



Comprehensive and Professional Solutions for all Heritage Related Matters

CK 2006/014630/23

VAT NO.: 4360226270

**FINAL REPORT ON THE INVESTIGATION, EXHUMATION AND
RELOCATION OF A NUMBER OF GRAVES
FROM PORTION 4 OF THE FARM GOEDGEVONDEN 101S IMPACTED ON
BY EXPANDING OPENCAST COAL MINING OPERATIONS**

For:

**Glencore Operations South Africa (Pty) Ltd
Private Bag X17
Leraatsfontein
1038**

A. J. Pelsler

Accredited member of ASAPA & Principal Investigator of Graves

REPORT: APAC021/105

November 2021

P.O. BOX 73703

LYNNWOOD RIDGE

0040

Tel: 083 459 3091

Fax: 086 695 7247

Email: apac.heritage@gmail.com

Member: AJ Pelsler BA (UNISA), BA (Hons) (Archaeology), MA (Archaeology) [WITS]

©Copyright

The information contained in this report is the sole intellectual property of APELSER ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTING cc. It may only be used for the purposes it was commissioned for by the client.

DISCLAIMER:

Although all possible care is taken to identify all sites of cultural importance during a survey of study areas, the nature of archaeological and historical sites are as such that it is always possible that hidden or subterranean sites could be overlooked during the study. APELSER ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTING and its personnel will not be held liable for such oversights or for costs incurred as a result thereof.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Pelser', located at the bottom center of the page.

SUMMARY

Anton Pelsler (of APELSER ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTING cc) was appointed by Glencore Operations South Africa (Pty) Ltd, in conjunction with Selala Funeral Services, to undertake the archaeological investigation, exhumation & relocation of a number of known & claimed as well as unknown and unclaimed graves located on a site located on Portion 4 of the farm Goedgevonden 10IS. The site (named Site G) is situated at Glencore's Goedgevonden Complex (Opencast Coal Mining Operations) close to Ogies in Mpumalanga. The graves are to be impacted on by expanding coal mining operations. A total of 13 graves were identified on the site.

Through social consultation 4 of the graves (Graves 1, 2, 3 and 8) were identified and claimed by the Skosana family, who were present during the exhumation of their family graves. The other 9 graves were unclaimed, with 3 of those containing formal headstones with legible inscription identifying the deceased individuals and their dates of death. The others were either demarcated with cement/concrete dressings without formal headstones and inscription or by single metal markers or only soil heaps. Detailed descriptions and discussions on the results of the investigations, exhumation and relocations will be provided in the report.

The archaeological portion of the work was carried out under SAHRA Permit No.: 3309 – Case ID No.: 13985.

It is concluded that the work was done successfully and that the expanding opencast coal mining operations in the area can continue, taking cognizance of the conclusions & recommendations put forward at the end of this document. The Skosana family graves and remains were reburied at the Kromdraai Cemetery near Emalahleni, while the other graves were relocated to the Phola Cemetery near Ogies.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

AIMS

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

METHODOLOGY

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA & SITES

INVESTIGATION AND RELOCATION OF BURIALS

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

REFERENCES

**FINAL REPORT ON THE INVESTIGATION, EXHUMATION AND
RELOCATION OF A NUMBER OF GRAVES
FROM PORTION 4 OF THE FARM GOEDGEVONDEN 10IS IMPACTED ON
BY EXPANDING OPENCAST COAL MINING OPERATIONS**

INTRODUCTION

Anton Pelser (of APELSER ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTING cc) was appointed by Glencore Operations South Africa (Pty) Ltd, in conjunction with Selala Funeral Services, to undertake the archaeological investigation, exhumation & relocation of a number of known & claimed as well as unknown and unclaimed graves located on a site located on Portion 4 of the farm Goedgevonden 10IS. The site (named Site G) is situated at Glencore's Goedgevonden Complex (Opencast Coal Mining Operations) close to Ogies in Mpumalanga. The graves are to be impacted on by expanding coal mining operations. A total of 13 graves were identified on the site.

Through social consultation 4 of the graves (Graves 1, 2, 3 and 8) were identified and claimed by the Skosana family, who were present during the exhumation of their family graves. The other 9 graves were unclaimed, with 3 of those containing formal headstones with legible inscription identifying the deceased individuals and their dates of death. The others were either demarcated with cement/concrete dressings without formal headstones and inscription or by single metal markers or only soil heaps.

