

The Story of MANGAHĀWEA BAY



Moturua Island as seen from the sea.

Mangahāwea Bay

Moturua Island

Nestled on the western shores of Moturua Island lies Mangahāwea Bay. A haven for boaties and visitors to Ipipiri, this beautiful cove is revealing secrets about its past.

Beneath the soil of its beautiful beachfront, archaeological evidence from a series of excavations under the leadership of Ngāti Kuta has shown that some of the earliest people to come to Aotearoa arrived and settled here. This physical evidence is reinforced by oral histories passed down by

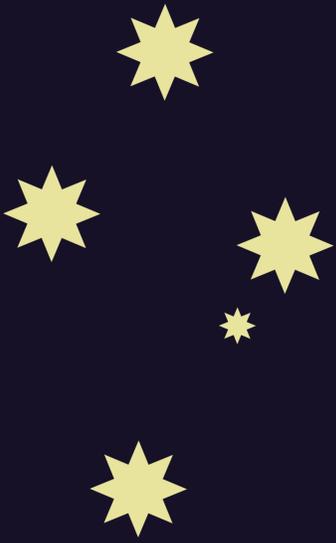
descendants of Te Kemara who lived on the island of Moturua. Both the histories and the archaeological evidence agree. They tell the story of migration, survival, cultivation and trading – and how this country came to be settled by peoples from Polynesia and beyond.

An aerial photograph of Moturua Island.



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Clues in the place names

Rākaumangamanga titiro ki Rapa Nui
Rapa Nui titiro ki Taputapuātea
Raiatea Taputapuātea titiro ki Rākaumangamanga
Rākaumangamanga titiro ki motu Rangiatea
Motu Rangiatea titiro ki Mangahāwea, Moturua ka tau

Whakataukī, Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha

Evidence linking place names in the Bay of Islands back to Polynesia reflect the voyaging histories of the people who first settled here.

The whakataukī above speaks of the voyages from Raiatea in the Eastern Pacific – with reference to its sacred marae of Taputapuātea – through to Rapa Nui [Easter Island], and to the maunga [mountain]

Rākaumangamanga in the Bay of Islands, otherwise known as Cape Brett. It finishes at the epicentre of the archaeological excavations – Mangahāwea Bay on the island of Moturua.

This bay is sheltered by the small island, Motu Rangiatea. Since Rangiatea is another form of the name Raiatea, it may have been named early to create a connection back to a Pacific homeland.

Even the name Mangahāwea itself is understood to incorporate a reference to a 're-adzed' waka hourua [double-hulled, ocean-going waka] – similar to the name of Kupe's famous waka,

Ngatokimatawhaorua (which means the 're-adzed Matawhaoura).

The whakataukī above – shared by Ngāti Kuta kaumātua, Matutaera Te Nāna Clendon (ONZM) – was adopted by the excavation team to underpin their work. Matutaera Clendon also provided the tikanga under which the work was undertaken, and stayed with the team on the island during the excavations in 2017, 2019 and 2020 as kaitiaki.

(1) Matutaera Te Nana Clendon and archaeologist Zac McIvor.

(2) A map of Moturua Island in the Bay of Islands.

(3) Motu Rangiatea Island.

(4) The kaitiaki of the Mangahāwea Bay excavation.





1

Navigators and Explorers

Aotearoa-New Zealand was the last place on earth to be settled by humans.

The Pacific Ocean – Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa – was one of the last areas on earth to be explored and settled by people. The story began about 3000 years ago when explorers began heading east from New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

The Lapita culture developed from these first Pacific explorers – who have cultural and genetic links back to Asia and the Pacific.

Polynesians – descendants of the Lapita people – sailed east from about 1000AD into what is now Raiatea, before migrating further up to Hawaii; and then across to Rapanui and then down to Aotearoa-New Zealand – the far corners of the 'Polynesian Triangle'.

These Polynesian explorers were the first people in history to sail large distances across oceans. In some ways their achievements are comparable to the Moon landings, or space exploration today. They literally sailed into the unknown .

Source: nzhistory.govt.nz



The Polynesian Triangle.



- (1) A fragment of Lapita pottery.
- (2) A modern Waka Hourua built using traditional methods.
- (3) A diagram of a Waka Hourua and its different parts.

How they did it

Polynesian mariners and navigators conquered vast distances of the Pacific.

To reach far-flung parts of the Pacific like Rapanui and Aotearoa, Polynesian explorers had to master celestial navigation and blue water sailing.

Another key was the development of the Waka Hourua vital for covering the vast distances of the Pacific Ocean.

Waka Hourua built in recent times use traditional construction techniques, and gives us an understanding of how the old Waka Hourua worked.

