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ARTEFACTS

Reports covering the period February to December 2017

EVENING LECTURES

Darwin's hunch: science, race and the search for human origins

(16 February 2017)

Christa Kuljian, Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research

The subject of this lecture came from Christa Kuljian's book of the same title, published by Jacana in 2016. The book, which is aimed at a public readership, had its roots in studies that the author did with palaeontologist Stephen Jay Gould at Harvard in the 1980s. It takes the reader through the history of palaeontology and the scientific search for human origins. It begins with Darwin's famous statement, made in 1871 in his book *The Ascent of Man*, that the human species had probably evolved in Africa, and carries the story through to the public unveiling of *Homo naledi* in a carefully-staged ceremony at Maropeng in the Cradle of Humankind in 2015.

Christa Kuljian's lecture followed broadly the same story. Framing the chronological narrative was her argument that, contrary to popular belief, and contrary to what many scientists in the field like to claim, research done by palaeontologists is in many ways directly shaped by the social and political contexts within which they work. Thus, the research done on fossil remains from the 1920s onward by Raymond Dart, to whom Kuljian gave a lot of attention both in her book and in her lecture, was directly influenced by the practice of contemporary anatomists and anthropologists to make detailed measurements of living Bushmen from the Kalahari in their search for 'pure' racial types.

Dart's successor in the Chair of Anatomy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Philip Tobias, began his career in the 1940s and 1950s with a similar concern with physical typology. Later, as resistance to the policies of apartheid began to mount inside and outside South Africa, numbers of researchers in the country, with Tobias as one of the leading lights, shifted decisively away from using racial analogies in their work on fossils. More recently still, in an intellectual climate that rejects theorising based on supposed racial differences, palaeontologists have shifted their focus to highlight the common origins of humankind in ancestors who lived in Africa.

Christa Kuljian managed to pack an absorbing account, accompanied by well-chosen illustrations, of a century and a half of palaeontological research into a 45-minute lecture. It was followed by a lively discussion. That the lecture venue was virtually full reflects the ongoing fascination that the story of human ancestry holds for members of the Archaeology Society.

Report by John Wright

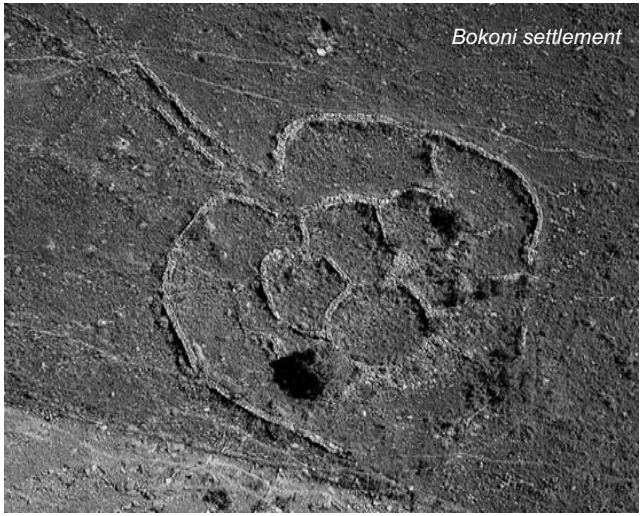
The story of an African farmscape: soils, climate change and farming innovations in Bokoni

(16 March 2017)

Dr Alex Schoeman, School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand

The Bokoni polity flourished on the escarpment between Carolina and Orighstad in Mpumalanga from the 16th to the 19th centuries. The only signs today of this once-vibrant community are widespread remains of stone-built homesteads, livestock pens, agricultural terraces and roadways. Dr Alex Schoeman's talk was on the possible effects of climate change on the history of Bokoni. The archaeological evidence suggests that there were four phases of settlement in this region, which covers an area of about 25 000 km^2. Phase 1 dates from the 16th and 17th centuries. Occupation of the region seems to have been continuous but haphazard. Settlements were sited in open, potentially vulnerable territory that would have been difficult to defend, which indicates that these were politically stable times.

Phase 2 dates from the 17th to the mid-18th centuries, when more formal homesteads with livestock enclosures were erected. The region was densely populated and intensively farmed. Phase 3 dates from the mid-18th to the mid-19th centuries. The evidence shows that a major shift in the typical living arrangements took place. People moved from the more fertile plains into the surrounding mountains, kloofs and ravines, and built dwelling places that can be seen as refugia. Refugia were easier to defend but more difficult to farm: this indicates that it was a time of political upheaval. Phase 4 dates from the mid-19th century onwards. During this time the Bokoni polity disintegrated. Many of the inhabitants seem to have become workers on Boer-owned farms in the



Bokoni settlement

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Bokoni terracing

Lydenburg region and to have integrated with other groups.

Alex Schoeman argued that phases 1 and 2 were reasonably stable, both politically and environmentally. She explained that changes in rainfall affected the way the land was used. In a good rainy season, farmers expanded into marginal regions, which they abandoned in times of drought. They managed stresses by relying on their social networks to help care for livestock, splitting their herds and sending a portion to more favourable areas. They also planted seeds with a shorter growing season, and traded with neighbouring groups. Although the move to refugia in Phase 3 was undoubtedly because of violent political upheaval in the region, Alex's aim had been to investigate whether climate change could have been a contributing factor. Kloofs are difficult to farm because the soils are poor and the number of hours of sunlight is limited. This restricts the type of crops that can be grown successfully. The study found that soils that were likely to develop into clays were chosen for agriculture and that they were enriched by the addition of refuse generated at farmers' settlements. As a result, no middens are associated with these settlements, and pot shards and other artefacts can be found when excavating the terraced slopes.

Growth rings from two dead trees were used in the study to determine how rainfall varied with time. The trees, an African almond and a cheesewood, provided rainfall information for a 200-year period. Since the rings correlated with tree rings on an 800-year-old baobab from Limpopo, it was possible to work out weather patterns in the Bokoni region for a longer period. Rainfall was consistently high until the beginning of the 18th century, but the 1820 to 1840 period was one of often severe drought. From 1850 onward rainfall improved, but it never reached the pre-1800 levels. This data provides support for the notion that the stress of a prolonged drought was probably a contributing factor for the violent political upheavals of the period as neighbouring tribes were likely to have been raiding the region.

After a period of stress as seen in Phase 3, people usually resumed their previous way of life, but this did not happen with the Bokoni. Their leader Marangrang is known to have adopted the practise of surviving by raiding neighbouring groups. Ultimately, he lost his territory to the Boers. His people were subsumed into neighbouring groups and lost their separate identity.

Report by Louise Mckechnie

The concentration camps of the South African War (6 April 2017)

Dr Elizabeth van Heyningen, Department of Historical Studies, University of Cape Town

Dr Elizabeth van Heyningen, an honorary research associate in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town, has done intensive research on the concentration camps that were set up by the British during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902. She has published a book containing her findings, much of which has been a revelation and, in part, controversial. She demonstrated that, surprisingly, very little thorough academic research and writing has been devoted to the topic. Even less has been known or written about the 'black camps', which were more numerous than the 'white camps'. South Africans do not have a 'shared history' and a great many people are unaware of the appalling experiences suffered by the occupants of the camps. For many Afrikaners, these experiences form part of a sacred history. This has had the effect of creating myths regarding some aspects of life in the camps and has developed a 'paradigm of suffering' for Afrikaner people. The camps became a subject of political propaganda, which discouraged robust academic research.

Emily Hobhouse, whose reports were aimed at the British ruling classes, focussed her attention on the better-off and literate Boers, whereas most of the inmates were poor peasant people and bywoners. The most significant aspect of the tragedy was the high proportion of child deaths; of some 28 000 deaths recorded, 22 000 were of children. Herein lies the cause of much misunderstanding. Hobhouse established that the main cause of child deaths was measles and its consequences. The British authorities, in an attempt to shift blame, claimed that poor sanitation practices on the part of Boer women were the cause. According to Dr van Heyningen, this was not so. The prevalence of measles was due to malnutrition and poor accommodation, which can be attributed to the poor planning and administration of the camps. The camps were set out in strict military style – perfectly straight rows of tents and squares – whereas the inmates, coming from poor farms, would have wanted to be in close family groups. Elizabeth van Heyningen explained that the poor in Britain in the late 19th century were suffering similar disabilities, exacerbated by the passing of a Poor Law that discouraged handouts. This created an attitude of what she described as the parsimony of poor relief. The British camp doctors were unable to correctly diagnose the real causes of children's deaths and found a convenient excuse in poor sanitation practices.

