



**NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION**



NZAA Annual Conference 2026

29 June – 2 July 2026

Takahanga Marae, Kaikōura

Mahi Tahī:

Working better together

Who We Are

The New Zealand Archaeological Association is the national organisation for archaeology with a membership spanning professionals, amateurs, students, organisations, businesses and institutions involved or interested in New Zealand archaeology and heritage. We actively aim to unite all persons engaged in or interested in archaeology by holding an annual conference and other seminars and workshops, for the discussion and further advancement of archaeological knowledge and practice.

Our objectives are to promote and foster research into the archaeology and history of New Zealand and further afield. Our archaeological record may be short in timespan by old world standards, but New Zealand has a rich heritage of archaeological sites which illustrate its 800-year history. We publish the Journal of Pacific Archaeology, a monograph series and the Association's quarterly newsletter, Archaeology in New Zealand.

As part of our national role, we lobby government and local authorities for the recognition and protection of New Zealand's cultural heritage through planning consultations and direct engagement. The Site Recording Scheme, initiated by the NZAA in the 1950s and today managed by the Association through its online portal, ArchSite, contains the records of over 60,000 archaeological sites in New Zealand. The records are used for the purposes of research and for the protection and management of archaeological sites.

Check out the links to our website and social media pages below and give us a follow!

Website

nzarchaeology.org

Facebook

facebook.com/NewZealandArchaeologicalAssociation

Instagram

instagram.com/nzarchaeology

Postal Address: P.O. Box 6337, Dunedin 9059, NEW ZEALAND

Email address: nzaa@nzarchaeology.org

Sponsors

The New Zealand Archaeological Association gratefully acknowledges the support of the following sponsors:



Conference Venue Information

Takahanga Marae, Kaikōura

Location Takahanga Terrace, Kaikōura

Overlooking Kaikōura township, approximately 2.5 hrs drive from Christchurch, and 1.5 hrs drive from Blenheim.

Takahanga Marae is the standing place of our hosts, Kāti Kurī, and though the marae recently celebrated its 30-year anniversary, Takahanga Pā was built centuries ago by Kāti Māmoe. The marae, buildings, and grounds are wāhi tapu. The documentary “The bones of our past” records the process of the construction of the marae, and can be watched at: <https://www.maoriplus.co.nz/movie/the-bones-of-our-past>

Staying at the marae

For those staying at the marae, please see Takahanga Marae’s info sheet for further information (<https://ngaitahu.iwi.nz/assets/Documents/Takahanga-booking-information.pdf>).

Mattresses are available, but guests need to supply their own sleeping bag/duvet, pillows, towels, toiletries, slippers, and bed sheets and pillowcases.

Arrival for pōwhiri

Upon arriving at Takahanga Marae on Takahanga Terrace, you will find yourself at the rear of the Marae. To go to the front of the marae for pōwhiri, please drive down the driveway, which is located on the left-hand side of the marae grounds (there is a large hedge on your left) where there is a sign that says “Manuhiri” (Visitors). The visitors’ car park is located at the end of the driveway so that you will end up at the front of the Marae. The pōwhiri will commence from the front of the marae.

Parking

Visitors parking is located at the end of the driveway alongside the north side of the marae (see above), or along Takahanga Terrace. Please leave the upper terrace free for members of Kaikōura Rūnanga.

Footwear

Papers are to be presented in the Wharenuī. No shoes are to be worn in the Wharenuī although slippers can be worn on any carpeted areas in the marae. Please bring slippers if you are uncomfortable being shoeless.

Photography

Photographs and videos are NOT to be taken inside the Wharenuī.

Smoking

Takahanga Marae is a SMOKE FREE complex, however a discreet designated area for smokers is available on request, please ask office staff where this is.

PROGRAMME

All paper sessions will be held in Maru Kaitatea, the Wharenuui, Takahanga Marae.

Monday 29 June

Morning	10:00 am 10:30 – 11:00 am 10:30 am	Pōwhiri Morning tea Registration opens, open throughout morning tea and lunch Introduction to Maru Kaitatea
	11:00 – 11:30 am	
	11:30 – 11:45 am	Kaikōura Rūnanga and NZAA introduction, favourite archaeological sites
Lunch	11:45 am – 12:45 pm	
Afternoon	12:45 – 3:00 pm ¹ 3:00 – 3:30 pm 3:30 – 4:45 pm 5:30 – 7:00 pm	Session 1: Papers Afternoon tea Session 2: Papers Welcome Event, Groper Garage, West End

Tuesday 30 June

Morning	8:45 am – 10:00 am 10:00 – 10:30 am 10:30 am – 12:00 pm	Session 3: Papers Morning tea Session 4: Papers
Lunch	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	
Afternoon	1:00 – 2:15 pm 2:15 – 2:45 pm 2:45 – 4 pm 4:30 pm 7:30 pm	Session 5: Papers Afternoon tea Session 6: Papers Student networking event, Groper Garage, West End Public lecture by Maurice Manawatu, Mayfair Theatre, Esplanade

Wednesday 1 July

Day	9:00 am – 4:00 pm	Field Trip
	Approximately	

¹ I know it's long, I'm sorry.

Thursday 2 July

Morning	9:00 am – 10:00 am 10:00 – 10:30 am 10:30 am – 11:45 am	Session 7: Papers Morning tea Session 8: Papers
Lunch	11:45 am – 12:45 pm	
Afternoon	12:45 – 1:45 pm 1:45 – 2:15 pm 2:15 – 2:30 pm 2:30 – 2:45 pm 2:45 – 4:15 pm 4:15 pm 6:30 pm	Session 9: Papers Afternoon tea Dave Robson Memorial Award Favourite archaeological site results NZAA AGM Mihi poroporoake / conference closing Conference gala dinner and awards, Donegal House, 258 Schoolhouse Road, Kaikoura Flat

Field Trip

Meet outside Sudima Hotel at **8:45am** where busses will take us down to across to visit one of the other pā on the peninsula, which may require a short 5 minute walk. From here the buses will take us to South Bay to visit the remains of the 1844-1922 whaling station. We will then head north along the coast to the Hinerongo Memorial, where there are sites lines to several significant coastal sites. A short trip will take us to Paparoa Point for lunch, after which we will travel to the Ohau Point lookout and seal colony. The final leg of the trip will return us to the Kaikōura Peninsula to visit the historic Fyffe House, the location of an early Māori settlement site and whaling station. The coastal winds can be cold so dress warmly. There will be a packed lunch but please remember to fill your water bottle and bring it along.

Gala Dinner

The gala dinner will be held at Donegal House, 258 Schoolhouse Road, Kaikoura Flat at 6:30 pm. Donegal House is a short distance out of town, so buses are arranged for return transport to the venue from the township.

Buses will leave at 6pm for Donegal House from outside the Sudima Hotel, corner of Esplanade and Yarmouth Street. Return bus trips to town from approximately 10:30 pm.

Conference events

Welcome event

Monday 29 June | from 5:00 pm
Groper Garage
50 West End, Kaikōura
Sponsored by CFG Heritage



Student networking event

Tuesday 30 June | 4:30 pm
Groper Garage
50 West End, Kaikōura
Sponsored by South Island Archaeology

Public lecture by Maurice Manawatu

Maurice Manawatu (Ngāti Kurī, Ngāi Tahu) will be speaking on the history of the Kaikōura area

Tuesday 30 June | 7:30 pm
Mayfair Theatre
80 Esplanade, Kaikōura
Sponsored by Clough and Associates



Field Trip

Wednesday 1 July | 9:00 am
Guided field trip to sites on Kaikōura peninsula and along the coast.
Meet 8:45 am outside the Sudima Hotel, corner of Esplanade and Yarmouth Street.

