



West Auckland Men's Rebus Club Newsletter

July 2024

Next meeting: 10:00 am Friday 12th July, 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	sj david55@gmail.com	021641717
Welfare Officer	Bill Mutch	celebrantwedding@gmail.com	021316556
Photographer	John Mihaljevic	john@rebuswestauckland.nz	098361504



Jim Morrow, guest speaker at the June 2024 meeting, climbing in Antarctica

MEETING REPORT

June 2024

Chairman: Bill Mutch

Attendance: 21 members

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

1. Welcome:

The meeting started with a greeting and a comment on the beautiful day. There was a mention of a buzzing noise from the sound system, which was malfunctioning. The attendance was noted to be slightly lower because of winter.

2. Visitors:

No visitors were present at the meeting.

3. Apologies:

Apologies were noted for Charles Nicholas who is in Sicily and Mensto De Roos who is in Holland.

4. Matters Arising from April Meeting:

No one reported any matters arising from the May meeting.



Bill Mutch talking to Noel Rose during the morning tea break at the June meeting

5. Correspondence:

We received the Rebus Chronicles for May 2024 from Rebus NZ, which highlighted the loss of four clubs because of their inability to form a committee. This represents an 8% loss of total clubs. The Chronicles also mentioned Rebus branded apparel, including hats, caps, and visors.

6. Treasurer's Report:

In the treasurer's absence, the secretary presented the financial report. As of the end of May, the club has generated an income of \$1163, with expenses amounting to \$559. This leaves us with a surplus of \$603. The club's monthly operational cost stands at \$90. Looking ahead, we have seven months remaining and

therefore can expect expenses totalling \$630. We have two subscriptions outstanding. Once received, these will ensure income fully covers the costs for the 2024 year.

7. Trip and Coffee Mornings:

The train trip to Hamilton was praised and the trip to Warkworth Museum mentioned. The upcoming mid-winter lunch at The Parkhouse in Whenuapai, on Wednesday the 26th of June, was announced, along with a visit to Totara Waters Garden.

8. Train Trip Review:

The Te Huia train trip was reviewed, including tagging off with the AT Hop card at Puhinui station, the comfort of the Te Huia train seats, and the visit to Te Awa Mall in The Base Shopping Centre which is next to the Rota Kauri station. A visit to Coupland's Bakery was also mentioned.

9. Welfare Report:

Trevor Pollard updated on Andrew Geddes' condition post-stroke, noting his limited mobility and communication, and the care he's receiving. Andrew recognized Trevor during a visit and showed signs of comprehension despite his condition.

10. Member News:

Ian Wheeler, a former club president, has moved to a retirement village in Wellington and sent well-wishes to the club.

11. Technology Acquisition:

The secretary shared his experience with purchasing a Power Point presentation clicker from AliExpress, highlighting significant cost savings compared to local prices.

12. Morning Tea:

The meeting concluded with arrangements for morning tea, with Trevor heading to the kitchen and a call for volunteers to assist.

Claudia's Corner

Who earns a living by driving his customers away?
A taxi driver.

I don't trust stairs, they are always up to something.

What nails do carpenters hate to hit?
Fingernails.

What did the cross-eyed teacher say?
I can't control my pupils.

German sausage jokes are just the wurst.

Long fairy tales have a tendency to dragon.



Hello! I'm Claudia, and I'll be turning 17 in December. My Grandad, Bill Mutch, has been teaching me to drive, and he recently took me to Warkworth for my driver's test. I'm thrilled to report that I passed!

I hope you all enjoy my clean, simple jokes and that they bring a smile to your face.

PRESIDENT'S PRATTLE
President's Report June 2024

Bill Mutch

Welcome to mid-year! I hope the winter flu hasn't caught up with you. Many of my friends have been hit hard by the flu bug, and it has really taken a toll on them.

On the welfare news list, we have Andrew Geddes, who is currently in Waitakere Hospital after suffering a nasty stroke. Although he's on a feeding tube, he is sitting up, and we all wish him a speedy recovery. I can empathize with him, having experienced a stroke myself in 2013.

I've also been dealing with health issues as my old leukaemia has resurfaced, forcing me to stop driving. I've had many hospital visits recently, but I'm still hanging in there!

