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FINAL REPORT ON A PHASE ONE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF A HISTORIC BURIAL AT SCHOONGEZICHT

Prepared for Simon Barlow

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SCHOONGEZICHT

Phase One Archaeological Investigation

1. Introduction

This report was commissioned by Mr Simon Barlow to investigate two archaeological features; one containing a historic human burial which had been partially disturbed by land clearing operations on the farm Schoongezicht and the second an area described by an oral informant to be an unmarked grave site.

2. Historical Background

A brief review of the known history of the site provides a basis for the interpretation of the material culture revealed in the archaeological investigation.

Schoongezicht, a sub-division of a much older farm Rustenburg, was granted to the landdrost of Stellenbosch, Roelof Pasman in 1682 by Willem Adriaan van der Stel (vide Fig 1). Rustenburg, later renamed Rustenberg, was transferred to Pieter Robbertze, another landdrost of Stellenbosch, who married Roelof Pasman's widow in 1699. The 92 morgen farm covered the floor of the upper Simonsberg valley. Later additions to the farm by van der Bly in 1810 and de Wet in 1825 extended the boundaries of the farm to include the foothills and central part of the Simonsberg mountain and thus adding an additional 729 morgen to the estate.

The first major sub-division of the Rustenberg estate was in 1810 when Jacob Eksteen transferred the portion now known as Schoongezicht to his son-in-law, Arend Brink. These two adjoining properties functioned as agricultural estates producing wine, livestock and grain. In 1812 Arend Brink sold his farm to Hendrik Cloete who built the homestead and organised the vineyards. When John Merriman bought Schoongezicht in 1892 he developed the foundation of the deciduous fruit industry and dairy herd farming.

Schoongezicht was re-united with the Rustenberg estate in 1941 by Peter Barlow who bought the farm from the deceased estate of Alfred Nicholson.

3. Changing Landscapes

The early history and development of farming in the Stellenbosch Valley has been documented by Borcherds[1] and comparative figures of population and productivity for the years 1750 to 1825 indicates that there were 3933 men, women and children living on the land, plus 13,893 cattle, 71,684 sheep and 136 pigs. On the agricultural side he lists vines 2,309,000; leaguers of wine pressed 2,541; wheat sown 1.162 muids and reaped 5906 muids; rye sown 54 muids and barley 80 muids.

1. *Houston, D 1981 Valley of the Simonsberg, South African Press, Cape Town.*

After 1825, the population of the landscape had increased dramatically to 16,446, which included slaves, cattle increased to 25,924 while sheep dropped to 25,509 and pigs rose to 2,543. Vines increased tenfold to 23,667,169 but wine production had increased only fourfold to 10,507 leaguers in the 75 years. Wheat sown 4,055 muids and reaped 34,879; rye 421 sown and 3,101 reaped; barley sown 764 and reaped 16,990. Rustenberg, at this time, carried 300,000 vines and Schoongezicht 100,000 respectively.

From 1884 onwards the wine industry of the Cape was plagued by the virus phylloxera, and in 1892 when John X Merriman bought Schoongezicht, the vineyards lay derelict due to the phylloxera epidemic. Merriman and his partner Alfred Nicholson, rooted out all the vineyards and planted peaches, plums and pears on the land overlooking the mountains. Land for new vines were prepared on virgin bush-covered hillsides[2].

In 1941 Peter Barlow continued the unbroken tradition of winemaking at Schoongezicht and dairy heard farming on the lower flat lands of the Simonsberg. This practice of land use continues until the present.

4. The Excavation

The excavation was conducted in a trench dug by the contractor while land clearing operations were underway in a central courtyard overlooking the farms outbuildings.

Figure 2 shows the location of the excavation at Schoongezicht while figures 3 and 4 shows a general view of the area.

The first 60 cms of the south east section of the trench had been removed by a mechanical digger to expose the skull, right humerus, ulna and radius of an adult human skeleton (vide Fig 5). Formal excavation of the first 20 cms of the north east section exposed hard compacted red clay soil, with large inclusions of dark clay soil impregnated with straw. At approximately 30 cms the charred roots of several vines were exposed in the south west section. The remaining deposit was dug out in 20 cms spits to a depth of 90 cms. Excavation of the trench revealed a fully extended burial facing north east at 60 cms (vide Fig 6). The deposit lying immediately above and below the skeleton had clearly defined pockets of yellow clay. The fragments of two buttons, one made from bone and the other from copper were found in a yellow clay pocket lying immediately below the right pelvis. The excavation was continued 20 cms below the burial and revealed sterile red clay soil. The excavation was not continued beyond 90 cms.

