



Apart from a few early settlements inhabited year-round, the wetlands were not seen as a permanent living place. Instead, Māori camped overnight at their mahinga kai and at established staging points on a network of trails traversing the wetlands between settlements to the north and south.

A watercolor illustration of a woman with long, flowing red hair, wearing a yellow woven dress. She is sitting on a woven mat, holding a green woven bag. Behind her is a large green plant and a palm tree. A small blue object is on the mat.

Settlements in the Christchurch area lived in by Waitaha then Ngāi Māmoe fell into disuse by about 1700. Ngāi Tahu established major settlements on the outskirts of the present-day city. Kalapoi, Rōpaki, Koukourārata, and Taumutu are names that featured throughout the turbulent events of the early 1800s.

At the same time, the epidemics of measles and influenza that accompanied the arrival of Europeans were decimating the surviving southern Māori people. By 1840, when South Island Rangatira signed the Treaty of Waitangi with the British Crown at Akaroa, Ngāi Tahu numbers in Canterbury had fallen from about 5000 in 1820 to about 500. Most of these people lived in settlements on Banks Peninsula. Their way of life had changed forever.

The mounting wave of European settlers initially brought profitable trading opportunities for Ngāi Tahu. When the first Canterbury Association ships arrived in December 1850, Ngāi Tahu supplied the settlers with wheat, potatoes, and other produce. The signing of Kemp's Deed in 1848 accelerated the loss of their ancestral lands and by the end of the 1850s, Ngāi Tahu were no longer an economic force. The fourth wave of migration, displacement, and changing dominance had become irreversible.

Find out more about Ngāi Tahu at ngaitahu.iwi.nz.

Exploring early Christchurch

Use this brochure to guide you to traces of the first peoples on the landscape of Christchurch. The reverse side outlines the major events in the early history of Canterbury, ending with the Canterbury Association settlement in 1850.

For information on other sites significant to Māori, check Ti Kōka Whenua, the Christchurch City Libraries' website on the Māori history of the Canterbury Plains.

www.christchurchcitylibraries.com/ti-kouka-whenua

For further information, publications and brochures on heritage sites and walks in Christchurch contact Christchurch City Council.



Pou, Victoria Square

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Inner-City Heritage Trail

Allow 30 minutes from the city to Barbadoes Street

This trail follows the Avon River (Ōtākaro) past sites that became the focus of early contact between Ngāi Tahu and the first Europeans.

1 Cathedral Square – central city. Plaques at Four Ships Court and on the east side of the Cathedral introduce you to the first peoples, Māori and European.

2 Puari – Worcester Boulevard Bridge. This area was the site of a major Waitaha settlement. On the corner of Hereford Street and Cambridge Terrace, a plaque commemorates the burial place for this settlement.

(A visit to the Canterbury Museum at the corner of Worcester Boulevard and Rolleston Avenue, could be included between 2 and 3. There you can see artefacts belonging to early Māori people.)

3 Market Square – Victoria Square. Look across the Avon River to where early trading took place between Ngāi Tahu and European settlers.

4 Pou – Victoria Square. At the carved pou (post) you can listen to Ngāi Tahu's creation legend.

5 Ō-Tautahi /The Bricks – corner Oxford Terrace and Barbadoes Street. Panels at this site describe a Ngāi Tahu seasonal campsite that gave Christchurch its Maori name and a landing place on the Avon River used by the first European settlers.

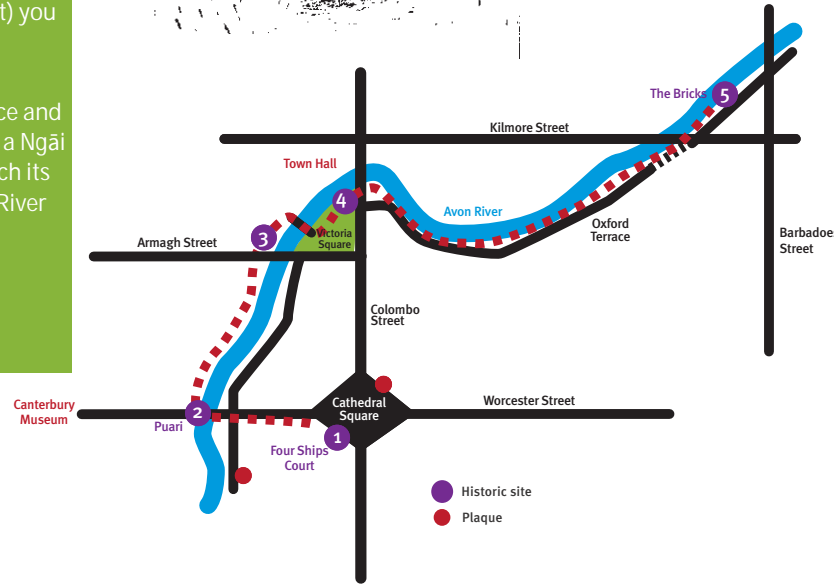
Puari and Ō-Tautahi – early Māori settlements

Waitaha and Ngāi Māmoë established settlements in the wetlands on high ground and close to sidestreams in places such as Puari and Ōtautahi. Later, Ngāi Tahu used these places as overnight camps while they gathered seasonal foods.



A plaque at Rehua Marae, Springfield Road, indicates the source of the freshwater springs on the northern boundary of Puari.

The wetlands and their waterways yielded waterfowl, fish, and eels. Flax, raupō, and the leaves of cabbage trees provided fibre for clothing, cordage, and containers. The tough flower stalks of flax were tied together to make mōkihi craft for travelling the waterways. Visit Travis Wetlands and Cockayne Reserve and walk the Heathcote Towpath to see remnants of wetlands within the city.