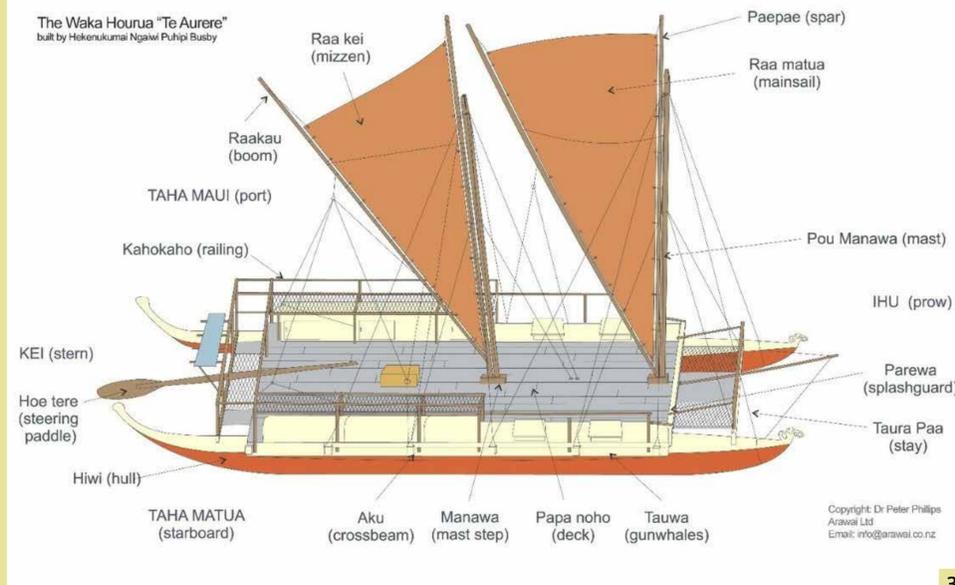
Each waka was built using two hulls made from hollowed-out logs. The two hulls were lashed together by crossbeams with the mast steps and decking also lashed to the crossbeams, adding to the structural strength of the waka.

With no nails or bolts, the strength of the fibres held the vessel together. We know today that in heavy seas fibres used in the construction of modern waka allow the vessel to flex with the waves and absorb pressure and impact. Waka made centuries ago worked in the same way.

Each Waka Hourua weighed several tonnes with a deck over a metre above the waterline. They relied on wind to power them, with only a single steering oar used to guide the vessel. These waka had two triangular sails enabling them to catch the wind when the wind was blowing from behind. The rest of the time the sails worked like an airplane wing standing on end – sucking the waka along



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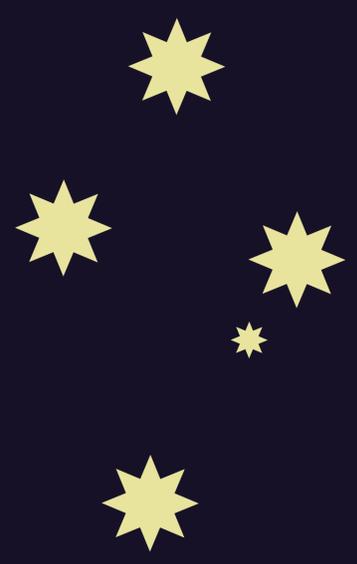


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by air pressure – the same principle modern sails work by.

Source: <https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/633-waka-hourua>

The Waka Hourua enabled Polynesian seafarers to explore and settle the Pacific.



Navigators of Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa

Navigators were central to successful Polynesian exploration and settlement.

The fate of people sailing in Waka Hourua lay with the captain of each waka. These tohunga had specialist knowledge and skills in the traditional science of navigation. Navigators were able to find and locate hundreds of islands within the vast expanse of ocean. This knowledge was passed on to those skilled in navigation through narrative, and over the years this knowledge base grew as new voyages were undertaken and places discovered.

