



West Auckland Men's Rebus Club Newsletter

December 2023

Next meeting: 10:00 am Friday 8th December, Friendship Hall, 3063 Great North Rd, New Lynn

COMMITTEE

President	Bill Mutch	president@rebuswestauckland.nz	817 4721
Vice-President	Noel Rose	noelrose1976@gmail.com	828 1305
Immediate Past President	Bill Fairs	bill.fairs@gmail.com	627 8297
Secretary	Vince Middeldorp	secretary@rebuswestauckland.nz	828 5250
Treasurer	Charles Nicholls	treasurer@rebuswestauckland.nz	6293816
Welfare Officer	Vacant		
Outings	Ian Smith	ismith435@gmail.com	027 4549343
Newsletter	Vince Middeldorp	editor@rebuswestauckland.nz	828 5250
Speakers	Noel Rose	noelrose1976@gmail.com	828 1305
Hospitality	Trevor Pollard		817 8822
	Alan Babich	ajbabich@xtra.co.nz	833 6169
Membership	Vacant		
Attendance	Stephen David	sj david55@gmail.com	021641717
Webmaster	Vince Middeldorp	vince@rebuswestauckland.nz	828 5250
Photographer	John Mihaljevic	john@rebuswestauckland.nz	098361504



Members waiting for Bill Mutch to call the November meeting to order

MEETING REPORT

November 2023

Transcribed by Whisper AI

Written by ChatGPT

Chairperson: Bill Mutch

Attendance:

Neil Castle, John Corban, Peter Cox, Stephen David, Vince Dennehy, Mensto De Roos, Bill Fairs, Maurice Forbes, Andrew Geddes, John McKeown, Vince Middeldorp, John Mihaljevic, Bill Mutch, Andrew Narayan, Charles Nicholls, Lyndsay Parris, Trevor Pollard, Noel Rose, Ian Smith, Ken Webster, Allan Williamson, Garrick Yearsley

1. Welcome and Introduction:

The meeting was called to order by Bill Mutch. A warm welcome was extended to all attendees.

2. Apologies and Visitors:

Apologies were recorded for Bobby Bland.

No visitors were present.

3. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings:

Paul Buchanan, the speaker at the previous meeting, has expressed thanks for emails sent by club members.

4. Correspondence:

A letter from the council acknowledging a grant for a lapel microphone.

Positive feedback from Paul Buchanan, on the report of his talk in the newsletter.

Mention of the Chronicles received with a highlight on Garth Dutton becoming the next President of Rebus.

5. Treasurer's Report:

Financial status and accounts overview presented by Charles Nicholls.

Mention of successful grant for lapel microphone and potential considerations for increasing subs next year.

6. Upcoming Events and Activities:

Zeki's Cafe visit on Friday November 17th.

Christmas function at McHugh's on December 13th.

Announcement of a concert at the Chapel of the Oaks on December 17th.

7. Welfare Report:

Recognition of Andrew Geddes recovery from a mild stroke.

Mention of a member, Ray Hancock, in the care part of the Murray Halberg retirement village.

8. Club Speaker Suggestions:

Members encouraged to suggest potential speakers for future meetings.

9. Discussion on Club's Future:

Discussion on the process of winding up the New Lynn Probus Club and the importance of member attendance at the special general meeting on December 18th.

10. General Business:

No general business discussed.

11. Next Meeting Date:

The next meeting is scheduled for December 8th.

Meeting Adjournment: 10:35 am.

PRESIDENT'S PRATTLE
President's Report December 2023
Bill Mutch



Bill Mutch reaches for his gavel at the November meeting

Friday 8 December marks the last meeting of the year. This year seems to have just flown by. Be nice seeing you all at our Christmas lunch, on 13 December and a great venue right on the beach. Janet and I are going by car and aim to get there by 11.45 am.

Welfare report: It was good to see Andrew Geddes at our last meeting after time in the hospital with a mild stroke.

On a more recent event, Trevor's wife Fay will be in hospital for a few weeks after she broke her ankle at home.

Remember that Trevor will need help in the kitchen.

Our last guest speaker was easy to hear as she used our new microphone. Many of us have a hearing loss problem, so the money was well spent buying this bit of equipment.

I missed the big railway book sale due to me spending 2 days in the hospital sorting out medicine, but the book sale was very successful.

