Aukaha
KIA KAHA, AU KAHA

Cultural Narrative *for* Fairfield School

Fairfield School Cultural Narrative

This cultural narrative provides two types of information for Fairfield School – that which is of a celestial nature and that which is of a historical nature – and it is important to be cognisant of this when using the information with classes and students. This information is from the Kāi Tahu tribe, with a focus on Otago and the area your school is in. The bibliography supplied will allow you to follow up on particular references for your students, classes and so forth.
It is important to note that our tribal dialect is used in this report. The ng is replaced by the k; for example, “Ranginui” is “Rakinui” in our dialect. We also use words and idioms particular to our tribe.

Macrons are another crucial part of the Māori language. They indicate whether the vowel is long or short. If a word has a macron on a particular vowel, it must be used when naming classrooms or other spaces. This is the official orthographic convention from the Māori Language Commission.

Furthermore, it is noted that throughout this narrative the name Taiari is used rather than Taieri, which is a misspelling. Taiari and its meaning are discussed and confirmed with appropriate historical references in the Ngāi Tahu atlas online – Kā Huru Manu, https://www.kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas.

We hope this cultural narrative will be a source of learning and development for your school. Please get in touch with Aukaha Ltd if you have any questions.

What is a cultural narrative?
A cultural narrative recognises the historical relationship between the area and its mana whenua. It describes what is unique about the place and the people your school is part of, building a common understanding of traditional and spiritual connections, heritage and values.

The cultural narrative ensures:

- the status of iwi and hapū as mana whenua is recognised and respected
- Māori names are celebrated
- mana whenua significant sites and cultural landmarks are acknowledged
- our natural environment is protected, restored and enhanced
- iwi/hapū narratives are captured and expressed creatively
- iwi/hapū have a living and enduring presence and are secure and valued in their rohe.

The Kāi Tahu tribal area of the South Island

The South Island (Te Waipounamu) of New Zealand not only has an entirely different landscape to that of the North Island (Te Ika-a-Maui) but also a different Indigenous demographic.

The South Island was originally inhabited by early Polynesian settlers known as Kāti Hāwea and Te Rapuwai. Anderson claims that these people were certainly Polynesians and among the ancestors of southern Māori. [1] The following onset of people were the Waitaha. They are an early group of people who are known to have arrived on the canoe, the Uruao, and their legacy was left in the many places they named in the South Island. The well-known southern tribal ancestor Rākaihautū of the Waitaha people was described as a giant. He carved out the lakes and rivers of the South Island with his digging stick named Tūwhakarōria.

The consequent migration and intermarriage of Kāti Māmoe and then Kāi Tahu from the east coast of the North Island to the South Island and into Waitaha procured a stronghold for Māori in Te Waipounamu. Map 1 illustrates the large tribal area now associated with Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe and Kāi Tahu in the South Island.

Te Waka o Aoraki and Tūterakiwhānoa feature as the oldest stories that connect to Otago. Aoraki was one of the senior progeny from Rakinui's (male) first marriage to Pokohāruatepō (female). Raki's (Rakinui) second marriage was to Papatūānuku. Aoraki and his brothers were interested in Raki's new wife and descended from the heavens in their waka (canoe) to greet Papatūānuku. The meeting appears to have been amicable, but a mistake was made in the requisite prayers when Aoraki attempted to once again ascend to their celestial home, and the canoe began to list. Aoraki and his crew scrambled to the high ground but were caught by the sun's rays and turned to granite, becoming the highest peaks of the Southern Alps.

The nephew of Aoraki, Tūterakiwhānoa, was charged with the responsibility of determining the whereabouts of his uncles – he discovered that they and their waka had become an island in the vast ocean. After a period of grieving, he grasped his great adze, Te Hamo, and set about shaping the canoe and its inhabitants so that it could be an inhabitable land mass.

He carved out the sounds in Fiordland and Marlborough and formed the peninsulas along the eastern seaboard, including Otago Peninsula, Huriawa Peninsula and the Moeraki Peninsula. He left the atua kaitiaki (guardians) Kahukura and Rokonui-ā-tau in place, and they remained until the time the old religion was abandoned and Christianity was adopted.