Unfortunately, very few records exist about the black camps. The sites are no longer identifiable, although some cemeteries remain to mark them. It is known that the men were a convenient source of labour for the British administration. Less known is that about a third of the occupants of the white camps were young men who were put to work in the camps. It is only in recent years that an attempt has been made to uncover the experience of black people in the camps.

Report by John McManus

Homesteads, pots and marriage in south-east southern Africa (25 May 2017)

Gavin Whitelaw, archaeologist, KwaZulu-Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg

Gavin Whitelaw came up from Pietermaritzburg to give the lecture at the Annual General Meeting of the Northern Branch. He spoke briefly about his recent work at Ntshekane near Muden in the Greytown area, describing deep pits filled with artefacts that had provided new insights into life in African farming communities around 1 000 years ago. The finds include tiny blue and blue-green glass beads imported into southern Africa via the Indian Ocean trade network. The glass itself probably came from Iran, but it was not yet known where the beads were made. The bead traders may have exchanged their goods for elephant ivory. Chiefs in the area kept a tight control on the hunting of elephants and the distribution of ivory, partly because of its trade value. Several pits contained pottery that indicated interaction between farming groups

speaking different languages. One of these languages belonged to the Nguni cluster while another spoken by the Ntshekane community resembled an early form of Shona. The interaction possibly included marriage, with Nguni-speaking women marrying into the Ntshekane community.

Gavin then considered the nature of marriage in the Ntshekane community and compared it to marriage in a more recent period, called Moor Park, between 700 and 300 years ago, whose people also spoke a language of the Nguni cluster. Linking fragmented artefacts to marriage practice is not straightforward. Gavin's approach combined ethnographic and historical information with the archaeological evidence of decorated pots, the details of homestead plans, rubbish disposal patterns, and the relationship between sites and arable soil. He concluded that both Ntshekane and Moor Park people practised *ilobolo*, the exchange of cattle for wives, and exogamy, which entailed not marrying close relatives. Bride wealth for wives was of high importance in the Ntshekane period, as typically a brother would use the cattle obtained by his sister for marriage as bride wealth for his own marriage. The system established strong and widespread alliances between homesteads as cattle moved in one direction and women in the other. These alliances must have helped the bead and ivory trade. In the Moor Park period, bride wealth was of low importance and homesteads were more isolated from one another as homestead heads emphasised their independence. They apparently wielded extensive authority over the homesteads, whose inhabitants included wives, children and, in some instances, various unrelated followers.

Gavin said that it was an ambitious interpretation, but one that he believed was necessary if archaeologists were going give life to the archaeological bits and pieces found on site.

Report by Gavin Whitelaw

Archaeology and the Indian Imagination (15 June 2017)

Professor Dilip Menon, Director of the Centre for Indian Studies in Africa, University of the Witwatersrand

In India, as in many other modern societies that have felt the weight of foreign imperialism and colonialism, archaeology is always entangled with nationalist politics, according to Prof. Dilip Menon, who gave this interesting lecture. In addition, he said, it reflected a desire to find proof that Indian civilisation is older than many others, and therefore 'better' because its civilisation has had longer to mature. That was why conceptions of time had been so important in Indian thought about the past. In the classical Hindu system of knowledge, the universe had passed through four ages that spread over several million years. That idea stood in sharp contrast to the long-standing Christian notion that the world was about 6 000 years old. In the early 19th century, the British historian James Mill mocked what he called India's 'pretensions to a remote antiquity'. At this stage, British travellers and writers often described India's past in terms of its picturesque architecture – a land of ruins without people.

It was not until the later 19th century that the Christian view, based on biblical chronology, began giving way to a scientific notion, based on works by the likes of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* and Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. This shift paved the way for the emergence of archaeology in Europe as a discipline concerned with the remote past. In India, the Great Rebellion of 1857 was followed by the transfer of authority from the East India Company to the British imperial government. In 1861, this act of political modernisation was followed by an act of scientific modernisation, with the establishment of the Archaeological Survey in Delhi. Archaeological excavation began to replace ancient religious texts as the basic mode of research into the remote past.

Even before this, Indian intellectuals had begun to participate in the enterprise of uncovering the subcontinent's history. In an earlier phase, indigenous thinkers had shown a strong interest in the origins and spread of Buddhism. From about the mid-19th century, Indian historians and, later, the first Indian archaeologists, began to develop a national Hindu imagination that sought to move beyond the British focus on the activities of the Greeks in India, or the Muslim conquests from about the 1200s onwards, and the 'achievements' of the British in the period of Company rule. By the early 20th century, an archaeology that focused on the political history of Hindu kingdoms alongside Muslim kingdoms was well established.

In the 1920s, a number of dramatic discoveries pushed back the age of Indian urban civilisations, i.e. Harrapa and Moenjadaro, to 2500 BC. News of these discoveries were taken up by the emerging Indian nationalist movement to help shape a narrative of ancient Indian civilisation as having been ground down by European colonialism. After Indian independence in 1947, successive nationalist governments encouraged the development of museums as sites where a real 'Indian' history could be displayed, a history free of Greek influence and Muslim influence. With the rise of Hindu fundamentalism in the 1990s, 'Indian' history more and more came to be aligned with the history of Hinduism. The disciplines of archaeology and history have become caught up in increasingly ugly political conflicts, Prof. Menon concluded.

Report by John Wright, with acknowledgement to Dilip Menon

Rising Star Cave and the discovery of Homo naledi (20 July 2017)

Steven Tucker, Evolutionary Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand

Steven Tucker is a qualified chartered accountant and registered auditor who started exploring caves in 2010 with the Speleological Exploration Club. In 2013 he was part of the team that discovered and mapped Armageddon Cave in the Cradle of Humankind, one of the largest caves in South Africa. A few months later, on 13 September 2013, he and fellow caver Rick Hunter entered an unknown chamber in the Rising Star Cave System. Their explorations took them along the Superman Crawl, up the 12 m Dragon's Back pinnacle and then through a very narrow 12 m crack. On the floor of the chamber they came to they discovered fossilised bones – a skull, jawbones and teeth. They took the fossils to Pedro Boshoff and later that day to Lee Berger, who thought they were of an unknown species.

Berger organised the Rising Star expedition within four weeks. He had six slender young women as excavators because access to the site was so narrow. Steve set up a safety system of ropes, ladders, cables and a video. Four very narrow entrances to the cave provide ventilation, the chamber was very dark and there are no signs of fire. Forty researchers stayed in a camp above ground for three weeks to analyse the finds and watch the excavation. The excavators uncovered an area of 80 cm x 80 cm around the site of the skull and dug down 20 cm into soft sediment. They found over 1 000 fragments of bone, making it the largest-known hominin fossil deposit on the continent of Africa. In 2015, *National Geographic,* which sponsored the excavation, announced the discovery of *Homo naledi* as the newest member of the human family. On display were bones of 15 individuals, ranging in age from new-borns to the elderly. They included a complete hand and foot, and a small 500 cc skull about half the size of present-day human skulls. The fact that the fossils had no bite marks or fractures was considered as possible evidence for deliberate burial. It

also suggested that *Homo naledi* may have been engaging in complex behaviours previously assumed to have been practised only by modern humans. Subsequently, the dating of the bones and the performance of electron spin resonance (ESR) on the teeth of *Homo naledi* showed that they had lived an estimated 230 000 to 330 000 years ago. Adults were 1,5 m tall and weighed 45 kg.

