



West Auckland Men's Rebus Club Newsletter

August 2025

Next meeting: 10:00 am Friday 8th August, 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	02102551937
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



Ken Webster enjoying good company with Mary Hibberd, President of the New Lynn Friendship Club, and her husband Bob Hibberd, who leads the New Lynn Lions Club.

MEETING REPORT

Friday 11th July 2025

Chairman: Bill Mutch

Attendance: 19 members and 5 visitors

Members: Neil Castle, John Corban, Vince Dennehy, Bill Fairs, Maurice Forbes, Robert King, John McKeown, Vince Middeldorp, John Mihaljevic, Eddy Molloy, Bill Mutch, Andrew Narayan, Trevor Pollard, Paul Robertson, Noel Rose, Ian Smith, Laurie Vincent, Ken Webster, Allan Williamson. Visitors: Mary and Bob Hibberd, and one other from New Lynn Lyons Club, Gary Marshall, and Owen (surname unknown).

1. Welcome and Introductions

President welcomed attendees and acknowledged new visitor Owen, who was introduced to the group.

2. Apologies Received

Apologies were noted from the following members: Mensto De Roos, Alan Verry, Charles Nicholls, Lyndsay Parris, Garrick Yearsley



Andrew Narayan, Neil Castle, and Maurice Forbes share a lively moment over morning tea.

3. Correspondence

Discussion on the latest Rebus Chronicles and a guide for Rebus Clubs from Rebus NZ. The guide contained suggestions for club operations and advice on increasing membership.

A spam message in Russian was received through the contact form on the website. When translated it related to escort services.

Vince shared his experience with CAPCHA filters to reduce spam and praised the effectiveness of Cloudflare's checkbox CAPCHA.

4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's report from Charles (in absentia) is similar to last month.

As of last month: 23 members had paid their subscriptions; 4 more expected to pay soon; goal is to reach 30 paid members.

5. Coffee Mornings & Outings

Ian Smith reported no new updates beyond what was covered in the newsletter (coffee morning at Kings Plant Barn scheduled for 23rd July).

Recent events members have attended: mid-winter lunch at Parkhouse Cafe; Te Huia train trip to Hamilton; 24th edition of Navy Band Senior Citizen's concert in Te Atatu.

6. Welfare Report

No new welfare updates were reported.

7. Speaker for Next Month

August Speaker is Susanna Burton-Thompson, a retired photo-journalist who survived a shipwreck and was involved in rescuing a prisoner from death row in Zambia.

8. General Business

Vince shared his experience using Notebook LM. He uploaded an audio recording of Adrian Riegen's talk on bar-tailed godwits, and in a couple of minutes it produced a well-written article suitable for the newsletter.

9. Lions Club Guests

Mary and Bob Hibberd from the New Lynn Lions Club were welcomed. Members were encouraged to greet them during morning tea.

10. Meeting Close

Meeting concluded with thanks to all attendees and an invitation to enjoy morning tea.

Claudia's Corner

What is the best-dressed country
in the world?
Tie-land.

Son: Hey Mum, what happens when a
car gets too old and claps out?
Mum: They sell it to Dad.

Dad: I am thinking of buying a pig
and keeping in your room!
Teenager: But Dad, what about the smell?
Dad: The pig will get used to it.

A man at his local Railway station asks
for a return ticket.
The ticket seller says, "Where to, Sir?"
Man: Back here, please.

Waiter: Sir, would you like the pizza
cut into four or six pieces?
Customer: Only 4, I couldn't eat 6.

Enjoy another winter meeting-----Claudia.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

A big warm welcome to you all — I'm looking forward to seeing everyone on **Friday, 8th August**.

Sadly, I wasn't able to attend **Anne Verry's funeral service**. The afternoon before, I received an urgent call from the hospital: I needed a blood transfusion the next morning. It was all go from there. I'm very grateful for the care I receive as they continue to monitor my **leukaemia and Parkinson's**.

Trevor Pollard kindly gave me a copy of the service sheet, and I'm sure Anne had a beautiful send-off. I've known **Alan and Anne** for many years, and Anne showed great courage throughout her long battle with cancer.

