



West Auckland Men's Rebus Club Newsletter

September 2024

Next meeting: 10:00 am Friday 13th Sept, Friendship Hall, 3063 Great North Road, New Lynn

COMMITTEE

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Orion Point coffee morning on August 28th at the new Metlifecare retirement village

MEETING REPORT

August 2024

Chairman: Bill Mutch

Attendance: 17 members

Neil Castle, Bill Fairs, Maurice Forbes, Robert King, John McKeown, Vince Middeldorp, John Mihaljevic, Bill Mutch, Lyndsay Parris, Trevor Pollard, Paul Robertson, Noel Rose, Ian Smith, Alan Verry, Ken Watson, Ken Webster, Allan Williamson.

1. Welcome:

The meeting commenced with a warm welcome to all attendees, with a special mention to visitors Eddie and Suman.

2. Acknowledgements:

Neil Castle was thanked for his generous donation of \$50 to the club in celebration of his 95th birthday. A brief celebratory moment took place, including a birthday song.

3. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Charles Nicholls, Mensto De Roos, Andrew Narayan and John Corban.



Members conversing during the morning tea break at the August meeting

4. Correspondence:

- A letter from Leanne Edwards confirmed that a \$500 grant for bus trips could be used flexibly for any trip.
- An email from Steven Beckett (Warkworth Men's Rebus Club) discussed strategies for growing club membership, citing the increase in his club from 30 to 60 members.

5. Treasurer's Report:

- The total income has increased due to the \$500 grant.
- Current balance: \$1,648
- Deposit: \$692 earning interest
- The club is on track to make a profit by the end of the year.

6. Upcoming Events:

- Orion Point Coffee Morning:
Scheduled at Metlifecare Orion Point. Attendees were asked to confirm their participation.

- Bus Trip to Warkworth:
A Railway Enthusiast Society (RES) trip to Warkworth, Matakana, and other destinations scheduled for August 27. Those with a Hop card are invited to join.

7. Welfare Report:

Andrew Geddes is making progress in his recovery, with assistance from his son from Australia.

8. General Business:

Efforts to increase membership include advertising through flyers at various locations and social media posts. Success has been limited.

9. Meeting Adjourned:

Meeting adjourned for morning tea, and a light-hearted joke was shared to close.

Claudia's Corner

Time for a nice smile again!

First man: How many work in the office?

Second Man: About half of them!

First man: I am going to see my Doctor as I do not like the look of my wife.

Second man: I will come with you because I can't stand the sight of mine.

What is worse than finding a worm in your apple?
The answer is finding half a worm.

Why did the orange stop halfway up a hill?
It ran out of juice.

What is the richest country in the world?
Ireland because its capital is always Dublin.

First man: I once knew a man with a wooden leg called Smith
The second man (not bright) "What was the name of his other leg?"

Have a nice meeting
Cheers Claudia.

Footnote: Be aware of Trevor's jokes.



PRESIDENT'S PRATTLE **President's Report September 2024**

Bill Mutch

Welcome to Spring!

On the welfare front, I have little to report. However, I am pleased to share that Andrew Geddes has shown some improvement. We wish him all the best in the future.

Our door patrol man, Stephen David, has been in the hospital. We hope he gets well soon.

I recently had an assessment and was informed that my brain is in good shape. However, my Parkinson's has moved up a notch. But, we carry on!

I was informed that two members participated in the Railway Enthusiasts Society (RES) trip to Warkworth, organized by Alan Verry. They had a great time and mixed in great with the RES members. Sharing with other clubs is always good.

The outing to Orion Point was reportedly met with excellent catering. Kudos to the organizers!

As we approach the end of the year, please start thinking about our Christmas lunch. Some members have suggested a change of venue.

Looking forward to seeing you all on Friday, 13 September 2024.

Cheers,
Bill Mutch

BEHIND THE BARS: A JOURNEY THROUGH AUCKLAND PRISON

GUEST SPEAKER JOHN SMALL

Whisper AI & Copilot AI



John Small points to the High Security unit at Auckland Prison

My name is John Small, and I work at Auckland Prison, also known as Paremoremo.

Before I begin, I want to clarify that the thoughts I share today are my own and not those of the department.