Conference Gala Dinner

Thursday 2 July | 6:30 pm
Donegal House
258 Schoolhouse Road, Kaikōura Flat
Bus trips to Donegal House from 6pm for seating at 7:00 pm, meet outside the Sudima Hotel, corner of Esplanade and Yarmouth Street. Return bus trips to town approximately 10:30 pm.

Pōwhiri/Conference Opening

9:45 am – 10:00 am Manuhiri /conference attendees gather at lower gate

10:00 – 10:30 am Pōwhiri/Conference opening

10:30 – 11:00 am Morning tea

Tikanga

We will be welcomed in with a pōwhiri by Kāti Kurī. Please see the information above about where to gather.

We will then find our seats.

The first speech will be given by tangata whenua followed with a waiata.

The Manuhiri (conference goers) speaker will respond, and the group will follow with the following waiata:

Ehara i te mea

Nō nāiane te aroha

Nō nga tūpuna

Tuku iho, tuku iho

Te whenua, te whenua

Te oranga o te iwi

Nō nga tūpuna

Tuku iho, tuku iho

Whakapono, tumanako

Te aroha te aroha;

Nō nga tūpuna

Tuku iho, tuku iho.

The koha will be given over.

The tangata whenua will finish off with the last speech.

Karakia to open up conference. Karakia for kai followed by morning tea.

Aotearoa's archaeology and Wikipedia

Which of your favourite archaeological sites aren't in Wikipedia?

Wikipedia is the first place students and the general public look to find out about archaeology in Aotearoa. But before the Archaeology Aotearoa project this year most of the major sites and discoveries weren't mentioned in Wikipedia: nothing about the Palliser Bay work, no articles on the Anaweka or Rēkohu Chatham Islands waka, and so on. These have been fixed but there's more to do. What should we work on?

They need to have a significant amount of published research about them, or coverage in the mainstream media—Wikipedia is a summary of already-published work. We're looking for "textbook examples" or case studies you routinely point students or the media to.

Question: what are the canonical sites or discoveries that need Wikipedia articles?

Scan the QR code below to go to the online survey. Voting closes at 3pm Thursday 2 July and the results will be revealed at the conference dinner.



Papers programme

Monday 29 June			
10:00 – 11:45 am	10:00 – 10:30	Pōwhiri	
	10:30 – 11:00 am	Morning tea	
	10:30 am	Registration opens	
	11:00 – 11:30 am	Introduction to Maru Kaiteatea	
	11:30 – 11:45 am	Kaikōura Rūnanga and NZAA introduction, favourite archaeological sites	
11:45 am – 12:45 pm	Lunch		
12:45 – 3:00 pm	Session 1 – Kaikōura archaeology		
	Time	Author(s)	Title
	12:45 – 1:00 pm	Alana Kelly	Introduction to the Archaeology of Kaikōura
	1:00 pm – 1:15 pm	Eliza Thompson	The Kaikōura Fyffe Site (O31/30): Faunal analysis and interpretation
	1:15 – 1:30 pm	Tristan Wadsworth	Takahanga Domain: an investigation in Kaikōura's north bay
	1:30 – 1:45 PM	Breather	
	1:45 – 2:00 pm	Angel Trendafilov	Excavations at Peketa Campground 2025-2026
	2:15 – 2:30 pm	Jeremy Habberfield-Short, Dan and Alison Witter, Jean Spinks, Te Rūnanga Kaikōura	NCTIR Archaeology
	2:30 – 2:45 pm	Dan Witter	Waipapa Point Fishhooks: Reliability and Maintainability
	2:45 – 3:00 pm	Questions	
3:00 – 3:30 pm	Afternoon tea		
3:30 – 4:45 pm	Session 2 – Material archaeologies		
	Time	Author(s)	Title
	3:30 – 3:45 pm	Jessie Garland	Uniquely colonial: situating the material culture of colonial Christchurch within its global context
3:45 – 4:00 pm	Nikole Wills	Wood you Believe it: Historic use of New Zealand Grown pine in Vernacular Architecture	

Monday 29 June			
	4:00 – 4:15 pm	Marie Dunn and Bradley McDonald	He ika kai ake i raro, he rapaki ake i raro: Experimental Approaches to Understanding Māori Fishing Cordage Properties
	4:15 – 4:30 pm	Adelie Filippi	Ngā tamariki rākau o Tānemahuta: Archaeobotany in an Aotearoa Context
	4:30 – 4:45 pm	Questions	

Tuesday 30 June			
8:45 – 10:00 am	Session 3 - Dating		
	Time	Author(s)	Title
	8:45 – 9:00 am	Caroline Phillips	A short history of radiocarbon dating in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Can dating tell us anything new?
	9:00 – 9:15 am	Simon Bickler and Fiona Petchey	The Aotearoa New Zealand Radiocarbon Database
	9:15 – 9:30 am	Simon Bickler and Fiona Petchey	Screwed by the Samples: How Research Objectives Shape the Radiocarbon Record of Aotearoa and the Pacific
	9:30 – 9:45 am	Fiona Petchey, Brian Allingham, Atholl Anderson, Simon Bickler, Rod Wallace, Gerard O'Regan	Murdering the Time: Making sense of early settlement
	9:45 – 10:00 am	Questions	
10:00 – 10:30 AM	Morning tea		
10:30 am – 12:00 pm	Session 4 – Essays in honour of Helen Leach		
	Time	Author(s)	Title
	10:30 – 10:45 am	Andy Brown	Early settlement models in Aotearoa
	10:45 – 11:00 am	Tim Thomas	Revisiting the blade production jigsaw
	11:00 – 11:15 am	Chris Jennings	Revisiting Māori tōki manufacture in Foveaux Strait
	11:15 – 11:30 am	Katharine Watson	On the kitchen complex

Tuesday 30 June			
	11:30 – 11:45 am	Eva Forster-Garbutt	Wallpaper and the Archaeology of Home in 19th Century New Zealand
	11:45 am – 12:00 pm	Questions	
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch		
	Session 5 - Sites		
	Time	Author(s)	Title
1:00 pm – 2:15 pm	1:00 – 1:15 pm	Mary O'Keefe	“So what kinda site is that? - reviewing the site types and features in ArchSite – Part 2”
	1:15 – 1:30 pm	Simon Bickler	Types, Topics, and Themes: Archaeological Data in the Age of AI
	1:30 – 1:45 pm	Craig Reidy	Drawing a circle: Archaeology and Maturanga in the Parawai/Totara/Maramarahi area
	1:45 – 2:00 pm	Prof. Annemarie Gillies and Dr Xavier Forde	Te Taunaha i ngā Tapuwae ō mātou Tīpuna: Piloting the use of Traditional Knowledge (TK) Labels by Ngā Hapū o Waimārama for their Archaeological sites
	2:00 – 2:15 pm	Questions	
2:15 – 2:45 pm	Afternoon tea		
	Session 6 - Community and mātauranga		
	Time	Author(s)	Title
2:45 – 4:00 pm	2:45 – 3:00 pm	Hayden Cawte, Jessie Garland, Jane Leighs and Katharine Watson	Sharing the past: community archaeology in Otautahi Christchurch
	3:00 – 3:15 pm	Jasmine Weston	Alongside the Mata-Au
	3:15 – 3:30 pm	Anne Ford, Gerard O'Regan and Tim Thomas	Empowering Kaitiakitanga: salvaging heritage together on the Moeraki Peninsula
	3:30 – 3:45 pm	Rachel Wesley, Gerard O'Regan, Tim Thomas and Marie Dunn	Tuia te Kupeka: Reflections from a Southern Archaeology Wānaka at Tūhura Otago Museum
	3:45 – 4:00 pm	Questions	

