

HISTORICAL & TECHNICAL REPORT

KOROWAI

E1620

THE ROYAL ALBERT MEMORIAL MUSEUM



**REPORT PRODUCED BY
BRENT KEREHONA PUKEPUKE-AHITAPU *BA, MTeach*
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KUPUTAKA/GLOSSARY

Kupu ē-kaupapa/Term	Whakamāramatanga/Definition
Aho	Horizontal or weft threads
Aho poka (also known as Tīhoi)	Additional aho, shaping inserts, which create contouring for a closer fit i.e. custom fit
Hapū	Sub-tribe
Harakeke	Phormium tenax or New Zealand Flax
Here	Ties used to secure garments
Hītori	History
Iwi	Tribe
Kairaranga	Weaver
Kaiwhakairo	Carver
Kākahu	Generic term for cloaks
Kauko	Side edge of a kākahu
Kaupapa	Framework of the garment
Kurupatu	A neck fringe on a kākahu
Kawa	Protocols of practice, how things are done (see also tikanga)
Paru	A black ferruginous mud used in the dyeing process
Pūrākau	Stories, oral history
Mātauranga	Traditional knowledge
Rangahau	Research
Remu	Bottom edge of kākahu
Taonga	Cultural treasure or artefact
Tāhuhu Kōrero	Background story
Tikanga	Correct procedure or custom (see kawa)
Te Ao Māori	The Māori World or Māori worldview
Ua	Top edge or neckline
Whakanakonako	Embellishments
Whatu	Hand-twining technique
Whenu	Vertical or warp threads

KUPU WHAKATAKI/PREFACE

Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro nōnā te ngahere, ko te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga nōnā te ao.

The forest belongs to the bird who feasts on the miro berry, the world belongs to the bird who feasts on education.

Māori Whakatauki/Proverb

The *whakapapa* and *hītori* of *taonga*, or the provenance and history of cultural treasures, are as important as the items themselves. Whenever the term *taonga* is used within this report, the author is referring to cultural treasures, although Western practice usually refers to them simply as artefacts or objects.

Mātauranga (knowledge) of who the *kairaranga* (weaver) or the *kaiwhakairo* (carver) was, the *iwi* or *hapū* (subtribe) from which they affiliate, the identity of the receiver, and the reasons for the gifting – are also *taonga* and unfortunately, far too much of this information has been lost to time.

Māori *taonga* rest in countless institutions around the world, museums, galleries, libraries, and private collections, and although the author does not take issue with this as such; he does feel that far too many *taonga* are displayed, or held, without an appropriate level of cultural and historical context. After visiting several museums in Europe, the United States of America, Australia, and the United Kingdom, the author noticed that several of our *taonga* had either minimal information, no cultural context, or worse, some information panels bore the terms ‘Unknown’ or ‘Unidentified’ and the name of the collector or collection was more prominent than the *taonga* itself.

As a weaver, a novice carver, and a Māori historian, the author felt that he was able to examine select *taonga* from institutions in countries to which he travels and produce documents that would provide these institutions with a general level of historical and technical information. The author has been fortunate to have undertaken extensive international travel, for work, research, and holidays, and has recently begun integrating museum and gallery visits into these trips; contacting institutions prior to any of his *haerenga* (journeys), to ascertain what *taonga* they have, and what he might want to access and examine – or what they would like to know more about.

By no means does he claim to be an expert in the study of Māori *taonga* and feels that there are others of greater standing within the field; however, he offers his knowledge, as best as he is able, to produce research documents that provide substantially more information than is currently held on these specific *taonga*.

The compilation and provision of these reports serve several purposes: to do the *taonga* justice by visiting and spending time with them; to examine them and promote their whereabouts; make their locations known to Māori (and other interested persons); and to uncover their *pūrākau* (stories) and bring them back to life. This third practice of uncovering their *pūrākau* achieves several outcomes, these being: to reunite them with *uri* (direct descendants) and *whanaunga* (relatives); to provide the institutions with a credible and informative record of the respective *taonga*; and ensuring their stories are not forgotten – *ka maumahara tonu tātou kia rātou*.

This particular *pūrākau* tells of Royal Navy officer, Lt George ‘Toby’ Phillpotts’ experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand, where he acquired this *korowai*; and his gallant loss of life in the Battle of Ohaeawai during the Northern Wars (1845-46).

HAURONGO/BIOGRAPHY



The author's cultural background sees him affiliated with the iwi (tribes) of Ngāpuhi, Ngāi Tūhoe, Te Whakatōhea, and Te Whānau-a-Apanui, as well as having connections to Alveston in Gloucestershire, Bloomsbury in London, and Helsingborg in Sweden – all of which he has visited.

He is ex-military, having served in the army as a paratrooper and then military police officer; before studying a Bachelor of Arts, and then a Master of Teaching degree, and becoming a history teacher, and a military and Māori historian.

The author is a cultural practitioner: *kairaranga* (weaver), novice *kaiwhakairo* (carver), and *kaihaka* (performer).

He is a published author, producing articles, reports, and story books; produced a historical short film; delivered lectures around the world; and contributed towards exhibitions in institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand, and Australia.

The author's research has been referred to in the media; mentioned in legal cases; used on government websites; presented in museums; stopped the sale of *taonga* at auction and assisted in the repatriation of *taonga* back to Aotearoa New Zealand.

He has also appeared on television and radio in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, as a *tumu kōrero* (historian), in documentaries, news, and cultural programs.

The author is a husband, father, and grandfather, who believes in the importance of teaching his *whānau* (family) *mātauranga* and *toi Māori* and including them in his *kaupapa rangahau* (research projects); taking them with him on these *haerenga* (journeys) if the opportunities allow.

It is his goal to contribute toward *Māoritanga* and *Te Ao Māori* (The Māori World) in a positive and impactful manner and hopes that this report goes some way towards achieving this objective.

ARA RANGAHAU/RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



This report was compiled by the author, utilising: online and library/archive-based research; consultation with curators; conducting interviews with members of the Ngāpuhi *iwi* (tribe); as well as carrying out a physical examination of the *korowai* itself. The physical examination of the artefact was undertaken at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, on 25th January 2024. The online and library-based research was undertaken between March 2024 - March 2025. The consultation process and interviews with Ngāpuhi academics and *kaumātua* began in May 2024, and are ongoing, as per Māori *kawa* and *tikanga*.

All physical descriptions, including measurements, and any condition notes, were obtained during the author's examination of the *taonga*.

Thanks, and acknowledgment goes to the following people and institutions for their support and assistance: Royal Albert Memorial Museum (Tony Eccles – Curator of Ethnography, and Elle Norrish – MA student, University of Exeter).

