



Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies



Newsletter

December 2025

Update from the Director

What a year this has been for the Stout Centre. We celebrated our 40th year with a truly wonderful and memorable event. So many people came to mark the occasion and we received amazing feedback for it. Indeed, people still speak of it. The launch of the two BWB books *Pakukore: Poverty, by Design* and *Hardship and Hope: Stories of Resistance in the Fight Against Poverty in Aotearoa* was yet another huge event with 200 people crowding into Rutherford House. The books were well reviewed, made it onto the top of the selling list of Unity books, and have just been listed in Spinoff's list of best books in 2025.

Our JD Stout Fellow, Dr Toby Boraman, not only gave the annual lecture but followed up a day later with a remarkable workshop seminar: a live oral history of the big strikes in the 1970s and early 1980s. It was a memorable afternoon, with all attendees extremely impressed by the quality of the programme.

And we are well on our way to planning and preparing for the next conference, which will be a logical follow up from Pakukore. With a conference on *Kia tika, Kia pono: for a just society* 16-18 April 2026, we will hopefully contribute towards finding a new language for a vision of a just society. Please save the date.

The press release about the new 2026 JD Stout fellow, Dr Frances Hancock, has been well received; please see:

[Dr Frances Hancock appointed as 2026 JD Stout Fellow | News | Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington](#)

You can read below the fascinating progress reports of our researchers and PhD students in the centre. We are also delighted to welcome Professor James Belich back in Wellington; Jamie has just taken up the role of chairperson of the New Zealand Historical Association, and Dr Steven Loveridge, a Stout Centre stalwart, will be working alongside him. This seems to be a good time to start exploring new ways of working together.

I especially enjoyed our Thursday research resident lunches this year. We had truly scholarly discussions ranging from memory studies, to publishing issues and deep reflections on the Wednesday seminars. I am also really proud of the excellent issue of the *Journal of New Zealand Studies*: <https://ojs.victoria.ac.nz/jnzs/issue/view/1099> that has just been published and features a printed version of my discussion with Jock Phillips on the history of the centre.

Lastly, I am pleased to announce that I have been appointed for a further two years as Director; I am very much looking forward to carrying on with the work I love, and to be among a truly great community of scholars.

I am wishing you all the best for the new year and hope that you will stay with us and keep supporting our work.

Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich

Events and Seminars since July 2025

On 14 August 2025 we celebrated 40 Years of the Stout Centre, as advertised.



Sir Robert Stout (1844-1930) lived many lives in New Zealand: Immigrant, teacher, lawyer, investor, liberal (and not so liberal), Premier, imperialist, founder of our university, leader of the opposition, Chief Justice, Māori land reformer, prohibitionist, penal reformer, a controversial and opinionated public combatant. This talk will look at some of these lives as windows into a particular kind of our history, good and bad in which ideas were always important, if sometimes flawed.

Welcome:	Professor Sarah Ross
Introduction:	Celebrating 40 years of Scholarship and Outreach Professor Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich
Dr Jock Phillips	A conversation with Dr Jock Phillips Looking back to look forward: New Zealand studies in the spotlight
Prof Geoff McLay	The many lives (and opinions) of Sir Robert Stout
Monica Webb	A Born Crusader: the political life of Lady Anna Stout

For a recording of the event please go to:

<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/stout-centre/about/events/previous-events/stout-research-centre-40th-anniversary>



Professor Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich and Dr Jock Phillips at the function



Stout family members with Director, Prof Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich



The 40th anniversary at the Hunter Council Chamber

Double Book Launch – 11 September 2025

Bridget Williams Books (BWB) and the Stout Research Centre hosted the launch of two publications on 11 September 2025 at Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus.

- *Pakukore: Poverty, by Design* produced from the 2024 Conference proceedings.
- *Hardship and Hope* produced by Rebecca Macfie, during her time as the JD Stout Fellow 2024.