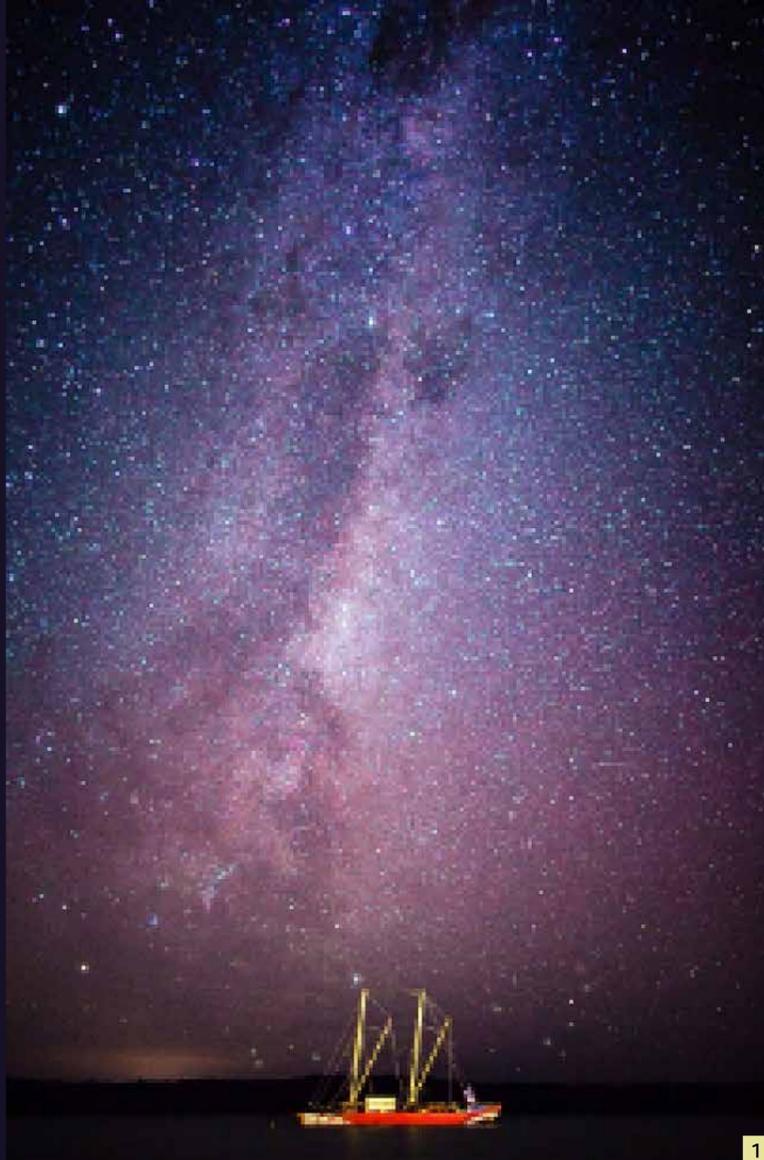
Navigators also used other skills to find their way around the Pacific. One tool was the use of pattern recognition of Te Whānau Mārama – the Heavenly Bodies – including the rising and setting of the sun, moon and stars, and their placement in the night sky.

These tohunga also drew on the natural world including wave patterns and wind direction, as well as other indicators like clouds over islands, following birds that nested on land or whales that migrated on set patterns across Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa.

Key to all this was the concept that navigators were at the centre of all these different natural factors and 'pointers' – interpreting the signs and indicators from the natural world around them while drawing on the body of knowledge handed down to them.

This was very different from European navigation, which places the navigator 'outside looking on' – visualising and tracking their path through maps and charts, though still using celestial navigation in direction-finding.

Both forms of navigation were very effective. Both embodied tradition, knowledge and science – though from different cultural perspectives.



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(1) A Waka Hourua under the night sky. Te Whānau Mārama – the Heavenly Bodies – were a central part of traditional navigation.

(2) A Waka Hourua under sail in the Pacific.