PŪRONGO KŌRERO O NEHE

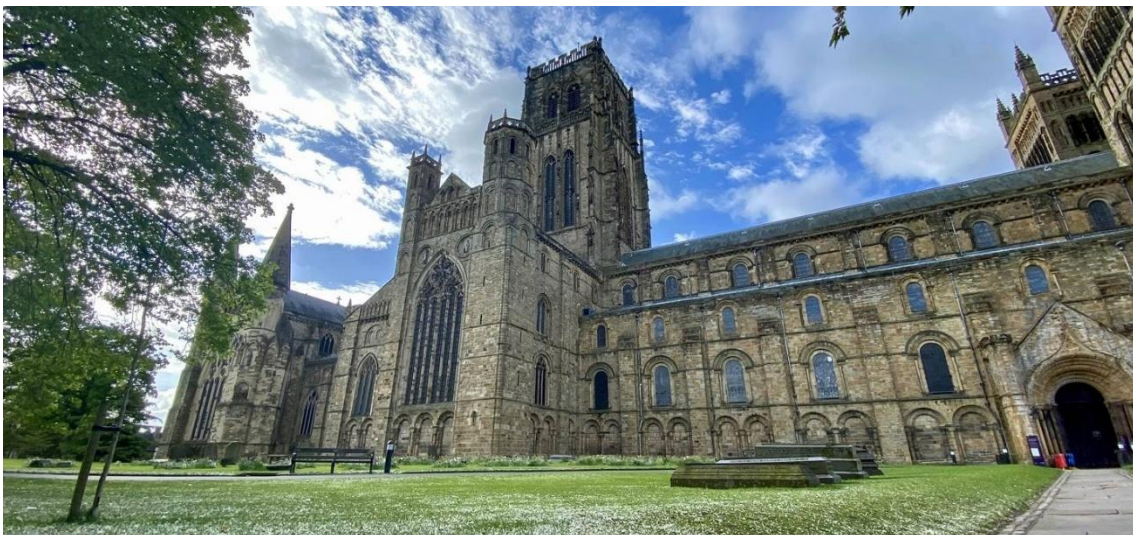
HISTORICAL REPORT

TĀHUHU KŌRERO/BACKGROUND STORY

George Phillpotts was one of 14 children of Henry Phillpotts, vicar of St Margaret's, Durham, England, and later lord bishop of Exeter, and his wife, Deborah Maria Surtees; his date and place of birth are unknown, but he was baptised in Durham on 26 January 1814.¹ At that time Henry was a canon of Durham Cathedral, 9th prebend, as well as curate of St Margaret's Church, Durham. He became Bishop of Exeter in 1831.



Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter.ⁱ

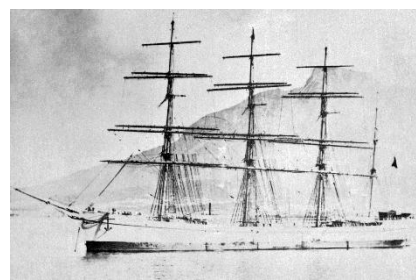


Durham Cathedral,ⁱⁱ

George Phillpotts entered the Royal Navy on 5 September 1827, advanced to mate through examination on 26 November 1833, served on HMS Asia. He also served on HMS Comet.



HMS Asiaⁱⁱⁱ



HMS Comet^{iv}

The Western Times had reported his predicament in March 1839, that "Bishop Phillpotts has a son of most extraordinary naval abilities—who has displayed valour the most consummate, zeal unabated and unwearied in every clime, discretion the most profound, and talent the most distinguished; and yet he is only a midshipman after twelve years service, and the infernal whigs will not promote him." Vouched correct by the West of England Conservative, the Northampton Herald had earlier noted that during those midshipman years, "he has been in active service, and has been in almost every part of the globe. He is a young man possessing most distinguished talent, consummate personal bravery, and unsullied reputation. Testimonials as to his character were signed by every commanding officer, without exception, under whom he has served. Under the sanction of these testimonials he made an application to the Admiralty for promotion, but a hint not to be misunderstood was given to him, that the name Phillpotts alone was a bar to all promotion, however in every other respect he might be deserving of it."^v His father's politics had hindered his career progression and he had become disillusioned with his naval career.

In January 1841, General William Dyott, 63rd Regiment, observed that Phillpotts had left the navy and was helping his friend Dick Dyott, the General's son, and the Conservative Party:

On the 6th a friend of Dick's, Mr. Phillpotts, a son of the Bishop of Exeter's, came for two nights, and was an able help in assisting at our party the following day. He had been in the navy, but on account of his father's politics could not obtain promotion and quitted, and was employing himself in a colliery and in iron works at Dudley. Dick made acquaintance with him at Plymouth when he was serving as midshipman. He is a nice gentlemanlike youngster.

Almost a year later, Phillpotts received his commission in the Royal Navy with rank of lieutenant on 12 November 1841. On 8 February 1842, he was appointed to the newly commissioned HM Steam Sloop Vixen, under Commander Henry Boyes, RN, being manned and provisioned at Plymouth, England, for her maiden voyage to the East India station and China.



HMS Vixen firing on Pangeran Usop's house - 9 Aug 1845^{vi}

General service

Phillpotts' naval service saw him in Asia, Australia, and the South Pacific, which included Aotearoa New Zealand. Whilst in New South Wales, Lieutenant Phillpotts was appointed to *HMS Hazard*, under Commander Charles Bell, RN. In December 1842, the day after her arrival at Sydney. After China, *Hazard* had left Singapore on 18 October, Anyer, Indonesia on 1 November, for refitting in Sydney into January 1843.

On 25th January, *Hazard* departed Sydney for Tahiti, following HMS *Vindictive*, which had sailed several days before carrying the British Consul, George Pritchard, to that place. In case of hostilities, Commander Bell was to report to the Admiral of the South American Station for further instructions. Subsequent to visiting Tahiti, *Hazard* was to cruise the South Seas in search of the whaler *Water Witch*, which had been carried off by its mate. They arrived back in Sydney on 24 March.

HMS Hazard left Sydney for Hobart on 11th or 12th April 1843, then headed to Tahiti a few days after its arrival.

Whilst at O'ahu, Hawaii, *Hazard* went to San Blas, Mexico, in January 1844, to bring William Miller, Consul General of the Sandwich Islands and the Pacific, and suite, to Hawaii. Thereafter they left Honolulu, O'ahu, for Lahaina, Maui, on 8th February, for presentation to the King of Hawaii, Kamehameha III on 10 February and signing of the Convention Between Great Britain and the Sandwich Islands on 12 February. *Hazard* then sailed for Mazatlán, Mexico, seemingly returning to Hawaii and Tahiti in March.

