NOTICE OF ORDINARY MEETING

The sixth general meeting of the Society for 1977 will be held in the Museum Education Building, North Terrace, Adelaide at

8.00pm Monday 22 August, 1977

AGENDA

1. Apologies.

2. Confirmation of minutes of general meeting held Monday 25 July, 1977. A copy of these minutes is attached.

3. New members.
The following new members have been elected by the Council to the Society:

   Mr. Glen Alexander Vallance, School of Social Studies, S.A.I.T.
   Mr. John Rexton Austin, 4 Matilda Street, Gilberton
   Mr. Andrew Grant Hughes, 13 Beulah Road, Norwood

The following papers and journals from other Societies or Organizations will be tabled at the meeting.

   'Red Gum' Vol. 1 No. 1 Conservation & Environment in S.A. Conservation Council of S.A. Newsletter Vol. 5 No. 3
   Anthropological Society of Queensland Newsletter No. 89
   Anthropological Society of N.S.W. Newsletter July 77
   Anthropological Society of Victoria Newsletter No. 135

5. Speaker.
Mr. Barry Craig, MA (Hons. - Sydney Anthropology), Diploma of Education (Sydney) and a member of the Society, will give an address to the Society entitled -

   'Economic Position of Women in Central N.G. & its implications for Art'

6. September meeting.
The September meeting will be held Monday 26 September, 1977.

Wern Tolcher,
Honorary Secretary,
213 Greenhill Road,
EASTWOOD, S.A. 5063
Institut hygiény a epidemiologie, ředitel prof. MUDr. R. Janda, DrSc., Praha

The life and work of dr. Aleš Hrdlička with special reference to his visit to Australia

Miroslav Prokopec

Mr. Chairman, dear friends,

Being 13000 kilometres by air away from Adelaide I beg one of you, the members of the South Australian Anthropological Society to read this my brief contribution to your programme.

I had the privilege to give you here the first hand information on the assessment of the Roonka anthropological osteological material early in 1975. I mentioned several times in my paper the name of Dr. Aleš Hrdlička a renowned physical anthropologist of Czech origin, who had been for 40 years curator of the Department of Physical Anthropology in the U.S. National Museum in Washington D.C. Mr. Graeme L. Pretty, who was in the chair of the session, asked me to prepare a paper on Aleš Hrdlička with special reference to his visit to Australia and to his contribution to Australian Aboriginal craniology.

Dr. Aleš Hrdlička was born on March 30th, 1869 in the town Humpolec, about 65 miles south-east of Prague - the Capital of Czechoslovakia - in the foothills of the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands. (To all of us dear Australian Anthropologist Professor N.W.G. MacIntosh had visited Hrdlička's birthplace in 1971 where he had been awarded Dr. Aleš Hrdlička's memorial medal, issued by the City Council of Humpolec). The region is known for its rather raw climate and poor soil. Those are the reasons that led to the development of woollen cloth industry, in this town of five thousand inhabitants. Aleš Hrdlička's forefathers worked in the industry since time immemorial. Only his father, Maximilian Hrdlička, was an exception. He was a joiner by trade specializing in weaving looms. Hrdlička's mother, Karolina, taught her eldest son herself so he could start his formal education at the age of seven right in the second grade. He was an excellent student and his name may be found in every year in the school's 'golden book' of the best students. Perhaps that is why a local priest got to like him and taught him privately Latin and Greek to enable him to transfer to the lyceum in the nearby city called nowadays Havlíčkuv Brod. This, however, was not to be because Hrdlička's parents and their four children emigrated to the United States in September, 1882, just as many other Czech families were doing at that time. Aleš's hard beginnings and, later on, the steep rise toward the position of an outstanding scientist conform to one's idea of the borderless possibilities open to a modern man in America. Of course, in the case of Hrdlička, it is also necessary to see that the source of his inner strength propelling him to his success in life was rooted deeply in his old country. It was the consciousness of belonging to a small nation fighting for its independence from the Austrian supremacy, and the realization of the fact that outstanding achievements in his work represented the only and perhaps the best way to help his nation abroad.
Yet another reason should be seen in the difficulties he encountered following his arrival in New York. Aleš could not make use of the letter of recommendation given to him by his teacher to enroll in a college. He did not speak English and had to take a job and go to nightclasses. Six years was a sufficiently long time to break or make the spirit of the young immigrant.

When young Aleš was able to go to university, Dr. Rosenbleuth who treated him previously, recommended him to a medical school and enabled him to earn a modest income by letting him work in his laboratory.

In 1882 it took a number of days for the ship to traverse the distance from Hamburg to New York. Modern technology has made it possible for us to cover the same distance in the course of a few hours. The bus takes you from the airport to the 71st Street in New York where Hrdlička lived during his studies, and it would not be too difficult to locate the place at 231 E in the 14th Street where the Eclectic Medical College used to be. Hrdlička used to walk that distance at the beginning several times a day. Following the completion of his studies he enrolled at the New York Homeopathic Medical College and Hospital on Eastern Boulevard between the 63rd and 64th Streets. Having passed the examinations before the State Board of Examination he joined the staff of John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. The private medical practice that he had opened after the completion of his studies did not enable him to devote himself to scientific research as he had wished. That is why he accepted the position offered to him at the State Homeopathic Hospital for the Insane at Middletown, New York, where he was promised freedom for scientific work.