On a sad note, I recently conducted a graveside service for a friend I've known for over 73 years, Brian Schieb. He was a well-known transport photographer and one of the early members of the Railway Enthusiasts Society. Brian spent his early years in Otahuhu and later in Hamilton and Huntly. Unfortunately, only 19 people attended his service.

I arranged for him to be interred with his mother, who passed away in 1956. There was a lack of staff training and an overwhelming amount of red tape, but my knowledge of funerals helped navigate through it.

I've received very positive feedback on our last lunch outing, and once I'm on top of my health issues, I look forward to joining these events again.

That's all for now.

Cheers,
Bill Mutch

SHACKLETON'S LEGACY: RETRACING THE PATH OF ANTARCTIC SURVIVAL

GUEST SPEAKER JIM MORROW

Whisper AI & Copilot AI



Jim Morrow, who delivered an enlightening presentation on his Antarctic expedition and Ernest Shackleton.

Ernest Shackleton, a name synonymous with survival against all odds, is best known not for his achievements, but for an expedition that never came to fruition. His story is one of resilience and determination in the face of insurmountable odds.

Shackleton's history with Antarctica began in 1904, when he joined Captain Scott to explore the Ross Ice Shelf. In 1907-08, he led his own expedition to conquer the South Pole. However, just 97 miles from their goal, Shackleton made the prudent decision to turn back, knowing that to continue would likely result in their deaths.

The South Pole was eventually claimed by Amundsen, a Norwegian, in 1911, and later by Captain Scott, whose entire party tragically perished on their return journey. With both poles conquered, Shackleton set his sights on a new challenge: crossing Antarctica from the Weddell Sea to the Ross Sea, via the South Pole.

In 1914, Shackleton embarked on this ambitious journey. Despite warnings from whaling captains about the severe ice conditions that year, Shackleton pressed on, leading to their ship being wrecked in the Weddell Sea. The crew spent a significant amount of time camping on the ice before escaping to Elephant Island in their boats.

Knowing that no one would come looking for them on Elephant Island, six crew members, including Shackleton, sailed to South Georgia Island to seek help. After a perilous 17-day journey across treacherous waters, they miraculously landed on South Georgia.

In a feat of desperation and determination, they crossed the island, a journey no one had ever undertaken before. They reached a whaling station, where Shackleton introduced himself to the manager, who initially believed him to be dead. Despite the manager's scepticism, Shackleton insisted his men were alive and waiting for him on Elephant Island.

Shackleton made three attempts to return to Elephant Island, each time being thwarted by ice. On the fourth attempt, with the help of the Chilean Navy, he finally reached the island. Miraculously, not a single man had died. They had spent the entire winter camped under two boats, holding onto the belief that Shackleton would return. And in 1916, he did.

In 2016, I embarked on an expedition to Antarctica, a journey that aimed to retrace the steps of the legendary explorers who had come before us. Our adventure began at the southernmost tip of South America, in Ushuaia, aptly known as 'Fin del Mundo' or 'End of the World'. The city was larger than I had anticipated, and the cold was more biting than I could have imagined.

We set sail on a small ship, the Polar Pioneer, with a compact group of 50 passengers. Our vessel, a Russian ship chartered by Australian company Aurora Expeditions, was dwarfed by the massive cruise liners also heading towards the ice. However, our small size allowed us to make two or three landings each day, an opportunity not afforded to the larger ships.

Our first task upon boarding was the lifeboat drill, a stark reminder of the harsh conditions we were about to face. We sailed out of Ushuaia in the late afternoon, heading into the wild waters of the Drake Passage. The journey across the Drake Passage took two days, during which time we were tossed about like a cork. Despite the rough seas, our first glimpse of Antarctica, with its icy cliffs in the distance, was breathtaking.



Kayakers from the Polar Pioneer braving it in the icy waters of Antarctica

Our landings were made in the ship's inflatable zodiacs. Sometimes the sea had an oily look to it, a sign that it was about to freeze. As a child, I had devoured books about the early explorers and dreamt of one day setting foot on Antarctica. Fifty years later, that dream had come true.

Our group comprised climbers, kayakers, and those who had simply come to see what Antarctica was like. As climbers, we roped ourselves together and ascended the nearest hill, where we could see massive crevasses that could potentially break off into the sea and become icebergs.

