West Auckland Men's Rebus Club

Newsletter

April 2024

Next meeting: 10:00 am Friday 12th April, Friendship Hall, 3063 Great North Road, 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
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
Attendance	Stephen David	sjdavid55@gmail.com	021641717
Webmaster	Vince Middeldorp	vince@rebuswestauckland.nz	828 5250
Photographer	John Mihaljevic	john@rebuswestauckland.nz	098361504

Members out in Mahurangi Harbour enjoying the sunshine and sights from the deck of the Jane Gifford

MEETING REPORT

March 2024

Chairperson: Bill Mutch

Attendance: 21 members, 1 honorary member, plus 2 visitors

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

1. Welcome and Introduction:

The meeting was opened with a warm welcome to all attendees. Honorary member Justin Griffith and visitors, Robert King, and David (surname not recorded), were welcomed.

2. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Charles Nichols and Alan Verry, who is currently in the USA.

3. Remembrance of Peter Cox:

A minute of silence was observed in memory of Peter Cox, a valued member who is sadly missed. Appreciation was expressed for Vince's write-up about Peter Cox in the newsletter.

4. Treasurer's Report:

The treasurer's report was read out, detailing the following:

- Income for the year : $510 (from member subscriptions), $120 (donations), and $49.70 (tea money). Total income: $679.
- Expenditure for the year: $235.15. Income over expenditure: $444.55.
- Current funds: $1,144.64 in the cash box and bank; and $692.41 in the savings account.

Trevor Pollard chats with a visitor at the March 2024 monthly meeting

5. Trips and Coffee Mornings:

Ian Smith said there was:

- A trip to Warkworth scheduled for next week. Attendees are reminded to be on time for the bus from St John's Hall.
- A coffee morning planned for the 22nd of March at Kreem Cafe in Universal Drive.

6. Next Month's Speaker:

The speaker for next month is Charles Nichols. He will be talking about The Alhambra in Spain.

7. General Business:

No general business was discussed.

8. Next Meeting:

The next Friday meeting will be held on the 12th of April.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT
AGM 2024

Chairperson: Bill Mutch

Minutes from the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM):

1. Attendance and Apologies:

The attendance and apologies are the same as those recorded for the monthly meeting that was just completed.

2. Minutes of the Previous AGM:

The minutes for the AGM held on the 10th of March, 2023, have been signed by Bill Fairs, who chaired the meeting last year. They were accepted as being true and correct.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

No matters were raised from the minutes of the last AGM.

4. President's Report:

- The President reported that the previous year was successful for the club, with a diverse range of speakers and effective contributions from all members in their respective roles.
- The club made a significant purchase of a wireless lapel microphone, which has proven to be a success.
- Improvements were made to the club's Kiwi Bank account, with three members now registered on the account, no bank fees, and an interest rate of 4.5% on the savings account.

5. Election of Officers:

All current officers were retained in their positions for the coming year. The motion was moved by Trevor Pollard and seconded by Andrew Geddes.

6. Financial Report:

- The club started with $2,027.37 in the bank and ended with $1,392.15, showing a loss of $635.22, primarily due to the purchase of the microphone ($1,429.58 less $1,000 grant = $429.58).
- The club increased the subscription from $25 to $30, which, along with the interest from the Kiwi Bank deposit, will help reduce the loss.
- The club aims to break even and has reserves corresponding to one year's expenditure.

7. Trips Report:

The trips for the year were reported to have been successful.

8. Bylaws:

The club decided to continue running with the constitution and not use the bylaws because of their onerous requirements.

9. General Business:

No general business was discussed.

10. Meeting Closure:

The meeting was closed, and attendees were invited for morning tea.

PRESIDENT'S PRATTLE

President's Report April 2024

Bill Mutch

As we bid farewell to the summer, we reflect on the season that was filled with warm days and nights. Despite some personal health challenges, including a bout of Bell's Palsy, I am grateful for the resilience and support that has seen us through.

Our last meeting featured an engaging guest speaker. While the presentation was insightful, there was a tendency for the speaker to focus on the screen.

Looking ahead, I anticipate a comprehensive report in the newsletter on our trip on the Jane Gifford. This trip holds a personal significance for me as my father and uncle worked on her, and I had the privilege of many rides as a young man. I look at a painting of Jane Gifford every day, and I will endeavour to bring it to our next meeting.