Shortly after the Rising Star expedition, Steven joined the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand full-time as an explorer. He leads a team in surface and sub-surface explorations around the Cradle of Humankind and has assisted with excavations at several sites, including Rising Star and Malapa. ***Report by Hilary Geber***

Bushman Rock Shelter (Pretoria lecture 17 August 2017)

Dr Aurore Val, post-doctoral fellow at the Ditsong National Museum of Natural History (DST/NRF Centre of Excellence in Palaeosciences), Pretoria

To assume that nothing happened in Africa between the evolution of *Homo sapiens* and the development of modern behaviour does not make sense. Key evidence for the evolution of modern behaviour in Africa includes various stone tool complexes (such as the Polokwane complex, which is often associated with the Cave of Hearths). However, there are certain biases that may affect the evidence, such as the differential preservation of various artefacts because of climate and environmental factors.

The Bushman Rock Shelter located in the district of Ohrigstad in the Soutpansberg. This dolomitic cave was originally excavated in the 1970s by a University of Pretoria team lead by Hannes Eloff when, apart from an Iron Age layer, archaeological strata dating from the Middle (MSA) and Later Stone Ages (LSA) interspersed by roof debris were revealed. The mineral and organic remains, well-preserved over a depth of 7 m, are key indicators for tracking the changes in the hunter-gatherer populations spanning at least 200 000 years. This is precisely the period during which the first anatomically modern humans appeared. There appears to be a gap in occupation between the MSA and LSA.

A recent research project at the Bushman Rock Shelter had two aims, namely obtaining a chronological framework for the site and sampling the MSA faunal and botanical remains. The artefacts found consisted mostly of stone tools and beads. The formal tools that were identified were mostly scrapers made from hornfels. These tools were generally used to work animal hides but there is evidence as well that the tools were used against hard animal material as well. Apart from this, two sets of human remains were discovered at the site. ***Report by Hayley Griesel***

Experiences in Anatolia, Mesopotamia and Eastern Turkey (16 November 2017)

Reinoud Boers has served as chairman of the Northern Branch on three occasions and was vice-president of the Archaeological Society from 2012 to 2014

Reinoud Boers gave an illustrated account of a tour the cradle of human development in Anatolia and the upper Mesopotamian Fertile Crescent by 26 ArchSoc members in September 2016. The 'intrepid' group travelled in a part of the world where not only Isis was still a threat – the group was at times just a few kilometres from the Syrian or Iraqi borders – but the conflict between the Anatolia's Kurds and the Turkish state was simmering. Participants were told that tourism in Anatolia was down 80 per cent and that the ArchSoc tour was the first large group to visit south-eastern Turkey in two years. Because of this, the group was kept under close surveillance by police or gendarmes for most of the journey. This was usually unobtrusive, but in the walled city of Diyarbakir, the unofficial capital of Turkish Kurdistan and a focal point of conflict, the police presence was palpable. Only one archaeological site on the Syrian border was could not be visited: Carchemish, where Babylon's Nebuchadnezzar defeated King Necho of Egypt in 605 BC.


Göbekli Tepe

Participants were of course aware of the archaeological and historical richness of Turkey, but even so they were staggered by its depth. At virtually every turn, in every direction, one stumbled across another site, each one evidence of the great swirl of peoples that passed through Anatolia as settlers or invaders from Neolithic times onward. The most fascinating archaeological site visited, in Reinoud's view, was Göbekli Tepe, the world's oldest-known sacred complex constructed by complex hunter-gatherers up to 2 000 years before the start of agriculture. Geophysical surveys of the 15 m high and 300 m diameter hill suggests that it is covered by 52 sacred sites built in two periods. In the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A phase from 9600 BC to 8300 BC circles of massive monolithic T-shaped pillars around 6 m high and weighing up to 20 t, often decorated by superb animal reliefs, were erected inside ovals cut into the bedrock. More than 200 pillars in about 20 circles are known of. In the second Pre-Pottery Neolithic B phase that followed and ended around 7500 BC, the pillars are smaller and were erected in rectangular rooms with floors of polished lime.


Boncuklu Höyük

An equally fascinating site lies on the yellow plains of central Anatolia near Konya, where the remains are found of Çatalhöyük, one of the earliest villages on earth and the largest and best-preserved Neolithic proto-city settlement in Turkey. Occupied between 7400 BC and 5 500 BC, it encompasses around 300 plastered mud-brick homes built in a unique streetless pattern and accessed via their roofs. Excavations over for four seasons in the early 1960s and again from 1993 onwards have revealed home shrines dedicated to a so-called 'Mother Goddess', spectacular interior wall paintings, modelled animal heads protruding from the walls and underfloor burials. The group was privileged to be taken around Çatalhöyük and a thousand-year older site called Boncuklu Höyük by Prof. Douglas Baird of Liverpool University. Boncuklu fills the gap between Çatalhöyük and an even older settlement called Pinobashe, which was inhabited by foragers as far back as 9500 BC. Boncuklu's 50 to 100 residents also plastered and painted their walls. Wheat dating to 8300 BC found at the site attests

to agriculture being practised, although pea and lentil pods indicate gathering as well. A visit later in the tour took participants back to the Neolithic period at the settlement of Çayönü, dating from around 7200 BC to 6600 BC. The significance of this site lies in the hypothesis that pig domestication first began here. What appear to be pig pens are situated next to farmers' homes. The regular cultivation of cereal could also have begun here since the genetically common ancestor of 68 contemporary types of cereal still grow here as wild plants.

Jumping to Roman times, Reinoud then told of the mind-blowing art collection of the Mosaic Museum of Zeugma in Gaziantep, which features a vast collection of exquisite mosaics and frescoes recovered from the Roman city of Zeugma, where a massive rescue operation saved the mosaics from inundation by the rising waters of a huge new reservoir. The mosaic floors and murals include unique renderings of Greek and Greco-Roman mythologies from ancient literature, as well as geometric designs. In one you find yourself in the middle of the Trojan War, in another you are enthralled by a Gypsy girl's piercing eyes. The Zeugma site itself was also visited to look at recent excavations of Roman villas above the waterline. The group was shown around by Dr Ayse Fatma Erol of Ankara University. Founded as a Greek settlement in 300 BC, the rich trading centre was conquered by the Romans in 64 BC. It was abandoned when Sasanians under King Shapur I from Persia sacked the city in 253 AD. Another impressive mosaic museum visited was the newly opened, 10 000 m^2 Edessa Mosaic Museum in Sanliurfa, which contains the mosaics of a Roman villa called Amazon Villa. It main trophy is a 5th to 6th century hunting scene that shows a party of Amazons hunting lions, leopards and wolves. Also in Sanliurfa, the group toured Turkey's biggest and newest Turkish archaeological museum, 200 000 m^2 in extent, which is home to a breath-taking display of objects from Göbekli Tepe and other Neolithic sites, such as the world's oldest intact statue, the 9 000 to 10 000-year-old, life-size 'God of Reproduction' from the Neolithic temple of Balikli Göl.

A display in the Mosaic Museum of Zeugma

A spectacular visit was to the 2 100 m-high Mount Nemrut, a monumental site of the Commagene Kingdom, a small Armenian state founded in 162 BC upon the breakup of Alexander the Great's empire. It was absorbed into the Pax Romana before disappearing into the mists of history in 17 AD. The monumental complex on Mount Nemrut was erected by the fourth king of Commagene, Antiochus I Theos, or the 'God King', who ruled from 70 BC to 36 BC and claimed descent both from Alexander the Great on his mother's side and the Persian King Darius on his father's. He instituted a royal cult in the Greek style with the intention of being worshipped as a god after his death. His sanctuary consists of a pyramid-shaped tomb of stone chips 145 m wide and 50 m high on the top of Mount Nemrod, and monumental terraces on the east and west each featuring five colossal limestone statues flanked by a lion and an eagle as guardians. The statues represent Zeus, Apollo, Tyche, Hercules and, of course, Antiochus himself, but also the Eastern deities of Oromasdes and Mithras to achieve a kind of religious syncretism.