One time, when returning to the ship, we encountered a field of ice. The captain then brought the ship to us, navigating through the ice to ensure our safe return.

Our expedition took us further into the Weddell Sea, where we experienced the real weather Antarctica is known for. We went quite a way south before the ice became too thick, and the captain turned around.

Sometimes we could not go out on deck because of the dangerous ice-covered conditions. On these occasions, the doors were locked for our safety.



The Polar Pioneer sailing through Antarctic ice floes

Leaving the Antarctic Peninsula behind, we continued to trace Shackleton's journey, setting our sights on Elephant Island. This was where Shackleton and his crew had landed after days of drifting and rowing. They found a beach, which they named Port Wild, and set up camp there, turning two boats upside down and building rock walls around them for shelter.

While the rest of the crew stayed behind, Shackleton and five others sailed one of the boats to South Georgia. The photographer of the expedition, despite their dire circumstances, continued to document their journey. One of his photos captured the launch of the James Caird, the boat that carried Shackleton and his crew to South Georgia. Today, the beach where they camped has washed away, leaving nothing but waves crashing against the cliffs.

Our journey to Elephant Island took us about a day by ship, a far cry from the six days it took Shackleton and his crew to row there. The island, the most northern of the South Shetland Islands, was a desolate place.

From Elephant Island, it took us about three days to reach South Georgia, compared to the 17 days it took Shackleton and his crew in their sailing dinghy. We landed at King Haakon Bay, where Shackleton and his crew had landed and camped for three days to recuperate from their voyage. From there, Shackleton and two others crossed the island to reach one of the whaling stations.

Our two-day crossing of South Georgia Island was done with all the right mountaineering equipment, a luxury that Shackleton and his crew did not have.

The north side of the island was greener and quite different from the south side. We saw the remains of several whaling stations on South Georgia, all now abandoned. We then sailed into Grytviken, which is still inhabited by a British scientific base. There, we visited a museum, a church, and encountered King penguins.

Ernest Shackleton died in 1924 at South Georgia when he was starting off on another expedition. We visited his grave and had a whiskey with the great man. His right-hand man, Frank Wild, who was left behind on Elephant Island and was in charge there, was buried next to him.

Grytviken was set up by the Larsens, who were Norwegians and devout Lutherans. They established a church, which is kept in nice condition. We were told that about once a year, there was a wedding there. The town also has a post office where you can send postcards and letters to your friends around the world.

After leaving Grytviken, we set sail for the Falklands and Port Stanley. To be honest, my first impression of the place was less than favourable. It seemed like a dump, with junk strewn everywhere and derelict boats dotting the landscape. However, the locals seemed to love it, finding charm amidst the chaos.

There was a harpoon cannon mounted on a concrete pedestal with a sign that read, "20,000 whales were killed by this gun between 1937 and 1965." There was also a memorial to the British who came to liberate the Falklands after Argentina invaded in 1981. The conflict lasted over 70 days before the Argentineans were eventually driven out.

Port Stanley had an English feel to it, with its Penguin News newspaper, post office, and government buildings. I even managed to buy stamps and first-day covers to send to my stamp collector friend back home. I didn't venture into the Globe Tavern, but I did visit the Nome Garden. Interestingly, all the trees you see on the Falklands have been introduced; none grow naturally there.



The Penguin News, published every Friday, is the only newspaper produced in the Falkland Islands

We visited a farm where a farmer was demonstrating how to dig peat, which they still use for fuel. They dug it up in cubes and set it out to dry. We were served morning tea, and I noticed a large pile of peat for the stoves. There were also the remains of an Argentine helicopter that had been bombed on the ground, not shot out of the sky.

Our plan was to fly up from the Falklands, but furious katabatic winds shut down the airport. We were told that sometimes these conditions could last for a fortnight. The captain, needing to service bases before the end of the summer season, decided he couldn't wait. So, we were back on the ship, heading back to Ushuaia.

Once in Ushuaia, I found myself in a café, savouring a very welcome Cape Horn beer. It was a fitting end to an unforgettable trip, a journey that had taken me from the icy landscapes of Antarctica to the rugged charm of the Falklands.