The launch was attended by approximately 150 people with the books available for purchase. The launch was advertised as follows:

Pakukore
Poverty, by Design
EDITED BY
REBECCA MACFIE,
GRAEME WHIMP
AND BRIGITTE
BÖNISCH-BREDNICH
‘IF INEQUITY WAS DESIGNED,
THEN IT CAN BE REDESIGNED.’
#110 BWB Texts

Hardship and Hope
Stories of Resistance
in the Fight Against
Poverty in Aotearoa
REBECCA MACFIE
‘HOPE IS THE WELLSPRING OF ACTION,
DETERMINATION AND IMAGINATION.’
#111 BWB Texts

Bridget Williams Books and the
Stout Research Centre for New Zealand
Studies invites you to a BWB Talk

Poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand

A discussion of two new BWB Texts:
Pakukore and *Hardship and Hope*

Speakers include Rebecca Macfie,
Tracey McIntosh, Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich
and Caroline Mareko

Thursday 11 September
Rutherford House
33 Bunny Street
Wellington

Doors open from 5.30pm, event starts 6.00pm

Nau mai, haere mai. Public event, no RSVP needed.
Contact info@bwb.co.nz for more information.



Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies
Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington

Public Lecture by

Prof Dominic O'Sullivan on his upcoming book, Friday 31 October 2025

Beyond the Crown: the treaty, equality and the future of New Zealand democracy.

This forthcoming book is not about 'them' and 'us'. Instead, it views Te Tiriti o Waitangi as neither a partnership between races, nor between Māori people and the British Crown. Neither does it accept that Te Tiriti created a culturally and politically homogenous non-Māori 'one people'. The book's alternative ambition is to help shift treaty discourse beyond a contest between partnership and minimising Māori distinctiveness towards the development of a republican commonwealth. This concept will be explained as a more likely path to balancing and fairly distributing the powers and responsibilities of rangatiratanga, kāwanatanga and citizenship as Te Tiriti set them out.

Dominic O'Sullivan (Te Rarawa, Ngāti Kahu) is a New Zealand political scientist specialising in indigenous politics and policy. Dominic O'Sullivan currently works at [Charles Sturt University](#)'s Canberra Campus where he is a professor of political science. He is an Honorary [Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand](#), an adjunct Professor at the Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington and also at the Centre for Māori Health Research at Auckland University of Technology. He has authored eight books and 60 articles and book chapters, and writes for *The Conversation*, *Open Forum* and the *New Zealand Herald*.



Update from JD Stout Fellow

My book project is progressing well. I have finished minor gaps in my research (after an intense 4-5 year research project which has included undertaking or consulting over 100 interviews). I am well into the final draft of a book manuscript for submission next year to an academic publisher.

The highlight of the year for me was the All out! strikes seminar in mid-November as part of my fellowship. It was held in association with the Labour History Project. The idea was to reverse the traditional top-down academic mode of having researchers speak to people. Instead, people involved in strikes would speak about their experiences in their own words in the tradition of bottom-up history or history from below. Feedback was highly positive, with some saying it was inspiring. Thanks to everyone who spoke or helped out with organising the event, especially Debbie and Brigitte.

As side projects, I also wrote for non-academic audiences an article for the Spinoff about the Takaparawha/Bastion Point green ban, and short articles about the Lyttelton tunnel blockade in 1979 (when the government sent in the army) and Aotearoa's first equal pay strikes. I also spoke to Unions Wellington about their own history in the form of the Wellington Trades Council of the 1970s/80s.

I would like to thank the Stout Centre for the wonderful opportunity to write full-time for a year - and back someone to write a book on a topic which is outside the mainstream. It has been marvellous and just what I needed to write up research. Thanks especially to Brigitte and Debbie. And a special thanks to everyone at the Stout Centre for the shared lunches, interdisciplinary conversations, and friendliness - an excellent atmosphere to foster research.

Toby Boraman



Advertisement of the
J.D. Stout Annual Lecture, Dr Toby Boraman

14 November 2025

Knocking off: Strikes in Aotearoa New Zealand 1968–1986

The late 1960s to about the mid-1980s was the most popular period of strike activity in this country's history. Despite the state deeming most stoppages to be illegal, hundreds of thousands of people participated in them.

This era of tumultuous conflict has remained largely unexplored by historians, despite the lasting impacts of those clashes.

These conflicts caused polarisation and controversy. A large-scale 'Kiwis care' protest against strikes occurred in 1981. Many believed that 'irresponsible' strikers and unions had caused inflation, brought on unemployment, paralysed the country, sabotaged the economy, and habitually cancelled interisland ferries.