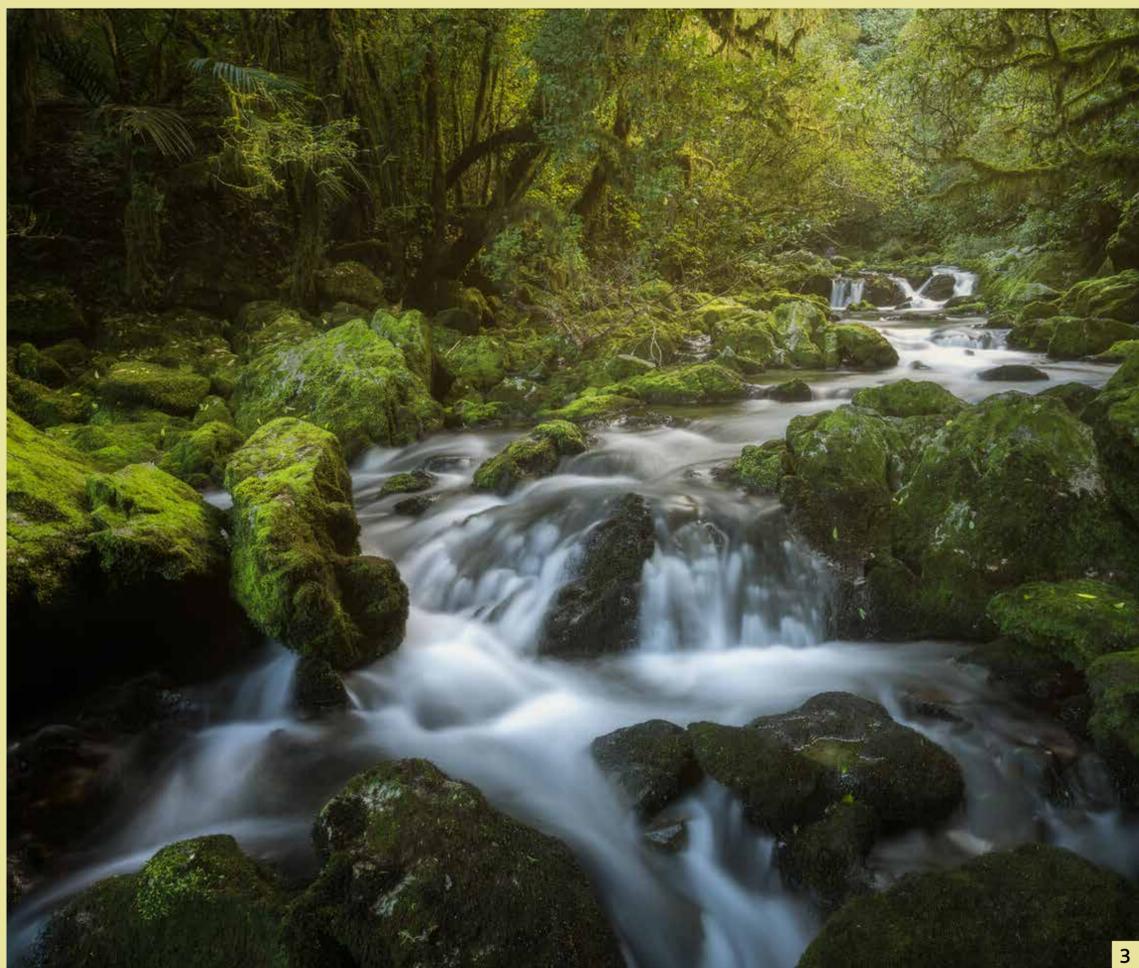
(3) Rivers and forests in Aotearoa provided limitless sources of food, water, timber and fibre.

What's so great about Aotearoa?

There were very good reasons why Polynesian explorers decided to settle in Aotearoa.

Besides the colder climate – which required some changes to gardening methods – it was hard to find a downside to settling here:

- Aotearoa was 10 times the size of all islands in Polynesia put together
- Reliable rainfall in Aotearoa meant horticulture – and regular food security – was possible.
- Rivers flowed all year round – a constant source of water and food.
- Many soils were good for horticulture
- The ngahere provided food, fibre and timber.
- There was a wide range of lithic material – stones and rock – for making tools
- Aotearoa had many large, safe natural harbours and sloping sandy beaches that were perfect for landing waka.





Glossary

- Ipipiri – the Bay of Islands
- Kaitiaki – guardian, custodian
- Maunga – mountain
- Motu Rangiatea – Rangiatea Island
- Ngahere – forest
- Pā – fortified village
- Pou whenua – land marker post
- Raiatea – Island near Tahiti
- Rākaumangamanga – Cape Brett
- Rapa Nui – Easter Island
- Taonga – treasure
- Tapu – be sacred, set apart, forbidden
- Te Ao Māori – the Māori world
- Te aute – the dawn
- Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa – the Pacific Ocean
- Tikanga – correct procedure, protocol
- Tohunga – expert, priest, skilled person
- Utu – repay, respond, avenge
- Waka hourua - double-hulled, ocean-going waka

Clues They Left Behind – The Archaeological Record

Beneath the soil lies evidence of some of the earliest human settlement in Aotearoa – New Zealand.

The first archaeological excavation at Mangahāwea Bay in 1981 revealed clear evidence of early settlement. Based on what was found, volunteer archaeologists from around the country came to Mangahāwea Bay in a series of significant excavations in the summers of 2017, 2019 and 2020.

Led by Ngāti Kuta kaumātua Matutaera Clendon and the Arakite Trust, that has provided leadership and cultural guidance throughout the Mangahāwea Bay

project – the work has been supported by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, the Department of Conservation, the University of Otago and the University of Auckland. From 2019 the project was also funded by the Lottery Tuia – Encounters 250 Programme.

With each excavation a more detailed picture of the history of this cove has emerged.

Why archaeologists are excited about Mangahāwea Bay

After four excavations, Mangahāwea Bay has revealed new information – and posed new questions. The picture that’s emerging has archaeologists excited. Here’s why:

- Mangahāwea Bay is unusual. It has been continuously occupied and cultivated from the time of the earliest Polynesian settlers through to historic times.

