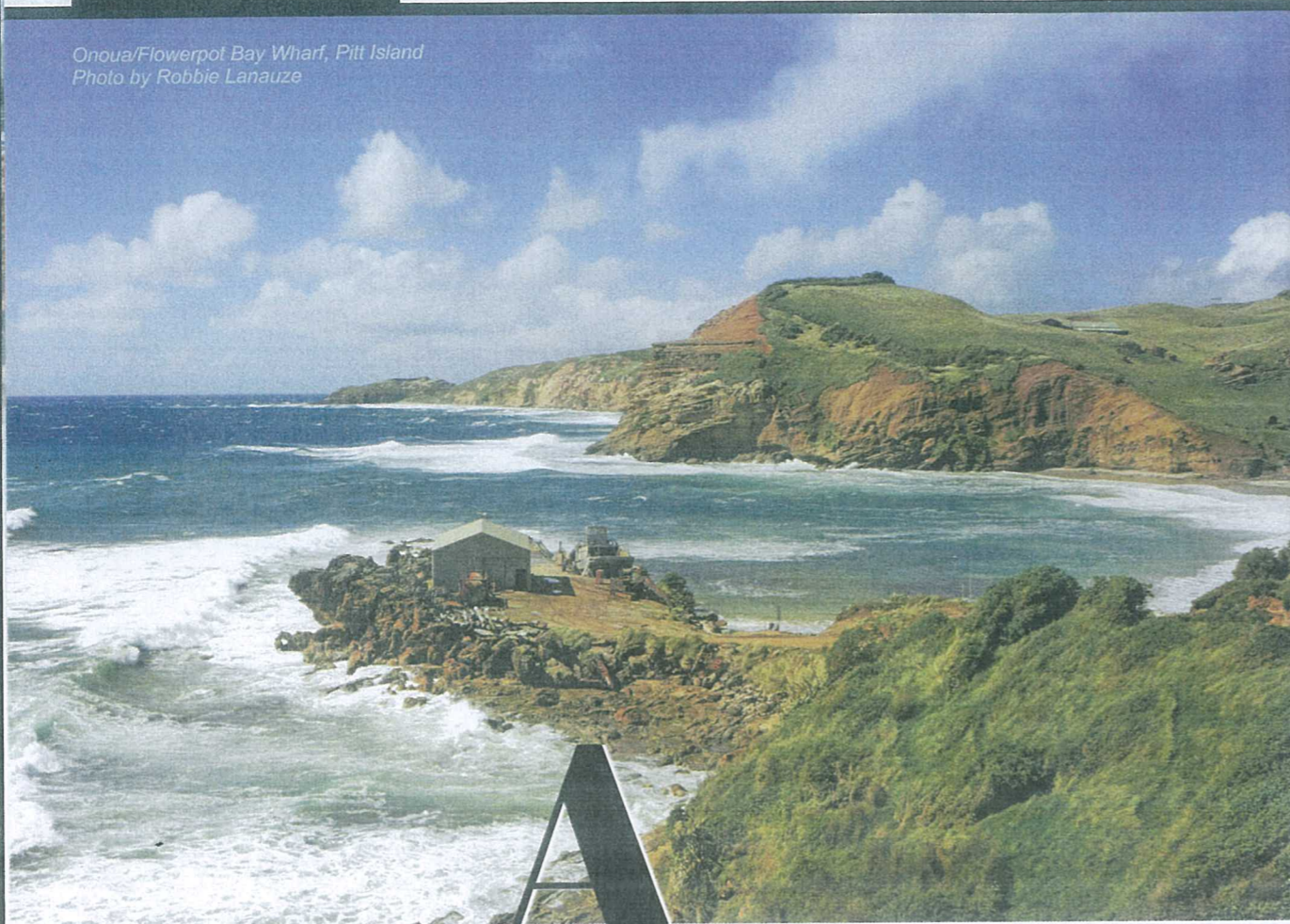


Onoua/Flowerpot Bay Wharf, Pitt Island  
Photo by Robbie Lanauze



## A SECRET HISTORY

**I**T MAY SEEM LIKE a distant corner of the country, but the Chatham Islands punch way above their weight when figuring in Aotearoa New Zealand's history. The seafarers who have called it home over the centuries were some of the hardest and canniest on earth, guiding waka or sailing ships into one of the world's wildest oceans and leaving a legacy of endurance and can-do that remains today.

The remarkable thing is just how little most Kiwis know of this history, and with overseas travel off the menu there's never been a better time to explore it than now.

