

Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group

Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group will be held on:

Date: **Wednesday 27 March 2024**

Time: **4.00pm**

Venue: **Banded Dotterel Room , First Floor, Te Whare Whakare
2 Baring Square East, Ashburton**

Membership

Ashburton District Council	- Cr Carolyn Cameron (Chair) - Cr Tony Todd
Historic Places Mid Canterbury	- Julie Luxton
Ashburton Museum & Historical Society	- Stuart Wilson
Community representative	- David Stewart
Council support	- Sarah Mosley (Group Manager People & Facilities) - Danielle Campbell (AAGM Deputy Director) - Connor Lysaght (AAGM Archivist)

Meeting Timetable	
Time	Item
4pm	Working Group meeting commences

- 1 **Apologies**
 - Cr Tony Todd

- 2 **Extraordinary Business**

Minutes

- 3 Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group – 29/11/23 **Pg 3**

Updates

Pg 5

- 4.1 Whakanui Beach heritage radar installation pad
- 4.2 Granite plaques
- 4.3 Ng King site brochure
- 4.4 Verbal updates

- 5 **Next meeting**
 Wednesday 12 June 2024 (tbc)

3. *Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group* **29/11/23**

Meeting of the Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group held on Wednesday 29 November 2023, commencing at 3.30pm, in the Council Chamber, 137 Havelock Street, Ashburton.

Present:

Crs Carolyn Cameron (Chair) and Tony Todd; David Stewart, Julie Luxton and Stuart Wilson.

In attendance:

Sarah Mosley (GM People & Facilities), Danielle Campbell (AAGM Deputy Director), Connor Lysaght (Archivist) and Phillipa Clark (Governance Team Leader).

1 Apologies

Nil

The Chair welcomed new member and former District Councillor Stuart Wilson who has recently been appointed as President of the Ashburton Museum & Historical Society.

2 Extraordinary Business

Nil.

3 Minutes

That the minutes of the Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group meeting held on 13 September 2023 be taken as read and confirmed.

Julie/David

Carried

4 Updates / discussion

- **Interpretation panels**

Open Spaces input is required. Sarah will speak with Ian Soper to organise this.

- **Time capsule**

Te Whare Whakare is to open to the public in late January, but the official opening date, when the time capsule will be enclosed, hasn't been confirmed yet.

Connor will collate the seeds for the time capsule (currently in storage held by Carrfields) after the date of the official opening is known.

Response to “*What do you like about Ashburton*” has been documented, ready to print nearer the time of completing the time capsule.

- **Granite ground plaques**

The Roading Team don't support in-ground plaques either on grass or paved areas. The thinking now is that building owners who wish to have plaques put on their buildings, could choose to do that.

David spoke about the Motueka examples which are in-ground and not causing any issues. Sarah will ask Ian Soper to speak to Tasman DC and report back on the Motueka plaques.

- **Heritage walking trail**

The pamphlet is still a work in progress.

Any design work may have to be outsourced, depending on capacity of Council's Communications team.

- **Potential projects**

Whakanui Beach and Chertsey oil well sites

The Chair read email correspondence from Glenn Vallender who contacted Heritage NZ after the last Working Group meeting. Heritage NZ advise there is nothing to stop the relocation of the concrete pad, if that is what is decided, but they ask that it isn't nominated for a heritage listing, at least at this stage, as a place entered on the NZ Heritage List needs to be listed at the place where it is affixed to land.

Heritage NZ agree the above sites are interesting but think it preferable that they are recognised by having archaeological site records (the 1947 foundation pad already has such a record, and the oil well could easily be recorded this way). This would give the two features a similar level of recognition.

Heritage NZ also commented that removing the concrete pad foundation from its beach site would be a loss of context for the site. They suggested an interpretation panel may be appropriate and will undertake to look at this next time they are in the district.

Heritage NZ have forwarded the relevant forms for Council to complete if the Chertsey oil well site is to be nominated for a listing or an archaeological site record.

Sarah advised that officers would need to consult with Te Rūnunga o Arowhenua before anything could be progressed.