I'm feeling better now and hope to be well enough for our meeting — especially as I'll be celebrating my **84th birthday** the very next day, **August 9th!**

I also received a message from the owner of **Devonport New World**, who many years ago hosted us for a lovely lunch during one of our trips. Over the years, he's generously donated biscuits to our club. He's now retiring and sends his best wishes to all our members for a happy future.

As I haven't been out much lately, I'll sign off here.

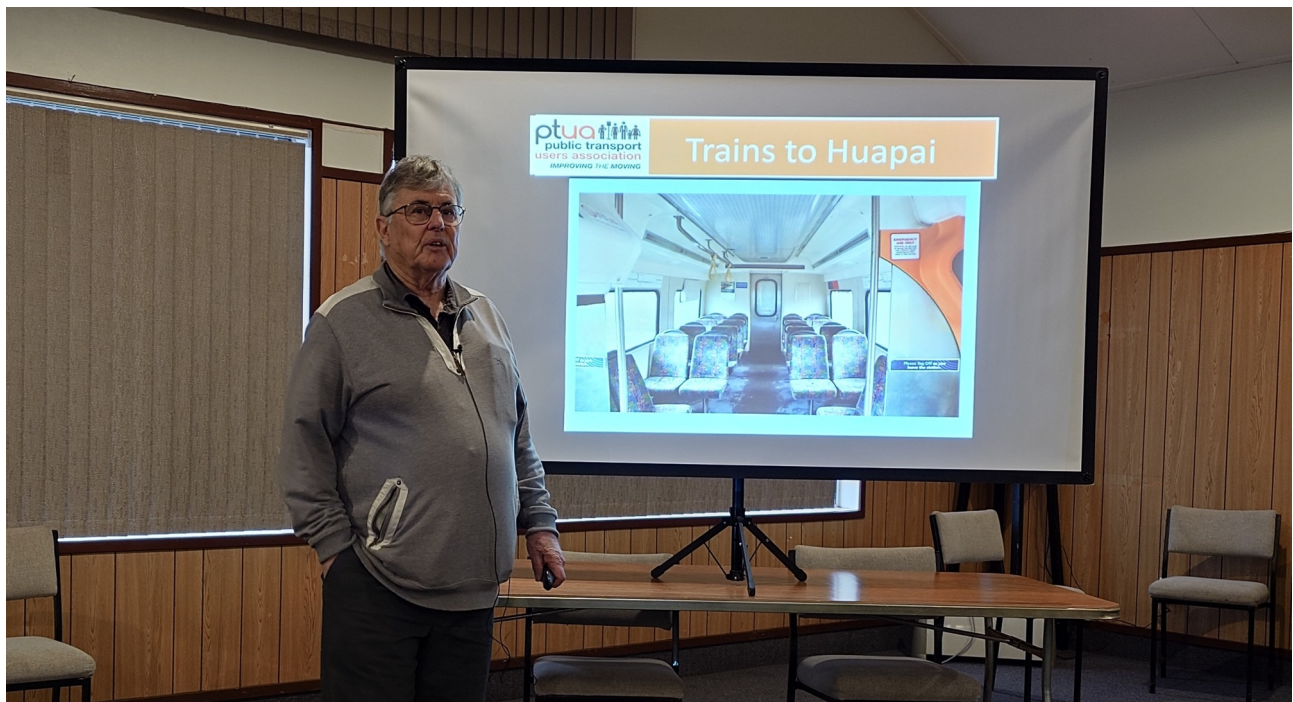
Warm regards,

Bill Mutch

REBUILDING AUCKLAND'S RAILS: A VISION FOR A SMARTER FUTURE

NIALL ROBERTSON

Google Notebooklm



Niall Robertson, Chairman of the PTUA, advocates for "Trains to Huapai" at the July meeting.