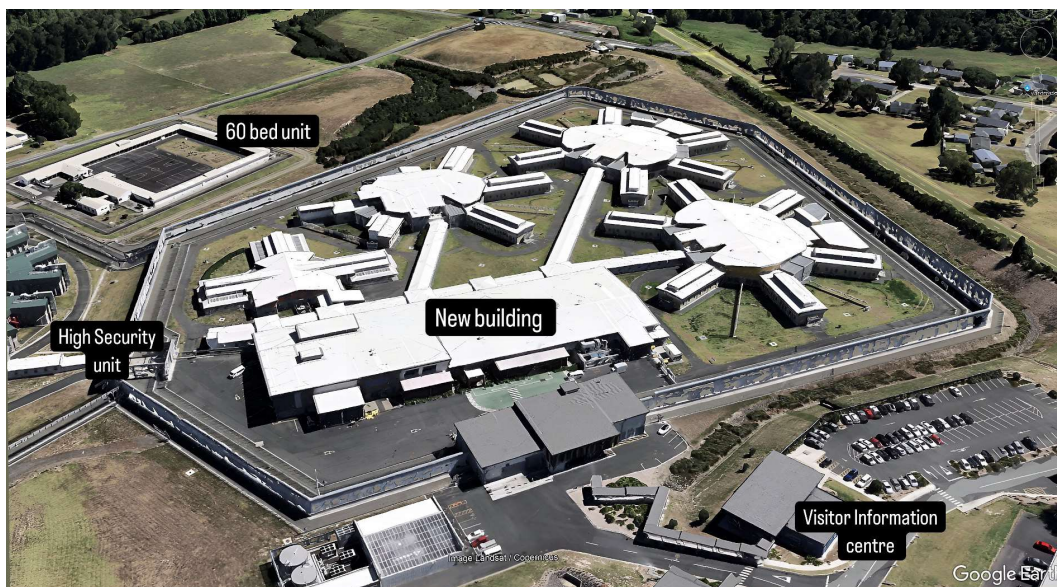
I started working at Auckland Prison on May 15, 1989. Initially, I thought I would stay for a couple of years and then look for other opportunities. However, it seems my next career move will likely be retirement, which isn't too far off.

I began my career at Auckland Prison as a corrections officer and gradually worked my way up to senior corrections officer, then principal corrections officer, and eventually to my current role as a residential manager. Over the years, I've also acted in various positions, including a stint as the prison director at Auckland Women's Prison while the then-director was on a lengthy leave. When he returned, he asked me to stay on, so I spent a year there before returning to Paremoremo.

During my time at Auckland Women's Prison, I realized the differences between managing women and men. In the women's 48-bed units, the noise level was so high that I could hardly hear myself think, whereas the men's units were relatively quiet. The dynamics were very different.

Men tend to resolve conflicts through violence, while women are more strategic and can make you pay in ways that male prisoners wouldn't. One of the biggest challenges at the women's prison was that many of the women formed relationships with each other, seeking friendship and support, which is quite different from the men's prison environment.

Before I dive into my main topic, I want to give you an overview of the layout of Auckland prison. The old maximum security prison, which has been closed down, had five units and held 261 prisoners. This facility was originally built in 1968.



Google Earth view of Auckland Prison at Paremoremo

With increasing prisoner numbers through the 70s, it was decided to build another complex at the site. As a result, a 240 bed high security stand-alone unit was developed. This facility has five 48 bed units and houses high-security prisoners. Following the development of the high security complex, Unit 6, a minimum security unit, was built in 1989. This 60-bed unit, located outside the main prison, serves as a drug treatment unit and has been very successful in recent years.

In 1994, another 60-bed minimum security unit was established specifically for child sex offenders known as Te Piriti. Psychologists play a significant role in this unit, running various programs. Among prisoners, child sex offenders are viewed very negatively, and we spend a lot of time ensuring their safety from other inmates.

Within Te Piriti, there is a carving room where prisoners have created over 2,000 Taonga (carvings) for different government departments. If you ever visit Orewa, you can see some of these carvings around the estuary, all made by prisoners from this unit.

A very important fact about Te Piriti is its sexual recidivism rate. For Te Piriti graduates from this unit, it is 5.47% as compared to the sexual recidivism rate of 22%. The unit gathered these results, showcasing its impressive success, over a period of two and a half to four years. In contrast, the general prison population has a recidivism rate of 56% within two years following release from prison. And around 36% are re-imprisoned after 2 years following release from prison.