After the departure of the *Shamrock* on 8th March, a serious skirmish took place between the Tahitians and French, commencing the *Franco-Tahitian War*. The Tahitians, assisted by the American and European seamen on the Island, managed to take six field pieces from the French, and kill about eighty. A gunner, formerly of *HMS Vindictive*, was at the head of the Tahitians.

Captain Bell, of *H.M.S. Hazard*, on his arrival at Tahiti, sent a boat ashore in command of an officer, which, on reaching, was at once seized by the French guard stationed on Papeete beach, and the officer and his crew were taken prisoners. After a detention, however, of several hours, they were 'sent off' to their ship, with the understanding that 'the subjects of Great Britain could not on any account be allowed to land on that Island,' as the French Governor declared the Island 'to be in a state of siege.' This declaration, on the part of the French Governor, is really too Quixotic to be viewed in any other light than that of pity—the act of besieging an unfortified place, must be brave indeed!

HMS Hazard touched at Tutuila, Samoan Islands in late April, and arrived back in Sydney on 18 May 1844, having traversed at least a distance of 30,000 miles on that cruise. The ship and crew departed Sydney, New South Wales, for Auckland, New Zealand on 4th July 1844.

Aotearoa New Zealand

HMS Hazard, under the command of Acting Commander David Robertson-Macdonald following Commander Bell's death in August 1844, was in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Trouble in a new land

It wasn't long before Phillpotts would find himself at the centre of a serious personal dispute, when late in 1844 or early 1845, he was lounging in Wood's Royal Hotel, Auckland, (site of The Northern Club today) reading the *Auckland Times* when some disagreeable content compelled him dismiss the newspaper as "a rag", and describe other uses to which it could be put. But it so happened that

Henry Falwasser, the newspaper's proprietor was also drinking at that hotel, to which he often resorted - or so his enemies said - to absorb editorial inspiration. Infuriated, Falwasser, in the phrase of the day, 'called Phillpotts out', the duellists, making their stand near the hotel. 'They both shot at each other but seemed to miss so made friends and repaired to the bar for a drink. It was only later when undressing that Falwasser found a bullet hole in the tails of his coat; if his opponent had aimed slightly higher it might have been rather painful.'^{vii}



Princess Street, Auckland 1849.^{viii}

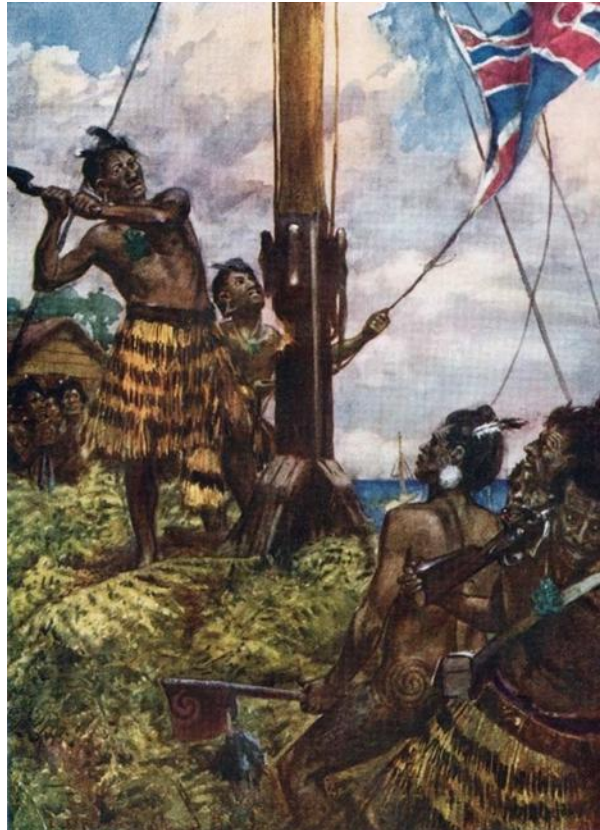
Regarding this incident, the late John Sidney Gully, M.A., DIP.N.Z.L.S., Assistant Chief Librarian, General Assembly Library, (2009) presented a lecture focussing on duels in New Zealand, and mentioned Phillpotts' case:

'Phillpotts v. Falwasser (1844). Henry Falwasser, editor of the *Auckland Times*, was called out by Lieutenant George Phillpotts, RN)... for adverse comments on the conduct of the war in the north. A duel took place in Auckland near where the Northern Club is now situated, probably soon after 10 September 1844. Falwasser received a bullet through his coat tail and Phillpotts lost a button from his uniform.'^{ix}

An account of this duel is also recorded in the *Auckland Times* in an article referring to Falwasser and his role in establishing the above-mentioned newspaper.^x

It can be argued that Phillpotts was not a man lacking in bravery, and unfortunately, this bravery would soon be required.

The *Hazard* was ordered to Kororāreka (also known as Russell) in February 1845, due to growing tension surrounding Māori-pakeha relationships in the region. Kororāreka had effectively been the capital for the past decade, until the capital was moved to Auckland in 1841,^{xi} and was the largest trading port in Aotearoa New Zealand prior to the relocation of power southward. The flagpole on Maiki Hill had been felled several times, sometimes by a Ngāpuhi Chief Hone Heke, or his men, at his direction. This was viewed as an affront to British authority, and military personnel were dispatched to Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) in preparation for possible conflict.



Heke fells the flagstaff at Kororareka by A. D. McCormick
Alexander Turnbull Library Reference: A-004-037.^{xii}

Phillpotts took command of the town's militia, working on the town's defences but was captured by Kawiti on March 4, that same year; before being released without harm by the Ngāti Hine^{xiii} chief. During the Battle of Kororāreka, it was Phillpotts, who took command of the *Hazard* after the captain was wounded and left incapacitated on 11 March. The loss of the blockhouse was problematic for the British forces, and after conferring with other officers, Phillpotts ordered an evacuation of the town. Once the settlers and military personnel were safely aboard the ships, Phillpotts ordered the *Hazard* to bombard Kororāreka, effectively initiating the sacking of the town. On 13th March, the *Hazard* and the other ships carrying refugees from Kororāreka sailed for Auckland (which would become the next capital) after Phillpotts had decided that no useful purpose was served by remaining in the area. CMS Missionary and teacher, George Clarke, infers that this perceived loss at Kororāreka affected Phillpotts greatly, writing:

'It galled him terribly, and the poor fellow took it as a reflection on his courage, and was very sore about it. It made him reckless, and he joined the camp with the foreboding that he should never return.'^{xiv}

Following the battle, ‘those responsible for the defence of Kororāreka have been much criticised, and certainly Phillpotts's inexperience and a want of sound judgement were evident during the battle.’^{xv} Prior to the battle, three highly influential chiefly brothers, Te Wharerahi, Rewa, and Moka Te Kaingamatā, of the Ngai Tawake^{xvi} and Te Patukeha^{xvii} hapū offered to assist the British forces, however, their offer of support was declined. In retrospect, it might have been prudent to accept their assistance, however, we will never know. Although initially wanting to remain neutral, after the Battle of Kororāreka, these three brothers would support the British forces, until they felt that Tamati Waka Nene may have been using them (and the British); to obtain utu (revenge) for an earlier slight by Hone Heke toward Nene and then withdrawing their support shortly after.