Reinoud then took us on a visual tour of the cities and sites of the tour route. At Malatya, the group explored the huge 30 m high mound of Arslantepe, where between 3900 BC and 3450 BC important public and private buildings were erected, including a large elite residence with decorative columns and white walls painted with red and black geometric motifs. The rich material remains of many civilisations were superimposed on the site. The ancient city of Harran high up in the Fertile Crescent also has 17 occupation levels. As early as the 3rd century BC, Harran's merchants were trading textiles with Ebla in the Levant and the city was sacred to the devotees of the moon-god Sin. Known as Carrhae by the Romans, it was the site of the famous battle at which Emperor Crassus was defeated by the Parthians. Visible today are the ruins of the late 12th century university of the Ayyubid, a zealous Sunni Muslim dynasty of Kurdish origin founded by Saladin.

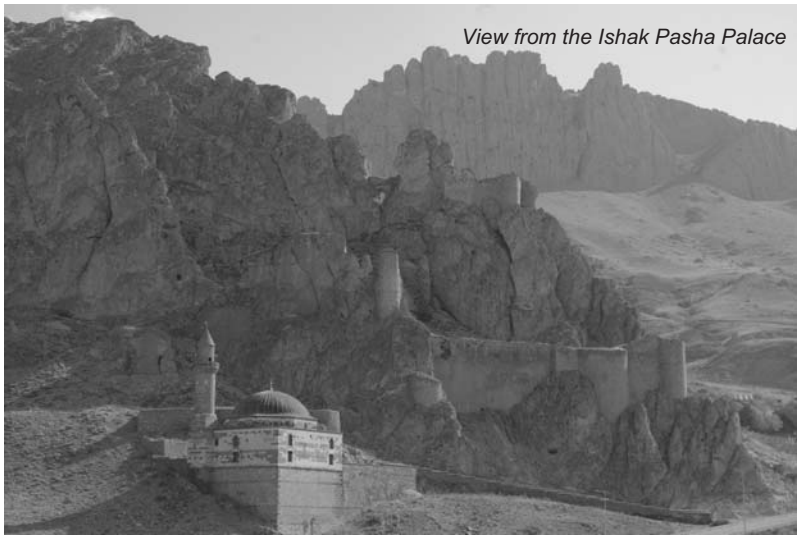
Diyarbakir, situated above the Tigris River and dating to at least 1300 BC, is an early Byzantine citadel called Sur protected by 10 m to 12 m high and 3 m to 5 m thick black basalt walls with 16 keeps and five gates. Here stands the Great Mosque, visibly converted from a church dedicated to St Thomas in 1091. The Dara Anastasioupolis fortified Roman city on the border with Persia was especially interesting for its huge water storage system comprising seven long tanks situated adjacent to one another. The group also explored Tur Abdin, a high plateau sandwiched between the Tigris and the burning flatlands of Mesopotamia, which is the spiritual heartland of the Syrian Orthodox Church. When in 451 AD the members of the church were declared heretics at the Council of Chalcedon and persecuted by the Byzantine authorities, many retreated to Tur Abdin, where over 300 monasteries sprang up and became self-sufficient communities that kept alive Aramaic. Lovely Mor Gabriel, the oldest surviving Syrian Orthodox monastery in the world, founded on the ruins of a temple in 397 AD, housed over a thousand Coptic monks in the 6th century.

The descent to the Tigris valley brings one to atmospheric Hasankyef, where the river passes through a narrow defile. In the records it was already described as a walled city of the Hurrian kingdom 3 800 years ago, long before the Romans built a stronghold here. The buttresses of the old Roman bridge and the beautiful minaret of the 1409 Er-Rizk mosque can still be admired. The town and its many cave dwellings in the surrounding hills are soon be swallowed by the waters of another dam. In Van and its vicinity, the group first came across the ancient Urartuans at some outstanding archaeological sites, namely the 3 000-year-old royal Urartu citadel of Çavuştepe with its temple, palace, a sacrificial altar and an advanced water collection system. Prof. Mehmet Isikli from Ataturk University gave the group a lecture on his findings at the late-Urartian citadel

of Ayanis and accompanied the party to the site overlooking Lake Van. Firmly dated by a temple inscription to 680 BC to 640 BC, the defences, walls of finely dressed andesite blocks and storerooms in the temple precinct are the leading features. Another Van bastion is Hoşap Fortress, the best-preserved Kurdish citadel in Turkey dating to 1643. The group also visited Akdamar island to see a beautiful 10th century Armenian church, the Church of the Holy Cross. Ornate biblical relief work, hunting scenes, and human and animal figures populate the façade, while biblical paintings cover the walls inside. The group's final major archaeological visit was to the site of the substantial Armenian city of Ani near Kars, which had its golden age in the 11th century. Here the group walked through time amidst the substantial ruins of churches, shopping streets, homes, a caravanserai and even a mosque. The metropolis had a population of 100 000 and is said to have had 1 000 churches.

Reinoud closed his talk by relating a few other experiences on the 5 350 km-long journey, from excellent dining to lovely hotels (e.g. a superb cave hotel cut into a cliff); Cappadocia's fantastic geological formations of pyramids and cones called fairy chimneys; the scale of the rock-cut underground complexes – Derinkuyu, likely to have been begun by the Hittites, has an estimated 18 to 20 floors below ground level and housed up to 20 000 people; the original lodge of the Mevlevi Whirling Dervishes, a mystical Sufi Muslim group whose members were seen in action later; the lovely city of Sanliurfa, former Edessa, prophet Abraha's birthplace, with its fish-filled pools and rose gardens; the shattered walls of a spectacularly-positioned Roman fort on the Euphrates river at a site originally settled by the Assyrian king Salamassar III in 885 BC; the beautiful city of Mardin that perches on a bluff overlooking the flatlands of Syria and its lovely Syrian Orthodox Saffron Monastery; the beautiful Malabadi bridge built by the Artuqids in 1146; historical 6 000-year-old Ahlat with its 12th century clusters of superbly decorated gravestones in the Meydan Seljuk cemetery; the 3 050-m-high Mount Nemrut (another Mount Nemrus) caldera with its five crater lakes; the grand 18th century remains of the wonderful Ishak Pasha Palace nestling in a high mountain valley near Doğubeyazit; and the impressive Upper Palaeolithic rock engraving site of Yazilikaya, covered with deer on a 14 m by 4 m wide panel.

Report by Reinoud Boers



View from the Ishak Pasha Palace

Ancient fortified settlements: Frobenius at Mapungubwe, 1928

(21 September 2017)

Dr Justine Wintjes, School of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand

A story about Mapungubwe that has gained wide currency in recent years is that the site was 'discovered' in 1932 by a local farmer named Van Graan. He had heard of a sacred hill on the banks of the Limpopo and succeeded in persuading an African man who lived in the area to take him to it. In 1933, so the story goes, Van Graan brought the site to the attention of Leo Fouche, professor of history at the University of Pretoria, who soon afterwards visited the hill, recognised its archaeological value and began excavations there.

Wider research, as Dr Wintjes tells it, points to a different story. The region round Mapungubwe had been inspected by the government of the South African Republic as early as the 1860s and had been mapped out for farms by the 1890s. Very few farmers actually occupied land there, but a bywoner named Frans Lotrie is alleged to have lived as a hermit near Mapungubwe from the late 1880s until his death in 1917. He seems to have visited the hill a number of times, probably to search for gold artefacts. His son Barend also visited the site. Various other 'outsiders' also found their way to Mapungubwe in the 1920s. One of these was a Johannesburg businessman named Von Leesen, who in 1928 arranged for Barend Lotrie to take an archaeological expedition from Germany, led by Leo Frobenius, to the site. Frobenius was an ethnologist and collector who made 12 long trips across Africa between 1904 and 1938. His ninth expedition took him and eight companions to southern Africa for several months. In October 1928 Frobenius and three other members of his party spent a week at Mapungubwe, excavating, photographing, recording rock art and probably collecting artefacts. From there they moved on to visit archaeological sites in what was then Southern Rhodesia and elsewhere across the region.

Frobenius accumulated a great mass of notes and visual material during his expeditions, which are today lodged in the Frobenius Institute in Frankfurt. Though he published numbers of books, he did not publish his material on Mapungubwe. This came to light quite accidentally when Dr Wintjes was doing research on the Frobenius expedition's work on recording rock art in southern Africa. Frobenius's publications on African history and archaeology were regarded as problematic by other scholars, who largely ignored them. This is one of the main reasons why few researchers have engaged with his unpublished archive. Dr Wintjes's work brings it back into view and, with it, information that scholars like herself find very valuable in providing new insights into how archaeological knowledge in southern Africa has come about.

