



# West Auckland Men's Rebus Club Newsletter

**July 2023**

**Next meeting: 10:00 am Friday 14 July, Friendship Hall, 3063 Great North Rd, New Lynn**

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Members tucking into their mid-winter lunch at Swanson RSA

**PRESIDENT'S PRATTLE**  
**President's Report July 2023**

**Bill Mutch**



*Alan Verry in discussion with Bill Mutch at the June meeting*

With the shortest day behind us now, it's a sign our winter is also getting shorter.

Trevor Pollard has had an operation and all is good. I have had no other welfare reports.

I was unable to attend our mid-year winter lunch as I am committed to Medical exams with Doctors at the North Shore Hospital. The next one is Thursday 6 July.

I have had three requests from members about the cost of funerals. So I will outline some helpful facts.

Many of our New Zealand funeral homes are operated by an Australian company. They keep the NZ company name, as many are well known, so it is hard to know who owns what.

To keep costs down, consider not putting the death in a newspaper. Many do this. Cremation is cheaper than a plot.

You have the right to get the company you wish. Sometimes the police or Hospital/Hospice will arrange a funeral company, but you can still request another.

There is a big difference in prices.

Considering the casket price, you can get a nice-looking casket for less. Why pay many dollars?

It is now common to pick up the deceased, take them to a funeral home, prepare them, cremate them, or bury them, and then hold a memorial service later. The death certificate and ashes take about 10 days.

Two Auckland-based companies that offer great prices are:

**Value Cremations** operate Mon- Fri 8.30 am to 5 pm, offer cremation for \$2125 but will add fees for out-of-hours service 0800 475 013. Value requests payment in full the day before cremation.

**Souly Funerals** operate 7 days of professional service and cover Auckland 0800 476 859. They provide an outstanding service. Fee is \$2,200 as a base.

Also, remember you can buy a plot in advance. Just pop into the cemetery office.

A memorial service can be held at any time, any place.

Reports are that the lunch at the Swanson RSA was good, with very good food.

President Bill



## MEETING REPORT

June 2023

Whisper AI transcription (edited)



*Members and visitors socialising before the start of the June meeting*

Good morning and a big, big welcome on this beautiful winter's morning. So, how many visitors have we got today? There are two. I hope you enjoy it. And just a little reminder, because you're visitors, when it comes to morning tea, you do not have to pay.

So next, I'm going to make a mention of this. Where's Maurice Forbes? He's just joined and paid his fees. Give him a big round of applause.

Now, have we got any apologies, Vince?

*We've got Mensto. He has gone overseas to Holland again. And John McKeown. He's on an Alaskan cruise.*

Have we got any matters arising from the May meeting? I kind of remember what we did. No.

So have we got any correspondence (Vince)?

*I had an email from the Lions in West Auckland, and they've got a senior citizens concert. It's the Navy Band. It's at the Te Atatu Community Centre. And it's on the 15th of June at 1:00 pm.*

Can we have a treasurer's report, please, Charles?

*John (Mihaljevic) and I often meet for an informal lunch, at Denny's after the meetings. Anybody else who feels that they want to drop in, is welcome and will find the two of us there. The treasurer's report is very much like last month's report. The changes will be the hall money going out and the tea money coming in. Next year, we might start showing a loss. But meanwhile, we're okay.*

Is Ian Smith here? Is there a coffee morning?

*No (coffee morning). Don't forget the luncheon on the 28th of June, which is a Wednesday. The food serving starts at 12:00 noon. It's at the Swanson RSA. There'll be about 50 there, including the other group (Waitakere Combined Rebus).*

Has anyone been here to hear Winston Peters talk He's an entertainer and you guys are going to have an opportunity to hear him. I'll let Vince tell you the details.

*Peter (Cox) went over to Blockhouse Bay, and came back with the newsletter from Grey Power. The newsletter said Winston Peters is talking in the Mount Albert War Memorial Hall after their (Grey Power's) AGM. He's speaking at 2:00 o'clock and he's fun to listen to.*

All right. Let's enjoy our morning tea. Thank you.

**GUEST SPEAKER**  
**PROFESSOR DAVID GERRARD**

*Whisper AI transcription (edited)*



*Olympic swimmer, NZ Olympic team doctor and chef de mission Dave Gerrard*

People often say to me, when did your interest in sport and sports medicine begin, and when did your career really start?

It began in Tokyo in 1964, where I swam in the 200 meters butterfly for the first time in my life.

People in this audience will remember 1964 for the Olympics in which Peter Mander and Jack Cropp won a gold medal in sailing, where Peter Snell won gold in the 1500 and gold in the 800 to go with the gold medal that he won in Rome in 1960.

We had John Davies finishing third place in the 1500 behind Peter Snell, and of course, Marise Chamberlain from Christchurch winning a bronze medal in the women's 800 meters.