After the entire South Island had been shaped fit for habitation, Tūterakiwhānoa returned to Piopiotahi/Milford Sound. It was brought to his attention that the sound was so beautiful that those who saw it would never move on. His relation, the goddess Hinenuitepō, left behind the small namunamu, or sandfly, to ensure that nobody would stay in the area for too long.

Otago Peninsula history

The Otago Peninsula has a long history of occupation beginning with that of Māori, the Indigenous people of New Zealand. The origins of how the peninsula was formed have been cemented in southern Māori narratives, as discussed previously. Early occupation of the peninsula was focused at the harbour entrance rather than near the mainland or across the peninsula. This area remains occupied today by the descendants of the first people to live on the peninsula. Mauaūpoko has recently been adopted by ourpeople as the overarching Māori name for the Otago Peninsula. However, this name's attachment to the peninsula is uncertain as there is only one source for it, from Herries Beattie in 1915. It is also not mentioned in the original Deed of Sale of Otago, which was signed by 23 Māori leaders and two 'proxies' on 31 July 1844 at Kōpūtai (Port Chalmers) across the harbour from the Otago Peninsula.

Ōtākou is the significant name of the area. Ōtākou was originally the name of the waterway that spans the area from Taiaroa Head to Harwood township. Although it is an ocean harbour, it was known as an awa (river) by our old people because of its river-like appearance. Ōtākou is more widely recognised in the Otago area today as the name for the entire harbour and the settlement at the eastern end of the Otago Peninsula. Otago (a modified version of Ōtākou) eventually became the name for the entire southern region. The origins of the meaning are still somewhat unclear although, as Beattie recorded, the word "kou" in Ōtākou means a jutting point or an end point, which may describe the shape of the area of Ōtākou.

The earliest activity on the Otago Peninsula was two moa butchery sites in the 1150-1300AD period, one at Harwood on the peninsula and one at Andersons Bay on the mainland, according to Anderson. [2] The following waves of people migrated in different phases from the North Island and married into the existing groups of people Kāti Māmoe were the first in the series of migrations south. The migration that followed Kāti Māmoe were descendants of an ancestor, Tahupōtiki, who lived on the east coast of the North Island around the area now known as Hawke's Bay.

The Kāi Tahu tribe is a well-known Māori entity of the South Island today and takes its name from Tahupōtiki. A series of events over a relatively short timeframe explains Kāi Tahu's position at the harbour entrance of the Otago Peninsula.

The first known arrival of Kāi Tahu to Otago started with the ancestor Waitai, who journeyed south leaving behind his siblings and relations, who were known as Kāti Kurī. Kāti Kurī lived in the Wellington area and made their way to the South Island. Waitai made his way south to the fortified village, Pukekura (Taiaroa Head), where he became resident. He married the sister of Te Rakitauneke, a local Kāti Māmoe chief, and an alliance was established. The pair embarked on a number of skirmishes throughout Otago, and Waitai was eventually killed by local Kāti Māmoe.

Trails and movement

Kāi Tahu were a nomadic people who travelled extensively on land and sea. They travelled from Ōtākou villages up the Otago Harbour and into bays and inlets within the Dunedin area, known as Ōtepoti. This area was a landing spot and a point from which the Ōtākou-based Māori would hunt in the surrounding bush. Māori would drag their waka into estuaries and walk by foot to food-gathering places such as the Taiari (now known as Taieri), which was rich in food sources like birds and eels. Four species of moa roamed the Otago Peninsula, and there were moa hunter sites in Andersons Bay, St Kilda and St Clair.

Māori also followed tracks over the peninsula, around the Lawyers Head area and into the Taiari plains. Today, Te Nohoaka o Tukiauau / Sinclair Wetlands is but a small remnant of what was once an expansive network of lakes, rivers, lagoons and wetlands across the Taiari plains, from Waihora (Lake Waihola) through to Mosgiel.

