



West Auckland Men's Rebus Club Newsletter

September 2025

Next meeting: 10:00 am Friday 12th September, Friendship Hall, 3063 Great North Rd, New Lynn

COMMITTEE

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Hospitality	Trevor Pollard		817 8822
Attendance	Stephen David	sj david55@gmail.com	021641717
Welfare Officer	Bill Mutch	celebrantwedding@gmail.com	021316556



Garth Dutton with a defibrillator in his orange knapsack on a boardwalk section of the Te Atatu Coastal Walkway, with Alan Verry on his right, who knew the walkway well and guided us through familiar turns.

MEETING REPORT

Friday 8th August 2025

Chairman: Bill Mutch

Attendance: 20 members and 5 visitors

Members: Neil Castle, John Corban, Bill Fairs, Maurice Forbes, Robert King, John McKeown, Vince Middeldorp, John Mihaljevic, Eddy Molloy, Bill Mutch, Andrew Narayan, Charles Nicholls, Lyndsay Parris, Trevor Pollard, Ian Smith, Alan Verry, Laurie Vincent, Ken Webster, Allan Williamson, Garrick Yearsley.
Visitors: Mike (prospective new member), Gary Marshall, and three visitors associated with guest speaker Susanna Burton-Thompson.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The President extended a warm welcome on a winter's morning.

2. Apologies Received

Apologies were noted from the following members: Mensto De Roos, and Noel Rose (hospitalised with shoulder injury).



Visitors Gary Marshall (drinking from green cup) and Mike (arms folded) who intends to become a member.

3. Correspondence

Rebus Chronicles – includes notice of AGM on Hibiscus Coast in 2026.

Rebus Club News – to be distributed the Sunday following with a coffee morning reminder.

4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Charles Nicholls acknowledged the general trends and said a full update will be provided next 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. Trips and Coffee Mornings

Ian Smith said the next coffee morning would be at The Alderman on Wednesday, 20 August.

Alan Verry is promoting a trip to Ryder's Cinema in Avondale on 2 September. Interested members were asked to indicate attendance (no payment required yet).

Papatoetoe Historical Society are celebrating 150 years of railway in the area with a display open from 24 July to 5 October at the local museum, Papatoetoe Chambers, 35 St George St, Papatoetoe.

6. Welfare Report

Continued difficulty contacting Stephen David. Multiple attempts made; no updates available.

7. Celebrations

Birthday acknowledged for Bill Mutch (date: tomorrow 9 Aug). Surprise cake presented by Treasurer's wife. Also celebrated: a member, Neil Castle, turning 96 this month. Group sang "Happy Birthday" with candle lighting.

8. Closing

Meeting concluded with thanks and invitation to enjoy morning tea.

Claudia's Corner

Have you heard of the new tennis game called quiet tennis?
It's the same as normal tennis, but without the racket.

What do you get if you cross a mouse and an elephant?
Bigger holes in the skirting boards.

What do you get if you cross an a gorilla with a parrot?
I do not know but when it talks you listen!

Which King of England wore the biggest shoes?
The one with the biggest feet.

Teacher: You should have been here at 9 am.
Pupil: Why, what happened!

How do you flatten a ghost?
With a spirit level.

What do you call a man with a 'kilt on his head?
Scott.

What's the best way to kill a circus?
You can go straight for the juggler.

Enjoy the almost spring meeting,
Cheers Claudia.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Bill Mutch

Hello everyone,

With the last day of winter behind us, it's wonderful to welcome the warmer days of spring.

A great new opportunity has arrived: the Te Huia passenger train from Auckland to Hamilton is now running on Sundays! This is a fantastic and easy way to enjoy a day out. This service is free, but please remember to bring your Bee card.

A big thank you to everyone who signed up for the recent trip to Ryder's for a movie and lunch. It's gratifying to see such strong support. Sadly, I was unable to join you, but I'm grateful to Alan Verry for once again organising a wonderful outing. Your efforts are truly appreciated, Alan.

On the welfare front, I'd like to send our best wishes to Trevor Pollard, who has faced some health challenges recently, requiring at least three hospital visits since our last meeting. I've been keeping in touch with him regularly, especially as it's just him and Oscar at home now. On a brighter note, he's kindly taking two ladies to the Ryders outing—good on him.



Trevor Pollard and his little dog Oscar head for home after the movie and lunch at Ryders on Tues 2 September

On a personal note, I am very grateful to now have some excellent home help, and I'm pleased to report that my own medical results have improved significantly.

