



Ahaura River Bridge replacement project



Ahaura River Bridge footpath

On track for opening

The new Ahaura River Bridge is on track for opening at the end of May. Opening events being planned include a community celebration and an archaeology presentation. More information will be coming very soon.

Bridge deck work is complete, and all concrete barriers are installed. The temporary works staging platform has been removed from site and work on the southern abutment is planned to be completed over the next few weeks.

Landscaped areas are looking very good, with planting benefitting from the recent rainfall.

Work in Ahaura township is progressing well, with kerb and footpath installation well under way and road surfacing works planned to start in the next few weeks.

What an old drain tells us

Archaeological discoveries were uncovered recently during groundworks in Ahaura township.

When there is a possibility that archaeological sites will be uncovered during construction, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga issues an Archaeological Authority – a legal requirement to formally investigate and record all the findings and monitor further construction work on the site and surrounds.

Discoveries include a 19th century stone filled drain on Camp Street and a much larger second drain, on Clifton Street, lined with timber – a typical construction method at the time. (The stone filled drain measures up to 100m long, and up to 1m wide and deep. The timber-lined drain is more than 40m long, 1.5m wide and 1.5m deep.)

The drains were uncovered accidentally during excavation of a soft peaty organic layer, which needed to be removed before the new road was built.

Historical records suggest drainage on Clifton and Camp Streets had been an issue as horse drawn wagons were known to sink into the road. The drains were likely constructed in response to the hazard, with newspaper accounts suggesting they were in place by at least the 1870s.

Artefacts of 19th century life along the main street of Ahaura have also been uncovered by the archaeology team.

These include remnants of a glass infant feeder bottle, horseshoes, decorated ceramic fragments, leather shoes, stoneware ink pots, and clay smoking pipes. A range of glass bottles, mostly fragments, were also recovered. The bottles include case gin, (bottles shaped to pack into a case) ring seal, black beer, poison and torpedo bottles (used for aerated waters - old fashioned fizzy drink). The remains will be assessed and analysed by specialists as they contain a wealth of information which will help us understand the lives of Ahaura residents in the 19th century.

Construction on the bridge project has been able to continue around the archaeological team, as they undertake this important work.

A final archaeological report will be produced at the end of the Ahaura Bridge project and made available to the local community.



Heritage New Zealand's regional archaeologist being shown a preserved boot that the archaeologists uncovered on Clifton Street.



Awahono School pupils visit the site and hear from the archaeologists.

Thank you

The project team - Waka Kotahi, WSP, HEB Construction, Tru-Line and all the subcontractors working on the Ahaura Bridge Replacement Project - thank everyone for their patience as we reach the final construction stages of the new Ahaura River Bridge. We're nearly there!



A British made guilt Salter's scale spring balance, Silvester's patent, which would've been capable of weighing up to 200lbs (approximately 90kg).



Fragments of clay smoking pipes of Irish and Scottish origin, which were common in New Zealand in the 19th century.

MORE INFORMATION



For more information on the SH7 Ahaura River Bridge replacement project, visit our website www.nzta.govt.nz/sh7-ahaura-river-bridge-replacement