This area was a significant food basket, providing an abundance of foods such as tuna, inaka, kanakana, waterfowl such as pūtakitaki, pārera, whio, and other birds from the neighbouring native forests.

The area also has a number of older pā sites and kāika. This is a fantastic place to visit with students. Shortland suggests that the ancient walking tracks were falling into disuse by the time he explored the Otago area because of the superior marine technology that Māori had employed over the previous 40 years. [3] The whaling boat proved to be an improved mode of transport from the carved single or double-hulled Māori vessels that dominated sea transport until the arrival of the European.

The Treaty of Waitangi and consequent land sales in Dunedin

In 1836, the ship The Sydney Packet arrived at Ōtākou with a few influenza cases on board. The disease immediately attacked Māori and the people died in hundreds, reducing the population to an alarming degree.

Following the demise of the Ōtākou Māori population came the loss of land. This began with the Treaty of Waitangi, which was taken by Major Bunbury throughout the Kāi Tahu tribal region to obtain southern Māori signatures. The Treaty had been signed by many iwi (tribes) in the North Island, and Korako and Karetai signed it at Taiaroa Head on 13 June 1840. They were among seven signatures for southern Māori. The premise they accepted in their hearts and minds was that under the Treaty they would retain their lands and have equal protection and rights with British citizens. Political struggle over the total disregard of the promises agreed to in the Treaty of Waitangi would continue for 150 years.

After the signing of the Treaty came the most significant contractual breach for Māori on the Otago Peninsula. Under pressure from the New Zealand Company, the British Crown waived its right of pre-emption as stated in the Treaty of Waitangi, allowing the New Zealand Company to negotiate with the local chiefs for the purchase of land in the south. The New Zealand Company and the Free Church of Scotland selected the area on the mainland at the head of the harbour for a permanent site, to be called New Edinburgh. Frederick Tuckett, a surveyor for the New Zealand Company, was assigned to oversee the purchase of the site. In 1844, George Clarke wrote an account of the proceedings in Otago, which included Tuckett, surveyors and local Māori. They had come to survey the land for a “New Edinborough, the Dunedin of the future.” [4]

Kāi Tahu wanted to keep 21,250 acres of Otago Peninsula land with ancestral sites for themselves. However, the Europeans did not agree and would not proceed with the sale unless the peninsula was included. Kāi Tahu conceded to accept only the land at the northern end of the peninsula and a few other areas outside of that, totalling 9,612 acres. On 31 July 1844 at Kōpūtai, 25 chiefs signed the Otago Deed, selling around 400,000 acres for £2,400. Of the 400,000 acres, 150,000 acres would be chosen for the New Edinburgh site. In addition to this land, verbal agreements were made to reserve 10% of all land sold, known as ‘the tenths’, in trust for the benefit of Kāi Tahu. The agreement was not honoured, and work began on New Edinburgh on the mainland in 1846.

The organised settlement of the suburban and rural areas of the peninsula began in 1848, focusing on Andersons Bay and Portobello. The peninsula was divided into farms of about 50 acres, which were gradually occupied and supplied a growing Dunedin with food. West states that “the sale of the Otago Block to the New Zealand Company in 1844 was by far the most significant event that shifted control over the Peninsula... the Ōtākou Māori were stranded on the northern tip of the Otago Peninsula, confined to meagre portions of their once vast property. The way was thereby opened to the European settlement, and the making of a new environment on the Otago Peninsula.” [5]

“Kāi Tahu wanted to keep 21,250 acres of Otago Peninsula land with ancestral sites for themselves. However, the Europeans did not agree and would not proceed with the sale unless the peninsula was included. Kāi Tahu conceded to accept only the land at the northern end of the peninsula and a few other areas outside of that, totalling 9,612 acres."

Placenames around Fairfield School

It is best to refrain from attempting to translate names from Māori to English as the meanings are often complex or forgotten. Some definitions and descriptions from different resources are recorded here:

Te Awa Kawiri A stream located at Green Island. Kawiri means “to twist”.

Whānau Paki A mountain (known as Flagstaff).

