years.

Had he lived, I would have followed him into the trade.

He was an entrepreneur, got an agency for Jowett Javelin cars and an agency for Seagull outboards. Val, at age 19, came to work with him, and what she would do was get two 50-gallon drums, put them on a nine horse-power Bradford truck, gas them up and deliver fuel to the local farmers.

Incidentally, we kept a Jowett Javelin when the business was sold. It had a fault on it, and at about age 20, I pulled the motor out, got the bearings done, and put the thing back together.



Raymond Barrett speaking about the site of his dad's business in Patumahoe

At age 10, I taught myself to drive on the front lawn. My mum, in her naivety, would let me drive all the way from Waiiau Pa to Patumahoe, which was 16 km away.

In 1952, on the 23rd of September, my dad died, and the effect of having this larger-than-life figure suddenly removed on my ego was huge and prolonged. There were 200 cars at his funeral, that's how well known he was at age 42.

My mum didn't handle that too well at all. The foreman, who was supposed to be looking after our interests, was holding parties in the garage and about a third of the stock was pinched. When the business was sold, mum really got ripped off.

Around the road was a widower. This guy appeared on the scene because Mrs Barratt was a 42 year widow that had a garage and a big house. I came home one day from school and my mum says, I'm not Mrs Barratt, I'm Mrs Baldwin. Shock, horror.

This man had never been a dad and suffered from chronic asthma. He would inject himself with a barbiturate to slow down his breathing and sit for hours in front of the fireplace, not moving.

Like my brother Bob, at the age of 15, I went off to work. With the help of mum's uncle, I tried for an apprenticeship at International Harvester Company. That didn't happen, and I ended up in Portage Road at Brown's family business making brushes. I would cut timber, stack timber, use a spindle shaper and do all sorts of stuff.

My second job was working for the father of one of my schoolmates and I would like to think I was headhunted. He was manufacturing fancy wire and wrought iron products on Kitenui Avenue, opposite the Rocket Park in Mt Albert. The guy made telephone stools, lamp stands and a range of other products. He was a talented man, but everything was done on the cheap. We never had a disk grinder. You were lucky if you could get a pair of goggles and there was no ear protection. I was with him for sixteen years.

I always worked two 12-hour days in a week, and I worked on a Saturday morning, so I didn't get the camaraderie or mate ship that comes from playing sport. The pay, while it wasn't fantastic, was better than factory earnings, but I was putting in the hours.

The workshop was upstairs and downstairs was a car painter with a rather wild son. One day he got some balloons, and we pumped them up with oxy acetylene from the welding torch. Then we attached a turps soaked rag and ignited it. There was a flash followed by a bang as loud as a 25 pounder firing in Western Springs. All the adjacent shops emptied out and we can't hear diddly squat because our hearing went.

A major change occurred in the year of Arnold Nordmeyer's black budget. I'm a winner in the National Service lottery.

I was included in the ninth intake and went down to Waiouru on a steam train with all these other guys, some who had never been away from home. It was at the end of January. We are at two and a half thousand feet. We are south of Auckland, and it's cold.

The first thing that happens at Waiouru is being told we're going on a Cook's Tour and I think that'll be nice. No, that's a three and a half mile, double march round Waiouru camp.

So I'm down there, with a bunch of strange guys, 700 in the intake. I'm in B squadron, 12 in the room, five down the inside, two at the back. There are chefs and you have a cooked breakfast every morning, and a cooked lunch. You are running everywhere, using energy, and there's a cooked tea: meat and three veg.

I saw guys you wouldn't want to be in the same room with, lose two or three stone, have their heads up, their chest out, and they were immaculate. They had learned how to make their bed, brush their teeth, and keep clean.

After the 14 weeks of basic training, you had to do three annual camps. The first one was at Hūkerenui, the next at Waiouru, and then down to Linton.

I don't remember much about it, but I do know that at Hūkerenui, I got my first rank, which was lance corporal.

Between the first and second annual camp, I met this delightful lady on a blind date. A year later, the couple that took us on the blind date got hitched, and a year later, we were married. We had two sons; one in 1973 and the other in 1976.



Raymond's wife Suzanne

After having a regular salary, I took the leap, and I went out and got a commission only job at Christopher Bede Photography. In 1971 and 1972, 30 cents out of every dollar spent on photography domestically or commercially was spent through this company.

They had 105 to 110 people knocking on the door, signing up people for an appointment. The photographer would come in with three lights and a backdrop. He had 40 minutes, and he'd take eight photos.