5. Unmarked Gravesite

A 78 year old man, Farson Munpa who has lived and worked on the farm since 1947 marked an area lying approximately 14 meters north east of the excavation as a grave site. The informant recalls that in the 1940's the graves were clearly recognisable and interred in an area of open countryside. The site measures approximately 4½ x 16 meters and lies at the confluence of two roads (vide Figs 2-4)

2. *Knox, G, 1976 Estate Wines of South Africa, David Phillip, Cape Town.*

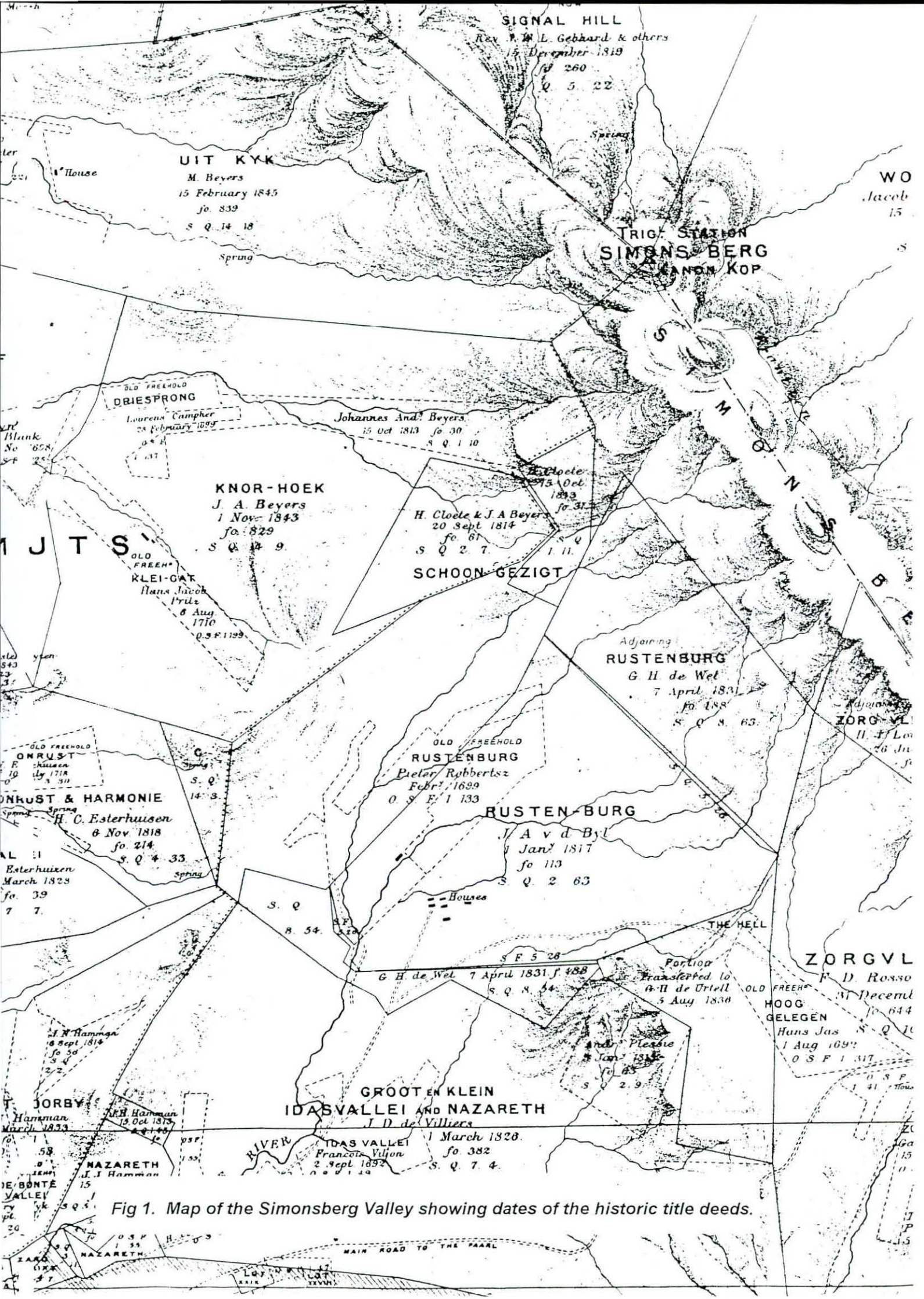


Fig 1. Map of the Simonsberg Valley showing dates of the historic title deeds.