Take the grand kids out to GVR. Check the [website](#). The Christmas lights steam train will be wonderful.

Cheers
Bill Mutch

Claudia's Corner

The inventor of the throat lozenge has died.
There will be no coffin at the funeral.

How do you catch a Squirrel?
Climb a tree and act like a nut.

Why did they have to bury George
Washington standing up?
Because he could never lie.

Can a Kangaroo jump higher than a house?
Of course, as a house can't jump.

What did the mountain climber name his son?
Cliff.



GUEST SPEAKER

NINA KITSON

Transcribed by Whisper AI

Written by ChatGPT

Unveiling the Undercover: A Former Policewoman's Journey into the Shadows



Nina Kitson about to present her talk on NZ's first female undercover officer

Good morning everybody,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to come and talk to you today. Allow me to provide a bit of background on my journey. I joined the police force in 1979 with no grand aspirations but a genuine enjoyment of connecting with people. This passion steered me through my initial two years as a cop, where I relished meeting and talking to individuals.

My professional trajectory took an unexpected turn when I transitioned into communications, responsible for coordinating police operations involving vehicles and logistics. Little did I know that a seemingly routine day at work, would lead me into the intriguing world of undercover operations.

One day, a sergeant from the drug squad approached me with a challenging assignment. They had recently made a major arrest at Auckland University, a development I was unaware of at the time. This arrest marked the culmination of a series of operations targeting individuals connected to drug trafficking, including arrests originating from China and the infamous Mr. Asia cases.

The focus of this particular assignment was a young woman named May Ling Sie, arrested along with two others. My task was unconventional—to keep her company in Ponsonby Road while she awaited a crucial phone call from her supplier. This call, we believed, would lead us to a person of significant interest, a target we had been pursuing for about ten years.

Despite the initial plan to keep May Ling undercover for a short duration, circumstances led to an unexpected extension. As days passed without the anticipated phone call, the decision was made to incarcerate her. I returned to my regular duties in communications, thinking that was the end of the story.

However, fate had other plans. A week later, the same police officer approached me again, proposing a new undercover setup involving May Ling. This time, they wanted to replace her with someone else, and for reasons unknown to me at the time, I became the chosen candidate.

Overnight, I transformed into a persona I had never imagined—posing as a prostitute and a drug-taking felon with numerous sugar daddies. This random and unexpected operation was centered around obtaining that elusive phone call. My crash course involved learning the jargon, understanding the cost of heroin, and

crafting a complete alibi for the flat May Ling had been in—a flat haunted by the tragic overdose deaths of its occupants.

There was a small incident I remember well. When walking over Grafton Bridge, I had this persistent man offering what seemed to be a fair price for services I hadn't even advertised.

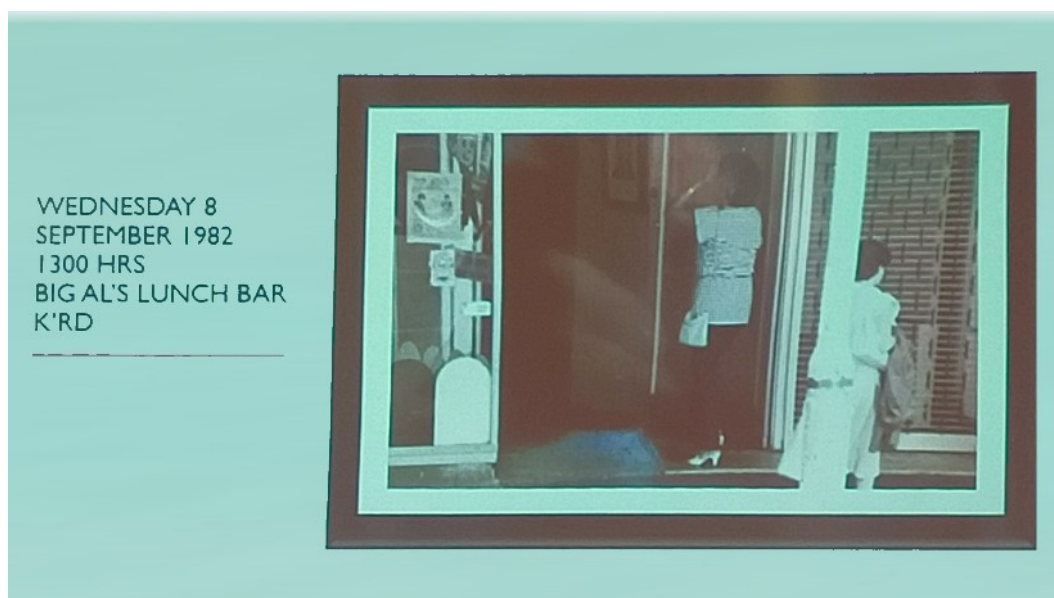
Desperate to shake off the stranger, I received guidance through a discreet earpiece from my operator. The advice: seek refuge in Milne's (Milne and Choyce Department Store). Following this instruction, I walked along Karangahape Road, entered Milne's, and breathed a sigh of relief as my follower failed to follow suit. To this day, the fate of that persistent stranger remains unknown, but one can only hope he learned a lesson about approaching strangers walking across Grafton Bridge.

