



REBUS CLUB NEWS

September 2025

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Spring has arrived. We had 5 live lambs born this year, and they are frolicking in the paddocks. Daylight saving means darker mornings for a while, but it means summer is just around the corner! This month we have another wonderful selection of submissions from Rebus Clubs throughout New Zealand for you to enjoy.

WOMEN'S REBUS CLUB OF WAIKANAE



Our August Speakers were **Jill Reti and Claire Hagan**. Operating for over 50 years in Battle Hill Park Campground in Pauatahanui, Wellington Riding for the Disabled provides therapeutic interaction with horses, education, sport and recreation. Jill Reti (Manager) and Claire Hogan (Senior Coach) explained how the charity works with disabled children and adults to strengthen muscles, improve physical health, develop social skills, build confidence and independence. Currently 85 individual sessions are held each week in a purpose built, covered arena with specialised flooring. Eighty volunteers assist riders, support activities or help maintain the facilities. Excellent slides and a video illustrated how the horse's natural movements create the same human muscle activity. Individualised programmes, overseen by a physiotherapist, cater for riders with differing needs, goals and abilities – some fully supported by assistants either side, others using carefully positioned gear or levels of supervised independence.

In September, our Fashion Parade was presented by Merric of Coastlands. They provided three outfits for each of our six lovely Rebus models showing off this year's Spring and Summer fashions. A big 'thank you' to our models, Wendy, Loretta, Barb, Sandra, Ann and Christine, who showed off the clothes so well.

- Mary Paddock, Newsletter Editor.



TAUPO MOANA REBUS CLUB



"20 members Taupo Moana Rebus made the trip out to Huka Prawn Park to learn a little about the "aquatic crustaceans" that have put this Taupo tourist attraction on the map, being NZ's only prawn farm and the world's only geothermally heated prawn breeding park. The Giant Malaysian River prawn likes a temperature of around 26 degrees to flourish so the geothermal power station next door to Huka Prawn Park has played a big part in this enterprise. With guide Sophie leading us, we learned about the journey of the prawns from hatchlings to harvest-ready. And we also learned that these little critters are known to be cannibalistic, especially the males that fight and eat each other - if food is scarce - tentacles first, then head, and finally the victim's body! After taking all that in morning tea was enjoyed in the well-appointed Prawn Park's restaurant - looking out to the river and chatting. Sadly, Shawn the Prawn was not on hand to meet us. Maybe Monday was his day off!" **Kathleen Devane** - Christine Bailey, Newsletter Editor.

REBUS CLUB OREWA

Our Guest Speaker in August was **Susanna Burton**. She was a lively speaker on her life of random chapters. She is a retired photojournalist and author of *A Life of Surprises*. She worked for World Vision in Africa, and her mission helped a Zambian man in prison, he turned his life around and set up a church in the prison with books from the mission. Eventually the President of the day released him. The mission continued to send money to him to support his work. She spoke of being baptised and joining a Christian Mission Ship travelling the world, taking religious books to various countries. There were about 150 people on the ship including families for 3 years. In 1988 the ship ran aground on rocks, and the Chilean Navy came and rescued everyone. They took them to an island with only one phone line out of island. The incident was on the BBC news, and she sent photos to NZ Herald. The ship was unable to be saved. She left school with no academic achievements but was a creative person. She got a job with Truth newspaper where she got to travel. She met her husband when she went to live in Snells Beach when she retired, he was her neighbour.

Our club speaker in August was **Norman Biss**. He spoke of his family's arrival in NZ where they moved to Rothesay Bay, as a 10-year-old. His father saw sections of land being divided up on by a local farmer. His father bought a section for 108 pounds in 1949 and put a caravan on site which slept 4. There were other immigrants from UK also there and a good community spirit. His father built a house with no power tools. He had to drill down 40 ft for water with a hand pump. Rothesay Bay was quite empty in those days down to the beach. Edmund Hillary came to officially open the IHC holiday camp in 1959.



