

Meeting on Monday 8 September 2025

Welcome by President Dave

PN Rotary News

Venue: The Board confirmed that we will continue to meet at our existing venue – but minus dessert from October.

New Member: We are very pleased to welcome Steve and James Deans and Steve's Tyres and Autocare as a new Business Member. Steve will be the Primary member, and James will be the alternate. Please make Steve and James welcome. Steve's Induction will happen on Monday 15 September.

Honorary Memberships: The Board has confirmed Honorary Membership for Olga Barrett and Bill Bendall. Thanks to both for their excellent contribution to our community, overseas communities and Rotary International over the years.

New Constitution and AGM: Rotary Clubs are required to register a new Constitution which has been sent to us by Rotary District 9940. This Constitution will be circulated separately to members, and an AGM/Club Day will be arranged to approve it (tentatively 3 November 2025).

Brew Union Friday Drinks

Next Brew Union drinks is on 26 September 5.00-6.30. Bring your partner, and friends.

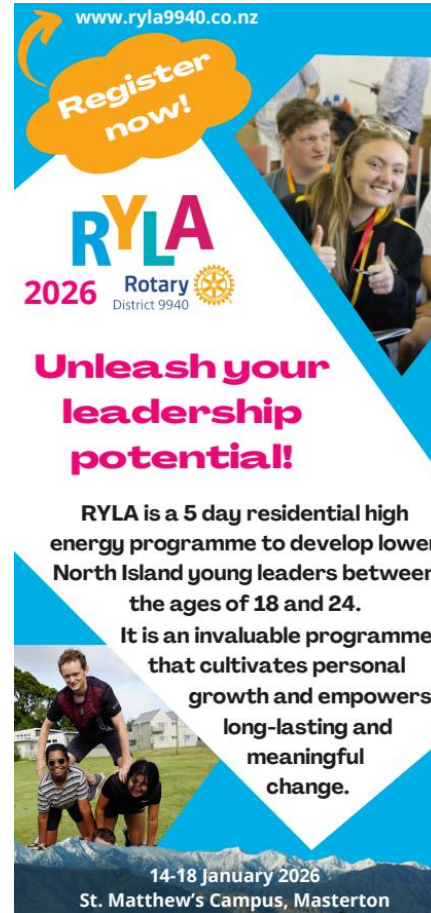
Croquet: Lesley Boulton has advised that Croquet kicks off in October. She will notify players of dates and times. Anyone wanting to play please talk with Lesley at the Monday meeting.

Rotary National Science and Technology Forum

Brian and Nick are conducting interviews in the next two weeks of the 4 RNSTF student applicants.

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards

The process of calling for and assessing candidates for 2026 RYLA has begun.



www.ryla9940.co.nz

Register now!

RYLA
2026 Rotary District 9940

Unleash your leadership potential!

RYLA is a 5 day residential high energy programme to develop lower North Island young leaders between the ages of 18 and 24.

It is an invaluable programme that cultivates personal growth and empowers long-lasting and meaningful change.

14-18 January 2026
St. Matthew's Campus, Masterton

Next Meeting Monday 15 September 2025

Welcome: President Dave

Induction: Steve's Tyre and Autocare, Steve Deans.

Nominator: President Dave

Welcome to Rotary: Martin Townsend

Speaker Rodney Wong,

"Social Equity in the \$3.3 billion NZ Screen Industry sector and the Art of Roasting a whole Pig in a Chinese Earth Oven...in Palmy."

Intro/Thanks	President Norelle
Attendance	Martin Townsend
Reception	Dan Wheeler
Sergeant	John Freebairn
Corporal	Ron Schalkwijk
Parting Thought	Enkay Onyema
Bulletin Editor	Steve Parsons

Report on meeting Monday 8 September

Our planned speaker Rebecca Culver of Just Zilch was unfortunately ill.

Mike Charles, a previous District Commander of NZ Police and a member of the Club for 37 years presented on his experiences as a Senior NZ Police Officer in Auckland during the 1979 Erebus disaster.

Reflections on the Erebus Disaster – Flight TE901

Introduction:

Steve Parsons opened by reflecting on his lifelong passion for aviation and the deep impact the Erebus disaster of 1979 had on New Zealand. He recalled the chilling words of a colleague who narrowly missed being on the doomed Air New Zealand DC-10 flight: *"I should have been on that flight yesterday."* He then introduced fellow club member **Mike Charles**, who was directly involved in the aftermath of the tragedy through his work with the New Zealand Police.



Mike Charles:

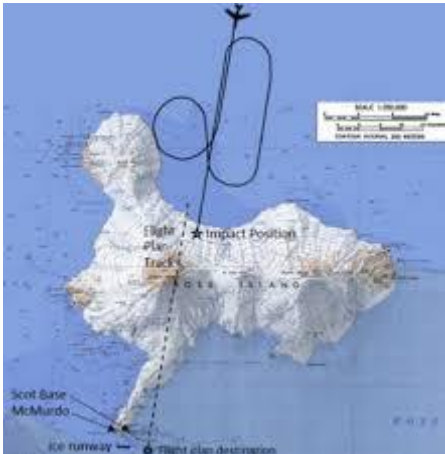
At the time of the disaster, Mike was a Detective Inspector with the Auckland CIB. When the DC-10 was reported overdue, he was called to help coordinate the police response. Once wreckage was confirmed in Antarctica, his role centred on one of the hardest duties: ensuring next of kin were notified with accuracy and compassion. With last-minute ticket changes complicating the process, great care was taken to avoid devastating mistakes.



In the weeks and months that followed, Mike led a team tasked with identifying victims as their bodies were returned to Auckland. Using dental records, fingerprints, clothing, jewellery, and personal items, they worked until March 1980. He shared powerful examples — including a passenger identified by a fingerprint in a borrowed Antarctic book, and another recognised by shoes purchased in Thames. In the end, all but one victim was formally identified.



Mike also spoke about the investigations: while the initial inquiry blamed pilot error, Justice Peter Mahon's Royal Commission concluded that a last-minute change to flight coordinates had not been communicated to the crew, putting the DC-10 directly in the path of Mount Erebus. Mahon's famous description of Air New Zealand's response as *"an orchestrated litany of lies"* remains one of the most memorable phrases in New Zealand's legal history.



**UNITE
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GOOD**



Archival Significance:

Mike still holds his original handwritten police journal from the Erebus investigation. This remarkable book contains the exclusive and contemporaneous record of how passengers were identified, page by page, as the process unfolded. It is a unique historical document tied to New Zealand's worst aviation disaster. Mike is now seeking feedback on where it should be archived to ensure its preservation and accessibility for future generations.



Thanks:

President Dave thanked Mike for sharing his unique experiences in what would have been a very harrowing task, identifying 257 people who had died and notifying all their relatives. The members thanked Mike for his service at that time and as an officer and Commander in NZ Police.

Parting Thought from Ramola Duncan:

Each of us can make a difference. Together we can make change. — Barbara Mikulski