Finally, as your President, my priority is to ensure our club is working for all its members. I'd like to get your thoughts on our meeting hours. Some clubs have increased membership by holding their meetings from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM, which is particularly helpful during the winter months. Please let me know if you have any feelings or suggestions about this idea.

I look forward to seeing you all at our next meeting.

**Warm regards,
Bill Mutch**

A LIFE OF SURPRISES: MY JOURNEY AS AN IMAGE HUNTER
SUSANNA BURTON-THOMPSON



"My mother, at 96, walked me down the aisle. I've photographed 500 weddings, but none as joyful as mine. Everyone was laughing, clapping, and cheering."—Susanna Burton-Thompson, at the close of her talk.

Hello, everyone! My name is Susanna Burton-Thompson, and I'm thrilled to share some stories from **my life of surprises**. It's been a truly privileged existence, one I could never have planned, filled with unexpected turns and incredible encounters.

I always wanted to be something creative. Initially, I thought I'd become a dress designer, but my art teacher suggested to my mother that I would be a good photographer. My first job after leaving school was working in my mother's arts and crafts shop, doing window dressing.

Then, a fascinating advertisement appeared: "Wanted: one young woman, no experience necessary, must be willing to travel and be trained in photography" for "Truth" newspaper. I went for the interview and got the job on the spot. I was trained by [Peter Bush](#), who simply gave me a camera and sent me out to photograph people. I worked there for three years, earning enough money to travel overseas. Photography has always been good to me, including three years as a stills photographer at Television New Zealand.

My life took a significant turn when I decided to **put God first in my life and truly become a believer**. Just three months later, the *Logos* ship opened—the world's largest international floating bookshop. Being on board was like being in a spiritual hothouse, surrounded by young believers hungry to know the truth and share their faith.

One of the most powerful stories from my life of surprises involves Francis, a policeman in Zambia. Due to corruption and financial struggles, the police weren't being paid. In desperation, he attempted an armed robbery, which led to him being immediately **put on death row in a maximum-security prison** in Zambia.

Francis was in solitary confinement before getting a room-mate named Reuben, who was always happy and content. One day, while walking in the prison courtyard, Francis expressed his desperation for meat. Reuben suggested they pray. Believe it or not, **two quails flying overhead collided and dropped at their feet**. This miracle led Francis to become a follower of Jesus.

Francis became a truly changed man, filled with real joy. He later wrote to me, saying, "**Hate has gone. Love has become my habit.**" Somehow, he found the address for the *Logos* ship and asked for Christian books and Bibles to be sent to the prison. I took up the challenge and sent books to the prison church for five years.

Then Francis wrote again, asking a monumental favour: "Will you please ask the President of Zambia to set us free?" When President Chiluba came to New Zealand, I heard him speak and was struck by his compassion. My sister, brother-in-law, and I wrote a simple letter explaining that Francis had totally changed, that his wife and children needed him, and that after ten years in prison, he would be a good citizen. We addressed it simply: "President Chiluba, State House, Zambia."

Five weeks later, while I was in Japan, I called my sister. She quickly told me, "**Susie, quick, before the phone cuts off, I have to tell you, Francis is free!**" Never underestimate the power of a letter. Francis's wife, Theresa, had waited faithfully for thirteen years, selling potatoes singly to survive. After his release, Francis went back to prisons, talking to inmates about changing their lives.

Years later, I had the privilege of meeting Francis and his family in Zambia. One day, watching television with them, Francis explained that fifty men who had attempted a coup were in prison, but they had become Christians. Even more exciting, Francis revealed that President Chiluba had asked him to preach to these men.

My life of surprises also included a dramatic shipwreck in January 1988. We were on the *Logos* in the Beagle Channel at the bottom of South America, trying to cut through from Chile to Argentina. The Chilean pilot warned us about some rocks but left the ship early. What he didn't account for was that you can't steer a ship that's slowed right down.

Just after the pilot left, **we hit the rocks**. It was midnight when I heard a voice going down the corridors: "**Get your life jackets on! Go to the dining room and pray! Take the children!**" The dining room filled with people, life jackets on, everyone praying.

The Chilean Navy arrived quickly. Initially, there weren't any holes, and the captain planned to be pulled off the rocks at 5 AM. Some people went back to sleep, but not me—this was a great assignment for a photographer, and I forgot to be afraid.

By 5 AM, a hole had worn in the bottom of the ship, and water was coming in. **We had to get rescued by lifeboats.** Thankfully, nobody got hurt. The men were incredibly gentlemanly, ensuring women and children were on the boats first.

