

The Wairau Lagoon is part of the Treaty of Waitangi settlements and will shortly be out of bounds to ordinary New Zealanders and for further archaeological research. Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research at Otago University says it will take at least five years for all the results of the dig, which took place over only three weeks in January 2009, to be fully published. Only visitors approved by Associate Professor Richard Walter of Otago University were allowed to visit the dig site. Some researchers were refused entry, including those with specialised underwater equipment and skilled operators offering to recover material eroding into the lagoon. And the question remains - who were the extra nine people claimed as being the tupuna of Rangitane, but who did not come from the burial site?

A Memorandum of Agreement over the Wairau Bar was signed between three parties: the Rangitane iwi, the Canterbury Museum and Otago University. Rangitane arranged and organised the media and had a professional blogger on site who photographed and reported on the dig. Future research on the retained samples can only be done if Rangitane give their permission. They own the intellectual property rights and effectively control what we know about the ancient people of the Wairau Bar - termed the 'The Holy Grail of New Zealand Archaeology'. Cultural sensitivity and controversy has effectively PREVENTED proper scientific investigation of the Wairau Bar and its people.

Pre-Polynesian settlement - What does the Government say?

After Noel Hilliam's persistent letters to PM John Key and Heritage Minister Chris Finlayson, Finlayson referred Noel to a government website and Michael King's *The Penguin History of New Zealand* and *The Quest for Origins* by KR Howe, upon which Government opinion is based.

To quote a little from the latter: Page 157. "We need some hard evidence" P158 "Some people simply have a capacity to believe some very strange things." P178 there is no direct and/or corroborating evidence of human presence in New Zealand 2,000 years ago, but widespread evidence...for human arrival in the later 13th century." Michael King in *The Penguin History of New Zealand*. Chapter 2 "Despite a plethora of amateur theories about Melanesian, South American, Egyptian, Phoenician and Celtic colonisation of New Zealand, there is not a shred of evidence that the first human settlers were anything other than Polynesian. Physiological, genetic, linguistic, mythological, artefactual and botanic evidence blends into a symphony of accord with this conclusion. The only points in doubt are precisely where these people launched their expeditions of colonisation, when and where they arrived, and how many of them founded the NZ Maori population." Chapter 4 Landfall: "All verifiable evidence - from archaeology, genetic analysis, carbon dating, burnt pollen remains and disposition of volcanic ash showers - points to NZ being settled in the 13th century...The inescapable fact remains, however, that to date, no direct evidence has been found of human occupation of NZ - no hearth fires, no tools, no human remains or the remains of creatures butchered by humans - earlier than the 13th century AD and it is in the latter period, when occupation and evidence coincide, making it possible to build narratives, that the human history of the country must begin... thanks to the sciences of geology, paleontology and palaeobiology, it is possible to establish the sequence and chronology by which a fragment of Gondwana became the island of NZ,



which humankind began to colonise around 800 years ago;" P59 "There was not a skerrick of evidence that the story (of the Waitaha people) had any basis in fact...would make the Waitaha the first people on earth to live in a country for several millennia and leave no trace of their occupation."

We invite readers to read these books for themselves in conjunction with reading our articles and check out the government website, to form a balanced opinion.

In his letter to PM John Key, Noel wrote about the TUREHU, who had fair skin and blue green eyes and the PATU-PAI-AREHE, another fair skinned people and asked government Ministers to refer to Franklin elocal's website www.elocal.co.nz archived editions of September, October, November 2008 and January 2009. There was a huge demand for these magazine editions, containing the series on the First New Zealanders. The website currently has

Franklin elocal invites readers to send in their comments, experiences and opinions on the early history of New Zealand and we will publish them in following editions. ■

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