DISCOVERING TOTARA WATERS GARDEN

A HIDDEN GEM IN UPPER WAITEMATA

Vince Middeldorp (Copilot AI)



John Mihaljevic and Andrew Narayan strolling around Totara Waters Garden

Our recent excursion to Totara Waters Garden was a refreshing departure from the ordinary. Nestled on the upper Waitemata Harbour, this 2-acre property is a testament to the meticulous care and hands-on dedication of its owners, Peter and Jocelyn Coyle.

The garden, which began its transformation in 1999, is a verdant paradise, boasting over 25 varieties of Palms, along with an extensive collection of Bromeliads and Succulents. But the allure of Totara Waters extends beyond its lush gardens. The stone-walled entrance, well-planned driveways, ample parking areas, accessible footpaths, and the architecturally designed house on the property all bear witness to thoughtful planning, diligent work, and significant investment.



Trevor Pollard, John Mihaljevic, Ian Smith (orange jacket) and Totara Gardens owner Peter Coyle

Our visit offered us not only the opportunity to explore this picturesque property but also to engage in enlightening conversations with its proud owners, the retired couple Peter and Jocelyn Coyle. Peter, in his chat with Trevor Pollard, shared that he and Jocelyn once owned a flower business in Henderson.

Following our visit to Totara Waters Garden, we gathered for a midwinter lunch at The Parkhouse Restaurant. There, I had the pleasure of engaging in conversation with several members of the Waitakere Combined Rebus. Interestingly, they had opted out of the garden visit, having experienced its charm on a previous occasion.

For those who have yet to witness the enchanting beauty of this property, I assure you, making the effort to do so will be a decision well rewarded.

MID WINTER LUNCH 2024

FROM RURAL CHARM TO URBAN CHIC: THE NEW FACE OF WHENUAPAI

Vince Middeldorp (Copilot AI)

Not too long ago, Whenuapai was a quaint suburb of Auckland, known primarily for its Air Force base and surrounded by expansive rural land. However, in what seems like a blink of an eye, this once secluded area has morphed into a bustling residential hub. The landscape is now dotted with modern two-story homes, nestled on compact sites, lining streets that serve dual purposes as thoroughfares and parking lots.

Among these transformations, the Parkhouse Restaurant stands out. This grand old rural house has been tastefully refurbished into a chic dining destination, complete with sprawling park-like grounds. It's not just a place for a meal, but a fashionable spot for a casual coffee.

Our midwinter gathering at this restaurant proved to be an excellent choice. Approximately 40 members from Waitakere Combined Rebus and West Auckland Men's Rebus graced the occasion, surpassing the expectations of our trips and outings organiser, Ian Smith.

The conversation at my table revolved around international travel experiences, from the cost of fish and chips in England to the allure of Amsterdam and Adelaide, and the unique experience of riding The Ghan through Australia's vast interior.

As for the culinary experience, I opted for the Wagyu Burger. While it didn't quite match the taste of a Big Mac from McDonald's or a Wendy's classic burger, it was satisfactory, barring the hefty price tag of \$30.



Members mostly from Waitakere Combined Rebus at The Parkhouse for mid-winter lunch

A SYMPHONY OF SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

OUR THREE DAYS IN NOTO, SICILY

Charles Nicholls

Helen and I are thrilled to share the exhilaration we experienced during our three-day adventure in Noto, Sicily. Our journey was inspired by the town's renowned flower festival, a spectacle that never fails to captivate its audience.

This year, the floral display paid homage to the 100th anniversary of Puccini's death, immersing the town in a symphony of his timeless music. We had the privilege of attending a local concert, where a tenor and soprano's harmonious voices soared, backed by an orchestra composed entirely of wind instruments.

The town square was a hub of cultural celebration, with drummers setting the rhythm, flag wavers adding a dash of colour, classical ballroom dancers gliding gracefully, and historical pageants bringing the past to life. Our cultural exploration also led us to an exhibition of paintings by Caravaggio and his contemporaries, further enriching our experience.

Noto, despite its vibrant present, bears the scars of a devastating earthquake in 1692, which claimed the lives of nearly half its population. The town rose from the ashes, rebuilt in the grand Baroque style reflective of the French court. It stands today as a testament to resilience and rebirth, especially after its liberation by Garibaldi in 1870 as part of the unification of Italy.



Caravaggio's painting "The Calling of St Matthew." Christ points to Matthew, a tax collector, inviting him to follow.