My best week was in late 1974-75. My sales were \$2,900. I got a percentage for black and white, a bit of a percentage for colour photographs, and seven and a half percent for deposits. \$2,900 in 1974 is \$40,000 today.

Because you dealt with people without chequebooks, you sometimes had to hit early on Friday morning to get money out of them. I'd be down at the Waiuku steel mill at seven in the morning. When you're on commission, you've got to do what you've got to do.

There's a whole insurance industry story, but I have to close it down.

Guys, thanks for your attention. I appreciate it.

RECENT EVENTS

COFFEE MORNING AT SELWYN VILLAGE

Vince Middeldorp

Thirty members of West Auckland Men's Rebus Club and Waitakere Combined Rebus Club accepted the invitation from Senior Sales Consultant Kathy Fitchett to have a look around Selwyn Village in Point Chevalier.

The tour started in the café at Lichfield Towers. The café has a room at the far end, which was set up with a table for making tea and coffee. Nearly everyone arrived at about the same time, and the room went from hardly anyone being there to being full of people in a matter of minutes.



Members walked into the room and helped themselves to tea and coffee



Selwyn Village staff brought café food to members seated at the tables

Cakes, sandwiches, and sausage rolls were brought around on large plates. I opted for the sausage rolls and had quite a few. They were very nice.

After about fifteen minutes, Kathy Fitchett welcomed everyone and gave a PowerPoint presentation on the village. Some of her talk was on the Selwyn Way, which is about promoting resilience, contentment, well being and engagement in life, during retirement.

There was a threat of rain outside and so it wasn't long before we set off in small groups to look at retirement apartments. Those in the apartments live independently and make use of support services ranging from GP care at the village Medical Centre to having someone come round to assist with taking a shower and getting dressed.

The first apartment we went to was Randerson Apartment 625. It was 82 m² + 6m² deck and priced at \$745,000. It was 2 bedrooms plus additional WC. This apartment had not been fitted out with a new kitchen. The kitchen looked in excellent condition and replacing it would have been wasteful. Selwyn Village prides itself on being committed to sustainability.

When we came out of this apartment block, we saw some of our members being driven around the village on a golf cart. Trevor and Fay Pollard were sitting in the back seats.



Heading into the Puckey Apartment block

In 2022, two new apartment blocks were opened at the village. One is called Puckey and the other Caswell. The second apartment we went into was Puckey Apartment 427. It was 2 bedrooms, 90m² + 8m² deck and priced at \$1,050,000.

The third apartment we viewed was in the Betty Pyatt block. This apartment block was built in 2016 and the apartment we saw, number 854, was priced at \$1,070,000. It was a more spacious apartment than the others, 105 m² + 16 m² deck. The feeling in our group was that it was nicer than the newer one at Puckey.

All three apartments had a feature which showed some good thinking. They had an additional or extra WC. In each apartment, there were two toilets right next to each other: one in its own room and one in the bathroom.

The apartments in all the blocks come with secure basement parking and storage. However, there is an extra cost involved in having those facilities.

One member of our group remarked on the amount of kitchen bench space being rather small. That made me look again at the length of the bench and I had to agree. The length was certainly not provisioned on the basis that most people today have an air fryer and a coffee machine that takes up space on the kitchen bench.

During our walk in the village, we came across the Minimart: opening hours 9:30 am to 12:30 pm Monday-Friday. It sells a grocery items such as ice cream, breakfast food and biscuits. I picked up a packet of Arnott's Scotch Fingers (which Trevor Pollard says are the best biscuits) and asked how much? To my surprise, they were \$2.60 which is better than the \$3.00 price at Countdown. I was told the stock was bought from Pak'nSav and a small markup is added.

It didn't surprise me to see there was not much use being made of the facilities provided for residents because I think that is the case at retirement villages everywhere. There was a workshop equipped with a large range of tools including a drill-press, with no-one inside. There was a gym with very expensive workout machines, and no one in there. There was a library with three or four computers for residents to use. There was no one at the computers and no one in the library looking for books to read. There was a community centre with one solitary resident watching rugby on a large screen TV.

One of my enduring memories of Selwyn Village will be walking outside and seeing residents requiring rest home level care through a very large plate-glass window. The ones who were still mentally good were happily engaged playing cards or board games with each other. Those who had declined to the stage where they could not do much anymore were dozing off in their chairs. The take away for me was that Selwyn Village has been set up so that as the residents living there get older, Selwyn Village can ramp up the level of care provided, to match the resident's current level of need.



Selwyn Village resident watching sport on the community centre big screen TV.