The archaeological portion of the work was carried out under SAHRA Permit No.: 3309 – Case ID No.: 13985.

The Skosana family graves and remains were reburied at the Kromdraai Cemetery near Emalahleni, while the other graves were relocated to the Phola Cemetery near Ogies.

AIMS

The main aims with the investigation and exhumation of the graves from Grave Site G (in this case) situated on Portion 4 of the farm Goedgevonden 10IS were the following:

- (a) The detailed investigation of all possible graves & burials located on the site,
- (b) The successful exhumation and relocation of all the burials and remains recovered to the Kromdraai Municipal Cemetery near Emalahleni (for the known and claimed Skosana family graves) & the Phola Municipal Cemetery (for the unknown and unclaimed graves) near Ogies.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are dealt with mainly in two Acts. These are the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998).

1.1 The National Heritage Resources Act

According to the Act the following is protected as cultural heritage resources:

- a. Archaeological artifacts, structures and sites older than 100 years
- b. Ethnographic art objects (e.g. prehistoric rock art) and ethnography
- c. Objects of decorative and visual arts
- d. Military objects, structures and sites older than 75 years
- e. Historical objects, structures and sites older than 60 years
- f. Proclaimed heritage sites
- g. **Grave yards and graves older than 60 years**
- h. Meteorites and fossils
- i. Objects, structures and sites of scientific or technological value.

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Section 35(4) of the Act states that no person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority:

- a. destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or paleontological site or any meteorite;
- b. destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or paleontological material or object or any meteorite;
- c. trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or paleontological material or object, or any meteorite; or
- d. bring onto or use at an archaeological or paleontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment that assists in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and paleontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.
- e. alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years as protected.

The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after receiving a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

Human remains

In terms of Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage resources authority:

- a. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position of otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;
- b. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or
- c. bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

Human remains that are less than 60 years old are subject to provisions of the Human Tissue Act (Act 65 of 1983) and to local regulations. Exhumation of graves must conform to the standards set out in the **Ordinance on Excavations (Ordinance no. 12 of 1980)** (replacing the old Transvaal Ordinance no. 7 of 1925).

Permission must also be gained from the descendants (where known), the National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Premier of the Province and local police. Furthermore, permission must also be gained from the various landowners (i.e. where the graves are located and where they are to be relocated) before exhumation can take place.

Human remains can only be handled by a registered undertaker or an institution declared under the **Human Tissues Act (Act 65 of 1983 as amended)**.

Unidentified/unknown graves are also handled as older than 60 until proven otherwise.

1.2 The National Environmental Management Act

This Act states that a survey and evaluation of cultural resources must be done in areas where development projects, that will change the face of the environment, will be undertaken. The impact of the development on these resources should be determined and proposals for the mitigation must be made.

METHODOLOGY

Background information – The results of previous work carried out in the area (Heritage Impact Assessments) are normally used to provide background to the project and the graves identified and recorded in the area under discussion.

Mapping and Photographing – Aerial images (Google Earth) of the area, providing a location for the area and the grave site, are produced. Photographs of the area, as well as each individual grave/burial, any skeletal remains and grave goods that are recovered are also taken as part of the documentation process.

Investigation and Exhumation – Graves were exhumed by hand using picks and shovels and where possible remains were documented photographically in position. Remains were then removed, placed in coffins, described and documented. In cases where no skeletal remains or cultural material were found a soil sample was taken for reburial as is standard practice.

Burial Forms – A Burial form for each individual burial is normally completed. Basic information on burial position, grave goods, general preservation and other general observations are included on these forms. These forms will not be reproduced in this report while the information on the burials will be summarized and interpreted at the end. The forms will however be archived for future reference if required.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA AND SITE

Grave Site G is located on Portion 4 of the farm Goedgevonden 10IS, at Glencore’s Goedgevonden Complex (Open-cast Coal Mining Operations). A total of 13 graves were identified on the site.



Figure 1: General location of Grave Site G (Google Earth 2021).



Figure 2: Closer view of the location of Grave Site G at Glencore's Goedgevonden Complex (Google Earth 2021).