The turning point came when Robert finally initiated contact. Operation Rock was officially launched in 1982, named after the form in which the imported heroin, Robert's trade, presented itself – white rock. A fittingly straightforward yet effective codename for the operation.

May Ling Sie, the woman I mentioned earlier, played a significant role in setting the stage for Operation Rock. Alongside Meon Khim Yoe, alias Robert, and there was also Morgan Lee, who unwittingly faced severe consequences after a dinner meeting.

My encounters with Robert were enigmatic, as navigating the undercover world meant I was the constant deceiver, weaving intricate lies while attempting to uncover the truth. Meetings with Robert were brief, often limited to a few words before he vanished, leaving me in a constant state of uncertainty.

To maintain my cover, the department decided to tell Robert that I lived in Wellington, a decision that would complicate matters, as he later insisted on meetings in the capital. Nevertheless, my cover held, and we successfully arranged a meeting at Big Al's lunch bar.



Nina going to the meeting with Robert at Big Al's Lunch Bar

The operation progressed as Robert expressed his willingness to meet and discuss supplying me with a substantial amount of heroin valued at approximately \$3 million in the market. This significant breakthrough allowed us to uncover other potential distributors in the network.

As Robert's trust in me grew, so did our interactions, leading to a pivotal moment when he divulged his intentions to supply a different drug – blue. To ensure the success of the operation, the police discreetly bugged Robert's room at the Dolphin guest house, gaining valuable insights into his discussions and affirming his trust in me.

The next phase involved clandestine meetings at the racecourse, where we strategically laundered money through betting on horse races. While the process was effective, it was far from straightforward. Delays in my arrival, due to the meticulous precautions taken by law enforcement, irked Robert, prompting him to provide me with a car to expedite our meetings.

Despite the operation initially intended to last a week, it had now extended into its second month, highlighting the complexity and challenges of infiltrating and dismantling a drug trafficking network.

As the operation unfolded, we found ourselves meeting at the racecourse, a location chosen for its proximity and inconspicuous setting. A note was sent, requesting that we treat the meeting like a day at the races – a clever cover that blended seamlessly with the activities at hand.

Wearing a wire during these encounters was no glamorous affair; instead of the sleek, discreet wires of today, I had to contend with a bulky device resembling a dinner plate strapped around my stomach. This unattractive contraption required me to don light, fluffy clothing to prevent sound interference – a challenging combination in the freezing winter temperatures.

In an ironic twist, Robert, concerned for my well-being, insisted I wear his jacket during these encounters. Little did we know that this seemingly innocent act would later create a significant stir in court, as an hour of radio contact, when I wore his jacket, mysteriously went missing from the tapes, becoming a point of contention during legal proceedings.

Navigating the intricacies of our meetings at the racecourse involved meticulous planning. Robert would occasionally send me a note indicating our rendezvous, prompting me to fly down to Wellington, secure a rental car, check into a hotel, and await his arrival. However, his penchant for last-minute cancellations added a layer of complexity to the operation, leaving us to grapple with the logistics of abrupt changes.

Robert's elusive nature added further challenges. He would vanish without a trace, prompting intensive searches that often yielded no results. The arduous nature of the operation became apparent as we encountered setbacks, including instances where all preparations were made, and Robert would send a last-minute message, rendering our efforts futile.