-Maureen Grigg, Bulletin Editor

REBUS CLUB OF WAIHEKE ISLAND

The inspiring mini speaker was **Esme Pfaff**, founder of Ahi Pao. Esme was born in Sheffield and after having her first child at 17, joined her brother-in-law working in recruitment. She then did a degree in accountancy and met her husband who was working in the denim industry. They had 14 jeans shops; the jeans being manufactured in Turkey. A pair of jeans was sold every 4 minutes, Retro, Renegade, London Jean Company. However, Esme became concerned about fast fashion. During this time, she had 5 more children and was also busy at work. She wanted washable nappies and launched an on-line nappy business with the nappies being made in Turkey. This was a niche business.



They could work from anywhere, so with 6 children set off travelling in a campervan around Europe. Esme did a Steiner school degree and home educated the children. They then travelled around Australia for six months, NZ for 6 months and also Thailand. The family then emigrated to New Zealand and lived in the middle of the Coromandel Peninsula. Esme did not want to be involved in fast fashion, and they opened a shop in Queen Street selling cashmere which had a massive market with Chinese tourists. They kept being asked for possum/merino and so decided to manufacture it themselves. Esme then took over the Harbour Master's building at Matiatia. She explained the process of making a cashmere sweater, there is no wastage whereas with artificial fibres 30% ends in landfill. What is happening now with people buying on-line is not sustainable and the knock-on effect terrible, if we want a choice in what we buy in the future we must buy and support locally. Just after they had opened Ahi Pao, covid hit, and they walked away from their Queen Street store, Esme got leukemia, had a stroke and was 6 months in hospital, and the business fell over. They now have a big order from China, have employed two more people and are running their machines 16 hours a day. Sustainable fashion is close to her heart.

The main speaker was **Nickie Jones**, fluent in Norwegian, French, Russian, English and some German. Aged 16, Nickie fell in love with the Russian language and at age 20 received a British Council scholarship to study Russian in Moscow, with a group of students of 27 nationalities. All their letters were censored, and they were allowed 3-minute phone calls home once a month. She spoke of how beautiful Red Square was,



particularly first thing in the morning with the sun rising behind St Basil's Cathedral. She spoke about shopping Soviet style: they went in 3s, joined a queue, although not knowing what one was buying at the end of the queue. Maybe once a year it might be bananas, it might be meat and there would be a whole carcase that was being cut up, one would then queue to pay, then queue again to pick up one's provisions. They became good at the black market. Nickie showed pictures of the Central Market where produce could be found from Central Asia. Visiting the Bolshoi ballet was wonderful and very

cheap as was caviar and vodka. As students, they would go ice-skating and sing Beatles songs. All their rooms were bugged. They were not allowed to mix with Russian students. Russian propaganda was always being played on the radio and if they wished to communicate, they would turn the radio up and whisper in each other's ears. In winter walking home in the evenings there were always drunks lying about that the police would pick up in the morning, if their hats had rolled off, they could die of cold. In 1984 Nickie met Victor whilst standing in a queue, he was a hairdresser and well connected in the Moscow scene. He took her to meet his parents outside Moscow which was banned. She became Nina from Latvia! In 1985 things unravelled and Nickie was called into the British Embassy and was severely reprimanded and told not to hang out with Victor, the KGB had a file on her and she could be deported. Nickie returned to the UK determined to get Victor out, but she was unsuccessful. In 1988 when Nickie had finished University and was working in advertising, she was contacted by Sir Richard Branson who asked her to run Hotel Oreander in Yalta on the Black Sea. His plan was to redirect English tourists from Spain to the Soviet Union; it was a lot of fun. Richard would phone her every month; their calls were bugged. In 1989 Sir Peter Ustinov and the photographer Lord Patrick Lichfield were filming and photographing for a Unipart calendar and Nickie was employed as interpreter. In 1995 Nickie was living in Norway teaching Russian, French and English, she travelled around the world by train including the trans-Siberian and met up with Victor again. Earlier this year Nickie contacted Sir Richard who sent back the message, "If somebody offers you an amazing opportunity but you are not sure if you can do it – say YES then learn how to do it later! Nickie has a deep love of Russia and the Russian people. -Tania Sweet, Newsletter Editor.