Figure 3: Grave Site G's location close-up (Google Earth 2021).



Figure 4: A view of Grave Site G.

GPS Location of Grave Site G: S26.11227 E29.04731.

INVESTIGATION AND RELOCATION OF THE BURIALS

A total of 13 graves were identified on Grave Site G. Four of these graves (Graves 1, 2, 3 & 8) were identified and claimed by the Skosana family after consultation and site visits. Of these 2 were marked by soil heaps only, with 2 others indicated by soil heaps with a metal & cement marker at the head respectively. Of the other graves 3 had headstones with legible inscriptions, 3 others had some form of cement and/or concrete dressings and headstones without inscriptions and 3 were marked by soil heaps (2 graves) and a soil heap and metal marker at the head. None of these 9 graves were claimed by descendants despite extensive social consultation undertaken.

Two test pits were also dug in spaces/gaps in between known graves to determine if these spaces could contain unknown/unmarked graves. No evidence of any burials were found in these pits however and they were discounted as No Graves.

Each grave and the results of the physical investigation and exhumation of the graves will be discussed in detail below. The graves were named & numbered as GGVI 1-13.

The physical exhumation & relocation work was conducted during November 2021. The Skosana family representatives were present on the day of the exhumation and relocation of the graves they had identified and claimed.

The ages and sex of the individuals buried in the graves were based on either size of the graves on the surface, burial pit size, names and inscriptions on headstones, skeletal remains recovered and in the case of the Skosana family grave the information provided by the family. The physical remains found were in most cases very fragmented and incomplete, with skeletal remains only recovered from 2 of the graves. Other grave goods (cultural material) found include corrugated iron sheeting, coffin wood fragments, some coffin nails, handles and screws. A few small pieces of coffin plastic and cloth remains were also found in a few burials.

The graves were all dug up to the level of the original bedrock or up to the level where remains were found and the remains then excavated and removed by hand and then placed in the coffins for reburial. Sterile, undisturbed layers were characterized by layers of compacted red soil and gravel. On average the depth of the burial pits was between 1.20 and 1.50m below the surface level, with a few slightly deeper.

The graves were all laid out in an East/West direction, with the heads on the Western sides. Of the 13 graves excavated infants or young children were represented by 6 graves; adults by 7; Male persons by 5; Females by 2 and those of unknown sex by 6 graves.