Te Piriti is based on a 120-bed unit in Christchurch called Kia Marama, which, although very successful, doesn't achieve the same level of success as Te Piriti.

Additionally, in Te Piriti there is a nursery/market garden where prisoners grow vegetables that are donated to Women's Refuge and other organizations. These units achieve a lot of good work.

In 1997, a third 60-bed unit was built and houses prisoners who work around the facility, maintaining the grounds and operating a recycling plant. They refurbish items like bikes and donate them to various causes.

In 2016, I was asked to take on the role of Custodial Advisor for the construction of a new maximum-security prison. I spent two years providing advice on what we needed for this facility. There were many discussions to decide what would work best to ensure the safety of staff and prisoners within the facility. The new build ended up costing more than \$300 million. This was a public-private partnership (PPP), built by Fletchers. A company now manages the buildings, and we lease it back from them for 25 years. I believe the Department takes back the facility at the end of the lease. Despite this arrangement, corrections remain responsible to the public and the Minister for ensuring everything runs smoothly at the site.

The new maximum-security prison comprises two 90-bed units for very serious offenders. Auckland Prison is the only maximum-security prison in the country, so when a prisoner causes trouble anywhere in New Zealand and their security classification meets the threshold for maximum-security, they are sent to Auckland Prison for management. There is also a 50-bed unit with two additional wings with 18 cells for at-risk prisoners. This unit houses those prisoners who are prone to self-harm or have mental health issues. Managing these prisoners is particularly challenging because they often do not understand consequences.

There is also a 30-bed unit designed to minimize physical contact with prisoners who pose a real threat to staff. All prisoners are entitled to an hour of exercise in an outdoor environment each day, so the cells in this unit each have their own yard. We can operate the doors electronically, allowing prisoners to go outside and return to their cells without having minimal physical contact with the prisoner, and yet can talk to the prisoner. These cells have their own showers and hatches in the door for the passing of meals and medication, if required. When we do move the prisoners, it is done with a minimum of 3 staff but is dependent on what threat the prisoner poses.

Not long after I started in 1990, I was identified as a Control Instructor to train staff. Before this, when a prisoner acted out, a dozen staff members would rush in, often resulting in injuries for half of the staff involved while the prisoner would walk away unscathed.

To address this, an officer, Brian Pendlebury, who had come across from England, to join NZ Corrections spoke to hierarchy about a way of managing threatening prisoners called control and restraint. We then introduced it at Auckland Prison and this method of controlling violent prisoners has now been adopted across New Zealand. The technique involves a three-person team, where each team member targets a specific body part: two staff take an arm each and one staff member takes control of the prisoner's head. We would train staff in wrist locks and arm bars to take control of the prisoner.

Since implementing control and restraint, we've also adopted the use of pepper spray. To give you an idea of the effect of pepper spray, imagine if you rub a capsicum in your eye. A capsicum measures around 6,000 Scovilles. In contrast, pepper spray measures two million Scovilles. When sprayed, it influences a person's ability to function. However, pepper spray does not affect 40% of the population.

I was one of the first to learn control and restraint, and it has been a crucial part of managing violent offenders.

As a Control and Restraint Instructor, I have been involved in several incidents. Because of my experience attending many incidents, I was relied on to take the position of forward command after being promoted as a manager. This role allowed me to guide staff during some very serious incidents at Paremoremo.

One such incident was the riot at Paremoremo prison in 1998. Staff came from other sites to regain control of the prison. I was on a 7 to 3 shift that day and was ready to head home, hoping to get in some golf practice and as I was leaving for home was told, "John, get a team. There are serious problems going on in the maxi."

At that time, prisoners had a lot of items in their cells, including play stations and other gear, making it difficult to search their cells. The decision was made to remove these items and only allow minimal possessions, which caused the prisoners to erupt. The first sign of trouble was when they moved all their TVs to a safe area.

I was called to go up to the maxi. The old maximum security prison was divided into four main blocks: A block, B block, C block, and D block (Delta block). D block had a notorious reputation among prisoners, however, was not involved in the riot. If you ended up in D block, you were in the toughest unit in New Zealand prisons. We tried to change that stigma, but many prisoners still saw it as their main goal; to get to Delta Block in Auckland Prison and have this tattooed on their body.

