Jackie O'Dwyer, engineer with the Board of Works at Mungret, examining the antlers and skull of the great Irish stag found at Ballynagreanganagh.

11,000-year-old antlers found in County Limerick

By LEADER REPORTER

FINDING A HOME for a pair of antlers and skull — estimated to be 11,000 years old — unearthed recently at Ballynagreanganagh, Co. Limerick, may pose a problem for the local Office of Public Works.

The relics belonged to a giant Irish stag. They were found by local men, Mr. Michael O'Grady and Mr. John O'Connell, excavator drivers with the Office of Public Works, during a cleaning operation with the Maigue drainage scheme at Ballynagreanganagh (between Kiltery and Old Fallas).

Eight years ago

“Our last substantial find was over eight years ago and those antlers are now mounted at the centre out at Lough Gur”, said Mr. Jack O’Dwyer, resident engineer, Maigue drainage scheme.

They consider this an important find, particularly since the upper set of teeth are still intact and the points of the antlers are not damaged.

They are awaiting a visit from the Office of Public Works in Mungret.

Next Monday night, this topic will feature on the R.T.E. science programme ‘Zero’. The crew visited the site at Ballynagreanganagh when the remains were being dug up.

Mr. O’Dwyer is still unsure as to where the find will end up... “If not in the National Museum, then perhaps at the National Park, Killarney, or some State body. Otherwise we will offer it to the County Council.”

In Limerick

Dr. Nigel Monaghan of the national monuments section of the National Museum said such finds were common in Ireland. “We have a couple of hundred remains in the National Museum and we have three female specimens on display and two male. There is also one on display out at N.I.H.E.”

He said that a large number had been found in Limerick. This he attributed to the fertile land.

And while he agreed that such a find was of great local interest, he said that its scientific value could only be undertaken if it was still in the ground and a dig could be undertaken.