The Working Group agreed that the Ashburton Aviation Museum would be the appropriate group to seek heritage status for the Whakanui Beach concrete pad. The Chair will refer this back to Glenn and ask him to submit the information to the Aviation Museum.

- **Ng King Bros. Chinese Market Garden Settlement**

A public opening day will be advertised early next year.

- **Rail overbridge**

The Working Group agreed that this is a worthwhile project and supported the direction that Council is taking. The bridge is of significance (with Heritage NZ Category 2 listing).

Council has this upgrade flagged in the LTP 2024-34 and will make a funding bid to Waka Kotahi in December, but the outcome won't be known until the National Land Transport programme is confirmed in mid 2024.

The meeting concluded at 4.30pm.

Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group

27 March 2024



4. *Updates*

4.1 Whakanui Beach heritage site

Glenn Vallender has contacted the Chair to ask the working group to reconsider the decision not to relocate the heritage Whakanui 1947 radar installation foundation pad. He has forwarded two documents in support of his request to help preserve this small area of the District's heritage.

"A case for heritage relocation" and "Canterbury Project" are appended.

4.2 Granite plaques

Open Spaces Manager, Ian Soper will update the Group on the outcome of his discussion with Tasman DC (Motueka plaques)

4.3 Ng King site brochure

Danielle Campbell will propose the idea of creating a brochure or leaflet for the Ng King site at Allens Rd that could be made available at ADC customer services. Based on the popularity of our AAGM 'What's On' brochures that were made available at Te Whare Whakatere, we think that the Ng King leaflet would be popular with visitors to the district.

4.4 Verbal updates

**To: The Ashburton Heritage Working Group Committee
for Ashburton District Council
Chair: Carolyn Cameron**

A case for heritage relocation: The Whakanui 1947 radar installation foundation pad

Background

In 1947 there was a allied military assignment which became known as the “Canterbury Project’ taking place on the Whakanui beach front. This flat beach front would have been up to 80-100m from the high tide mark at this time. The purpose of this project was to investigate radio wave propagation under nor West wind conditions and other meteorological phenomena. Furthermore, this location marks the place where early NZ radioastronomy investigations took place. The RNZAF Ashburton station was where analysis of data and management took place. This project is reasonably well documented with archives held at the Ashburton Aviation Museum. A summary poster has been attached which will be used in material produced for the History of Astronomy lead by Dr Wayne Orchiston who recently visited Ashburton. The history of this site has been provided to Heritage NZ for comment regarding issues surrounding the ethics of relocating structures of historic significance. Replies from Heritage NZ have previously been passed on to the ADC Heritage Working group. Given due diligence, it was found that there is no reason why the structure cannot be relocated.

Note on the ethics of Relocating heritage items

There is a vast literature associated with the ethical issues in the relocation of heritage places and ephemera. The go-to document is the ICOMOS NZ Charter. (International Council on Monuments and Sites). https://icomos.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NZ_Charter.pdf . Every Council is guided by these ethics in New Zealand in their Heritage policies.

The following is an extraction of the relevant statements from the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the conservation of places of cultural heritage value.

Revised text Copyright © 2010 ICOMOS New Zealand (Inc.) / Te Mana O Nga Pouwhenua O Te Ao – The New Zealand National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites.

1. Respect for surviving evidence and knowledge (ICOMOS NZ Charter. #5. P5)

*“The removal or obscuring of any physical evidence of any period or activity **should be minimised**, and should be **explicitly justified where it does occur**. The fabric of a particular period or activity may be obscured or removed if assessment shows that its removal would not diminish the cultural heritage value of the place.”*

2. Relocation (ICOMOS NZ Charter #10. p4)

“The on-going association of a structure or feature of cultural heritage value with its location, site, curtilage, and setting is essential to its authenticity and integrity. Therefore, a structure or feature of cultural heritage value should remain on its original site.

