NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

The 4th General Meeting of the Society for 1985 will be held in

THE CONSERVATION CENTRE, 120 WAKEFIELD STREET, ADELAIDE

on

MONDAY 24th JUNE AT 8.00 PM.

AGENDA

1. Apologies:

2. Minutes of the previous General Meeting:
   Minutes of the General Meeting held at the Conservation Centre,
   Monday 27th May 1985, having been circulated in this Journal, to
   be confirmed.

3. New Members:
   The following new member has joined the Society since the last
   meeting:

   Mr. Lawrence DAY

4. Papers and Journals:
   Papers and journals received from other societies and organisations
   will be tabled at this meeting.

5. Business:

6. Speaker:
   Mr Philip Jones, Curator of Australian Ethnology at the South
   Australian Museum will address the Society. The subject of
   his address will be his recent visits to museums in Western
   Europe.

7. Supper will be served.

R. Allison
Hon. Secretary
c/o 213 Greenhill Road
EASTWOOD SA 5063

SUBSCRIPTIONS. If a red cross has
appeared on your envelope it means
somehow you have overlooked sending
your subscription for 1985.
Heritage may be thought of in material terms. In these terms, heritage conservation deals with sites and artefacts. The notion 'cultural heritage' extends the concept of heritage to include beliefs and practices. In connection with heritage, however, it is seldom realised that inextricably bound up with culture is language. The reason I believe linguistic heritage to be so important is that, in my experience, especially in relation to the aboriginal language with which I am concerned, language is so often the last place where 'cultural heritage' is preserved. Material culture may be no longer in use, and beliefs and practices in relation to it may have ceased, but in the language there may yet remain evidence for and knowledge of culture. Words and phrases conjure up a whole way of life that has ceased. In them may be preserved a record of that way of life, of which even the speakers themselves may be unaware.

The vast amount of cultural information retained in Yura Ngawarla, the language of the Adnyamathanha people of the Flinders Ranges, became apparent when in 1984 I began gathering together words which related to artefacts, in order to make a dictionary for use in aboriginal studies and language classes in the Nepabunna Aboriginal School. The school employed myself and Annie Coulthard (Adnyamathanha) to do the study. There was no opportunity for us to compare our information with that obtained for other groups in South Australia and elsewhere, and indeed, we had little opportunity even to have lengthy discussions with other speakers of the language, until our work ended. These limitations make our publication, "Artefacts of the Flinders Ranges" a perhaps even more amazing piece of work than it is: it is the first and probably the last complete record of artefacts made and used by the Adnyamathanha people, and it represents (with one or two exceptions) the incredible knowledge of one woman who in a white man's society is regarded as totally illiterate (and perhaps by inference, ignorant). This knowledge has not come from firsthand experience, for many of the items have not been used this century. It has come from the education received from her elders, over many years, and has, with knowledge about a great many other things, been stored in the memory.
The dictionary has taken the word 'artefact' to include things used and/or made by the Adnyamathanha people, irrespective of whether those 'things' could be removed to a museum show case or not. Thus items such as the wurley and the pitfall are included. Also included are one or two items pertaining to the post-contact period, such as makiti (rifle) and wuruku (frock, dress), both of which derive from English words ('musket' and 'frock' respectively).

In the preparation of a publication on aboriginal culture, it is important that no items be included which are culturally sensitive. Also, in the case of the Adnyamathanha, women were involved in ceremonies to a greater extent than were women of other groups, and tended to know things they perhaps ought not to know. It was important, therefore, that the publication be approved by male elders. The imprimatur was given by two wilyaru (fully initiated) men, Rufus Wilton and Claude Demell. Rufus Wilton had the entire text read to him, and Claude Demell saw all the pictures and heard the related text. On their request, some items were removed and additions and deletions were made to the text and drawings.