Welcome, I'm the chair of the Public Transport Users Association (PTUA). We're a not-for-profit organisation, powered by volunteers and entirely non-politically affiliated. Our core mission is to champion more efficient, environmentally friendly, and affordable public transport options. Crucially, we also advocate for passenger transport that is truly adapted for the 30% of our population who rely on it – that's people with disabilities, the elderly, or those facing financial limitations.

Auckland's transport history is a fascinating, if sometimes frustrating, journey. We've seen significant shifts over the years, often moving away from what was once a comprehensive public transport network.

A Look Back: The Decline of Our Rail Network

- Our city once boasted horsedrawn trams from 1884 to 1902, quickly followed by electric trams (James Duncan's talk, recorded in our [October 2022](#) newsletter, provides more information on the trams). By 1903, these electric trams saw 13 million boardings.
- Patronage peaked during the Second World War with an astounding 120 million boardings per year.
- However, just over a decade after this peak, the entire tram system was dismantled due to the rise of cars and roads. Looking back, one can't help but wonder if that was truly the wisest decision.

- Property developers set up the Takapuna Tramways & Ferry Company, built a line from Bayswater to Milford, and operated it from 1912 to 1927. While the tram line itself wasn't profitable, it served its purpose by allowing them to develop and sell their land.
- The Great Depression affected ambitious plans for railway expansion, such as the 1924 Auckland Council proposal for a new railway around the waterfront, under the city, and electrification of the entire system. Although the new line via Panmure and a new station on Beach Rd were completed, the underground and electrification on the network proposals were put on hold.

The 1950s marked a significant pivot. After the war, development was slow until around 1955, when a comprehensive motorway system plan was proposed and largely completed. By 1956, trams were out, replaced by diesel and trolley buses, cementing Auckland as a **very road-focused city**. I find it ironic that even beautiful plane trees, excellent for CO2 sequestration, were chopped down for trolley bus wires. The late 50s saw diesel replacing steam on the suburban rail network, the Harbour Bridge opening, and motorways starting to appear.

In the late 1960s, a rapid rail scheme was proposed, but it wasn't supported by the government, which was prioritising motorways. Even when the government became more sympathetic in the 1970s, Citizens and Ratepayers dominated the council and killed off the proposal. This period, coupled with economic stagflation, further embedded **car dependence as the norm** in Auckland. An attempt to close the urban rail system in 1983 was narrowly saved by the casting vote of ARA Chairman [Phil Warren](#).

A Turnaround and New Challenges: Things began to shift in the 1990s when public transport was taken more seriously. Professor Newman from Australia, brought over by campaigners, shared insights on Perth's successful urban electric system. A fortunate side effect of his visit was the availability of Perth's old diesel railcars, which Auckland purchased. These 19 railcars gradually replaced older trains by 1993 and, for the first time in years, our urban public transport had heating. This led to a **remarkable 69% boost in patronage**, spurring the council to believe that a better system would attract more users.

The early 2000s saw significant developments:

- Britomart Station was opened in 2003, quickly becoming a very busy hub. Its limitation, however, was being a dead end, restricting train capacity.
- We began acquiring more rolling stock, including ex-Queensland carriages (modified for bi-directional travel) in 2003 and X Mark 2 British Rail carriages in 2004, which were converted for urban use and called SA carriages.
- By the late 2000s, our system looked much tidier, with new trains and the opening of Newmarket Station and the trench at New Lynn Station in 2010. The Western Line duplication and Onehunga Line also opened that year.

A major setback occurred in early 2010 when the Super City Regional Transport Authority, a democratic organisation where citizens could voice their needs to politicians, was disbanded. It was replaced by **Auckland Transport (AT), which we find to be anything but a council-controlled organisation**. There are current efforts to disband AT and return to the previous model, but legislative hurdles mean this won't happen for at least another 2.5 years.

Despite this, persistence from figures like Len Brown led to the approval of the City Rail Link (CRL). By 2013, electrification was well underway, and the new depot for electric trains opened. In April 2014, the first Auckland electric train began running on a scheduled service, a proud moment for our campaign.