Feeling the need for further anthropological studies, he went to Paris where he studied anthropology with Professor L. Manouvrier, and to Prague where he met the future professor of Anthropology at the Charles University Jindřich Matiegka. The knowledge gained by studies in Europe was applied in the development of the research of normal population for the purpose of obtaining norms for comparison.

Prior to accepting the post of curator in the newly established department of physical anthropology at the National Museum in Washington, he worked in the field of research in human skeletal material obtained from various collections, on the preparation of norms, publishing a great deal, and repeatedly taking part in scientific expeditions (mainly those led by Carl Lumholz) working among the Indians of the American Southwest and Mexico.

Hrdlička's talent, his industry and working zeal and, on the other hand, the opportunities offered by the Smithsonian Institution, provided the prerequisites for building up, in the course of some 40 years of work in the anthropological department of the Museum, one of the richest anthropological collections in the world, and writing some 300 scientific works in the various branches of the science of man. Hrdlička dealt in his works with the history of this branch of science, the methods in physical anthropology (his book 'Anthropometry'), the coming of man to the North and South America (Early Man in South America, the Origin of American Indian, the Peopling of America from Asia), the development of Man (The Skeletal Remains of Early Man). The last mentioned book was written by Hrdlička following his inspection and visits to all then existing discoveries and finding place in all corners of the world. It would be an interesting map indeed should we chart all Hrdlička's travels in pursuit of anthropology. He became an authority in the field because he did
not hesitate to solve also highly complicated and even unpopular tasks and chiefly because he knew no obstacles in his quest for facts supporting his assertions. A good example of this is his refutation of the theory on the development of man from animal forebearers (Diprotodons and Tetraprotodons of Prof. Ameghino in South America) and his ten trips to Alaska to obtain the proofs of the migration of America's original inhabitants from Asia (Anthropological Survey of Alaska).

It is interesting to note, that according to the Lake Mungo skeleton, dated 30,000 years, Australia had been populated prior to America. A valuable contribution toward this topic has been published by Hrdlička's successor in the Department of physical Anthropology in the U.S. National Museum Dr. T.D. Stewart, in Grafton Elliot Smith's memorial volume, edited by Professor Elkin and Professor MacIntosh.

Hrdlička gained in his lifetime a number of various scientific honours and awards (membership in the American Academy of Sciences since 1921 and in a number of other institutions; the Gold Huxley's Medal for his lecture 'Neanderthal Phase in the Development of Man' delivered in London in 1927; honorary doctorates of the Charles University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno). His personal modesty and unpretentiousness enabled him to do a great deal for the development of anthropology in Czechoslovakia as well as for research of American Indians through the Smithsonian Institute to which he bequeathed all his property.

It is not only the home town of Humpolec and Hrdlička's old and new homelands where his 100th birthday had been remembered in 1969 but all the UNESCO member countries remembered his services to the development of science and better understanding among nations.

The following was said or written about Dr. Aleš Hrdlička:-

"Hrdlička was a tireless worker all his life; he was never really hurried, yet never idle. To him the world contained so much that should be observed and recorded, that he could feel no temptation to relax" (A.H. Schulz).

"I remember once on Kodiak, where, toward the end of a day on which we had been working together as a team he suddenly turned to me and said in his quiet way: 'Osborn, what makes you so strong?'...... The real reason, though I did not say it, or even realize it myself at the time, was his strength of body and mind, which spread out to all of us with him and made every good day better and even the poor ones worthwhile" (Maury Osborn).

"Hrdlička was an authority in the Museum as well as in the wilderness, among simple people as well as among his colleagues in science. He was esteemed by all for his determination, frankness and openmindedness. His sense for criticism was admired and feared. His popularity in the United States was great" (Jíří Malý).

"He did not care for compliments and did not like to be flattered in a letter or in an address of welcome. Already after a short relationship he usually evaluated people correctly and expressed his criticism openly without offence but also without any effort to embellish it" (Ludmila Matiegková).

"Several weeks before his death Dr. Aleš Hrdlička invited me to come and talk to him ... The main point of what Dr. Hrdlička had in mind and wanted to
tell me lay in the following: Everything ought to be sacrificed in order to ensure their (youth in Czechoslovakia in 1943) education" (Vladimir Hurban).

"His work won my interest so far that after Hrdlička's death I enrolled at the university and started studying anthropology. Watching the great scientist at his work was the very best example a young student could wish for. The studies of Dr. Aleš Hrdlička were the results of patient, methodic work, following a systematic plan. As the years go by I admire Dr. Hrdlicka more and more, as a scientist and as man" (Lucyle E. St. Hoyme).

"It would be an interesting map of the world in which we marked the course of all Hrdlicka's journey's all the regions and places which he explored during his 55 trips" (Karel Absolon).