With regard to the current status of items recorded in the dictionary, it is with regret that we record that almost none of the traditional artefacts is in use today, and indeed, few have been used in the traditional manner during the lifetime of any living Adnyamathanha. Items fall into several categories of durability. Firstly, there are items which are constructed in the environment. One example of these would be a pitfall (vata), which was dug in the ground on a wallaby or kangaroo pad. People today remember these, but it has proved difficult to locate any of those which have been thought to be "still there", as most likely they would have been filled in over time and with successive rains. The same applies to the 'wing' or race (yarru), a V-shaped brush fence, often with a pitfall at its end, or a net, to head the mammal in the right direction for the hunters. It is more likely that the remains of these will yet be discovered, as they were topped with stones so that they did not easily blow away. More permanent in the environment are graves (warlkari), and many are to be found in the Flinders Ranges area.
They are to be identified by the remains of the break at the head (i.e. the ngalda warla). Although originally it would have been constructed of brush, topped with (creek) stones, after years all that remains is a semicircular stone arrangement. Camp was abandoned after a death occurred there. An abandoned camp is arnngurla. There are many arnngurla throughout the Ranges. The most common indicator that a place was once a camp site, is the presence of creek stones well up out of a creek bed. These stones were used for cutting up meat. There may be other artefacts also of the types referred to in the Dictionary. (Readers are reminded that all such items are to be left in situ). Perhaps the most permanent structure to be found, are yadhi, often called 'hides' in English. They are a low stone wall, behind which a hunter would hide at night, waiting for a mammal to pass. They were constructed near the known path of mammals going to a waterhole, and were particularly useful in areas where the mammal had little choice as to the route to be taken.

Some items are still available, but not used for their traditional purpose. One such is smoke (yurndu), which was used for sending up a signal, as the Dictionary records. As well, it was used after certain ceremonies and after confinement - instances of bodily trauma - and a smoke from green wood was used to keep flies away. Today, sinews (ildya) of kangaroos are not kept, as they once were, for twine, used as sewing thread, for tying things, and for weaving into nets.

The items which are more traditionally thought of as 'artefacts', are those which can be held, and which were fashioned manually. These include grinding stones (wadla), message sticks (yaramaka), boomerangs (wadna), spears (aya and wardlatha), spindles (yadi), drums (varika), skin rugs of various types (andupi etc.), carrying bags (malaka, mundharri and yakutha), necklaces (wakamada), laddersticks (yanmarri) and flintstone implements (yurda and mundupa). Although very few living Adnyamathanha have
used these items for traditional purposes, some older people are still able to make some of them, and demonstrate their use.

Our 'dictionary' is not strictly a dictionary, in that we have done more than simply list the items with an English equivalent. That would tell us nothing, virtually. For instance, what is a 'break'? What does the word 'bed' call to the imagination? To take the latter case, any picture a non-aboriginal Australian may have of a 'bed' would be very unlike a narngu. Even to Annie Coulthard, the word 'bed' represents one thing, and the word 'narngu' another. There is in my experience, a very great difference indeed in the results of cultural research done in English, and that which is done through the medium of the language. The language is the key which unlocks the door of memory to knowledge of a way of life — a life lived out in and through the medium of that language. The language itself may also hold knowledge for the analyst, which even the speaker does not actually 'know'. For instance, during the research period, I knew of the existence throughout the ranges, of stone hides, but none of my informants knew any word in Yura Ngawarla for them. They knew the structures, and could talk about the procedure of going out at night and lying in wait for a mammal to pass by. In fact, there was an expression which meant 'lying in wait at night, in order to make a kill': a person was said to go yadhinga. I began to think about this word, which was clearly the word yadhi with the locational suffix -nga attached. I had often in the past, as well as now, asked people what yadhi meant, but always the answer given was in reference to the word yadhinga. No one could use the root alone. The more I discovered about hides, however, the more convinced I became that that is what a yadhi was, so I wrote my dictionary entry along this line, indicating however, that my conclusions were the result of speculation. Then one day I gave a lift to one of the community who had just come out of hospital, and to fill in time, asked if he knew the name of those stone walls. Oh yes, he said, they are yadhi warla! (Warla is the word for 'break'). So the entry was rewritten.
When we were discussing clothing, Annie Coulthard told me about *urnda valdha*. *Valdha* is clothing, covering, blanket, and traditionally was made of the skin of a mammal, but there was uncertainty as to what sort of mammal *urnda* was. We arbitrarily entered in the Dictionary the view that it was 'some sort of rat'. Further investigation since the Dictionary went to the publisher has revealed that it was a wallaby, and in my present view, probably the *Onychogalea lunata*, the Crescent Nailtail Wallaby. The name was retained in a lullaby with reference to the blanket a little girl was wearing when she disappeared. The meaning was lost to all Adnyamathanha, because the wallaby had disappeared from the area long ago. Even in the lullaby it was in danger of disappearing, because people had begun to change the word *urnda* to *andu* (the more familiar Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby, the *Petrogale xanthopus*). Probable identification has been made by the use of comparative linguistics, and is reinforced by the finding of remains of the Crescent Nailtail Wallaby in a Gorge in the Northern Flinders Ranges. (Graeme Medlin, p.c.)

