

THE CMLC NEWS



March 2026

- ▶ Price Changes For Whitecliffs
- ▶ One Million Year Old Bird Fossils in Waitomo Caves!
- ▶ Upcoming Field Trip
- ▶ New Workshop Class
- ▶ Woman Scientists????

Canterbury Plains from High Peak Forest

General Meeting (7:30pm): 12th March

Annual General Meeting (7.30pm): 11th June 2026

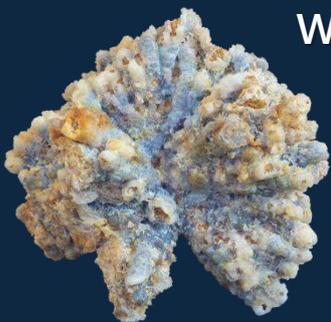
Committee Meeting (7pm): 19th March

Micro Mineral Meeting (7pm): Tuesday evenings

Workshop (6.30/7:00pm – 9:00pm): Every Tuesday & Friday

CMLC Clubroom

110 Waltham Road, Waltham,
Christchurch



March Auction

This month, we have Material from Committee member, Scott Hardwick. Scott is an avid collector within the Canterbury rock-hounding community. For sale will be a mix of polished and rough material.

March Speakers

For March, we have three speakers from UC who will be giving short talks on interesting subjects.

Ethan Grant

Will be covering an overview of the Moke Creek copper lodge and its surrounding geology.

Laura Gnesko

Unconfirmed but will likely talk about Otago geology and/or landslides and Engineering Geology

Jade Humphrey

A brief talk on paleoseismology (The study of ancient earthquakes)

We will also be running a short video on a DIY sphere making machine by Michigan Rocks. If time allows.

March Field Trip

For this month, we will go back in time to the Pliocene/Miocene at Motunau beach on the 21st of March. Impressive fossils can be found here, including Penguins, Turtles, Crabs, Scampi, Whales, Dolphins, Sharks and more! More info on this trip further below.



Birdwood Ave, Beckenham, Christchurch.

Also: Akaroa and Queenstown

0800 333 333

Meet The CMLC

Amanda Gray



When did you start your rockhounding adventure?

We lived in Mayfield for most of my upbringing and I often disappeared to the river looking for treasures after school. I'm guessing I was about 10 years old.

When and why did you join the CMLC?

In 2019 after having my second child I realised how unfit and reclusive I became. I reached out to a friend who took me for a hunt to the Rangī, I felt like I was 10 again. That day I found a 5kg agate, we visited Malcolm, saw his orphanage and I was inspired to learn more so joined the club.

What is your best rock hounding memory or story?

Seeing my family/friends finding their first decent quality pieces. Their reactions and joy give me a kick.

What is your favourite rock or mineral?

I love agates with sagenite features, I was stoked to find a nice one on a hunt with my mum in 2023.

Do you have any hobbies outside of the rock related hobbies?

I used to play a lot of sport, now I love watching our boys play. I also enjoy adventures with my kids where I can soak up the views - hiking, fishing, camping etc.

Workshop Notice

Just a reminder to all our members of our requirements for the health and safety of both yourselves and the machines.

- Long hair is to be tied back (even beards)
- Tight-fitting long sleeves or short sleeves to be worn
- Closed-toed and strong shoes to be worn. No jandals, crocs or opened toed sandals
- Safety glasses, a mask and ear protection should be worn when on machines
- Suggested wear of waterproof apron to protect clothing
- Check that you are using light hand pressure on the wheels for the best results and less damage
- Check with tutors about the size of the stone used on machines
- Check that the water flow is sufficient to keep the wheels working efficiently

If in any doubt about the machine or your carving/polishing, please ask a tutor for assistance



We don't want a repeat of the WHEELS OF SHAME!!!!

Whitecliffs Price Increase.

One of the problems we have faced with Whitecliffs is the ever-growing issue of maintenance. To keep the site accessible and tidy, the club has to spend roughly \$5000 after about 6 fieldtrips.

At our current rate of \$5 per person, we make a grand total of \$100 per trip. This means we need to run 50 trips to Whitecliffs (25 weekends, or 8.5 years' worth of trips) to cover the cost of maintenance.

Because of this, we have decided to increase the price of future Whitecliffs trips to \$20 per person or \$10 if you only fossick on the surface.