Occupying the Rixen clothing factory, Levin, 1981.

This lecture will discuss why stoppages were significant for both participants and strike opponents. Were strikers reacting to falling living standards during a period of economic shocks, or did they selfishly push beyond the limits of what employers, or the economy could afford? Did the 1980s neoliberal restructuring of the economy take place partially as a reaction to strikes?

Advertisement for a fully booked seminar hosted by the JD Stout Fellow

All out! 1970s/80s Strikes Seminar Toby Boraman

15 November 2025

A seminar to mark and memorise resistance.

Hundreds of thousands of people in the 1970s and 1980s in Aotearoa New Zealand participated in strikes. Yet these strikes have mostly been overlooked. Many went on strike so they could keep up with the rising cost of living and to gain dignity and respect from employers. Strikes broke national wage freezes and won many working conditions that are taken for granted today such as sick leave and redundancy payments. Yet many politicians and employers thought strikes caused inflation, unemployment, and national economic decline. And for many strikes were selfish, disruptive, and self-destructive.

Come and hear talks from those involved in strikes to learn lessons from the last big period of labour unrest in Aotearoa New Zealand history and to discuss whether strikes are still relevant today.



Lyttelton tunnel workers' redundancy picket, 1979

ALL OUT!

1970s/80s STRIKES SEMINAR

a seminar to mark and memorise resistance

Research Update – Adjunct Scholars

Adjunct Research Professor Barbara Einhorn

My research tracing four generations of the Einhorn family from Poland to Germany to Aotearoa New Zealand has become a journey of discovery, of both personal and historical significance, including confrontation with the stark realities of persecution, and expulsion which forced my parents to flee Nazi Germany, ultimately finding asylum in Aotearoa New Zealand. In Berlin I discussed with an editor the book proposal I had sent her.

In Berlin and Grybów, Poland, I laid Stolpersteine (<https://www.stolpersteine.eu/en/>) for my grandparents and other family members murdered during the Holocaust. The small brass plaques are laid outside the last house in which they lived voluntarily:



Photo credits: Karlotta Ehrenberg

In Grybów, a documentary entitled 'Carrying the World in Memory', featuring me and Wiktorja, a 90-year old living witness of events in 1942, was premiered to a large audience, the majority 16-18 year olds from three local schools:

My 2025 journey ended with my presentation to the International Oral History Association Congress in Kraków, which I began by paying my respects to te ao Maori, addressing the way colonial-like genocidal-regimes seek to eliminate memory, and with it the cultural identity of an entire people.

Adjunct Professor Anna Green

I have continued to work on two ongoing major projects over the past few months. The first is writing the book based on my Marsden-funded intergenerational family memory project, which is coming together well if rather more slowly than I would like. The second is working with a young website designer to refresh the website for the National Oral History Association of New Zealand Te Kete Kōrero ā-Waha o te Motu. On his advice we are trying to moderate our love of maximum written text on the website and include shorter introductions and many more images! I remain president of NOHANZ until September next year when I will have completed the maximum three two-year terms. Following acceptance of my chapter on 'Oral History as Evidence: multidisciplinary approaches' for the Bloomsbury Oral History Handbook, which will be published early next year, I was asked to record an online interview as a teaching resource. Al Thomson in Melbourne, one of the editors, recorded the audio-visual interview by zoom last week and it will be available on the publisher's website.

Emeritus Professor Richard Hill

Richard has been appointed a Visiting Fellow at St Cross College, Oxford University, in Michaelmas Term, 2026, where he will reconnect with the Oxford Intelligence Group and work on historical British-New Zealand security and policing interactions and liaisons. Meanwhile he continues his work with Steven Loveridge on the second volume of their history of security intelligence in New Zealand, covering the period 1956-2001. Richard's rescue from destruction of a post-World War II manuscript by Roderick MacIvor has led to its publication: Peter Cooke, ed., *Citizen Army – The New Zealand Wars Lost Official History* (Defence of New Zealand Study Group, 2025).

