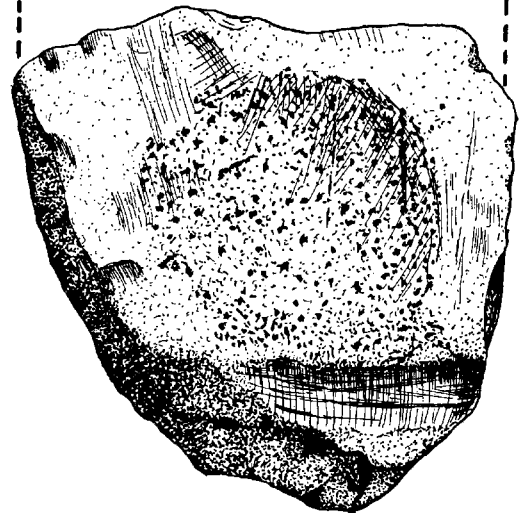
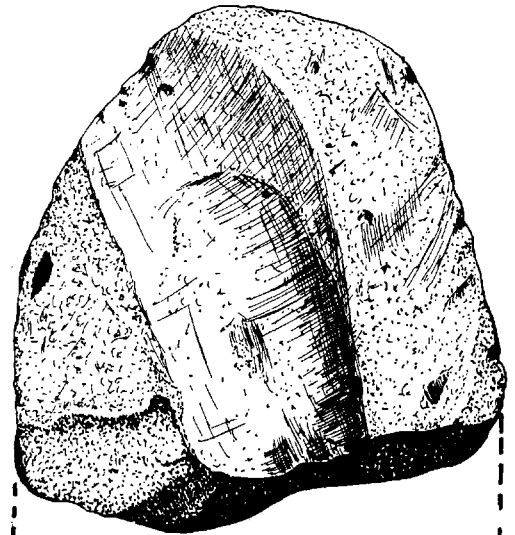
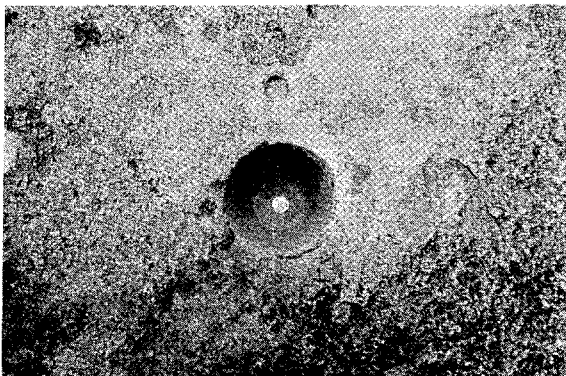
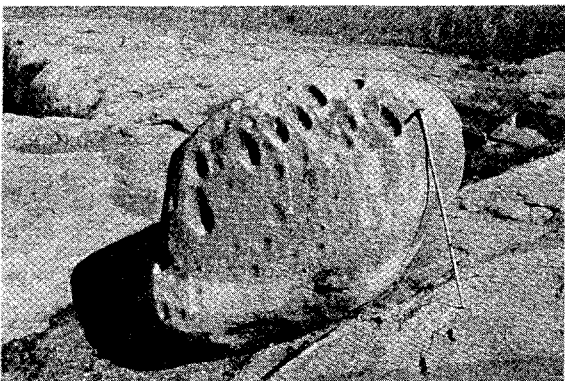
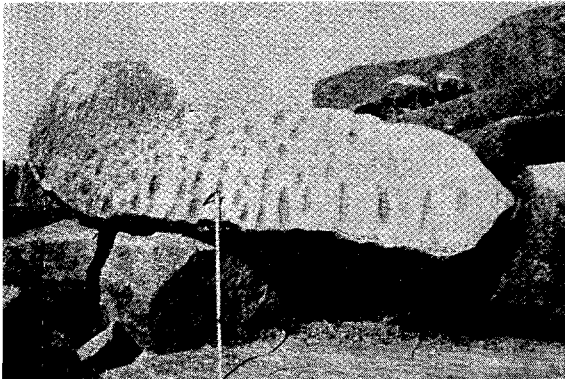


# THE DIGGING STICK

Volume 9, No. 2

ISSN 101-7521

August 1992



Left: Pitted and grooved rocks at Quested's Dam (top and middle) and a circular grinding hollow at Seven Mile Kopjes (bottom) ( C.K. Cooke, 1964). Right: A grindstone from level 11 at Pomongwe ( C.K. Cooke, 1963). See page 7 for Mr Cooke's last article on grindstones for further details.

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# PEERS CAVE, 'THE CAVE THE WORLD FORGOT'

JANETTE DEACON & MIKE WILSON

In a cynical moment one could describe Peers Cave as 'The Cave the World Forgot', for it is one of those archaeological sites that were investigated too early to have had the benefit of the sophisticated techniques now in use and, since almost all of the deposit has been removed, it is too late for the site to fulfil the promise it once showed.

On the cover of the booklet on Peers Cave issued by the Fish Hoek Municipality in 1941, Sir Arthur Keith, a noted British anatomist, is reported to have said in 1929 'It will be a long while before so perfect a discovery as that made by the Peers is repeated'. At the Durban meeting of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science in 1932 Field Marshal Smuts declared that 'The exploration of this Cave is not yet complete, but already it promises to be the most remarkable cave site yet found in South Africa'.

What was so remarkable about Peers Cave sixty and more years ago, and why were the prophecies not fulfilled? Part of the answer can be found in the history of the investigation of the site.