Pakaru This is a lagoon/estuary; the tributaries of this lagoon include waters from surrounding hills such as Matamata, streams from Fairfield and Green Island. Pakaru was an important kāika mahika kai (food-gathering place) for local Kāi Tahu.

Ōtokia Ōtokia is the brook that runs into the sea at Brighton and the hill above it. Ōtokia is also the long line of hills south of Matamata (Saddle Hill) that runs alongside the Otago coastline. The Ōtokia Creek originates in this mountain range before flowing out to what is now the township of Brighton.

Kaikarae An important river and area of food-gathering close to your school. Known today as Kaikorai but should be spelt Kaikarae.

Kaituna A noted lagoon where tuna was harvested, near the Dunedin gas works.

Uruka te Raki The meaning of this is associated with a Kāti Māmoe ancestor, Rakiihia. It is the name for Hillside. This is in the Balaclava region.

Te Raka-a-ruka-te-raki The place where Te Rakiihia (a tupuna) was buried – a ridge up above St Clair and near Corstorphine.

Matamata Saddle Hill (see this narrative for more information).

Taiari Taiari is the correct spelling for the Taieri River.

Rakiihia

According to iwi history, a key figure was Rakiihia, who was buried in the vicinity of what is now known as Lookout Point in Dunedin. He was buried so he could survey his domains to the south and the north from a prominent hilltop that afforded views. Rakiihia was of Kāti Māmoe descent (the grandson of Tūtemākohu of the senior Kāti Māmoe line). Rakiihia entered negotiations at Kaiapoi with Te Hautapunui-o-Tū (senior Kāi Tahu chief). The negotiation was successful, and marriages were arranged as part of this process. The truce is remembered in the name Poupoutunoa, which is the name of a hill near Clinton. Rakiihia stayed on at Kaiapoi for some time and eventually returned south to Ōtākou with Te Hau Tapunuiotū to find that his sister was being treated badly by her “household slaves”. [6] Rakiihia killed the slaves and was wounded in the process. He died a prolonged death as recorded in a Māori language manuscript. [7]

Ko te wāhi e noho nei te ope nei he rae kei te taha hauauru o te awa o te wahapū o Ōtākou e rere atu ana te raina rerewe o Kōpūtai ki Otepoti. Ka tae ki te rae ka kitea atu te taone Otepoti. Koia te wāhi i noho ai taua ope. I muri mai i tā rāua whawhai ko tōna hoariri, ka rewa te ope nei. Noho rawa atu i reira i te matenga o Rakiihia. Ka tanumia ki tētahi wāhi kei roto i te taone o Otepoti. Ko Urunga-te-Raki te ingoa.

Translation:
The group resided at the head of the eastern side of the river at the entrance of Ōtākou, the train track runs from Port Chalmers to Dunedin. Dunedin city can be seen when you arrive at the point. This is where the group resided. Following the fight, the group left. They stayed until Rakiihia’s passing. He was buried in a place in Dunedin city. Urunga-te-Raki is the name of that place.

> “Taiari is the correct spelling for the Taieri River."

Matamata

Matamata is a taniwha. In our mana whenua narrative from Ōtākou, Matamata was a giant creature, similar to a serpent or lizard in shape, that carved out the Otago Harbour and rivers on the Taiari plains of Dunedin. Places are named after his movements, and eventually he solidified in the sun and remains as a distinct hill in Dunedin.

Various narratives are written about Matamata, and the main source from an Ōtākou perspective is that from Te Iwi Herehere Ellison. He was the informant to Reverend Pybus in the 1940s. Te Iwi Herehere was the son of Raniera Ellison (of Taranaki whakapapa) and Nani Weller (Te Matenga Taiaroa's grandchild).

Tahu Pōtiki also retold the narrative – he stated that Matamata carved out the Otago Harbour and the twists and turns in the Taiari river, eventually turning to stone. Many years later he came back to life and became the protector of Te Rakitauneke. [8] Furthermore, Karetai, the paramount chief of Ōtākou, used to speak about a taniwha that was the guardian of the spirit of a famous Kāti Māmoe chief.