REBUS CLUB OF PALMERSTON NORTH

Tony Nicholls, our Secretary and Club Speaker at the September meeting, gave us an interesting look into his younger years. As a child and later as an employee, his experiences at a native plant nursery in Taupo formed a significant part of his early life. After a short period in the Catholic church, he trained as a quantity surveyor in Wellington and was posted to Christchurch.

Rosalie Heckler, another of our members, presented a very interesting slideshow about her visit to the San Joachim Valley, California. The Valley is huge – 700 km long and 80 km wide. 80% of the world's almonds



are grown there and 14 million tonnes of tomatoes are grown and processed into paste each year. Other products include grapes, pistachio nuts, beef and milk. Rosalie also presented some interesting facts about Yosemite NP and Lake Tahoe.

A group of us had a great day out in Wanganui visiting the Serjeant Art Gallery – a wonderful amenity for a small city – and the NZ Glass workshop to see glassblowing and a display of excellent results.

-Dean Halford, Newsletter Editor.

"Whatever you do, always give 100% — unless you're donating blood." —Bill Murray

REBUS CLUB OF MANAWATU

SEPTEMBER MEETING SPEAKER: Forester **Mike Hodgson** returned by popular demand talking about Forestry Harvesting. We saw how the enormous, intricate machines worked and were guided by their skilled operators. Mike took us back to the 'good old days' with Kauri logging through to the current day, we also gained a new appreciation of the dangers in forestry work and crucial health and safety improvements for contemporary workers.



Our walking group was decimated by flu this month, but we did have friends joining us for coffee. *Picture: Kath Nevatt*

Margie Comrie, Newsletter Editor.

RIVERSIDE REBUS CLUB OF HAMILTON



Photo - From our last tramping group walk at Omokoroa.

-Steve O'Sullivan, Bulletin Editor.

MT. HOBSON REBUS CLUB



The Club speaker in September was Evan Teale. He writes: In the year 2000, my wife Janette and I made an exciting move to Malaysia. I'd been offered a role in pharmaceutical distribution — a fantastic career opportunity and a chance to live somewhere new, explore Southeast Asia, and meet people from all walks of life. We embraced the adventure wholeheartedly. But as they say — not all that glitters is gold.

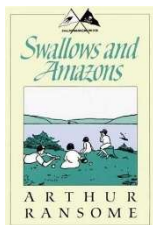
Soon after starting the role, I noticed something troubling: clear signs of internal theft. Being a straight-talking Kiwi, I did what I believed was right — I raised the alarm. What I hadn't realized was that this wasn't the work of a few bad apples. The rot went all the way to the top. Senior executives were involved, and suddenly, I found myself on very thin ice. We were

“encouraged” to visit fellow Kiwi colleagues in Thailand — a friendly suggestion that, in hindsight, was more about getting us out of the way. When we returned to our apartment, the situation had clearly escalated. Our apartment had been broken into. The lock was tampered with. Our tropical fish — every single one — had been killed and laid out in a trail across the floor. It was a message. A threat. And it was crystal clear. Soon, we learned our lives were genuinely in danger. We hired personal security — men trained to use lethal force if necessary. Let me tell you, nothing prepares you for sitting across the table from someone whose job is to protect you by potentially shooting someone else.

As we prepared to leave the country, more obstacles appeared. The moving truck we’d booked to pack up our lives vanished without a trace. No explanation. That’s when it hit us — we weren’t just in danger. We were trapped. That’s when New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) stepped in. Thank God for MFAT. They moved us into hiding — a hotel under strict security. For 48 hours, we stayed there, terrified, not even daring to shower in case someone burst in. I was warned not to contact my daughter in New Zealand — our phones were likely tapped, and any sign of movement could compromise our safety. Eventually, an escape plan was set in motion. We were driven to the airport under full escort — chased, believe it or not, by men on motorbikes. It felt like a scene from a spy movie, except this was our life. Our fear was very real. Even after safely landing in New Zealand, the ordeal wasn’t over. Our shipping container had to be fully inspected for hidden contraband. We had no idea what might have been planted. That’s how deep the corruption ran.