Victor Stanley Peers was born in New South Wales in 1874 and came to South Africa in 1899 during the Anglo-Boer War. He later joined the South African Railways, where he worked for 30 years. His son, Bertie, was born in 1903 and while the family lived in Fish Hoek father and son, keen amateur naturalists, archaeologists and palaeontologists, became interested in the exploration of the various caves and rock shel-

ters in the area. In May 1927, encouraged by John Goodwin, who was lecturer in Ethnology and Archaeology at the University of Cape Town, they began excavations in Skildergat Cave. In a preliminary report on the site published in 1929, Goodwin said he had dug a trench from the front to the back of the cave in 1925 but 'further work proved inconvenient and it was abandoned, only the upper midden refuse of Wilton type having been disturbed'. Goodwin also commented 'It is of interest here to note that van Riebeeck [*sic*] in his journal mentions that this valley was inhabited during his governorship, and in fact seems to have been the home, or at least the refuge, of Herry or Harry, his amusingly dishonest interpreter'.

## WHY SKILDERGAT?

Bertie Peers, in his unpublished report of 1929, said that the name Schilder Kop supposedly derived from a farm-hand called Schilder who sought refuge in the cave with a few cattle some time in the mid-nineteenth century. Others have assumed that it relates to the rock paintings (Afrikaans *skilderye*) on the cave walls, a few faded remnants of which are still visible. These are the only rock paintings within a 100-km radius of the Cape Peninsula. Curiously, Goodwin, in the above-mentioned report, said '... this cave shows no signs whatsoever of cave-painting having been practised'. Perhaps he was unable to see them for the numerous graffiti that cover parts of the cave walls. Bertie Peers's copies of the paint-

ings, which are in the South African Museum, include patterns of dots and lines in browns and yellows and what appear to be superposed handprints.

## FIRST EXCAVATIONS

In another, unpublished, preliminary report of 1929, Goodwin said of the Peers that 'Their first real attempt at excavation was in the Skildergat cave. This cave proved an immense task, and in order to improve their technique they began work in a few minor shelters in the same valley'. Since both the Peers had jobs, work was restricted to weekends, public holidays and their week of annual leave. Excavation of Skildergat Cave was not an easy job and reports say that spades, picks and even dynamite were used to dislodge the large blocks of roof-rock that littered the cave deposits (marks of the explosions are still to be seen). The finds created such interest, both locally and abroad, that a newspaper report records that when visiting archaeologists attending the 1929 joint meeting of the British and South African Associations for the Advancement of Science arrived in Cape Town, they 'went direct from the mail steamer to the cave before going anywhere else'.

## SKELETONS

In the uppermost levels, below a recent sterile layer of about 150 mm deep, the Peers found a substantial shell midden up to 1.5 m thick, probably dating to between 300 and a few thousand years old. The remains of six people, two nearly complete female

skeletons and four children, were found buried in this layer, tucked into cavities in the rear wall. Prof. J.H. Keen of the University of Cape Town's Medical School analyzed those of the most complete individual and estimated that the woman had been about 1.53 m tall and could better be described as 'Hottentot' than as 'Bushman'.

Amongst the goods associated with these burials were ostrich eggshell beads, marine shell pendants and a fragment of rusted iron, said to have been a spearhead and therefore dating to within the time of European contact with the Cape. The remains of small leather bags possibly containing 'curative herbs' were found strung around the waist of one of the women, who had apparently been lame. Finds also included fragments of woven reed and rope, bone awls and arrow-points and bored stones.

Two more skeletons, both poorly preserved, were found in Still Bay (Middle Stone Age) deposits below the shell midden and beneath a rockfall, but appeared to have been buried from the midden levels, so that Prof. Philip Rightmire of the State University of New York at Binghamton later listed all eight as coming from the midden layer. A ninth skeleton (labelled no. 4), which created a great deal more interest at the time, was recovered from the deposit (layer 3) below the Still Bay layer, but a tenth, apparently also associated with MSA material in layer 5, was 'totally perished'. However, Bertie Peers's plans of the excavation show only nine burials, that of no. 6 being the lowest.

#### **FISH HOEK MAN**

The MSA horizon was said to contain Howieson's Poort artefacts

layered between two Still Bay levels and skeleton no. 4 had apparently been buried into the Howieson's Poort layer from the overlying Still Bay. This individual, identified by Sir Arthur Keith as a male about 30 years old and 1.57 m tall, immediately became a local celebrity familiarly known as 'Fish Hoek Man'. His fame was dependent on his having been associated with the MSA rather than the LSA, and even now remains from the MSA are extremely fragmentary. Doubts were, however, expressed as to the skeleton's contemporaneity with the faunal remains from the MSA, which were very poorly preserved.

#### **'STELLENBOSCH CULTURE'**

In 1929 the Peers stopped their excavation at a depth of about 3 m, but they then put a trench into the talus deposits close to the mouth of the cave where they reached an estimate of over 6 m. They recovered from this trench a few stone artefacts reminiscent of what was then called the 'Stellenbosch Culture' of the Earlier Stone Age. This was an important finding, since at that time the only other cave in the country that had yielded the full sequence from Earlier through Middle to Later Stone Age was one outside Montagu, some 160 km to the north-east.

#### **NEW EXCAVATIONS**

Almost twenty years after the Peers's excavations, Keith Jolly, an archaeology graduate of the University of Cape Town, undertook further work in the cave in 1946-7. He had to spend the first fortnight removing recent in-filling and rockfall to expose the sections of the Peers's excavations but he, too, was unable to finish the work satisfactorily. In Jolly's opinion, the deposit containing Howieson's Poort

type artefacts lay below the Wilton shell midden, not between two layers of the Still Bay.

