

I-HĪKOI

A digital guided tour
of the Māori history
of Ōtautahi-Christchurch



Image: John Turnbull Thomson, *Canterbury Plains*, 1856, watercolour on paper,
acc: 92/1296 Hocken Pictures Collection

Introduction – Foyer of UOC building, Christchurch Hospital

Welcome to the i-hīkoi, a digital guided tour of the Māori history of Ōtautahi-Christchurch. The University of Otago, Christchurch (UOC) campus is located in an area long occupied by Ngāi Tahu – the local tribe and traditional guardians of this land. The purpose of this guided walk is to provide staff and students of UOC with an opportunity to explore our histories. This is our gift to you. This journey will connect current Ōtautahi-Christchurch events with those historical events of both pre and post-colonial settlement. This journey will highlight signs and stories that have likely been invisible to you before, but which add life, substance and richness in understanding the environment in which we work and study. We hope that this walk will provide you with a deeper understanding and respect for Ngāi Tahu and the local sub-tribe Ngāi Tūāhuriri.

Ngāi Tahu is a large iwi (tribe), which is spread over much of Te Wai Pounamu (the South Island of Aotearoa). We descend from a common ancestor, Tahu Potiki. Ngāi Tūāhuriri is the hapū that are now based at Tuahiwi, about 6km north of Kaiapoi, which was a main centre for Ngāi Tahu and the pounamu trade.

In 1848, a man named Henry Tacy Kemp brokered a deal with Ngāi Tahu leaders, resulting in the sale of most of the South Island – 20 million acres – for 2000 pounds, which included the land you stand on today. This purchase was made using underhanded tactics, such as threats that if Ngāi Tahu did not sell the land to him he would buy it off another tribe, and they would lose the land without getting anything in return. The terms of the contract were deliberately misinterpreted, and Ngāi Tahu were forced off lands they believed they never sold, and denied rights to mahinga kai (food gathering sites) and wāhi tapu (sacred sites).



Kemp Purchase Map
Christchurch City Libraries,
File Reference: CCLMaps 440842

The personal impact of colonisation, and specifically the impacts of the Kemp purchase have been difficult for many to perceive, but recent events in Otautahi may aid us in our quest to make the continued relevance of this history known.

In Otautahi, there was massive upheaval, with the loss of homes and livelihoods following the numerous earthquakes from September 4th 2010 and throughout 2011. The evidence will be forever written across the city, in the architecture of the buildings that rose from the rubble, and the memorials to those loved ones who lost their lives in the course of these devastating natural events. The seismic unrest in the region translated into unstable homes, and uncertain futures. People were permanently disabled through physical injury, and the mental health of Cantabrians was tested, while health services were under-prepared for the impact of the cumulative stress these earthquakes triggered.

The ripple effects of both of these events have significantly changed the course of countless lives, and caused a dramatic shift in the way we view the past, experience the present, and hope for the future.

This i-hīkoi acknowledges the role of Ngāi Tahu in the past, present and future of Ōtautahi-Christchurch. You will navigate this i-hīkoi self-guided tour through 5 further locations around the UOC campus. We invite you to now begin the hīkoi – please follow the directions at the top of the following pages.



Photo: Sophie McKellar



Photo: Sophie McKellar



#1 Impact of the 2010/2011 earthquakes

Exit the UOC foyer, turn right and cross the pedestrian crossing. Go down the stairs or ramp onto Riccarton Avenue, turn right, and walk along the footpath until you get to the iron gates on your right. Enter through these gates to Hagley Park.



This land of Te Wai Pounamu, Ōtautahi, and where you currently stand, on the UOC campus holds great importance to Ngāi Tahu, and not in the sense of land ownership as we now think of it. Whenua gives life through bearing food, its plants provide materials for shelter and healing, and it is where ancestors are returned to through burial. The identification of a mountain or a river that held significance to ancestors evokes a sense of belonging to a place and a community of people who can point to the same.

Picture yourself on land you belong to, gathering food and providing for yourself and whānau. One day a man arrives, and claims he has purchased this land for himself. You lodge official complaints, calling for justice, and the terms of the deal you believed in to be upheld in good faith. Your voice goes unheard.



Port Cooper Natives

John Turnbull Thomson, *Canterbury Plains*, 1856, watercolour on paper,
acc: 92/I296 Hocken Pictures Collection



Photo: Sophie McKellar

Canterbury was shaken in a violent and life-altering way on both September 4th 2010 and February 22nd 2011. These earthquakes, and the thousands of aftershocks that followed, caused buildings to fall and holes to open up in roads, swallowing vehicles and spewing forth silt and water from under the ground. An entire city shuddered to a stop as the very land we went about our lives on moved beneath us.

