NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

The 7th General Meeting of the Society for 1984 will be held in :

THE CONSERVATION CENTRE
120 Wakefield Street
Adelaide.
(use the wire gate and go to the back of the building)

MONDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 1984 at 8.00 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies:

2. Minutes of the previous General Meeting:
   Minutes of the previous General Meeting held in the Conservation Centre on Monday 27th August 1984 to be confirmed. A copy of these minutes is attached.

3. Papers and Journals:
   Papers and journals from other societies and organisations received since the last general meeting will be tabled at the meeting.

4. Business:

5. Speaker: Mr Steven Hemming, Curator of Australian Ethnology, South Australian Museum, will address the Society. The title of his address will be:

"Aboriginal Art in South Australia."

The address will include discussion of wood carving and decoration. Slides and film from the S.A.Museum Archives will be shown.

6. Supper will be served.

M.F.Nobbs
Honorary Secretary
c/o 213 Greenhill Road
EASTWOOD SA 5063.
Phone: 3327579
New theory gives Aborigines extra 90,000 years

By JANE FORD

AN AUSTRALIAN researcher has produced the world's longest record of environmental change which shows that Aborigines may have come to Australia 130,000 years ago — 30,000 years earlier than previously thought.

Dr Gurdir Singh of the Australian National University has just completed a 10-year study of ancient sediments at Lake George near Canberra to produce a record covering the past 750,000 years.

This gives a detailed picture of major climatic and vegetation changes and shows a sudden increase in destructive bushfires about 120,000 years ago.

Dr Singh said the evidence of the bushfires shown from layers of carbon in the sediments could only be explained by the presence of man in the Lake George area 130,000 years ago.

This goes against the general consensus of archaeologists that the first Aborigines arrived in Australia about 60,000, or at the most, 50,000 years ago.

Dr Singh said that associated with the onset of the fires was a sudden change in the nature of the vegetation. For the first time in the 750,000-year period, fire-sensitive forests dominated by casurinas began to be displaced by fire-tolerant eucalypt forests which now make up the typical vegetation of the region.

Dr Singh said there was no way as yet of testing his theory because the traditional radiocarbon dating technique was limited to the last 40,000 years.

There were now three Aboriginal sites in Australia, which had been dated back 40,000 years and it seemed an extraordinary coincidence if Aborigines had arrived at three widely spread sites in Australia at the same time.

Dr Singh said Lake George was one of the world's most important repositories of information about climatic and biological changes in ancient times.

His 750,000-year sediment study provided the world's longest combined record of vegetation, natural and man-made bushfires and climate together with plant migrations and extinctions.

During the period, Lake George, together with the rest of Australia, had experienced eight major climatic changes between glacial and interglacial periods.

He said it was difficult to see how the marked increase in bushfires in the past 130,000 years could have come about by natural means.

The fact that the climate was becoming drier was not a satisfactory explanation.

"But if human beings came on the scene they were in a position to increase fire frequencies irrespective of the availability of fuel."