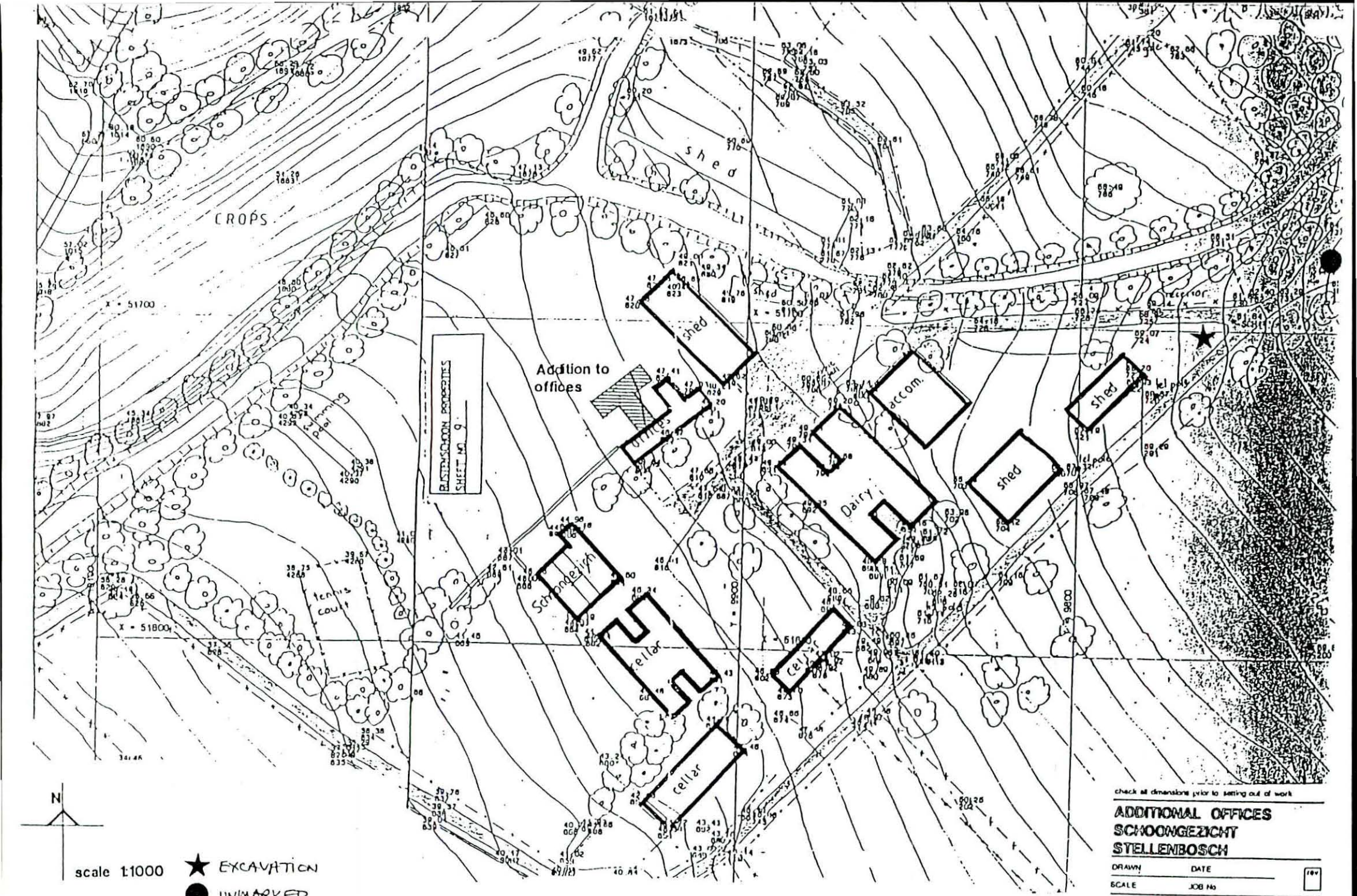


Fig 2. Plan of the site and location of the excavation and undisturbed grave site.

Fig 3. General view of the site looking South West.

Fig. 4. General view of the site looking North East and location of undisturbed graves.