In 1963 an American doctoral student, Barbara Anthony, carried out further excavations in Peers Cave. One of the initial problems she experienced was discovering that some of her excavations were in earlier spoil-heaps! However, she found undisturbed deposits in the centre of the cave, between the Peers's and Jolly's trenches, at a depth of about 1.35 m below the original surface and excavated two trenches there. Her work was also never completed or fully published, although she wrote a fairly comprehensive report for the National Monuments Council.

#### **DATING**

As a result of Barbara Anthony's work there was renewed interest in the site and an attempt was made to date the MSA deposits and 'Fish Hoek Man'. Charcoal yielded dates of greater than 35 600 B.P. from a depth of about 0.5 m in her Trench II and 36 000 ± 2400 B.P. from about 1.0 m (it must be borne in mind that these depths were from the surface left after the Peers's excavations). Later, Rainer Protsch obtained a date of 35 000 B.P. from a piece of *Equus* bone said to have come from the same level as 'Fish Hoek Man'. However, bone from the postcranial skeleton of this individual is reported to have been dated to about 12 000 B.P., thus placing it well within the Later Stone Age and showing the great antiquity earlier claimed for it to have been incorrect.

#### **PROBLEMS**

The problem with the Peers's and Jolly's excavations is that, in keeping with the practice of the times, only what were considered to

be representative samples of the artefacts were retained, which makes it almost impossible to analyze the material in terms of today's more stringent criteria. The Peers's artefact collections were bequeathed to the South African Museum and an inventory of these was made in 1943 by H.S. Jager, a keen amateur archaeologist and for some years mayor of Fish Hoek, and Dr E.E. Mossop, a medical doctor best known for his publications on early expeditions into the interior.

It was here that the full tragedy of Peers Cave came to light. Not only were there very few artefacts relative to the vast amount of deposit excavated (over a third of the contents of the cave), but in many cases their origin could not be attributed with certainty, some having come from the other five sites excavated by the Peers as well as from surface collections. A small part of the material from Jolly's excavation is also housed in the Museum. There are probably more artefacts in the debris in the talus slope below the cave than on the Museum's collections, but since the former are no longer in context they have at best only curiosity value.

By contrast, Barbara Anthony recovered some 45 000 artefacts from her second trench, which was about 10 square metres in area and a maximum of 1.8 m deep.

Prof. Tom Volman of Cornell University, then a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Chicago, studied the artefacts from the three sets of excavations. He concluded that a reliable culture-stratigraphic sequence for the upper levels could not be established from the reports by the Peers and Jolly because of discrepancies between these, which he considered might have re-

sulted from horizontal variability within the deposits, as well as from differences in terminology.

Volman also found little to distinguish the samples from the levels in Anthony's excavations from one another, but considered that the artefacts from the lower levels possibly had more in common with those from the Peers's talus trench than with those from their Still Bay layer 3. His conclusion was that if this was in fact the case, something that could only be verified by further excavation, then it might be possible to demonstrate that the lowest strata at Peers Cave might provide information on what constitutes a transitional industry between the Earlier and Middle Stone Ages.

Bertie Peers died in 1939 from a snake-bite and his father died the following year. Since the 1940s, at the initiative of Mr Jager, attempts have been made to have Peers Cave proclaimed a National Monument. This was not done, chiefly because all archaeological sites are protected by the National Monuments Act and are thus *de facto* national monuments.

In 1989 the National Monuments Council's Western Cape Regional Committee discussed the matter and concluded that, as the scientific value of the site had dwindled, it would be worthwhile proclaiming it only if it were endangered or could be used as a public educational facility. In the latter case, the Fish Hoek Municipality would have to undertake the long-term maintenance and management of the site.

#### WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Is this the end of the story of 'The Cave the World Forgot'? Have the graffiti artists had the last word, or do the citizens of Fish Hoek believe that something could be made

of Peers Cave after all? If so, what would be commemorated? Would it be the heritage (now largely vanished) of the Stone Age people who lived there for so many thousands of years; would it be the zeal of Victor and Bertie Peers and their successors; or would it simply be the setting and ambience of the large and airy rock shelter?

We believe that the most interest lies in the fact that people lived in Peers Cave for possibly 200 000 years; but other factors give it added value. To exploit these values sensibly, it is necessary to do the following:

1. clean off the graffiti, including the unsightly notices painted on the walls by the Historical Monuments Commission;
2. inspire an organization like the Simon's Town Museum or the Fish Hoek Municipality to take responsibility for the management of the site;
3. devise educational material such as displays and leaflets that will inform visitors about the heritage of the site and its surrounds; and
4. record the mistakes of the past so as to learn from them for the benefit of the site in the future.

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## LITTLE LEIGH ROCKSHELTER

N. HAHN (with assistance from S. MILLER)

I have known about the site we call Little Leigh Site A: Bushman Cave for the past 20 years but it was not until October last year that I realized the full importance of the site. At that time two members of the Soutpansberg Rock Art Conservation Group and I went to look at the site for the purpose of documenting paintings in the shelter. It turned out that it was not only the rock art that was of interest but also the artefacts that we found on the surface.

Stone tools of all ages lay side by side with Iron Age potsherds. Possibly the most important ceramics find was a well-preserved sherd relating in style to the material from Klein Afrika. This find was surprising because the people of the Early Iron Age mainly preferred open and level areas on deep fertile soils for settlement rather than mountain tops.

