NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

The 7th General Meeting of the Society for 1986 will be held in:

THE CONSERVATION CENTRE, 120 WAKEFIELD STREET ADELAIDE

on

MONDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER 1986 AT 8.00 PM.

AGENDA

1. Apologies:

2. Minutes of the previous General Meeting:
   Notes of the previous general meeting held in the Conservation Centre on Monday 25th August 1986 are attached.

3. New Member:
   The following new member was elected to the Society:

       J.R. Michell

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

5. Business.

6. Speaker:

   Margaret Nobbs will show slides of Aboriginal Rock Art, taken during the field excursion which followed the "Conservation of Rock Art" conference held in Perth, at the WA Museum in 1977. The field excursion visited art sites north of Meekatharra, at Woodstock, in the Pilbara; at Port Hedland and Dampier Island.

7. Supper will be served at the close of the meeting.

R. Allison
Hon. Secretary
120 Wakefield St.
ADELAIDE. SA 5000
At a meeting of the Anthropological Society of South Australia on Monday evening, Dr. R. Pulleine presided. Smoke signals, message sticks, and the birth of the Australian aborigine were discussed. Members were divided in their views as to whether smoke signals could be read or not. Mr. Aiston communicated a note in which he said that in the Cooper's Creek district the signals were usually pre-arranged. The blacks used green boughs to make, and control the smoke. Smoke puffs were used to acknowledge the receipt of the signals. Dr. Campbell said that an aborigine who went out from Killalapaninna became in need of water. His smoke signal was read by his fellows at the camp, and supplies were taken out to him. The Ooldea natives could also tell from the smoke signals, when the Kulata natives were in need of water. Professor P. Wood Jones directed attention to a paper by Magarey (1894), who set out a definite code of signals. Dr. Morgan pointed out that at the time many bushmen contradicted Magarey's statements in the press. Mr. Tindale said the Ingura men often made guesses regarding the meaning of signals at a distance, and they were frequently wrong. Mr. Mountford showed several Larrakia message sticks, and detailed the messages. One was received from Melville Island by a Larrakia man, who pointed out several marks at each end as having a definite meaning. On reversing the stick he repeated the message, starting from the wrong end, showing that the message was a verbal one. Mr. Aiston said that in the Cooper's Creek district there were two types of message sticks, namely, the letter sticks and the reminder stick, and gave illustrations of each. Professor Wood Jones supported the idea of their being two types by quotations from literature. He also exhibited a stick given to Mrs. Barr Smith over 40 years ago by a young blackfellow, who received it from his father in Queensland. The son understood the message inscribed upon it. Dr. Pulleine quoted Roth, who did not believe in any message being present on message sticks, but regarded them merely as passports, or signs of good faith. Professor Wood Jones opened the discussion on aboriginal children at birth. He maintained that no really good description existed of a new-born child. Different writers and observers had described the colour of the skin as anything from white to light purplish. Dr. Naylor forwarded some notes on several births at Penong on the west coast. Mr. Christie related some experiences in the Northern Territory. New-born children at Cape Don were often laid out on the hot sand in the sun for several hours. They were rubbed with charcoal and fat because the mothers wished them to become black as soon as possible. When first born they were nearly white, with a darker patch on the forehead. Many members took part in a general discussion on the papers. Mr. Stapleton drew attention to the urgent need for preserving native rock paintings and carvings in South Australia. Acts of vandalism were reported by several members, and a committee was formed to report on the best means of carrying out protective measures.
IN aboriginal carvings what appear to be mere lines and crude angles nearly always have meanings. For instance, a circle with six lines radiating from the centre to a few inches past the circumference represents a turtle; a line crossed by two straight ones, a lizard. A frog is a circle with only four lines, a snake a wavy line. Light is shown by a single cross, meant to represent crossed boughs. Crudely, methods of picture-writing are adopted to convey to others the presence of game. An emu is shown by two lines fanwise, representing the great and smaller toe of the bird. The kangaroo has the same insignia, though a perpendicular line is shown underneath to denote the tail.

On native message-sticks, straight upright lines are made, the number of lines shorter for women, a certain number of lines representing any number of people according to the "key" sign at the point of the stick. A zig-zag following the strokes shows the tribe to which the message is addressed, and a "dot" placed beside each row of strokes means the tribe is encamped. The diagram is an exact copy of a message-stick (or rather "alone") in my possession.—"Blassey."

THE MULGA WIRE

A BLACK boy from a neighboring run arrived at the blusker's station within a couple of hundred yards from one homestead, and, without speaking a word, handed in a chip of wood. With acuteness he looked at the local sign, rushed to the house: "You bin knowen," he said, "that little phella peckin' below Missbrown, that bin fall down long on ole well-brokin' leg—that bin harskin me talk you bin lendit new phella buggy, go Cunnamulla." Nobody had any doubts. The buggy was promptly despatched, and the injured kidde taken to the doctor. I have never known any "abo," authority give a reasonable explanation of how Jacki gets his information from the chip. Can any "Punch" reader explain—"Cippuland."

THE ABO. MORSE CODE

HAD a white man ever mastered the system or code used by the Abo. In his smoke signals? It seems to be manipulated by a kind of dot and dash method of interrupting ascending smoke columns, but that suggests a more elaborate education than the average attains. The smoke travels very fast and is at will sent against the wind.—"Lail."
THE stick sketched here is an aboriginal passport from the Roper River. The diamond device runs round the stick, and is carved deeply into the wood. So is the device at the top—probably the tribal mark. The two heavy strokes are the sign of peace, and are intended to represent the two fingers raised in the signal of friendship. The message says that the tribe to whom the messenger belongs desires to trade turtle (shown by the cross) to two strokes representing an iguana, and a zig-zag representing a turtle. A sound is given to the walker as a sort of flag on the trail. In older days—"Niti."