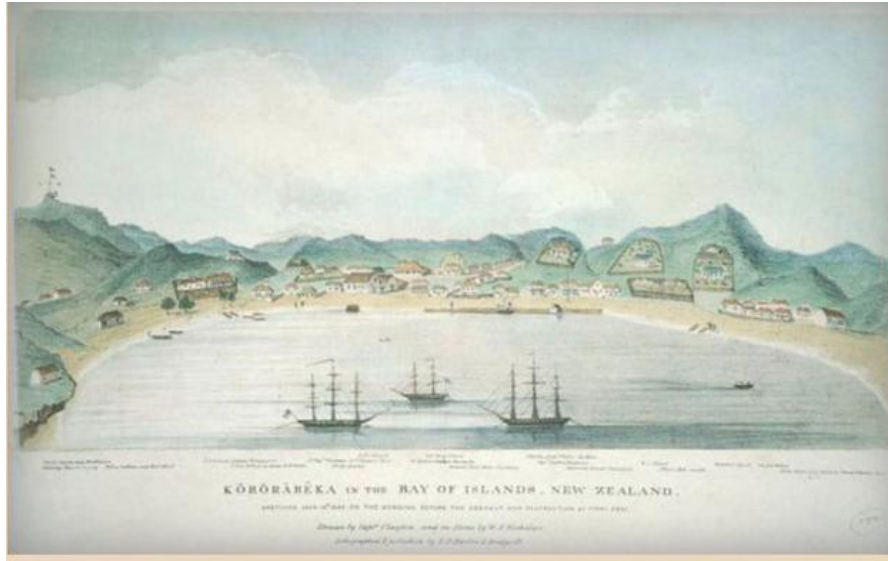
Hariata Rongo, daughter of Hongi Hika, and wife of Hone Heke; Hone Heke; and Te Ruki ‘The Duke’ Kawiti.

Alexander Turnbull Library. Reference: C-012-019 Artist: Joseph Jenner Merrett

Permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand. ^{xviii}



Rewa (Maanu), Moka Te Kaingamatā, and Te Wharerahi. ^{xix}



Kororāreka in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand. The ships are the Hazard, the Victoria and the Matilda. Sketched by Captain Clayton, on 10th March 1845, on the morning before the Battle of Kororāreka.^{xx}

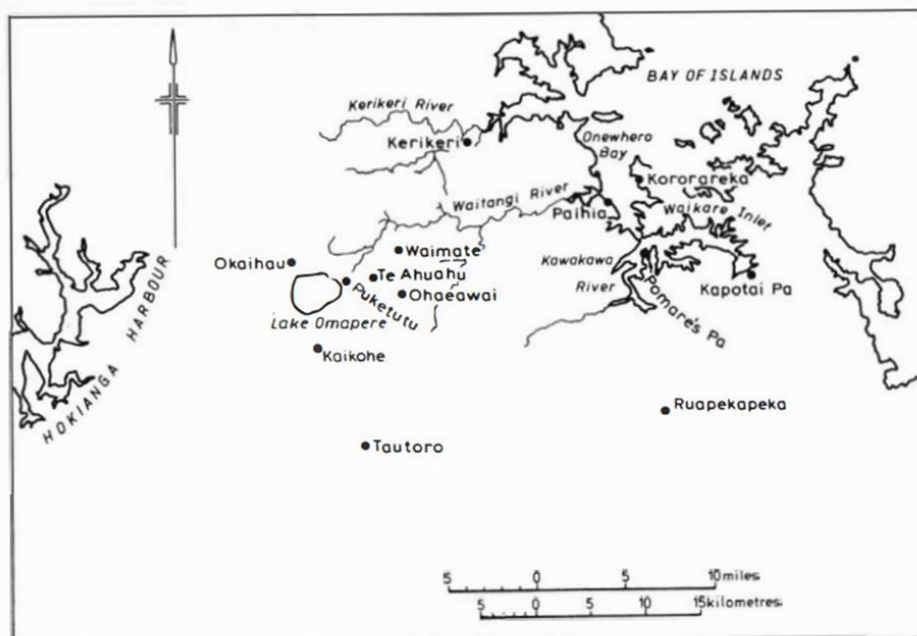


Christ Church in Kororāreka.
Photo © the author 2008.

In April, the *Hazard* returned to Pewhairangi (Bay of Islands), and during May, Phillpotts led parties of seamen in operations against Hone Heke and Kawiti; including an expedition against Otuihu pā in the Waikare Inlet, where 'after an armed standoff, the soldiers entered Otuihu, plundered the valuable stores of trade goods, and set the pā ablaze.'^{xxi} The question that could be asked considering these reports of military personnel looting various pā, is how did Lieutenant Phillpotts acquire this particular *korowai* ? Several other skirmishes occurred, including one against Puketutu,^{xxii} one of Heke's pā near the shores of Lake Ōmāpere; and Heke's forces withdrew to a pā *tūwatawata* (fortified defensive position) atop Te Ahuahu.^{xxiii}