As no obvious signs of human or animal disturbance were present the only apparent reason for the mixed occurrence of artefacts on the surface seems to be water action. Although the shelter protects from rain an area of 120 m<sup>2</sup>, storm water can enter the shelter from the west, possibly re-

sulting in selective erosion of the deposit.

### THE SITE

The site is situated on the farm Little Leigh which lies at an average altitude of 1120 m. The shelter is approximately 12 m wide, 10 m deep and 6 m high, and is situated approximately 110 m above the valley floor, close to the top of the south-facing mountainside of quartzite and sandstone of the

walls and roof are generally smooth, and run from the floor to the apex in a continuous curve. Several stem-fruit trees (*Bequaertiodendron magaliesmontanum*) grow in front of the cave, screening it from casual inspection. Owing to the fact that the site faces south, cool temperatures can be expected in summer while in winter sun will be able to penetrate well into the shelter. A last special attribute of the cave is its

sound quality; sounds are easily projected up and down the valley below, sometimes in echo effects that could have been utilized for various purposes.

The site lies approximately 5.5 km south-west of the Early Iron Age site of Klein Afrika. The nearest water is a perennial spring lying 100 m east of the shelter, but perennial water can also be found in the valley

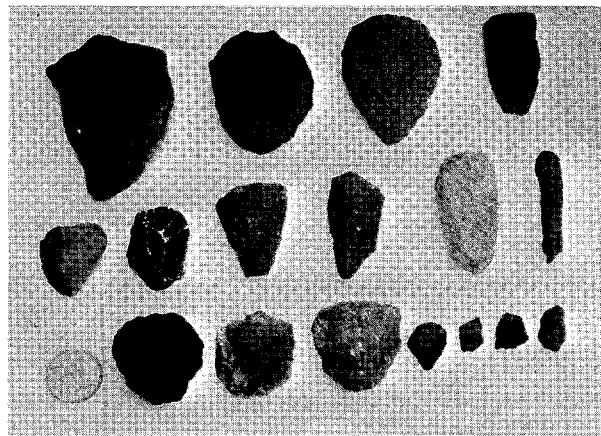


Fig. 1. Stone artefacts from the surface of the shelter.

Soutpansberg Group. The floor is quite level, with a few convenient rocks protruding through the surrounding archaeological deposit. Apart from the sheltered area, the floor continues outward for a few more metres, resulting in a usable floor space of around 160 m<sup>2</sup>. The

below. To the north of the shelter is a plateau which was in the past, and still remains, rich in game. Although access is easy from the north, the shelter is well hidden and is difficult to find unless one knows the area well. From the valley floor to the south the site is protected by vege-

dicular mountainside strewn with numerous fallen rocks. From the opposite mountainside the shelter is clearly visible.

### STONE ARTEFACTS

There is a range of stone artefacts from the Earlier Stone Age through to the Later Stone Age (Fig. 1). In the surface collection, artefacts from the earlier periods are fewer in comparison to those of the later ages.

### POTTERY

The potsherd (Fig. 2), mentioned above as similar to material from neighbouring Klein Afrika, was found by Reg Miller and is the most interesting owing to its size and state of preservation. It is approximately 270 mm long and 230 mm wide, with the typical curved body and neck combination and decoration close to the thickened lip. Although it was not found within the overhang of the shelter it appears to belong with the same deposit.

One half of a rounded pottery disc with a hole in the centre (Fig. 3) was found in the middle of the cave. It is 65 mm in diameter and 13 mm thick, but without decoration. This is probably part of a spindle whorl used in weaving.

Several other smaller sherds, apparently both Middle and Late Iron Age were also found. These are more difficult to place accurately in time as several of the decorations are repeated in time, and the size of the sherds does not allow for proper determination of vessel shape.

### METAL

Metal slag (? copper) was found in the back of the shelter, and pieces of ore that appear to be either haematite or magnetite were found at the entrance (Fig. 3). Hae-



Fig. 2. Early Iron Age potsherd with decoration on the outward curving lip, from the entrance of the shelter.

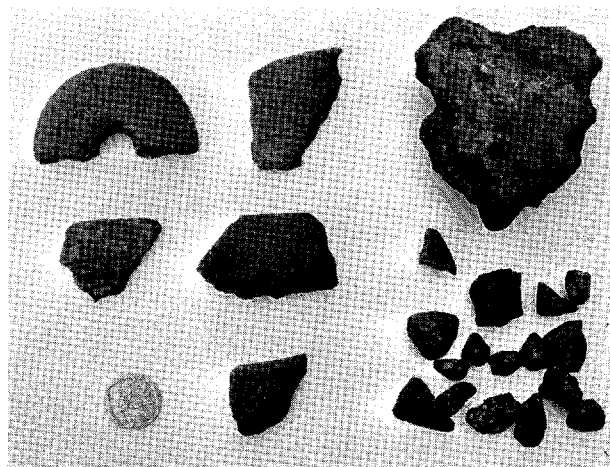


Fig. 3. Spindle whorl, potsherds, slag and ore from the surface of the shelter.

matite does not occur in the vicinity of the site, as far as is known, but could be expected to be found near the Limpopo.

### GRINDING HOLLOWES

In the south-eastern corner, close to the entrance of the cave, the bedrock was used for grinding. Several longitudinal hollows, 200 mm long and 75 mm wide, occur here. The shape of these hollows suggests the grinding of ore, rather than organic matter, although this interpretation is open to debate.