Report by John Wright, with acknowledgement to Justine Wintjes

Face to face with the Philistines: the excavation of the first known Philistine cemetery, Ashkelon, Israel, 2014-2016 (26 October 2017)

Ruby-Anne Birin, archaeology student, University of the Witwatersrand

The ancient seaport of Ashkelon is situated 64 km south of Tel Aviv on the Mediterranean coast. Since 1985, annual excavations have been conducted there. Ruby-Anne Birin joined the Harvard Summer School in 2015 and participated as a volunteer in 2016.

Dating from the Canaanite era, Ashkelon is the oldest seaport yet discovered in Israel. It was a thriving Middle Bronze Age (2000–1550 BC) metropolis, more than 150 acres in extent, and has

the oldest arched city gate in the world, dating to 1800 BCE. Excavations in the city have uncovered remains from the Philistine era (1175–604 BC). Ashkelon is famous for its association with Samson and Delilah, Goliath and its destruction by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, who burnt it down in 604 BC. Evidence of the successive presence of Phoenicians, Mycenaeans, Greeks, Romans and Crusaders has been found.

Near the end of the 2013 season, Harvard University's Adam Aja, an assistant director of the expedition, met with a retired worker from the Israel Antiquities Authority who claimed that almost two decades earlier he had uncovered human remains roughly 60 cm under the surface near the city's northern edge. Aja had a pit dug there as far down as the digging machine's arm would go. He scrambled into the bucket and was lowered into the pit, where he found bones and a human tooth. Since then, researchers have uncovered the remains of 160 individuals: men, women and a few young children. Most were buried in simple pits, and some in stone-lined chambers, while others were cremated. Many of the dead were laid to rest on their backs and were buried along with personal items such as jewellery and weapons, or with two storage jars, topped with a bowl and a little juglet inside. The Philistines were 'sea people' who migrated to the area in about the 12th century BC. DNA and radiocarbon testing of the bones may help determine where they came from and help establish an accurate picture of what they looked like, and how long they lived.

The largest dog cemetery in the world was discovered at Ashkelon. Archaeologists have excavated the remains of more than 1 400 dogs buried 2 500 years ago. The burials spanned a period of only 80 years. Each dog was carefully positioned by itself, in a shallow pit, with no grave goods. Dogs were placed on their sides, legs flexed with tails tucked round their hind legs, then covered with a mixture of earth and gravel debris. They were not offered as sacrifice and appear to have died of natural causes. About 70 per cent were puppies, while others were old with signs of arthritis and even injuries that had healed, indicating that they had been cared for to some degree.

Report by Hilary Geber

OUTINGS AND EXCURSIONS

The Freedom Park Museum, Pretoria (26 February 2017)

With Badresh Kara, guide at Freedom Park

In 1999 the concept of a park to celebrate South Africa's freedom was mooted by President Mandela. The huge, award-winning building and 52 ha site on the southern edge of Pretoria opposite the Voortrekker Monument is the realisation of his idea. There are two main parts to the park, the large //hapo interpretative centre (from the Khoi proverb, 'A dream is not a dream until it is shared by the entire community') and the memorial garden, which is a social and cultural narrative drawing on myths and legends. After days of rain and poor weather we were fortunate to be able to visit the park on a pleasantly warm and dry day. Our excellent and very knowledgeable guide, Badresh Kara, gave us an introductory talk and then led us through the recently-opened museum, giving an overview of each section as we passed through it.

Seven epochs are celebrated in the //hapo. (1) Earth, where the story of creation is told in terms of African myths. (2) Ancestors, where the concept of the ancestors is explored from a physical and spiritual perspective. (3) Peopling, which deals with preconquest societies. (4) Resistance and colonisation, which gives a very brief history of the forces that gave birth to South Africa. (5) Industrialisation and urbanisation that covers the impact on indigenous society and settlements of the colonial era. (6) Nationalism (both African and Afrikaner) and struggle, dealing with the period of the democratic struggles and the path to political freedom for all people. (7) Nation building that leads to the freedoms enshrined in our constitution. Excellent user-friendly audio-visuals and animations guide the visitor through the building and explain the various exhibits, which are attractively mounted and easily accessed.

Time constraints did not permit us to view all the features of the memorial park, each of which is named in one of the official languages of South Africa. Dry-wall construction similar to that found at Iron Age sites is used throughout the park. We first visited the conference centre overlooking the amphitheatre and a large pool in which an eternal flame burns. There Badresh explained the symbolism of various aspects to us, in particular the theme of reeds which symbolise birth or creation. After that we were taken to the memorial wall where the names of persons who died in the cause of, or were involved in, the various struggles for freedom in Southern Africa are inscribed. Badresh explained the criteria for having one's name inscribed on the wall and admitted that it has caused a great deal of controversy among various groups who either wanted certain groups of names added or excluded. Next, we walked to the Lekgotla or meeting-place along spiral paths which symbolise the linking of various elements into a cohesive whole. The boulders and thorn trees placed there were brought from different provinces to indicate the unity of the whole country. A visit to this park makes one realise just how multi-faceted South African history is. The morning ended with a picnic lunch in the Uitspanplek.

Report by Barry Jacoby

Braamfontein graffiti tour (25 March 2017)

With Jo Buitendach of Past Experiences

Braamfontein, one of Johannesburg's inner-city suburbs, has a fascinating history. It began in 1853 as a large farm owned by Gert Bezuidenhout that stretched from Westdene in the west to Houghton in the east, and from Greenside in the north to Newtown in the south. After the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902, Braamfontein was settled by a large poor-white population. At this time the class-conscious Braamfontein ratepayer's association passed a motion for the name of the area to be changed to Clifton, but the name did not stick. In the 1930s businesses started moving to the area, and by the 1960s and 1970s it had become part of Johannesburg's vibrant CBD. However, then areas like Sandton began to attract businesses away from the CBD and urban decay befell most of the inner city. Deterioration and neglect attracted graffiti artists to leave their mark. It is only recently that

A young and upcoming graffiti artist, Opia, only 19 years of age, is leaving her mark around the Inner City

developers have started to actively rejuvenate parts of Braamfontein and other enclaves of gentrification. Rejuvenation projects like those seen in the Maboneng Precinct further south often include graffiti in an attempt to attract people back onto the streets.

All this we learnt from Jo Buitendach from Past Experiences, a tour company specialising in Johannesburg inner city and archaeological tours. Jo has conducted tours for the Northern Branch on several occasions; this time she took us on a tour of graffiti sites along the streets of Braamfontein. If you look casually at the plethora of graffiti and street art strewn across buildings in Johannesburg, you are left with the impression that there are no rules or order, but we learnt that this is a fallacy. Street subcultures are part and parcel of the communities in downtown Johannesburg. All city subcultures, even those that profess anarchy, have their own structures.

Graffiti artists begin by developing a 'Tag', a visual nickname similar to the signature of an artist. Tags are quick and simple to make. 'Throw-ups' are usually also artists' names but are more elaborate and often larger, taking more time than tags. Graffiti artists go on to work on 'masterpieces', which can take hours. These reach the height of artistic expression. The rule is that throw-ups can be painted over tags but neither tags nor throw-ups are ever painted over masterpieces. Other street art includes stencils, stickers, commissioned murals and wheat-paste posters.

A Pop Art-inspired mural by American graffiti artist Pose completed for the Nando's Street Art Stories series

As we walked down the alleyways of Braamfontein, Jo told us that such alleys, found only in Braamfontein and Hillbrow, were fenced off by the city authorities a while ago to try to cut down on supposed crime, prostitution and drug-dealing. Five years ago, the authorities opened them up again and reclaimed them as something to be proud of. Similar reclaiming of previously seedy areas can be seen in Melbourne, Australia. On the tour we noticed new cafes, bars, student housing and art galleries springing up. Intermixed with these new sights and sounds were an array of graffiti and political protest art. Unlike the art on sale in private galleries, public street art is accessible to all.