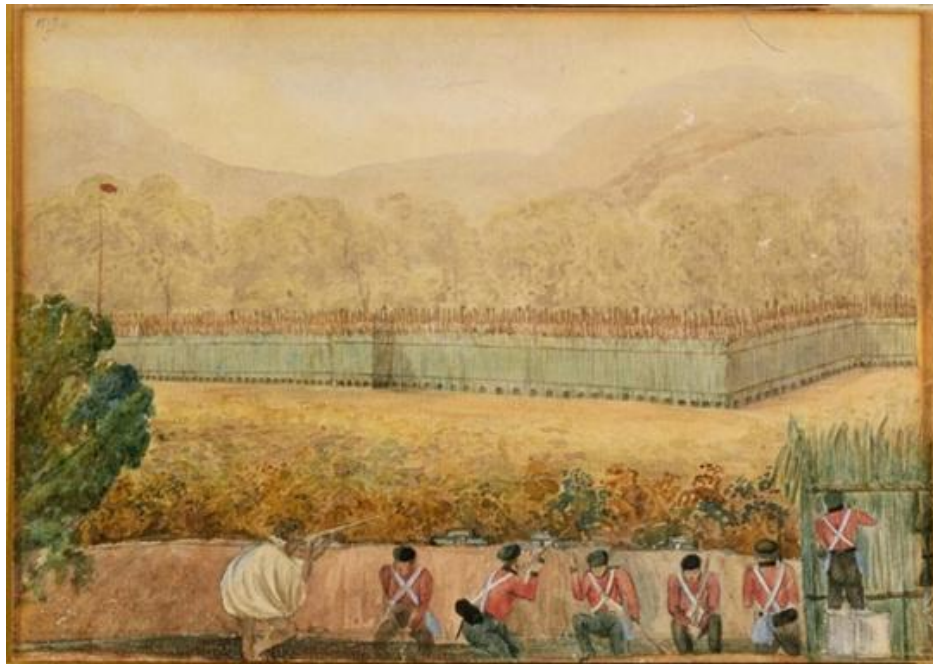
Maunga Te Ahuahu also known as Pukenui.
Photo © the author 2025.



Bay of Islands: 1845-46

J. Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*.^{xxiv}

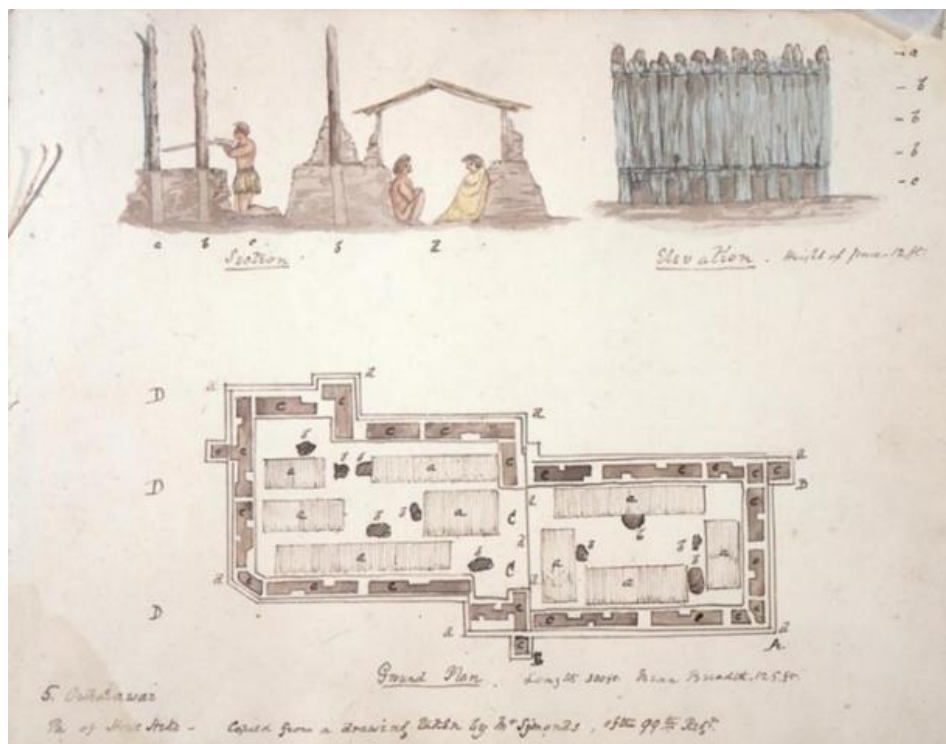
The British troops arrived at Ōhaeawai Pā on June 23rd, establishing a camp about 500 metres to the North-West of the pā. On the summit of Puketapu (translated as Sacred Hill), the British forces established a four-gun battery; beginning a barrage the next day, which continued until sunset, but causing minor damage to the palisade. On June 25th, the guns were brought forward to within 200 metres of the pā. For a further two days, the bombardment continued, to little benefit. The *pekerangi* (outermost palisading) had been covered in a thick layer of *harakeke* (*Phormium tenax*) leaves, which provided both an additional measure of protection, as well as a shroud which prevented observers from seeing inside the pā. No breach was effected, and subsequently, Col. Despard ordered a frontal assault; however, he was persuaded to delay this action until the next day, July 1st.



Ohaeawai Pa, painted by Cyprian Bridge, July 1845.^{xxv}

Barthorpe (1979) cites Cyprian Bridge as describing the pā as being:

‘...a remarkably strong and well defended place, very cleverly fortified with trenches inside a double row of strong palisades [sic], bombproof pits, huts with walls of stone and loopholed, embankments, & c. Some of the posts of the fences were as thick as a stout man’s body.’^{xxvi}



A plan of Ohaeawai Pā.
Thomas Biddulph Hutton, 1845.^{xxvii}

These plans were thrown into disarray, however, when one of Heke's parties raided the knoll on which Tāmāti Wāka Nene had his camp, capturing Nene's colours – the Union Jack, and returning to the safety of the *pā*. The flag was hoisted, upside down, and at half-mast, below the Māori flag, which was a *korowai*. Infuriated by this insult, Despard couldn't but order an attack on the *pā*, without adhering to his plans for the following day. Unfortunately, the attack was directed at the aspect of the *pā* which was easily defended, known in military circles as 'forlorn hope',^{xxviii} and in less than 10 minutes, after multiple attempts to breach the position; 33 lay dead, and 66 were injured - the casualties included Captain Grant of the 58th Regiment, and Lieutenant Phillipotts.



A painting of Lieutenant George Phillipotts during the assault on Ōhaeawai on July 1, 1845.^{xxix}

Crawford (1990) states that:

'In June he was second in command of the Hazard's contingent which joined Colonel Henry Despard's expedition against Hone Heke and Kawiti at Ohaeawai. In the disastrous attack on the pa on 1 July 1845 Phillpotts led the party of seamen who formed part of the main body of the storming party. During the attack he shouted encouragement to his men, and ran along the face of the pa attempting to find a way in. Eventually he managed to get through the light outer stockade before being shot dead.'^{xxx}

Lieutenant George Phillpotts rests peacefully in the St John the Baptist Church Cemetery, on the site of the Waimate North CMS Mission, in an area known as Taiāmai.



St John the Baptist Church, Waimate North.
Photo © the author.



The author paying his respects to George Phillpotts in January 2025.
Photo © the author 2025.