In the centre and back of the shelter several conical hollows, 80 mm in diameter and between 25 mm and 60 mm deep, can also be seen on part of the bedrock protruding through the deposit. These could have been used for many purposes, from extracting metals from ore by dry panning, to crushing plant material for medicinal purposes, to preparing materials for the paintings on the walls.

### ROCK ART

The paintings in the shelter are in a poor state of preservation but, owing to the inaccessibility of the site, their deterioration can be ascribed to three factors, namely:

1. some of the paintings were executed in white pigment which seems to be of inferior quality and style;
2. possible advanced age; or
3. possible adverse atmospheric conditions which seem to affect rock paintings in the region.

Numerous small line and other drawings are present but they are very indistinct and difficult to rec-

ognize. One of the better preserved images is a strange drawing of a human figure, painted with lines of red entoptic dots. The style of these drawings is the same as that which one would normally associate with San art. An elephant and eland, both painted in white pigment, are most probably of a different, possibly Negroid, origin.

### CONCLUSION

This site was obviously used over a long period by a variety of groups. The evidence in the shelter shows trance-related activities (paintings), possible metal working (ore and grinding hollows) and weaving (spindle whorl), as well as the preparation of plants for unknown reasons (grinding hollows).

As the site is too small to support more than a few people at any one time, we conclude that it was either used by smaller groups of people (such as the nomadic San) for longer periods or by larger groups (such as Later Iron Age people hiding from raids by other groups) for very short periods of duress.

The use of the shelter for ceremonial purposes can also not be excluded. The Early Iron Age sherds possibly point to the site's being used for such purposes since it is unlikely that people who settled in large communities and practised agriculture would have lived in such a small shelter.

It would be interesting to assess the possibility that the cave was used by both the San and their Iron Age neighbours as it is generally known that the San existed in the area well into the nineteenth century. The fact that ore appears to have been prepared in the shelter would suggest that both groups were there at times, if it is true that the San only used iron artefacts that they obtained from Iron Age people rather than making their own.

However, the site has not been excavated yet and it is to be expected that many questions will only be answered when this has happened. My intention was just to bring this shelter to the attention of anyone who may be interested in

shedding light on the history of the Soutpansberg.

I thank Dr Janette Deacon for making helpful suggestions on this paper.

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Anyone interested in receiving or contributing to *Die Rooi Olifant*, newsletter of the Soutpansberg Rock Art Preservation Group, should contact the Editor, Mr E.B. Eastwood, P.O.Box 168, Louis Trichardt, 0920: phone 01551-9843 (h) or 01551-2212 (w).

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## GRINDSTONES

### C.K. COOKE\*

Very little literature is available on the lower grindstone or quern in its various forms, authors giving only casual mention of its existence. These stones occur throughout southern Africa and as far north as Egypt. The upper grindstone is also rarely given a detailed description.

In Zimbabwe there are many hundreds of querns being used in gardens as birdbaths, the original localities long forgotten. A similar

position occurs in South Africa, despite legislation which requires a permit before one may collect archaeological material. However, some grindstones occur *in situ* and may still be examined and a few from archaeological deposits are in museum collections.

The portable quern is common but grinding areas also occur on flat granite outcrops in Zimbabwe. Shapes vary considerably but a

common form appears to be confined to a particular area, except in one instance which is described later.

The variation shown in size may well illustrate individual preferences or use for specific purposes. But, with the mechanical grinding mill becoming available even in the remotest areas, it is now difficult to ascertain reasons for variation, the types of material ground and the



exact method used to obtain the desired product.

### ORE EXTRACTION

The occurrence of grooves and dolly holes at Selukwe suggests the grinding of ores, possibly gold. The artefacts occur close to a running stream below the Bonsor Ruins in a mining area.

The combination of grooves and a dolly hole (Fig. 1) at Morven Mine near Bulawayo is of particular interest. The grinding area on natural rock had shallow grooves over the whole area with a central dolly hole. Small flecks of gold and iron were extracted from the grooves. The mine is situated on a banded ironstone occurrence which shows visible gold in the quartz bands. This deposit was mined prior to the advent of Europeans.

The exact use of the grindstones from the Morven Mine (Fig. 1) is not clear. The central dolly hole could be used for the preliminary

heavy gold particles while the waste continued into the central hole. The principle would be not unlike that of the James table but without the shaking. These grindstones were on a local outcrop of granite.

### FOOD PREPARATION

Almost circular grinding areas occur at Lake Kyle in Zimbabwe, Glenesk Farm in the northern Transvaal, in Lesotho and the foothills of the Natal Drakensberg. The Kyle occurrence is on the site of a settlement of labourers brought from Lesotho to Masvingo (Fort Victoria) by the Pioneer Column during 1890. The site is on bare rocks within the national park and no longer occupied.

Those in the Drakensberg foothills are not far from the boundary of modern Lesotho. A circular example in the museum at Marianhill came from Lesotho.

The occurrence at Glenesk Farm is unlikely to have any tribal connec-

rather than the back and forth method used for maize. However, long, narrow examples also occur at this site.

Glenesk has a large area of alluvium which has been under intensive occupation and cultivation, possibly from before the introduction of maize. The circular grindstones were possibly used for crushing and grinding the hard seeds of millet (*Pennisetum caffrorum*). Another possibility is that sherds were crushed for grog. Unfortunately, if there was any stratification showing difference in age between the two types, this has long since been destroyed by the plough.