***Relocation** of a structure or feature of cultural heritage value, where its removal is required in order to clear its site for a different purpose or construction, or where its removal is required to enable its use on a different site, is not a **desirable** outcome and is not a conservation process.*

*In exceptional circumstances, **a structure of cultural heritage value may be relocated if its current site is in imminent danger, and if all other means of retaining the structure in its current location have been exhausted. In this event, the new location should provide a setting compatible with the cultural heritage value of the structure.***

Argumentation

In reality, there is an **imminent** danger of a heritage structure being lost by coastal marine retrograde erosion. Indeed, images show the concrete foundation pad exposed in the beach berm wall and at current erosion rate of c0.8m/y this pad will be eroded out and lost possibly within the next 1-3 years.

The current location is the original location.

A new location such as at the Ashburton Aviation Museum, will not only salvage this historic foundation pad but will also provide a location where the 'Canterbury Project' headquarters were originally thus retaining its historical context and connection.

This is a case of saving, salvaging and relocating an historical structure within its original context for *"a setting compatible with the cultural heritage value of the structure."* It is also a case where relocation is a far better and ethically acceptable option than 'doing nothing' and have the structure destroyed and lost forever. Indeed, relocation would add to the history of this site with this last remaining structure being preserved. Relocation also conforms to ICOMOS ethics for relocation of a cultural structure (ICOMOS NZ Charter #10).

It is a little disappointing to receive notice that the justification for not relocating this historic structure was on the grounds of "diminishing its value" if relocated, and that it would be too difficult to do. In my view, this is not adequate reasoning. There is no explanation as to exactly how its value is diminished nor a reasoned explanation as to why it would be too difficult to remove and relocate. There is no reason why this structure cannot be physically removed and relocated within an ICOMOS ethically justified context. With authoritative consultation between ADC and the AAM committee, relocation to the Ashburton Aviation Museum is the best option and one that also shows ADC complies with its own heritage policies in its obligations to heritage in the Ashburton district.

Recommendation:

1. That the Heritage working Group of ADC seriously reconsider their decision to not relocate this piece of locally and nationally significant remaining piece of cultural heritage.
2. That authoritative consultation between ADC and AAM be carried out to achieve the salvage and relocation of this last remaining heritage structure of the 1947 Canterbury Project.
3. Ubi voluntas est via est.

Glenn Vallender

The Canterbury Project

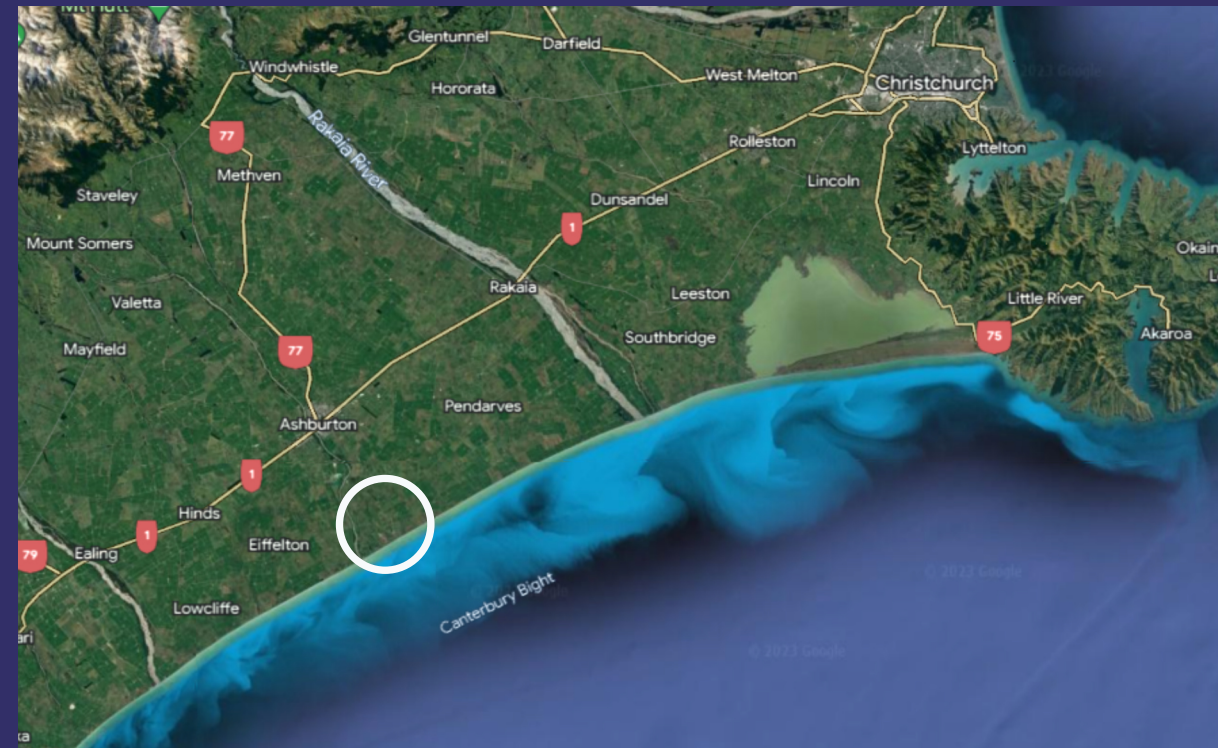
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GROUP USE ONLY