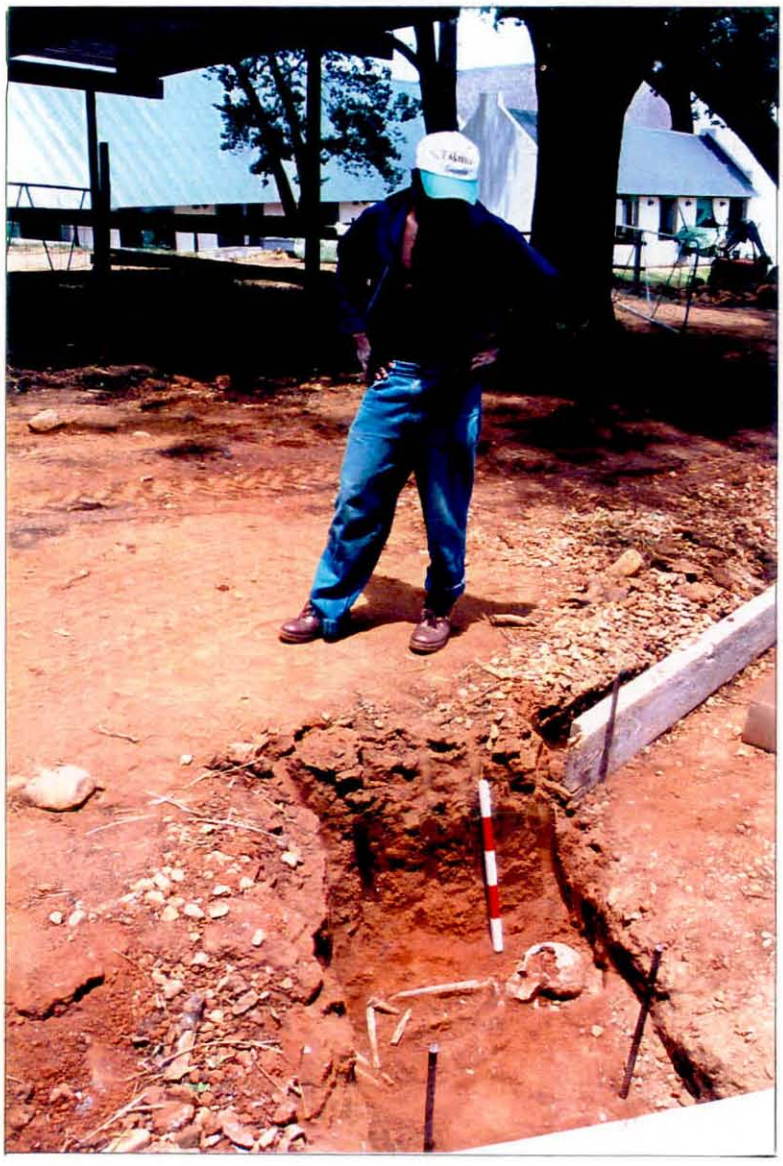


Fig 5. Mechanical excavation of the historic burial.

Fig 6. Fully extended burial facing North East at 60 cms. Note insitu charred vine root in South West section.

The area was surveyed on foot, but no obvious signs of head, foot stones, cairns or exposed human remains was noted. The surface of the site is composed of red soil with compacted stones from the table mountain sandstone series. The remains of an old oak trunk and the gnarled roots of the tree are entwined in the partially exposed stones of the survey area.

6. Forensic Analysis

Laboratory preparation

On examination the state of preservation of the skeletal remains is consistent with a grave in damp clay soil conditions. When the remains were unpacked in the laboratory it was found that they were waterlogged. The bones were extremely friable and crumbled at the touch. Each bone, or cluster of bones held together by soil, was exposed to the air for the period of one week in order to allow the specimens to dry out. The condition of the dry bone was much improved in comparison to their state when wet and this enabled each specimen to be completely cleaned of adhering soil[3].

The skeleton is more or less complete although few bones are in good condition due to the poor soil preservation. The cranium and mandible are complete (Vide Fig. 7a,b). The right arm, damaged at exposure, is missing as are most of the bones of the hand. The bones of the trunk are especially poorly preserved. The sternum and adjacent medial clavicles are crumbled beyond recognition as are most of the vertebral bodies. Preservation of the vertebral arches is much better, although all of the lower (C4-7) cervical vertebra have been lost. The bones of the feet distal to the tarsals were not recovered[3].

Two areas of damage are evident from the mode of discovery. The left side of the skull at the temporal region is broken and fresh scrape marks can be seen in the vicinity. This damage is consistent with shovel excavation. Of the post-cranial bones, further excavation damage is present on the right arm. The upper humerus has been broken into fragments. The fresh nature of these breaks indicates that this was done at excavation as the broken surfaces show no sign of the soil discolouration. The loss of the lower cervical vertebrae most likely occurred when the cranium was removed by the police prior to excavation[3].