- Mangahāwea Bay is rare. It is one of only a small number of sites in New Zealand that show early settlement and adaptation by Polynesian explorers.
- Mangahāwea Bay may be unique – the only one in public ownership in the north that can be investigated.

North and South

Early Polynesian sites in New Zealand that we know of tend to be located in the South Island – for example the early Te Ata Polynesian arrival site in the country at Wairau Bar on the eastern coast of the South Island. Similar intact sites in the north are very rare.

For that reason, information about early Polynesian settlement tends to be dominated by evidence from southern sites like Wairau Bar. So far, these have been the main source of early settlement data.

We know from evidence from southern sites, however, that the North Island was well explored, well settled and integrated very early into national exchange and communications.

Because horticulture wasn’t possible in the early southern sites, these sites were abandoned after the moa and seal resource were used up.

By contrast, early sites in the warmer north were never abandoned, and continued to be used by Māori – so northern sites may be able to tell us more about the process of Polynesian colonization and development of an indigenous Māori culture in New Zealand than southern sites.

Mangahāwea Bay helps us balance the picture by telling the northern ‘side’ of this early settlement story.

The excavation team discuss findings onsite at Mangahāwea Bay.

Archaeologists at work during the excavations at Mangahāwea Bay.



Layers of history

Different layers for different generations – the story of settlement

The deeper archaeological features are found, the earlier – and older – they are likely to be. That's why Mangahāwea Bay's stratigraphy is so important. Each layer of archaeological evidence tells a story of what was happening at different times in the Bay's history.



The earliest layer:

Besides the Pā Kahawai artefact (see separate story), other evidence – like the remains of moa, seal and the *Cellana Denticulata* limpet found at this level – also points to early settlement. All of these relate to early arrivals because these food resources quickly became extinct after humans settled here. The remains of the moa and seal were found in a large stone-lined hāngī, while other structural features identified in the immediate area included post holes and fire scoops.

Artefacts found at this level include one-piece shell fish hooks, which date back to about 1300-1400AD.

In an excavated area a little further inland from the beachfront, archaeologists found a regular pattern of shallow indentations on the edge of a former stream bed. It is quite possible that these were individual taro plants within a taro garden.

Taro was one of the earliest plants brought to Aotearoa by Polynesian explorers. Although it grew in warmer climates like Northland, in time it was replaced by the more hardier and climatically robust kūmara.

Charcoal layers relating to vegetation burn-off found at the base of each plant are being dated and can potentially confirm an association with the first Polynesian settlers in the bay. If that proves to be the case then we will have direct evidence of gardening by the earliest settlers of Aotearoa-New Zealand.

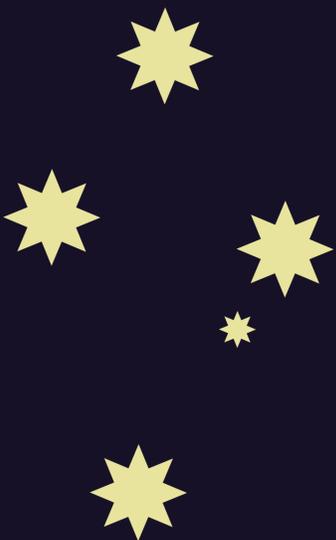
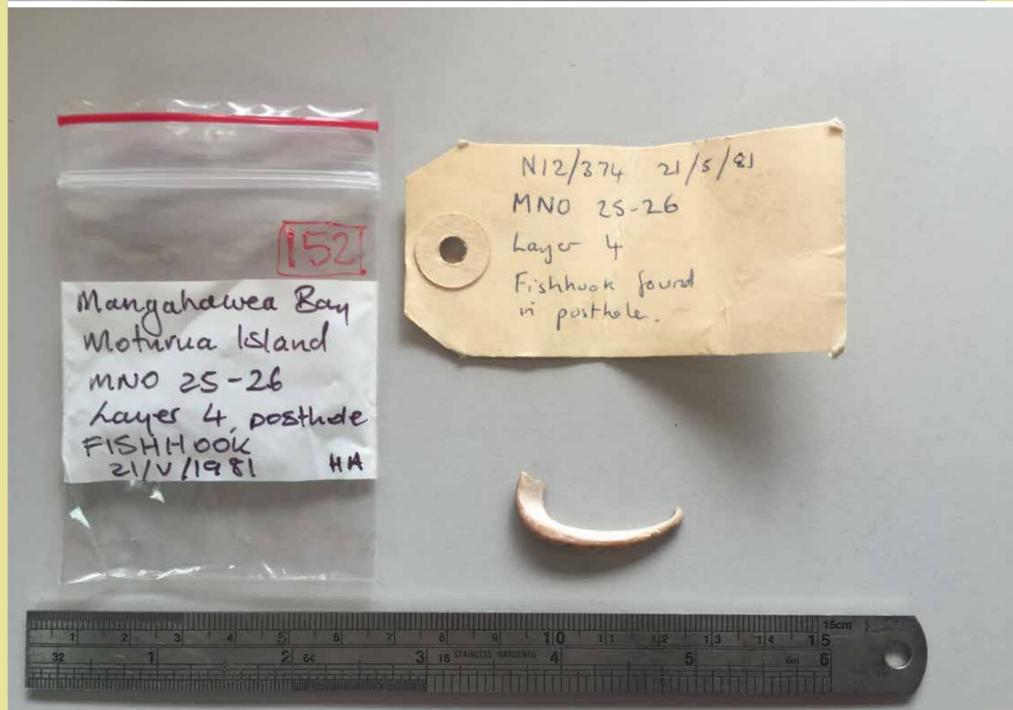
(1) Archaeologists have located the likely extent of the initial Polynesian settlement.