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Glenn Vallender¹ and Alistair Perkins²
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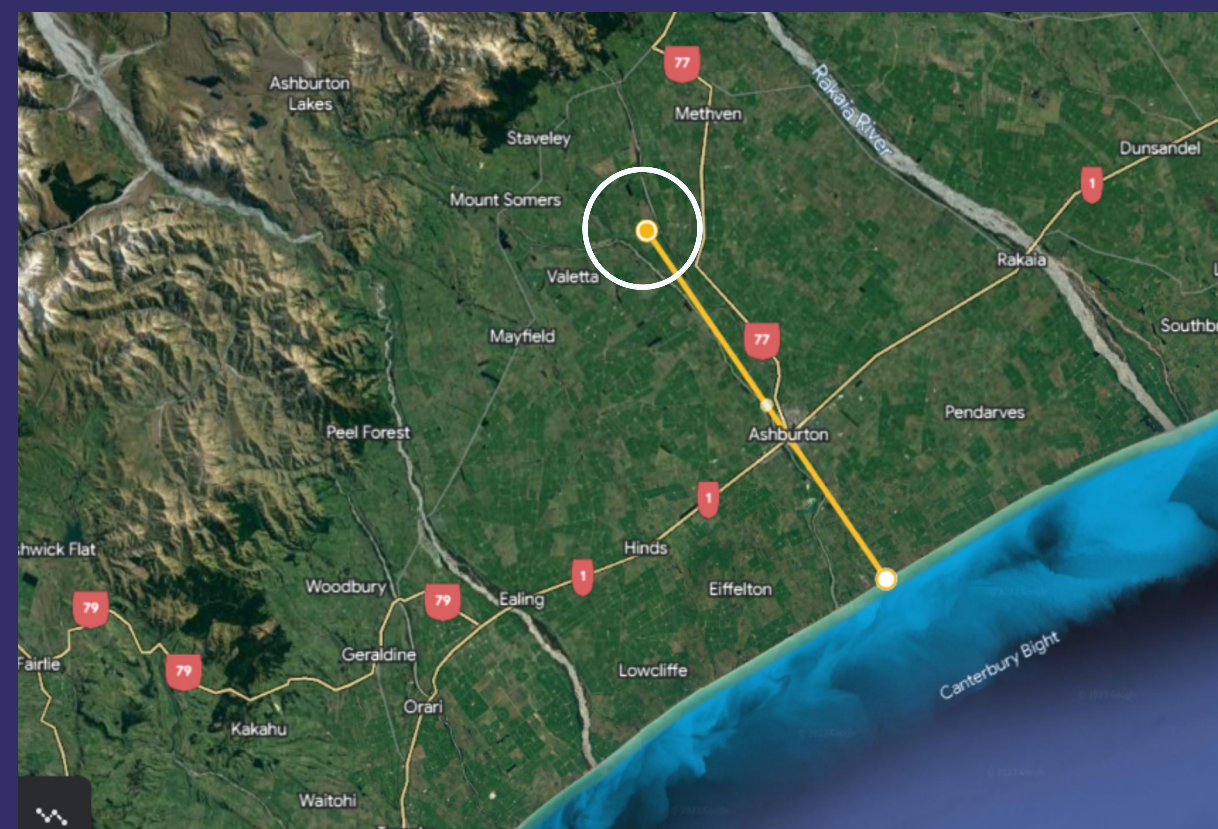
UNIVERSITY
of SOUTHERN
QUEENSLAND