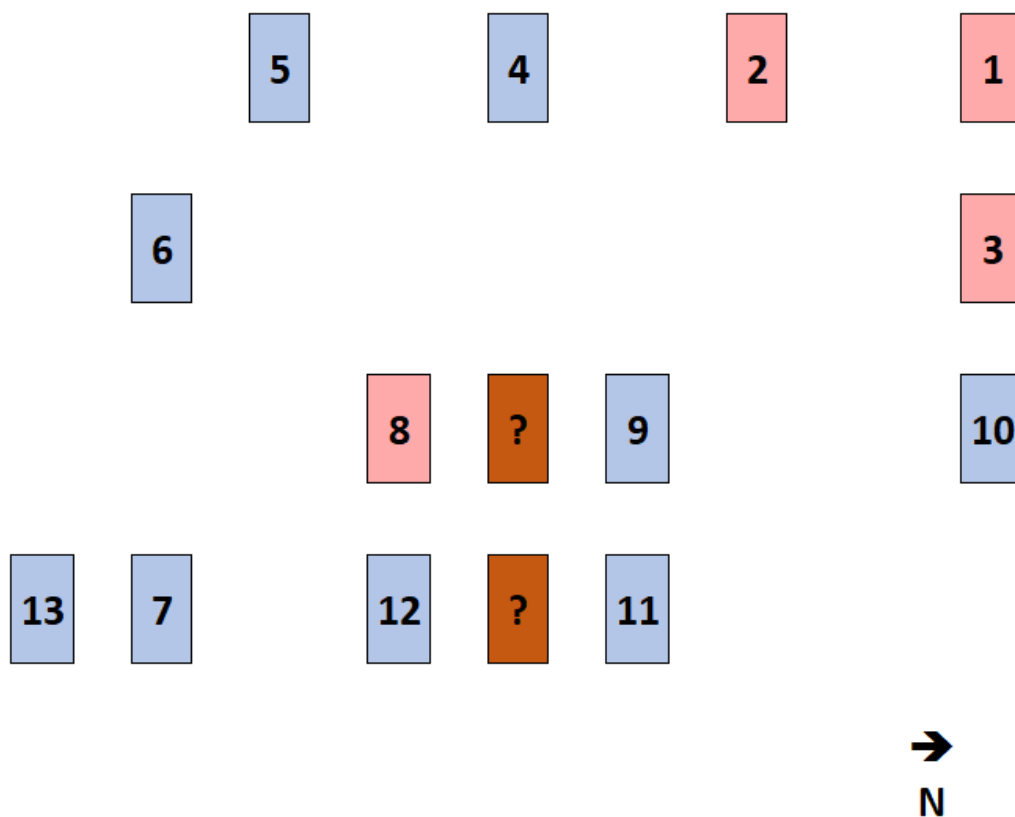


Figure 5: Basic map of Grave Site G. Those in pink are the Skhosana family graves. The orange blocks with question marks represent the Test Pits dug in between known graves.

Each confirmed grave/burial will be discussed below:

- GGVI01:** This was the grave of Mpiyakhe Skosana. According to the family he was a young adult male who died in 1966. They were unsure about a date of birth. The grave was marked by a slight soil heap. No remains were found and a sterile compacted red soil level was reached at a depth of approximately 1.20m below the Present Surface Level (PSL). A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- GGVI02:** This was the grave of Thembana Skosana. According to the family he was an old adult male who was born around the 1920's and had passed away in 1986. The grave was marked by a slight soil heap and a cement marker at the head. No remains were found and a sterile compacted red soil level was reached at a depth of approximately 1.00m below the Present Surface Level (PSL). A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- GGVI03.** This was the grave of Johan Zuzu Skosana Mahlangu. According to the family he was a small infant who was born around 1978 and had passed

away in 1979. The grave was demarcated by a slight soil heap and a metal marker at the head. Although 2 small coffin nails were found, no other remains or grave goods could be recovered from the burial pit. A soil sample was again taken for reburial purposes.

GGVI04: This was an unknown grave marked by a slight soil heap. The size indicated a possible infant/young child's burial. No remains were found, with a hard red compacted soil level reached at approximately 1.00m below the PSL. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.

GGVI05: This grave was indicated by a soil heap and metal marker at the head. As with grave GGVI04 no remains were found and a soil sample was taken to rebury. It is assumed that this might also have been the burial of an infant or very small child.

GGVI06: This grave had a formal demarcation of cement and a headstone with legible inscription. This identified the individual buried here as on Hendrika Susanna Strydom (born Rheeder), who was born on the 24th of November 1895 and who had passed away on the 29th of December 1935 (aged 40). Besides fragments of corrugated iron sheeting that had originally covered the burial pit and coffin, pieces of coffin plastic, metal coffin handles, coffin screws & nails and coffin wood were also recovered. The skeletal remains found were very fragmented and incomplete but were clearly that of an adult individual.

GGVI07: This grave had formal cement dressing and a cement headstone, but there was no legible inscription on it to help identify the deceased individual's name or dates of death or birth. The size of the grave seems to indicate an adult individual. Besides some fragments of corrugated iron sheeting that had originally covered the burial pit and coffin, no other grave goods or skeletal remains were preserved. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.

GGVI08: This was the grave of Mgwaza Skosana. According to the Skosana family this was the grave of an infant female who was born and had passed away around 1983. The grave was marked by a slight soil heap. Other than a single long bone (arm) of an infant individual no other remains were found in the burial and a soil sample together with the human remains was taken for reburial purposes.

GGVI09: This grave had formal cement/concrete dressing and a (broken) slate headstone with inscription. This identified the grave as that of one Hendrik Johannes van der Merwe, who was born on the 17th of April 1933 and passed away on the 25th of December 197?. The size of the grave and burial seems to indicate that he was an adult male when he passed. A sheet of corrugated iron was found covering the burial pit and coffin. Some

fragments of coffin wood fragments as well as the very fragmented and fragile skeletal remains of an adult individual were recovered from the burial.