We understand this is a significant price hike, but due to the expenses needed to maintain the site, this is the most reasonable solution moving forward. Please feel free to contact myself, Kamen, or Tessa if you have any further questions or concerns.



Above - Arguably the find of the day unearthed by Logan Flanagan.



Left - A very rare mineral hemisphere agate from Whitecliffs. found on the surface by John Taylor



Motunau Field Trip



A Fossil Gemfish skull that Morne (Mamlambo) found

When

Saturday 21st March, 8:30am

Where/Contact

Please contact Tyler McBeth (0272273014) if you wish to attend. We will meet at School Rd in Woodend at 8:30am before making our way to Motunau beach



A rare fully articulated Penguin skeleton that Morne found at Motunau Beach

What to Expect

This is a rocky beach that is different to the pebbled beaches of Mid Canterbury. You can find fossils as soon as you leave the car park.

Hazards

Large unstable rocks underfoot that may cause some to lose their footing. Be aware that there is a large precipice that lines the beach. Rock falls do happen regularly, so it's worth keeping a distance. Seals often catch people unawares, as they blend in to the rocks. If you do come across one, please give them a wide berth and do not approach them. They are wild animals that can run surprisingly fast on land and have a fierce bite!

Fitness Requirements

You don't need to be too fit for Motunau. As long as you have decent balance on uneven ground, you should be good. It does help to be able to carry heavy objects in case you find a large fossil that you like.

What to Bring

Suitable clothing for the day and your own food and drink. A hand pick is also advised as well as a bag suitable for carrying fossils, which may be upwards of 20kg (If you're lucky!)



February Competitions

— Competition judge, *Kamen Engel*

Hi everyone, hope you all enjoyed last month's competition, the entries were few but of great quality which made things difficult for me to judge...

You may also notice that Bring N Brag was not judged this time round as I set it up as the main focus of the February meeting rather than it being part of the competition.

We will be returning to our regular competition style this month, and I look forward to seeing what you've got in store for me this time!

The lapidary (own work) section is particularly difficult this month with the category being "Any Sphere", but I have faith that some of you have made your own spheres in the past. In fact, you don't even need a sphere machine to make them! I'll be bringing one of my own poorly made spheres (if I remember to), and we will have a short video (time willing) on DIY sphere making machines.

The mineral category this month is "Any lead mineral", and I'm hoping the micro-mineral people will bring some along to show off the impressive variety of lead minerals there actually are.



Robin Halls Number 1 piece for Agate Arena. A stunning agate from Woolshed Creek from the Mt Somers volcanics



Morne giving a brief talk on how he found a massive piece of petrified wood from Canterbury

Thanks all and I hope to see your name on the table this coming meeting!



Zena won first place in the alphabet cup with this fantastic quartz cluster from Brazil

Monthly Competition Results for February

Ranking	Lapidary own work: <i>Any polished geode</i>	Fossil: <i>Something from Otago</i>	Mineral: <i>Garnet</i>	Alphabet cup: <i>State or country starting with (O,L,B)</i>	Agate Arena: <i>Any Mt Somers</i>	Bring N Brag
1	Robin Hall	John Taylor	Robin Hall	Zena Wilson	Robin Hall	N/A
2	John Taylor			Campbell Potter	Tyler McBeth	
3	Chris Thian			Ava Wilson	John Taylor	

Competitions for 2025/2026:

Category	Lapidary <u>own work</u>	Fossil	Mineral	Alphabet cup: <i>State or country starting with the corresponding letters</i>	Agate arena
Mar-26	Any sphere	Something marine	Any lead mineral	Q, F	Tubes/plumes
Apr-26	Flint/Chert	Trilobite	Tourmaline	W, U	Any Otago
May-26	Carnelian	Something from Canterbury	Any form of calcite	Y, P, V	Any uncut nodule

New Workshop Class

— Anna Baker

A Brief Introduction to Plaiting and Lashing

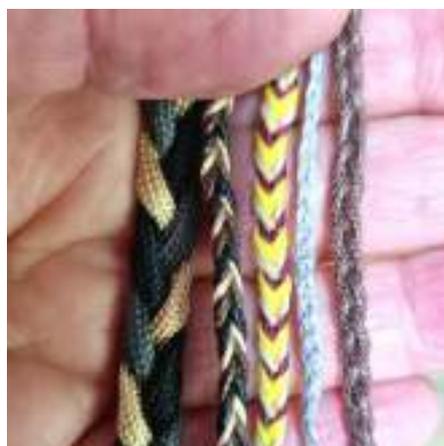
On Tuesday evenings, we are excited to introduce a new segment to our workshop experience. You now have the opportunity to learn basic plaiting and lashing techniques from our volunteer, Anna. These sessions are tailored for beginners eager to master foundational skills such as plaiting cord for pendants, simple whipping and lashing with cord, and creating slip knots.