However, things soon went "pear-shaped". The council proposed light rail along major roads, which initially didn't concern us. But when budget issues arose, the comprehensive plan was abandoned and strangely replaced by a plan for light rail only along Dominion Road to the airport. This made no sense to us, as light rail is best for shorter routes and speeds of no more than 50 km/h. For destinations like the airport, **rapid or heavy rail is essential, offering higher capacity and much quicker travel times**. This shift, driven by transport consultants and town planners who benefit from such projects, led to the PTUA splitting from the Campaign for Better Transport, as we felt they fell under this "spell".

The light rail to the airport plan was scrapped by the current government, but they have not reverted to the original heavy rail plan

Our Current Campaigns and Vision: The PTUA is actively campaigning for several crucial rail projects:

1. **Airport Rail (Heavy Rail)**

- **The Problem:** The airport, and surrounding Mangere employment hub (MEH) for 30,000 people (and growing), currently relies entirely on road transport for its 18.7 million annual passengers. The current truncated Onehunga line service, which runs to Newmarket and requires passengers to change trains there, has seen a 60% drop in patronage. AT's current rail plan is nonsensical and threatens the Onehunga line.
- **Our Solution:** We propose running an airport train from the CBD to the airport in just 33 minutes via the Eastern Line, with stops at Panmure, Ōtāhuhu, and Māngere. This would be a circular route, which connects through to the Onehunga line. For the Onehunga line to survive, it needs duplication, grade separation of level crossings, longer platforms for six-carriage trains, an extension to Wiri via the airport and Māngere employment hub, and a connection to the proposed Southdown line. Without this, it risks being truncated back to Penrose and eventually deemed unprofitable.
- **Route Protection is Critical:** I've written to politicians and the council about the folly of not having route protection. Areas intended for future railway lines are now being built upon with warehouses, adding about 50% to construction costs if we have to elevate tracks above roads.

2. **Trains to Huapai (Northwest Auckland)**

- **The Problem:** Huapai, with 20,000 residents, justifies a railway station, but has virtually no functional public transport. The existing railway to Swanson is freight-only beyond a certain point, with trains still limited to 40 km/h despite significant upgrades. Northwest commuters face extreme congestion, with 16,000 more vehicles daily on their two-lane road than on the Waikato Expressway.
- **Our Solution:** We are proposing a privately funded shuttle service from Huapai to Swanson, running hourly from 6 am to 8 pm, with twice-hourly services at peak times. This would use existing SA and SD units. This initiative requires no government money and has support from the current mayor, local councillors, and former transport ministers.
- **Overcoming Obstacles:** KiwiRail is blocking this, citing vague "major problems" with the line and a "nothing before the CRL opens" stance. However, my analysis and official information requests show their claims about tunnel safety and track conditions are unfounded or exaggerated. The tunnel is small, and fire risks are minimal with modern, fire-suppressed trains. The track has recently been upgraded, with some parts even better than the main line.

3. **Next Harbour Crossing (Heavy Vehicle Bridge with Mini Rail)**

- **The Problem:** The current Harbour Bridge is in poor shape due to heavy traffic far exceeding its design capacity. High winds close it not because cars are unsafe, but due to fears of trucks tipping over. Extra road tunnels simply encourage more traffic and are unhealthy. The CRL also needs relief as a single point of failure could shut down the entire system.
- **Our Solution:** We propose a new bridge for heavy vehicles (trucks and buses) that also includes heavy rail, pedestrians, and cycleways. This bridge would go from Victoria Park to Onewa Point, allowing for a direct run by rail to the airport for North Shore residents.

Why Rail is the Way Forward: Public transport, especially rail, offers immense benefits that current authorities often overlook:

- **Social Equity:** It provides a vital service for the 30% of the population who need it most, including those with disabilities, the elderly, or those with financial limitations. Our current intercity transport options are often poor, leaving many without viable choices.
- **Environmental Impact:**
 - It reduces CO2 emissions.