Other information comes from Herries Beattie, who collected information in the 1900s from various Kāi Tahu kaumātua. The information he collected on Matamata is somewhat disjointed and recorded in different parts of his various publications. One of his informants, Teone Tikao, said that Matamata was a famous "ghost" who came originally from Hawaiiki and was in later times a guardian god of Te Rakitauneke, the famous Kāti Māmoe warrior. [9]

The main theme for the purpose of this narrative will be Matamata's search for Te Rakitauneke.

Te Rakitauneke
Te Rakitauneke was a well-known Kāti Māmoe chief, and it was said that Matamata was his kaitiaki (guardian). Te Rakitauneke fought in battles against Kāi Tahu and in alliances with Kāi Tahu from Kaikōura to South Otago and also inland. Traditions state that Te Rakitauneke was buried on Bluff Hill. Te Rakitauneke's ohākī (parting instructions) were "Kia pai ai taku titiro ki te ara a Kiwa" – "Let me gaze upon Foveaux Strait."

According to Beattie, Te Rakitauneke had a pā near the peak of Mauka-atua [10] (a prominent ridge that dominates the skyline of the Taiari). [11]

Matamata was living in a small bush beside Whakaehu (Silverstream) below his master. Te Rakitauneke was not sleeping well at night as the noise of the sea disturbed him, so he went on a trip inland. Matamata found that Te Rakitauneke was gone and went searching for him.

Matamata's search for Te Rakitauneke
Matamata journeyed from Silverstream, near the base of Whare Flat, as far as the present Mosgiel. He then took his course down the Taiari River and, wriggling, caused all the sharp bends and twists in the river. In Matamata's frustration, he turned and twisted looking for his master. The aerial view below illustrates the image of a lizard winding through the earth and making the Taiari River.

Particular places are named after Matamata.

Wai-pōtaka – A lagoon near Silverstream. Pōtaka is a spinning top, and the name is attributed to the spinning and turning of Matamata in desperate search for his master.

> "In our mana whenua narrative from Ōtākou, Matamata was a giant creature, similar to a serpent or lizard in shape, that carved out the Otago Harbour and rivers on the Taiari plains"

Te Konika o Matamata (The crawling of Matamata) – Depression in the land where Mosgiel is.

Te Korekore o Matamata (The turning of Matamata) – The last 500 meters before the river hits the forge.

Matamata also dug out the Ōtākou Harbour as can be seen in this aerial view.

Matamata eventually got caught by the sun and now lies solidified. The humps of the hill are named Pukemakamaka and Turimakamaka. This is Saddle Hill today.

Below is an account recorded by the Rev. Thomas Pybus (1954) for his book The Māoris of the South Island:
Regarding their legends, the Māori people of Ōtākou used to speak about taniwhas and fabulous monsters which performed extraordinary deeds. Hoani Karetai, the paramount chief of Ōtākou, used to speak about ataniwha which was the guardian of the spirit of a famous Kāti Māmoe chief. This taniwha lost its master and set out in search of him. The same taniwha scooped out the Otago Harbour. The monster now lies solidified in the Saddle Hill. [12]

Mahika kai (food gathering)

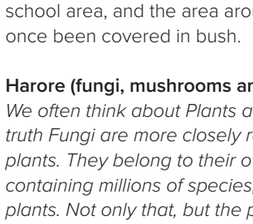
Many foods would have been available around your school area, and the area around Fairfield would have once been covered in bush.

Harore (fungi, mushrooms and toadstools)
We often think about Plants and Fungi together, but in truth Fungi are more closely related to humans than plants. They belong to their own separate kingdom containing millions of species, vastly outnumbering plants. Not only that, but the part of the fungi we are most familiar with – the toadstool or mushroom – is just the tip of the iceberg. Most of the fungi lies below the soil, a massive network of thread-like cells. The mushroom is simply a reproductive organ, like the flower of a plant, it bursts forth to spread its spores and then dies away again.[13]

Fungi are recorded in Māori narrative and were used as kai and for medicinal purposes. This southern part of New Zealand had different kinds of fungi, and past informants said that they were in the bush. Harore is the name given to various species of mushrooms and toadstools, which were not always edible.