Report by Law Pinto

Kromdraai in the Cradle of Humankind (25 June 2017)

With Professor Jose Braga, Evolutionary Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand

In 1938, a young schoolboy, Gert Terblanche, discovered a fossil jawbone and teeth at Kromdraai. Soon afterwards, Dr Robert Broom began excavations on the site. Following the discovery of a lower mandible in 1944, he was able to construct a cast of the skull. This discovery gave us the first preserved specimen of Paranthropus robustus.

Eleven years later, Dr Bob Brain became involved and opened trenches 3 m deep. He confirmed that Kromdraai was a major hominid site. Since 2014 the cave has received a great deal of attention from scientists. More artefacts and at least 29 hominid specimens have been discovered. For the past few years Prof. Jose Braga from the Paul Sabatier III University in Toulouse has been a member of the Kromdraai team. The site is now about ten times bigger than it was in the 1950s and is thought to extend a further 8 m. As new artefacts are unearthed, so dating procedures have become more accurate. Stone tools identified by Dr Kathy Kuman are similar to those that have been found at Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania.

Jose Braga gave us a fascinating account of the geological changes that have taken place at the site over time, and the effects they have had on the rocks and specimens buried in them. Some of the deposits are not horizontal or intact because, geologists argue, they were affected by climatic changes. The decalcification process of breccia affects bones and teeth in the cave. Jose also told us about the value of studies on the ear cochlea, and how measurements taken of fossil skulls can enlighten us about the height, size and even the age and sex of early hominins. It was most interesting to hear about the connectivity of the various disciplines involved in the study of fossil remains. The geologist's role is to examine the changes that have taken place in the formation of rocks, which in turn affect the preservation of the many specimens of hominins that have inhabited areas like the Cradle of Humankind. Botanists look at seeds and tree roots for evidence of climatic changes. Modern technology makes possible the examination of fossil finds without the many weeks of time-consuming chipping away at the matrix or rock that was formerly needed to expose them. DNA studies help with identification. Zoologists help us understand the nature of the habitats in which hominins lived. The wide range of disciplines involved helps to find evidence for understanding our common past.

Report by Gerry Gallow

The Vredefort Impact Stucture (30 July 2017)

With Professor Frans Waanders, North-West University

The Vredefort Dome lies about 100 km southwest of Johannesburg between the towns of Vredefort and Parys, with the Vaal river running through it. It consists of a semicircle of hills about 70 km in diameter. It is the largest impact crater in the world and, with an age of 2 023 million years, also the oldest. It was formed by the impact of a meteorite 10 km to 15 km in diameter travelling at a velocity of 10 km to 20 km per second. The impact released kinetic energy equivalent to the explosion of 87 million tons of TNT and generated temperatures in excess of 2 000 °C and pressures of 10 million atmospheres. The seismic magnitude was about 14 on the Richter Scale. A crater 50 km deep and 150 km wide was formed. The compressed rock beneath rebounded, forming a dome-shaped central uplift. The meteorite and adjacent rocks vaporised and were ejected from the crater. The ejecta formed a 5 km-thick blanket over existing for-

mations, which preserved them from future erosion, thereby aiding the preservation of the gold-bearing rocks of the Witwatersrand.

We were privileged to have as our guide Prof. Frans Waanders, geologist, chemical engineer and environmental expert. He enriched our excursion with his wide knowledge of history and the politics that has affected the development of the area.

Our first stop was at Van Coller's farm, situated on the rim of the crater. Here we saw a dyke of volcanic rock with petroglyphs depicting eland, rhino and hippo believed to have been drawn by the Bushmen who inhabited the area about 2 000 years ago. We then moved on to a disused granite mine near Leeukop. The attractive colours of the granite made it popular at one time for building. It was often found in kitchens and on the walls of buildings. On our journey to the next stop we passed a hillside of wild olives, believed to be the largest in the country, which is listed as a National Heritage site. The olives are very small and not edible but are used for the propagation of other varieties. They appear to be fire-resistant. At the farm Donkervliet, once owned by the poet CM van den Heever, we saw how the Vaal makes a perpendicular cut through the rocks. The nearby farm houses a children's holiday camp, but sadly the river is now too polluted for swimming and water sports.

We drove past the old mining town of Venterskroon, which developed during the gold rush at the turn of the 19th century. As it turned out, the local reefs yielded very little gold but the town once had 10 000 inhabitants. Now all that remains are a few buildings including the old prison and a hotel that was doing a lively lunch trade when we passed by.

We stopped for our lunch at a farm, Thabela Thabeng ('Happy on top of the mountain'). It lies at the foot of the inner ranges of rocks of the Jeppestown sub-group. It has a small museum and a lovely view and was an ideal spot for our picnic. After driving further west along a gravel road, we stopped at the side of a cutting to view shatter cones in the Kimberley shales. These have curved, striated surfaces that were formed by the impact pressure generated by the meteorite. The more sprightly among us walked through the veld to the entrance of a disused gold mine, which is now blocked up for safety reasons. It was worked for about 50 years. At one stage, the notorious mining magnate Brett Kebble was involved with it. All business entrepreneurship in the region ceased when, in 2005, the Vredefort Dome was declared a World Heritage Site.

Report by Gerry Gallow

Argent Silver Mine, East Rand (17 September 2017)

With Graham Reeks, doctoral student in archaeology at Unisa

Argent Silver Mine (from the Latin *argentum,* meaning silver) is on the East Rand near Delmas. Our first stop at the remains of some of the original buildings Graham Reeks outlined the early history of the mine. The first phase of Transvaal Silver Mines Ltd extended over the decade from 1889 to 1899. Barney Barnato and Wolf Joel were the primary directors, with other Randlords becoming shareholders. Eight of them made heavy investments in the venture. When prospecting began in 1890, four inclined winzes were sunk to a depth of 15 m to an ore vein that had a high silver content in places. The mine had a single cage and tunnels 40 m long on either side of the vertical prospecting shaft. The high-grade ore was shipped to Swansea in South Wales for smelting and separation of the refined metal. From there it was sold on the world market.

At this time Barney Barnato was found guilty of illegal share dealing and had to sell his shares in Argent to the Corner House group, of which Lionel Phillips was the chairman. Otto Hahn, the mine's general manager and metallurgist, introduced new and more efficient equipment. Furnace bricks were made from local clay and a reduction plant was built in about 1892. Staff numbers increased, and a new work force included skilled artisans from many disciplines. A technical mistake by Hahn led to his being superseded by E Wetherman, who replaced the smelting works with a new reduction plant. A severe economic depression resulting from the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act in the USA led to the end of mining operations at Argent in 1894.

As we moved round the site, we saw what are thought to be the remains of the mine manager's house. Some pretty china artifacts were found here. The quarters for the European staff were located nearby. A big hole caused by underground subsidence has developed in this area. At our next stop we saw the remains of the mechanical point-switching post, as well as the location of the mine's railway line and conveyor belt. In the Anglo-Boer War from 1899 to 1900, soldiers destroyed many of the buildings on the mine. After the First World War, the Transvaal Silver and Base Metals Company was formed. It had its main reduction plant at Argent. New technology and equipment was installed, some of it more sophisticated than that found on the much larger gold mines. A new headgear was put in and seven levels, 30 m apart, were opened up. Below the lowest level granite bedrock was reached, which ended the vein of silver. The miner's strike of 1922 affected Argent less than it did other mines.

We then visited the site of Graham's archaeological dig, where his assistants were excavating one of a group of middens. Some of his excavations have yielded hardly anything but others have revealed artefacts from living quarters, which tie in with written records that indicate that this was the location of the black mineworkers' living area. Our tour took us through a rather barren landscape on a dirty, windy day, but Graham's enthusiasm for his research lifted us, in our imaginations, into the midst of a large, noisy, well-equipped mining operation.