To this day, I avoid Malaysia. Even transiting through Singapore triggers anonymous phone calls — just a voice on the line saying, “We know where you are.” This experience taught me a lot. It opened my eyes to the scale of corruption that exists in some parts of the world — how quickly a professional expat can become a political target. And how doing the right thing is often the hardest thing. But I’d still do it again. Because integrity is non-negotiable. And thanks to MFAT — and a bit of Kiwi grit — we lived to tell the tale.
-Pat Alley, Newsletter Editor.

SOUTH WAIRARAPA REBUS CLUB



How did *Swallows and Amazons* author **Arthur Ransome** transform himself from a literary critic to a foreign correspondent who witnessed and reported on revolutions in Russia and China, then become a celebrated novelist read by children and adults alike? This was Ransome expert **Kirsty Findlay's** subject in her August address to SW Rebus Club.

She showed us images of a tiny notebook written by Ransome aged eight years. It is a 2000-word adventure story derivative of *Treasure Island* that testifies to his exceptional early talent. While ill, he had complained of running out of books to read. His mother suggested he write his own story!

He wrote a wide range of books including critical studies of Edgar Allen Poe, Oscar Wilde and, lost until 1990, of Robert Louis Stevenson. He first went to Russia in 1913 to learn the language and write a history of St Petersburg. He observed the Russian revolution at close quarters, reporting for *Daily News* (UK). He brought the British government information of the greatest value—his MI6 code name was S76—but was also detained and questioned by MI5 on suspicion of treason for expressing opposition to Allied intervention in the Russian civil war. He smuggled Trotsky’s personal secretary out of Russia, returning to England to marry her and became a *Manchester Guardian* essayist. Finally, he gave up journalism to create his much-loved novels for all ages, *Swallows and Amazons*, and its numerous successors. He was a great and complex man. - David Woodhams, Newsletter Editor.

“I told my doctor I broke my arm in two places. He told me to keep out of those places.”

— Rodney Dangerfield

WAIKANAE MILLENNIUM REBUS CLUB



COFFEE BUILDS STRENGTH TO BE ABLE TO BIKE HOME -The Cycling Group enjoying coffee at the Raumati Social Club.

Our speaker was **Navina Clemerson**, who talked about her book based on the terrible events which happened to her family. I thought she is a very brave woman to write about such horrendous things, and then to speak about them to us. It was clearly not easy for her, but oh so interesting for us.

- David Goggin, Newsletter Editor.

RED BEACH LADIES' REBUS CLUB



Our thanks to **Ian Hacking**, President of the Silverdale and Districts Historical Society and his wife **Jennifer**, pictured here with Club President Lorraine, following their very interesting talk about the Silverdale Pioneer Village. They brought along some of the objects which had been discovered in and around the village over the years. There were some interesting comments from members trying to establish what these objects were!

- Bobbie Wakenell, Newsletter Editor.

CAMBRIDGE REBUS CLUB



Last month we were entertained by St Peter's School junior choir and winners from the recent Solo Music Competitions. Cambridge Rebus Club members were enthralled with the wonderful sound of the choir, the soloists, and the beautiful piano and cello performers.



-Steve O'Sullivan, Newsletter Editor.

PAPANUI REBUS CLUB



Janette and Paul gave an insight into how to renovate a 250 + year old dilapidated property - Ivy Cottage in Cheshire, England. They bought it at an auction at a cost of £17,500. It needed completely restoring and showed us the photos before and after. They did all the work themselves apart from the new windows. They fitted insulated wall board, replaced all floors and ceilings, installed central heating with an anthracite burner in the lounge. It took 18 months to complete, and they lived in it for fifteen years. They sold the two-bedroom cottage in 1993.