Thursday 2 July			
Session 7 - Between features			
9:00 – 10:00 am	Time	Author(s)	Title
	9:00 – 9:15 am	Matthew Felgate	An evolutionary series of inconspicuous deep-cut stone-lidded subsoil drain systems for kumara storage pit complexes at Mokoia Pā, Panmure, Auckland (R11/98)
	9:15 – 9:30 am	Helen Heath and Rose Young	Infills and Intercuts: Archaeological Excavation of Pā Ditch U14/3214 in Residential Tauranga
	9:30 – 9:45 am	Kirsty Sykes	Floods, Faith and Public Memory: Archaeology of St Andrew's Church, Blenheim
	9:45 – 10:00 am	Questions	
10:00 – 10:30 am	Morning tea		
Session 8 – Heritage and its legislation			
10:30 – 11:45 am	Author(s)	Title	Time
	10:30 – 10:45 am	Shea Esterling	Dark Skies, Heritage and Sustainable Development
	10:45 – 11:00 am	Caroline Phillips	Significance in Waiariki-ki-Tai: Addressing the vexed question of what is a significant site?
	11:00 – 11:15 am	Mike Dickison	Wikipedia as the public face of archaeology
	11:15 – 11:30 am	Emma Clifford, Mel Russel	A brave new world: Fast-track Approvals Act 2024
	11:30 – 11:45 am	Questions	
11:45 am – 12:45 pm	Lunch		
Session 9 - Te Pokohiwi ō Kupe			
12:45 – 1:45 pm	Time	Author(s)	Title
	12:45 – 1:00 pm	Catherine Collins and Lisa Matisoo-Smith	Genomic history of tupuna from Wairau Bar: an update
	1:00 – 1:15 pm	Monica Tromp, Amber Aranui, Peter Meihana, Karen Greig, Kristine Korzow, Ashley Scott, Camilla	Uncovering Wairau Bar's Bone Working Traditions Through ZooMS and Iwi Partnership

Thursday 2 July			
		Speller, Christina Warinner and Richard Walter	
	1:15 – 1:30 pm	Corey Heberd, Andrew Lorrey, Peter Meihana, Shaun Williams, John-Mark Woolley, Ruby McKenzie Sheat and Jay Hepi	Ground Penetrating Radar as a rapid non- invasive technique for mapping previously unrecorded archaeological taonga: The case of Te Pokohiwi o Kupe, Wairau Bar
	1:30 – 1:45 pm	Questions	
1:45 – 2:15 PM	Afternoon tea		
2:15 – 2:30 pm	Dave Robson Memorial Award		
2:30 – 4:00 pm	NZAA AGM		
4:00 pm	Mihi poroporoake / Conference closing		

Field trip itinerary

Wednesday 1 July

Guided bus trip to several sites along the Kaikōura Coast, including a pā on the Kaikōura peninsula, the South Bay whaling station, Hinerongo Memorial, Paparoa Point, Ōhau, and Fyffe House. Though there will be several stops, travel time is expected to total approximately 1 hr 45 mins on the bus.

Paper abstracts

Session 1 – The archaeology of Kaikōura

Introduction to the Archaeology of Kaikōura

Alana Kelly (South Island Archaeology)

Kaikōura has long human history and is well known for its rich archaeological and cultural landscapes. The region is home to diverse and nationally significant archaeological sites including those relating to early Māori occupation, coastal settlements, numerous pā, and later European arrivals.

This paper provides a brief overview of the history of archaeological work in the region, beginning with an overview of early surveys and research digs and concluding with some highlights from more recent redevelopment projects. Given the abundance of archaeological work and information available for the area, this paper aims to provide a concise background to archaeological investigations in the region, setting the scene for the following papers.

The Kaikoura Fyffe Site (O31/30): Faunal analysis and interpretations

Eliza Thompson (Currently working at InSitu Heritage, research for paper done as part of a masters degree through the University of Otago)

The Kaikōura peninsula contains a wealth of early archaeological sites suggesting it was a popular location for settlement. These early pre-European Māori sites are broadly characterised by midden-rich food processing sites on the low beachside flats that surround the peninsula. The Fyffe site (NZAA site O31/30), also known as Avoca Point, is representative of the many phases of human occupation that have taken place on the Kaikōura Peninsula. Though first discovered in the 1850s, the Fyffe site came under threat of development in the early 1980s leading to a series of salvage excavations undertaken by Michael Trotter and Beverley McCulloch between 1982 and 1987. These excavations found three phases of settlement at the site; an initial settlement period, a later gardening period, and finally a European whaling period associated with the Fyffe house. This lowest layer has since been dated to the earliest phase of human settlement in New Zealand and is characterised by large quantities of highly diverse midden. Like many sites in New Zealand excavated under duress, faunal material from the Fyffe site remained largely unstudied in the Canterbury Museum until the late 2010s, when funding was obtained for further research. A sample of this midden was subsequently taken and analysed by Tristan Russel and Eliza Thompson at the University of Otago. This paper aims to present the results of these analyses and frame the results within the wider context of the Kaikoura peninsula and settlement along the South Islands East Coast.

Takahanga Domain: an investigation in Kaikōura's north bay

Tristan Wadsworth (Underground Overground Archaeology)

Kaikōura's north bay is one of a number of extensive settlement sites, overlooked by the pā of the peninsula, with cultural layers, middens and ovens recorded across almost the entirety of the roughly 20 ha area of the bay. Excavation and investigation of the area has been piecemeal and associated with sporadic developments and infrastructure works. This paper will outline the results of 2022 excavations in the bay for the formation of the rugby club on Takahanga Domain, where the remains of whare were encountered.

Excavations at Peketā Campground 2025-2026: HNZPT Authority 2025/367

Dr Angel Trendafilov

Peketā Campground is a large campsite located on a flat strip between State Highway 1 and the ocean. It is a few kilometres south of Kaikōura and on the outskirts of Peketā pā - an important stronghold for Ngāti Mamoe and Ngāti Tahu.

In 2025, the owner of Peketā Campground – Ngāti Tahu invested in major improvements to the wastewater system and associated services, including the construction of a large wastewater treatment plant and a discharge field covering more than 3000 m², and more than 1 km of service trenches.

During these works, more than 140 archaeological features were found and investigated, including middens, ovens and postholes. This archaeological evidence testifies to the extensive use of the land as a mahinga kai and gardening area, with possible storage buildings (pātaka) and fish-drying racks. Using results from microfossil and faunal analysis, wood identified by taxa, and radiocarbon dates, this paper will try to shed light on the way of life of the local tribes before the European arrival.

NCTIR Archaeology

Jeremy Habberfield-Short, Dan and Alison Witter, Jean Spinks, Te Rūnanga Kaikōura

Excavations were conducted across multiple archaeological sites at Rākautara and Waipapa Point, north of Kaikōura as part of the North Canterbury Infrastructure Transport Recovery project subsequent to the 2017 earthquakes. The excavations recovered a large and diverse assemblage of artefacts and faunal materials. Together these materials form a coherent body of evidence for technological practise, subsistence strategies and the organisation of daily life within a highly productive coastal environment. The Kaikōura region occupies a distinctive ecological niche at the boundary of the Hikurangi Trough, where nutrient-rich upwelling supports an exceptionally abundant marine ecosystem.

This environmental setting underpinned intensive exploitation of marine resources, reflected in substantial midden deposits and specialised fishing technologies. At the same time, archaeological evidence demonstrates the continued importance of terrestrial resource use, including bird hunting and the processing of organic materials such as hides and fibres. The assemblage therefore provides a rare opportunity to examine how Māori communities integrated marine and terrestrial economies within a unified technological system.

Previous research in New Zealand archaeology has tended to focus on prominent artefact classes — such as fishhooks or adzes — often treating them as discrete categories. This presentation adopts a different approach, integrating examples of multiple classes of material culture to explore how diverse technologies functioned together. This integrated perspective highlights the interdependence of technological systems, in which tools were not isolated objects but components of broader chaînes opératoires linking resource procurement, manufacture, and use.