"Harore tui" and "Harore atua" were said to look like toadstools but taste like the introduced field mushroom... which was called "Harore kai Pākehā" – "harore, food of the Pākehā"... Harore and other fungi were usually cooked by the "tupuku" method, that is placed in a flax basket, a covering put on top, and then put in a steam oven.[14]

Putawa is the name of a mushroom seen below:



Putawa was used by Māori as tinder for lighting fires, and could be useful for carrying fires between locations. It was also used medicinally to protect wounds and to help ease a difficult childbirth.

Elsdon Best discusses Māori and their use of fungi. He records that some fungus is found on dead and partially decaying trees, stumps and logs. He stated that this species was eaten but only in times of scarcity. Best lists the Māori names of some 65 fungi varieties.

One particular mushroom discussed by Herries Beattie (a Pākehā ethnologist who collected valuable information on Kāi Tahu language, culture and narrative) was the whareatua. Various informants to Beattie had been told that it was a large white round mushroom with a net inside. Some informants said they could be eaten and others claimed that they were poisonous. An informant knew of an invading war party to the Banks Peninsula in pre-European times who had landed near Rakaia and eaten whareatua and died.

The poketara, or puffball, is another southern fungi referred to regularly in manuscript and narrative. Some said the poketara could be eaten and others were unsure. An informant to Beattie said that the poketara would "grow as big as your head and was roasted and eaten. The peelings were taken off and the inside eaten – she had eaten them and they were sweet."

It was also said that a poketara would fall from the sky during a thunderstorm and it was therefore also known as tutae-whaitiri (excrement that fell from thunder). Poketara is used as an analogy for someone who has no roots or doesn't have genealogical ties to a place. People who do not know their ancestry are likened to a puffball with no roots.

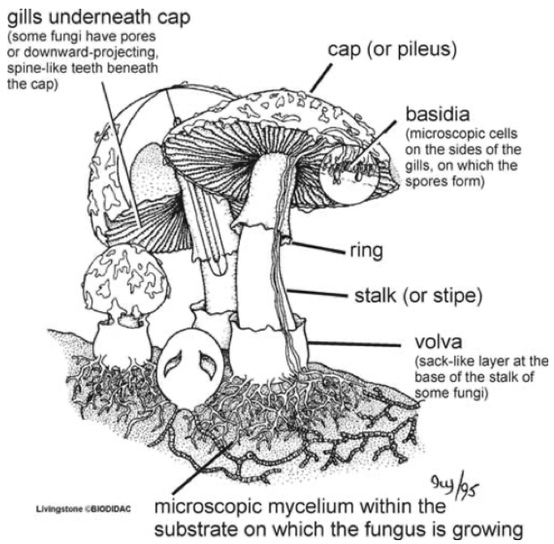
Fungi were also used for tā moko (tattooing). A fungus named āwheto was burnt and became a black powder, which was mixed with bird fat and used for tā moko.

This mushroom is known as the werewerekōkako (resembling the blue wattle of the kōkako bird).

See the werewerekōkako on the fifty dollar note:

Taking care when looking at fungi

1. Never eat unidentified fungi. Some are deadly, and many have unknown toxic side effects. If in doubt, throw it out!
2. Eat new fungi in moderation on the first try.
3. Check which group the fungi might belong to.



William Martin

William Martin was born in Fairfield in 1886 and died in Dunedin in 1975. Martin was a botanist and said to be one of the most "versatile and capable field botanists" in New Zealand. Fairfield was the pioneer nursery of Otago and contained one of the largest and most varied collections of plants across Australasia.

Martin's grandfather (also William) arrived at Port Chalmers in 1848 on the Philip Laing. His grandfather was from Lanarkshire, Scotland, and worked as an apprentice in the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. His grandfather bought a 186 acre farm block on the flanks of the Chain Hills and in 1851 married Mary Kirkland. He called his farm Fairfield and laid a nursery around his homestead.