(2) An early food storage pit from the 14th Century.

(3) A fragment of cooked moa bone.

(4) Reels – made from fish vertebrae – were strung together to make a necklace. This is also East Polynesian in design providing further evidence of the early settlement of Mangahāwea Bay.

(5) One of the one-piece fish-hooks found at Mangahāwea Bay.



A link between the old and the new

The shell of this artefact may be from New Zealand, but its design is purely Polynesian.

In 1981, archaeologists discovered an artefact that raised big questions about the span of human history at Mangahāwea Bay.

A small object made from shell and clearly worked by human hands was found during that excavation.

The object is Polynesian in design, but analysis shows that it is likely to have been made from a native New Zealand shell species. This deceptively simple artefact is

believed to be a Pā Kahawai – a trolling fishing lure, possibly adapted further to be worn as a pendant – and is an example of a Polynesian design applied to a local material.

This taonga is most likely to have been crafted by one of the earliest arrivals from Polynesia, and provides evidence of 'continuing' Polynesia in this new land. Carbon dating has placed the age of the Pā Kahawai at about 1300-1400AD – the earliest period of Polynesian settlement before a distinctive Māori culture evolved.

It is an exceptionally rare, tangible link between the 'old' cultural order of Polynesia, and the new that was beginning to emerge in Aotearoa.

The Middle Layer:

The features and artefacts found in the middle layer of excavation tell us a lot about what was happening at Mangahāwea Bay.

Further evidence was found of a group of settlers whose tūpuna most likely came from somewhere in the Eastern Polynesia area – people whose descendants would become identifiably Māori.

One of the most exciting finds in this middle layer was a tā moko chisel used in tattooing, complete with staining from what may have

been a residue of tattoo ink. This is an example of continuity from Polynesia.

Other finds show that this population was mobile, and that new resources had been discovered in Aotearoa. These finds included some Mayor Island obsidian, used as a cutting tool; chert from the Whāngārei area and argillite from the Marlborough region – both used in making stone tools.

It also suggests that trade with other people beyond Ipipiri was taking place.

The Upper Layer

Artefacts found in the upper layer nearer the ground surface are younger in age – but just as revealing.

Items found here date back to the 19th Century, and include a gun flint, both French and British tobacco pipes, and glass fragments. These are likely to relate to the early historic settlement period of about 1800-1840; though some could be earlier.

Archaeologists also found evidence of gardens thought to be associated with potato cultivation, which

began in Ipipiri in the early 1800s. White potatoes were a highly sought-after trade commodity by Māori who traded them with Europeans for muskets and other goods between about 1818 and 1830.

The potato economy of the Bay of Islands was fuelled by demand for this humble root vegetable, with the Bay becoming an economic powerhouse prior to the signing of Te Tiriti in 1840. Evidence suggests that this trade cash crop was being grown at Mangahāwea Bay – part of the continuous cultivation that has taken place here for hundreds of years.

(1) The Pā Kahawai fishing lure – which appears to have been modified as a pendant. This taonga is most likely to have been crafted by one of the earliest arrivals from Polynesia. Its design provides evidence of 'continuing' Polynesia in this new land.

(2) A chisel used in tattooing found at Mangahāwea Bay.

(3) A range of buttons found in the upper layer uncovered during the excavation.

(4) A fragment of a clay tobacco pipe dating from the 1800s.

(5) A flint which would have been used with a musket in the 1800s.