The assemblage also provides an opportunity to re-evaluate the relationship between artefacts and subsistence practices. While certain tool types—such as fishhooks—are often assumed to correspond directly with faunal remains, the NCTIR data demonstrate that this relationship is mediated by behavioural factors including tool curation, maintenance, and discard, as well as by differing modes of resource exploitation (e.g. routine subsistence versus episodic mass harvests). As such, material culture is best understood as a behaviourally structured record, reflecting patterns of practice (kawa), the environment, and Mātauranga Māori rather than being simple proxies for diet.

By bringing together multiple strands of evidence, this presentation hopes to contribute to a more holistic understanding of Māori lifeways in coastal Aotearoa. It demonstrates that material culture is not simply a reflection of technological capability, but an expression of adaptation, organisation, and cultural knowledge, embedded within both environmental contexts and social structures.

Waipapa Point Fishhooks: Reliability and Maintainability

Dan Witter

The technological terms reliable and maintainable come from design engineering and the concepts have been used in archaeological studies. They are used here in the description of the fisheries at the Waipapa Point coastal village site excavated by the NCTIR project.

The middens produced 18,164 identifiable fish bone elements. Baracoutta comprised 76% of the MNI and the rest belonged to 15 other species. The site also produced 29 barracouta lure hooks and 22 bait hooks. The principles of reliability and maintainability are used to explain the ratio of 47 fish per baracoutta lure hook and 19 fish per bait hook.

Session 2 – Material archaeologies

Uniquely colonial: situating the material culture of colonial Christchurch within its global context

Jessie Garland (Christchurch Archaeology Project)

Many cities across the Anglo-colonial world were historically connected to a global cultural and economic network evident in the urban archaeological record, particularly in the shared material culture of different urban settlements. Yet, the particularities of local contexts, communities and individual agency have led to the development of unique local identities in urban spaces. As a tool in the navigation of economic and socio-cultural behaviour, material culture showcases both the broader global connections of the nineteenth-century British world and the local agency evident in the ways that urban communities materially differentiated themselves.

This paper presents the results of a comparison of the origins of nineteenth-century material culture from Ōtautahi Christchurch with urban assemblages from Ōtepoti Dunedin, Melbourne, Toronto and London. When considered alongside the mechanisms by which domestic and commercial commodities

were made available to different settlements, the ‘unique’ colonial character of Christchurch is highlighted alongside similarities it shares with other colonial cities.

Wood you Believe it: Historic use of New Zealand Grown pine in Vernacular Architecture

Nikole Wills

Pine is the backbone of New Zealand forestry, but in nineteenth century rural Canterbury it was an experiment with surprising results. This paper examines an 1890s buggy shed constructed entirely from New Zealand-grown pine, revealing important insights into the utilisation of pine in nineteenth-century outbuildings. The paper situates this case study within the broader context of planting initiatives across the Canterbury Plains, which forms part of the historic foundations of forestry in New Zealand. By exploring the nuance of vernacular architecture, the paper aims to enhance our understanding of the legacy of nineteenth century tree planting and encourage a deeper appreciation of the archaeological value of ancillary timber structures.

He ika kai ake i raro, he rapaki ake i raro: Experimental Approaches to Understanding Māori Fishing Cordage Properties

Bradley McDonald (University of Otago | Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Marie Dunn (Rapuwai, Hāwea, Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Kāi Tahu, Kāti Rakiwhakaputa, University of Otago | Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Experimental archaeology can be a practice of embodying the lifeways of our tīpuna (ancestors). In Aotearoa there are many forms of mahi toi (traditional art practices) that have been passed down, while others may be practiced by a select few knowledge holders or have not been recreated in generations. For kairaraka (weavers), extracting whitau (fiber from Harakeke, Phormium tenax) for cordage is one of the foundation skills in mahi raraka (weaving). However, extracting fiber from other native plants appears to be less prevalent among weavers today. In addition to testing the properties of different cordages used for lashing pā kahawai, this project has taken an experimental approach to exploring the manufacture of cordage from Tī Kouka (*Cordyline australis*) as described in the ethnographic record. Becoming reacquainted with these mahi toi offers an avenue of connection to our tīpuna and helps in our understanding of materials that don't typically survive archaeologically. This project examines the properties of cordage made from Tī kouka using different treatment methods to assess practical viability as fishing line. This provides empirical data for the physical properties of the cordage within a framework of traditional knowledge and phenomenology. As a simple and easily reproducible experiment this research can serve as an introductory step to a community archaeology project led by the lived knowledges of local weaving groups.

Ngā tamariki rākau o Tānemahuta: Archaeobotany in an Aotearoa Context

Adelie Filippi (PhD candidate, University of Otago)

When our Polynesian tīpuna arrived in Aotearoa in mid-to-late 1200 CE, they encountered landscapes radically different from the tropical coral atolls and volcanic islands of Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa where they had grown up. What followed was the merging of a tropical Polynesian way of life with new whenua and a world of new species – including the beginning of a relationship with the plant children of Tānemahuta, the native plants of this land.

Plants are the foundation of life; they are the food that fills our bellies, the clothes on our backs, the tools in our hands, and the roofs over our heads. The relationship between people and plants takes different forms in different cultures, and in Aotearoa this relationship is grounded in whakapapa. This talk briefly examines the different layers of meaning which contribute to cultural identity of plants within te ao Māori, exploring the different ways in which plants were used in te ao tawhito and how these different forms of use created different pathways for the deposition of plant materials into the archaeological record.

Session 3 – Dating and radiocarbon

A short history of radiocarbon dating in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Can dating tell us anything new?

Caroline Phillips, Archaeological Consultant

One of the principal objectives of archaeology is to understand change over time. Radiocarbon dating has the main tool to organise the data in Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, over time C14 has itself changed, resulting in alterations to the basic understanding of Maori occupation, including key times, events and developments. In particular, a lot of research has been undertaken into finding the date of first settlement. But is this the only question we can ask of radiocarbon dating? This paper reviews the history of radiocarbon dating, looks at current issues around marine dates and charcoal from mixed deposits, and asks where to next?

The Aotearoa New Zealand Radiocarbon Database

Simon Bickler and Fiona Petchey

The Aotearoa New Zealand Radiocarbon Database (ANZRD) and the Pacific Archaeological Radiocarbon Database (PARAD) have made it easier to compare radiocarbon dates and integrate archaeological information across Aotearoa and the wider Pacific. This talk provides a progress report on these two databases and showcases how the data collected has been influenced by archaeologists' research objectives, the features sampled, and the materials chosen. We also highlight how a small number of well-studied sites can alter our interpretation, and how improvements to sampling strategies could better capture the spatial and temporal histories of different site types across the motu.

Screwed by the Samples: How Research Objectives Shape the Radiocarbon Record of Aotearoa and the Pacific

Simon Bickler and Fiona Petchey

The Aotearoa New Zealand Radiocarbon Database (ANZRD) and the Pacific Archaeological Radiocarbon Database (PARAD) have made it easier to compare radiocarbon dates and integrate archaeological information across Aotearoa and the wider Pacific. This talk provides a progress report on these two databases and showcases how the data collected has been influenced by archaeologists' research objectives, the features sampled, and the materials chosen. We also highlight how a small number of well-studied sites can alter our interpretation, and how improvements to sampling strategies could better capture the spatial and temporal histories of different site types across the motu.

Murdering the Time: Making sense of early settlement

Fiona Petchey, Brian Allingham, Atholl Anderson, Simon Bickler, Rod Wallace, Gerard O'Regan

Archaeological events across New Zealand have become "frozen" into three periods—Classic Māori, Transitional, and Early East Polynesian. This division is not simply due to the fragmented nature of the archaeological record but is often a consequence of outdated sampling and interpretive methods that have not kept pace with advances in analytical precision and our understanding of natural radiocarbon variation. Like the Mad Hatter, we have been perpetually stuck at teatime – unable to advance our interpretations. This talk explores the consequences of these methodological shortcomings and how they obscure our ability to untangle past events. Using the re-dating of Te Hākapupu (Pleasant River Mouth), we demonstrate how updated approaches can overcome these limitations and provide more robust chronological links with other early sites along the South Island's eastern coastline.