Paranoia permeated Robert's mindset, recognizing the consequences of getting caught in his illicit activities. Despite his caution, he harboured a genuine liking for me, offering a layer of protection and minimizing high-risk situations. His keen awareness allowed him to identify potential threats, pointing out individuals he deemed suspicious during our outings.

One memorable incident involved the department suggesting I carry a conspicuously large police radio in my handbag – a decision that could have jeopardized the entire operation. Quick thinking and a calculated move allowed me to dispose of the radio discreetly, avoiding a potential disaster during an unexpected inspection of my handbag by Robert.

Midway through the operation, the risks escalated to a point where authorities contemplated pulling the plug on the entire endeavour. Originally envisioned as a simple task of securing one crucial phone call, the operation had evolved into a complex, high-stakes venture, lasting three and a half months. With no formal training and the momentum gaining an unsettling speed, I found myself navigating uncharted territory.

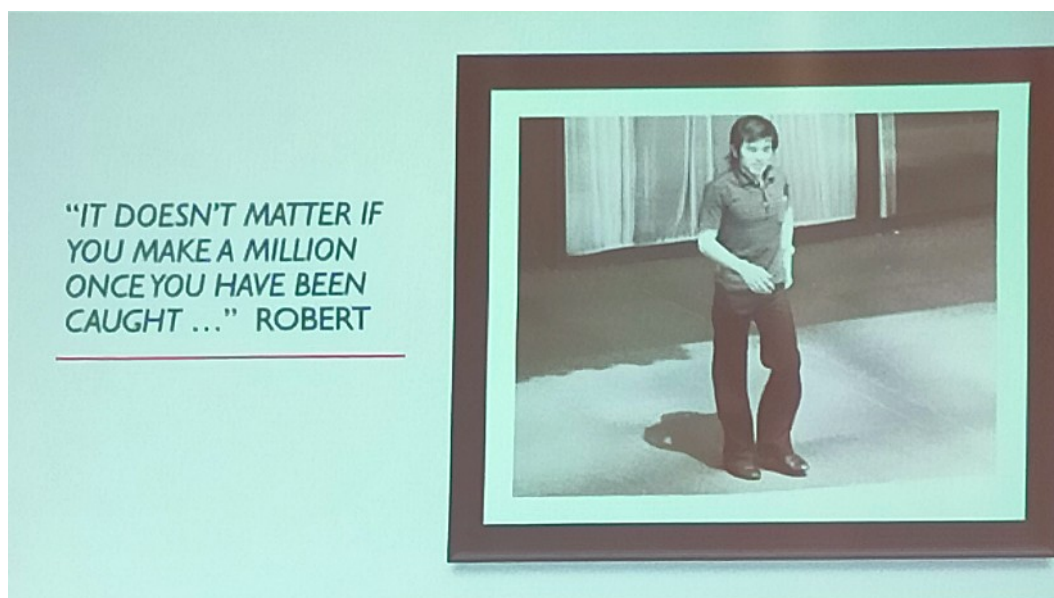
Robert continued making promises of substantial financial gains and emphasizing the need for patience. Despite the growing challenges and the looming threat of termination, the operation pressed on, with the promise of unravelling the intricate network behind Robert's drug trafficking activities.

Robert's elusive behaviour continued, prompting a series of encounters that tested the limits of undercover work. On September 10th, a critical day in the operation, Robert instructed me to return to Wellington while he handled matters, emphasizing the need for caution to avoid being ripped off. Little did we know that this day would mark a significant close call.

Avondale Racecourse, a familiar locale for me as a lifelong Auckland resident, became the setting for a nerve-wracking encounter. As I mingled with Robert, a police officer I knew well approached us. The unforeseen twist unfolded because a staff list error had led to Mike French being on duty that day. Faced with potential exposure, I urgently signalled my operator, who was about 12 feet away. He created a ruckus which Mike French had to deal with and averted a crisis.

This incident highlighted the inherent risks of undercover work in one's home town, where the delicate balance between maintaining cover and avoiding familiar faces hung in the balance. The operation teetered on the edge of jeopardy, emphasizing the challenges of maintaining secrecy amidst unforeseen circumstances.