I assembled a team, and we went into A block, which prisoners had set on fire. As we entered, prisoners were on the stairway of the three-story building. Prisoners had made an assortment of weapons and as we attempted to get up a stairway, had a fridge from one of the landings thrown down the stairway at us. All the prisoners were wearing masks, making it hard to identify them. The fire and smoke were so intense that I couldn't see my hand in front of me. Given the prisoners had weapons and makeshift shanks, you really needed to trust and rely on your colleagues. After our first encounter with the prisoners, we decided to pull back and reassess.

Eventually, we managed to get into Bravo block, the other 48-bed unit, and regained control. There were a few injuries to the staff, but nothing serious. We finally took back the prison at midnight, after a lot of damage from fire and water.

1998 was a big year for me. I was working in the high security unit, Unit 3. There were only two of us working in those high security units back then, unlike today, where they have four people per unit. We had to rely on our communication skills and the cotton shirts we wore.

We used to lock up around 8:30 at night and as I was going down the landing, locking up, I realized that a prisoner wasn't in his cell ready to be locked. It was rare for prisoners not to be in their cells during lock-up. On checking the next cell, I realised that prisoner was missing as well. I next heard my colleague calling for two other prisoners, and I noticed a broken window at the end of the landing. It became clear that four prisoners had escaped.

The prisoners in question were in prison due to some very serious offending, making their escape highly concerning. It also meant I had a lot of explaining to do, however it was found the infrastructure of the prison had let us down.

It took us about a week to get them back. They had gone on a "holiday" down to Coromandel before the police managed to locate them.

So, that was my 1998 year—not so great.

In the high-security units, we manage a variety of industries, including catering, laundry, engineering, and joinery. Additionally, in our 60-bed unit, we run a horticulture program in the nursery. Under our Industries Training and Learning (ITL) initiative, we offer over 50 programs for prisoners. ITL plays a crucial role in providing prisoners at Paremoremo with the rehabilitation and reintegration support they need for a successful transition back into society. Organising these programs requires significant effort from our staff and collaborating non-government organizations.

We have 320 on-site corrections staff, along with many other staff members who come in to facilitate ITL. With the new build, we constructed a kitchen that can produce up to 1,100 meals a day. This kitchen is operated by the prisoners, who do all the work, overseen by instructors. Currently, we only feed our own site, but can also produce meals for other sites making additional savings.

Working in prisons can be quite a negative environment. In the maximum-security areas, you're always on alert, as you never know what's going to happen. Prisoners these days have less respect for staff compared to when I started, so assaults are a constant issue. Just a couple of days ago, a prisoner in a high security unit boiled some water, added sugar to it, and threw it over a staff member, causing serious injuries. The sugar makes it stick, so the staff member was taken to hospital for treatment.

We're always implementing new ways to manage the prisoners on site and there are some good news stories. One that stands out is about a prisoner who was incredibly violent and had, with home-made weapons, stabbed several prisoners, though he wasn't violent towards staff. He was a member of the Mongrel Mob and would do anything for them.

At one point, he seemed to improve, so I arranged for him to be transferred to Hawkes Bay, where he was from. However, he again committed a serious violent act towards another prisoner and was sent back to Paremoremo. Shortly after his return, he was in my office, and I asked him, "So, did you do it?" He replied, "If I told you I did, what would you think of me?" I told him he knew what I would think, and he left without answering.

As a result of the assault in Hawkes Bay, he had another 8 years added to his sentence. Then, about three years ago, while I was at Auckland Women's Prison, I got a call from Rimutaka Prison. They said this prisoner wants to talk to me. I agreed, and he got on the phone to tell me how well he was doing. He shared his plans for the future, and I asked him about leaving the gang, knowing there are serious consequences for that. He believed he had done so much for the Mongrel Mob that he had earned the privilege of moving on.

Now, I know he's working in Hawkes Bay, has a partner, and a daughter. By all accounts, he's staying out of trouble, though you never know for sure. You just have to hope they find a way in life that they are able to add to the community.

There was another prisoner, also a Mongrel Mob member in Auckland. He was extremely violent, and I had many dealings with him in maximum security. When it was time for his release, two probation officers came in to talk about the expectations they had of him once he was released, which he didn't like. He reacted badly telling them what he thought of them and what he'd do if they got in his way. Despite this outburst, he still had to be released. They brought in two more probation officers because the first two refused to deal with him.