"Dr. Hrdlicka paid me a visit and told me that he wanted to travel to Siberia ... "When you receive my telegram", he said, "get into a train and come at once: we shall buy everything we need along the route". And before I had the chance to make up my mind, Hrdlička had gone" (Karel Chotek).

"I always tried to be worthy of the honour of becoming Dr. Hrdlicka's successor" (T.D. Stewart).

"We (American Anthropological Association) didn't just grow up like Topsy. For many year we were only a well concealed gleam in Doctor Hrdlicka's eye" (Mildred Trotter).

"It was through his efforts that the Museum's collections of physical anthropology, which are regarded as the most complete of their kind, were built up. This was only one of the varied activities of his long career devoted to building the science of physical anthropology in America" (Ruth L. Bunzel).

"To write about Dr. A. Hrdlička - means to write about a life fully devoted to a service to science, about concentration, consistency and untiring work of a real scientist, about a man of a big heart, about a citizen, patriot and a true son of his Czech native country" (M.G. Levin).

Dr. Hrdlička visited Australia in 1925 during his seven month's journey in the interest of Physical Anthropology, extending through France to India, Ceylon, Java, Australia and South Africa with a brief final stop in England. The main goal of his journey was the river bed of the Solo river of Java near Trinil, where the famous Pithecanthropus skull cap had been found by Dr. Eugen Dubois in 1891. This place means to a physical anthropologist the same as Mecca to a Moslim. Report on his study tour appeared in the "Explorations and Field-Work of the Smithsonian Institution in 1925".

"From Java Dr. Hrdlička travelled by boat along the northwestern and western Australian coast, stopping at all the little ports from Derby to Perth. This gave the opportunity to see numerous pureblood Australians, and also some of their impressive nocturnal ceremonies. Here was encountered an exceptional type of the Australian from the Wyndham district, differing considerably from the rest of the natives. Here also were seen for the first time full-blood and otherwise full-coloured Australians with tow hair; more were seen later on the Trans-Australian Railway at Ooldea. In southern Australia other aborigines were seen, particularly on the lower Murray River."
"The principal Australian Museums of interest to Anthropology are located at Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. They were found to contain astonishingly rich collections, ethnological, archaeological and anthropological from Australia, Tasmania and Melanesia. In addition, there are several noteworthy private collections of this nature, two of which (Dr. Basedow's and Dr. Pulleine's, Adelaide), were seen; and important somatological collections are being built up at the Anatomical Departments in the principal cities. The greatest collection of human skeletal material is that of the Museum of Adelaide. It consists of over 600 skulls of the Australian Aborigines, with numerous skeletons, and it is being constantly added to under a beneficial law which obliges all the police officials of the State of which Adelaide is the capital to forward to the Museum any aboriginal skeletal remains that may be found.

"These precious somatological collections Dr. Hrdlička was permitted to utilize and nearly five weeks were spent in the work, resulting in securing essential measurements on 1,000 well-identified skulls of Australians, and on such of the Tasmanians as are preserved in the institutions visited.

"The data obtained in Australia, supplemented by those on the Tasmanian material in the College of Surgeons, London, throw a very interesting and to some extent new light on the moot questions of both the Australian and the Tasmanian aborigines, who deserve truly to be classed as one of the more fundamental races of mankind, and yet it is a race which shows close connections with our own ancestral stock - not with the negroes or Melanesians (except through admixture), but with the old white people of postglacial times. They carry, however, some admixtures of the Melanesian blacks, which is more pronounced in some places than in others.

"As to the Tasmanians, the indications are that they are in all probability but a branch of the Australians, modified perhaps a little in their own country. Both peoples have lived, and the Australians of the northwest live largely to this day, in a paleolithic stage of stone culture. They are still making unpolished stone tools, which in instances resemble the Mousterian implements or later European paleolithic types. But they are also capable of a much higher class of work. Today, about Derby, bottles are used in making beautifully worked spear heads.

"In the Anatomical Department of the University of Sydney, with the kind aid of Professor Burkitt, Dr. Hrdlička had the chance to examine several times the Talgal Skull, believed to be of geological antiquity. The specimen was seen to bear undeniable affinities with the Australian cranial type, but the very large palate and the teeth need further consideration."

For aid given in connection with his work in Australia, Dr. Hrdlička had been particularly indebted and thankful to the following:- Dr. I.S. Battye, Director of the Perth Museum; Mr. A.E. Morgan, Consular Agent at Perth; Dr. A.E. Waite, Director of the Museum, Adelaide; Dr. J.A. Kershaw, Curator of the National Museum, Melbourne; Dr. C. Anderson, Director of the Australian Museum, Sydney; Professors of Anatomy, R.J.A. Berry (Melbourne), F. Wood-Jones and A.N. Burkitt; Drs. Herbert Basedow and R.H. Pulleine at Adelaide; and the U.S. Consul General at Melbourne. It was Dr. Tindale from the S.A.M. who used to prepare the crania for Dr. Hrdlička for assessment.