I am pleased to share that the morning tea at Kreem Café on the 22nd of March received positive feedback from our members. Such gatherings strengthen our community and I look forward to more of these in the future.

As we move forward, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone for their continued commitment and contributions to our club. I look forward to seeing you all at our next meeting.

Best Regards,
Bill Mutch

Claudia's Corner

Why did the Lion eat the tightrope walker?
He wanted a well-balanced meal!

Why did the cookie go to the doctor?
Because he felt crummy.

Do you want to hear a pizza joke?
Never mind it's pretty cheesy.

What do you call an Alligator in a vest?
An Investigator.

A pushy Salesman went house to house selling the latest electric vacuum cleaners. At the first house he knocked on he said to the housewife watch this and he tipped dried sheep droppings all over the lounge floor and said if this cleaner won't pick this up I will eat them.
She said would you like some sauce to help you eat them because we have no power!!!

Little White Gate

Bill Mutch

I have been asked before but I will redo it. This is the reading I do when someone passes.

There's a little white gate at the end of the lane
The end of the lane called life.
A little White Gate we all must pass through
When we come to the end of Earth's strife.

A little White Gate at the end of the Lane.
Not a barrier grim and tall.
Just a little White Gate opens for us then
without any trouble at all.

For Death is the name of the little white gate
And it's not at the end of the lane.
But we cast our cloak off, as we pass it by
Then life, without tears is our gain.

NET ZERO:
THE DREAM & THE REALITY

GUEST SPEAKER BRYAN LEYLAND

Whisper AI & ChatGPT AI

Andrew Geddes thanks Bryan Leyland for his talk on the dreams and realities of net zero

Let's talk about the dream and the reality of achieving net zero. In the dream, windmills spin gracefully, powering our lives with endless energy. In reality, we find ourselves in the dark, surrounded by candlelight, when the wind falters. The dream insists that by 2050, we must achieve net zero, electrify transport, heat our homes with electricity, and significantly increase wind and solar power.

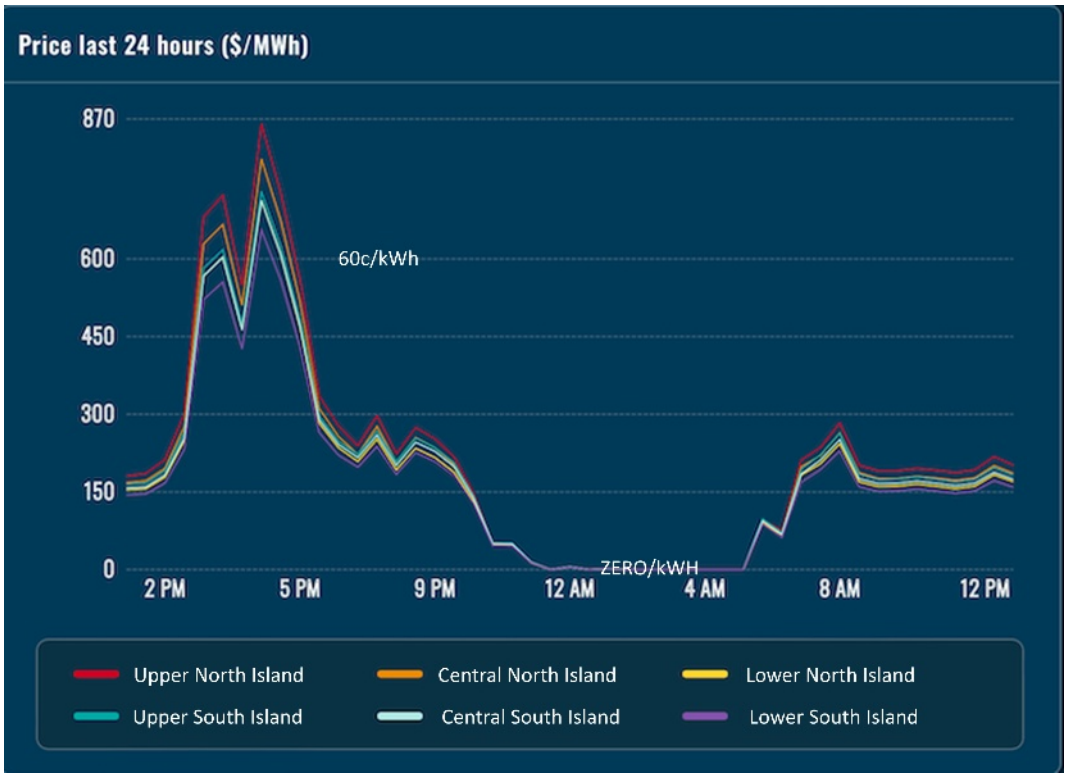
We would need to increase our generating capacity from 9,000 MW to a staggering 26,000 MW. Why? Because wind and solar power are intermittent, requiring backup when the elements don't cooperate. This means investing in short and long-term energy storage, which can supply 4,000 MW when required. Can we do it? Can we afford it? The answer to both questions is no.