Our Guest Speaker this month was one of our members, **David Eddy**. David gave us a wonderful talk on his adventures on a 3-week cruise, a Scott and Shackleton's Ross Sea Expedition to Antarctica. David was impressed with the great service and luxury conditions. He was advised to take many warm clothes and was given a big, warm parka to wear and keep. They visited Scott and Shackleton's huts. Some landings were wet landings – onto a beach. Others were snow landings – where the crew carved steps in the ice using a chainsaw and covered them with carpet. Talks and lectures were given every day. He showed us a lovely video of penguins lined up on an ice cliff and diving into the sea, one at a time, looking very much like synchronised swimmers. David's two words to describe Antarctica: Magnificent Desolation. - *Linda Barnes, Newsletter Editor*.



CAMBRIDGE MEN'S REBUS CLUB

Last month's guest speaker was the inspirational **Uluomato'otua ("Ulu") Saululu Aiono** who travelled down from Auckland to address us on "Cause and effect and its profound pressures in all human endeavour".

Despite the serious nature of the topic, Ulu conveyed his message most effectively, lacing his presentation with anecdotes and his marvellous sense of humour.

In August, 22 members visited SATCO, the NZ owned and operated logging attachment company based in Tokoroa, suppliers of forestry equipment.

The tour was followed by lunch at the Redwood Café, and a visit to the Putaruru Timber Museum

- *Nigel Salter, Newsletter Editor*.



WARKWORTH LADIES' REBUS CLUB

Our club continues to thrive, welcoming six new members at the August meeting. This brings our total to 68 members, with even more expected to join next month.

With the development of new interest groups, there are now more activities for members to enjoy. One such group saw 26 members gather for morning tea and coffee at MMK, right in the heart of Matakana Village.



Our baking enthusiasts took a delicious step back in time, exploring recipes from the 1930s Depression era—when ingredients like butter and eggs were scarce. A standout was the Wacky Cake, a rich, moist, and chocolatey treat born out of that time of resourcefulness, which everyone was delighted to sample.

Adding to the fun, the group tried their hand at butter churning—a novel experience for most! There was also time to whip up a simple one-bowl lemon brownie (mixed and baked in the same tin), and swap favourite recipe books.



The month's big highlight was the premiere of Downton Abbey – The Grand Finale. Forty-three members and guests attended, with many dressing up for the occasion. Prizes were awarded to the three best dressed, adding a touch of glamour to the occasion. Guests were treated to a complimentary morning tea served on fine china, generously donated by Hospice.

- Maryanne Dransfield, Newsletter Editor.

THE REBUS CLUB OF WANGANUI

Eight members from the Palmerston North Fitzherbert Rebus Club paid a reciprocal visit to our Club last month. They were a delightful bunch, and we shared a great day.



- Paerau T T-Mosen, Newsletter Editor.

“Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it, you’ve got to start young.”

— Theodore Roosevelt

REBUS CLUB OF GULF HARBOUR



The Guest Speaker at the September meeting was **Guy Slocum**, fighter pilot during the Cold War, which started towards the end of WWII, following a meeting at Yalta between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin. He started flying gliders at the age of 12, then flew the monoplane Austers. He earned his first pilot's licence at 17, and his "wings" a year later.

Target practise involved firing at a flag towed by another aircraft. The aim was to intercept the Russians before they could fire their missiles. Lightnings held fuel for only 50 minutes, so had to refuel mid-air sometimes up to 32 times. Guy transferred to the Royal Navy. Aircraft carriers always had a helicopter in the air ready to assist in case of an accident.



September Dine-Out - About 30 members from the Rebus Club of Gulf Harbour and Hibiscus Coast met at the Ship and Anchor in Orewa for an evening of good food, fun and fellowship.

Thanks to George Tregidga for organising these evenings.

Jean McIntosh, Newsletter Editor.

REBUS CLUB OF UPPER HUTT

The guest speaker was **Bryce Williams**. He is a lawyer from Lower Hutt who provides legal services in a variety of areas. They include wills, enduring powers of attorney, estate planning, estate administration and estate litigation, trusts, retirement villages, eligibility for means-tested benefits (Residential Care Subsidy) and obtaining personal and property orders through the Family Court.