Adjunct Research Fellow Selwyn Katene

Selwyn Katene is currently undertaking an oral history research project on religious leaders in New Zealand. The aim is to conduct oral interviews with ten heads of religious denominations on their leadership experiences by 30 June 2026. The lived experiences of these religious leaders need to be examined, recognised and documented to inspire people especially those aspiring to follow in their footsteps and for future teaching and research purposes. To date interviews have been held with Justin Duckworth (Catholic), Paul Martin (Anglican), Peter Meurs (Mormon), and Janine Donaldson (Salvation Army).

Selwyn is also editing a history of the Church College of New Zealand (CCNZ), from 1958 until its closure in 2009. CCNZ was a Mormon Church-sponsored residential co-ed secondary school that replaced the Māori Agricultural College which closed in 1931 after the Napier earthquake. Located in Tuhikaramea, west of Hamilton, CCNZ included state of the art facilities such as an indoor swimming pool, three-basketball court gymnasium, rugby stadium, and auditorium. It was church policy to close CCNZ and redirect its resources where "quality education" was required.

Adjunct Research Fellow Dr Jacqui Leckie

Adjunct Research Fellow Jacqueline Leckie has been deeply immersed (and tearing what little she has of her hair out!) in writing a history of the poet Meg Campbell. If anyone has any information they would like to share, please do get in touch with Jacqui. She continues also as a co-editor of *The Journal of Pacific History*. In November Jacqui gave a presentation to staff of the National Library on her recent project and book, *Wellington's Indian Story: Beyond a Century*, of which copies are still available for purchase at <https://www.wia.org.nz>

Adjunct Research Fellow Dr Steven Loveridge

In August Steven attended a Waitangi Tribunal hearing in Ohakea as part of the Wai 2500 Military Veterans Kaupapa Inquiry. Here he gave evidence on his research into the enlistment and employment of Māori servicepeople in the armed forces over 1949-1975. His book review of *Te Hau Kāinga: The Māori Home Front during the Second World War* was published in the September 2025 edition of the *Journal of Australian, Canadian, and Aotearoa New Zealand Studies*. He is currently researching and writing a paper on radical anti-Vietnam War protests to be presented at the New Zealand Military History Committee's conference in February

2026. Lastly, he is also continuing to work, alongside Richard Hill, on a second volume of the history of security intelligence in New Zealand.

Adjunct Research Fellow Dr Brad Patterson

As part of his extended study of the dynamics of settler capitalism in early Wellington, Brad has continued his reconstruction of the wool trade, looking closely at the role of colonial merchants as brokers and their links with British correspondents in the supply of wool to the Yorkshire woollens mills. He intends to turn his attention early in the new year to the functions and trading patterns of Port Nicholson as the colony's preeminent commercial shipping focus. In November he attended the 27th conference of the Irish Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand, held this year in Dunedin. While in the south he took the opportunity to consult the only extant copies of early newspaper, the *Wellington Independent*, held by the Hocken Library. In October he completed a commissioned chapter ('Afterword: A Personal Reflection') for a collection entitled *Ireland's Revolutionary Decade 1912-23: New Zealand's Responses*, edited by Lisa Marr and Rory Sweetman, currently with UCD Press. He continues to work on a collection of his writings on archives and records management issues over 50 years and also continues to chair the Ian McLean Wards Memorial Trust, established in 2013 to support archives and manuscripts holding institutions and to offer grants to assist related research.

Adjunct Research Associate Kathryn Patterson

Kathryn presented a paper at the conference of the Irish Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand held in Dunedin 20-22 November 2025. The theme being *Health, Wellness and Care* Kathryn's paper moved on from an earlier conference paper which looked at the longevity of a group of discharged soldiers from the 18th, 58th, 65th and 68th regiments, to examining the causes of death generally across this group of invisible immigrants. Using *Papers Past*, genealogical sites, Coroners' Inquest reports and material received from members of the Genealogical Society of New Zealand, causes of death were found for 365 of the group. Heart conditions featured prominently as did drownings and alcohol related accidents. However, often very vague causes were used such as 'died from natural causes' or 'died following a lingering illness'. The next step is to see if the range of causes can be compared with official statistics in this area.