William Martin III was born into an exciting period of expanding horticulture and botany in southern New Zealand. His father died in an accident, leaving his mother to raise four young children and manage a business and property with very few resources. Martin eventually gained a free-tuition scholarship to the University of Otago while working as a pupil teacher at Green Island School. He took university classes while attending Dunedin Teachers' College and continued with university night classes when he was appointed to Ravensbourne School. Martin graduated with a Bachelor of Science in 1911.

Martin's accomplishments in botany were extensive even though he was an amateur without formal training. Martin made New Zealand botany popular, and his work on New Zealand lichens (fungi and plants) and his writing on Dunedin and Marlborough flora are worthy contributions that illustrate part of the significant legacy he left. There is an expansive bibliography of his works that would be of value for the tamariki of Fairfield School to study.

> "Fungi were also used for tā moko (tattooing). A fungus named āwheto was burnt and became a black powder, which was mixed with bird fat and used for ta moko."

"…early settlers called kānuka "tea tree" because they used the green leaves to make a substitute for tea. Māori used the hard wood of the plant for paddles and weapons, blades and spears."

Native flora and fauna around Fairfield School

This section describes native flora and fauna found locally. Some projects teachers could consider are outlined below.

1. Visualise what the area around Fairfield School and further afield might have looked like in the period of pre-contact and contact between Māori and European.
2. Examine some of the types of plants that were once in abundance around your school. Some plants have medicinal purposes, so investigation into these would be valuable.
3. Look at a cross-section of land near your school to assess whether any of those plants are still growing in your area.

At the point of European contact with Dunedin, the vista that looked out from Fairfield School would have differed greatly to that of today. According to our people, the bush was so thick in the Dunedin area that when some Europeans ventured in they never returned. Māori had trails and tracks and understood the area.

Monro made his observations about the mouth of the harbour of the peninsula in 1844:
The sky, a great part of the time, was without a cloud, and not a breeze ruffled the surface of the water, which reflected the surrounding wooded slopes, and every sea-bird that floated upon it, with mirror-like accuracy. For some hours after sunrise, the woods resounded with the rich and infinitely varied notes of thousands of tuis and other songsters. I never heard anything like it before in any part of New Zealand.

Monro followed on to note the "absence of a good site for a town". He mentioned how inhospitable the bush was on the mainland and that whalers had said they never ventured into it.

On his stay at Ōtākou (the Otago Harbour and village at the end of the peninsula) between 1843 and 1844, Edward Shortland wrote in his diary:
In the morning I woke early; and, as the dawn first peeped forth, was deafened by the sound of bell birds. The woods which were close by seemed to be thronged with them. Never before had I heard so loud a chorus. I called to mind Captain Cook's description of the impression made on him by the singing of these birds, when at anchor near the shore in Queens Charlotte's Sound. He is wrong, however, in saying that they sing at night, like the nightingale. They commence at dawn of day their chime of four notes, which, repeated independently by a thousand throats, creates the strangest melody. But they cease, as by one consent, the moment the suns first rays are visable; and there is a general silence. Again, at even, they commence, just as the suns last ray fades, and sing on till dark.

Some of the traditional flora from the area around Fairfield School are described below.

Miro
Kūkupa (wood pigeon) feed on the berries from the miro tree. Snares of running nooses were placed beside the water troughs or at natural drinking pools to trap thirsty kūkupa. Nooses of cabbage leaves were used for snares as they were stronger than those of flax. The snares were placed so close together that the kūkupa could not drink without putting their necks through the snares.

Miro oil was made into a liquid paste with kōkōwai (red ochre procured from earth) and smeared onto the body and garments to kill off vermin and pests. This oil is also one of the compounds used to make the scent taramea. The gum of the miro pine was used to stop the flow of blood from an open wound and apparently as a cure for warts.

There is a narrative about Maui, who turned himself into a kūkupa and flew down into the garden where his father was. He landed on the fence round the garden. People saw the kūkupa and chased him again so that they could snare him. He flew away and eventually met with his father and turned himself back into human form.