In addition to his work for older clients, he assists families with the administration of estates and resolving disputes. He also acts for corporate, a charitable client who operate residential care facilities, providing general advice and debt recovery services. Bryce has been in legal practice for 20 years. Bryce was thanked by **Alex Davidson**.



-Alex Attewell, Newsletter Editor.

"I like work. It fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours." — Jerome K. Jerome

REBUS CLUB OF MILSON INC



What a happy time we had at our 25 years Celebration! A nice venue, a lovely meal and good company. Everyone I've spoken to said how well it went, so thank you to everyone who helped to make it a success.

Our day started with an entertaining talk from **Burnsee**, from Radio Magic, about his life in broadcasting, it certainly put us in the right mood. If he had been a doctor, his patients would definitely have been entertained!



-Margaret Broderick,
Secretary/Newsletter.



WARKWORTH MEN'S REBUS CLUB



Warkworth Men's Rebus Club were lucky enough to secure a talk by **Sir Graham Henry**, former All Blacks coach. He led the team to a World Cup win in 2011 among other things in his illustrious career. The talk was a Q&A session, MC'd by another rugby stalwart, **Steve Watt**, and a lively debate ensued especially after the All-Black's historic loss to the Springboks on the previous Saturday. To say the discussion was robust was an understatement!

As we knew this speaker would be popular invitations were sent out to other local Rebus Clubs, the local Rugby Club and the local newspaper, who sent along a reporter. We had about 30 guests, and the newspaper report all helps to raise our profile and attract new members.

Everyone agreed it was a great session.



Warkworth Men's Rebus Club visited the engine shed of Warkworth Museum where our member **John Trigg** and another museum volunteer showed off several historic engines to a group of nearly 30 Club members. The display included steam and diesel engines, mostly of agricultural use. There were many fascinating machines for all sorts of functions including a maize corncob peeler and a grinder to turn it into kibbled

corn. The noise was deafening; the atmosphere was thick with smoke and exhaust and yet it brought back many childhood memories of farms long ago. - *Stephen Becket, Newsletter Editor.*

REBUS CLUB OF HAMILTON

Mainly Men's Group: We gather informally once a fortnight to share a male perspective on life, sport and even social media. As we wander round local cafés, we have become connoisseurs of date and cheese scones. -*Kath Kenrick, Bulletin Editor.*

FITZHERBERT REBUS CLUB INC

Esmee and Ian Rowden are Red Cross volunteers. We all hear of the work Red Cross does around the world, but a lot of work is going on in N.Z. especially among the refugees who come to us from less than perfect lives in the countries of their birth. There are 100 million refugees in the world and only 1% of these get resettled in a new country. In N.Z. they arrive and are housed at the Mangere Resettlement Centre in Auckland for 6 weeks before being transferred to a city which they will call home. Esmee found that a lot of the women loved sewing and crafts, so she has established a network all over N, Z. for donated sewing machines. She has gathered 657 machines since 2019. A volunteer services the machines, so they are in good working order. This has proven to be a very worthwhile project and a credit to Esmee.

-*Rosy Look, Communications Secretary*

From The Editor:

One of the perks as my job of editor, is to read all the newsletters from around the country. In this issue I have tried to give a bit more space to the meeting guest speakers, and also the Club speakers. I know from experience in my own Club, it can be hard to find good entertaining speakers at times, but many Clubs have nailed it! -**Steve O'Sullivan, Editor, Rebus Club News.**

P.S thanks to Women's Rebus Club of Waikanae for this month's joke.

On a beautiful summer's day, two English motorcyclists were driving through Wales.

They stopped at Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwylllantysiliogogogoch for lunch, and one of the riders asked the waitress, "Before we order, I wonder if you could settle an argument for us. Can you pronounce where we are, very slowly?"

The girl leaned over and said, "Burrr...gurr...king."