I lost everything except my cameras and the film from the last part of the trip. There was no insurance, but people worldwide sent money for a new ship even before we asked. Within a year, a new, bigger, and better ship was built. This experience truly taught me that **good often comes out of bad situations**, especially when you have faith in a loving God.

In my younger years, I was too busy to get married, but I was also waiting for a truly lovely, godly man. I never married until I was 69 years old.

My husband, Owen, had been widowed two years prior. He was praying, asking God if there was another woman for him. One day, he woke up knowing absolutely that I had never married, loved Jesus like he did, and had served God. Two months later, I walked down the shared driveway, and he looked out his window and said, "**That's the one. I believe that's the one the Lord promised.**"

My mother, at 96, walked me down the aisle. I've photographed 500 weddings in my life, but I've never seen one with so much joy as mine. Everybody was laughing, clapping, and cheering. Owen and I married four years ago, and it's a beautiful story that's my favourite.

We had a three-week honeymoon, and for the third part, we took my mother with us. While we were away, the COVID lockdown was announced, so we couldn't take her back to her retirement village. **We spent the first month of our marriage with my mother in our B&B underneath!** She was a character, always wanting to be involved.

Technically, I was never the world's best photographer. However, for me, the most important thing about photographing people is **getting on well with them and making them feel comfortable.** I always tell people when I'm about to take their picture. Natural, unposed photographs often turn out better, but it usually takes many tries to get a good one.

I've had my share of photography disasters. Early in my career, I accidentally burned the carpet at a bride's mother's house with my tungsten light. Another time, I got locked in the toilet and had to climb out a window to get to the wedding. As a sports photographer, I was absolutely hopeless—I **went back with a photo of the Clerk of the Course instead of the winning jockey!** I realised then that people were my thing.

Following Jesus has been absolutely wonderful. It has changed my life, given me a beautiful Christian husband, and filled me with a deep, unwavering peace that assures me I'm on the right path. Thank you!



Wrapping up her presentation, Susanna Burton-Thompson addresses a question from Neil Castle.

A MAGNIFICENT DAY OUT AT RYDERS

Vince Middeldorp



Ryder's theatre, formerly the West Wind Cinema, offers seating for 60 and a front-row ticket to nostalgia.

On Tuesday, September 2nd, 39 members and friends enjoyed a movie and lunch outing at Ryders in Riversdale Road, organised by Alan Verry from the Railway Enthusiasts Society. True to form, Alan extended the invitation to West Auckland Rebus Club members and other friends.

The event was sparked by Trevor Pollard's suggestion that we should return to Ryders – an idea that Alan readily embraced. While Alan initially stated in his flyer that the event would only proceed if more than 25 people booked, he was quietly confident from the start that we'd exceed that threshold. The enthusiastic response proved him right, with people travelling from as far as Hamilton to attend.

Our host, Clint Ryder, was delighted with the turnout and full of praise for Alan's organisation. Despite having to handle everything single-handedly – from cooking the buffet lunch to operating the movie projector – Clint delivered an excellent experience. He expressed optimism about the venue's future after installing new drainage to prevent any repeat of the flooding damage from Cyclone Gabrielle in 2023.

The feature film was "Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines," the classic 1965 aviation comedy that proved as entertaining today as it was nearly 60 years ago. Comedians such as Benny Hill, Eric Sykes and Tony Hancock had substantial roles, not the brief cameos I was expecting.

It was particularly wonderful to see Janet Geddes join us – our first chance to catch up with her since Andrew's stroke and move to rest home care. Trevor Pollard brought along friends from Selwyn Village, while Annette Gough represented the Waitakere Rebus Club.

The day perfectly captured the spirit of our club outings: good company, entertainment, and the chance to explore local gems like Ryders' unique venue.



As the buffet lunch is served, Noel Rose (grey cardigan), Merilyne Rose (purple cardigan), John Mihaljevic (brown jacket), Annette Gough (red hat), and Alan Verry (standing by the seat) enjoy the lively atmosphere.

A REFRESHING STROLL ON THE TE ATATU COASTAL WALKWAY

Vince Middeldorp



Rebus members on the Te Atatu Coastal walk: David Gatland (left), Alan Verry and Vince Middeldorp (right).

On Monday, September 1st, members of our club were invited to join the Hibiscus Coast Rebus Club's "Amblers and Ramblers" for a walk around the Te Atatu Coastal Walkway. Two of our members—Alan Verry and I—accepted the invitation to go on the walk.