Estimation of Gender

All osteological features indicate that this was the skeleton of a man. The skull has a large mastoid with strong muscular attachments and the mandible has substantial chin development (vide appendix 1). Most distinctive is the narrow sciatic notch of the pelvis (vide appendix 2)[3].

Estimation of Age

Poor preservation prevents the use of most of the standard age estimation techniques. The pubic symphysis and iliac auricular surfaces are badly eroded. The medial condyle of the clavicle is lost and the rib ends are badly eroded. All long bone epiphyses are united and the third molars are fully erupted, (vide Fig 8a), both

3. *Morris, A 1999. Report on the Skeleton from a grave at Schoongezicht, Stellenbosch, Department of Anatomy, University of Cape Town.*

indicating an adult status. All cranial sutures are open (vide Fig. 7b). Although this cannot be used to confirm the youth of the individual, open sutures are generally indicative of individuals in their 20's and 30's as progressive obliteration of the sutures usually starts in the 5th decade of life. The teeth demonstrate moderate wear. Taking the few ageing features that are available, best estimation of age at death is somewhere in the 30's[3].

Population Affinity

The cranial features of this individual are strongly suggestive of a European ancestry. The mid-face is generally narrow with strongly angled and projecting nasal bones. the lower face is also narrow with a deep palate. The anterior nasal spine is damaged.

Comparisons to the ranges of variation for the facial and nasal indices and raw values for palatal depth (Vide Fig. 9) show how the face of the Schoongezicht specimen falls well within the range of European Caucasoid individuals. Although this cannot be taken a conclusive evidence that the individual was European in origin, it does indicate that a substantial amount of his genetic background was from that part of the world[3].

Health and Individual Variation

There are no obvious signs of disease on the skeleton. The teeth and gums were healthy although there was some incisor crowding in the mandible. The lower right canine, as well as three upper incisors were lost ante-mortem (Vide Fig. 8b). Disease is unlikely to have been the cause of the tooth loss as all of the other teeth are healthy and molars usually become diseased before the incisors. The individual may have had the incisors removed, a practice seen in the Western Cape in the 20th century but this is also unlikely as the right central incisor had been present after the other teeth had been lost. The most likely explanation is that these teeth have been lost due to accidental trauma.

The upper limbs of this individual are very robust (vide appendix 2), especially in the diameter of the clavicle. This indicates that the individual had prominent upper limb musculature. An interesting but relatively unimportant anomaly is the lumbarisation of the 12th thoracic vertebrae. This occurs in under 5% of humans and has no clinical or functional significance. The reconstructed stature from the maximum length of the right femur and left tibia is as follows: 1.26 (47.2 + 38.9) + 67.09 = 175.58 cm. This is based on the formula from Trotter & Glesser (1952, 1958) for American white males[3].

7. Conclusions

The phase one archaeological survey at Schoongezicht leads to the following conclusions.

1. The grave is the site of a historic burial. The skeletal remains were buried in the 'Christian' tradition facing north east.

