

ArchSoc News



January 2018

SA Archaeological Society, Northern Branch

P O Box 41050, Craighall, Johannesburg, 2024

PROGRAMME 2018

Confirmed Lectures and Excursions

15 Feb	Suikerbosrand Developments Lecture by Prof. Karim Sadr
25 Feb Sunday	Cullinan Tour
15 March	Hermannsburg Mission Lecture by Dr Udo Küsel
25 March Sunday	Little Foot Outing by Prof. Ron Clarke
5 April	Gestoptefontein Rock Engravings Lecture by Jeremy Hollmann
22 April Sunday	Redan Rock Engravings and the Vaal Teknorama Museum
15-17 June	Weekend at Verlorenkloof Outing by Peter Delius

Membership Renewals Now Due

Membership renewal invoices have been posted. Please renew your membership by 28 February:

Ordinary Member (Single) – R305; Joint or Family – R325; Junior Member – R210 (Discount of R95)

Please deposit the membership fee direct to the SA Archaeological Society, Standard Bank, Cape Town 025009, account number 07 051 0121.

Please avoid making cash or cheque deposits as these incur considerable bank fees. Credit card facilities are now available. Please add your name and membership number and **email proof of payment to archsoc@iziko.org.za, or fax-to-email 0866 155 874.** If paying by direct deposit, please ensure that **your name appears as a reference on the beneficiary bank statement.** If unavoidable, **post your cheque** to The Secretary, South African Archaeological Society, Box 15700, Vlaeberg, 8018.

Suikerbosrand: A Pre-colonial Tswana City between Johannesburg and the river Vaal **Prof. Karim Sadr**

Date: **Thursday**, 15 February 2018

Venue: The auditorium, Roedean School,
35 Princess of Wales Terrace, Parktown

Time: 19:30

Charge: Non-members: R30, members: free

SKBR is the archaeologist's abbreviation that designates a dense agglomeration of stone-walled structures in the western foothills of the Suikerbosrand massif, some 60 KM south of Johannesburg. The hundreds of Molokwane-style homesteads, large livestock enclosures, monumental ash-heaps, stone towers and other impressive architectural features attest to the economic wealth and political importance of this pre-colonial city during its classic phase of occupation. It is possible that parts of SKBR were still inhabited when the first European settlers reached this area in the mid-1800s. This presentation provides an overview of the research in progress at SKBR, and introduces the site through a brief description of its settlement pattern and the principal features of its built environment. A decade or two of further field work are needed to fully decipher the history of this pre-colonial African city.

Karim Sadr teaches archaeology at Wits University and since 2010 has been mapping the distribution of Iron Age stone walled structures in the southern half of Gauteng Province by using Google Earth satellite imagery. He is interested in the spatial organization of pre-colonial societies on the highveld.

National website: www.archaeologysa.co.za

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LITTLE FOOT UNVEILED

Tour by Prof. Ron Clarke

Date: **Saturday**, 25 March 2018 **Time:** 10:00 for 10.30

Meet at: Café Fino, Origins Centre

Parking: Wits University

Charge: Non-members: R70, members: R40

Note that numbers of members for this visit are limited to an absolute maximum of 48 people, owing to the size of the room in which we will view the skeleton.

Professor Ronald Clark will show us the fossilized skeleton of Little Foot, the most complete skeleton of an *Australopithecus* older than 1.5 million years ever found. He will tell us why he believes Little Foot (*Australopithecus Prometheus*) differs from other forms of *Australopithecus*.