A Google Earth view of Whakanui beach (white circle) and town of Ashburton. Te Wai Pounamu South Island NZ.



The concrete aerial foundation remains on the edge of the Whakanui beach berm (yellow circle).



Location of the inland meteorological station some 38 Km from Whakanui beach (White circle). This was a more or less permanent station in 1947.

Acknowledgements:

Ashburton Aviation Museum archives.

Ashburton Guardian, June 14, 1946, November, 28, 1947.

Personal journal and photo album of the family of Don Wilson.

Unwin, R.S. & Milnes, B. (May, 1948). The Canterbury Project: A radio meteorological investigation in the South Island of New Zealand. Publisher. DSIR NZ) and (UK).

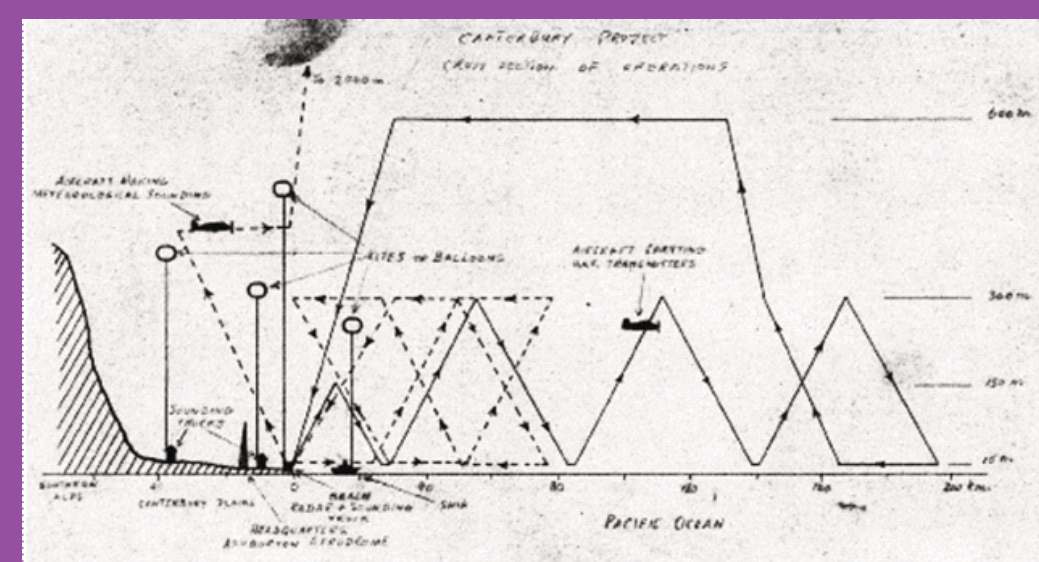
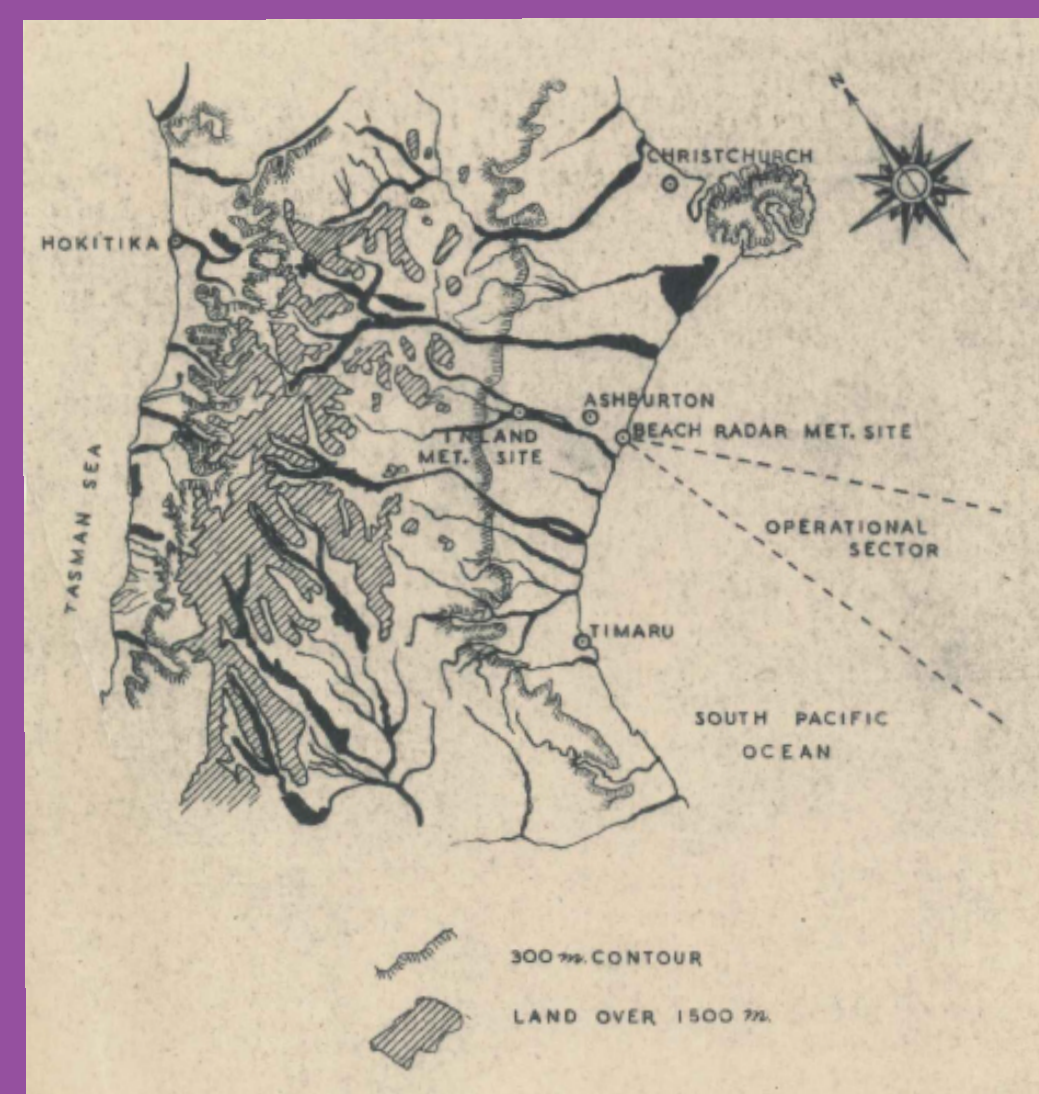
After some earlier investigations, in July 1945 the New Zealand War Cabinet approved the establishment of an experimental radar station “on the Canterbury Plains” and then continued in February 1946 through to 1948 with of course British and American ‘assistance’. This became known officially as the “Canterbury Project” and was organised and directed by the NZ Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR).