Having spent over 20 years with this prisoner, I knew him well and through a meaningful discussion, it was agreed he would work with the new probation officers. When he got out, he asked if he could stay in touch with me, which was agreed, and he called me every week to check in. At this stage, he was on a bracelet so restricted in his movements. At 42 years old, having been in prison since his teenage years, he had no idea how to survive in the community. We talked about what was going on for him, and for a long time he did alright out there, but it was always going to be difficult for him to fully cope out there.

One day, the police picked him up as he was travelling down the Southern motorway and found he had \$192,000 in cash. This was in breach of his parole, so he was placed back in Mount Eden Prison. At least he wasn't committing a violent crime, which he was quite capable of.

He was released and contacted me sounding quite positive, but sadly two weeks after our conversation he was shot multiple times at a church in Avondale and died from the gunshot wounds. These are the kinds of connections you can develop with some of these people.

One thing I pride myself on throughout my career is my ability to work closely with prisoners.

When dealing with prisoners, I have always tried to be fair in my decision making and yet firm ensuring I explain the reasons for any decision, which they respect.

Here's a quick story: After a couple of years on the job, I went into one of the high security units. While unlocking the cells, I encountered a prisoner with psychological problems. He was hyped and amped, and I decided to give him space. The other prisoners in the unit were very mindful of him because he was not only violent but also quite capable.

As mentioned earlier, back then there were only two staff working in those 48-bed high security units. On the day, I made the mistake of not warning my colleague about this guy being a threat. I assumed everyone could recognise someone who was that pissed off. The prisoner got on one of the pay phones, and the call must have gone badly because he threw a cup of tea across the unit, hitting the wall.

My offsider decided to reprimand him, but he turned around, picked up and threw my colleague across the office in front of me. I was sitting there having a coffee, thinking, "What the hell?" I jumped up and directed the prisoner out of the office where I could speak to him away from other the prisoners. The Unit Office has good lines of sight, so the other prisoners in the unit could see what was happening. The prisoner turned to me with eyes as big as saucers, clearly in a state of rage, and came straight at me and threw a punch that whistled past my ear. Thanks to my training in control and restraint, I managed to take control of the situation and, with help from other staff, remove him from the area.

Drugs play a huge part in the increase in crime that's occurring. With the 501s and all these gangs coming back from Australia, the gang population has doubled in size over the last five years. There are many factors contributing to the current crime rates in society.

Our role, as I mentioned earlier, is to implement the right programs to give these individuals hope and the opportunity to gain employment. Speaking of employment, 40% of New Zealand prisoners wouldn't be able to read an employment contract or tenancy agreement if they were freed today. That's a significant problem.

To address this, we offer numeracy and literacy programs to improve their odds. If anyone has any questions, I'm happy to answer them.

Q: If the government came and asked you what we can do to reduce the number of prisoners re-offending within two years of release—currently at 56%—what would be your answer?

A: Good question and not that easy to answer. There are many reasons why people offend. The main reason is the prevalence of mental health issues among prisoners. A high percentage suffer from conditions like foetal alcohol syndrome; drugs play a part and many of their issues are generational.

Imagine if your parents were gang members, you'd likely want to live up to their expectations. Most of us wanted to be like our parents or even surpass them. Until we can get out into the community and support struggling families, we won't see significant change. It's not about giving people money, as many don't know how to manage it. It's about providing knowledge and understanding, helping people make their own way in life.

COVID has caused additional challenges that we'll likely face in the future. By addressing these underlying issues and providing the right support and education, we can work towards a better society.

Q: You mentioned some prisoners escaped through a broken window. Was there no security fence or barbed wire?

A: Let me explain. We had workshops, including an engineering shop. Prisoners would go there and get searched upon returning. However, like in most industries, there are staff that do their job well, and some unfortunately don't. The prisoners had managed to smuggle a crescent wrench into the unit. The window had bars bolted from the outside, but the nuts weren't burred over. They used the wrench to move the bars aside. One of the prisoners was quite large, so had to be greased up to fit through the narrow window.

At that time, there was only a single fence around the prison. They later added another fence, and around the new building, there are six layers of security. An ex-prisoner on the outside at the time cut a hole in the fence to help them escape. We didn't have electronic security back then. Nowadays, if someone touches the fence, an alarm goes off, and we respond immediately.

The ex-prisoner picked them up, and they went to Muriwai, stayed the night at the fire station, got some gear, and then headed to the Coromandel.