OTHER

WEST AUCKLAND AND NEW LYNN PROBUS

Vince Middeldorp

Jack Morley was the secretary when I joined West Auckland Men's Rebus Club. A few weeks ago, I went to see Jack to get his signature on a letter to the BNZ bank. Jack saw me coming round as his opportunity to off-load all the old records of the club.

Included in the old records was a spiral bound booklet titled, "Probus Club of West Auckland: The First Decade March 1985 – March 1995." It was written by Dr Ron Barker, CBE. He became club secretary in 1994 and was the New Zealand Director General of Health before he retired.

Reading this booklet resulted in a more complete picture of how the two clubs began: Probus Club of West Auckland in 1985, followed by Probus Club of New Lynn in 1991.

The setting up of the two Probus Clubs was not the result of an initiative by the New Lynn Rotary Club. That had been my previous understanding of the origins of the clubs. Rotary played a role, but in each case Rotary was brought in by the individuals setting up the clubs.

The person who deserves most of the credit for establishing the West Auckland Club is Arthur Silcock. He was also the second President of the club.

Arthur Silcock's interest in Probus began when he read an article about Probus clubs in Britain. He then discussed the idea of such a club with a few of his friends. These discussions led to telephone contact being made with Jim Stanford, the secretary of the Probus Centre in Paramatta. They were advised to contact Jack Porter, the Probus Centre representative in Auckland. Jack Porter provided the group with a copy of the Probus Constitution and By-laws. An advertisement to form a Probus club was then placed in the Western Leader.

The inaugural meeting was held on 23 January 1985 at Tui Glen and was attended by 18 prospective members including Bruce Garrity, who was the President of a Rotary Club. Bruce Garrity offered sponsorship of his club and pledged \$200 to assist in its formation. In those days, Rotary Club sponsorship was required to set up a Probus Club.

A.L. (Mac) Williams, a former President of the Henderson Rotary Club, agreed to accept the office of President of the Probus Club. Ron Spring gave an address at the inaugural meeting explaining the activities of the Remuera Probus Club.



Arthur Silcock



A.L.(Mac) Williams



Jack Armstrong

It was agreed that the Club would meet on the first Friday of the month commencing in March at Tui Glen and that membership would be limited to 70. The suggested subscription was \$20 and the election of officers was deferred until the next meeting. After a few meetings, it was decided to hold the meetings at the Kelston Community Centre.

The following year, in his President's report, Mac Williams wrote, "I am obliged to confess that I had some reservations, misgivings, even when I agreed to act in this capacity a year ago. I was not persuaded for the need for such a club. Any misgivings or reservations are now gone. They have been replaced by a conviction that such an organization as this, in this area, is not only desirable but is filling a real need. And it is you who have convinced me. By your attendance at meetings, your supporting and obvious pleasure in the outings, and most of all, by your increasing and obvious pleasure in each other's company, you have given abundant proof of the validity of such a club as this. While some of us have a shyness and reserve, man is largely gregarious and happier in the company of others."

At the end of the first year, membership stood at 52. The second year saw it grow to 58 and by the end of the third year, it had reached 70. Following this, a small waiting list was begun, but it soon reached a level that warranted the establishment of another club.

John Lovegrove, one of the founding members of Probus Club of West Auckland, was the prime mover in setting up the new club. It was to be based in New Lynn, where John's business was located. In 1992, with the New Lynn Club operating successfully, John resigned from Probus Club of West Auckland.

An account of the origin of New Lynn Men's Probus, was written by Tom Lowndes, and reprinted in the August 2021 edition of the West Auckland Men's Rebus Club newsletter. The following are paragraphs taken from Tom's account. They follow on from what Ron Barker wrote in his booklet.

"The meeting (first meeting of New Lynn Men's Probus) was called to order by a fellow called John Lovegrove, a Rotarian who I later learned had an upholstery business near the corner of Great North Rd and Rata St. John was a most likeable and capable man and smoothly saw to it to form a club to be known as the Probus Club of New Lynn.

"President, Jack Armstrong (of West Auckland Probus) installed Jack Gascoigne (President of New Lynn Probus) and presented him with a regalia-type collar and a cheque I later learned was for \$300 to get the club established. John Lovegrove donated a gavel of Desert Hardwood from the USA for use by the club."

Fast forward to 2020 and both clubs were struggling with low membership numbers and finding members to serve as office holders. Probus Club of New Lynn was put into recess and its members added to West Auckland Men's Probus Club, which was now affiliated with Rebus New Zealand and renamed West Auckland Men's Rebus Club.

Combining the New Lynn Club and West Auckland Club can be viewed as the wheel having turned full circle: one club in 1985, the year when the first club is founded, two clubs in 1991 because there are no vacancies for new members in the first club, and back to one club in 2020 because membership numbers have fallen away in both clubs.