Anna says, "I'm no expert and still learning techniques myself, but I'm more than happy to assist those who are just starting out"

She will provide templates and a large cord to facilitate your learning, along with a basic cord to help you begin. Anna will supply what you need for the initial few sessions, then will guide you on tools and resources as you progress.

Workshop fees apply, unless you're only there for plaiting/lashing, then the fee is \$5 per session.



An excellent skill to learn



Celebrating Women in Science

— *Kamen Engel*

On the 21st of February, I attended an event being held at the Christchurch Library to promote the Sciences to women and girls. The event was held in celebration of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, and I was asked to participate as a stall holder on behalf of the Geology department at the University of Canterbury.

Our goal was to create awareness about what geologists do in a fun and accessible way for kids to enjoy. This included:

- A “Dress up as a field geologist” booth
- Some volcanology-based games (both card games and digital ones)
- Microscopes to look at thin sections and micro minerals
- A treasure hunt “Find the fossil, etc”
- A reading corner for geology-based children’s books
- An impressive display of fossil dinosaur bones and crystals
- And more!

Prior to this event I had asked the club for donations which I could hand out to the attending children and their families. We had over 5000 visitors during the day, and thanks to all you lovely people who donated, every kid who was interested managed to get themselves a special rock to keep! A huge thanks to the following people:

- John and Sharlene Dugmore for a table full of museum-grade display material
- Scott Hardwick for two ice-cream containers of tumble polished stones
- John Taylor for a bucket of miscellaneous rough and polished pieces
- Bronwyn Adams-Hooper for a bucket of beautiful Agate Creek and Wavehill agates
- Robin Hall for an ice-cream container of polished agate halves and slabs
- Yvonne Luxton for another ice-cream container of polished agate halves and slabs
- Tyler McBeth for an assortment of rough and polished all-sorts

Rest assured that all your donations are now being treasured by some very excited kids who are keen on learning more about rocks and geology! Our UC Geology stall had nearly double the attention of all the other stalls present – even more than the astronomy and biology people combined. All in all, a very successful, tiring and rewarding day.



Lady Kamen’s rad display

New Discoveries in Waitomo Caves!

Australian and New Zealand scientists have unearthed the remains of ancient wildlife in a cave near Waitomo, the first time a large number of million-year-old fossils have been found in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The discovery of fossils from 12 ancient bird species and 4 frog species has opened a rare window into how New Zealand looked about 1 million years ago. It indicates that New Zealand's ancient wildlife was significantly impacted by catastrophic climate changes and volcanic eruptions. This resulted in frequent extinctions and species replacements well before human arrival.

The research is published this week in *Alcheringa: An Australasian Journal of Palaeontology*.

Co-author and Canterbury Museum Senior Curator of Natural History Paul Scofield says, "From our excavations at St Bathans in Central Otago over many years, we have a

snapshot of life in Aotearoa between 20 and 16 million years ago. These new findings cast light on the 15 million year period from then to 1 million years ago, which is largely absent from New Zealand's fossil record.

"This isn't a missing chapter in New Zealand's ancient history, it's a missing volume."

One of the most significant finds is a new species of parrot, *Strigops insulaborealis*, an ancient

relative of the Kākāpō. While the modern Kākāpō is famous for being a heavy, flightless parrot, this newly described ancestor may have been able to fly. Analysis of the fossil suggests it had weaker legs than its modern descendant, implying it was a less adept climber. More research is required to confirm whether the ancestor could fly.

The cave also yielded an extinct ancestor of the modern Takahē, which allows researchers to track the evolution of this iconic New Zealand bird, and an extinct species of pigeon closely related to Australian bronzewing pigeons.



An extant species of bronzewing Pigeon, found in Australia today



Cave near Waitomo, 1 million years ago. Paul Scofield. AI-generated.