The initial aim was to investigate the impact of meteorological conditions such as a Foehn wind on refraction and transmission of radio waves and their ability to detect, essentially, incoming missiles and aircraft. Operations were controlled and analysed by a scientific team at the Ashburton airfield. Mr A.D.Lowe was the officer in charge at the airfield and Mr R. S. Unwin (Later Dr Unwin) from Winchester was a senior scientist on the project. Observations began in September 1946 and closed down officially on Tuesday, December 16, 1947. Over 70 days operating, 97 sets of measurements were achieved. Forty one people lived and worked at the Ashburton airfield. The Mayor of Ashburton at the time (E. C. Bathurst) preferred to call the project “the Ashburton Project” rather than the “Canterbury Project”! Although primarily a ‘radar’ project, it was also used towards the end of the programme to look at radio frequencies emitted from the Sun and other stars thus building on the work of early radio astronomers. This was at the time, called “solar noise” when the transmitters were operating at 97 megacycles/sec and linked to sunspot activity. Sunspot activity had long been associated with geomagnetism as shown through the work of the Magnetic Observatory at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

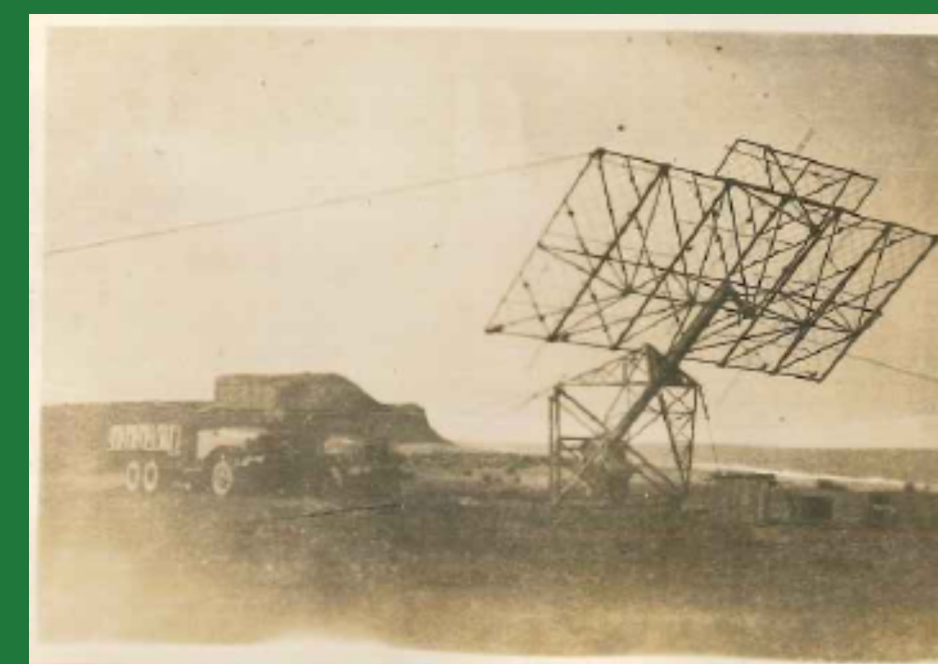
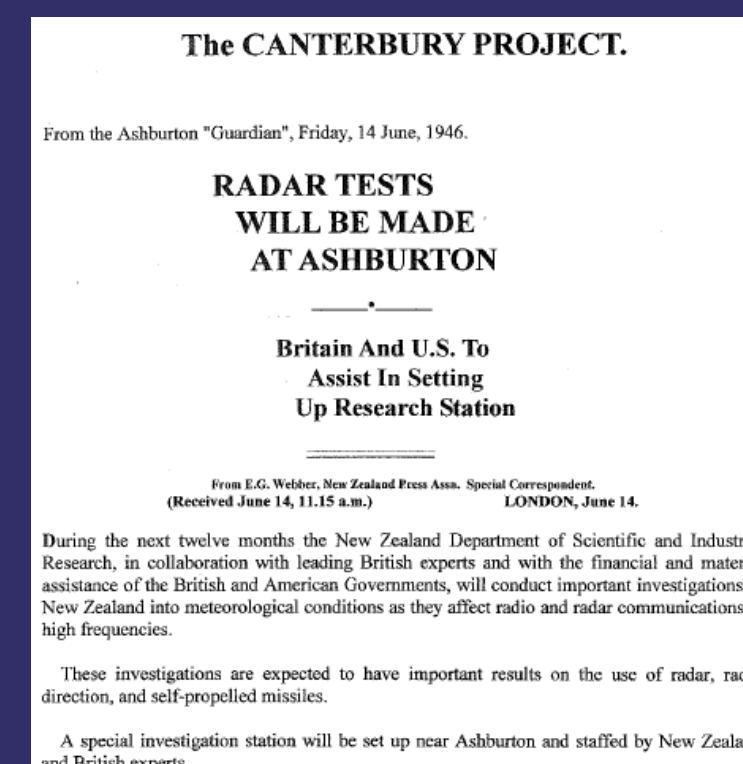
The Canterbury Project was a fundamental and early window into an understanding of the role of weather conditions on radio wave transmission and ducting as well as providing an opportunity to investigate solar and stellar radiation.