A POEM TO WHICH SOME OF US CAN RELATE

Bill Mutch

I remember the corned beef of my childhood,
And the bread that we cut with a knife.
When the children helped with the housework,
And the men went to work, not the wife.

The cheese never needed a fridge,
And the bread was so crusty and hot,
The children were seldom unhappy,
And the Wife was content with her lot.

I remember the milk from the bottle,
With the yummy cream on the top,
Our dinner came hot from the oven,
And not from a freezer; or shop.

The kids were a lot more contented,
They didn't need money for kicks,
Just a game with their friends in the road,
And sometimes the Saturday flicks.

I remember the shop on the corner,
Where biscuits for pennies were sold,
Do you think I'm a bit too nostalgic?
Or is it...I'm just getting Old?

Bathing was done in a washtub,
With plenty of rich foamy suds,
But the ironing seemed never ending
As Mum pressed everyone's 'duds'.

I remember the slap on my backside,
And the taste of soap if I swore,
Anorexia and diets weren't heard of,
And we hadn't much choice what we wore.

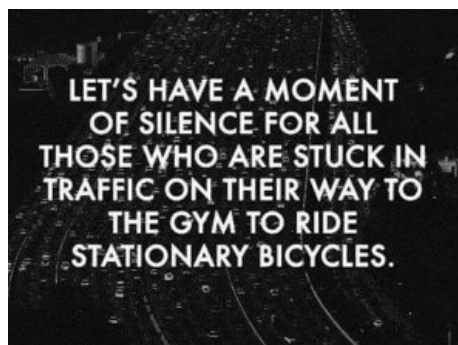
Do you think that bruised our ego?
Or our initiative was destroyed?
We ate what was put on the table,
And I think life was better enjoyed.

Author, Unknown...

If you can remember those days...Continue to enjoy your Retirement.

QUIPS

Ian Smith

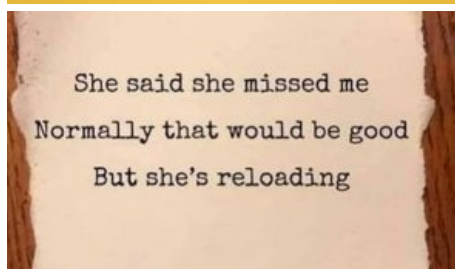


I went to the psychiatrist today. She told me I had a split personality and charged me 160 dollars.

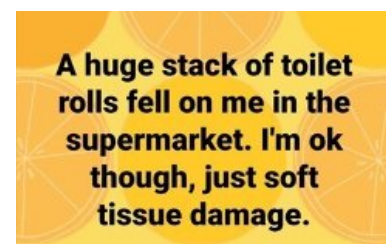
I gave her 80 dollars and told her to get the rest from the other idiot.



I see people around my age mountain climbing - meanwhile, I feel good getting my leg through my underwear without losing my balance



I told my wife I saw a deer on the way to work. She said how do you know he was headed to work?



TREASURER'S TRAVELS

Charles Nicholls

Your treasurer is once again on the road. First, cricket news.

I watched the very exciting but narrow loss of the Blackcaps in the Super Over in the first T20 game against Sri Lanka. The Blackcaps redeemed themselves in the second game, which I watched on TV.

Stratford, in Taranaki, has played a significant part in our lives. As young teachers, we were involved in Drama, Music and Cricket and developed a love for the mountain. Our two children were born in Stratford and Hawera. A few years ago, we bought a small house which looks out to the mountain on a clear day. We wanted to give our grandchildren a chance to appreciate what we and their mothers enjoyed. When we can, we drive down to enjoy a break from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Stratford was named Stratford upon Patea, upon the motion of William Crompton in 1877. The similarity of the Patea River to the Avon River in England was the catalyst for this. The easy walks along the riverside certainly reinforce tranquillity and peacefulness. All of Stratford's streets are named for characters drawn from 27 plays. Romeo and Juliet re-enact the balcony scene from the glockenspiel clock tower three times a day, with their dialogue carried by external speakers to the small groups of onlookers. The full-size figures were crafted by Nigel Ogle, the curator of the Tawhiti Museum in Hawera. This museum tells the story of early settlement around Taranaki and is well worth a visit. Stratford also is the home of the historic [Kings Theatre](#) which opened in 1917 and it was the first theatre in the southern hemisphere to show "talkies". It is being kept open by a community trust and is the home to historic cameras and other theatre equipment.