One crucial realization often overlooked is that New Zealand's actions cannot impact the global climate. Our efforts to stop burning coal and gas won't alter the climate. Coal and gas-fired power plants exist worldwide, and shutting them down globally is impossible. Wind and solar power currently contribute only a fraction of the world's energy supply, making the transition away from fossil fuels by 2050 unattainable.

In New Zealand, most electricity (65%) comes from hydro, with geothermal making the next largest contribution (18%). However, the elimination of coal (4%) and gas (12%) presents a significant challenge. New Zealand also has to contend with the unpredictability of hydro output during dry years. The shortage of power from hydro generation in dry years poses a risk to power supply reliability.

Previously, power planners focused on one primary objective: ensuring lights stayed on during dry years. However, with our current electricity market, concerns about capacity shortages loom large. Transpower has warned of potential blackouts during peak demand periods if significant wind power isn't available. How did we get into this dire situation?

Allow me to paint a picture of a winter's night, specifically on July 3, 2023. Hydro is running at a brisk pace, churning out 4222 MW of power. Wind is cooperating nicely, contributing 684 MW. However, our battery reserves sit idle at 0 MW, despite having 35 MW capacity. What's even more perplexing is the fluctuating price of electricity. One moment, it's a steep 60 cents per kilowatt-hour on the spot market because of calm winds, only to plummet overnight to almost nothing. Investing in power stations requires sound profitability forecasts and in our volatile market, that is impossible.



Graph showing the market spot price for electricity changing during the course of a day

Let's talk about the dream touted by the Commerce Commission, which disregarded a sensible report from the Interim Committee on Climate Change. The latter, with engineering insights, suggested that achieving net-zero power generation is unfeasible without retaining about 5% of fossil fuels for dry years. Dismissing this advice, the Government formed the Climate Commission, and it lacked substantial engineering expertise. Their vision, extended to 2050, projects 12,000 MW of wind and solar power, with no increases in hydro or geothermal.

The pursuit of net zero is a path that cripples our economy, leading to expensive and unreliable electricity. Imagine running a dairy factory under the constant threat of power cuts. Consider the implications for steel mills or aluminium smelters during extended blackouts. The economic repercussions would be severe, affecting agricultural income and driving up processing costs.

Regardless of one's stance on man-made global warming, diverting vast sums of money towards net zero initiatives yields little reward. Climate change has always been a part of Earth's history, and adapting to its fluctuations as they occur is a more pragmatic approach. Our ancestors thrived amidst climate variations, building great structures during warmer periods and weathering challenges during colder ones.

Let's also consider the indispensable role of oil in our lives. Beyond transportation, oil contributes to medicine, cosmetics, plastics, rubber, soaps, and asphalt. Can we truly envision a world without these essentials? Plastics, often vilified, are an integral part of modern life, requiring management rather than outright eradication.

I recently had the privilege of hearing from Professor Kelly, a distinguished New Zealand engineer and a friend of mine. With credentials from Cambridge University and membership in the Royal Society of Engineering, his insights into the challenges of achieving net zero by 2050 were eye-opening.

According to Professor Kelly's meticulous analysis, the cost of achieving net zero by 2050 would amount to a staggering $550 billion. And for what? For no discernible change in the climate, now or in the foreseeable future.

Achieving net zero would require a doubling of the current number of electrical engineers—a daunting task considering our current shortage of engineers across all disciplines. New Zealand would need to procure

10% of the global annual production of crucial materials like lithium, cobalt, and neodymium. The implications of such a demand raise questions about the feasibility of such a massive endeavour.

If 46% of oil goes into making gasoline, what makes up the other 54%?