Visitors From Another World

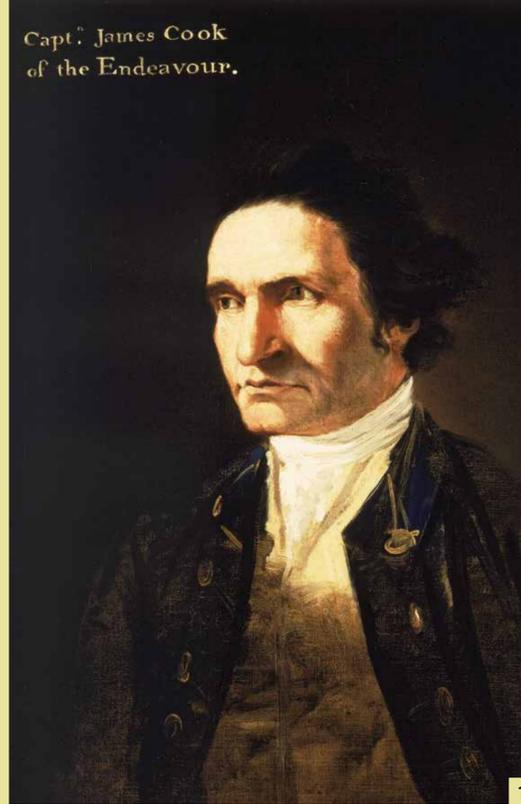
Flashpoint – European explorers clash with Te Ao Māori in the Bay of Islands

Lt James Cook

Over the centuries, Moturua Island has been the landing place for explorers – not just from Polynesia but Europe too.

In spring 1769, Lieutenant James Cook sailed the *Endeavour* into the Bay of Islands from the Society Islands with the tohunga Tupaia on board, who acted as a cultural and linguistic guide. They landed on Moturua Island at Waipao Bay – just south of Mangahāwea Bay. Cook and his men used the freshwater stream they found there to replenish their water casks.

Some interactions with Māori were violent while some were relatively peaceful enabling Cook to record descriptions of the people,



houses and gardens in the bay. Cook continued his historic voyage that charted and brought Europeans in contact with Māori around Aotearoa.

The *Endeavour* only stayed six days in the Bay. Cook never returned to Moturua Island, or the Bay of Islands, though his arrival in Aotearoa heralded an era of profound change for Māori.



Capt. Marc Joseph Marion du Fresne

Three years after Cook's arrival in the Bay of Islands, French mariner Captain Marion du Fresne arrived with his ships the *Mascarin* and the *Marquis de Castries*. Du Fresne's ships had been hit by a gale and were looking for a place to anchor, make repairs and tend to the many sailors on board the ships suffering from scurvy. The Bay of Islands seemed perfect.

Du Fresne set up a hospital tent for his sick crew at Waiiti Bay – next to Waipao Bay where Cook had landed – and a forge was set up on the opposite side to make iron bands needed for re-masting.

The time du Fresne and his men were in the bay was the longest period of time that Māori and Pākehā had spent with each other.

Besides some tensions between the two peoples, initial contact was relatively peaceful. That changed, however, when du Fresne's men took part in a fishing expedition in a bay that had been pronounced tapu after the bodies of two drowned men had been washed up. Du Fresne and his men continued fishing, ignoring directives from Māori to stop.

As utu for du Fresne's offence, the leaders Te Kauri and Tohitapu killed du Fresne and some of his men so that evil might not come on their tribes for the evil of those people

for ignoring the tapu of the beach where the corpses had lain.

The surviving French officers responded with fury, driving Māori from the Bay in order to secure the hospital tent, and to finish replenishing their water supplies. They then took their revenge by sacking and burning Paeroa Pā. The French remained for another month, completing their preparations and wreaking vengeance before finally leaving the Bay.

(1) A portrait of Captain James Cook.

(2) A replica of Cook's ship, the *Endeavour*.

(3) Marion du Fresne.

(4) *Death of Marion du Fresne at the Bay of Islands, New Zealand, 12 June 1772. [Meryon, Charles] 1821-1868 : Between 1846 and 1848]. Ref: G-824-3. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.*



The balance of power is disturbed bringing change to Ipipiri

Marion du Fresne's disastrous stay in the Bay of Islands had major repercussions for Māori living in the area.

Change was to impact everyone – not least of all Ngare Raumati, whose territory included Moturua Island. Ngāpuhi integrated with the earlier tribes and are now ahi kā in the bay.

A heritage of voyaging and navigation

The rich voyaging and navigation heritage of Mangahāwea Bay was recognised with the unveiling of a carved pou whenua acknowledging the connections between Aotearoa Māori and their Pacific tūpuna from the Hawaiki homeland.

