SAHRA Sterkfontein Excavation Permit 2012

Research Proposal Amendment

The Jacovec Cavern

The Jacovec Cavern is one of the deepest chambers of the Sterkfontein Cave system and may contain some of the earliest hominin material in southern Africa. Initial exploration of deposits in the Jacovec yielded intriguing hominin material, including a partial cranium and a clavicle with ‘unique and ape-like morphology’.

Over the next two years, we plan to excavate and analyse a stratigraphically controlled hominin and faunal assemblage from the Jacovec Cavern *Australopithecus*-bearing deposits in the Sterkfontein Cave system. Utilising a multidisciplinary approach we aim to explain the stratigraphic history of this area of the caves and place the hominin and faunal assemblages within a refined chronological, palaeoenvironmental and depositional context. Through this work we also hope to clarify the relationship between the distinct hominin and faunal assemblages of the Jacovec Cavern and the established *Australopithecus* assemblages of the main Sterkfontein site (i.e Member 2 and Member 4), thereby enabling further opportunity to understand intra-*Australopithecus* variability.

Kind regards,

Dr. Dominic Stratford