A memorial plaque that acknowledges Lieutenant Phillpotts' service and passing, located on the Northern wall of the St James' Church in Sydney, reads:

'In Memory of Lieu t George Phillpotts R. N. Who Fell at the Assault on the Pa at Ohaeawae New Zealand 1st July 1845 Aged 31 Erected by his Brother Officers of the H. M. Hazard and North Star'

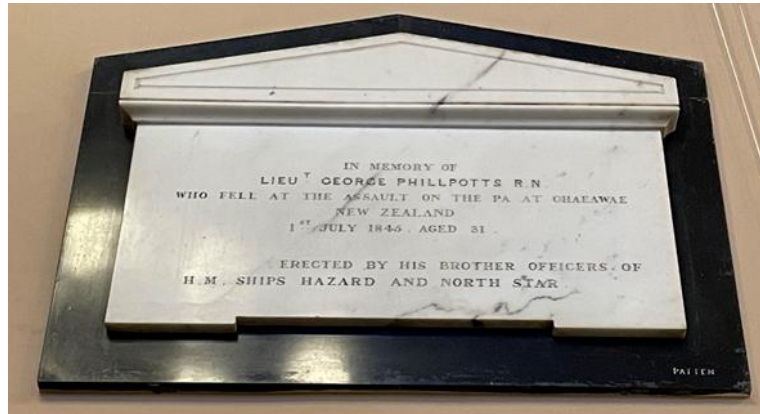
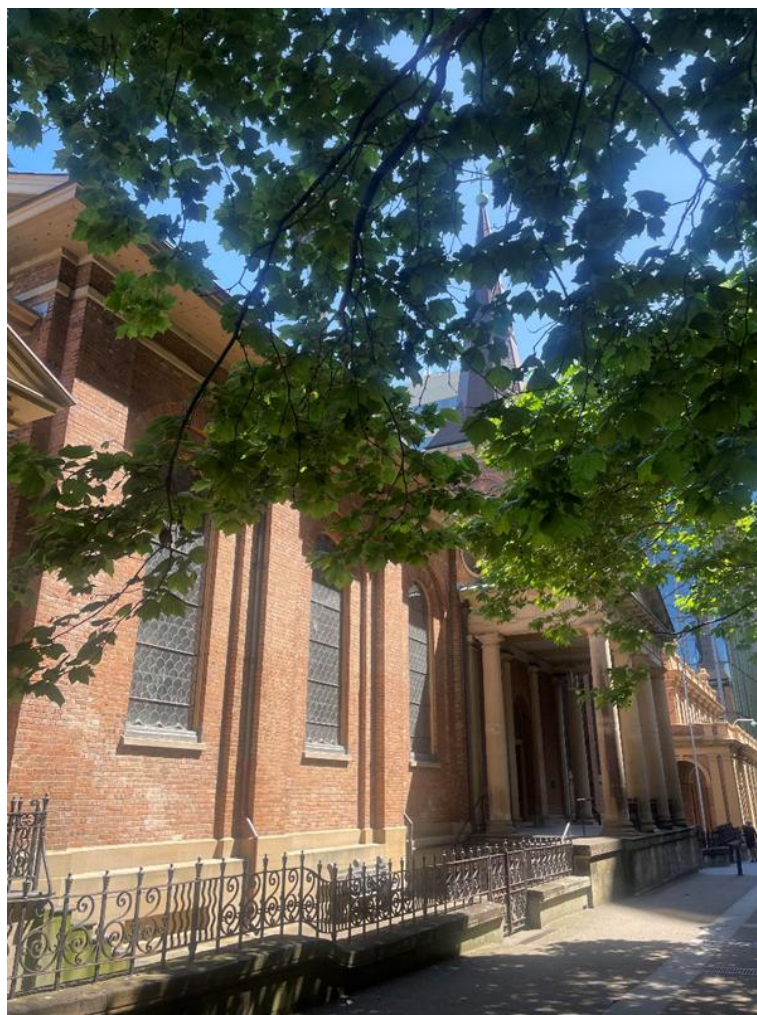


Photo © the author (October 2023).



St James' Church, Sydney.
Photo © the author (October 2023).

Te Korowai o te Pakanga no Te Tai Tokerau – The Cloak of the Northern Wars

In her master's thesis *He kākahu, he korowai, he kaitaka, he aha atu anō?*, Taituha asks, 'is it a dress, is it a cloak, or is it a scarf?'^{xxxii} To many, especially those without background knowledge of Māori weaving, or more specifically, of *whatu raranga*, this may not seem an important question; however, to a *kairaranga* (weaver and cultural practitioner), this is particularly significant.

This term is common to the Pacific region, with slight variations used by Pasifika peoples i.e. the *Tanata Ma'ohi* (Native Tahitian) using *kahu*, whilst the *Kānaka Maoli* (Native Hawaiian) use the word *ahu*; and so, the term *kākahu* is, for lack of a better term, a cloak which spans the Pacific.

Generally, the term *korowai* has been used by many when describing Māori cloaks, however, this is problematic, and a matter of contention for some.

There are several styles of cloaks, and these vary greatly in both structure and appearance; with some examples being: *kahu huruhuru* (feather cloaks), *kahu kiwi* (Kiwi-feather cloaks), *kahu kuri* (dog-skin cloaks) and the rather ornate *korowai*. The term *korowai* relates specifically to one style of cloak, which *Kairaranga* (Master Weaver) Veranoa Hetet explains as being woven with *muka* or *whitau* (both terms for extracted *harakeke*/flax fibre) with *hukahuka* (tassels) attached.

The term *kākahu* (cloak) is more appropriate for a garment when the specific type is not known to the one referring to it, and the author prefers to use that term whenever he is unsure of the status of the garment.



Kahu huruhuru, Kahu kuri, and Korowai.^{xxxiii}

PŪRONGO KUPU Ā-KAUPAPA TECHNICAL REPORT

Taipitopito tirohanga/Examination details

Taipitopito whakawhiwhinga/Accession details: E1620

Momo Kākahu/Type of garment: *Korowai Ngore*/Cloak with tassels and pom-poms.

Whakaahuatanga/Description:

A medium-sized *kākahu*, of the *korowai* class, with *hukahuka*/tassels, *kurupatu*/neck-fringe, and *ngorengore*/pom-poms.



