



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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NOTES AND NEWS

As this Newsletter has had to go to the printer in May, before the New Plymouth conference at Queen's Birthday weekend, there is no news here of the conference.

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Trust decision overturned by Minister

Something of the pressure on archaeological sites is indicated by a recent note in the Historic Places Trust Newsletter (No. 17, April 1982).

"The venture of the Kilgour Conelly Mining Company, to rework an important historic gold tailing site near Cromwell has taken an ironic twist. An application for authority to destroy the site was refused by the Trust and, on appeal, overturned by the Minister for reasons including the site's economic potential (Newsletter No. 16, p.6). The company has now withdrawn from the project because of low profitability, but only after destroying a significant part of the historic site."

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The Offshore Islands of Northern New Zealand: a Symposium

A preliminary notice of this event is now being circulated. The symposium is being organised by the Offshore Islands Research Group in association with the Auckland Institute and Museum and the University of Auckland. The venue is the University of Auckland and the dates are 10-12 May 1983.

The first circular will appear in August 1982. If you wish to receive it write to:

A.E. Wright,  
Auckland Institute and Museum,  
Private Bag,  
Auckland.

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New Zealand/China Student Exchange Scholarships

I just happened to see an advertisement in the Auckland Herald (27 March 1982) which offers a marvellous opportunity to a student interested in Chinese archaeology.

"Scholarships are offered each year for study in China under the New Zealand/China Student Exchange Scheme.

These scholarships may be taken up for one or two years. Students will study Chinese language at the Peking Languages Institute for the first year. Those who opt for a second year will be offered specialist courses either at the institute or at universities or other appropriate institutions. The second year electives normally available are in the fields of Chinese language, history, philosophy, literature, political economy and archaeology.

Inquiries may be addressed to the Asian Affairs Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Private Bag, Wellington."

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#### Churchill Trust Fellowships for 1983

A note from the Secretary of the Trust outlines the possibilities:

"Every year the Trust offers financial help for projects by able and experienced New Zealanders that advance their occupational area, or benefit New Zealand generally, or help maintain the Commonwealth as a beneficial influence in world affairs. No specific qualifications are required. No field of endeavour is excluded. The closing date for applications is 31 August. Full details and application forms are available from the Secretary of the Trust, P O Box 12347, Wellington."

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#### Notice to archaeologists recording taro sites

Peter Matthews writes:

"Early European explorers (e.g. Cook, Dieffenbach, and Colenso) provide reports of taro (Colocasia esculenta) cultivation in Northland, North Island East Coast, Marlborough Sounds and Taramakau in Westland. It is clear that taro persists today in the wild as a remnant from prehistoric cultivation. Although the plant is sometimes recorded by site surveyors, most people are unsure when trying to identify it.

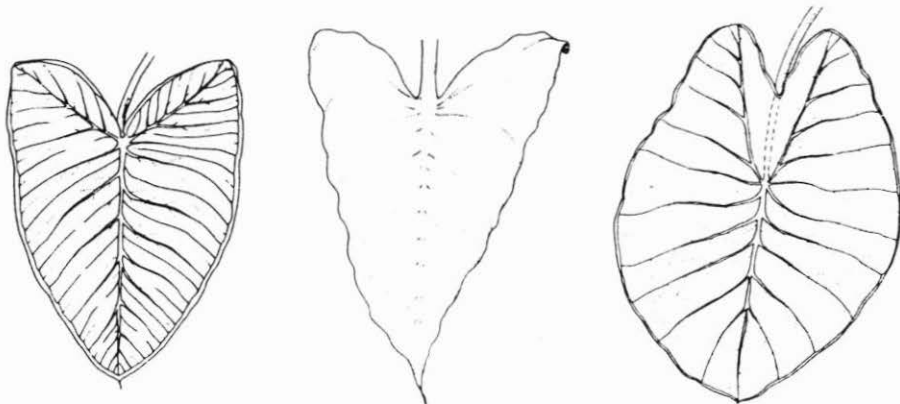
Presently a botanical study of the distribution and variation of taro in New Zealand is being made by Peter Matthews, Department of Botany, University of Auckland. It is hoped that something

will be learnt of its use by the Maori. Taro continues to be used in many rural communities and within historic times there may have been considerable movement of taro about the country. It is important for describing prehistory that all locations where taro is found be recorded so that prehistoric and historic influences can be sorted out. This includes gardens, where owners are amenable.

