

concerned. Sir John Logan Campbell, whose keen interest in anything connected with Cornwall Park or One Tree Hill Doman is well known, drove out, but the descent by means of ladders into the caves was a task not to be thought of by a gentleman verging on ninety years of age consequently he was reluctantly compelled to remain on the surface.

**16 November 1908 Wanganui Herald**  
**THE PUBLIC MUSEUM**  
**A RARE EXHIBIT**  
**AN ANCIENT MAORI BURIAL**  
**CHEST.'(By G. R. Marriner,**  
**F.R.M.S., Curator)**

There is an intensely interesting exhibit to be now seen in the Concert Hall, in a case just opposite the entrance from the corridor, in the shape of an ancient Maori burial chest or coffin. It is only of late years that it became known that such things were in existence, and even now very little is known about them; so ancient are these chests, that their Maori name is unknown, both to the Maori and the Pakeha. Some people think that they were used only by the original inhabitants of New Zealand before the advent of modern Maori, and therefore the burial chest now on exhibition in the Museum may be five or six hundred years old, and is no doubt the most ancient exhibit in the place.

This one was found by Miss Higginson of Durietown, about seventeen years ago, in a cave situated between Ngaheia and Pa-karaka in the Bay of Islands, and with her consent we have been able to place it on exhibition. Only about two lots have been found, and all these places have been discovered north of Auckland. These chests or coffins are usually in the shape of a stout human figure, with ridiculously short legs, and a very large, stout body. The whole coffin is cut from a solid tree trunk, and carved all over with curious patterns. At the back of the body is a lid which opens into a small squarish cavity, in which the bones were stored. The bodies of the dead, as far as we can ascertain, were first placed in a tree or somewhere to dry, and the bones were scraped clean and placed into one of these chests. **The chest or coffin was taken secretly to a cave and there stored; often seven or eight of them will be stored in one cave. The one now in the Museum was evidently used for a child as can be seen by its small size. In height it is 3ft. 3in., width 11in., legs only 8in. long.** The cavity at the



*This photograph is from **The old-time Maori (1938)**, by Mākereti Papakura, the famous Maori guide, author and folklorist. She notes that the blonde, fair child and the father, Tonihi (right), are both Urukehu. Papakura believed that the Urukehu were the result of the mixture of Polynesian and the Caucasian strain called Patupaiarehe.*

back, from which the lid is missing, was one foot long, and seven inches wide, and six inches deep. It is the first time that a burial chest has been exhibited there, and indeed only three or four museums in the world can boast of any. NOTE: Whanganui Regional Museum reports that the chest was returned to Miss Higginbottom from Wanganui at the close of the exhibition.

**INTERESTING DISCOVERIES IN THE PELORUS Marlborough Express 27 March, 1893**

The discovery of ashes in the Pelorus which we briefly announced a short time back may prove a most interesting one. Mr J. Rutland noticed some oblong mounds on the hillside at Ferndale, Kenepuru, after the bush was cleared. On opening one of these he found that instead of consisting of the vegetable mould of the surface strata around, it consisted of the clay sub-strata with merely a surface deposit. Further investigation showed that a section had been cut out of the hillside, the floors and walls of which had been made smooth and carefully finished off. On the floor was a small quantity of ashes intermixed with charcoal, and above this layers of clay, obtained by sinking nearby, had been placed until the cut was filled, and a mound raised above the surrounding surface. The vegetable mould and matter taken from the first excavation was then placed in the hole from which the clay had been taken. On the hill side close at hand

there were several similar mounds. It is evident that no one making an ordinary fire would have gone to all this trouble, either to prepare the place or preserve the ash, and the inference is that Mr. Rutland has discovered a crematory of some early inhabitants of the Sounds. All the precautions taken, and the raising of the mounds to indicate the tapued locality, seem to point to this. The Maori inhabitants of the Sounds have, however, no knowledge of this ancient crematory, and there is no custom recorded in Maori lore to account for this phenomena. In this juncture what is said to be a local tradition is fallen back upon, viz., that the aboriginal inhabitants of New Zealand were driven from the North Island by the Maori, found a resting place at Pelorus, and that their chief home was at Kenepuru. ■

**NEXT EDITION**

Who ate all the Moa? How could a small number of people alleged to have arrived in New Zealand around 1350 kill all of this numerous species and yet carry no stories of the hunts in their whakapapa?

We smell a rat! Archaeologists agreed that the finding of rat (kiore) bones points to their presence in New Zealand up to 2000 years ago, proving that people were also here. The discovery changed the accepted 'short chronology,' the officially 'preferred' date of first settlement by people in 1350 to a 'long chronology.' Why is this not in our history books?