Visiting Scholars

Graeme Aitken

Graeme Aitken has had a long career working in and around te ao Māori. He has worked on Te Tiriti negotiations, helped set up Māori Focus Units in prisons, and has been heavily involved in reviews of Māori land and other Māori related legislation. His working life spans a period of intense debate about tino rangatiratanga, self-determination.

He has been writing a memoir about the challenges he has faced as a Pākehā, the things he has learnt, and his insights into Aotearoa/New Zealand's evolution towards a Treaty-based multi-cultural society. He sent his manuscript to a publisher in late 2025 and hopes to see progress towards publication during 2026.

Alina Berg

Alina Berg joined the Stout in October and will be here until the middle of 2026 to undertake research on Pounamu. She is working closely with the Museum and Heritage Studies programme. Alina is from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU Munich). Her research topic: Towards a natural-cultural approach to decolonial museum scholarship: *Building a digital archive of pounamu's living relations*. This thesis explores and activates the entanglements of 'nature' and 'culture' in museum spaces and beyond by studying *pounamu*—jade/greenstone from Aotearoa New Zealand—a stone and material that has been deeply engrained in Māori cosmo-ontology, while also being subjected to geological inquiry and (colonial) collecting and trade for centuries.

Setting out by tracing pounamu at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, the British Museum, the Museum Fünf Kontinente Munich and the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, it seeks to digitally assemble a kaleidoscope of stories situating pounamu in its net of living relations and reactivating its taonga-ness. This thesis seeks to unravel the stories that pounamu 'things' can tell us today, by reading them as archives of combined natural-cultural knowledge throughout a form of provenance research that integrates geological and Māori methodologies, recentring frequently overlooked actors in the context of museum scholarship and reconnecting 'exiled' pounamu with its (hi)stories of origin.

Violet Blue

Violet Blue has continued to research and write her book charting how New Zealand lived through Covid-19, emerging to remain at the top of the world's most resilient and successful responses. The project stands at roughly 65,000 words, not including Introduction, supplemental chapters, and front/back matter. Two additional hires were completed this year to add two Indigenous sensitivity and Regional Voice reader/editors. Research has been bolstered enormously by the University Library, Victoria's Law Library, subject interviews (virtually and in person), and a further set of interviews is planned for early 2026. Project research was greatly aided by the release of the Royal Commission of Inquiry ("Lessons Learned"), yet initially did not anticipate the announcement of a second Inquiry and awaits release of the Royal Commission's Phase Two report, estimated to be complete 26 February 2026 (release date TBD). Lastly, on 9 April, Violet was involved in Difficult Subjects—Researching the Perilous and Unknown Seminar Series at Stout. To a packed room and on livestream, Blue presented "No Idle Threat—On dangerous ground investigating Aotearoa New Zealand's Covid-19 response," with an overview of her project and speaking to the challenges and risks associated with researching a politicized pandemic that touches "a boggling array of areas including history, health science, political science, media and communications, health equity, sociology, fieldwork, and more."

Dr Emma-Jean Kelly

Tēnā koutou, I've had a wonderfully productive couple of months as a Visiting Scholar at the Stout. I have been working with Dr Oliver Sutherland and Ulla Sköld on an oral history project. Having recorded 12 hours of their life story while still the Senior Audio-Visual Historian at Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage, we have permission from that organisation to develop their memoir of 50 years of social activism, and in particular anti-racism work. The oral history itself has been deposited with Auckland Libraries at Oliver and Ulla's request.

Roger Steele is keen to publish the book, so we're steaming ahead, going through Oliver and Ulla's archives at home and at Auckland Libraries, where they have already deposited the Auckland Committee on Racism and Discrimination (ACORD) archives along with Te Hāpua, far north community archives, documenting through Sally Symes photographs the relationship between ACORD and the gardeners and weavers of the Far North, led by Saana Murray. In addition, I have received word (confidential until next week) that I have been awarded funding for the Oliver Sutherland and Ulla Sköld book by Whiria te Mahara, the Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage History Research Grant.