The Christchurch City Council and Ngāi Tūāhuriri are now working in tandem to help this city we live in recover from these devastating events. There is a strong Ngāi Tūāhuriri voice amongst the clamour of the rebuild, an organisation which is instrumental in incorporating elements of Ngāi Tūāhuriri and Te Ao Māori into the redesign and rebuild of Ōtautahi. These earthquakes have provided a golden opportunity for those stories and histories to reassert themselves as an integral part of the cityscape, while creating spaces where whānau can gather and foster community, where whakapapa can be acknowledged and where the wider population of Ōtautahi and visitors to the city can get a feeling of understanding and connectedness to the local Ngāi Tūāhuriri and the stories of our land.

#2 Impact of Kemp purchase

Follow the path as it curves to the right, and cross the bridge on your left. Turn left over the bridge, and follow the course of the river.



Ngāi Tūāhuriri were a thriving people in 1848. The social structures of iwi, hapū and whānau worked alongside the practices of mahinga kai (food gathering places) to keep everyone fed and healthy. Ōtākaro was a primary mahinga kai for Ngāi Tūāhuriri. This slow-moving body of fresh water was a major driver for the economy, providing their people with food to keep bellies full, as well as for trade with the settlers in the Christchurch region.

Visualise people visiting Ōtākaro in the summer months to spear flounder, and catch eels, whitebait and trout. Picture the portions set aside laid out to dry to be preserved for the harsh winter to follow. Hear the laughter of children as they play on the banks while their parents work. Today, you may see people punting on the river, enjoying the peace the river can provide in the central city, or perhaps you hear the laughter of children as they chase each other in kayaks, reminiscent of the Ngāi Tūāhuriri children playing in 1848.



Avon River
Christchurch City Libraries,
File Reference CCL PhotoCD 1, IMG0026



Market/Victoria Square
Christchurch City Libraries,
File Reference CCL PhotoCD 16, IMG0002

If time permits, you may wish to follow the winding course of Ōtākaro Eastward, and you will be brought to Victoria Square. This was a site of plentiful trade between Māori and European settlers, known in 1848 as Market Square.

Ōtākaro was lost as a mahinga kai through the Kemp Purchase due to the deliberate misinterpretation of the phrase as not “food gathering sites”, but “cultivations” or “plantations”. This significantly restricted the rights of Ngāi Tūāhuriri to utilise this resource, and consequently had a severe negative impact on personal health, as well as their ability to trade.



Photo: Sophie McKellar

Following the earthquakes in Christchurch, Ōtākaro (the Avon River), along with other waterways in Christchurch and Canterbury, became contaminated. This restricted the activities that could be enjoyed on the river or other Christchurch beaches, and caused a decline in the numbers of Inanga (whitebait) and other species of fish which once swam in relative abundance through the waters of Ōtākaro.

While people no longer rely on Ōtākaro for sustenance, it was still felt as a significant loss to the city to have the river so affected. It was yet another effect of an event which took so much from the people of Christchurch. The CDHB and Medical Officer of Health had the power to determine what activities, such as leisure and food gathering, could occur on and in Christchurch waterways. The loss of the leisure activities the waterways provided was felt particularly keenly, and the economy of central Christchurch ground to a halt.

Ngāi Tahu and Ngāi Tūāhuriri have spent over a century and a half fighting for their rights, and are now a thriving part of the Christchurch and wider Canterbury region economy. They are investing resources into young Māori to create strong, well-educated leaders, and Ngāi Tahu are leading the way in ecosystem and mahinga kai preservation in the post-earthquake environment.



Woodland bridge
Woodlands Bridge, Botanic gardens Christchurch, n.d, Aotearoa Collection N322, 80/1799, Hocken Photographs Collection



Avon River today
Photo: Sophie McKellar

#3 Role of Rongoā

Continue on the path, go past the first signpost and follow the course of the river as it sweeps around to the right, until you reach the entrance to the New Zealand Gardens. Enter the gardens and choose your own path through the native flora.



In 1848, rongoā (traditional Māori medicine) was still widely practiced. Community members who fell ill or were wounded were treated by tohunga (healers), who utilised remedies and techniques developed and shared through generations. Similar to those patients who stayed home and were cared for in the community after the earthquakes, Māori medical practices are heavily whānau and community based.

Take a look around you. You are also surrounded by the plants which were the mainstay of rongoā. Walk through the New Zealand garden and seek out the native plants that contributed to rongoā practice. Look for harakeke, the koromiko, the kowhai, the Mānuka tree and the Kawakawa (pepper tree). These natural remedies offered up by the whenua were utilised against an array of illnesses and injuries.