As the operation persisted, we continued our exchange of letters to coordinate meetings and convey crucial information. Robert's sporadic disappearances added complexity, requiring strategic efforts to track him down and ensure the continuity of the operation.



Robert recognised the consequences of getting caught in his illicit activities

The operation took an intriguing turn on October 15th when Robert presented me with an unexpected gift – a fur coat. Intending to address my apparent discomfort in the chilly weather, Robert's gesture added a layer of humour to our interactions. Despite my inability to wear the fur coat due to a fictitious fur allergy, the incident showcased the peculiar dynamics of the undercover world.

Conversations with Robert revealed glimpses of his guarded nature and concerns about law enforcement scrutiny. He expressed caution, identifying potential informants and maintaining a vigilant stance to safeguard his operations. The intricate dance between trust and suspicion became a recurring theme, emphasizing the complexities of infiltrating criminal networks.

As the calendar turned to November, the operation faced new challenges. Robert's intermittent communication and unexplained absences led to moments of frustration for the department. The delicate balance of trust and reliability began to waver, introducing uncertainties into an operation that had already surpassed its initial expectations.

The operation's timeline stretched into December, bringing with it heightened tension and a sense of urgency. Robert's inconsistent behaviour prompted the department to reassess the risks and benefits of continuing the operation. The prospect of pulling the plug loomed, fuelled by concerns that the operation had grown beyond its intended scope.

Amidst the uncertainty, December 20th marked a pivotal moment when the decision was made to catch up with Robert directly. An orchestrated encounter allowed me to coincidentally cross paths with him, providing an opportunity to address the growing misalignment in our communication.

Robert's explanation about a failed shipment was an unwelcome turn of events, causing frustration and disappointment on my part. The dynamic shifted as Robert introduced me to someone new – Morgan Lee, a figure who would play a significant role in the evolving narrative of Operation Rock.

As the operation approached Christmas, the stakes rose higher, and the department faced mounting pressure to make critical decisions. The prospect of a trip to Sydney to pick up heroin marked an unexpected escalation, challenging the original parameters of the operation. Robert's protective nature clashed with the department's growing concerns, setting the stage for a dramatic showdown.

As the operation unfolded, the stakes were raised to an unprecedented level. Robert's request for me to transport heroin from Sydney back into New Zealand, strapped against my body, presented an untenable scenario. His advice on evading detection, emphasizing the need for a jacket and caution around dogs,

painted a grim picture of the perilous journey that awaited me. However, this treacherous plan never came to fruition.

In a surprising turn of events, Robert, displaying an unexpected protective instinct, reconsidered the entire Sydney operation. He deemed it too risky for my safety and well-being, expressing genuine concern about the potential consequences. His plea resonated with a shared sentiment – the fear of incarceration and the desire for mutual success.

The final meeting with Robert marked a turning point in Operation Rock. The decision was made to pull the plug on the entire operation, citing the inability to coordinate customs to allow Robert and me to leave the country while safeguarding my undercover role. Little did I know that night marked the conclusion of my interactions with Robert, and our next encounter would be under vastly different circumstances.

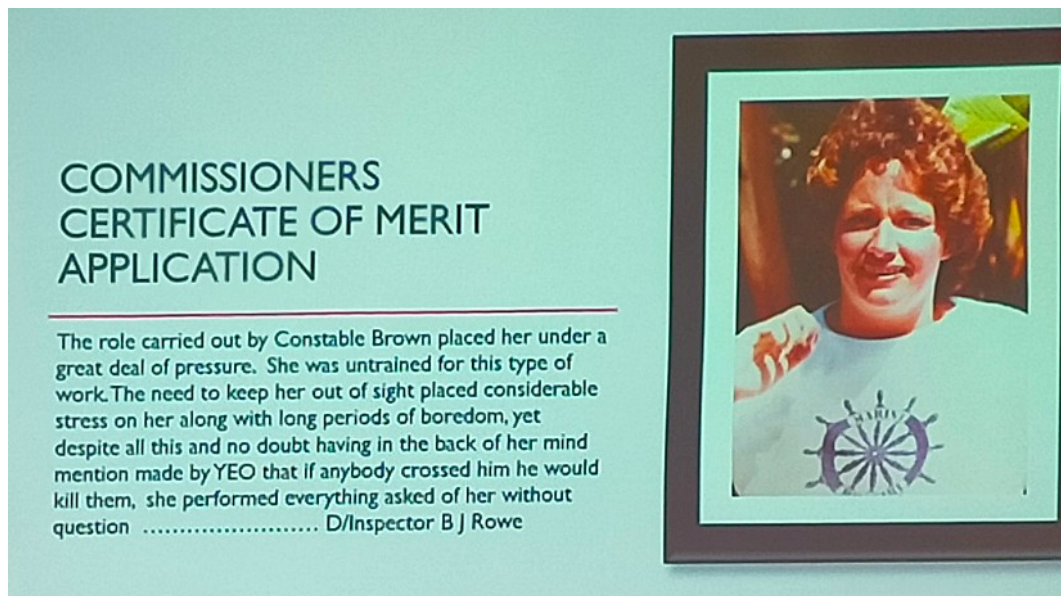
The narrative unfolded in the courtroom, where I found myself in the witness box, a stark contrast to my earlier undercover endeavours. Having never given evidence in court during my two years in the police force, this was an entirely new terrain. The defence, led by formidable lawyers Eb Leary and Peter Williams, subjected me to a rigorous cross-examination that spanned four challenging days.