- GGVI10:** This was the grave of Kenneth James. His grave was demarcated with a cement dressing and headstone with legible inscription. This identified him as a very young infant who was born on the 21st of August 1937 and who had passed away on the 7th of September 1937 (16 days old). No physical skeletal remains or any grave goods/material were recovered, with sterile hard compacted red soil levels reached at approximately 1.20m below the PSL. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- GGVI11:** This was an unknown grave with formal cement dressing containing no inscriptions. The size of the grave seems to indicate an adult individual being buried here. Besides fragments of corrugated iron sheeting that originally covered the coffin and burial pit, as well as some coffin wood fragments, no human skeletal remains were recovered. The trench was dug up to a depth of approximately 1.70m below the PSL.
- GGVI12:** This was another unknown grave (in terms of the deceased individual's identity and age of the burial) with a cement dressing and no inscription. Although the size of the cement dressing on the surface indicated a possible adult individual, no physical skeletal remains were recovered and it is possible that a young infant or child was originally buried here. Fragments of corrugated iron sheeting were found and together with a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.
- GGVI13:** This grave was indicated by a slight soil heap only. No remains (human skeletal or cultural material/grave goods) were recovered with sterile compacted levels reached between 1.00 & 1.20m below the PSL. A soil sample was taken for reburial purposes.

Photographic Documentation of the Graves



Figure 6: Small porcelain vase from the surface of Grave 01.



Figure 7: The bottom of Grave 01.



Figure 8: Soil sample taken from Grave 01.



Figure 9: Grave 02 before exhumation.



Figure 10: Grave 02 complete.



Figure 11: Soil sample from Grave 02.



Figure 12: Grave 03.



Figure 13: Grave 03 complete.



Figure 14: Coffin nails from Grave 03.



Figure 15: Grave 04.



Figure 16: Grave 04 complete.



Figure 17: Soil sample from Grave 04.



Figure 18: Grave 05.



Figure 19: Grave 05 complete.



Figure 20: Soil sample from Grave 05.



Figure 21: Grave 06.



Figure 22: Grave 06 headstone with inscription.

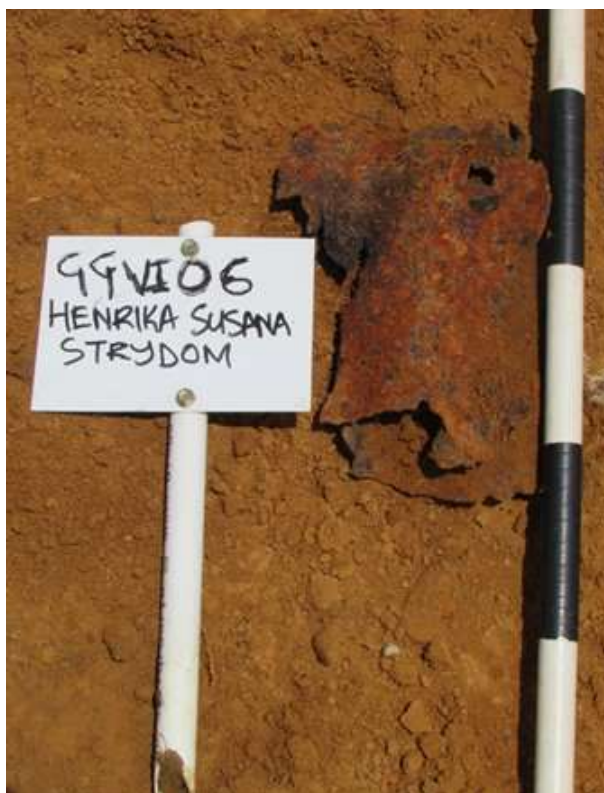


Figure 23: Grave 06 corrugated iron.



Figure 24: Cloth fragment from Grave 06.



Figure 25: Coffin handle Grave 06.



Figure 26: Fragmented skeletal remains in situ in Grave 06.



Figure 27: The remains from Grave 06 in the new coffin.



Figure 28: Grave 07.



Figure 29: Grave 07 headstone.



Figure 30: Corrugated iron from Grave 07.



Figure 31: Soil sample & corrugated iron from Grave 07.



Figure 32: Grave 08.



Figure 33: Infant arm bone & soil sample from Grave 08.



Figure 34: Grave 09.



**Figure 35: Close-up of broken headstone
Grave 09.**



Figure 36: Corrugated iron sheeting in Grave 09.