Report by Gerry Gallow

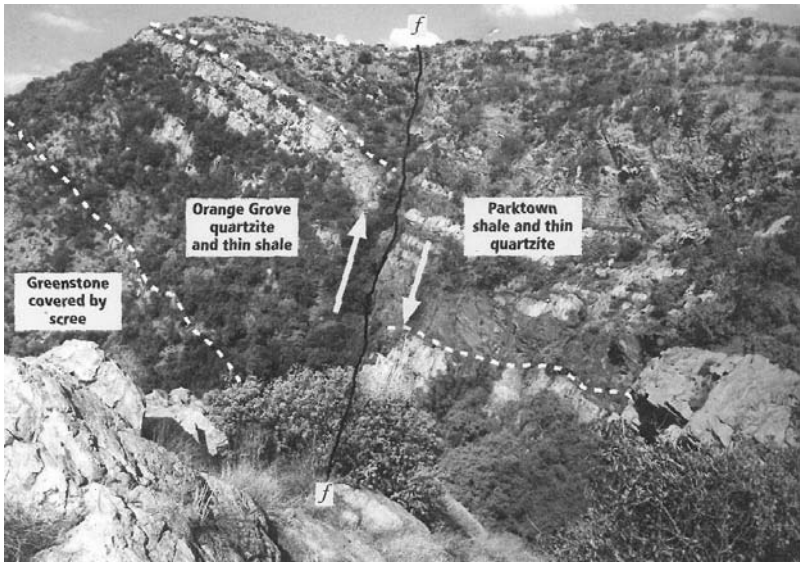
Year-end outing to the Geological Garden and Geotrail at the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden (26 November 2017)

With Morris Viljoen, Professor Emeritus of geology, Wits University

An excursion to the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden in Roodepoort guided by Emeritus Professor Morris Viljoen followed by lunch at the Eagles' Fare Restaurant was the final highlight of the 2017 programme of the Northern Branch. The botanical garden at the Witpoortjie falls lies on the northern side of the Witwatersrand continental watershed. Here the headwaters of the Crocodile river start their journey to the Limpopo and the Indian Ocean, while across the ridge, other streams flow south to the Vaal, the Orange and the Atlantic. Prof. Viljoen discussed the geology in the wider context of the Johannesburg dome that outcrops in Midrand (see figure) and is an inlier of the Archaean granite-gneiss and greenstone. The Witwatersrand Supergroup, to the south, was deposited on the ancient basement rocks and now dips southward at about 30°, while to the north, the younger Transvaal Supergroup dips northwards at 20°. Morris Viljoen explained that the Botanical Garden location reflects great antiquity as it includes exposures of archaic granite and the older greenstone remnants, as well as the south-dipping rocks of the Witwatersrand Supergroup that is covered by the Ventersdorp Supergroup lavas.

The greenstones that weathers to soft, grey-coloured talc schist form part of older granitic rocks of the Johannesburg dome and represent some of the oldest rocks in the world. The Geotrail

that starts at the base of the waterfall follows the lowermost layers of the Orange Grove Quartzite and Parktown Shale Formations of the Witwatersrand Supergroup that overlie the ancient greenstones. The Orange Grove Quartzite layer was formed from sand that was eroded from the surrounding granitic mountains and deposited into an early sea. Over immense time, and as a result of deep burial, the sand became compacted and metamorphosed to quartzite. Iron-rich Parktown shale occurs above the quartzite near the top of the ridge.



The geology at Witpoortjie falls. The white dashed lines represent the top and bottom of the Orange Grove Quartzite and the black line (f-f) is where an almost vertical fault cuts the strata (from 50 Must-See Geological Sites in South Africa *by Gavin Whitfield, 2015: 278).*

Morris also gave us a multi-layered interpretation of the geological time-line of South Africa as represented by large rock specimens that had, through his inspiration, been sourced and transported to the garden from a 100 km radius. These rocks, representing 20 major rock types in South Africa, are laid out according to a geological timeline. Surface sections of a number of these specimens have been polished to provide a 'window' into their mineral composition and beauty. The trail starts with the oldest volcanic rocks, formed at ultra-high temperatures, of magnesium-rich komatiites dating to 3,5 billion years ago. We continued past specimens of the Witwatersrand conglomerates that included specimens of gold-bearing reefs or banket. Then came specimens of amygdaloidal Ventersdorp lava from the Klipriviersberg hills (Ventersdorp Supergroup) south of Johannesburg. At around 2 700 million years ago the first continental-scale outpouring of lava of this supergroup took place and eventually covered the entire Witwatersrand basin.

Specimens from the Bushveld Complex, the Karoo sedimentary basin, as well as Dwyka Tillite that occurs at the base of the Karoo Supergroup, are also represented. The Karoo Supergroup comprises a basal tillite, carbon-rich and fossil-bearing layers, as well as coal formed in swamps in which flora such as glossopteris fossils occur, as well as specimens of petrified trees from further afield. Also to be seen on the geological walk are specimens of basaltic lavas, representing the top layers of the Karoo Supergroup, and dolomites of the Transvaal Supergroup that included specimens of breccia. Morris referred to kimberlite pipes that occur, for example, at Premier Mine in Cullinan where the world's largest diamond has been discovered.

We realised how fortunate we were to have experienced this geological journey guided by Morris Viljoen who, through his interpretation, had brought us in touch with these major geological events of earth formation. After a steep walk part-way along the Geotrail up the side of the falls, we returned the Eagles' Fare in the centre of the botanical gardens for an excellent buffet lunch on the deck while enjoying the greenery and good ArchSoc company.

Report by Anna Batchelor-Steyn

An archaeological, historical and cultural sweep through KwaZulu-Natal (14 to 22 May 2017)

Amajuba – A hill too far

Boer prisoner to a British officer: 'Your soldiers are the best, your regimental commanders excellent, but (for victory) we depend on your generals.'

Participants, which included a number from the Western Cape Branch, on the nine-day self-drive Kwa-Zulu-Natal tour met at Volksrust and drove in convey to the farm on which the battle of Amajuba had ended the First Anglo-Boer War in 1881. Our hosts, Elbie en Dawie, served home-brewed ginger beer, a lunch of vetkoek and mince, followed by good koffie in the hall lying below Mount Amajuba, which was shrouded in mist and rain. Warming ourselves at a fire in the open hearth, we listened to Jaap Earle telling us about the events leading up to the short War of Independence and the battle. Here is a synopsis:

Britain had not lost a war in almost a century after they had to ceded independence to the American colonies in 1787. It was unthinkable that they should now be faced with defeat in a rebellion in southern Africa. In 1877, Britain had cursorily annexed the minor Boer Republic of Transvaal, the ZAR, to the surprise of its inhabitants, and quickly promoted unrest by capricious taxation. The Boers took to arms and the First Boer War started. The British had to sign defeat after the Boers were victorious in the four major engagements that followed. The first of these was at Bronkhorstspruit and the next three in a small oblong area barely 20 km in extent in northern Natal.

The unpleasant task of subduing the Boer forces fell to Major-General Sir George Pomeroy-Colley, titled scion of an eminent Dublin family, Sandhurst trained and with an impeccable administrative career in the military. He was regarded as the 'cleverest' general, but had never heard much obnoxious gunfire, and held the position of High Commissioner to Natal. Facing him was General Piet Joubert, overall commander of the ZAR forces, which had no standing army. It consisted of commandeered burgers in their everyday clothes, with each burgher expected to provide a horse and provision for eight days, a rifle and at least 50 rounds of ammunition. Joubert's men were all expert marksmen and horsemen, determined and courageous, and have been labelled the best mounted infantry of that period. They knew they were fighting for their country.

Colley and his army were gathered in Pietermaritzburg and marched north to the border via Newcastle. His main camp was based on Mount Prospect and he had to cross Laing's Neck. Joubert decided to give battle here and on a steep section near the top of the neck he arranged a herringbone of trenches along the rough track. This work was described as that of a military genius. The track crosses the neck 10 m off the modern road and we parked and climbed up to an elevation to see the whole battlefield. Then and subsequently Colley underestimated his foe and was severely beaten on 20 January 1881. Colley awaited reinforcements but later decided to escort convoys himself as the Boers made very impolite sorties on his line of communication.