But what exactly does net zero entail? It means that by 2050, the carbon dioxide emissions from power generation would be offset by absorption through carbon forests and technical solutions such as carbon capture. However, achieving this balance seems increasingly impractical given the myriad challenges and limitations we face.

Take offshore wind power, for instance. The exorbitant costs, operational challenges, and environmental impact make it an unviable option for sustainable energy generation. Even if we were to pursue it, the logistical hurdles and astronomical expenses would outweigh any potential benefits.

The government's eagerness to electrify transport and heating raises concerns. Without a robust renewable power system in place, transitioning these sectors to electricity could inadvertently exacerbate our reliance on coal-fired electricity, rendering the effort counterproductive.

It's clear that a more measured and pragmatic approach is needed—one that prioritizes the development of renewable energy infrastructure before committing to ambitious initiatives such as electrification. Unfortunately, common sense seems to be lacking in the corridors of power.

Let's delve into the economics of electric cars. When we consider factors like cost, road user charges, charging infrastructure, and depreciation, the picture becomes clearer. Depreciation alone accounts for a significant portion of the costs. The running cost for an electric vehicle is $1.38 per kilometre. In comparison, my diesel car, a Skoda station wagon, has a running cost of 80 cents per kilometre. The Skoda is significantly more economic to run than an electric car.

Essentially, an electric car is akin to an expensive conventional car with a limited fuel capacity that takes 30 minutes to recharge. While it may serve as a statement of eco-consciousness or a stylish accessory, practicality often takes a backseat. Take Elon Musk's electric ute, for example, which weighs in at a hefty three and a half tonnes, necessitating a special driver's license and sacrificing payload capacity due to the weight of batteries.

Considering the global landscape of passenger vehicles, the adoption of electric cars has been relatively slow, with only around eight million in operation compared to the staggering 1.4 billion vehicles worldwide. The Manhattan Institute, a reputable American think tank, questions the economic rationale behind subsidizing electric cars, asserting that such endeavours lack a solid foundation and fail to significantly impact pollution or CO2 emissions.

The proposition of converting all heating to electricity poses substantial challenges. Such a transition would increase electricity demand by approximately 20%, exacerbating existing issues with power reliability. The cost of overhauling infrastructure, coupled with the inevitable strain on resources like copper, would be immense, with little to no tangible benefits in terms of climate impact.

In addition, the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources like wind and solar, necessitates the need for energy storage solutions. However, current technologies fall short in addressing this need effectively. Meanwhile, the lack of investment in gas-fired generators due to uncertainty surrounding future gas availability compounds our energy woes, thanks in part to governmental policies restricting exploration.

Let's talk about keeping our lights on, particularly during dry years when electricity demand peaks. One reliable solution is coal, with a million tons at Huntly providing a dependable backup. While some may question the sourcing of this coal from Indonesia, it's a pragmatic choice. Procuring coal locally isn't feasible given the unpredictability of dry years and the need that follows to replenish depleted stockpiles.

Now, let's address the notion of wind and solar power as primary sources of energy. While they hold promise, they require reliable backup due to their intermittent nature. To meet an additional load of 4,000 MW, we'd need a staggering 12,000 MW of wind and solar capacity along with 4,000 MW from backup storage. The Lake Onslow pumped storage scheme, once considered, fell short in both capacity and purpose. Its designed storage capacity was only enough to overcome the hydro shortfall in dry years.

Reforming the electricity market, while necessary, presents significant hurdles. The current market has its flaws, but overhauling it would require massive changes, particularly given the vested interests profiting from the status quo.

Despite claims that wind and solar power are the cheapest options available, the reality tells a different story. Power prices tend to rise in regions heavily invested in renewables, primarily because of the need for backup. In Europe, neighbouring nations shoulder the burden of keeping the lights on in countries which have converted to renewables. Responsibility lies with those who invest in such technologies.

Regarding storage options, batteries remain prohibitively expensive. The cost of storage far exceeds the spot price of electricity, making it economically unfeasible to rely solely on battery storage to back up wind farms.

Let's explore some alternative options for addressing our energy needs, particularly in the context of achieving net zero emissions. Pumped storage schemes present a promising avenue, but their implementation faces challenges. Upgrading the aluminium smelter to reduce load during dry years could be beneficial, but securing a long-term contract poses a hurdle. Shutting down the smelter could have unintended consequences, potentially increasing global emissions if production shifts to coal-fired smelters elsewhere.