Very few people knew the name of the fence trap, the *yarru*. When Rufus Wilton gave us the word, we had no doubt that this was the word we were looking for, because the expression *yarru-yarru*, quite well known, means '(to go) with the head down, looking neither to the right nor to the left' - exactly as mammals do inside the bounds of the *yarru*, heading down their pad to what they believe to be a waterhole.

We knew from Mountford material that the Adnyamathanha had used message sticks in the past, but Annie Coulthard could not remember what they were called. Mountford had recorded a word 'jaramaka'. I was uncertain as to how consistent his spelling was in relation to the sounds of Yura Ngawarla, but knew the word could be (using our orthography) 'tyaramaka', 'tyarramaka', 'tyadamaka', or each of these with the initial 'ty' replaced by 'y'. I decided on 'yarramaka' on the basis of the knowledge that there is a small lizard known as a *yarramakanha*, whose appearance gives the signal that rain is imminent. Since -*nha* is a suffix indicating definiteness, the word means 'the *yarramaka* one'. Since his important role was that he gave the message that rain was near, *yarramaka* was
a good candidate for 'message stick'. The question was phrased; What is a *yarramaka*? so that no clue as to the possible meaning was contained in the question. The answer: Oh - that's word I've been trying to think of, for the stick.

Some of the above examples have been given to demonstrate just how close we are to the edge of knowledge. Message sticks are no longer used, and indeed, even in Mountford's day (1920's and 1930's) were not well understood. Museums cannot find many items, any longer. Those that exist are accessible only to those who can make a visit to where they are housed. It is debatable whether 'giving back to the people' actual items of cultural value, is the best way to make them accessible to the whole community to which they belong - Museums are as safe a place as anywhere. What we can do, however, in what may be the very short time available to us, is to record for posterity - especially aboriginal posterity - as much as we are able, in the language, regarding things, beliefs, practices and places. The language is the window on a world on which the world of white man was superimposed. Language strips away the latter, to reveal the former. It shows a way of thinking and expressing that is very different from that of the recently arrived white man. It shows another way of living in harmony with the environment. This is the heritage which we, the *udnyu* (whites) took away, sometimes almost by force, but which we are also capable of giving back. This is how we view "Artefacts of the Flinders Ranges", the first book on the language written in the practical orthography now in use in the Nepabunna community and beyond. And thanks to the staff of the Nepabunna Aboriginal School, there are both children and adults in the community who can read the language part of the dictionary. Its publication is of great significance therefore, in the history of the Adnyamathanha people, and we - Annie Coulthard, Sue Hatch (the artist) and myself - are privileged to have been given the opportunity of producing it.

Information from Mountford originally (for the publication) came from Notebook No. 30, The Mountford-Sheard Collection, Libraries Board of South Australia, and was used with permission.

Dorothy Tunbridge.
ARTEFACTS OF THE FLINDERS RANGES, written by Dorothy Tunbridge (linguist), with the help of Annie Coulthard (Adnyamathanha) and sensitively illustrated by Sue Hatch (artist), is an illustrated dictionary of artefacts of the Adnyamathanha people. It is published by Pipa Wangka, Port Augusta (P.O. Box 267), from whom copies may be obtained. It costs $5.00 per copy, its low price being due to the fact that it will not and may not be sold for profit to any party, vendor, publisher or writer, under the conditions of its publication. Its sale will release funds for further publication of aboriginal educational materials.

Copies will be on sale at the South Australian Museum in Adelaide, where many of the items listed in the dictionary are exhibited.