NOTICE OF ORDINARY MEETING

the fourth general meeting of the Society for 1976 will be held in the Napier 5 Theatre, University of Adelaide, North Terrace, at

8.00 pm Monday 28 June, 1976

This meeting will occur exactly 50 years since the Society was founded on Monday 28 June, 1926.

AGENDA

1. Apologies.

2. Minutes of meeting held Monday 24 May, 1976 to be confirmed. Copies of these minutes are attached.

3. New members.
The following new members have been elected to the Society.
Mr. Maurice Stockdale 93 Main Street, Port Augusta
Mr. Kym Morgan Goodsell 2/4 Torrens Street, Lockleys

4. Papers and Journals.
Papers and journals from other Societies and organizations will be tabled.

5. Films.
As a part of the Anniversary Weekend Celebrations a series of films will be shown.
   Dr. T.D. Campbell 'So they did Eat'
   Qantas 'The Dreaming'
   Ian Dunlop 'The Desert People'
   Dr. C.P. Mountford 'Walkabout'

6. July meeting.
The July meeting will be held on Monday 26 July, 1976.

VERN TOLCHER,
Hon. Secretary/Treasurer,
213 Greenhill Road,
EASTWOOD, S.A. 5063
(Cont'd).

References.


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AUSTRALIAN CANOES AND CANOE TREES.

by

Dr. E. Couper Black

The natives living along the coast of Australia had few watercraft and what they had was poor. One can speculate about original inhabitants arriving over dry land, or if they came by sea-going boats, that they had lost the art and desire to build them. The same goes for the Tasmanians whose primitive bark canoes were described by Labillardiere in 1792.

In the main there was no watercraft of any sort from Shark Bay in Western Australia along the south coast to Lakes Entrance in Victoria. From there along the New South Wales coast canoes made of a strip of pliable bark peeled and tied at the ends were used in quiet waters, such as seen by Captain Cook. Going north along the Queensland coast canoes improved, being larger and made of strips of bark sewn together. These extended to the north coast of Arnhem Land. In the Gulf of Carpentaria log rafts were used which continued westwards and down the north-west coast of Western Australia, becoming often single logs to Shark Bay. But for some time before European settlement, and over an unknown period, visiting Malays and Torres Strait Islanders had intro-
duced dug-out canoes, with one or two out-riggers to the Aborigines, whose copies were not up to the standard of other peoples.

The coast of South Australia with its gulfs, bays and off-shore islands, offered inducements to go on the sea, but the natives used long paths rather than short cuts by water.

Coming to inland waterways, of interest to South Australians, are bent-bark canoes of the Murray and Darling Rivers. Strips of the thick bark of red gums of suitable size were cut off, shaped by heat and heavy stones to turn up at the sides and ends, leaving a flat bottom. They could be from 8 ft. to 16 ft. long, about three feet wide and have not more than about 4 inches of free-board. Contemporary illustrations in Angas' South Australia Illustrated, shown on the screen give them a length no more than eight feet. They were about 3 feet wide, cracks were sealed with clay, a fire was alight on a patch of clay to cook as soon as caught. The native usually stood erect, propelling the canoe in quiet back-waters with his spear as a paddle, ready to strike when he saw a fish.

This sort of thing was hardly a canoe, it seems really a floating platform from which to spear fish. There is one in good order in the South Australia Museum. But what is preserved in large numbers are the scars left on the trunks of red gums after removal of these "canoe platform". They are concentrated along the River Murray and some of the tributaries such as the Finnis River. Photographs of these "canoe trunks" were shown. As the red gum seems slow growing and long living, they can be archaeological specimens.

On the large lakes at the mouth of the Murray, where rough seas could arise quickly, and where large red gums did not grow, rafts made of reeds were used.