Records should be made on New Zealand Archaeological Association site record forms and sent to N.Z.A.A. site record file keepers. If possible send copies directly to the Dept. of Botany - site numbers for the archaeological locations will be added when available.

Taro is often confused with the closely related genus Alocasia and sometimes with arum lily when fully open leaves aren't obvious. Leaf blades of all three are shown below. (after Healy, A.J. and E. Edgar, Flora of New Zealand (Vol.3). Government Printer, Wellington, 1980. P.24)."

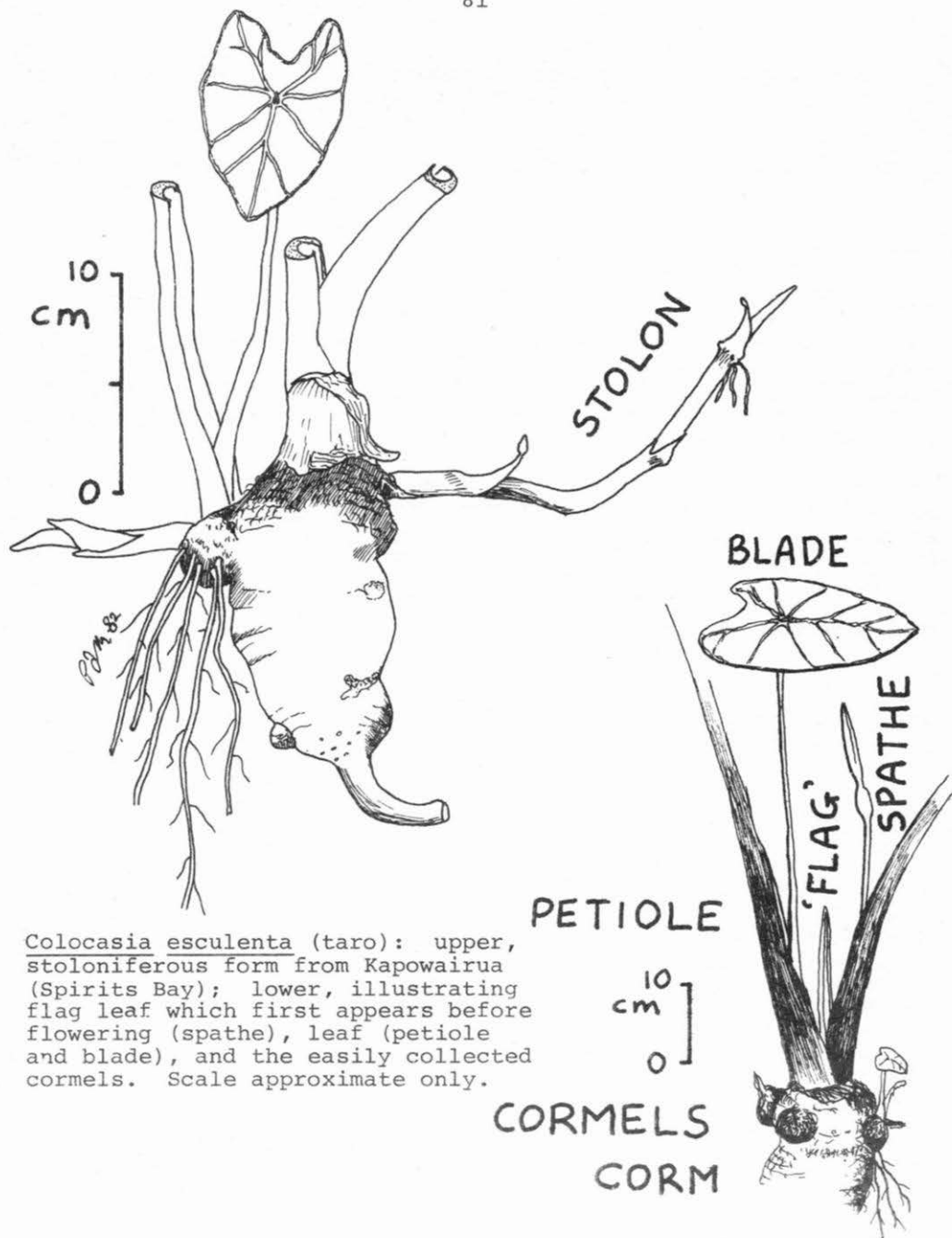
Peter adds, "If cormels can be collected (only a handful required) during site recording, and sent to me this would be useful. Leafless cormels or short stolons may be sent dry in a small cardboard box. I am particularly interested in collections from south of Auckland.