Fig 7a. Frontal view of the skull

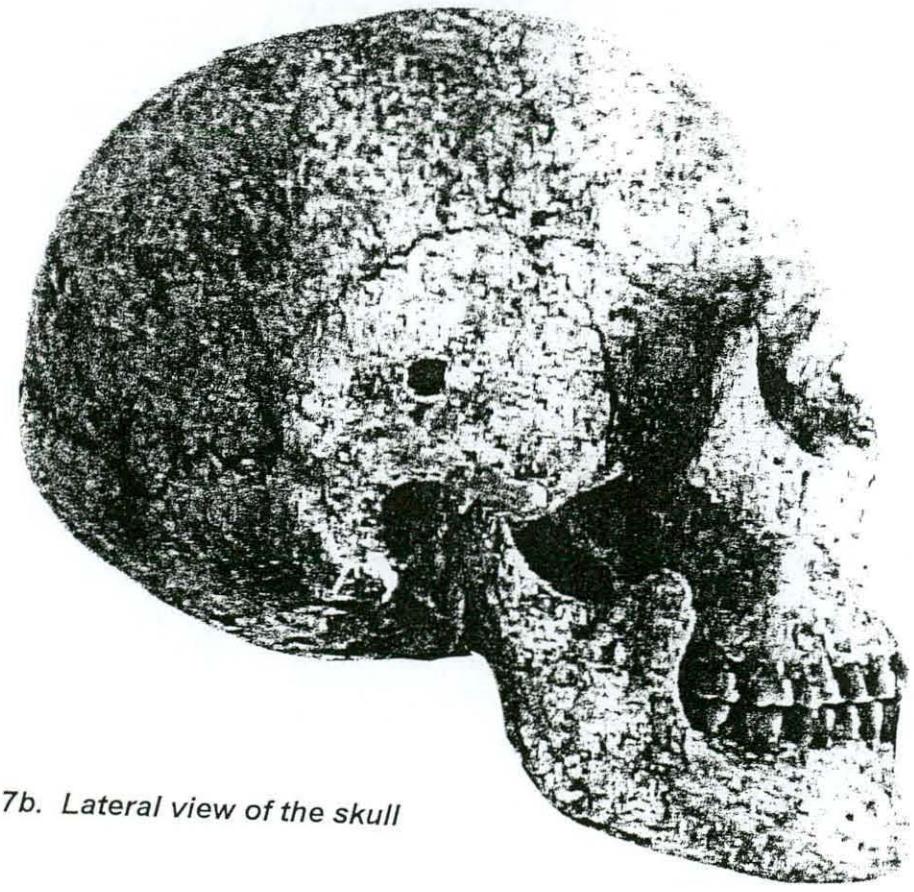


Fig 7b. Lateral view of the skull

Fig 8a. Lower mandible showing erupted third molars

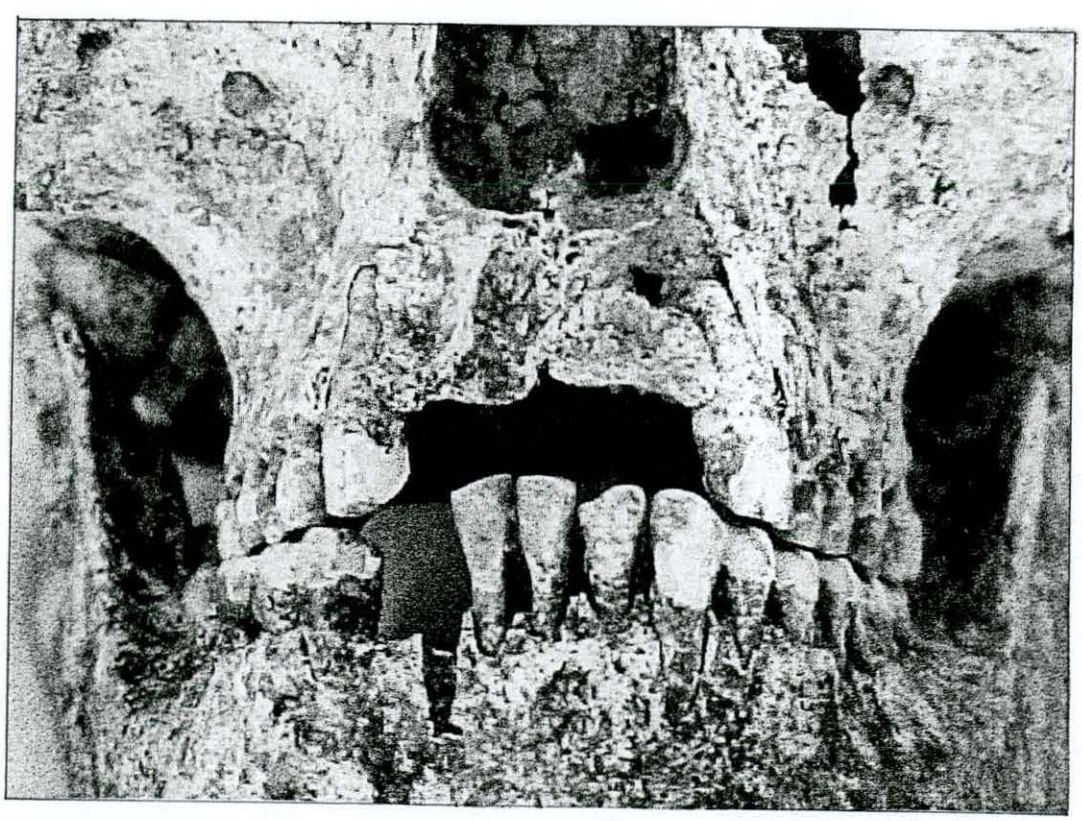
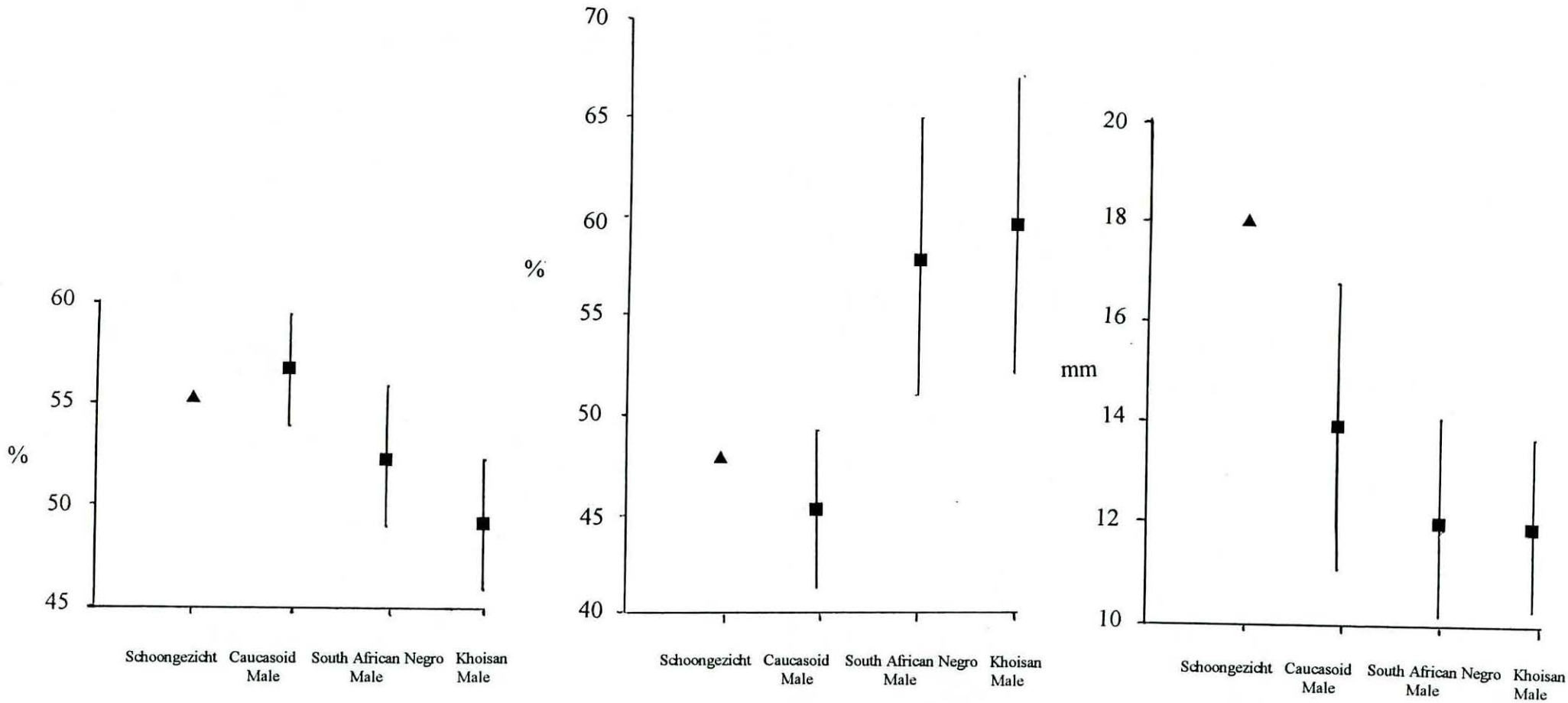


Fig 8b. Frontal view of the maxilla and mandible showing missing incisors and lower right canine.



Facial Index
(Upper Facial Height / Bizygomatic Breadth)

Nasal Index
(Nasal Height / Nasal Breadth)

Palatal Depth
(raw values in millimetres)

Fig 9. Osteometric measurements indicating the Schoongezicht cranial indices in relation to other population groups.

2. The cultural material recovered from this excavation complements the existing historical documentation. The two buttons recovered from the grave can be dated to approximately 1823. The charred insitu vine stump can be dated to approximately 1892, when the land was cleared of vines due to the phylloxera epidemic, thus placing the burial between 1823 and 1892.

3. The oral informant's information suggests that the area lying north east of the excavation is potentially sensitive and that additional unmarked graves may be lying close to the surface of the contemporary roads marked in Figs 2 - 3.

4. Forensic analysis of the skeletal remains suggests a 30 year old male of possible European ancestry. This is consistent with the oral history of the farm when in the late 1800's early 1900's, Bywoner or tenants, did odd jobs around the farm in return for accommodation (Barlow personal communication).