Stratford, Taranaki has a sister town partnership with Stratford on Avon, England, the two Canadian Stratfords and one in Connecticut, USA. In 2024, these towns will participate in the annual Shakespeare festival. Helen and I are going to some 2023 events. We decided to give "The Shakesbeer" event a miss.

"Shakespeare's Women" was presented by the Hawera Repertory Company. Excerpts from 14 plays gave an insight into the pivotal roles women characters played in Shakespearean plays. Men dressed up as women because only males were allowed to act on stage and this added spice. Sometimes there were vulgar exchanges between audiences and the actors. In the comedies, they even dressed up as men again, leading to confusion and complexities that eventually had to be resolved.

Romantic love leads to self-destruction for Ophelia, Juliet, and Cleopatra. Scheming women helped destroy Macbeth, and King Lear. Katherina -the shrew- would be seen today as a modern progressive woman but is "tamed" to become an example of the dutiful and obedient wife that was the model for Elizabethan women. However, in the Merchant of Venice, Portia, disguised as a male lawyer, defeats Shylock and is shown to be more intelligent than the other protagonists. Shakespeare's women are not unidimensional.

[Hollard Gardens](#) near Kaponga are well worth a visit. They were the setting for "Much Ado About Nothing". [The Barden Party](#) is a group of six actors who perform in outdoor settings, schools and for corporates. If members ever get the chance to see this group of six very talented actors, I would strongly recommend them. They perform with energy, and in the true Shakespearean tradition, interacted with their audience. While remaining faithful to the text, they composed their own songs and used contemporary music to give a modern touch to their production.



Next weekend we will be going to Baldrick's Big Day out at the [Stratford Showgrounds](#) to see medieval dancing, food stalls and jousting.

Fare thee well.

Charles.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

Charles Nicholls

I am available to assist members with any documents that need a JP to sign. I can be contacted on this email 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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Vince Middeldorp

Material in this newsletter is produced by uploading digital voice recordings of the meeting into the Whisper AI (artificial intelligence) system. The output from Whisper AI is too large to paste into the newsletter in its entirety e.g. the transcript of Raymond Barrett's talk was 8,294 words. The transcript is heavily edited for the newsletter e.g. the newsletter article on Raymond Barrett's talk is 2,108 words.

Kevin Stravert's step-by-step YouTube tutorial was used to work out how to use Whisper AI <https://youtu.be/8SQV-B83tPU> Whisper is made by a company called OpenAI. It is the same company that is behind the immensely popular ChatGPT.

LYNFIELD CHAINSAWS AND MOWERS

Vince Middeldorp



Blades and disk



Impact wrench

I hate businesses that have a minimum charge. I know they have overheads and are not a charity, but when they want to charge me something like \$50 for a five minute job, I swear never to go back there. Lynfield Chainsaws and Mowers is a business I would like to go back to. Here's why I feel that way about them.

Last month I fitted a set of new blades to my lawnmower. They were not expensive: \$20 from Bunnings. To fit them, I had to unbolt a large disk under the lawnmower. Everything went well until I went to bolt the disk back onto the mower. Turning my spanner caused the engine to turn over. I couldn't tighten the nut!

A YouTube video told me to jam a wooden spoon into the fins on the flywheel. That suggestion didn't work. My engine was a Briggs & Stratton and the engine in the video was a Victa. There was no way to get the spoon into the fins of the flywheel.

I put the lawnmower in the back of my car and took it to Lynfield Chainsaws and Mowers. The guy at the counter looked at it and said there was a plate missing.

He went away and searched in his junk box for a plate. It took him a while to find one. He put the plate under the nut and tightened it with an impact wrench. It was battery operated and looked like an electric drill. The impact wrench made a loud hammering noise when tightening the nut.

With my mower now fixed, I asked how much. The guy who had fixed the mower turned to a young bloke standing behind the counter and said, "Put \$10 through the till." I said I didn't need a receipt and handed over a \$10 note.

Lynfield Chainsaws and mowers did me a good turn. Hopefully one day I will be able to buy something substantial from them.

NEXT COFFEE MORNING

Ian Smith

No outing planned...too wet for Devonport Museum....catching trains and buses in the rain is not a good idea at the moment.

Coffee back to Esquires at The Boundary, 5 Vitasovich Ave, Henderson, on the **25th May 10 am a Thursday.**



Coffee Morning at Esquires last year on 27 July 2022

SUPPORTERS

West Auckland Men's Rebus acknowledges the support and assistance of:



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

The June meeting date is Friday 9 June 2023

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, so that they can be included in the Newsletter. Remember, it is YOUR Newsletter: feel free to contribute to it as you will.