



More About Those Rock Drawings

A CONTROVERSY which appeared in *The Listener* correspondence columns last year, on the significance of the drawings to be found on the walls and roofs of caves in various parts of New Zealand, has induced 3YC to arrange a radio discussion on the topic. This programme, which has been scheduled for 9.32 p.m. on Sunday, April 27, consists in the main of two estimates of the importance of the rock drawings—one from Theo Schoon, a young Dutch painter who has been collecting data on the drawings for the New Zealand Government, the other from Dr. Roger Duff, Director of the Canterbury Museum, who has himself extensively investigated the remains of early Maori culture. A radio reporter, who visited the sites of a few of the drawings, adds his account to provide a layman's conclusion to the programme.

Perhaps the clearest understanding of Theo Schoon's work in connection with what may be New Zealand's earliest and most truly indigenous art, is given by Dr. Duff in his opening remarks. Dr. Duff says: "Every word of Theo Schoon's talk conveys that single-minded enthusiasm which has inspired him since his first sight of the South Island rock drawings at Otago Museum. That enthusiasm in turn inspired a Government grant, which enabled him to spend two years in the field with the following impressive results: For every known shelter he searched out thrice the number and more, that were unrecorded; he produced a fine series of photographs and a set of over 100

copies, painted in oils on cardboard, of the more interesting drawings."

But, as Dr. Duff also points out later, all this research and recording does not answer the main questions in the public mind—Who did them? When? And Why? Dr. Duff produces strong evidence in support of his own theory that the shelter-wall decorations are "drawings dating from Moa-hunter to European times." Mr. Schoon, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the small caves and crevices which he has explored and found drawings in, were once the "exclusive precincts of the Tohungas of New Zealand, and the drawings . . . part of their magic practices." However, it is clear from the two talks that in general artist and scientist speak from their own view-points. The conflict is perhaps in the question of the importance of the drawings to ethnology or art.

The 3YC commentator who visited some of the small shelters where the strange wall drawings are to be found, expressed an admittedly unauthoritative view when he stated that for other than scientists or artists, the drawings were probably not worth travelling a great distance for. But the loss in tourist trade will not compare with the loss to the nation's cultural heritage if, as Mr. Schoon explains, the present rate of deterioration—from natural causes and the work of vandals—continues. It is the rate of deterioration from natural causes (such as the weathering of the rock faces) that has led Dr. Duff to suppose that the wall "decorations" are in most cases not more than 300 years old. The question of origin of the drawings, and their age is, of course, of more immediate concern to Dr. Duff than it is to Mr. Schoon.

As Director of the Canterbury Museum, Dr. Duff has done a great deal

of valuable research into the early culture of the Maori people. Already, in *The Moa-Hunter Period of Maori Culture*, Dr. Duff has revealed aspects of a cultural age belonging to the earliest Polynesian settlers and distinct from the cultural period which began with the arrival of the 1350 Fleet and which for some time was looked upon as the only culture of the Maori people. Dr. Duff is concerned, therefore, with the importance of the wall drawings in relation to these two Maori cultural periods. Mr. Schoon has clearly stated that "The question whether they were of Maori or Moriori origin, did not particularly interest me." He has looked at these examples of native art with an artist's eye, but it is, perhaps, the fact of his not being a New Zealander by birth, which explains his enthusiasm for something most people who have lived here all their lives might take for granted.



Spencer Digby photograph
ROGER DUFF

(Solution to No. 592)

I	G	L	O	O	D	E	B	A	T	E	D	
N	E	D	E	A	O	I						
A	B	A	N	D	O	N	E	D	R	L	S	
D	V	S	I	H	S	P						
V	A	I	N	P	A	R	A	N	O	I	A	
E	N	S	L	B								
R	E	G	A	L	E	M	I	A	S	M	A	
T												
E	L	O	N	G	A	T	E	R	A	K	E	
N	L	H	T	H	S	M						
T	U	I	T	H	E	R	E	F	O	R	E	
L	V	E	N	R	N	N						
Y	I	E	L	D	E	D	B	E	S	E	T	

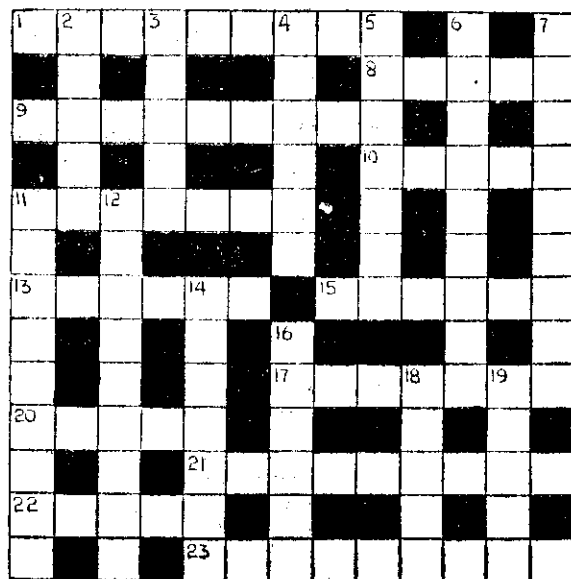
Clues Across

- If our cats are upset they're naturally peevish.
- Lowest point in drain.
- Eat nut, Eve! (anag.).
- "Cold in the —, and the deep snow piled above thee" (Emily Bronte).
- This sport has a very appropriate ending!
- Peculiar sounds to come from organs.
- Requesting, like a monarch?
- Blimp, perhaps (if a Low character).
- A Royal dynasty.
- The gift of the gab?

"THE LISTENER" CROSSWORD

- "What was he doing, the great god Pan, Down in the — by the river?" (Elizabeth Barrett Browning).
- Beer to all? This is pretty good!
- This bird's only remark was "Nevermore!" according to Poe.
- Duct.
- One letter altered in 13 across will give this fruit, if you mix it correctly.
- As the Duchess sang in "Alice in Wonderland," "Speak roughly to your little boy And beat him when he —."
- Fuss over an allowance?
- Hang Clare in a Russian seaport.
- A soup tang in this, so naturally it's bitter!
- Would you find this plant under logs?
- "Do the work that's — Though it's dull at whiles" (Charles Kingsley).
- "creeping like snail Unwillingly to —" (Spoken by Jacques in "As You Like It")
- Found in reverse in a rare position.
- Outdo in five letters but it sounds like two.

No. 593 (Constructed by R.W.C.)



THEO SCHOON