Establishing a foothold – Europeans on the plains

The first Europeans relied on local Ngāi Tahu to show them the network of trails that traversed Banks Peninsula and the plains. Those Europeans who settled on the Peninsula and married Ngāi Tahu women then became interpreters and guides on these trails for later arrivals. Visit Four Ships Court (Cathedral Square) to read more about the many settlers who arrived before the organised European settlement by the Canterbury Association in 1850.

Throughout the 1840s and 1850s, settlers in Christchurch relied on Ngāi Tahu to supply provisions. Ngāi Tahu farmers from outlying settlements brought produce to trade at Market Square (Victoria Square).

Within a generation of the arrival of the Canterbury Association settlers, raupō and flax, whare and tent fly gave way to gridded streets and ambitious stone buildings. Like their Māori predecessors, the European settlers named places after ancestors and their original homes, imprinting the new city with their European culture.



The Bricks Memorial

Coastal Heritage Trail

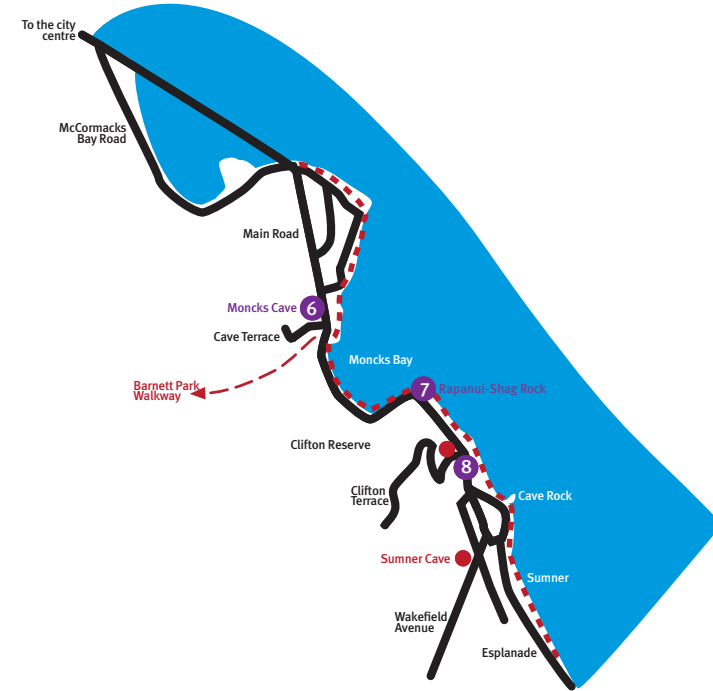
Allow 30 minutes from Moncks Cave (Redcliffs) along the coastal path to Cave Rock in Sumner.

Three sites – Moncks Bay, Rapanui-Shag Rock, and Sumner – are featured on this trail.

6 Moncks Bay, Redcliffs – In this area you can visit several nationally important archaeological sites.

7 Rapanui-Shag Rock – Māori gathered important coastal resources from this estuary.

8 Sumner, Clifton Bay – The rivers feeding the estuary became the entry point for the first European arrivals.



The earliest inhabitants

The first people living in the Christchurch area were the Waitaha. Human remains have been found at Rae Kura (Redcliffs), where the Waitaha had a major settlement amongst the sand hills.

Moa bones were found in and near Te Ana o Hineraki-Moa Bone Point Cave by sailors from the survey ship 'Acheron' in 1849.



Canterbury Museum

Excavation of the occupation layers in 1872, one of the first formal digs in New Zealand, contributed to the development of archaeological interpretation of the past. Material from these significant sites continues to contribute to present day archaeological research.

Coast and estuary

From the beginning, the Christchurch coastline was a major resource. Later, Māori ventured inland from their coastal settlements to gather seasonal resources from the forests. But when the forests were destroyed by fire about 500 years ago, people again became reliant on the coast.

Several thousand camp sites have been found along the sand dunes between the estuary and the Waikari River mouth.

Right up to European times, Ngāi Tahu harvested shellfish, eels, and waterfowl on the tidal flats of the estuary, although they were no longer living here.

Gateway to the city

The estuary and the rivers feeding it became the main entrance to the Christchurch area for the European settlers. Sumner was established as a convenient link between Lyttelton and the estuary.

The Canterbury Association erected its store on a beach at Clifton Bay. Heavy goods were shipped from here across the Sumner Bar before being taken up the Heathcote or Avon Rivers to the new city site.

Other places to visit

On your travels through the city, look out for some other sites on the heritage trail. These are not shown on the maps.

Riccarton Bush
Allow 30 minutes to 1 hour to explore this historic site.

Until the vast podocarp forests that covered the Canterbury Plains were destroyed by fire, they were a valuable source of birds and timber.



Deans Cottage, Riccarton Bush

When Europeans arrived, some Ngāi Tahu people still lived at Riccarton Bush. Its name Pūtarīngamotu, the ear severed from the body, eloquently describes the loss of the forest. This site was occupied by the first European settlers in the city area.

Today you can walk in Christchurch's sole remnant of flood-plain forest. On this site you can also visit Riccarton House and Deans Cottage to find information on the Māori and European history of Pūtarīngamotu and Riccarton.

Ōpāwaho – A Waitaha satellite settlement is marked by an information panel on Richardson Terrace near the corner of Opawa Road. This site can be visited as part of the longer trail along the Heathcote River that tells the story of early European trade.

Cashmere Reserve – A plaque here explains the significance of a cave located on a traditional Māori route to Banks Peninsula.

Mt Pleasant – High on the slopes of Mt Pleasant, at the corner of the Summit Road and Mt Pleasant Road, a Ngāi Māmoë pā site is marked by a plaque.