I had several reasons for wanting to go. It was a walk I hadn't done before, and was in Te Atatu, which is a suburb I travel to every day. Another was a [YouTube interview](#) I had recently watched—which has now had over 7 million views—with Dr. Roger Seheult, a top critical care doctor. He talks about how sunlight, fresh air, and being out in nature can seriously boost your health.

As I drove to the Te Atatu Peninsula, the weather looked ominous with dark clouds gathered over the Waitakere Ranges, and a light rain falling on the windscreen. Fortunately, it remained dry throughout our walk. I later heard that New Lynn was hit by a heavy hailstorm—so that's where all our rain ended up!

The walkway itself offered a diverse experience, weaving together concrete footpaths, narrow wooden boardwalks, and gravel trails that traced the peninsula's scenic coastline. Alan proved to be an invaluable local guide, having completed the route many times before. His foresight in bringing a hiking pole was a subtle hint that the coastal walkway was not going to be anything like a smooth concrete cycleway.

Among the Hibiscus Coast group, naturally I knew Garth Dutton, President of Rebus NZ, because he had visited our club to present our 40th Anniversary Certificate. I also knew David Gatland, the club's speaker organiser and fellow University of Auckland Electrical Engineering graduate, from my visits to their club.

The walk concluded perfectly at the Delicious Café, which truly lived up to its reputation as the best café on the Te Atatu Peninsula. It was a wonderful opportunity to combine exercise, fresh air, and fellowship; ticking all the boxes for a healthy, enjoyable outing that connected our two clubs.



Our group at the Delicious Café, enjoying coffee and something to eat, after completing the coastal walk.

COFFEE MORNING RECAP—20 AUGUST AT THE ALDERTON

Vince Middeldorp

Attendance was lighter than usual, but those present enjoyed a relaxed morning of coffee, cabinet food and conversation. Because of the crisp weather, members opted for The Alderton's cosy interior over the outdoor seating.

Our club was represented by John Mihaljevic, Alan Verry, Trevor Pollard, and me. Apologies were received from Andrew Narayan and Raymond Barrett, both unwell. Noel Rose phoned on another matter and mentioned he hadn't checked his emails—otherwise he might have joined us. Waitakere's turnout was also affected by a missed reminder email.

Ian Smith shared an interesting update from the Henderson Falls Friendship Club. Their newly elected President has resigned unexpectedly, and with no Vice-President in place, the club has been left in limbo. This is the club with which we have held some very successful joint events.

Trevor Pollard shared an intriguing story about a drainlayer-builder friend who spotted problematic drainage work in a new development. He contacted Auckland Council's drainage department, only to be told that a private company was handling the drainage inspections. The Council's drainage spokesperson then said they couldn't intervene since compliance was the private company's responsibility. We know that contracting out inspections played a large role in the leaky homes saga. Is the Auckland Council making the same mistake again?

Alan Verry brought us up to speed on the long-discussed Avondale–Southdown rail link, a \$6 billion project crucial for moving freight between Northport and South Auckland. KiwiRail, he noted, must show tangible progress soon or risk losing the rail corridor. This project is expected to become a major focus once the new Auckland Central Rail Link opens next year.

Despite the modest crowd, the morning was rich with conversation and camaraderie. We look forward to seeing more members next time!



Eric and Janelle Davison from Waitakere Rebus are always a welcome sight — never short of a thoughtful comment or lively perspective during our coffee morning chats.

NEXT COFFEE MORNING



The next coffee morning is on **Wednesday, September 17th**, at **Sierra Cafe**, 111 Lincoln Road, Henderson. Start time is the usual 10:00 am.

🎄 **REBUS CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2025—LET' HEAD BACK TO MCHUGH'S!**

Mark your calendars: **Wednesday December 3rd**, is our festive finale for the year, and we're returning to the ever-popular **McHugh's of Cheltenham** for a Christmas Lunch with all the trimmings.

🚌 **Travel in style:** Ian Smith is kindly organising a bus for those who'd like a relaxed ride. Departing **St John Hall, Edmonton Road at 9:30 am**, with a **coffee stop en route**, and returning around 3:00 pm.



📌 **Cost:**

- \$55 per person (includes bus)
- \$45 per person (if driving yourself)

🏠 **Payment details:**

- Bank account: **12 3232 0318628 00**
- Account name: **Waitakere Combined Rebus Club**
- Bookings and payments are **open now**—secure your spot early!



SUPPORTERS



We hold our meetings at 10:00 am on the second Friday of each month at New Lynn Friendship Hall, located at 3063 Great North Road. The date for our October meeting is Friday, October 10th.