It's essential to consider the ramifications of pursuing net zero electricity. Wholesale prices are already on the rise, hovering around 20 to 30 cents per kilowatt-hour, with occasional spikes to 60 cents. This volatility poses risks for investors in renewable energy, potentially hindering further development. The government's reliance on wind farms to meet energy demands overlooks these economic realities.

Realistic options must be considered. Introducing large-scale renewable energy sources could lead to the closure of heavy industries and economic downturn. However, it's crucial to recognize that such measures won't significantly impact the climate.

Exploring alternatives like hydropower, geothermal, and gas could offer a more sustainable path forward. However, opposition from environmental groups complicates efforts to expand hydropower capacity. Similarly, advancements in conventional vehicle technology offer potential for reducing emissions, but lack of investment due to perceived obsolescence of the internal combustion engine hampers progress.

The Leibstadt Nuclear Power Station in Switzerland. It would require 240 wind turbines on 300 km2 of land to generate its power output

Nuclear power emerges as a viable solution for clean energy. Compared to wind farms, a modern 1200 megawatt reactor provides reliable power for up to 60 years, with significantly smaller land requirements than wind-farms and a longer operational lifespan.

Let's discuss the potential of small, modular nuclear power reactors as a solution to our energy needs. These reactors offer many advantages—they can be mass-produced, are inherently safe, and are not prone to explosions or meltdowns. However, regulatory hurdles pose a significant challenge, delaying their implementation.

My hydro scheme's generating plant, despite being a century old, continues to operate reliably and is projected to do so for many more years. Wind farms and batteries have much shorter lifespans, typically lasting around 20 years and require more frequent maintenance than conventional plants.

There's a misconception surrounding the dangers of radiation, particularly at low levels. Contrary to popular belief, low levels of radiation are not inherently harmful. Studies have shown that exposure to low levels of radiation does not significantly increase the risk of cancer. In fact, the evidence suggests that radiation levels below 3,000 mSV are harmless. The panic surrounding radiation, exemplified by the Fukushima incident, often results in unnecessary evacuations and expenditures, ultimately causing more harm than the radiation itself.

The transition from coal to gas offers a viable pathway to reducing emissions, given that gas emits half the carbon dioxide compared to coal. However, regulatory barriers hinder progress. While fields of shale gas in Europe hold promise, opposition fuelled by geopolitical interests has stymied their development. As a result, countries like the USA, which have embraced shale gas extraction, have significantly reduced emissions and even become exporters of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

The pursuit of net zero emissions, as evidenced by recent headlines, appears to face significant challenges. Reports show a waning consensus on climate change in Europe and a back-pedalling on climate goals by politicians in the US and Europe ahead of elections. Concerns have been raised about the impact of net zero targets on British prosperity. A recent analysis suggests that floods have become less deadly over the years.

The push for net zero emissions raises questions about the strength of evidence supporting man-made global warming. Despite extensive research spanning 25 years, scientifically acceptable evidence remains elusive. Authorities often cite consensus among climate scientists rather than empirical data to support their claims. The reliance on consensus in politics should not be allowed to replace the emphasis on evidence in science.

A notable example of misguided science is the 2014 Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 8.5, initially considered a worst-case scenario but now deemed unrealistic by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Despite this, many government departments still base their policies on projections derived from RCP 8.5. Transitioning to more realistic scenarios, such as RCP 4.5, could dispel the need for climate change measures.

Europe has extensive shale-gas basins which could produce vast supplies of natural gas

Examining climate model predictions reveals discrepancies between projected and actual temperature increases. The divergence raises doubts about the accuracy of these models and underscores the need for more reliable forecasting methods.

Regarding nuclear power, the deployment of small modular reactors offers a promising solution. These reactors, as safe as houses, could be situated in major substations or in coastal areas such as the Kaipara. However, resistance to nuclear power persists, often rooted in misconceptions about its safety and association with nuclear weapons.

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

A BUSTLING MORNING AT KREEM CAFÉ

Vince Middeldorp (Copilot AI)

Kreem Café, nestled on Universal Drive, was where Ian Smith organized the coffee morning for Friday, March 22nd. The event drew a good turnout of members, all keen to kick-start their day with a cup of their favourite brew. Among those present were Noel Rose, who had used his Total Mobility Card for a hassle-free taxi ride and Justin Griffith, currently hailing from Remuera, who arrived on his motorcycle.

