

IN 1939, a 13-years-old schoolboy, Jim Eyles, digging just beyond the boundary of his mother's small farm at the north end of the Wairau Bar, unearthed the bones and implements of the earliest human beings in New Zealand. Dr Roger Duff tells the story:

"Just past the sheep-yards, alongside the sheep trough, he drove his shovel into a gently sloping bank of shingle. About a foot down the shingle gave way to sand, which was easier digging, and at the same time the blade of the shovel just tipped something which rang hollow. His first thought—that it was a pumpkin—immediately vanished when he picked it up. It was a huge egg, with a small neatly drilled hole at one end. Apart from a crack where the shovel had hit it, it was perfect. A foot deeper he struck bones, brown and crumbling, the skeleton of a man. He was lying at rest, his head pointed to the rising sun, his feet to the setting sun. Round the bones of the neck were a number of ivory beads like cotton reels.

"In all those 20 acres Jim's shovel had opened up the one place where the chiefs of the moa-hunters had been buried."

These moa-hunters, the first inhabitants of New Zealand, are one of the main subjects discussed in a series of talks *Digging up New Zealand's Past* (4YA, 7.15 p.m. Monday, August 4; 2YA, 7.13 p.m., Thursday, August 7), in which the contributors are John Golson, Lecturer in Pre-History, University of Auckland; Dr R. A. Falla, of the Dominion Museum; Dr R. S. Duff, of the Canterbury Museum; and, representing the amateur-experts so necessary in archaeological research, Dr G. Blake-Palmer of Dunedin.

In the opening talk, "Archaeology and New Zealand," John Golson defines archaeology and its aims and objects in relation to New Zealand, and outlines some of the achievements in this field to date. Of the research on the moa-hunter period in Maori culture he comments: "It brings us much nearer to knowing the nature of the ancestral culture of the Polynesians as it was established in the islands of the South Pacific, and, consequently, nearer to recognising the prehistoric sources from which that ancestral Polynesian culture was derived."

Because of the close balance achieved between bird and man in the moa-hunter period—which lasted possibly 400 years—it is natural that studies of the moa-hunters tell us also more about the moa, and that this knowledge again can be related to other areas where few traces of a moa-hunter ecology remain. Thus a general picture of the New Zealand of this period is arrived at—with some knowledge of the distribution of both man and moa, facts of climate and vegetation, and some idea of the trade practised in those far off times. These aspects are treated by Dr Falla in the second talk, "Man and Birds in Early New Zealand." Dr Falla also describes



Buried History

some of the different types of moa, and gives his reasons for believing that in isolated pockets in Fiordland, the moa-hunters and perhaps some of the smaller moas survived into recent historical times. (The Takahe Valley site illustrated on this page is assessed, for example, at not more than 100 to 200 years old.)

The next two talks in the series, by Dr Roger Duff, are on the moa-hunters themselves; what kind of people they were and how they lived, and how this culture differed from the classical culture of the Fleet Maori. They did not grow crops, they were hunters, fishers, fowlers; they were not warlike and groups did not fortify villages one against the other. A peaceful, industrious people, theirs was a golden age that would all too soon end: "The canoes of the Fleet were approaching, as fateful to Polynesian New Zealand as were the galleys of Caesar to the Britons, or to the Saxons the deep-laden ships of the Normans."

(*Digging up New Zealand's Past* will begin from other YA stations in the week beginning August 25.)

Descending, as archaeologists would say, to another level, we discern the highly individual spoor of one who is neither moa, moa-hunter, nor archaeologist, but one who is nevertheless offering some original reflection on the subject of Old Remains.

"Archaeology is looking into things perhaps best left forgotten," says Denis Glover in the first of three talks titled *Mr Bones: Adventures with an Archaeologist*. This science, he claims, is "one of the few things we don't suffer from" in New Zealand.

"True, we can go around digging up Maori fish-hooks, and vestigial feathers of the moa, and a few broken egg-shells, and perhaps a rotten post in a crumbling post-hole. But this is not Archaeology proper. We call it Polynesian studies, or Maori-tangata, or moa-hunter ecology, or Studies on Apteryx or Harpagornis."

In England, however, things are different—or, at least—were different, in the wartime England of Mr Glover's joyful, if highly apocryphal reminiscences. These concern his adventures, in Oxfordshire ("Ah, Oxfordshire, dear old Oxfordshire... It was there that I heard my first cuckoo"), with Mr Greenborne, an officer of the National Historic Places Trust. Appointed by that body, this worthy was engaged in recording and photographing anything of antiquarian interest before—and in case—it was obliterated by bombing. On tour he, of course, kept the record and directed his assistant what photographs to take, while Mr Glover, a sort of antipodean Dr Watson tagged wonderingly along:



★ MOA BONES and feathers, kakapo feathers, a flax sandal and part of a flax snare found at the site of a moa-hunters' camp in Fiordland. The site is shown in the upper illustration

"Look at it, Glover, look at it!" I bent down, and recoiled at the sight of a few bones and a large round skull. "Genuine 13th century," exclaimed Greenborne. "The lead just crumbled. Knew it from the form of the cross and half a letter left of the inscription." With his short arms he reached down and brandished on high a thigh bone, then carelessly tossed it back.

(2YC, 7.50 p.m., Monday, August 4; 4YC, 9.24 p.m., Sunday, August 10.)

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Master Pianist from U.S.S.R.	4
Conducted by Nicolai Malko -	4
Berlin—A Divided City (2) -	5
Rugby in My Time (16) -	6-7
Short Story -	8
Talented Australian -	9
Editorial -	10
Letters from Listeners -	11
Books -	12-13-14
Drama -	15

Films -	16-17
"The Listener" Crossword -	18
Shepherd's Calendar -	18-19
Radio Review -	20-21
Ask Aunt Daisy -	22
Programme Guide -	24-25

PROGRAMMES DAY BY DAY
Mon. to Sun., August 4-10 - 27-47