Q: When it comes to discipline, especially with primary school kids, the teachers have had their authority removed. They can't discipline the kids or keep them under control, and the kids know they can get away with it. Does not instilling any form of societal discipline result in increased crime?

A: We face a similar problem in the prison. With the new build, we have cameras in every corner of the prison, except inside the cells. We also have body cameras, and staff are constantly reminded to turn them on for their safety. It has been proven that advising an assaultive person you are going to record their actions can calm them down.

However, if you're dealing with a violent prisoner, you need to match their intensity. Some staff feel this might come across on camera as though they're inciting the prisoner. The reality is that at times, you have to stand your ground. It's not about being threatening; it's about using tactical communication and demonstrating you have the confidence to manage the situation.

Q: How much influence do you have if you believe a prisoner is not safe to be back on the streets?

A: One of the things we do at the prison is to keep detailed file notes on prisoners. These recordings dictate a prisoner's security classification. If a prisoner is consistently behaving poorly, we put negative notes in their file, which affects whether they can be moved to a less secure area. When a prisoner goes to the Parole Board, case managers collect all this information and present it to the Parole Board. This allows the Parole Board to see the prisoner's behaviour clearly throughout their sentence and make appropriate decisions about

releasing a prisoner. The reality is, though, that once a prisoner gets to the end of their sentence, they have to be released.

For those deemed a serious risk, ankle bracelets are used to track and restrict their movements. There are limits to what we can do, but once a prisoner's sentence is complete, we must release them.

Q: Did you have anything to do with Dean Wickliffe?

A: No, he was a bit before my time. I spent a lot of time flying in and out of Wellington for a while and on one occasion I walked into a hotel where we all stayed, and there was Dean. I said, "What are you doing here?" I cannot remember what his response was. He was the first person to escape from Paremoremo.



Dean Wickliffe is the only person to have escaped Paremoremo maximum security prison twice, in 1976 and 1991. He was New Zealand's longest-serving prisoner.

RELAXED ELEGANCE

A MEMORABLE VISIT TO METLIFECARE ORION POINT



The elegant main building of the newly opened Metlifecare Retirement Village at Orion Point

Recently, we had the pleasure of visiting the stunning new Metlifecare Retirement Village at Orion Point, Hobsonville. It was truly an experience to remember!

Thanks to Amanda McCullough and Kirsty Guy, we enjoyed a complimentary coffee morning in the village café. The large bay windows offered views of the complex and surrounding areas.

Inside, the elegant décor—new furniture, carpeted floor, and high rise ceiling—provided an atmosphere of refined comfort.



Cosy comfort at Metlifecare Orion Point's cafeteria for our coffee morning

Our group was then split into two for a guided tour of the village. We explored an apartment and a villa, visited the large indoor swimming pool, saw the well-equipped gymnasium, looked in at the bloke's workshop and walked down to the residents' pavilion by the coastal walkway.

While in the workshop, I had a surprising reunion with Dennis Watt, a former colleague from my days at Post Office PABX section in the 1970s. He is now a resident at Metlifecare Orion Point.



Maurice Forbes and John Mihaljevic silhouetted at Metlifecare Orion Point's pool

What made this tour different from visiting the village on an advertised open day, was the relaxed pace and company of fellow club members. It allowed us to explore freely without feeling the usual pressure of sales pitches or the need to consider retirement village life.



View from a spacious and beautifully tiled apartment balcony

To top it off, we received complimentary coffee and muffin vouchers in our glossy sales packs. The café is open to the public from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, Monday through Friday. I'm looking forward to returning to enjoy another flat white coffee at the Orion Point retirement village café.



The resident's pavilion had a definite wow factor

UPCOMING OUTING TO AUCKLAND ZOO

Ian Smith has announced that our next outing will be to Auckland Zoo on **Wednesday, 25th September**. This will be an "own transport" event, meaning most attendees will drive their own vehicles. For those who prefer public transport, the number 18 bus from New Lynn to Auckland City via Great North Road is a convenient option, running every 12 minutes during the day and providing easy access to the Zoo.

While Ian hasn't confirmed a start time, we can likely expect the usual 10:00 AM beginning. It's recommended to arrive early, as school groups often visit, and the prime parking spots fill up fast.