### WEAPON SHARPENING

Grindstones were also necessary for sharpening weapons of war. On Quested's Farm in the Plumtree area of Zimbabwe there are many ground areas on upright granite boulders. I was told by Chief Gambo II that the Anandabele impis sharpened their assegais on these rocks prior to engaging Goold Adams's column at Singwesi in November 1893. A flat rock adjacent to the entrance of the Cross Ruin at Kame (Khami) has similar ground areas probably used by those guarding this access.

### OTHERS

Stone mortars are not uncommon in the mining areas of Zimbabwe but they also occur in places where no economic minerals occur or were known to have been exploited prior to 1890. The only known transportable example is in the Natural History Museum in Bulawayo (Fig 2). Fixed examples occur at Mwala Hill,

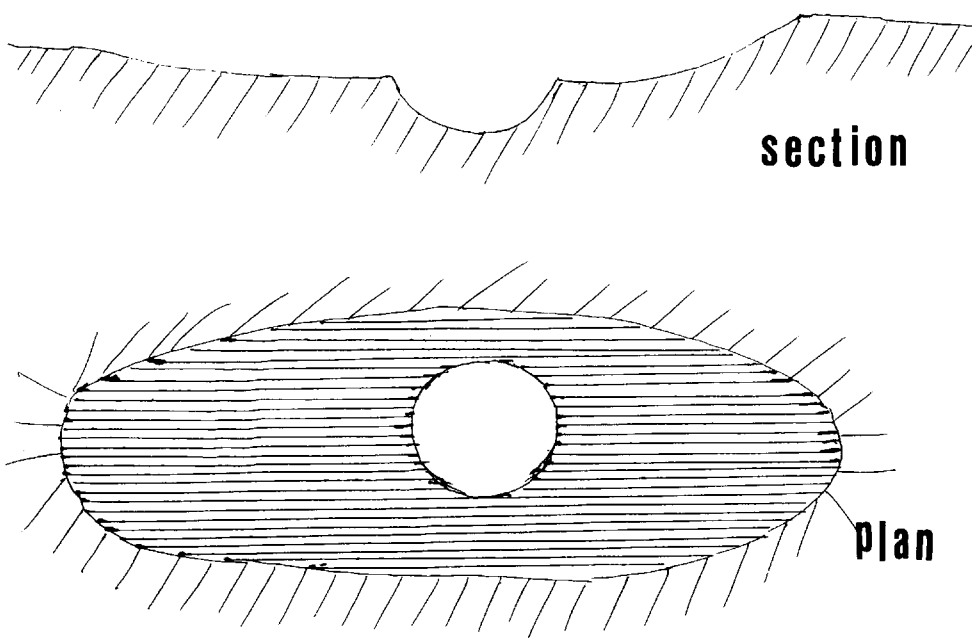


Fig. 1. Grooved grindstone with dolly hole. Morven Mine, Zimbabwe.

crushing of ore. The resulting powder may have been washed over the grooves which would catch the

tion with Lesotho. It is more likely that a specific grain was ground which needed circular grinding



Nyamandhlovu District and at Plumtree, well away from the gold belt.

except in the areas described above. Glenesk Farm has both

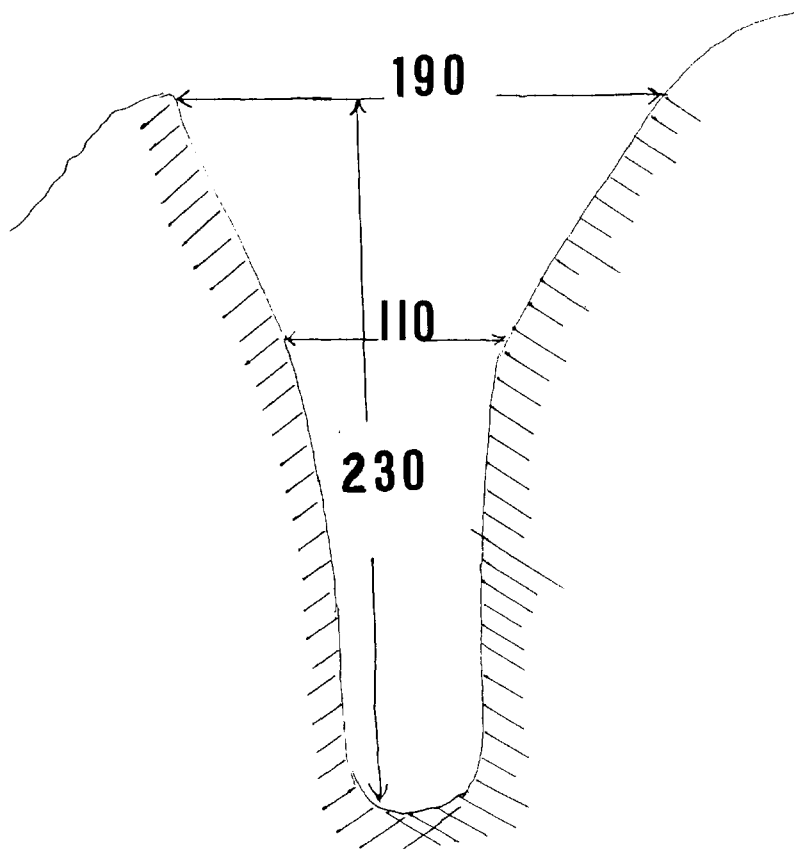


Fig. 2. Diagrammatic cross-section through hole for a moveable dolly. From Matabeleland, Zimbabwe. Measurements in mm.

These may well have been used for crushing millet and marula or other hard nuts. Examples of grindstones recovered from Late Stone Age deposits have no consistent shape. One from Pomongwe Cave has a circular area on one side and an oblong one on the other. It could have been used for preparing grass seeds, or ochre and haematite for painting or body decoration.