Session 4 – Essays in Honour of Helen Leach

Early settlement models in Aotearoa

Andy Brown (Horizon Archaeology Ltd)

This year marks 30 years since the publication of Anderson and Smith's *The Transient Village* in Southern New Zealand. Over much of that time the model has been a key lens through which data on early settlement is parsed. As such, additional elements have been informally added over the years, and the concept has been applied beyond its original southern setting. This paper considers selected aspects of the Transient Village model and asks how some of the processes underlying the patterns it describes might be adapted to a North Island context.

Revisiting the blade production jigsaw

Tim Thomas (University of Otago)

The nineteenth-century discovery of retouched prismatic blade flakes in the archaeological record of the southern South Island attracted immediate academic attention. Within various explanatory paradigms, the apparent lack of a Polynesian precedent for blade tools raised questions about the origins and affinities of the earliest settlers of Aotearoa. The possibility of a Melanesian influence persisted into the late twentieth century – until Helen Leach ('Jigsaw' 1984) argued that blade-making by early Polynesian settlers "could have been perfected in one or two centuries in New Zealand by modifying adze-making procedures" in response to economic pressures. To support this, Leach conducted laborious refitting of an assemblage of silcrete artefacts recovered in 1967 at Otūrehua, supplying evidence for a model reduction sequence that could be compared to adze reduction methods. Very little work followed up on Leach's proposal, with researchers turning instead to the use-context of blade tools before a near-cessation of academic interest by the mid-1990s. In this paper I revisit Leach's pioneering work and identify some of the major questions about the southern blade industry that remain to be answered. I draw on Otago University excavations at silcrete procurement sites in the Nenthorn Valley to argue that better explanations for the unusual characteristics of early southern lithic assemblages will come from a framework that theorises the broader drivers of technological organisation, and better determines the temporal and spatial limits of change.

Revisiting Māori tōki manufacture in Foveaux Strait

Chris Jennings (Origin Heritage)

Murihiku contains two major stone sources associated with early Māori tōki manufacture in Aotearoa New Zealand: Bluff argillite and Tihaka argillite. These indurated metasedimentary rocks share similar geological origins, and tōki produced from them have widespread distributions across Te Waipounamu. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Helen Leach conducted technological analysis of the Riverton Adze Manufactory assemblage at the Tihaka quarry. Her use of jigsaw refitting analysis shifted tōki studies beyond typological classification toward the reconstruction lithic reduction strategies.

This study builds on Leach's work by revisiting the Tihaka quarry and comparing its manufacturing technology with the lithic production system of Bluff Harbour. Photogrammetry and 3D laser scanning were used to produce digital assemblages of tōki, blanks, and preforms from three case-study sites: the Tihaka quarry in Colac Bay and the Bluff Harbour sites of Colyers Island and Tiwai Point.

Preliminary analysis indicates that all stages of reduction were undertaken at the Tihaka quarry. In contrast, production in Bluff Harbour was carried out at multiple sites, with quarrying and primary reduction occurring at Colyers Island (and other sources) before partially worked blanks were transported to Tiwai Point for late-stage reduction and finishing. These results suggest broadly similar approaches to tōki manufacture in Murihiku while also demonstrating variation in production influenced by the characteristics of the raw material and the mode of its acquisition

On the kitchen complex

Katharine Watson (Christchurch Archaeology Project)

One of Helen's abiding interests was food and the preparation thereof. This can be seen in her work on the Christmas cake, to which she and Raelene Inglis brought a uniquely archaeological approach. It is also underlies her 2014 publication *Kitchens: The New Zealand Kitchen in the 20th Century*, which drew on that same archaeological approach, but used a range of other sources too. This 2014 publication was a wide-ranging one, considering the layout of the kitchen, the utensils and other equipment and, of course, the food that was prepared. Inspired by Helen's research, this paper explores the 19th century in New Zealand, through a far narrower lens and drawing on a far narrower range of sources. I have taken what Helen called a material culture approach to documentary sources. In particular, house plans and newspaper advertisements. Using this approach provides a quantifiable insight into the use and development of what Helen called "the three-room kitchen complex": the kitchen, the pantry and the scullery.

Wallpaper and the Archaeology of Home in 19th Century New Zealand

Dr Eva Forster-Garbutt (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga)

This paper examines wallpaper as an integral, and often overlooked, item of domestic material culture and its value for buildings archaeology in understanding nineteenth-century homes in colonial New Zealand. Material culture associated with domestic interiors can reveal the origins, functions, and meanings of household items (fixed or moveable), as well as the identities, aspirations, and social values of their occupants.

Drawing on recently completed PhD research undertaken through the School of Architecture at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington, this paper explores the importation, trade, styles and use of wallpaper in nineteenth-century New Zealand. Applying an archaeological lens, it analyses the origins, distribution patterns, designs, and functions of wallpaper in European-style homes, and considers how this decorative lining expressed both physical and symbolic connections to 'Home' in the United Kingdom.

Session 5 – Sites

“So what kinda site is that? - reviewing the site types and features in ArchSite – Part 2”

Mary O’Keeffe (ArchSite Central Filekeeper, centralfilekeeper@archsite.org.nz)

The site types and features currently in use in ArchSite are based on the first computer-based system devised in 1982.

These types and features are used to identify and categorise sites, and are used in detailed analysis by sorting and grouping sites by their characteristics.

Both technology and the scope of site recording has improved dramatically since the 1980s, and the site types and feature have not kept up, so a review and refresh is in order.

At the NZAA conference in 2025 the Central Filekeeper reported that she had commenced a review, based in part on her work reviewing and approving sites submitted to ArchSite, where she is well placed to spot sites that don’t quite “fit” with the current schemas of site types or features.

This paper will report back on this review, and the revised schemas of types and features.

Drawing a circle: Archaeology and Mātauranga in the Parawai/Totara/Maramarahi area

Craig Reidy

This paper discusses Māori archaeological sites that have not yet been recorded in the Parawai/Totara/Maramarahi area near Thames. My interest and knowledge of the archaeological landscape of Parawai/Totara/Maramarahi were passed down to me, and I am in turn passing this knowledge down to my whanau.

In my role as Pouarahi for Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, I read many archaeological assessments that accompany Archaeological Authority applications. These assessments are informed by an investigation into the potential presence of anthropogenic material remains in the pre-1900 landscape. The Authority process enables the analysis and recording of archaeological sites before they are laid to rest. The consequence of contemporary society’s pressure for progress through development is often borne by our sacred sites. However, with each archaeological excavation in the area, the stories of our tupuna are corroborated, confirming another page in the book of our past.

As a case study, I drew a 1km radius circle around my papakainga in the Maramarahi/Parawai/Totara area and examined both the recorded archaeological sites and the mātauranga that has been passed down to me. In this paper, I present findings and observations that highlight the role of archaeology in

affirming our mātauranga, and the potential for the profession to ground its practice in mātauranga from the outset.