Our last trip to the Zoo was in November 2022, and for those who missed it, the Zoo has undergone significant improvements. Gone are the days of elephant rides and chimpanzee tea parties. Now, the focus is

on providing natural habitats for the animals, and the grounds include a variety of excellent dining and relaxation options. Te Puna Café is a personal favourite, and I imagine many of us will enjoy spending time there during our visit.



Members enjoying a relaxing break at Te Puna Café during the Zoo visit in April 2021

You can purchase your ticket online from the Auckland Zoo website for the 25th of September and get the discounted price \$16.50 for those aged 65 and over.

Otherwise, use your Gold Card at the entrance. Ticket prices are \$24 for adults and \$20 for seniors.

NEXT COFFEE MORNING

The next coffee morning is scheduled for **Friday, 20th September at 10:00 am**. We will once again gather at Gloria Jean's Café located in The Boundary shopping centre in Henderson.

The turnout visibly surprised the proprietors at our last Gloria Jean's coffee morning, with numerous West Auckland and Waitakere Rebus members in attendance. They couldn't conceal their delight as they watched their café fill with so many customers so quickly.

One feature I particularly appreciate about this venue is the empty parking area accessible from Newington Road. I always spot our coffee morning organizer, Ian Smith's grey Toyota Prius, parked there when I arrive.



The parking area behind the shops is always less crowded than the main parking area in front

There is a convenient back door entrance from this parking area, which opens into the corridor running alongside Gloria Jean's Café.



The 'EXIT' sign at the end of the corridor alongside Gloria Jean's directs you to the door that opens to the Newington Road car park

RETURN TO MCHUGH'S FOR A MEMORABLE CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Last year's Christmas Lunch at McHugh's of Cheltenham was a great success, so much so that Ian Smith has recommended we return for the 2024 Christmas Lunch. Ian has chosen **Wednesday, 4th December** for this year's event.



Members arriving at McHugh's for the 2022 mid-winter lunch

To secure our spot, we need to book early and pay a \$300 deposit soon. At the next meeting, we will gauge interest in returning to McHugh's. Please consider this outing and let us know at the next meeting, if and you will be going to the Christmas Lunch.

Most of us will once again travel by bus from St John's Hall, departing at 9:45 am. This year, the bus will take a scenic route via the Kauri Glen Reserve in Northcote. A highlight of this reserve is the newly opened

"Sky Bridge" that guides you through the forest canopy over the Waiurutoa Stream and is located among an impressive stand of kauri trees.



The boardwalk is 18 metres above the valley floor

The upper part of the reserve features smooth, low-gradient tracks leading to the "Sky Bridge," making it suitable for wheelchair or mobility-impaired users.

Some members may choose to drive to McHugh's because of mobility issues. We encourage you to use your own car rather than miss out on the Christmas Lunch.



Ian Smith with John Corban and his wife enjoying the 2023 Christmas Lunch at McHugh's

ANNUAL ROAST MEAL AND MOVIE AT RYDER'S

Trevor Pollard has been working behind the scenes to ensure the continuation of our annual roast meal and movie at Ryder's. This event has become a favourite among some of our members, with memorable gatherings in December 2022 with the Avondale Waterview Historic Society and in December 2023 with the Henderson Falls Friendship Club.

Trevor started the arrangements by reaching out to Allison Turner, secretary of the Avondale Waterview Historic Society. Allison has now made a booking with Clint Ryder, and we're all set to enjoy another wonderful day.



Ryder's movie and roast lunch with Avondale-Waterview Historic Society in 2022

Event Details are: Date: **Tuesday, October 1st**; Cost: \$38 per person (same as last year); Ryder's gates opening time 10:00 AM; Location: 177 Riversdale Road, Avondale.

Clint has requested that we secure accurate attendance figures to avoid any financial losses due to no-shows. Therefore, we'll need to collect a non-refundable \$38 in advance from those intending to go.

GUEST SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER



In 2018, Allan and Joanne Williamson embarked on a two-week paddle-steamer cruise down nearly the entire length of the Mississippi River, from Minneapolis to New Orleans (approximately 2,200 miles). They stopped at several towns and cities along the way.

In this talk, Allan will describe the cruise, details of the river system, the facilities and life onboard the paddle-steamer, and some of the places visited. He will share many images and memories of a leisurely and enjoyable journey.

SUPPORTERS



Our meetings are held at 10:00 am on the **2nd Friday of each month at New Lynn Friendship Hall**, located at 3063 Great North Rd. The date for our October meeting is Friday, 11th October.