NOTICE OF ORDINARY MEETING

The next meeting will be held in the Museum Education Building, North Terrace, Adelaide at
8.00 p.m. on MONDAY, 2nd APRIL, 1972

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 27th March, 1972 meeting
3. Tabling of Papers and Journals
4. Announcement of New Members.
5. Dr. J.M.R. Young, PhD., Senior Lecturer in History, University of Adelaide will give an address entitled:
   "RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO COLONIALISM IN NEW GUINEA"
6. Date of next meeting: Monday, 22nd May, 1972

R.D.J. Weathersbe, Honorary Secretary, C/- South Australian Museum, North Terrace, ADELAIDE. S.A. 5000.
BOOK REVIEW

The following review was written by Mr. R.W. Ellis, Curator of Relics, South Australian Museum:

"ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE GALLUS SITE, KOONALDA CAVE"


When Hale and Tindale undertook the first systematic archaeological excavation in Australia at Devon Downs, on the banks of the Murray, in 1929, it was generally believed that Aboriginal man was a relatively recent migrant to this island continent.

Devon Downs now stands as a landmark in the gradually unfolding puzzle of Australian prehistory - a prehistory which now, thanks to the excavations at Koonalda Cave, can be reasonably assumed to go back almost 30,000 years.

The detailed collection of interpretive data presented in this volume suggests that Koonalda Cave will stand as another such landmark in Australian archaeological studies.

The volume is produced in two sections. The first, concerned with the results of the 1967 expedition sponsored by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, includes detailed ethnographic, vegetational, geomorphological and faunal studies. The second is concerned with the results of the first Gallus excavation undertaken between 1956-58. That Koonalda's prehistory has been uncovered for Australian researchers is in many ways a tribute to the un-flagging enthusiasm and dedication of Dr. A. Gallus, the discoverer of the cave's archaeology and author of the second section of the work.

On a first view one might feel as did the editor, that it would have been desirable to have produced a single volume which collated all the data and interpretation into a single unity. However, it is apparent that such a task would have been extremely difficult, and in many ways have denied an understanding of the various approaches and responses of field workers engaged in the study of Koonalda's prehistory.

The editor's first contribution, 'An Ethnographic Background to Koonalda Cave Prehistory', is an adequate resume of documentary sources available on the area and its early inhabitants. One cannot help feeling, however, that this
BOOK REVIEW

"ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE GALLUS SITE, KOONALDA CAVE"
(Cont'd.)

contribution would have been improved by research undertaken with living informants familiar with the area. At least one such man is known to me at Yalata Reserve. In many areas archaeologists are completely dependant upon historical observations. It seems regrettable therefore, that where this is not true, living informants are not sought to provide information which may prove invaluable in the interpretation of archaeological deposits.

The studies of the vegetation, fauna and cave sediments suggest that the area surrounding the cave has not experienced any significant climatic change in the last 20,000 years. Such observations indicate again, that a reconstruction of recent Aboriginal utilization of resources may well offer insights into the ethology of the area and the cave's early visitors.

It seems evident that pre-historic man entered the cave in the search for suitable flint material derived from bands of nodules embedded in the cave wall. No artifactual material other than poorly worked flint material, carbon deposits and wall markings was discovered. Perhaps in this respect the paper by Mr. Wright on 'The Flints' is the most significant. In this he discusses the morphology of 206 flakes discovered in the excavation which exhibited positive bulbs of percussion. Of these, only nine exhibited secondary flaking of a limited nature. While it may be premature to dismiss the other material as purely quarry waste, Wright has, I think correctly, avoided predictions as to the ultimate stone technology for which the flint was presumably used.

Gallus, on the other hand, has used terms derived from studies of European prehistory to describe types and cultures. This illustrates two problems with the last section of the report. Firstly, the difficulty most Australian students would have in recognising the shapes and morphologies of implements in relation to European types (which is not a criticism of Gallus), and secondly, the difficulty in identifying a co-incidence between the Koonalda material and the European industries.

The contribution on wall markings deals with a particularly fascinating aspect of Koonalda's prehistory - an aspect however, for which few solutions can be provided to the many questions it raises. As happens with most pre-historic art discoveries there is no evidence to give a firm date for their
creation, but the student must rely upon deduction based upon comparison with more recent additions and presumed associations between datable deposits and nearby art forms. Given this lack of evidence, suggestions as to its meaning can be nothing more than the subjective response of the student, more often telling us more about the interpreter than the material being interpreted.

The second section of the monograph dealing with the Gallus expeditions is a remarkable study which shows an interesting response to the material. Gallus' discovery of "stele", thought to represent a deliberate arrangement of stones, will make interesting reading for many students who themselves have been confronted with materials which tempt interpretation.

Finally, one should remark on the excellent series of photographs reproduced throughout the text, many of which are the work of Mr. R. Edwards of the South Australian Museum. Certainly the volume is a must for any student of Australian archaeology.
NOTICES

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Members are reminded that their subscription for 1972 was due immediately after the Annual General Meeting in November, 1971. So far very few members have paid their subscription and in view of the forthcoming publication of Mankind, it is desirable that subscriptions are paid as quickly as possible.

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