8. Recommendations

1. Submit a copy of this report to the National Monuments Council for their perusal and await their recommendations.

2. Consider the oral informant's information as part of the oral history and tradition of the estate and designate the proposed unmarked grave site as culturally sensitive. A management plan to restrict access over this land should be devised.

3. Commission an archaeologist to be on site during all construction activities, particularly land clearing and trenching in the vicinity of the proposed unmarked grave site.

9. Investigation Team

Consultant	Ms Mary Patrick
Archaeology	Ms Mary Patrick
Forensic Analysis	Prof. Alan Morris
Report preparation	Ms Mary Patrick
	Prof. Alan Morris
	Mrs Leah Borkowf

10. Acknowledgements

Mr Simon Barlow, Schoongezicht, who commissioned this project and for his co-operation and assistance

Site Plans	Mr Raymond Bouma, Naude & Bouma Architects, Stellenbosch
Oral History	Mr Farson Munba, Schoongezicht, Stellenbosch
Artefact Analysis	Mr Hennie Vos, Cultural History Museum, Stellenbosch
& Site Photographs,	
Forensic Analysis	Professor Alan Morris, Department of Anatomy, UCT

SPECIMEN NO. _____ POPULATION _____

CATALOGUE NO. _____ SUB-POPULATION Schoongezicht

SEX ♂

AGE 30's

CRANIAL MEASUREMENTS

1.	Max. Cran. L.	185.0	22.	Inner Bi-orb. B.	97.0
2.	Max. Cran. B.	138.0	23.	Outer Bi-orb. B.	103.0
3.	Basibreg. H.	136.0	24.	Interorb. B. (D)	19.0
4.	Bistephanic B.	110.0	25.	Interorb. B. (M-F)	18.0
5.	Biasterionic B.	105.6	26.	Orbital Breadth	42.0
6.	Nasion-basion L.	102.0	27.	Orbital Height	35.0
7.	Pros.-basion L.	97.0 est	28.	Nasal Height	50.0
8.	Fr. Sag. Arc (N)	136.0	29.	Nasal Breadth	24.0
9.	Par. Sag. Arc	129.0	30.	Least Nasal B.	8.0
10.	Occ. Sag. Arc	113.0	31.	Max-alveolar L.	52.0 est
11.	Transverse Arc	315.0 min	32.	Max-alveolar B.	66.0
12.	Fr. Sag. Chord (N)	119.0	33.	Palatal Length	46.0
13.	Par. Sag. Chord	113.0	34.	Palatal Breadth	37.0
14.	Occ. Sag. Chord	94.0	35.	Palatal Height	18.0
15.	Foramen Mag. L.	38.0	36.	Nasion-breg. Sub.	27.0
16.	Foramen Mag. B.	32.0	37.	Nasion Sub. Frac.	52.0
17.	Mastoid Height	27.0	38.	Bimaxillary B.	89.0
18.	Least Frontal B.	92.0	39.	Bimaxillary Sub.	21.0
19.	Bizygomatic B.	122.0 est	40.	Bifrontal B.	98.0
20.	U. Facial H.	68.0	41.	Naso-frontal Sub.	19.0
21.	T. Facial H.	116.0			

Notes: _____

Appendix 1. Cranial measurements of the Schoongezicht skeleton.

MANDIBULAR MEASUREMENTS

1.	Max.B.outside Condyles	117.0 est	11.	Corpus Width at P1	11.5
2.	Bicoronoidal Breadth	92.0	12.	Corpus Width at M2	16.0
3.	Bigonial Breadth	93.0	13.	Proj. Max. L. Mandible	108.0
4.	B. at Mental Foramen	45.0	14.	Proj. H. Left Ramus	60.0 rt
5.	Max. L. Left Condyle	19.0 rt	15.	Proj. H. Left Coronoid	59.0 rt
6.	Max. B. Left Condyle	10.0 rt	16.	Proj. L. Corpus	~~15~~.0
7.	Min. width Left Ramus	35.0 rt	17.	Mandibular Angle	124.0 rt
8.	Molar-premolar Chord	27.0	18.	Cond-Cor./Ramus Angle	53.0 rt.
9.	Symphyseal Height	30.0	19.	Sigmoid Notch Sub.	12.0 rt.
10.	Corpus Height at M2	29.0			

Notes:

LONG BONE LENGTHS (estimated)

	Max.	Physiol.
right femur	472	470
left tibia	389	368

Appendix 2. Cranial and long bone measurements of the Schoongezicht skeleton.