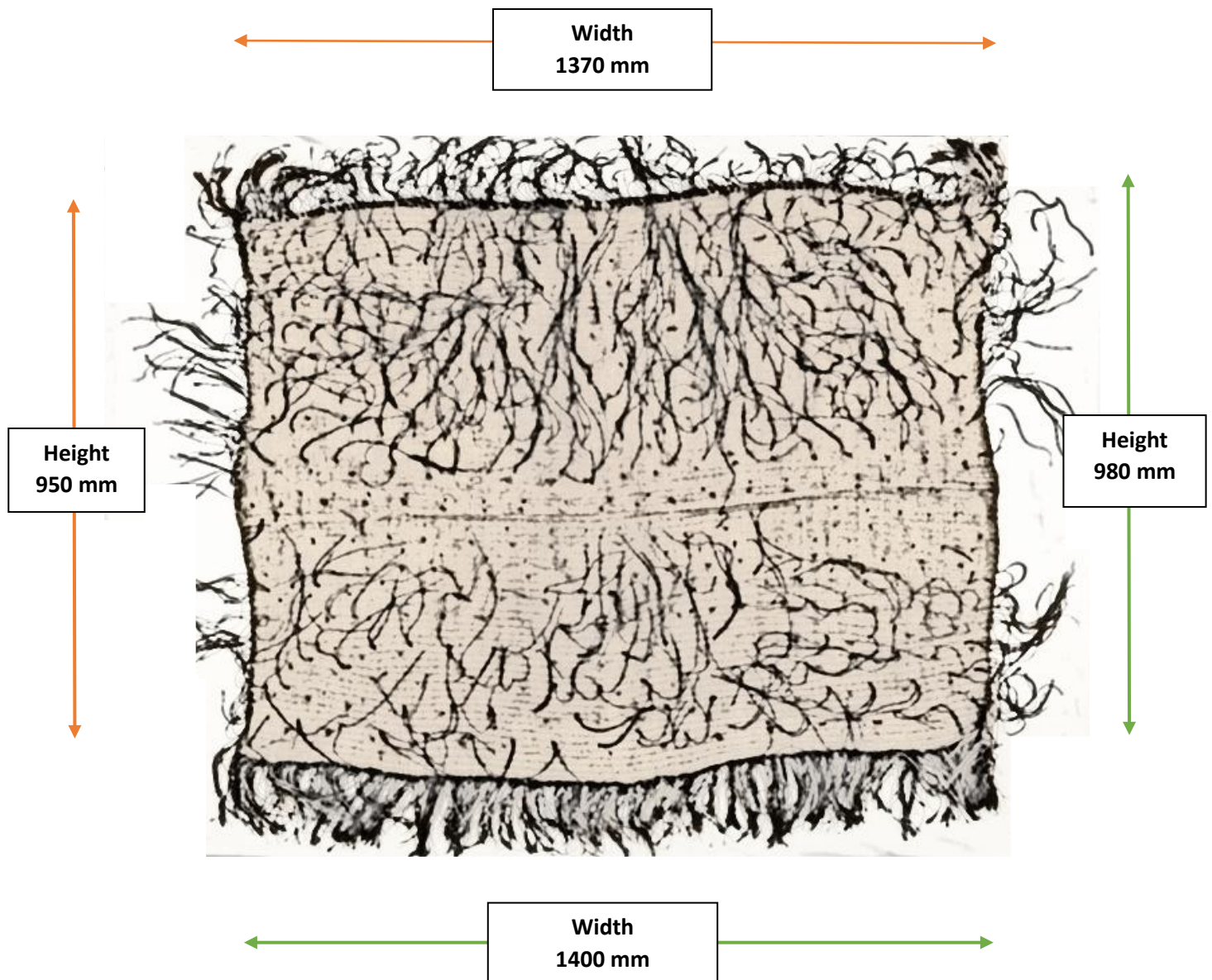
Photo courtesy of the Royal Albert Commemorative Museum.

Pinetohu/Labels and tags: There is a small white calico label with the reference E1620 in black embroidered stitching, sewn onto the inside of the *kaupapa* by a brown-coloured cotton thread.



Photo © the author 2025.

Inenga/Dimensions:



The dimensions of this *korowai* are as follows:

The width across the *ua*/neckline measures 1370 mm, across the centre measures 1385 mm, and across the *remu*/bottom measures 1400 mm.

The height down the left *kauko*/edge measures 950 mm, down the centre measures 1050 mm, and down the right *kauko*/edge measures 980 mm.

Taimaha/Weight:

Rauemi/Materials: *Muka/whitau* (*harakere* fibre), *paru*/black mud dye, and coloured dyes.

Kaupapa/Framework:

The *kaupapa*/framework of this *korowai* comprises of approximately 822 *whenu* (at six *whenu* per centimetre) with the addition of a few more toward the centre, with the addition of *aho poka*.

The *aho* rows are woven into the *kaupapa*/framework at intervals of approximately 8 mm. There are sixty-nine *aho* rows down edge *kauko*/edge, and seventy-six *aho* rows down the centre, which are due to the *aho poka*/elliptical shaping inserts that are present.



Photos © the author 2024.

Aho poka/Shaping inserts

There are two sections of *aho poka* (also known as *Tihoi*), one toward the top of the garment, and another toward the lower portion of the garment. The uppermost *aho poka*/shaping insert begins nine *aho* rows down from the *ua*/neckline and comprises of four levels of increasing; with the first intersection 100 mm from the left *kauko*/edge, the second at 160 mm, the third at 210 mm, and the fourth at 280 mm – these measurements are similar on the opposite side. The lowermost *aho poka*/shaping insert also comprises of four levels of increasing; with the first intersection 40 mm from the left *kauko*/edge, the second at 80 mm, the third at 140 mm, and the fourth at 180 mm – these measurements are similar on the opposite side.



This section of *aho poka* is on the right side of the garment.

Whakanakonako/Embellishments

Hukahuka/Tassels

There is a uniform covering of *hukahuka*/tassels across the external surface of the *kaupapa*. The *hukahuka* are generally woven into every 4th *aho* row, at intervals of approximately 60 mm, however, there are some exceptions with some being woven in on every 2nd *aho* row. These *hukahuka* measure approximately 220 mm in length. There is a row of lighter coloured row of *hukahuka* on the 19th *aho* row from the *remu*/bottom. As the *hukahuka* are dyed with *paru*, which is rich in iron, they become fragile and brittle with age.



Photos © the author 2025.

Kurupatu/Neck fringe and Ua/Neckline:

The *kurupatu*/neck fringe, comprises of a more profuse covering of *hukahuka*, woven into the *ua*/neckline of the *korowai*. These *hukahuka* measure approximately 220 mm in length and are woven into the *ua*/neckline at 10 mm intervals.



Views of the front of the *kurupatu*/neck fringe (above), and the rear of the *ua*/neckline (below).

Photos © of the author 2025.



Ngorengore/Pom-poms

Decorative elements include small, dyed *ngorengore*/pom-poms in the following colours: scarlet red, ginger, and forest green. These appear to be created from little bundles of *muka/whitau* rather than wool. These are woven into every 4th *aho* row at intervals of 80 mm apart. The *ngorengore*/pom-poms along the bottom row are all ginger in colour except for the central one which is red. Overall, the majority of *ngorengore*/pom-poms are ginger in colour, with specifically placed red ones, and only four green located in the centre of the 25th *aho* row from the *remu*/bottom.