Sandstone blocks used for shaping bone, ivory, wooden artefacts or ostrich eggshell beads have not been included because they have been described in many papers on the Stone Age.

#### LONG TYPES

The longer than wide type occurs throughout the area covered,

types but, because of the movement of many of these artefacts to gardens, it is impossible to give any estimate of numbers or proportions.

The long oval type of grindstone also occurs on granite outcrops. At Nyahokwe in the Myanga District of Zimbabwe there are over 100 examples on one flat area. This site is adjacent to Iron Age settlements, ruins and terraced agricultural land.

#### QUERNS IN USE

The earliest record known to me of a quern in use appears as a painting in Silozwane Cave in the Matopo Hills (Fig. 3). It is possibly about 2000 years old, but definitely postdates the arrival of the Bantu in Zimbabwe.

There is no evidence for the saddle quern, as in Egypt, although a sitting or kneeling position must have been used.

Some years ago in the Bikita District of Zimbabwe I saw women standing up using a quern mounted on a platform made of saplings. The upper grindstone was an oblong piece of diorite. Maize was being ground, after it had been stamped in a wooden mortar. The standing position appears to be a modern innovation connected with the adoption of fashionable store-bought clothing.

#### UPPER GRINDSTONES

I examined or located very few examples of upper grindstones but those that I did find were oblong pieces of diorite with one or more facets polished by the grinding.

Pieces of diorite between 180 and 200 mm long, for use with the dolly holes and rounded at one or both ends from use, were fairly common at the sites of ancient workings.



Fig. 3. Rock painting from Silozwane Cave, Matopos, Zimbabwe. Approximately 1/10th natural size.

## WHERE NOW?

This paper is the result of many years of observation and the maintenance of comprehensive notes on a subject in which I have had only minimal interest owing to my involvement with other aspects of archaeological research. How much is still left to discover is a difficult question to answer; it is certainly a subject which should be investigated further.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are due to Mr Alex Willcox and to members of the staff of the National Museums and Mon-

uments of Zimbabwe, all alas departed to situations new.

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\* Sadly, Mr Cooke, who was one of our longest-standing members, died recently; we are lucky to have this last contribution by which to remember him — Ed.

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## WESTERN AND SOUTHERN CAPE OUTING TO THE SWARTBERG

### VAL TAYLOR

A combined excursion by the Western and Southern Cape Branches of the Society proved so successful last year that another joint excursion was held at the beginning of May this year.

A full programme provided for a wide spectrum of interests, starting with a visit to the Enon Conglomerate east of Calitzdorp. This soft red freshwater alluvial deposit was laid down at the beginning of the Cretaceous, 120 million years ago. It contains Table Mountain Sandstone boulders, Witteberg Quartzite and fossils of lamellibranchs, freshwater mussels (*Unio* sp.) as well as plants such as ferns and cycads. We lunched among colourful rounded red hills splashed with yellow-green lichen.

The road winds past ostrich farms in the fertile green valley leading to the Swartberg Pass. The

scenery along the Gamkaskloof road is breath-taking as it winds for 50 km like a fine strand far into the mountains ahead, zigzagging finally down a series of unbelievable hair-pin bends to the valley below and to the warm hospitality of Zannie van der Walt, the Conservation Officer. That night Kampe Smith brought hi-tech to this isolated valley, using his generator to provide a whole string of electric lights on posts for the braai.

Early next morning members examined Bushman paintings nearby. There were depictions of human figures, two or three clear red ochre elephants and finger dots in lines and clusters. The quick visit revealed one piece of pottery but no other noticeable artefacts. A small boy in the party created a stir; he went to pick up a baby boomslang he thought was dead. It was not!

Returning to Swartberg Pass with the mountain peaks covered overnight with snow, the party made its rendezvous in Prince Albert at the home of Lydia and Zigi Barrella to view their unique collection of crystals and gemstones. Helena Marenkowitz pointed out some of the interesting architectural features, such as distinctive gables, of the houses in the little town. Many homes have been restored and are fully equipped to provide tourist and holiday accommodation at a very reasonable rate. The museum has an interesting display of Victorian furniture, clothes, musical instruments, medical equipment, etc., as well as fossil material which abounds in the district.

In the afternoon Hennie du Plessis and Herman Olivier kindly granted members access to their farms and guided them to several

sites to see Bushman paintings and artefacts. The paintings varied considerably in quality and preservation. They included a number of human figures, eland, elephants and various other animals as well as shapes. Artefacts included some MSA tools, as well as a large number of fine-grained microliths like cores, scrapers, many flakes and a lower grindstone.

John Almond introduced members to a distinctive trace fossil, *Spirophyton*, a soft-bodied animal which burrowed vertically down through the silt to a layer rich in organic food. The possible proboscis protruded to ingest food material, producing as it moved, a series of curved side branches from a central furrow about 1 cm in diameter.

Most members slept well but the hard-worked organizer spent a wild night, running in her nightmare through the dining room to take a nose-dive down a flight of stairs into

an adjacent room, breaking a little finger in the process! Eina! A doctor in the group improvised a splint with lolly sticks and elastoplast.

On the last morning the convoy snaked its way to the farm of Louis Muller in the Leeugamka district. He spoke of the recent oil search on his farm and of the fossil animals that lived there in the very distant past. Then he led the group in four-wheel-drive vehicles to the dry stream bed where, on a picnic one day, his wife chanced to notice some very large, clear footprints in the shale. Gradually they made out seven pairs of footprints of *Bradysaurus* (a slow-moving lizard), a stem-reptile dating back 240 million years and thus antedating the dinosaurs (175 to 75 million years ago) and the mammal-like reptiles. Not far away there was evidence of a large fossil animal at least 3 m long lying just below the surface.