Figure 37: In situ fragmented and fragile human remains in Grave 09.



Figure 38: Coffin wood and remains in Grave 09 coffin.



Figure 39: Grave 10.



Figure 40: Close-up of Grave 10 headstone.



Figure 41: Grave 10 complete.



Figure 42: Soil sample Grave 10.



Figure 43: Grave 11.



Figure 44: Grave 11 complete.



**Figure 45: Corrugate iron
And coffin wood fragments together
with soil sample in the Grave 11 coffin.**



Figure 46: Grave 12.



Figure 47: Corrugate iron sheeting fragments in Grave 12.



Figure 48: Grave 13.



Figure 49: Grave 13 complete.



Figure 50: Soil sample from Grave 13.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Anton Pelsler (of APELSER ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTING cc) was appointed by Glencore Operations South Africa (Pty) Ltd, in conjunction with Selala Funeral Services, to undertake the archaeological investigation, exhumation & relocation of a number of known & claimed as well as unknown and unclaimed graves located on a site located on Portion 4 of the farm Goedgevonden 10IS. The site (named Site G) is situated at Glencore's Goedgevonden Complex (Opencast Coal Mining Operations) close to Ogies in Mpumalanga. The graves are to be impacted on by expanding coal mining operations.

Through social consultation 4 of the graves (Graves 1, 2, 3 and 8) were identified and claimed by the Skosana family, who were present during the exhumation of their family graves. The other 9 graves were unclaimed, with 3 of those containing formal headstones with legible inscription identifying the deceased individuals and their dates of death.

The archaeological portion of the work was carried out under SAHRA Permit No.: 3309 – Case ID No.: 13985.

A total of 13 graves were identified on Grave Site G. Four of these graves (Graves 1, 2, 3 & 8) were identified and claimed by the Skosana family after consultation and site visits. Of these 2 were marked by soil heaps only, with 2 others indicated by soil heaps with a metal & cement marker at the head respectively. Of the other graves 3 had headstones with legible inscriptions, 3 others had some form of cement and/or concrete dressings and headstones without inscriptions and 3 were marked by soil heaps (2 graves) and a soil heap and metal marker at the head. None of these 9 graves were claimed by descendants despite extensive social consultation undertaken.

Two test pits were also dug in spaces/gaps in between known graves to determine if these spaces could contain unknown/unmarked graves. No evidence of any burials was found in these pits however and they were discounted as No Graves.

The physical exhumation & relocation work was conducted during November 2021. The Skosana family representatives were present on the day of the exhumation and relocation of the graves they had identified and claimed.

The ages and sex of the individuals buried in the graves were based on either size of the graves on the surface, burial pit size, names and inscriptions on headstones, skeletal remains recovered and in the case of the Skosana family grave the information provided by the family. The physical remains found were in most cases very fragmented and incomplete, with skeletal remains only recovered from 2 of the graves. Other grave goods (cultural material) found include corrugated iron sheeting, coffin wood fragments, some coffin nails, handles and screws. A few small pieces of coffin plastic and cloth remains were also found in a few burials.

The graves were all dug up to the level of the original bedrock or up to the level where remains were found and the remains then excavated and removed by hand and then placed in the coffins for reburial. Sterile, undisturbed layers were characterized by layers of compacted red soil and gravel. On average the depth of the burial pits was between 1.20 and 1.50m below the surface level, with a few slightly deeper. The graves were all laid out in an East/West direction, with the heads on the Western sides. Of the 13 graves excavated infants or young children were represented by 6 graves; adults by 7; Male persons by 5; Females by 2 and those of unknown sex by 6 graves.

It can be concluded that the work was done successfully and that the expanding opencast coal mining operations in the area can continue. The Skosana family graves and remains were reburied at the Kromdraai Cemetery near Emalahleni, while the other graves were relocated to the Phola Cemetery near Ogies.

Finally, it needs to be stated that although extensive efforts are made to identify all possible graves in an area of impact, and to remove all possible remains from these graves, there is always a possibility that previously unknown and unmarked graves and remains could be present in the area. Should any be uncovered during the expanding mining operations, work in the area should be stopped and an expert be called in to investigate and provide recommendations on the way forward.

REFERENCES

General and Closer views of Grave Site G: Google Earth 2021.