Ronald Clarke is an honorary professor in Palaeoanthropology in the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand Medical School. For many years he directed the excavations of the Sterkfontein caves, and his prime responsibility now in retirement is the preparation and publication of the Little Foot skeleton. Ron was born in Wokingham, England and in 1963 qualified in Conservation of Antiquities at the London University Institute of Archaeology. From then until 1969, he worked as Archaeological and Palaeontological Assistant to Dr Louis Leakey at the Centre for Prehistory in Nairobi, Kenya. Clarke received his BSc Honours in Anthropology at London University, followed by his PhD at Wits, completed in 1977, supervised by Prof. Phillip Tobias. Clarke was responsible for most of the excavation and casting of the 3.6 million-year-old *Australopithecus* footprint trail at Laetoli, Tanzania. In 1994 and 1997, he discovered in boxes at Sterkfontein the previously unrecognized *Australopithecus* foot and leg bones of the kind of foot that would have made the Laetoli prints. This led to the discovery of the 3.67 million-year-old *Australopithecus* skeleton in the Sterkfontein caves. Clarke has developed an international reputation for his skill and has held positions at the old Transvaal Museum and the National Museum in Bloemfontein, South Africa, the

AFRICA CALLING –

A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE HERMANNSBURG MISSION AND ITS DESCENDANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Dr Udo Küsel

Date: **Thursday**, 15 March 2018 **Time:** 19:30

Venue: The auditorium, Roedean School,
35 Princess of Wales Terrace, Parktown, Johannesburg

Charge: Non-members: R30, members: free

The Hermannsburg Mission was established in the mid-19th century in the small town of Hermannsburg in Germany by a Lutheran pastor, Ludwig 'Louis' Harms. Young men were trained as missionaries. The first group was sent out in 1854 but was refused entry to the East Coast of Africa by the Muslims who controlled the coast. Disappointed they returned to Durban and decided to work with the Zulu people. They established their headquarters north of Pietermaritzburg and called it Hermannsburg. They worked amongst the Zulu people but were soon invited by the Transvaal Republic to also work with the Tswana people.

Africa Calling is a comprehensive book on the history and dedication of the Hermannsburg Mission and its descendants in South Africa. It is the life stories of these people who had answered the call to bring Christianity to the people of Africa. This book is the stories of faith, dedication, hardship and endurance of the Lutheran Germans and their adaptation to a new life in Africa – their new homeland. The Germans lived together with the Boers as pioneers in Natal and Transvaal. They made a great contribution to education and built schools and trained teachers. In the Transvaal, they helped numerous Tswana tribes to obtain land. Most of them became farmers.

Dr. Udo S. Küsel was born in Paulpietersburg to German parents. He worked at the City Council of Pretoria and studied part time at the University of Pretoria where he obtained a BA degree majoring in Anthropology, Archaeology and Indigenous Law. He holds a Masters degree in Archaeology and a D.Phil. in Cultural History. He worked as an Archaeologist at the National Museum in Bloemfontein and the Cultural History Museum in Pretoria. He established his own company African Heritage Consultants cc.

GESTOPTEFONTEIN ROCK ENGRAVINGS

Dr Jeremy Hollmann

Date: **Thursday**, 5 April 2018 *Time:* 19:30
Venue: The auditorium, Roedean School, 35 Princess of Wales Terrace, Parktown
Charge: Non-members: R30, members: free

The rock art sites on the farms Gestoptefontein and Driekuul, in South Africa's North West Province, are well-known in rock art literature, but until now their content, context and significance have not been explored in depth. The two best-known rock art sites are part of a much larger complex of marked outcrops in a landscape that oral traditions imbue with significance. The location and characteristics of these places are discussed, as well as the damage that mining and unsystematic collection of rock art has inflicted on them since the late 19th century. The rock art comprises recognisable motifs of clothing, ornaments, anthropo- and zoomorphs, as well as anthropogenic 'gestural' markings, including rock slides. Several factors – the rock art, local beliefs about a large water snake, Khoe-San ethnography – suggest that the ceremonies concerned female initiation and the celebration of womanhood.

Jeremy Hollmann is an independent specialist in southern African rock art. He is an NRF rated scientist and has worked at the Rock Art Research Institute (Wits University) and the KwaZulu-Natal Museum. He has published several papers on southern African rock art and two books.