Leary and Williams scrutinized the operation’s lack of structure, highlighting its unconventional nature. Yet, their critique did not overshadow the key objective – to establish the guilt of the accused individuals. The courtroom drama played out with intense scrutiny, with every word exchanged during the operation meticulously transcribed and analysed.

Despite the relentless questioning, I persevered through the testimony, bolstered by the belief that truth would prevail. The courtroom drama unfolded against a backdrop of seventy-nine folders of evidence, capturing every nuance of the intricate undercover operation.

The culmination of the trial resulted in a significant outcome – twelve years of imprisonment for each of the accused individuals. While Robert received a sentence that allowed him to undergo much needed dental work and pursue education behind bars, the impact of Operation Rock reverberated through the criminal hierarchy.

Reflecting on this tumultuous journey, I received a Commissioner’s Medal for the remarkable work undertaken during Operation Rock. The commendation acknowledged the immense pressure, uncharted territory, and commitment to the role, underscoring the resilience displayed throughout this unconventional undercover assignment.



Commissioner’s Certificate of merit application for Nina’s work in the undercover assignment

A FUN DAY OUT AT RYDERS
WITH HENDERSON FALLS FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Written by: Copilot AI in Microsoft Edge



Ryders is up and running again after suffering severe flood damage from cyclone Gabrielle

On Wednesday, November 8, 2023, we had a wonderful outing with the Henderson Falls Friendship Club. We joined them for a roast meal and a movie at Ryders, which is a cosy and charming venue on Riversdale Road.

In total there were 37 people, with 10 members from our West Auckland Rebus Club and 27 members from the Henderson Falls Friendship Club.

We were delighted to meet Lorraine Clark, who is the President of the Henderson Falls Friendship Club. She ended up sitting across the table from Trevor and Fay Pollard.

After the meal, we moved to the cinema room, where we watched the movie “The Castle”. This is a classic Australian comedy film that tells the story of a working-class family who fight to keep their home from being acquired by the government for an airport expansion.

Some of us had seen the movie before, but we still enjoyed watching it for a second time.

The day went so well that Lorraine Clark suggested we should work together again if the opportunity presented itself.

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION
ZEKI’S MEDITERRANEAN BAKEHOUSE CAFE

Written by: Copilot AI in Microsoft Edge

On Friday, November 24, 2023, we had our monthly coffee morning at Zeki’s Mediterranean Bakehouse Cafe in Pioneer Street, Henderson. It was a lovely occasion to enjoy some delicious coffee and pastries, and chat about various topics.

We were pleasantly surprised by the turnout, as more people than expected showed up for the event. The staff at Zeki’s pulled an additional table across the floor, to create one large table that everyone could sit around. We appreciated their hospitality and service.

Zeki’s serves authentic Turkish coffee, but most of us opted for regular coffees such as flat whites.

Observant eyes caught a member hesitating when told the price of some very small nibbles on the counter.

One of the topics of conversation was the unfortunate situation of the Probus Club of New Lynn BNZ bank account, which has been deliberately drained of all the money that was in it.

