

## ***Waitangi Day: the New Zealand story*** ***What is it and why it matters***

By Philippa Werry

*A non-fiction children's book from New Holland Publishers*

### Synopsis:

*Waitangi Day: the New Zealand story* is a fascinating look at a part of New Zealand's history and culture that many people feel they don't know enough about.

The book begins with the earliest meetings between Māori and Europeans, and traces the development of Waitangi Day from the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 and the gifting of the Treaty House to the nation by Lord Bledisloe in 1934, right up to the present day. It helps children to understand why and how we remember these events and describes how Waitangi Day is marked around the country and abroad.

The text is written in a clear, easy-to-understand style with many illustrations. At the back of the book, ideas are given for follow-up activities and for websites to look at.

### About the author:

**Philippa Werry** is a children's writer who began her career writing for the *School Journal*. Since then, her non-fiction, stories, plays and poems have been widely published. Several of her books have featured in the Storylines Notable Books lists and her historical novel *Enemy at the gate* was shortlisted for the New Zealand Post Children's Book Awards in 2009. Her non-fiction book *Anzac Day: the New Zealand story* (also published by New Holland) was shortlisted for both the New Zealand Post Book Awards for Children and Young Adults and the Lianza Book awards in 2014. Philippa lives in Wellington and visits schools around the country as part of the Writers in Schools programme; she is an online writing tutor and maintains several writing blogs.

For further info, see

<http://www.philippawerry.co.nz/>

### Writing style and design:

This is a non-fiction book for 8-12 year olds, but teenagers and even adults will find it interesting and informative, and younger children will be attracted by the photographs and other illustrations. The topic is a huge one and it was a challenge to limit the content to only 64 pages from all the information available. The resulting content is based on extensive research and the book contains a wide range of images, both historic and contemporary. These include photographs, portraits, paintings, newspaper articles, maps, diaries, stamps, posters and a timeline. The book also contains non-fiction features such as contents page, index, bibliography, glossary, picture credits and text acknowledgements.

The images have been carefully selected with three aims in mind:

- to expand on and deepen understanding of the text
- to capture children's attention
- to cover as many parts of New Zealand as possible

The text is clear but succinct, so each section could be expanded on with further research if wanted. It starts with an introduction about what and when Waitangi Day is, describes some of the early meetings between Māori and European, leading up to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (Chapter One) and What happened next (Chapter Two), and goes on to talk about the

years of “change, protest and progress”, up to the present day (Chapter Three). Chapter Four focuses on Waitangi Day celebrations in NZ and around the world, and Chapter Five on historic sites and other places to visit in and around Waitangi.

Classroom discussion points:

Children will come to this text with differing levels of knowledge and understanding, from those who have been to Waitangi or do something special to mark Waitangi Day, to new immigrants who may know little or nothing about it.

The topic of the Treaty of Waitangi has been contentious and controversial over the years and needs to be handled sensitively and with respect (although this book is not primarily about the Treaty, but about the history and development of Waitangi Day).

1. Waitangi Day (6 February) is New Zealand’s national day. Find out when and why some other countries have their national day, and what they remember or commemorate (see pg 34). How is New Zealand’s national day different? How is it the same?
2. Talk about whether you have visited any of the sites mentioned or pictured in this book. Why is it important for us to remember the events of 5-6 February 1840?
3. Oihi (or Hohi) Bay has been described as one of the most important places in NZ history. What happened there in December 1814 (see pg 9) and in December 2014 (look up some newspaper reports.) Why do some people claim that “the events that culminated in the Treaty of Waitangi started at the Oihi Mission Station on Christmas Day 1814”?  
(See <http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/historic/by-region/northland/bay-of-islands/marsden-cross-historic-reserve/archaeological-investigation/season-1/>)
4. Imagine yourself in the situation of Māori or European, meeting for the first time in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. What would be the differences in your backgrounds and way of life? What would be the similarities between you? How could you communicate without a common language?
5. There are several flags mentioned in the text, including the flag of the United Tribes of New Zealand (pg 13) and the Tino Rangatiranga flag (pg 40). What is the point of a national flag? What flags from other countries can you recognise? Recently there has been talk about changing New Zealand’s national flag. Do you think this is a good idea? Find out what alternatives have been suggested, or make up a design of your own, and carry out a poll amongst family and friends to see which they prefer.

Classroom activities:

1. Use a large map of New Zealand and put coloured drawing pins in places mentioned in the text (eg Waitangi, Russell, Paihia, Kerikeri and other places in the Bay of Islands, Auckland, Kawhia, Wellington, Porirua, Okains Bay, Akaroa, Ōnuku, Ōamaru, Ōtākou, Awarua, Ruapuke Island.) Find out who has been to any of those places.
2. Use Google Maps or a large map of the world and pinpoint places mentioned in the text (eg London, New York, Gold Coast, Afghanistan.) Find out who has been to any of those places.