I have also attended ISAANZ in Ōtepoti, the Irish Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand conference in Dunedin, 20th - 22nd November. A wonderful interdisciplinary conference, I presented with my Irish Interest Group colleague from the NZ Genealogical Society Patrick McCabe on our ancestors who spent time in the New Zealand Asylum system. The work of the Royal Commission Inquiry into Abuse in Care in State and Faith-based Institutions has established that there are 4,000 unmarked graves related to those held in the asylums, 2,000 or so at Porirua Cemetery. Many of these are Irish Catholics, and I'm going to continue to do work to find out how many are from our community, whilst others continue to try and work out the stories of those individuals, often with the help of the descendants.

Thank you to all the staff, students and scholars who have made me feel welcome during a difficult time for historians; it's much appreciated and has helped me stay motivated. In particular, Debbie and Brigitte are always such wonderful and kind hosts, despite being horribly busy themselves!

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou, Tabhair aire duit féin, Dr Emma-Jean Kelly.

Chris Lipscombe

Chris has made some important progress on his research into Jim Bertram's life and work, especially during the post-WW2 period where Jim's story overlaps with the early history of Corso and the New Zealand China Friendship Society. I'm grateful for support received to date from Emma at the J. C. Beaglehole Room; Jared and his team at the Alexander Turnbull Library; and Brooke and others at Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision.

Doug Munro

Doug is currently finishing the write-up of a paper on 'Donald Calman, ASIO and Academia'. An interview (conducted by Christopher Chevalier) about his experiences as a historian of indentured labour is in press with the *LHP Bulletin*. Doug has also submitted a paper titled 'Remembering Brij V. Lal' to the *Journal of Indentureship and its Legacies*.

Nicola Saker

Visiting scholar Nicola Saker is completing her research into the first female journalist in New Zealand's Parliamentary Press Gallery. Another piece of work, on Pony Club culture in 1960s New Zealand is being published in the Listener's holiday issue this month. In 2026 she intends to research Rupert Brooke's brief sojourn in Wellington *en route* to Tahiti.

Distinguished Alumni Award

Vincent O'Malley, PhD 2004 (Stout Research Centre)

Every two years, Te Herenga Waka awards the brightest and boldest innovators, visionaries, and community connectors from within its 140,000 alumni with the Distinguished Alumni Awards.

This year, previous JD Stout Fellow and first PhD graduate of the Stout Research Centre, Dr Vincent O'Malley was one of the recipients.

His citation read: Dr Vincent O'Malley FRHistS FRSNZ is an award-winning Wellington writer and historian who has authored many bestselling and acclaimed works on Aotearoa New Zealand history, including *The Great War for New Zealand: Waikato 1800-2000* (2016) and *The New Zealand Wars/Ngā Pakanga o Aotearoa* (2019). His book *Voices from the New Zealand Wars/He Reo nō ngā Pakanga o Aotearoa* won the general non-fiction prize at the 2022 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards. In the same year, he received the Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in Non-Fiction. In 2023, he was awarded the Humanities Aronui Medal by the Royal Society Te Apārangi and was a semi-finalist for Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year.

[Read Vincent's profile here.](#)

Journal of New Zealand Studies, published by the Stout Research Centre

Issue [NS40] of the *Journal* was published on 19 December.

Call for Papers

The journal publishes two issues a year online, in June and December. Please submit articles for future issues of the Journal through our online registration:

<http://ojs.victoria.ac.nz/jnzs/index>

Access to all issues of the Journal can be found at: <https://ojs.victoria.ac.nz/jnzs/about>

History of Giving

The Stout Research Centre was founded in 1984 through the generous support of the Stout Trust, which was established from a bequest left by Dr John Stout. The Stout Trust continues to fund the annual Stout Fellowship, which has enabled research into many aspects of New Zealand society, history and culture. John Stout's gift is valued highly by today's researchers at the Stout Research Centre. We also value the contribution of all our Friends and supporters and welcome opportunities to talk with you about continuing your support through a gift in your will. All gifts are managed by the Victoria University Foundation, a registered charitable Trust established to raise funds in areas of strategic importance to the University, such as the Stout Research Centre. For further information on how you can support the Stout Research Centre through a gift in your will, please contact the Development Manager – Planned Giving, Victoria University of Wellington Foundation, telephone 0800 VIC LEGACY (0800 842 534).