So, what am I going to talk about?

I'm going to spend a bit of time talking about drug misuse in sports, which has become a real dilemma for sports officials, a bit about how politics has interfered with sports over the years, some history of anti-doping, education in sports and sports medicine, a few individuals that I believe earned their place in the sports hall of shame, and I'll finish up by touching on a very controversial topic, transgender as it applies to sport.

I personally believe as a physician that the misuse of drugs in sports carries with it three significant, strong arguments.

The first of these is ethical behaviour. Is it ethical to take a drug for other than its intended clinical purpose? In other words, to take a drug to enhance your athletic performance? I say no, that's an unethical use of medication.

Second, as a medical practitioner, if an athlete came to me asking for a performance-enhancing drug such as an anabolic steroid, I could not legitimately prescribe that drug to a fit, healthy young athlete. So there are implications for the law.

And then, of course, there are the implications for health. Let me give you an example of a drug that was popularised by cyclists, Lance Armstrong in particular, called EPO.

EPO is a naturally occurring substance that enables our bodies to manufacture more red blood cells. And this is a very important drug to be used in people who might have terminal cancer, who might have kidney failure, who might have a disease in which their blood is not producing red blood cells, and they become very anaemic.

The sporting community decided or thought the use of EPO would enhance performance. And it really did.

But the downside of too many red blood cells coursing through their arteries and veins, was the possibility of blood clots. And suddenly, it was found that young athletes using these drugs were dying of strokes and heart attacks.

It was then that the international sports medicine authorities and the Olympic Committee had a closer look at the drugs that athletes were using.



*All Blacks performing the 'Ka Mate' Haka*

When the all-blacks perform the Haka, and particularly when they're playing Australia or South Africa, there's a huge amount of national pride. And that pride is partly born of the fact that these guys are doing things because of the hard work and the effort that they put in.

However, it's not always like this. Lance Armstrong was the seven times winner of the Tour de France. He and his doctor were ahead of the game and were using many drugs, for which there was no laboratory analytical process that could detect the drugs in his urine or blood.

So Lance Armstrong got away with it for a while, but finally, it came back to catch up with him.



*Lance Armstrong claimed he never returned a positive drug test during his cycling career*

Another common question is, are the cheats ahead of the game? Well, I have to say, no, they're not.

And over the last ten years, the science that has informed the testing, the type of testing that's been done, and the international arrangement that's now available through the World Anti-Doping Agency, means that all international sporting federations are playing the game by the same rule book.



Athletes are picked up out of competition, not just in competition, so you could be in the All Blacks, in a training camp, and the anti-doping community could arrive and say you've been selected for a random urine test.

And no longer do athletes go, pass a sample and come back. They must be observed, both men and women, passing urine to be sure that the specimen has come from them.

The World Anti-Doping Agency has produced a list of banned substances, so athletes and their medical advisors know which drugs are banned.

There is, however, inadvertent use. Athletes who go to the chemist and buy supplements that leave themselves open to inadvertent doping.

But if you're a severe asthmatic, or you're an insulin-dependent diabetic, or you need to use a substance that is on the banned list, there is a means by which you can have what is known as therapeutic use exemption.

And we have an international committee, the Therapeutic Use Exemption Committee that I've had the privilege of chairing for the last 15 years, who have set diagnostic standards that are complied with throughout the world to enable athletes and their doctors to use banned substances for legitimate medical reasons.

For example, if you're an asthmatic and you need to use a banned substance to enhance your breathing back to a normal level, that is allowed. It is not giving you an advantage.

But it wasn't always like this, and now I'm going to give you a few historical snapshots.

At the St Louis Olympics in 1904, Thomas Hicks, the American marathoner, won the event, but only with the support of his coach and mentor, giving him a mixture of brandy and strychnine.

In days gone by, people used to use a combination of things, sometimes successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully.

In Rome in 1960, in a team time trial, a Danish cyclist by the name of Knud Jensen was taking a prohibited substance, an amphetamine, and died because of that. It was the first recorded death in an Olympic Games by an athlete using a banned substance.



*Knud Jensen collapsed and fractured his skull on the pavement*

Seven years later in the Tour de France, a British cyclist by the name of Tommy Simpson was riding up one of the most precipitous slopes in the whole of the Tour, Mount Ventoux, and halfway up, he suddenly collapsed and died. He too was found to have been using amphetamines. There was no legal reason for him to be taking these drugs.

If I had to list my sports wall of shamers, the first would be the former East German government and the doctors and politicians that were involved in deciding that they would allow drugs to be used across the board.

I'm going back now to the 60s and the 70s and probably the early 80s, when East Germany was the most powerful sporting nation on the planet, winning more gold medals than the United States, and the other big countries that today win so many gold medals.