Kawakawa has vivid green leaves, almost heart shaped. The leaves of this tree may be used as a poultice on boils, and were often utilised in the treatment of gonorrhoea and syphilis. Chewing kawakawa shoots also provided relief from cough and toothache, and commonly was and is used for huango (asthma).



Kawakawa
Photo: Sophie McKellar

Koromiko, which you may know as hebe, can be used by tohunga for both medicinal and spiritual purposes. A tea made from the boiled leaves of koromiko could be put to effective use against dysentery (and would be useful had you drunk the tap water in the few weeks post-quake). You may imagine yourself standing in a river, sprig of koromiko in hand, while the tohunga recites incantations to rid you of your ailment.

Harakeke in particular is a native plant with a large repertoire of uses, and as you exit the NZ Garden you may follow the signs and head North-East to the Visitor Centre and Ilex Café, where there is more information on the myriad uses for this versatile flax.

Rongoa is not as prevalent now as it was in the time of the Kemp purchase, a direct result of colonisation. This is due partially to the loss of land that bore the plants of rongoa, as well as the transformation of purpose for the land, for example land which once had an abundance of kawakawa and harakeke may now be pasture for cattle or sheep. Alongside this, the Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907 forced many rongoa practices underground. This act was repealed in 1962, and rongoa has experienced something of a resurgence. Today you may see both Maori and non-Maori patients who utilise rongoa for management of chronic illnesses such as asthma or everyday ailments, like headaches.



Hebe/koromiko
Photo: Sophie McKellar



Harakeke
Photo: Sophie McKellar

The health of all Cantabrians was affected by the earthquakes. Physical injuries sustained in the quakes were followed by gastrointestinal diseases from contaminated water supplies. The psychological, and emotional stresses then began to make themselves apparent from months to years after the initial events. The people of Christchurch were forced to adjust to a whole new way of life: many houses and workplaces became transitional, there was constant fear of future quakes and aftershocks, the stress of dealing with insurance companies, and the complete adjustment of lifestyle for those left with permanent injuries causing disability.

Here in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens we are in close proximity to the Christchurch Hospital, which is the largest centre for healing in Canterbury. Christchurch Hospital was built in 1862, only 14 years following the signing of Kemp's Deed. The population of Christchurch at this time was around 2000 people. At the time of opening, most people had to pay for services from the Christchurch Hospital unless they were especially poor. The hospital remained semi-operational following the earthquakes to provide care for those in dire need. Many cases that normally would have come in for treatment in the hospital were managed at home, to take the strain off the system.

In exploring more of Otautahi, you may begin to recognise a number of the native trees and plants we have just discussed. This is due in large part to the work of Ngāi Tahu, yet another element of the history of this land that has been reincorporated into the urban environment. While many people may simply be aware of the presence of a tree or plant, to a member of Ngāi Tahu or Ngāi Tūāhuriri, seeing a tree or plant that they can recall for its healing properties, knowing its use to their ancestors, can transform the meaning of a space, and reaffirm their belonging to this whenua.



Hospital, 1856
Christchurch City Libraries,
File Reference CCL PhotoCD 13, IMG0033



Photo: Sophie McKellar

#4 Ngāi Tahu response to land confiscation

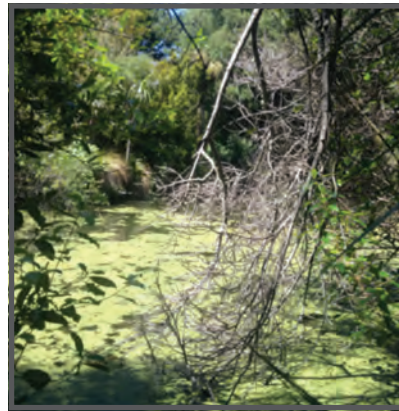
Exit the New Zealand Gardens by the large green koru sculpture, turn right and head back to the river. Follow the rivers course, keeping it on your right hand side.



As you explore the New Zealand Garden, take note of the swamp-like area in the eastern part of the garden. Doesn't it seem odd that there should be a swamp in the middle of a city? A map of Christchurch in 1850, known as the Black Map, shows the types of terrain that existed here when the Deans Brothers arrived and when Kemp made his purchase, and the extent to which early settlers have altered the landscape over time. Where we now see paved streets and green grass was once murky swamp and expanses of tussock.



Black Map of Christchurch
Christchurch City Libraries,
File Reference CCLMaps 433589



Swamp in NZ Garden
Photo: Sophie McKellar

Very few Ngāi Tūāhuriri made homes in this area in 1848 because of the difficulties of living in that sort of environment. What we now know as central Christchurch was an area for hunting and gathering food to take back to established communities, such as those of Tuahiwi, Kaiapoi and Rāpaki.