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### The tale of the *Glory* is really the story of one of our greatest maritime achievements

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The archipelago - *Rēkohu* or "Misty Sun" to Moriori – was first settled around 500 years ago and ever since its story seems to have attracted conjecture. Generations of New Zealanders grew up believing a largely untrue version of how Moriori and Māori interacted, and it is only now – remarkably – that this is being rectified. A major milestone in this has been the opening of the Kōpinga Marae, dedicated to re-establishing the identity of Moriori and acting as a base for future growth; any trip to the Chatham Islands is not complete without an exploration of the journey that Moriori have made in the last five centuries.

Europeans first arrived in 1791 in the form of Her Majesty's Ship Chatham, which was on a four and a half year mission of exploration and diplomacy. Sealers and whalers arrived soon after that, settlers followed and for decades the Islands were home to a microcosm of the tumult that played out on mainland New Zealand; warfare ebbed and flowed, economies boomed and busted, German missionaries arrived (and failed to make a single convert), the French navy bombarded the main port, and Te Kooti and his Hauhau rebels were exiled there. There was, to be sure, never a dull moment.

But while countless books and podcasts pick over the history of mainland New Zealand, the sometimes outrageous and often courageous history of the Chatham Islands flies under the radar.



Dr Hamish Campbell  
Photo by Bronwyn Campbell

Take for example the story of the *Glory*: shipwrecked on the Chathams in 1827, several of the crew of the brig *Glory* set off in a salvaged longboat and safely completed what is one of this country's most epic open boat journeys – 1280 kms – before returning with help for those who had stayed behind. It is an incredible feat of navigation and fortitude – and aside from Chatham Islanders and mainland historians, no one has ever heard of it.

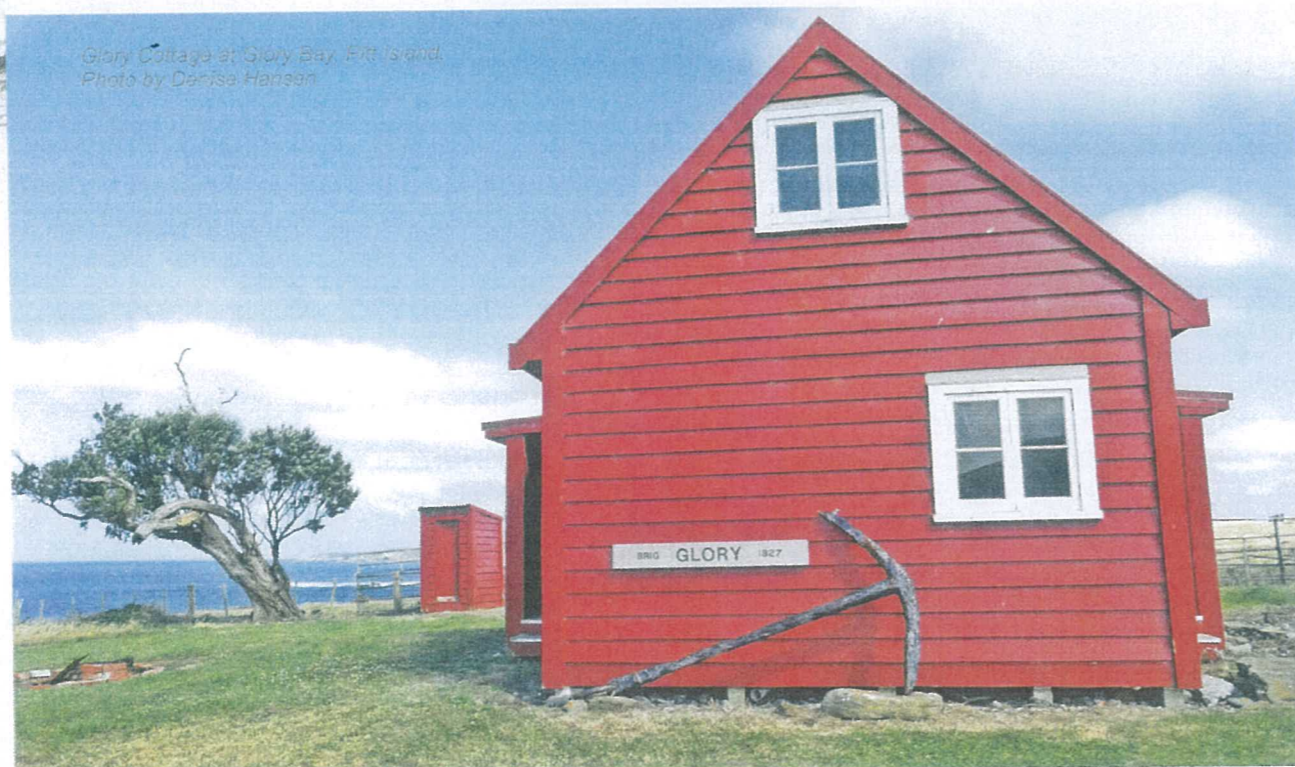
One of those historians is Hamish Campbell, a geologist and research scientist with GNS Science in Wellington, but probably more familiar to most as appearing in the popular 'Coast New Zealand' television series. Together with David Johnston of Massey University in Wellington he has researched the extraordinary tale of the *Glory* and is looking to commemorate it – possibly even re-enact it.