We didn't know at the time that there was clandestine drug misuse sanctioned by the state. It was particularly the female athletes that were performing so well because they were given anabolic androgenic steroids.

These are the drugs that make big muscles and masculinize young female athletes.

In Montreal in 1976, young female East German swimmers won 11 of 13 gold medals that they could have won. Often it was East Germany first, second and third.

And then there was Ben Johnson, the Canadian athlete who won the 100 meters in 1988 in Seoul. He beat Carl Lewis from the USA and Linford Christie, the world record holder from Great Britain.



*Ben Johnson was the first man who beat 9.9 (Rome, 1987) and 9.8 seconds (Seoul, 1988)*

People were amazed at the performance of this man. Little did we know at the time that he and his doctor had contrived to use high-dose anabolic steroids. But they had underestimated the capacity of the laboratory in Seoul to pick up traces of these substances in his urine.

He fell foul of the system and became the first Olympic gold medalist to be sent home in shame.

And there's another young lady from Belarus, (Nadzeya Ostapchuk) who in 2012, when the London Olympics were on, also used an anabolic steroid to win the women's shot put.

Who did she steal the gold medal from in those games? Yes, Dame Valerie Adams.

And then we get to Russia. We knew at the Sochi Winter Olympics that the Russian government, who controlled the drug testing laboratory at the Olympic games, was exchanging samples.

They found out which Russian athletes had been tested, got into the system and switched samples, which they knew were positive, with negative urine samples.

So what about one of the modern controversies in international sport, this question of transgendered?

The first thing I want to say is there's a hugely significant difference between the words sex and gender. Your sex is the way you were born, either a male or a female. If you have a Y chromosome, you're a male. The absence of the Y chromosome ensures that you are a female.

Your gender, on the other hand, is a social construct. It's the way you feel, act, and dress. It's the way we in society perceive a man or a woman to act.

So the words male and female are descriptors of your sex, whereas man and woman are terms to describe your gender.

Now, this is where it becomes, to me, not half as complicated as some people tend to make it.

In sports, or in life, there are people who are transgender. In other words, they change their gender, not their sex. They move from being a man to becoming a woman.

In 1976 in Montreal, the New Zealand men's hockey team pipped the Aussies to win the gold, John Walker won the gold medal in the 1500, and East German women, who were laden with testosterone, with male hormones, won gold medals.

That had the International Olympic Committee saying, we are concerned that there are men who may be masquerading as women, so we want every female athlete at the Olympic Games to undergo what they called a sex test. And this was a physical examination.

Another thing that happened in Montreal was Bruce Jenner becoming the first athlete in the history of the sport to break 8,000 points for the decathlon. Decathletes around the world at that time could not get near 8,000. Jenner did it.

Thirty years later, Bruce Jenner said to the world, you know, I'm actually a woman in a man's skin. I'm going to become Caitlyn Jenner, which she did.



*Caitlyn Marie Jenner was born William Bruce Jenner*

Two years ago, controversy arose in New Zealand when Laurel Hubbard competed for us in Tokyo and I said this is not fair.

Laurel Hubbard, born Gavin Hubbard, New Zealand junior men's weightlifting champion, at the age of 32 decided to be transgender.

Laurel Hubbard had a significant unfair advantage over the biological female athletes because he had benefited from male puberty.

Those of you that have got grandchildren who play rugby, rugby league, or soccer even, know that up to the intermediate school level, boys and girls play in mixed teams because there's no difference generally in size, body shape, bone strength and lung and heart capacity.

From the age of 12, 13 onwards, male testosterone levels rise to a level anywhere between 20 and 40. Women's testosterone doesn't get above 2.

I'm putting my hand up for the biological female athlete who, because of political correctness and inclusivity, now has to compete against transgender females who biologically are still males and have benefited from puberty and male testosterone levels.

Then, out of the blue, you'll get people who are born physiologically with both male and female sex hormones.

Caster Semenya was a South African athlete who was intersex. She was a woman, a female, but with a Y chromosome. She was born with abdominal testes and that's where she got her advantage.

They started secreting testosterone when she reached puberty.

She was poorly treated by the athletic community. She was accused of taking anabolic steroids and that she was a man masquerading as a woman.

So I've had the privilege of seeing sport now for over 60 years from my own Olympic experience to coming back as a team doctor, medical commissioner, chef de mission in Atlanta in 1996 and seeing Danyon Loader win those two gold medals in the pool, which as a swimmer was a great thrill for me.





*Caster Semenya was assigned female at birth but had XY chromosomes*

I've shared experiences with many young fine young athletes who have represented New Zealand and I can assure you they have represented us proudly and without the use of drugs.

Thank you all very much for your kind attention and I am happy to answer any questions.