Types, Topics, and Themes: Archaeological Data in the Age of AI

Simon H. Bickler

ArchSite reflects over 70 years of archaeological practice in Aotearoa New Zealand, capturing changes from early site survey to modern digital-based site recording. Leveraging this legacy data requires navigating significant inconsistencies in site recording and typology. This paper proposes a shift from rigid “types” toward a more fluid framework of “topics.” Positioned between strictly defined typologies and broad research themes, topics allow for flexible approaches to understanding archaeological landscapes. By leveraging different conventional and AI-based methodologies, archaeologists can extract topics of interest by combining structured data with the rich, unstructured textual information held within ArchSite records. The presentation also demonstrates how shifting professional practices have influenced the nature of the archaeological recording. The new framework facilitates adaptive exploration of site distributions relating to topics allowing for evolving data, shifting definitions, and new systems of looking at archaeological data. It provides a roadmap for archaeological digital sustainability transforming ArchSite into a dynamic tool capable of connecting disparate heritage, planning, and environmental databases. This ensures that legacy information remains relevant, continuing to inform contemporary heritage management and archaeological research.

Te Taunaha i ngā Tapuwae ō mātou Tīpuna: Piloting the use of Traditional Knowledge (TK) Labels by Ngā Hapū o Waimārama for their Archaeological sites

Professor Annemarie Gillies (Ngā Hapū o Waimārama, & working for Te Kura I Awarua, Eastern Institute of Technology)

Dr Xavier Forde (Raukawa & Ngāti Toa, Senior Research Fellow for Te Kotahi Research Institute, University of Waikato)

In Aotearoa, ArchSite is the online database for the national recording scheme of archaeological sites, which are protected by law. Over 70% of the 80,000 sites recorded are Māori in origin, the vestiges of our tipuna activities, but the database has historically been created almost exclusively by non-indigenous archaeologists. As such it generally excludes data from iwi Māori, and the sites recorded generally contain no reference to the local hapu, their interests, or their aspirations for these sites going forward. The lack of input from First Nations to this data creates a further deficit in every other information and regulatory asset building upon this information. This poses challenges for tribal communities seeking to exercise their kaitiakitanga in cultural and environmental matters, or in resource management issues that require archaeological site information.

Our pilot project has explored the use of the Local Contexts system of Traditional Knowledge Labels which supports Indigenous sovereignty by labelling Traditional Knowledge data. This system was customised by Ngā Hapū o Waimārama to communicate proper attribution and protocols to Archsite users about data records in their rohe. The names and wording of the labels were shaped through wānanga with whānau at a community level, and engagement with the Local Contexts organisation and institutional data holders from ArchSite and the New Zealand Archaeological Association.

Mahi Tahi: Working Better Together

Ultimately, the aim is to address the deficit of Māori cultural authorship over data about their ancestral landscapes in ArchSite by deploying a system which should make it easier for other iwi and hapū to engage with the archaeological site records in their rohe. The Local Contexts system has now been adopted by the New Zealand Archaeological Association who have begun to implement the Labels in the next version of ArchSite.

Session 6 – Community and mātauranga

Sharing the past: community archaeology in Ōtautahi Christchurch

Hayden Cawte, Jessie Garland, Jane Leighs and Katharine Watson (Christchurch Archaeology Project)

Archaeology is a valuable means of connecting people to place, of building connection and sharing knowledge about our past. This is even more true of community archaeology, an aspect of the discipline whereby the community is directly engaged in the practice of archaeology. Community archaeology has an important role to play in connecting people to each other, helping to break down barriers and improve social cohesion. Not only does it foster connection, anchoring people in their past and present, it also makes the past more accessible by enabling the public to participate in the often privileged pursuit of archaeology as contributors to and curators of their own heritage.

But what does community archaeology look like in a New Zealand city? How do we move beyond theory into practice? What types of projects work? Which ones do not? Part of Christchurch Archaeology Project's mission is to share the archaeology of Ōtautahi Christchurch with the city's residents, past, present and future. Over the past 12 months we have done this through a range of projects, including developing a children's museum with a local school and curating a major exhibition that sought to involve the community. This paper will share the results of that work, and what we have learnt about the practice and role of archaeology in the local community.

Alongside the Mata-Au

Jasmine Weston (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga)

This paper presents a recent collaborative survey project undertaken by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga in partnership with Tūhura Otago Museum and the Archaeology Programme at University of Otago, with support from the New Zealand Archaeological Association. Bringing together professional archaeologists, university students, mana whenua, and members of the local community, the project focused on putting archaeological survey skills to use.

The surveyed area contains a diverse range of archaeological and historical features that reflect the layered histories of mana whenua occupation, nineteenth-century gold mining, and later industrial activity associated with the region. The results of the survey included the identification and recording of oven features, rock shelters, and railway lines located alongside the Mata-Au. The project emphasised practical survey methodologies and collaborative approaches to heritage management, while also fostering positive relationships between institutions, communities, and participants.

Empowering Kaitiakitanga: salvaging heritage together on the Moeraki Peninsula

Anne Ford (Archaeology program, School of Social Sciences, University of Otago/ Otākou Whakaihu Waka)

Gerard O'Regan (Te Rūnanga o Moeraki and Tūhura Otago Museum)

Tim Thomas (Archaeology program, School of Social Sciences, University of Otago/Otākou Whakaihu Waka)

Since 2021, the Archaeology programme at the University of Otago/Otākou Whakaihu Waka has been supporting Te Rūnanga o Moeraki on cultural heritage projects on the Moeraki peninsula. Starting with

a community-led project to investigate exposed headland archaeology and possible unknown burial locations within an urupā at Tikoraki, over the years this has expanded to other eroding wāhi tupuna at the 19th century Kaik. Working together, this mahi has allowed manawhenua to shape the research agenda and to ensure that work is completed as a tikanga-led practice. A central theme has been empowering kaitiakitanga, assisting community with using archaeological methods and practices to provide further knowledge of these places. This in turn allows for more effective management and kaitiakitanga decisions to be made for their future protection, particularly in the light of ongoing landscape damage from coastal erosion, introduced pests, and increases in major weather events. The results of these projects have been growth in knowledge on many fronts – not just about the places themselves, but the knowledge gained from working together as active partners in salvaging heritage and caring for place.

Tuia te Kupeka: Reflections from a Southern Archaeology Wānaka at Tūhura Otago Museum

Rachel Wesley (Tūhura Otago Museum)

Gerard O'Regan (Tūhura Otago Museum)

Tim Thomas (University of Otago)

Marie Dunn (University of Otago)

In February 2026, the Southern Archaeology Group convened a three-day wānaka at Tūhura Otago Museum, bringing together kaitiaki and archaeologists to critically assess the current state of archaeological knowledge in Murihiku and to chart indicative research directions for the future.

The wānaka opened with a provocation that framed subsequent kōrero: who is setting the research agenda for archaeology in Southern New Zealand, and how can that mahi better serve hapū and rūnaka?

Presentations addressed coastal settlement mobility, the integration of mātauraka Kāi Tahu with archaeological method, lithic technology and reuse, indigenous cultivation systems, and emerging iwi cultural heritage policy frameworks. These sessions generated substantive discussion around several pressing research gaps: the under-representation of inland sites in regional models; the need for landscape-scale approaches over single-site studies; the potential of museum collections examined through new technologies; and the urgent triage of coastal wāhi tūpuna under accelerating erosion.

The wānaka identified an indicative agenda for future collaborative research – one that foregrounds rūnaka priorities, data sovereignty, and capacity building within Kāi Tahu. This paper reflects on that process as an exercise in mahi tahī: collectively reorientating southern archaeology towards research questions that are as meaningful to manawhenua as they are to the discipline.

Session 7 – Between features

Floods, Faith and Public Memory: Archaeology of St Andrew's Church, Blenheim

Kirsty Sykes (Keystone Archaeology)

The hotel redevelopment of 6 Russell Terrace, Blenheim, provided an opportunity to investigate the archaeological remains of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, a prominent Blenheim landmark that occupied the site for more than a century. The original church opened in 1868 after its initial

foundations were washed away during construction. A larger church was built in 1892, with the earlier church relocated adjacent for use as a Sunday School.