Alocasia macrorrhiza  
(elephant's ear)

Zantedeschia  
aethiopica

Colocasia esculenta  
(arum lily) (taro)



*Colocasia esculenta* (taro): upper, stoloniferous form from Kapowairua (Spirits Bay); lower, illustrating flag leaf which first appears before flowering (spathe), leaf (petiole and blade), and the easily collected cormels. Scale approximate only.

CORMELS  
CORM

Flowering may be observed occasionally in spring and summer, but is not known to result in viable seed.

Leaves in some areas reach a height of between one and two metres in summer. During winter smaller leaves are produced."

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#### Maori use of sedge

Auckland University M.A. student, Jane Connor, writes,

"I am currently looking into the use of the sedge Eleocharis sphacelata in the manufacture of mats, baskets, hats and other items. Its use by Maori women was recorded by early ethnographers and there are communities in Northland where mats are still being made from this material.

E. sphacelata is known by the names kuta, kutakuta, paopao and ngawha and is sometimes confused with Scirpus lacustris. It is a leafless sedge which grows in swamps and lake margins and is characterised by cylindrical stems which are transversely septate. The septa appear as raised rings on the external surface of the stem and permit the easy recognition of this species in ethnological specimens.

I am interested in hearing about the modern use of this plant anywhere in New Zealand and in seeing any items made from it. Please write to: Jane Connor, c/- Anthropology Dept., University of Auckland, Private Bag, Auckland."

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#### Recent publications

By the time this Newsletter appears our Monograph 13 should be out and available. My aim with The First Thousand Years: Regional Perspectives in New Zealand Archaeology has been to present in an accessible and interesting form something of the nature of New Zealand archaeology, including the latest work. Professional archaeologists have a well used communication system which keeps them up with what is going on: the public, and even many members of this Association, are often not included. The book is for New Zealanders who are interested in the past and wish to know something of "The First Thousand Years" of people living in this country - that is, the period before European settlement.

A useful article on the Tahanga quarry has recently been published which includes a plea for the preservation of this important site.

P.R. Moore, The prehistoric stone quarries and workshops of Tahanga, Coromandel Peninsula. Historical Review (Whakatane and District Historical Society), 30(1):32-42 (1982).

Not strictly a 'publication' but something of the utmost interest to many New Zealand archaeologists is Phil Millener's recently completed Ph.D. thesis.

Philip R. Millener, The Quarternary Avifauna of the North Island, New Zealand. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Geology Department, University of Auckland, 1981.

### Change to metric maps

Tony Walton writes,

"As of July part of the Auckland file will switch over to metric maps. Existing records have been assigned metric site numbers and no further NZMS1 site numbers will be allocated to newly recorded sites in the area covered by maps P09, Q09, Q10, Q11, Q12, R11, R12, S12, T12, T13, U11, U12 and U13. Part of the Waikato file (maps R13, R14, R15, S14, S15, T14, T15) will follow in August and then Hawkes Bay (maps V10, W20, W21).

Other metric maps already in use are those sheets covering Stewart Island in the Southland Filing District; I44-J44 in the Otago Filing District; R27, R28, S27, S28, T25, T26, T27, T28, U24, U25, U26 and V24 in the Wellington Filing District."

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### Gremlins

For some reason or other March issues of the Newsletter are being very difficult. In the first issue this year two pages of tables in Reg Nichol's article were accidentally reversed, while last year's March issue (Vol. 24, No.1) saw two cases of misplaced pages. In David Butts' article pages 14 and 15 are in the wrong order, while in Jeffrey Clark's article pages 34 and 35 again are reversed. My apologies to the authors concerned.