BOOKING CONDITIONS FOR OUTINGS

Only participants who have been confirmed by phone, SMS or e-mail may participate in an outing. The costs of all outings must be prepaid. These stricter measures are necessary as the number of participants on outings usually needs to be limited; people who book but fail to arrive prejudice those on the waiting list.

Please deposit the fee in the BRANCH account, NOT in the Cape Town membership account.

SA Archaeological Society, [Standard Bank](#), Rosebank branch [004305 account number 001 945 920](#) (*Jan Smuts branch has closed and merged with Rosebank*). Please state the EVENT followed by your SURNAME as reference. Send deposit slip to Anne Raeburn e-mail anner@mweb.co.za tel. Cell: 083 455 4151. When paying by cash or cheque, please add R20 for bank fees.

REDAN ROCK ENGRAVINGS AND THE VAAL TEKNORAMA MUSEUM, VEREENIGING

Outing with recommended guide

Date: Sunday, 22 April 2018

Details regarding the charge, venue and time will be announced closer to the date.

The Redan rock engravings represent the only major site of its kind in the Gauteng Province. Over 270 images have been engraved into the sandstone at the site. While some images are clearly animals, most are abstract geometrics. Each image is unique. The engravings have not been analysed previously and are not dated. However, comparable engravings around Kimberley have been found to date to between 150 and 8400 years ago. Placing the Redan engravings into a historic-cultural context required reviewing all that is known about the people of the area in both historic and prehistoric times. This was complicated by the lack of past research on the area, and resources for the study. During the period in question many indigenous groups lived in the southern Highveld periodically. During the Difaqane, missionaries made their first forays across the Vaal River, starting in 1823. They recorded encounters with a variety of ethnic and cultural groupings. Prominent among these groups were the Korana, a Khoekhoe group. A guide from the Vaal Teknorama museum will take us to see the site.

VERLORENKLOOF LONG WEEKEND EXCURSION

Outing with historian Peter Delius, farm owner Eric Johnson and Verlorenkloof guide Joseph Mothupi, for a special weekend of discovery in the “Forgotten World: The Stone Walled Settlements of the Mpumalanga Escarpment”

Date: 15th (Friday)-17th (Monday) June 2018

Meet at: Verlorenkloof

Details regarding the meeting time and programme details will be announced closer to the date.

Booking is essential: Booking opens Monday 19 March 2018.

Contact Anne Raeburn; Email anner@mweb.co.za / tel. 083 455-4151

Verlorenkloof Estate is home to a rich archaeological legacy. It lies at the epicentre of an extensive complex of the remains of Late Iron Age stone structures stretching along the escarpment from Carolina to Ohrigstad. These structures include stone-walled homesteads, livestock pens, cattle tracks and terraces.

In oral histories recorded in the early twentieth century the area was known as Bokoni – the country of the Koni people. Bokoni society lasted for approximately 500 years, and underwent a series of transformations.

Verlorenkloof Estate has over 120 recorded archaeological sites. These include terraces and open-air stone-walled sites in use when the Bokoni economy focussed on intensive agricultural production.

Verlorenkloof Estate was developed by Eric and Heidi Johnson, whose family has owned and farmed property in the area since 1970. The Estate has been actively involved over the past 14 years in developing and researching its archaeological heritage.

Peter Delius, formerly a Professor of History at the University of Witwatersrand, has published widely on the history of the Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces. From 2005 to 2009 he led the Mpumalanga History and Heritage Project that gave rise to two books - Mpumalanga; History and Heritage (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007) and (with M. Hay) Mpumalanga: An Illustrated History (Highveld Press 2009). During this research, he became intrigued by the stone-walled structures that cover the Mpumalanga Escarpment. This led to major research projects with Alex Schoeman and Tim Maggs, and to numerous publications of which the most comprehensive is ‘Forgotten World: The Stone-Walled Settlements of the Mpumalanga Escarpment’ (Wits University Press, 2014). This book has also been translated (2017) into Afrikaans and Sepedi. Peter Delius also co-produced and co-wrote the documentary ‘Forgotten World’ on the rise and fall of Bokoni.