Museum and Heritage Studies PhD Roundup

In 2025 we have had several new students join the PhD cohort as well as a few visiting researchers from overseas. This is a lively and active group of young scholars who participate in social activities as well as conducting their own research. They have given presentations to the MMHP classes and in November held the annual postgrad seminars which was attended by an enthusiastic audience. **Robert McLean** and **Matteo Collina** are nearing completion of their doctoral research, whereas **Maja Deng**, **Anamaria Rojas Munera**, **Chris Mallows**, and **Ruihe Qi** are well advanced in their work. Below we see a photo of the students along with Awhina Tamarapa, who completed her PhD in 2024, after her delivery of the Michael Volkerling Memorial lecture at Te Papa in November this year.



Sara McDonald has lived in the US, Canada and Aotearoa and began work on her PhD this year after completing the MMHP the year before. She is looking at the interpretation of taxonomic names in natural history museums including the ways in which whakapapa might open up new decolonised approaches to the taxonomic categorisation could be. Her supervisors are Conal McCarthy and Māori biologist Sara Belcher from the Science and Society programme.

<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/stout-centre/study/student-profiles/museum-and-heritage-studies/current-research-students/sara-macdonald>

Ping Wei arrived recently from China to start her PhD which is looking at Chinese material culture in western museums. She has a master's degree in art, Archaeology and Heritage Research from Zhengzhou University, and has worked at and published on the dating and stylistic analysis of the famous Dunhuang Grottoes in Xinjiang province north west China. For her PhD, supervised by Conal McCarthy and historian James Beattie, she is interested in export porcelain in museum collections in Australia and New Zealand exploring issues of cross-cultural interpretation and more culturally informed approaches to museum display.

<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/stout-centre/study/student-profiles/museum-and-heritage-studies/current-research-students/ping-wei>

Tatenda Tavengeyi is the most recent addition to the PhD whānau. Originally from Zimbabwe, he has completed a Master's degree in Archaeological Materials Science at Sapienza University in Rome through Erasmus, has worked for ICCROM, ICOMOS and other international heritage agencies, and recently spent time in Cambodia working with communities on the preservation of their living arts. For his PhD research, Tatenda wants to learn the lessons from the Pacific region about the sustainable management of cultural heritage and take them back to Southern Africa. He is interested in the relationship between indigenous knowledge systems and mainstream science including the ethical use of innovative emerging technologies such as AI.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/tatenda-tavengeyi-b2b305140/>

The next PhD student to arrive early in 2026 is **Yiqi Shen**. She completed a Master's in Cultural Heritage Management at the University of Sheffield in the UK, and has worked in museums in her home province of Liaoning, PRC. She will investigate how visitors' emotional experiences in digital exhibitions influence cultural representation, comparing New Zealand and Chinese Museums.

Finally, visiting international PhD students this year include Anna Castelli from Italy who is doing an art history PhD on contemporary indigenous art and repatriation, Alina Berg from LMU Munich/Cambridge who is doing a PhD in anthropology on pounamu and 'a natural-cultural approach to decolonial museum scholarship', and Jiawei Zhang from Sun Yat Sen University in China who is conducting a comparative analysis of the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.



Dr Awhina Tamarapa, Post-Doctoral Fellow

Research visit to Canada and USA

From Bella Coola to Pennsylvania – from Indigenous communities to museum storerooms. Awhina was fortunate to visit communities and museums of the Northwest Coast of Canada B.C. then across the continent to U.S museums, over September-October.

The Canadian visit was part of an international research project, “The Heritage and Future of Indigenous Rights within Settler-Colonial Commonwealth Nations in the Environmental Climate Emergency.” The project is funded by a prestigious award, the Future Leaders Fellowship, from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

The project instigator and lead, Bryony Onciul, is Professor of Museology and Heritage, University of Exeter, UK. This project brings together a team of researchers across heritage, ecology, archaeology and culture. We will be working with Indigenous communities and partner organisations including a range of charities and NGOS, and the University of British Columbia, Canada. Bryony will be visiting Aotearoa in January, watch this space.

Awhina then went to museums in New York and Philadelphia, as part of her post-doctoral studies, to locate and collate information on taonga puoro and karetao in museums overseas. The American Museum of Natural History in New York have a small but important collection of taonga Māori. The Penn Museum, University of Philadelphia, have an outstanding collection as well, including a rare ancestral karetao, collected in the 1870s. The kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face to face) meetings with museum staff is an important part of building relationships, another aim of the research.