One of the ginger-coloured *ngorengore*/pom-poms (left), a short row of forest green *paheke* or wave-like pattern (centre), and a scarlet-red coloured *ngorengore*/pom-pom (right). Photos © of the author 2025

Kokonga Tāniko/Corner fringes

A common aspect of many *korowai* are the fringes at the top corners, their name and significance having been lost to time unfortunately. Some *kairaranga*/weavers and *kairangahau*/researchers have suggested that they serve as small handgrips with which to hold and pull when wearing the garment. These *kokonga tāniko* comprise of both *paru*-dyed and natural *whitau/muka* fibres.



Kokonga tāniko/corner fringes at each end of the *ua*/neckline.



The *kauko*/side-edges are decorated by both a twisted *paru*-dyed thread on the edges, as well as a vertical column of *hukahuka*/tassels running down the complete height of the garment. The right *kauko*/side edge is quite bare in places, as the *hukahuka*/tassels have broken off. Photos © the author 2025.

Remu/Bottom edge

The *remu*/bottom edge is embellished with *hukahuka*/tassels much like the *kurupatu*/neck fringe, however, instead of consisting solely of black *hukahuka* it has natural or brown-coloured *hukahuka* interspersed with black. These measure approximately 150 mm in length



Here/Ties

There are no *here* present, however, there may be evidence of where one of the *here* may have been attached; with a small hole or gap under the *ua*/neckline, approximately 360 mm in from the top right corner of the *korowai*.

Pakarutanga/Damage

There is some slight discoloration due to age, with exposure to moisture and possibly perspiration when it was used as a functional garment nearly 200 years ago. There is some damage to *hukahuka*, due to them becoming brittle over time and breaking off. See *Tiakanga*/Preservation section for more details.

Whakaaturanga, Whakahaumarutanga rānei/Display or Storage

This *taonga* is not on display and is stored in a drawer in a storage room on site.

Ngā tuhinga a te kaitihipuhi/Author's notes

This was one *taonga* that I am so satisfied to have viewed, examined, and researched.

I feel a particularly strong connection with this *taonga*, especially as the *pūrākau*/story connects this *korowai* to the *rohe*/region of Te Tai Tokerau/Northland, *iwi*/tribal affiliations to Ngāpuhi and a military campaign in which my *whanau*/family fought.

Additionally, over the past two decades I had visited the former battle site at Ohaeawai several times, as well researched Phillpotts' role in the battle, and had visited Toby's final resting place at the St John's Baptist Church Cemetery to pay my respects.

It is interesting that there is a memorial in a church in Sydney, Australia, as he was from Exeter. On the day that I visited the church and memorial, there was a Palestinian protest in Hyde Park, and I walked through this to get to the church, exiting Museum Station and walking to the St James' Church (173 King St). I would not be surprised if my photo and name is now in a portfolio of 'people of interest', as undercover NSW Police were taking photographs of people. The presence of this memorial gave me some solace that I could pay my respects to 'Toby', and this historical and technical report also serves as a way in which I pay my respects to a fellow military veteran; as I am also ex-military, having served as a Paratrooper, and Military Police Officer.

Additionally, the opportunity to visit Phillpotts' home of Exeter, where I examined this *taonga*, has given me a greater sense of who this man was.

Tiakanga/Preservation

As the *hukahuka* are dyed with *paru* (which is high in iron), this begins to breakdown the fibre structure over a prolonged period of time, which causes the *hukahuka* to become brittle, and at risk of breaking with any touch or movement.

Preservation of this particular *korowai* is of the highest priority, as the *paru*-dyed fibres have become brittle over time, and there is a genuine risk of further damage any time the garment is moved, hung up, or draped over anything. Through her research, textiles conservator Rangitautahi Te Kanawa, has discovered that the most common black dye, being *paru* (mud rich in iron salts, especially iron tannate) is very acidic. In her article Conserving textiles on the Te Papa Tongarewa website, she elaborates by stating 'When exposed to the air, they begin to break down the *muka*, turning it powdery. In particular, this damages the black [fibres] that decorate cloaks...'

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/topic/3658#:~:text=In%20collaboration%20with%20scientists%20at,ensuring%20that%20precious%20taonga%20survive>. (Accessed 13 April 2025).

In an article (After five years, chemists find way to save cloaks) from the New Zealand Herald (2020), Te Kanawa suggests the use of a zinc-alginate consolidation treatment, which appears to mop up the acids and, importantly, binding fibres together. This may be an option which the Australian Museum should consider, if they wish to keep this artefact from deteriorating any further.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/kahu/after-five-years-chemists-find-way-to-save-cloaks/H3PGUNMI3EMHXDFDCJ76C4Z72M/> (Accessed 13 April 2025).

It is museum practice to preserve artefacts, however, only so much can be done with finite resources (funding and specialist personnel); which are measured against museum priorities i.e. historical significance, rarity, or whether they are expected to be exhibited in the future. *Taonga* (cultural treasures) like these were never intended to last forever and were exchanged and re-gifted numerous times until the end of their lifespan.

How do we ensure that this *taonga* and its associated history lives on? This can be achieved by ensuring that this *korowai* is digitally recorded, and records created (this technical report being an example); because at some point, physical preservation and restoration efforts will no longer be possible. The weaving of a replica is also an option to consider, but this would entail a consultation process with the Ngāpuhi *iwi* (tribe) to which this *korowai* is connected, and any prospective weaver/s.

The only effective way of preserving these types of textiles dyed with *paru*, is not to handle them; so that there is no movement resulting in further damage.

Whakapapa/Provenance

This *taonga* was donated to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum by Bishop Henry Phillpotts, in December 1869,

George Phillpotts acquired this *taonga* in Aotearoa New Zealand prior to his death at the Battle of Ōhaeawai in July 1845, and it was sent to his father in Exeter, England.

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- ^{xvi} A Ngāpuhi hapū, originally from the area known as Taiāmai, they migrated to Kerikeri, Te Rawhiti, and Kororāreka between 1800-1830.
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^{xxii} Also known as Te Kahika, research indicates that this site was on the hills opposite Tapuaeharuru; one of Hongi Hika's old *pā*, which was situated at Taumata Tutu Promontory on the northern aspect of Lake Ōmapere.

^{xxiii} A large extinct volcano that overlooks Taiāmai.

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^{xxviii} The term 'forlorn hope, was coined due to the likelihood of death being so high.

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Tūtohu/Sign Off

Ingoa/Name:

Brent Kerehona Pukepuke-Ahitapu BA, MTeach

Historian I Author I Cultural Practitioner

Tohu/Signature: _____

Date/Rā: 13 April 2025