- It reduces particulate pollution: Crucially, recent studies show that tyre wear and road dust produce about 2,000 times more particulate pollution than modern car and truck exhausts. This is a major public health crisis, linked to 7 million premature deaths globally each year. In New Zealand, it accounts for 400 deaths annually and 13,000 hospital admissions from asthma attacks. This particulate matter contributes to serious illnesses like stroke, heart disease, lung disease, and cancer, and can even hinder cognitive development in children.
- Tyres also produce phenomenal amounts of microplastics, with tire microplastics now being the biggest contributor to microplastics in our oceans. We are literally breathing in about a credit card's worth of microplastics every year.
- Rail transport has a significantly smaller land footprint. Two railway lines can carry the equivalent number of people that would require 24 lanes of road. Road transport is the most inefficient and polluting form of transport.
- **Economic Benefits:** Public transport saves the city about a billion dollars a year in lost production due to congestion. It also significantly reduces road damage, saving billions in pothole repairs and resurfacing.

A recent quote says that "we have perfected the art of indecision and we like to wrap opportunity with caution, and halfway through someone changes the rules and nothing is accomplished" (Roger Partridge). This rings true for much of our infrastructure development. It's time for a clear vision and decisive action.

If you believe, as we do, that Auckland deserves a better, more sustainable, and equitable transport system, please consider signing our petition. Just google **change.org trains for Huapai now**. You can also join our association to support our efforts. Thank you.

COFFEE MORNING WITH WAITAKERE COMBINED REBUS CLUB

Vince Middeldorp



Rebus club members enjoying conversation and good company over coffee and treats at Kings Plant Barn.

Our West Auckland Men's Rebus Club joined forces with the Waitakere Combined Rebus Club for a delightful coffee morning on Wednesday, July 23rd, at Kings Plant Barn Cafe on Universal Drive in Henderson.

The venue was bustling with activity, with the cafe doing a roaring trade and a large, hardworking staff behind the counter serving numerous customers. It was interesting to note that there were far more people visiting for the cafe than for the plants, shrubs, fruit trees, fertilisers and other garden supplies that the plant centre offers. People going to cafes seems to be a trend in the area, with Kreem Cafe across the road also being very well patronised.

The majority of attendees were from the Waitakere Combined Rebus Club, which makes sense as they're the larger club and the Henderson location is more convenient for their Te Atatu-based members, while our New Lynn location is a bit further away.

This gathering was particularly special as our last coffee morning at Kings Plant Barn was back in May 2021, which had been better attended by our West Auckland Men's Rebus Club members. As our membership ages, we're finding that fewer members are able to attend these social gatherings compared to years past.

The cafe has new operators since our last visit. The new operators of the cafe are from the Indian community, with one kitchen staff member wearing a turban, suggesting they are Sikh. If memory serves correctly, the previous cafe operators moved on to take over The Falls Bistro, which they renamed The Alderman.

The morning provided excellent opportunities for fellowship, with members like Eric and Janelle Davison joining the gathering. Eric had also attended the recent Navy Band concert and, like others, thoroughly enjoyed the performance.

As the morning wound down, Andrew and Linda Narayan, Trevor Pollard, and I discussed plans to attend Anne Verry's funeral at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church. We discussed the limited parking at the church, and I went to the church afterward to find the location. I noticed Trevor Pollard had the same idea, as his white van was leaving just as I got there.

FAREWELL TO ANNE VERRY: A LIFE OF GRACE, COURAGE, AND COMMUNITY

Vince Middeldorp



Anne Verry, in a red jumper, sits between Trevor Pollard and her husband Alan at Ryders on 6 December 2022, while Linda Narayan distributes yellow Tyvek wristbands to the table.

Several members of our club attended the funeral of Anne Verry, held on Friday, July 25th, at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Henderson. Anne passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by family, after a courageous battle with lung cancer. Her illness had a rare genetic component, present in only 8–10% of lung cancer cases.

The choice of venue was deeply personal: Anne was not only a parishioner of St Andrew's but one of its most dedicated contributors, helping sustain the church's life and work in countless quiet ways. The church itself is modest in size—so much so that Google Maps mistakenly identifies the adjacent manse (the minister's residence) and its garage as the church building.