Māhoe
Māhoe is a soft wood that burns slowly. It is started with a rubbing stick, generally of a tougher wood like kaikōmako, which burns well. Dry moss was sometimes put at the end of the stick to hasten the ignition.

Māhoe has a special relationship with fire, and this was believed to be due to the actions of Maui. He made it his goal to discover the secret of fire. Maui put out all the fires in his village and volunteered to go and meet with his tupuna, Māhuika, whose fingernails were made of flame. He eventually persuaded her to part with one of her fiery fingernails and then immediately extinguished it in a nearby river. Maui persuaded her to give him another nail, and another, and continued to put them out in the water. By the last nail, Māhuika realised what Maui was doing and, in a fit of anger, threw up a great flame against him. With her fire being rained out, Māhuika collected the last few sparks and looked for somewhere to place them to set them on fire. The trees of rātā, hīnau, kahikatea, rimu and miro did not spark up, but māhoe was one that did take to the fire. Maui saw Māhuika place the spark of fire in these trees and returned to his village to show his family and friends how they could bring out the fire by rubbing the sticks of these trees together.

Tōtara
The tōtara tree had mutiple uses for Māori. Examples include wood for canoes, housing, musical instruments, toys, water containers and more. The tree's importance to Māori is recognised in our language, metaphor and idiom. When a chief dies, it is likened to the fallen tōtara: "Kua hinga te tōtara i te wao nui o Tāne" – The great tree in the forest of Tāne has fallen.

In our Kāi Tahu creation narrative, Maui's ancestor, Māhuika, is credited with hiding the gift of fire in five trees, one of them being tōtara. The bark of the tōtara trees on Rakiura / Stewart Island and in the southern part of the South Island is softer and more papery than that of the trees in the North Island and was used by muttonbirders to make torches – it was interwoven with flax fibre. The torch was saturated in muttonbird fat and set alight.

The dry outer bark of the tree was used to make splints for broken bones. The inside of the bark of the tōtara was used to make a medicine that helped with a fever.

Kōwhai
Beattie also wrote about the kōwhai's medicinal properties in the South Island. The bark was soaked in water and was an excellent remedy for cuts. Swellings of any sort were treated with wai kōwhai (kōwhai water), and this was a swift cure. Another internal remedy was for colds and sore throats. The bark was steeped in boiling water, and the infusion had to be drunk fresh as it doesn't keep.

Beattie was told of an incident where kōwhai juice was used successfully:
One aged man narrated the case of a Māori who had been with him on a sealing hunt. This man suffered very nasty injuries when his face unfortunately came between the teeth of a kekeno (fur seal). As soon as possible waikōhai (kōwhai juice) was poured into the wounds and in two or three days the man was right again.

Kānuka
The common name for this tree is white tea tree or white mānuka. Kānuka is used medicinally by boiling 12 even-sized pieces of bark until the water is dark – it is drunk for diarrhoea and dysentery. Long poles of sharpened kānuka are used to make eel weirs, and its fragrant leaves are used as scent oil. Spinning tops were also made of kānuka. Captain Cook and early settlers called mānuka "tea tree" because they used the green leaves to make a substitute for tea. Māori used the hard wood of the plant for paddles and weapons, blades and spears. The bark was used to make water containers and the inner bark as a waterproof layer for roofing.

Birds

Some of the traditional birdlife in the area would have been:

Kōparapara – bellbird

Tīrairaka – fantail

Tauhou – silver-eye

Kāhu – hawk

Weka – woodhen

Kākāpō – owl parrot

Pūtakitaki – paradise duck

Kererū, kukupa – wood pigeon

Pārera – grey duck

This birdlife was mainly relegated to the forest areas. Birdlife was also abundant near the ocean and into Ōtākou.

Glossary for your school

Kai – food
Kākahu – clothing
Kekeno – seal
Kinaki – relish
Kiri – bark
Korowai – cloak
Mokomoko – lizard/gecko
Tuna – eel
Wai – water

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