Members of the Canterbury Project team at Whakanui beach 1947.



Locations and methodology for measuring the weather conditions and recording the radio wave strength.



Building and erecting the antenna on Whakanui Beach 1947. (Images: Courtesy of Don Wilson family and the Ashburton Aviation Museum)



One of four Avro Anson aircraft parked at the Ashburton airfield and used to take measurements up to 200Km from Whakanui beach. They were based at the Wigram airfield at Christchurch. Two aircraft were often used to take radio signal measurements over a two hour period up to 600m altitude. Aircraft made up to 8 ascents and descents between 50m and 300m. Level runs were made each time as well. This was called the “free space level”.



Building the antenna at Whakanui beach, 1946.



Minesweeper HMNZS Hautapu docked in Timaru. This ship was restricted to measuring up to 30Km offshore from Whakanui beach. Kites and balloons were used to take measurements of humidity, air pressure, temperature and wind velocity at a known altitude.



Scientific officers at the Ashburton airfield headquarters. B Milnes, H. Davies and R. S. Unwin. (Press, Vol. LXXXI November 9, 1946).

Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group Terms of Reference

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group is to promote the history and heritage of the Ashburton district and to strengthen the community's feeling of being connected to Ashburton's past. This relates to Council's community outcome of '*a district of great spaces and places*'.

The Working Group's activities will align with Council's strategies, plans, policies and bylaws. Access to the archival collections of the Ashburton Museum & Historical Society Inc (AM&HS), which are held on the premises of the Ashburton Museum, will be in accordance with the current Agreement between the AM&HS and the Ashburton District Council (ADC). Any and all imagery / text used will be moderated so as to not breach the Copyright Act 1994 (by strict use of only materials owned by ADC and the AM&HS).

Projects identified by the Working Group will have clear funding requirements, including the potential for external funding. Council's approval will be subject to budget availability that is aligned to annual work programmes.

Membership

Membership of the Working Group comprises:

- Cr Carolyn Cameron (Chair)
- Cr Tony Todd
- Mayor Neil Brown (ex officio)
- Historic Places Mid Canterbury (Julie Luxton)
- Ashburton Museum & Historical Society (Stuart Wilson)
- Community representative (David Stewart)

The quorum for the Working Group is three members, one of whom shall be an elected member.

External engagement

The Working Group may seek approval from Council to engage with representatives of other heritage groups, iwi or organisations in an advisory capacity.

Meeting Frequency

The Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group will meet quarterly.

Working Group members shall be given not less than 5 working days' notice of meetings.

Projects

The Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group has responsibility for identifying projects that will promote the history and heritage of the Ashburton district. If Council approves a project, the Working Group will be involved in the implementation of the project.

Council officers will provide updates on work programme progress, the level of expenditure against budget, and health and safety regulation compliance.

Budget

The 2023-2024 year has \$8,000 budgeted for working group projects.

Reporting

The Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group will report to Council.

Meeting Management

Technical advice and support will be provided by the GM People & Facilities or appointee. Administrative support will be provided by the Governance Team.

Date Adopted:

4 October 2023