FROM BRASS TO BEYOND

THE ROYAL NZ NAVY BAND'S ANNUAL CONCERT

Vince Middeldorp (Copilot AI)

Four of our club members attended the Royal New Zealand Navy Band's annual concert at the Te Atatu Peninsula Community Centre. This musical extravaganza, organized by the Henderson West Auckland Lions Club, primarily caters to our retired community, drawing many from local retirement villages and rest homes.

Upon my arrival, just after the concert's commencement, the band was in full swing, playing the globally recognized and invigorating Colonel Bogey March. Having attended these concerts in the past, I was initially

taken aback by the seemingly sparse number of performers. Aware of the military's ongoing retention and recruitment challenges, I was concerned. Could it be that only five members remained in the band?



Five Navy musicians played the Colonel Bogey March

My apprehensions were quickly allayed when a door to a backroom swung open, revealing the remaining band members who promptly joined their colleagues on stage. Among them, I spotted the familiar faces of saxophonist Daniel Reshtan and keyboard player Jesse Wood. It's fascinating to see how the NZ Navy Band has evolved to include a diverse range of musical instruments, far beyond the traditional brass and drums.



The Navy Band with more of their musicians performing at the Te Atatu Peninsula Community Hall

The band once again demonstrated their versatility, playing music to cater to all tastes. They performed the crowd-pleasing "When I'm Sixty-Four" by Paul McCartney (credited Lennon-McCartney as was the norm for songs by The Beatles), which was a hit with the audience. They also delved into the American Songbook, performing Stephen Sondheim's "Send in the Clowns", a more sombre piece.

Post-concert, I had a chance to speak with Dorothy Reid, the event coordinator. She expressed her concern about the reduced attendance compared to pre-Covid-19 times and the challenge of attracting a larger audience. Her dilemma resonated with me, as we grapple with similar issues in promoting our Rebus Club.

NEXT COFFEE MORNING

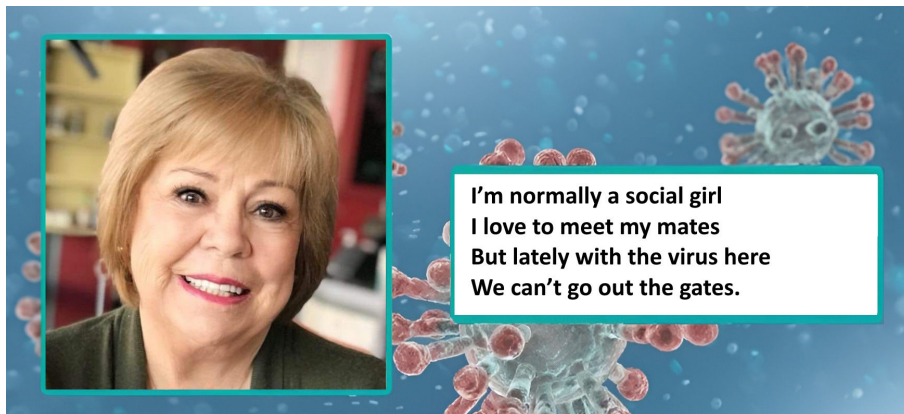
Mark your calendars our upcoming coffee morning at Gloria Jeans on **Wednesday, 31st July**, starting at 10:00 am. Our previous gathering at this location enjoyed a robust turnout. Gloria Jeans is conveniently located at The Boundary shopping centre in Henderson, which also houses popular big box stores Chemist Warehouse, Kmart, and Briscoes. We look forward to seeing you there!



John Mihaljevic with Janelle and Eric Davison at Gloria Jeans for the May coffee morning

GUEST SPEAKER FOR JULY

Noel Rose has arranged for the esteemed poet, Jan Beaumont, to grace the July meeting as the guest speaker. Beaumont first gained recognition with her poignant poem, “Let’s All Drink to Lockdown,” penned during New Zealand’s initial Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020. The poem resonated with many and quickly went viral. However, it was frequently and erroneously credited to Pam Ayres MBE, leading Ayres to clarify on Twitter, “This poem seems to be everywhere attributed to me but it isn’t mine, it’s by Jan Beaumont.”



SUPPORTERS



Our meetings are at 10:00 am, **2nd Friday of the month**, New Lynn Friendship Hall, 3063 Great North Rd.
The date of the August meeting will be on **Friday the 9th**.