The original, pre-colonial landscape was a major reason for the disruption the Christchurch Earthquakes caused. Being built on swamp land, it was prone to movement, and the liquefaction that was forced up through the ground was an untimely reminder of the origin of this land. But where buildings tumbled and liquefaction rose, people dusted themselves off and embarked on a long journey of rebuilding and recovering, showing enormous strength of spirit and love for the place they call home.

Following the confiscation of this area of land by the crown, the area between Harper Avenue and Carlton Mill Road – known as Little Hagley Park – was occupied by 150 Ngāi Tahu in 1868, while they fought for compensation from the Land Court. These claims were unsuccessful, but only hardened the resolve of Ngāi Tahu, generations of whom have since fought for over 150 years for justice, and fair compensation for their losses.



Land Court Hui at Tuahiwi Avon Rover
Christchurch City Libraries,
File Reference CCL PhotoCD 7, IMG0001



Sketch of Canterbury Plains
Christchurch City Libraries,
File Reference CCL PhotoCD 9, IMG0027

The Government has over time negotiated specific settlements with Ngāi Tahu in response to the past injustices of the Kemp purchase. The compensation has only been recent, and did not align with the economic, physical, emotional and spiritual impacts of this purchase on generations of Ngāi Tahu descendants. However, Ngāi Tahu have used this settlement and the autonomy and self-determination to retain their mana as individuals, as hapū, and as an iwi.

The rebuilding and recovering for the iwi continues, just as it does for the city of Christchurch, and the resilience shown by both are inspiring.

#5 Role of Community

Exit the Botanic Gardens onto Rolleston Avenue, turn right and cross the bridge at the Antigua Boatsheds.



Ngāi Tahu, and earlier peoples such as Waitaha, imbued the natural landscape and world around them with stories of gods and ancestors. As you stand here and listen to a couple of these stories, feel your connection to each landmark grow. Put yourself into Te Ao Māori and begin to understand that the whenua has its own life force, and each part has a story to tell.

If you are standing here in Spring or Summer, there is a good chance you are feeling the North-West wind blowing. A mighty wind, it blows warm and relentless, and is notorious among Cantabrians for causing headaches and general irritability. Ngāi Tahu knew this wind as Te Māuru, and refer to it as "Te Hau Kai Tangata" – "the wind that devours humankind."

Turn to the West, and try to discern the peaks of the Southern Alps in the distance. These peaks represent the sons of Raki, sky father, who journeyed down from the heavens to meet earth mother Papatūānuku. Their canoe, known as a waka, capsized as they tried to make their way back, and the hull of the waka became the South Island. The brothers clambered on top of the overturned waka and there were frozen by the icy southerly wind, and turned to stone. The tallest of the brothers was Aoraki, and he stands high and proud, the tallest peak in Aotearoa.

Communications networks and cell towers were entirely unreliable in Ōtautahi following the earthquakes. Power was cut off to many homes, some for periods of weeks, and with the decrease in landline phones people found themselves virtually cut off. Organisations such as the Student Volunteer Army and Comfort for Christchurch worked to provide some relief to those worst affected, and all over the city, people were meeting their neighbours for the first time as news relied on word of mouth to travel to the people who needed it.

Much as news was passed from neighbour to neighbour in post-quake Christchurch, the stories and traditions of Ngāi Tahu have always been passed on in the same way, through oral storytelling, from generation to generation. The living arrangements of Iwi, hapu and whanau were a perfect structure for this kind of organic information sharing. With the signing of Kemp's Deed, the disruption to these social structures will surely have impacted the ability to share stories, leading to lost history, and colonisation has led to a devastating loss of language.

Think of Aoraki (Mt Cook), a tall peak, staunch and proud. This is how Ngāi Tahu and Ngāi Tūāhuriri stand – tall, and with great mana – refusing to lay down and accept injustice. Our old people have shown great strength, determination and resilience through many generations to not only preserve, but to build and evolve our Iwi into a smart, modern, economic force, while upholding the proud traditions of our ancestors.



Aoraki/Mt Cook
Photo: Bridget McGlinchy

#6 Conclusion

Follow the footpath around to the right, and head past the Emergency Department entrance, back to the foyer of the UOC building.



Although much of what you have heard today is historical in context, we hope that it strikes a chord with you, and spurs you to action. These actions do not have to be large to have a lasting impact. Consider incorporating more te reo in your day-to-day life, or speaking up against interpersonal or institutional racism. Use this knowledge we have presented you with to change your lens when treating patients who are not only combating their disease, but also battling the effects of a century and a half of marginalisation and injustice.

In these modern times it is easy to become future-focussed. We hope that this I-hikoï serves to remind you that to have a fair and just future, we must take stock of the present, while acknowledging, respecting and learning from the past.

Thank you for taking this journey with us.

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