APPLAUSE

### **UPCOMING GOLD CARD TRIP**

#### **DEVONPORT MUSEUM**

*Vince Middeldorp*



*Devonport Museum 33 Vauxhall Road Devonport*

Ian Smith has organized another Gold Card trip, this one to the Devonport Museum. It is on Wednesday 26 July 2023, and is being held with Waitakere Combined Rebus.

**Journey Planner**

125 - Henderson Train Station

33 Vauxhall Road, Devonport-Narrow

WEST 1

Leave at 9:10 am

Leave 9:10 am  
125 - Henderson Train Station

WEST Britomart/N

Henderson Train Station Platform 1 9:10 am

14 stops (48 min)

Britomart Train Station Platform 4 9:58 am

DEV Devonport

Ferry Terminal - Downtown Pier 2 10:30 am

2 stops (12 min)

Ferry Terminal - Devonport Pier 1 10:42 am

Walk 3 min (213 m)

Wait 2 min

807 Vauxhall

Devonport Terminal Stop 3462 10:47 am

6 stops (2 min)

Devonport Museum Stop 3455 10:49 am



*Objects on display inside the Devonport Museum*

**Western Line Train**, 9:10 a.m. service, from Henderson to Britomart.

**Walk to the Down Town Ferry Terminal.**

**Ferry to Devonport** 10:30 am sailing.

**Bus Number 807**, 10:47 am departure, from Devonport to Museum.

**Arrival at Museum** 10:51 am.

Plenty of time has been allowed between arrival at Britomart, which is shown on the train timetable as 9:58 am, and departure on the 10:30 am ferry to Devonport. There is a Starbucks Café in Britomart and a



Hollywood Metro Café outside Britomart. If the train arrives at Britomart on time and allowing six minutes to walk to the Ferry Terminal, there is 26 minutes to have a coffee at one of these cafés.

The idea is to meet up at the back of the last carriage in the train and if you cannot use public transport, then drive to the Devonport Museum by car.

There is a suggestion in the Waitakere Combined Rebus Newsletter, to have lunch at “Devon On The Wharf.” This restaurant is in the Devonport Ferry Terminal building. The top item on the menu is Taramasalata (smoked Kahawai, caviar, dill, pickled fennel, sourdough \$26) and the bottom item, which will probably be my choice, is Straight Cut Fries (Aioli, tomato sauce \$12).



*Devon On The Wharf is described as offering a selection of food that suits all kinds of tastes*

We will have to let Ian Smith know at our meeting on Friday 14 July, how many are going to “Devon On The Wharf” for lunch. Waitakere Combined Rebus is making a booking and needs a headcount.

## **MIDWINTER LUNCH**

### **PHOTO ON PAGE 1**

***Vince Middeldorp***

Swanson Memorial RSA Club is the largest in West Auckland. Having been there before for a Christmas lunch, going back was a return to a familiar and much liked environment. Everyone paid the cashier \$25 at the entrance when they walked in the door. The cashier was on the ball and tracked down two of our members who had inadvertently walked by without realizing they needed to pay on arrival.

Swanson RSA serves a buffet meal with a selection of fresh salads, carvery meats, vegetable dishes, seafood and sides. That means you load on your plate what you want from the selection on offer and decide how many slices of ham, or whatever you like best, go on the plate.

A few of our members came away from the counter with a bowl of soup and then returned for the main meal. Most of us just had a main meal, dessert, and a coffee before going home. Nobody at our table bought any drinks from the bar.

The only negative thing you can say about Swanson RSA is that the seating is cramped. Fortunately, the restaurant was not full, and that made scrambling in and out of an awkward place at the table to get some dessert or coffee a lot easier.



**COFFEE MORNING**  
**ESQUIRES HENDERSON**  
*Vince Middeldorp*



*Trevor and Fay leaving to go to Montel Ave Medical Centre for Trevor's appointment*

We had a coffee morning at Esquires Café on Wednesday 28 July. Once again, there were more members from Waitakere Combined Rebus present than from West Auckland Men's Rebus.

The person seated next to me was called Lois, and she worked at McIntosh Dental in Lincoln Road for 30 years before retirement. After hearing that, the people at my end of the table shared stories about dentists.

Because I had read in the archives that Ian Smith had worked with computers in the banking system, I asked him about his time doing that work. The computers being used were the IBM System/360 mainframes which were around in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Much of the work was done overnight. Ian was not despondent when the company he worked for closed down. He did not like working night shifts. He received a redundancy cheque and later a large superannuation payout.

Trevor Pollard was at the coffee morning and its timing worked out well for a doctor's appointment he had later in the morning. His doctor's surgery is only a short distance away from Esquires Café. The appointment was to take out some stitches. Trevor said he had been in so much pain during the night he had taken two tramadol tablets to get some sleep.

**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 August meeting date is Friday 11 August 2023*