Archaeological investigations identified structural remains associated with multiple phases of occupation, including timber and concrete foundations, along with evidence of repeated flooding, site modification, and landscape change associated with the Taylor River, which formerly enclosed the site on three sides before river realignment works in the mid-twentieth century.

A substantial redeposited artefact assemblage dating from the 1860s onwards was also identified within later fill, providing an important snapshot of everyday life in early Blenheim.

Alongside the archaeological investigation, the project included media releases, council communications, heritage walks, and presentations to professional and community audiences. The strong public response demonstrated the enduring connection between people, place, and memory. This paper explores how archaeology can illuminate the development of nineteenth-century towns while creating opportunities for communities to engage with familiar places and shared histories.

Infills and Intercuts: Archaeological Excavation of Pā Ditch U14/3214 in Residential Tauranga

Helen Heath and Rose Young (ProArc)

This presentation outlines the preliminary results of an archaeological excavation by ProArc at Acklam Ave, Ōtūmoetai, Tauranga. Situated in a residential area overlooking the Tauranga Moana and out to Mauao, archaeological excavations within the quarter-acre section revealed the western length of a ditch associated with pā site U14/3214. Excavations also revealed obsidian and stone artefacts, storage pits with deep internal features and varying backfilling events, posthole clusters, large circular undercut rua, and a 17m long rectangular pit feature.

This presentation explores the phases of Māori occupation on site, how early land use relates to the later pā ditch, and varying feature types and artefacts observed, with consideration of the surrounding landscape and archaeological sites.

As the demand for denser housing and constant service and utility upgrades rapidly change and expand our residential spaces, this presentation is another reminder that significant finds can be revealed in good condition, in small lots, and in already developed spaces.

Thank you to Ngāi Tamarāwaho and Ngāi Tūkairangi for ongoing cultural support, CFG for surveying and HNZPT.

An evolutionary series of inconspicuous deep-cut stone-lidded subsoil drain systems for kumara storage pit complexes at Mokoia Pā, Panmure, Auckland (R11/98)

Matthew Felgate

An evolution of drainage systems for kumara storage complexes was recorded at Mokoia Pā during salvage investigation in 2018-2020. This evolved from relatively informal simple stone-lidded subsoil exit drains to compound systems of primary drains leading into long secondary drains with more sophisticated masonry lids with a specific system of lidding to reduce initial drainage trench width. This evolutionary series occurred largely within the AD1600s, but originating possibly within the AD1500s. The subsoil drains were deeply cut with deep clean fill above the lidded water channel, and could be inconspicuous. These were not recognized as drains by previous investigations of the site, and are easy

to miss due to the clean backfill of the cut trenches. Reporting these results may assist other archaeologists working in the region.

Session 8 – Heritage and its legislation

A brave new world: Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Emma Clifford and Mel Russel (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga)

It has been over a year since the Fast-track Approvals Act introduced a new process for obtaining archaeological authorities. During this time, Heritage New Zealand has been involved in over twenty applications and has experienced some good outcomes as well as a few hiccups along the way.

This presentation will run through some of our experiences and learnings and also some recommendations for navigating the process. In line with the conference theme of Mahi Tahī, in our experience working together and early conversations have been instrumental through the fast-track process.

Dark Skies, Heritage and Sustainable Development

Shea Esterling (University of Canterbury, Faculty of Law)

The movement to protect dark skies largely has been driven by ecological and human health concerns. However, increasingly it is recognized that protection is also vital for the preservation of heritage. This presentation explores heritage as a driver of the movement to protect dark skies highlighting how it contributes to securing sustainability beyond environmental dimensions. Relying on interviews conducted at International Dark Sky Places [IDSP] as designated by Dark Sky International across Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia in 2025-26, this talk demonstrates that intangible heritage encoded in the stars creates opportunities to strengthen communities by supporting cultural diversity, reconciliation and renewal vital for decolonization within the context of the multiple crises that we face in the 21st century.

Wikipedia as the public face of archaeology

Mike Dickison

Wikipedia is an increasingly important public information resource, a source for Google searches and AI summary. It is written by volunteers, so relies on a strong local editing community. The New Zealand community although growing is small, and so Wikipedia's coverage of Aotearoa archaeology is poor. Important sites are barely mentioned, many significant archaeologists have low-quality articles, and open-licensed images of people or places are often absent. This matters, because Wikipedia articles—not research publications—are what stakeholders, students, the media, mana whenua, and funding agencies see first when forming opinions about archaeology and research programmes. To help improve this situation, I have been a Wikipedian in Residence in the Christchurch Archaeology Project for six months, funded by Wikimedia Aotearoa NZ, a branch of the non-profit Wikimedia Foundation. This talk will outline several ways archaeologists in this country can work more closely with Wikipedia, Wikimedia Commons, and the worldwide volunteer editing community to improve the public face of archaeology here.

Significance in Waiariki-ki-Tai: Addressing the vexed question of what is a significant site?

Caroline Phillips, Archaeological Consultant

In December 2005, the government proposed reforming the RMA. The proposed reform would subdivide the current legislation into two bills. In the Planning Bill one of the goals is to protect the identified values and characteristics of: “significant heritage sites”. This paper asks the question what is a “significant heritage site”? To tackle this I use the example of 10 years work my team and I have undertaken in Waiariki-ki-Tai, in the Bay of Plenty. In this area of loose soils there is little visible evidence of archaeological features without stripping off the topsoil as part of an authority. Therefore, one problem is that significant sites are unknown prior to excavation. However, if the purpose of archaeology is to understand the past, in Waiariki-ki-Tai the answer is that it is the sum of all evidence that enables us to create a history of changing land-use over time. No single site or limited number of sites could do that. Understanding is only achieved by considering all. Therefore all sites are significant.

Session 9 – Te Pokohiwi o Kupe

Genomic history of tupuna from Wairau Bar: an update

Catharine Collins, Lisa Matisoo-Smith

Te Pokohiwi o Kupe, or Wairau Bar, is an early archaeological site on the north-eastern coast of Te Waipounamu (the South Island) of Aotearoa, dated to early 14th Century and thought to be representative of the founding population of Māori in Aotearoa. Rangitāne o Wairau have upheld ahi kā and kaitiakitanga at Te Pokohiwi o Kupe for generations. This research supports iwi-led efforts to understand ancestral origins and reaffirms the site’s cultural and genealogical significance. Here, we build on earlier analyses of mitochondrial genomes from these tupuna and present whole genome data from six tupuna with >1% endogenous DNA from Wairau Bar, the first ancient genomes from tupuna Māori. Shotgun sequencing resulted ~20k-400k genetic sites from across the genome from each tupuna. These data were analysed alongside previously published genetic data (both whole genome and sites typically targeted in ancestry studies) from modern and ancient populations from across the Pacific, and screened for the presence of genetic variants associated with metabolic disease. Together, these datasets assess the population history, genetic ancestry and relatedness of an early Māori population.

Uncovering Wairau Bar's Bone Working Traditions Through ZooMS and Iwi Partnership

Monica Tromp^{1*}, Amber Aranui², Peter Meihana³, Karen Greig¹, Kristine Korzow⁴, Ashley Scott⁵, Camilla Speller⁶, Christina Warinner⁵ and Richard Walter¹

¹Southern Pacific Archaeological Research and Archaeology Programme, University of Otago; ²Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa; ³Rangitāne o Wairau & Massey University; ⁴Texas A&M University, USA; ⁵Harvard University, USA; ⁶The University of British Columbia, Canada; *monica.tromp@otago.ac.nz

Te Pokohiwi o Kupe (Wairau Bar) is one of Aotearoa's most significant early settlement sites, and the taonga held in legacy collections at Canterbury Museum, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and the University of Otago offer a remarkable window into the material world of its earliest

inhabitants. The Ika Moana Ika Whenua project brings together Rangitāne o Wairau, university-based researchers, and museum partners to examine these collections through a combination of mātauranga Māori and minimally invasive ZooMS (collagen peptide mass fingerprinting), guided throughout by Rangitāne o Wairau trustees who participated directly in collection and processing visits.