Karetao in the American Museum of Natural History, New York.



Carving detail on a hoe (paddle). Penn Museum collection, University of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Awhina is noticing the same carving style of the 'nose', on taonga puoro. Possibly from the Bay of Islands, early-mid 19th century.

The Michael Volkerling Lecture 2025

27 November 2025

Museum of New Te Papa Tongarewa

Karanga taonga, karanga tangata, karanga whenua |Reversing Cultural Amnesia: Activating Māori Practice in Museums

Dr Awhina Tamarapa

In 1947, Māori leader, politician, and scholar Apirana Ngata spoke to his scholarly peers at the Polynesian Society, announcing his greatest desire to revive Māori culture as a living force within communities, not be relegated to dead exhibits in museums (Ramsden 1948, 85). This lecture acknowledges the concerns of visionary leaders and champions of cultural practice and their activation within museums. Through her work as a Māori curator, writer, cultural practitioner and post-doctoral researcher, Awhina Tamarapa advocates for cultural restoration as a form of liberation in a museum context. In her research, Tamarapa is exploring strategies for the recovery and reclamation of taonga puoro (singing treasures) and karetao (animated storytellers) for new generations. There are challenges regarding taonga held by overseas museums. Concepts such as *keeping taonga warm*, and *mana taonga*, recognises the connection and authority of descendants to their taonga, that underpin this work.

The focus on the reclamation of Indigenous practice has been bolstered by working with First Nations, Canada BC. Led by Professor Bryony Onciul, University of Exeter, UK, Awhina Tamarapa was privileged to be part of a research project “The Future of Indigenous Rights and Responsibilities: Ancestral governance, environmental stewardship, language revival, and cultural vibrancy” funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK. The Michael Volkerling Lecture series is a partnership event with the Museum and Heritage Studies programme (Stout Research Centre for NZ Studies) at Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington, National Services Te Paerangi and Te Papa Tongarewa. This annual [public lecture series recognises the legacy of the late Dr Michael Volkerling](#) who was one of the principal architects of New Zealand's cultural and creative sectors.



7th Biennial Conference of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS)

29 November – 2 December 2026

Call for Papers

The 7th Biennial Conference of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS) will be held at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington in Aotearoa New Zealand in November-December 2026. The inaugural manifesto of the ACHS called for the promotion of critical interventions in heritage while questioning the cultural and economic power relations that underpin traditional understandings of heritage. The next conference will foreground an indigenous approach from te ao Māori (the Māori world) and the multiplicity of perspectives from different ethnic communities of Aotearoa and the wider Moana Oceania (Pacific Ocean). This is reflected in the way the conference will run, with a pōwhiri (welcome ceremony), extensive input from mana whenua (local people of the land), and opportunities to experience Māori culture and heritage. The whakatauki – *Whatua mai te aho, whiria kia tina* – will guide our mahi before, during and after the conference. Its literal meaning – ‘Weave the thread across, bind, hold fast’ – alludes to the idea of coming together to unify or strengthen. While this is our framework, we of course recognise the diversity of heritage globally and welcome everyone from everywhere with their different experiences of heritage.

The conference theme is **Tūhono - weaving relational heritage spaces**. In the Māori language, Tūhono means to connect. At this conference we will explore how heritage connects people with each other, with the past and with the land, holding them 'in relationship'; and how, as a field, we can connect theory and practice and dualistic conceptions of heritage (tangible and intangible, natural and cultural) to create a more relational critical heritage studies. This idea of connections and relationality speaks to the most pressing challenges facing humanity today; namely, creating and maintaining harmonious relations between people, and between people and the natural world. It highlights interdependency and the need for ethical relationships. Our dialogue will be informed by indigenous concepts and practices – such as the integral relations between time/space and nature/culture – that open up creative ways of thinking about heritage and its relationship to wider social, political and environmental issues.

For further information and to submit a paper, please go to:

<https://www.achs2026.nz/call-for-papers>



29 NOVEMBER - 2 DECEMBER 2026
Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Aotearoa | Wellington, New Zealand



MMHP Graduation, 10 December 2025