Because Kreem Café is always well patronized, Ian Smith was a little surprised when he secured a table reservation. A subtle detail on the reservation sign caught my eye - a two-hour time limit, a testament to the café's popularity.

During the coffee morning, I shared an intriguing experience. A few days prior, Google Directions had guided me through a residential street named Kimber Hall Avenue. Ignoring the suggested route on my return journey, I encountered significant roadworks on Donovan Street - the very path I would have taken

without Google's guidance. It was astonishing to realize that Google Directions considers not just traffic congestion, but also major roadwork disruptions.

Upon the mention of Kimber Hall Avenue, Ian Smith revealed a connection to Ian Wheeler who was a former resident of Kimber Hall Avenue. I knew Ian Wheeler well from New Lynn Men's Probus. What I didn't know was that Ian Smith and Ian Wheeler were work colleagues at the BNZ.

This sparked a chain of reminiscences. I recalled Ian Wheeler's association with my friend, Ray Gavin, who had also worked at the BNZ. Ian Smith then said he had worked with both Ian Wheeler and Ray Gavin at the BNZ and that Ray Gavin's father, John Gavin, had been the starter at Alexandra Park.

This revelation brought back memories of my part-time job as a Totalisator Supervisor at Alexandra Park. I remembered my frequent chats with Ray Gavin, who worked at the park, distributing number cloths to horse trainers. It was fascinating to learn that in working at Alexandra Park, Ray had followed in his father's footsteps.

OUTINGS AND TRIPS

SAILING INTO HISTORY: THE RESTORATION AND VOYAGE OF THE JANE GIFFORD

Vince Middeldorp (Copilot AI)

The Jane Gifford, the last fully rigged sailing scow in existence, was built in 1908. In 2005, she was transported by road to Warkworth, where she underwent a meticulous restoration by both volunteers and paid workers. They rebuilt her as close as possible to her original appearance. She was fitted with two reconditioned Gardiner diesel motors, manufactured in Manchester in 1958, and was re-launched at Warkworth in 2009.

On Wednesday, March 13th, we had the privilege of joining Waitakere Combined Rebus on a memorable journey down the Mahurangi River to the Mahurangi Harbour aboard the Jane Gifford. The Jane Gifford Society had installed speakers below the cap rail on both sides of the boat, allowing for an informative commentary on the river and its surroundings.

Fay and Trevor Pollard listen to the commentary coming through the speaker below the cap rail

Among the sights was the derelict Wilson Cement Works, established by Nathaniel Wilson in 1878. At its peak in 1903, the cement works employed 180 people and produced over 20,000 tonnes of lime and cement. We also passed Morrison's Orchards, established by Edward Morrison in 1873. It was New Zealand's largest producer of fruit and fruit trees until the 1920s, when an alleged fire blight led to the destruction of most of the plantation.

We can highly recommend Seafood N Eat It for lunch in Warkworth

After disembarking at Warkworth, we sought out a place for lunch. A group of us found ourselves at the historic Thomson House on Neville Street. The sign on the building read, "Seafood N Eat It," and "Award Winning Fish and Chips." Despite appearing upmarket, their fish and chips were reasonably priced at $13. Andrew and Linda Narayan, Trevor and Fay Pollard and I, went inside and enjoyed a truly delicious meal.

On the trip, I learned that two members from Waitakere Combined Rebus, Allen and Phyllis Greenland, are relocating to the Summerset Retirement Village in Warkworth. Allen's company on our outings with Waitakere Combined Rebus will be missed. Ian Smith, as President of Waitakere Combined Rebus, will undoubtedly feel the loss of Phyllis. She is the secretary of Waitakere Combined Rebus.

Allen and Phyllis Greenland, who we have seen on most of our trips with Waitakere Combined Rebus.

COFFEE MORNING

Coffee Morning at Columbus Coffee in Mitre 10: Our next coffee morning will be held at Mitre 10 in Lincoln Road Henderson. The coffee morning is on Friday, 26th April; which is two weeks after our April meeting. As usual, we'll start at 10 am.

SUPPORTERS

REBUS NZ INC.

Whau Local Board
Auckland Council

The May meeting date is Friday 10th May 2024

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