Despite the church's size, the turnout was immense. Every seat was filled, and a sound system relayed the service to those gathered outside—clear evidence that Anne's impact reached far and wide. Her husband, Alan Verry, though visibly out of his comfort zone at first, greeted attendees with quiet dignity. By the time of the reception, he seemed more at ease, no doubt relieved that the service had gone so well.

The funeral began at 11:00 am and concluded shortly before 1:30 pm, a testament to the richness of tributes shared. Among the most moving moments was a musical tribute by Ben Makisi, often called “The Polynesian Pavarotti.” His rendition of “Time to Say Goodbye”—made famous by Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman—was a highlight. Ben’s powerful voice and presence left a lasting impression, and it was no surprise to learn he’s won prestigious competitions such as the McDonald Aria Competition at the Sydney Opera House.

One of Anne’s sons, Tim Verry, spoke at the service. Some may recall reading about Tim in the New Zealand Herald in August 2024, in connection with the tragic death of his wife, Pastor Helen Verry, who was killed when a roller door fell at Church Unlimited in Glendene. The door had been improperly installed, and the company responsible was ordered to pay \$200,000 in reparations.

In his eulogy, Alan Verry shared a lighter memory: he met Anne while both were working at the National Mutual Insurance Company. He described himself as a “West Auckland hoon” and Anne as a “Mt Roskill girl.” Alan also mentioned his participation in the Heatway International Motor Rally, the longest rally ever staged in New Zealand, covering over 3600 miles across both islands.

The reception following the service was a chance to reconnect. One particularly meaningful encounter for me was with Phillip Walden, a fellow trainee from my days of telephone exchange technician training—an acquaintance not seen in 54 years. Phillip worked at the Te Atatu Telephone Exchange and shared that he had gone on to earn a degree at Victoria University and spent most of his career at Spark. He also revealed he had served as President of the Railway Enthusiasts Society (RES)—a detail that explained his presence, as Alan Verry is actively involved in the RES.

Anne Verry’s funeral was not only a farewell but a celebration of a life well lived—marked by love, service, and quiet strength. Her legacy lives on in the hearts of those she touched, and in the community she helped build.

NEXT COFFEE MORNING

Ian Smith has emailed to say the next coffee morning is on Wednesday August 20th, at The Alderman, 22 Alderman Drive, Henderson. Start time is the usual 10:00 am.



Rebus club members enjoying a coffee morning at The Alderman in October 2024.

Free parking is still available along the boundary with The Alderman in the car park at the corner of Edmonton Road and Alderman Drive. These spaces are marked for 120-minute parking. If those spots are full and you'd prefer not to pay for parking, continue along Alderman Drive to the West Wave swimming pool. There are always plenty of free parking spaces available there.

MOVIE & LUNCH AT RYDERS CINEMA – LET'S GO!

Kick off spring with a classic comedy on the big screen followed by a delicious roast lunch at Ryders Cinema (177 Riversdale Rd, Avondale) on Tuesday, 2 September 2025.




 Gates open: 10:00 am;  Movie starts: 10:30 am.

The movie is ***Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines (1965)*** – a hilarious romp through a 1910 London-to-Paris air race. Look out for Robert Morley, the villainous Sir Percy (Terry-Thomas) and cameo appearances by Benny Hill, Tony Hancock and Eric Sykes.




Stepping back to the golden age of aviation with Terry-Thomas and Eric Sykes.

What's for lunch?

 Roast with two meats  Potatoes, kumara & gravy  Carrots, peas & beans ☺ Tea & coffee

How to book:

 Email: office@res.org.nz or alanverry@gmail.com

 Phone: 09 636 9361

Payment details:

Cost: \$48 per person (movie +  a Magnum ice cream + lunch)

Bank account: **12-3027-0332084-00**

Name: **The Railway Enthusiasts Society**

Reference: Your surname + Ryders

Please pay and book by **Friday, 22 August 2025.**

Questions?

Call or text Alan Verry on 027 270 1385 or email alanverry@gmail.com

Please note that a minimum of 25 bookings are required for this activity to proceed

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 Road. The date for our September meeting is Friday, 12th September.