3. Look at the painting of the signing of the Treaty (pgs16-17) and the photo of the 1940 re-enactment (pg 27). What do they tell you about what happened and who was there? Draw or paint a scene from 5-6 February 1840, or write a poem, letter, song or diary entry, from the point of view of someone who might have been there.
4. On pg 60, there is a timeline of events connected with the Treaty of Waitangi and Waitangi Day. Make up your own timeline that includes some of those dates, and match them up with dates that are significant for you and your family or friends. For example, you might want to include dates when people in your family were born, or first came to New Zealand, or other important events in your family's history.
5. Some of the early meetings between Māori and Europeans happened not only in New Zealand but also in Australia and England. Find out about Māori who travelled overseas, for example Hongi Hika and Waikato who went to London in 1820.
6. The 28<sup>th</sup> Maori Battalion (see pg 28) was one of the most famous New Zealand fighting forces in the Second World War. Find out who they were, what they did and where they went, and why it was decided to formally wind up the Battalion in December 2012.
7. Find out more about the history and geography of the Bay of Islands and Northland. If you were going to Waitangi, how would you get there? What would you most like to go and see? Use Internet travel sites to work out transport, accommodation and costs. It can be expensive to get to Waitangi if you live a long way away. How could you cut down on costs?
8. How is Waitangi Day marked in your local area? Talk about any Waitangi Day events you have been to, or plan your own. What is a good way to celebrate Waitangi Day? (see pgs 37 and 48)
9. What are some of your favourite NZ meals, music, films or books? Share recipes, book and film reviews and playlists.
10. What are the rules of kī-o-rahi (pg 54), what equipment do you need and how do you play it? Try and find out enough about it so that you can have a game.
11. Carry out one of the activities listed on pg 59.

Websites:

A number of websites are listed on pg 61.

Extra information about Waitangi Day for extra learning:

**1. Books about early NZ history include:**

Younger fiction:

Beale, Fleur. *Mission girl: the writings of Atapo, Paihia, c1840* (Scholastic, 2010) Originally published as: *A new song in the land* (2004).

De Roo, Anne. *Jacky nobody* (Methuen, 1983)

Menefy, Diana. *Shadow of the Boyd* (Harper Collins, 2010)

Morris, Paula. *Hene and the Burning harbour* (Puffin, 2013)

YA fiction:

David Hair's Aotearoa series, a mixture of fantasy, history and mythology, includes one book (*Justice and Utu*) set in Russell

Non fiction:

King, Michael. *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Penguin Books Ltd, Auckland, 2003)  
Orange, Claudia. *An illustrated history of the Treaty of Waitangi* (Bridget Williams Books, 2004)  
Shaw, Peter. *Waitangi* (Cosmos Publications, 1992)  
Stenson, Marcia. *The Treaty: every New Zealander's guide to the Treaty of Waitangi*. (Random House, 2004)

## 2. People

### Find out more about:

- Any of these people: Kupe, Captain Cook, Joseph Banks, Marion du Fresne, Hongi Hika, Samuel Marsden, Thomas Kendall, William Colenso, Jean-Baptiste Pompallier, Baron Charles de Thierry, Captain Hobson, Tamati Waka Nene, Hone Heke, Lord Bledisloe, Sir Āpirana Ngata, James K Baxter, Norman Kirk, Dame Whina Cooper, Eva Rickard, Titewhai Harawira, Bishop Vercoe, Sir Paul Reeves, Helen Clark, Don Brash, Sir Jerry Mateparae. In each case, explain what their connection is to Waitangi, the Treaty of Waitangi or Waitangi Day.
- Charles Darwin  
Why was he on the *HMS Beagle* and where else did he go on the voyage?
- Charles Kingsford Smith  
What were some of his famous flying exploits? How, where and when did he die?
- Māori women who signed the Treaty (see pg 17)  
Thirteen Māori women signed the Treaty. Two of them are mentioned on pg 17. Who were the others, and where did they sign the Treaty?
- Artists and photographers  
A number of the images in the book are by well-known NZ artists, illustrators, cartoonists or photographers. See if you can find biographical information and other pictures, paintings, cartoons or photographs by Augustus Earle (pg 10), Russell Clark (pg 11), Marcus King (pg 16), Leonard Mitchell (Centennial certificate on pg 26 and also pg 37), Gil Hanly (pg 36), Ans Westra (pg 38) and Bob Brockie (pg 43).

## 3. Poetry

You may find some poems about Waitangi and the Treaty by Maori poets such as Arapera Hineira Kaa Blank, Roma Potiki and Robert Sullivan.

NZ poems about Waitangi and Waitangi Day also include:

“Waitangi Day, Porirua” by Vivienne Plumb. (See pg 47-48 for a description and photo of the Festival of the Elements in Porirua.)

<http://nzpoems.blogspot.co.nz/2012/04/waitangi-day-porirua-vivienne-plumb.html>

There are some questions to ask about the poem here:

<http://9wraenglish.weebly.com/blog2/questions-aboutvivienne-plumbs-poemwaitangi-day-porirua>