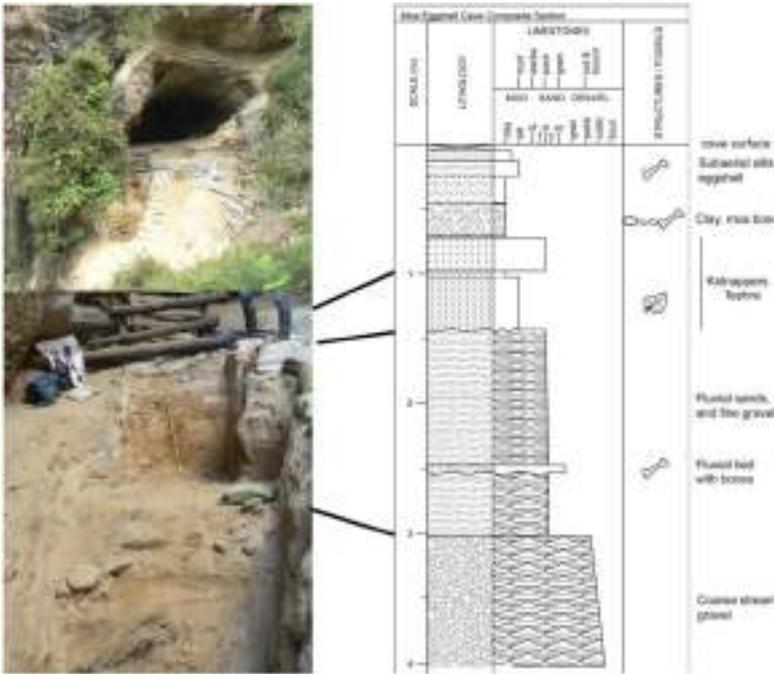
An extant *Leiopelma hochstetteri*. This is in same genus as the extinct frogs found. Photo by Shaun Lee

Lead author and Flinders University Associate Professor Trevor Worthy says the study breaks new ground.

“This is a newly recognised avifauna for New Zealand, one that was replaced by the one humans encountered a million years later,” he says.

“This remarkable find suggests our ancient forests were once home to a diverse group of birds that did not survive the next million years.”

The fossils were analysed by a team of palaeontologists from Flinders University and Canterbury Museum along with volcanologists Joel Baker from the University of Auckland and Simon Barker of Victoria University of Wellington.



The findings suggest that about 33-50% of species went extinct during the million years before humans arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand. Paul says this was driven by relatively rapid climate shifts and cataclysmic volcanic eruptions.

“The shifting forest and shrubland habitats forced a reset of the bird populations, says Paul.

“We believe this was a major driver for the evolutionary diversification of birds and other fauna in the North Island.”

The fossils could be accurately dated as they were between two layers of volcanic ash preserved in the cave. One layer was from an eruption 1.55 million years ago, while the other was from a massive eruption 1 million years ago. The more recent eruption would have blanketed much

of the North Island in metres of ash. Most of it would have been washed away, but some would have been preserved in caves. The older layer found at this fossil site proves it is the oldest known cave in the North Island.

Trevor says the fossils “provide a critical, missing baseline for New Zealand’s natural history”.

“For decades, the extinction of New Zealand’s birds was viewed primarily through the lens of human arrival 750 years ago. This study proves that natural forces like super-volcanoes and dramatic climate shifts were already sculpting the unique identity of our wildlife over a million years ago.”

- Article provided from the Canterbury Museum.



A Message to Photographers

— *Tyler McBeth*

If you have any scenic photos of Canterbury such as geological areas, mountains or anything nice and decent quality for the newsletter cover photo, please sent them to

Tyler_@hotmail.co.nz. It would help a lot, as I don't have many scenic photos, and I'd rather try to avoid using the same images if I can help it.

February Auction

The last of Craig McGregor's rocks were auctioned at the last general club meeting. There were heaps of goodies such as agates from New Zealand, Brazil, Morocco, USA, Australia and other areas. There were fun lots of material in mystery goodie bags for people to get their hands on, full of jaspers, carnelian and polished Lune Rv agates from Tasmania. The auction ran well with plenty of happy customers getting some beautiful rocks for affordable prices to add to their collections.



Craig was well known for crafting some impressive spheres!



As you can see, there were of rocks and one of John Bakers dogs on display!

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