ZooMS analysis of bone taonga from these collections has identified a diverse range of species used in bone working traditions at Wairau Bar. These results shed new light on the relationships between Wairau Bar's first inhabitants and the animals, both terrestrial and marine, that shaped their material culture, and on the environmental and ecological world they encountered in early Aotearoa.

This project is itself an expression of a transformed research relationship. Rangitāne o Wairau are not research subjects but intellectual partners and decision-makers, shaping research questions, methods, and interpretation. The integration of mātauranga Māori alongside scientific analysis, and the direct involvement of iwi trustees throughout the projects various stages, reflect a model of collaborative practice in which knowledge is produced through sustained relational engagement rather than extracted from it.

Ground Penetrating Radar as a rapid non-invasive technique for mapping previously unrecorded archaeological taonga: The case of Te Pokohiwi o Kupe, Wairau Bar

Corey Hebbard¹, Andrew Lorrey², Peter Meihana¹, Shaun Williams², John-Mark Woolley², Ruby McKenzie Sheat², Jay Hepi²

1 Te Rūnanga a Rangitāne o Wairau

2 Earth Sciences New Zealand

Te Pokohiwi o Kupe (Wairau Bar) is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most significant archaeological sites, dating to c. 1280 AD (McFadgen & Addis, 2018). For Rangitāne o Wairau—kaitiaki of this ancestral landscape—the site is a cornerstone of identity and whakapapa. Previous mid-twentieth century investigations are remembered by whānau as extractive, involving the removal of kōiwi without appropriate consent. Repatriation of ancestral remains has since restored iwi authority and reaffirmed rangatiratanga (Meihana, 2022). Accelerating sea-level rise and coastal erosion now threaten to permanently inundate significant portions of the whenua, with modelling indicating up to 75% could be affected by 2100 under a 1 m scenario (Williams et al., 2025). These pressures create an urgent need to identify what lies beneath the surface before the opportunity is lost, while ensuring methods align with iwi governance and tikanga.

This paper presents Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) as a rapid, non-invasive technique for mapping previously unrecorded sub-surface archaeological features at Te Pokohiwi o Kupe. The survey was co-designed with Rangitāne under a Mātauranga Māori Plan governing data sovereignty. Fieldwork combined drone-based aerial GPR with ground-based surveys using three antenna frequencies—including 160 MHz penetrating to approximately 6 metres—processed into 3D volumetric cubes. Horizontal time-slices and vertical cross-sections were integrated into GIS maps of signal strength, enabling identification of coastal barrier architecture and anomalies related to both buried cultural material and sequence stratigraphy. The approach provides Rangitāne with a spatial evidence base for prioritisation decisions without physical disturbance to wāhi tapu, and offers a replicable, iwi-led model for non-invasive archaeological screening at coastal sites facing climate-driven hazards.

Keywords: Ground Penetrating Radar, non-invasive archaeology, Te Pokohiwi –o Kupe, Wairau Bar, mātauranga Māori, coastal hazards, sea-level rise, sub-surface mapping, iwi-led research, taonga

Poster Abstracts

Central Otago's Goldmining Landscapes and Public Accessibility to Archaeological Interpretation.

Riley Christie, Russell Cook (Origin Heritage)

Origin Heritage has recorded a series of nineteenth-century goldmining landscapes across Central Otago, Te Waipounamu, during cycleway development projects. These works have enabled documentation of extensive, previously inaccessible archaeological landscapes, including tailings, water races, and associated features. The creation of public access has also enhanced opportunities for in situ interpretation and engagement with Otago's goldmining history. However, increased accessibility raises questions around the balance between preservation and visitation of the sites. This poster examines how archaeological recording and infrastructure development intersect, and considers whether facilitating access can support, rather than compromise, long-term archaeological values.

Significance in Wairiki-ki-Tai: What is a Significant Site?

Jennifer (Seneuefa) Graydon

When the New Zealand Government proposed a reformation of the RMA by subdividing the current legislation into two bills in December 2005. A goal of the Planning Bill is to protect the identified values and characteristics of "significant heritage sites". This poster aims to start a conversation about what exactly is a significant heritage site. How can we know a site's heritage significance? What does it look like? Significant to who? How do we as archaeologists recognise and use it to further understand history? When all things are considered, should all sites be considered significant?

Waimata: A case study of site relocation.

Jennifer Lane, Caroline Phillips

The mapping scheme that NZAA has used for site recording has evolved through several systems since its establishment. Each of these iterations transformed how site locations are documented, and in doing so have largely increased error margins that have built up in each record.

This compounding error has affected sites in Gisborne along the Waimata River catchment area where recorded sites are few and far between.

Site relocation and identification within this catchment area is part of a larger ongoing multidisciplinary project.

This poster demonstrates some of the issues faced in relocating sites within the Waimata river catchment area.

Archaeological evidence for interaction with native plants on an offshore island in Foveaux Strait, New Zealand (Codfish Island/Whenua Hou).

Brooke Tucker (Archaeology Programme, University of Otago) and Meriam van Os (Anatomy Department and Archaeology Programme, University of Otago)

Issues of preservation generally mean that plant use is 'invisible' in the archaeological record. However, the 2019 excavation at Sealers Bay Camp (D48/5) on Whenua Hou recovered a variety of seed types, and palaeofaeces containing the dietary DNA of several plant species. Macroscopic and genetic analysis, combined with charcoal identification, has provided an insight into the utilisation of native plants on an offshore island outside the horticultural zone, demonstrating cultural adaptation in the face of new environs and the loss of dietary staples, and the integration of local resources within transported behavioural strategies.

Te Ahi-Kai-Kōura-a-Tama-ki-Te-Raki

Where the Mountains Meet the Sea

Kia ora koutou katoa, kā mihi nui ki a koutou i haere mai nei, a warm welcome to the 2026 New Zealand Archaeological Conference. Kaikōura is a place of dramatic landscapes, stunning coastlines, and unique natural heritage. It is a destination for all seasons and there is no shortage of activities to do and places to visit. We have put together our ‘frequent fliers’ list for those who want to make the most of local highlights and attractions during their stay.

Food and Drink

Kaikōura is well known for its abundant kai moana and local delicacies. There are many quality dining choices suitable to all requirements and budgets, whether dining in or taking away. Here are some of our favorites:

- Strawberry Tree
- Beach House Café
- Nin’s Bin
- The Pier Hotel
- Flo & Co
- Kaikōura Seafood BBQ
- Hiku
- Sime’s Kitchen
- Cooper’s Catch



Culture and Heritage

Kaikōura has long human history with deep cultural roots. For anyone interested in learning more about the local history, visiting and exploring some cultural and historic sites, or connecting with this beautiful landscape, we’d recommend the following:

- Kaikōura Museum
- Māori Tours Kaikōura
- Fyffe House
- Moana Skies
- South Bay Whaling Station
- Kaikōura Cultural Artwork Trail

Sightseeing

There is no shortage of activities, exploring, or sightseeing in Kaikōura. Whether you are interested in observing the abundant marine life, exploring the area, pursuing adventurous activities, or just soaking in the natural beauty, there is something here for everyone.

There are numerous local tour operators that provide the opportunity to watch whales, seabirds, and dolphins by sea or air. Scenic flights by helicopter or plane are also available. If you are feeling brave enough to put on a wetsuit you can even get up close with dolphins and seals or go scuba diving.

For those keen to stretch their legs there are many local scenic walks, whether it be along the Esplanade at sunrise, up to the lookout at sunset, or around the Kaikōura Peninsula. We hope you enjoy your stay and make the most of this beautiful place we know and love.

Hei ākuanei!





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