The pou whenua was unveiled at Mangahāwea Bay in November 2019 as part of the Tuia 250 commemorations following a pōwhiri at Rāwhiti Marae hosted by Ngāti

Kuta and Patukeha to welcome a fleet of waka and sailing ships to Ipipiri.

The fleet of Waka Hourua, which originated from different parts of the Pacific and Aotearoa-New Zealand, joined with tall ships – including a replica of the *Endeavour* – to celebrate navigation and voyaging traditions.

The pou whenua looks out to Motu Rangiātea and was carved by Rāwhiti-based carver Hohepa Hemara. It was given the name Te Pou ki Taihere o Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, and was unveiled by Teva Teihotaata of the Tahitian waka Fa'afaite, which was in the bay as part of the Tuia 250 commemorations.

The pou is a tangible way of celebrating important connections that link Māori back to Polynesia reflecting the oral traditions that speak of the voyages from Raiatea in the Eastern Pacific through to Rapanui, and to the maunga Rākaumangamanga.

The pou in turn connects to Mangahāwea Bay on the island of Moturua – and symbolises the story of the emergence of a settlement by people believed to have been part of an organised migration from Hawaiki – most likely from somewhere in the Marquesas-Society Islands-Cook Islands area.

These fearless explorers were likely to be the first generation of Polynesians to settle here – and whose descendants would, in time, become identifiably Māori.

(1) Part of the flotilla of Waka Hourua from Aotearoa and other parts of the Pacific.

(2) The pou whenua Te Pou ki Taihere o Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, carved by Rāwhiti-based carver Hohepa Hemara, unveiled by Teva Teihotaata of the Tahitian waka Fa'afaite.

(3) The pou whenua at Mangahāwea Bay.



Two Polynesian Navigators

Kupe and Nukutawhiti are two of the most famous Polynesian explorers in Aotearoa, especially in Northland. Their exploits are recorded in oral histories by different iwi all around the country – including Northland. The accounts here relate to their connection to Northland.

Kupe

According to some tribal narratives, Kupe was the first Polynesian to discover the islands of New Zealand. His journey there was triggered by difficulties he faced fishing in Hawaiki, his homeland.

The problem was a great octopus belonging to Kupe's competitor, Maturangi. Kupe set out in his waka to kill the octopus, and such was the length of the pursuit that it brought him to Aotearoa. Kupe's wife – Hine Te Apārangi –

named the new land Aotearoa when she saw a long white cloud and realised that land was nearby.

With a companion known as Ngake (or Ngahue) in another canoe called Tāwhirirangi, he pursued the creature all the way to Cook Strait (known as Raukawakawa), where it was finally destroyed.

Stories of Kupe are also held in the north.

Guided by the light reflected from the mountain Te Ramaroa, Kupe entered Hokianga Harbour. The traditions say that Kupe was so awestruck by the strength of the light that he named the harbour Te Puna-o-te-ao-mārama (spring of the world of light). Kohukohu, Te Pouahi and Whānuī were Kupe's first settlements on the northern shore of the Hokianga. Koutu, Pākanāe and Whirinaki were his settlements on the southern side.

When he returned to Hawaiki he said, 'Ka hoki ahau? E kore ahau e hokianga mai!' – Shall I return? I shall never return! – hence the name Te Hokianga-a-Kupe – which means the great returning place of Kupe.

Nukutawhiti

In Hawaiki, Kupe's waka – Matawhaorua – was re-adzed and named Ngātokimatawhaorua (Ngā tōki means the adzes).

Captained by Nukutawhiti, the refurbished waka returned to Hokianga, accompanied by Ruanui and his waka Māmari. The captains landed and established their settlements. Nukutawhiti completed his first, but waited for Ruanui so that they could conduct their dedication rites together.

However, when Ruanui finished building his houses of learning he ordered his priests to begin consecrating them without waiting for Nukutawhiti. The priests chanted incantations to compel a huge whale to enter the harbour and beach itself as a sacrifice.

When he realised this, Nukutawhiti ordered his priests to perform chants to send the whale back toward the open sea. Ruanui's prayers finally ran out, however, and the crew of the Māmari had to leave the Hokianga. This is remembered in the name Hokianga-whakapau-karakia – Hokianga where incantations were exhausted.

(1) Hine Te Apārangi, the wife of Kupe, sights Aotearoa - the land of the long white cloud

(2) Kupe fights and kills the octopus.

(3) Kupe confronts the octopus that led him to Aotearoa.

Credit: Artwork by Andy Shaw, used with permission from Te Ahu Public Library.