The car park near Zeki's has a 60 minutes maximum time limit for free parking. Those of us who knew about the touch screen device on the counter which extended the time limit to 3 hours, made use of it.



We had a wonderful time at Zeki's and thank all those who came along

DON'T FORGET THE CHRISTMAS LUNCH

AT MCHUGHS OF CHELTENHAM

Written by: Copilot AI in Microsoft Edge



Waitakere Rebus and West Auckland Rebus members at McHughs of Cheltenham in June 2022

We are excited to remind **those who have booked in and paid Ian Smith** for the Christmas Lunch, that it is coming up soon. The lunch is on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, and it will start at 12:00 pm.

Before going to McHughs, most of us will visit the Devonport Museum at 33 Vauxhall Road, Devonport. The museum is a treasure trove of local history, with exhibits and artefacts that showcase the heritage and culture of Devonport and its surroundings. The museum is open from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Admission is free (but a gold coin donation is appreciated).

Most of us will be travelling on the bus that has been booked for this occasion. The bus will leave St John Hall in Edmonton Road at 9:30 am, and it will take us to the museum and then to McHughs. The bus will return to St John Hall at around 3:00 pm.

Some of our members, such as Bill Mutch and Charles Nicholls, are using their own cars to get to McHughs.

We hope those going are all looking forward to this wonderful event. It will be a great opportunity to enjoy some good food, good company, and good fun.

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

AT THE CHAPEL OF FAITH IN THE OAKS

Written by: Copilot AI in Microsoft Edge



The beautifully restored Chapel of Faith in the Oaks

Friends of Waikumete are delighted to invite us to a special event, Carols by Candlelight, at the Chapel of Faith in the Oaks. This magical evening will take place on Sunday, December 17th, from 7pm to 8pm.

This year, they are privileged to have Simond Grant as Master of Ceremonies. Simond is known for his charismatic presence and engaging style, and we are sure he will make the evening even more memorable.

Friends of Waikumete are also excited to announce that the Glen Eden Methodist Sunday School, the Sweet Peas String Trio, and the talented duo Marina and Rebecca Scott will be gracing those attending with their beautiful voices.

Adding to the musical delight, Peter Palmer will be playing on the keyboard, providing a melodious accompaniment to the singers. Peter's skillful playing is sure to add a special touch to the evening.

So, come and join Friends of Waikumete for an evening of festive cheer and beautiful music. Let's gather together to celebrate the holiday season in the serene setting of the Chapel of Faith in the Oaks.

Friends of Waikumete look forward to seeing you there!

SPEAKER FOR DECEMBER

LISA TRUTTMAN

Written by: Microsoft Bing



Avondale-Waterview Historical Society president Lisa Truttman

We are delighted to announce that our speaker for the meeting on Friday 8 December is Lisa Truttman, a local historian and author of several books on Auckland's history. Lisa will be sharing with us the story of the F & W Fowler Foundry explosion, a dramatic event that rocked Avondale and the surrounding suburbs in 1966.

The F & W Fowler Foundry was a metal casting and engineering company that operated on Rosebank Road from 1929 to 1974. It produced a variety of products, such as pipes, valves, fittings, pumps, and machinery parts. On the night of 23 September 1966, a massive explosion occurred at the foundry, caused by a faulty valve that allowed molten metal to come into contact with water. The resulting steam pressure blew apart the furnace and the building, creating a fireball that lit up the sky and a shockwave that shattered windows and damaged properties for hundreds of metres around.

The explosion was so loud that it was heard throughout most of Auckland, and even as far away as Waiuku. It was fortunate that no one was killed in the blast, as there were only a few workers on site at the time. However, many people were injured by flying debris and glass, and some suffered from shock and trauma. The fire brigade arrived quickly and managed to contain the blaze, but the damage was extensive and the foundry never fully recovered.

Lisa will tell us more about the causes and consequences of the explosion, as well as the personal stories of some of the people who witnessed and survived it. She will also show us some rare photos and documents that illustrate the scale and impact of the disaster. This is a fascinating and important chapter in Avondale's history, and we hope you will join us to learn more about it.

SUPPORTERS



The January meeting date is Friday 12th January 2023

Our meetings are at 10:00 am, **2nd Friday of the month**, New Lynn Friendship Hall, 3063 Great North Rd.