"The tale of the *Glory* is really the story of one of our greatest maritime achievements," Campbell says. "The ship was sealing – for what was at that time a very lucrative market for seal skin in China – when they struck rocks near Pitt Island. The captain tried to run the ship aground, but it foundered and the crew were lucky to make it ashore. They salvaged what they could from the wreck, including a long boat, and though there is no record of it, they must have been helped by Moriori, who would no doubt have witnessed the wreck."

What followed was an epic journey – some have called it stupidity – as the Captain and five of the crew set out in the long boat to find help.

"It was an open boat, bare to the elements but rigged with a sail," says Campbell. "Interestingly – and in what would make modern health and safety inspectors happy – they fitted splash boards to the long boat to make it more seaworthy, but it would have been a harrowing trip through a wild stretch of ocean."



*Glory Cottage at Glory Bay, Pitt Island.  
Photo by Denisa Hansen*

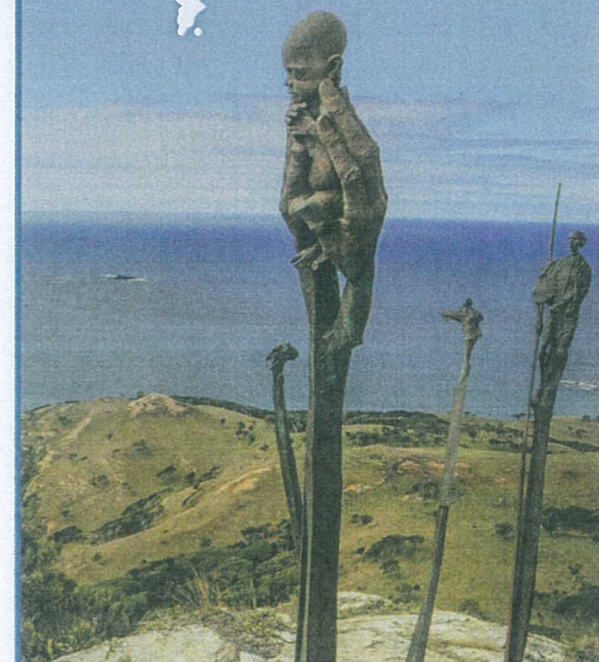
1280 kms is a very long way when you're exposed to the elements, wet through and living on rations. The hero of the story is undoubtedly the captain – it was a feat not just to stay alive but to stay on course."

Their course took them to the Bay of Islands where they managed to board a sailing ship – the *Samuel* – on its way to Sydney. They then commissioned the same vessel, returned to Pitt Island and rescued the remainder of the crew. But there is debate as to whether 'rescue' is the right word. Moriori were hospitable, and there would have been other ships - sealer and whalers - almost certain to visit. Why the *Glory's* crew chose to brave the ocean instead of getting fat on seafood and awaiting a whaler is unknown.

**1280 kms is a very long way when you're exposed to the elements, wet through and living on rations.**

"So much of this story is unknown," Campbell says. "We don't know how many crew were on the *Glory*, or what happened to them afterwards back in Australia. You can't help but feel that if the wreck had been on the mainland, there would be books written about it, but in this case they sailed into history – and then into oblivion."

Today, all that physically remains of the adventure is the ship's anchor, to be found near Glory Cottage in Glory Bay on Pitt Island. It is a humble monument to the story, but Campbell and Johnston are hoping that it won't be the end of the story; they are planning on more research, both here and across the Tasman, searching for a diary, letters, anything that will shed light on another fascinating part of the Chatham Islands' history.



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