A final treat was a visit to Roy Oosthuizen's well-known trilobite collection on the farm Zwartskraal. This is the largest collection of trilobites in South Africa. Roy has specialized in marine fossils of the Devonian and Lower Devonian, about 350 million years ago. The well catalogued collection includes an invertebrate collection of molluscs, both bivalves and the scarcer gastropods, crinoids, echinoderms, coral, ammonites from the Cretaceous and a large Silurian sea-scorpion. Vertebrate fossils include Lower Permian fish from the Witteberg. There are also fossil plants such as ferns, lycopods and *Dadoxylon* and a general collection of stone tools and other items.

We are grateful to all our hosts for their ready generosity and warm hospitality.

44 Sandown Road, Rondebosch, 7700.

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## IN PRAISE OF A WASH

### TOWNLEY JOHNSON

Reproducing rock paintings for publication is an absorbing undertaking. The dot-pattern method is in my opinion tedious and the least satisfactory effort. It is an unconvincing attempt to convey how the original study appears to the viewer *in situ*.

A colour copy with the inclusion of the rock background is the ideal method. However, unless the considerable expense merits the presentation, by virtue of a quality publication with a large membership or readership prepared to pay the

price, this method is unlikely to be favoured. On the other hand, there appears to be a likelihood that new printing options will present remarkable cheaper results and merit colour reproductions.

The use of watercolour washes employing a wide range, from opaque black to the lightest shade of grey, supplies a comprehensive scale approximating to the best half-tone photographic copy. Washes with Process black or Indian ink are also employed to supply acceptable results. Additionally, the back-

ground rock surface may be included as an important feature to enhance the overall result. A quality watercolour paper, preferably a rough surface, will ensure the satisfactory image.

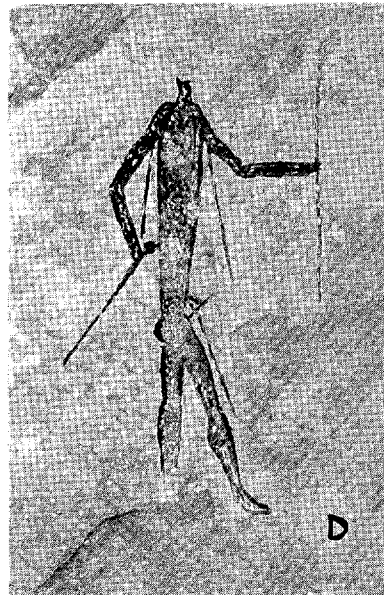
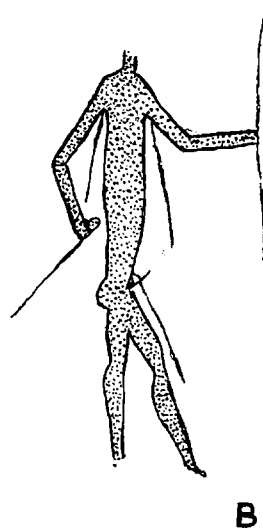
My days of dot-dot-dotting, no matter how industriously and enthusiastically the labour was indulged, was calculated to drive me dotty! On one occasion I used 97 483 separate dots to make a copy. A colleague interrupted me at this stage of counting by asserting that my total of dots was suspect.

"Surely not 97 483? Nearer 97 465 maybe?" Re-starting was considered a wasted exercise with probably further interruptions from a heathen. And so near to a world record!

The result of all this fine-nib

or grey portion of the painting — add up to an unconvincing image.

To the champions of the dot technique, if my theory does not wash, then my humble appeal for a convincing improvement on the half-tone wash method.



The original study — photograph (A); Dots (B); Solid (C); and wash (D).

black-ink involvement in trying to convey gradations of tonal value seems to me an exercise in futility, no matter what my critics say. Black thick dots, medium strength dots, fragile light dots, vignettted lighter dots — the latter to indicate a white

Far Horizon, Bosman Avenue, Llandudno, 7800.

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Published by the South African Archaeological Society, P.O. Box 15700, Vlaeberg, 8018 South Africa. Editor: Dr Margaret Avery.

## NEW PUBLICATION

The response to a flyer sent with the *South African Archaeological Bulletin* last year indicated that many professional archaeologists, as well as several laymen, supported the launch of a new archaeological journal. The Archaeology Department of the Albany Museum therefore proceeded with the publication of *Southern African Field Archaeology* which was officially presented to the archaeological community at the conference of Southern African Association of Archaeologists in Cape Town in July 1992.

The aim of the journal is to communicate basic data to professional archaeologists and to the public. Manuscripts of original research undertaken in southern Africa will be considered for publication. These include reports of current research projects, site reports, rock art panels, rescue excavations, contract projects, reviews, notes and comments. Students are encouraged to submit short reports on projects and theses for publication. *Southern African Field Archaeology* will also welcome general information on archaeological topics for publication, such as reports on workshops and conferences.

*Southern African Field Archaeology* will be published twice a year. Subscription rates are R25 per year for individuals and R40 for institutions in southern Africa. Outside southern Africa the rate is US\$25 and US\$30 respectively.

Anyone wishing to subscribe to this new journal should write to: The Editors, *Southern African Field Archaeology*, Albany Museum, Somerset Street, Grahamstown, 6140 South Africa.

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