They encountered the enemy at Schuinshoogte near the Ingogo River and once again the superior tactics of the Boers prevailed. Voley suffered yet another humiliating defeat.

One can only say that by this time Colley should have realised that man for man his forces did not match those of his opponents. He chose to make a surprise move that proved fatal to himself, to his army and the chances of a British victory. He proposed to double back from Laing's neck and to curve north to occupy the most prominent feature in the hilly terrain, known then and still today as Mount Amajuba. In a night march of eight hours his force of some 375 men of different regiments, and even a Royal Naval company, reached the hill and started the ascent. They occupied the crest by dawn but took few precautions of a defensive nature.

The Boers were surprised but nevertheless took immediate action and proceeded from their laagers to attack in three columns. They numbered around 350 men. Overall command was given to Commandant N Smit who employed textbook strategy. Using cover and charge assaults ('Skiet mekaar los' – shoot one another clear), which was still very much part of infantry training in the Second World War, they gained ground and with deadly accuracy picked off any helmet that appeared on the skyline. They soon gained tactical heights known as MacDonald's and Gordon's koppies, and from there fired into the shallow basin where the British by then had herded themselves. Discipline failed and there was a hurried general retreat that left many behind. Colley took a bullet above his right eye but by then the battle was essentially over. The Boers carried his body down and handed it to the British two days later. The British had lost 92 dead, 134 wounded and 59 prisoners. Boer losses amounted to one killed and five wounded.

At the foot of this mountain, at O'Neil's Cottage, a building virtually unchanged from 1881, a treaty was signed by which the South African Republic regained its independence. The name Amajuba was writ large in the annals of military history and revives the humiliation that is felt even now by British arms and the British Empire. Colley's end was sad, but his high hopes and dedication had not been good enough.

Report by Jaap Earle

Fort Amiel – an important base for British operations

After a fascinating visit to O'Neil's Cottage, we arrived at Fort Amiel in Newcastle. Louis Eksteen, the Curator of Fort Amiel Museum, welcomed us. He gave us a most interesting talk about the British military fort's history, highlighting at the same time the importance of Newcastle from the time it was called Post Halt Number 2 on Military maps since postal coaches from Port Natal stopped here on their journey into the interior.

The fort was built on a knoll overlooking the town just before the British annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 by a Major Amiel and about 200 men of the 80th Staffordshire Volunteers. The fort was an important base for military operations from 1876 until the end of the Anglo-Boer War in 1902. During the Anglo Zulu War in 1879 and the Transvaal War of Independence in 1881 it was used as a transit camp, hospital and commissariat depot. The defensive complex consisted of an officer's building, a blacksmith's and a wheel smith's workshop, store buildings, a canteen, a magazine, a shell store and barracks for about 200 men, and had a surrounding ditch, a rampart and a stonewall. Major-General Sir George Pomeroy-Colley stayed here in 1881 on his way to Mount Prospect.

Fort Amiel was declared a National Monument in 1979. The discovery of the original plans of the fort in Britain in 1981 was of great importance as they contained valuable, detailed information that assisted the restoration work at the fort. The central office block was in such a poor state that it had to be demolished and rebuilt. Excavations on the site revealed the foundations of the canteen building, the shell store, the magazine and stores, and these buildings were reconstructed in 1986. Louis Eksteen showed us boxes of artefacts that were found on the excavation site. Today, fort Amiel houses a cultural history museum, a guard house, a cookhouse, a canteen, and a blacksmith's and wheel smith's workshop. Fort Amiel zs well worth a visit and talking to Louis Eksteen is an extra bonus.

Report by Jo Earle

Ladysmith and surrounds – missionary work and a war museum

The Maria Ratschitz Mission nestles in the foothills of the Biggarsberg range, not far from Wasbank. After a night of heavy rain, the approach lead along a slippery road through thornveld, making the drive a daunting experience. Eventually, out of the African landscape, emerged a beautiful old church, its tall steeple reaching heavenwards from amidst a grove of trees. The surrounding stone buildings and well-kept grounds had an air of peace and we knew that we had arrived at a sanctuary. On entering the church, we gasped at the richly decorated interior with its carved high altar and pulpit, the beautiful frescoes, magnificent stained glass and fine woodwork.

The mission was founded by Trappist monks in the late 19th century as an outstation of Mariannhill near Pinetown. The community flourished with a productive farming unit being established, and other skills such as carpentry, metalwork and building being taught. A school was opened, and the monks provided medical care. However, the 1936 Land Act changed the status of the resident black population, while the outbreak of the Second World War resulted in the monks being interned and financial support from Germany coming to an end. The Trappists never returned to the mission, which was later staffed by other orders. But with a smaller resident population and no strong leadership, the viability of the mission declined until the forced removals of 1968 reduced it further. The buildings fell into disuse and slowly deteriorated. Eventually the mission came under the care of the Franciscan order and in the early 1990s the Bishop of Dundee began a restoration project. The work was made possible by an anonymous donor in Germany and the expertise of Mr Brucker, a German church restorer and father of one of the nuns. He brought German art students to South Africa for four consecutive years and the restoration was completed by 2000. The interior of the church is now magnificent.

The high altar in the Maria Ratschitz church

We were shown around by Sister Isobel of the Franciscan Nardini sisters. The mission now has nine sisters and their work focuses on health care and spiritual welfare. They run a hospice and the Duduza Care Centre, which offers support to the poor and needy. Maria Ratschitz is the pilgrimage place of the Dundee diocese and retreats are offered. It is truly a very special place. Back on the road again and heading for Ladysmith, it was a jarring experience to be confronted by the bustle of the 21st century.

Our next destination was the **Ladysmith Siege Museum**, considered to be one of the best Anglo-Boer War museums in South Africa. Housed in a building that began as a vegetable store and then became a ration post during the siege, the museum brings the period to life using old photographs, weaponry, uniforms, maps, documents and memorabilia. The nucleus of the exhibition was collected by William Mackay, Ladysmith's town clerk from 1947 to 1961. What foresight he had in preserving these artefacts. The story of the siege of Ladysmith is well known. Ladysmith was a strategic position for the British, being close to the Transvaal and the Free State borders. On 2 November 1899, Boer forces advancing from the north surrounded the town and cut the railway link to Durban. Telegraph communications and eventually water supplies were cut leaving 26 000 soldiers and 8 000 civilians trapped. Despite many raids and sorties to sabotage Boer artillery, the Boers remained in position. Eventually, people were starving and dying of disease, and the horses and draught animals were weak from lack of forage. The Boers around Ladysmith were also growing weaker and it was later realised that the Boers lost months in engaging the British in a futile exercise. Flooded rivers and dramatic rain storms took their toll on both sides. Eventually, General Sir Redvers Buller broke through the Boer positions on 27 February 1900 and the siege was broken. It had lasted for 118 days.

For me, the exhibits of the medical facilities of the time were the most memorable. There were phials of quinine, opium and an iron/arsenic compound, and trays of sharp steel instruments. Bandages were washed and boiled for re-use. Indian stretcher bearers used dhoolies to carry the wounded. These were green canvas slings hung over bamboo poles and the four bearers would advance with short, quick steps to minimise jolting. Despite the long, drawn-out suffering, there was a little relief at Christmas when the Boers sent over a shell without a fuse. It was found to contain a Christmas pudding and the message 'Compliments of the season'. The Ladysmith Christmas Day menu (see left) gives an idea of both the privations endured and the effort made to maintain morale.

Report by Pamela Küstner

Ladysmith, Christmas Day, 1899

Menu

Potages
Julienne (Thinned – kept specially for Christmas)

Entrées
Nil

Rôti
Rosbif à la Anglais (trek ox)

Légumes
Pommes de terre bouillees (one for each man)
Petits Pois (one small tin)

Relevés
Jambon au General Hunter (God bless the General for it!)

Entremets
Plum-pudding au Bulwan
(nobody asked for a second helping)

Desserts
Apricots, peaches (Several of the deserted houses in Ladysmith have orchards attached)

Vins
Eau de Klip River (ad lib), cognac de Ladysmith (one bottle), Port d'Afrique (one bottle), Rhum (commissariat quarter bottle).

N.B. The 'Rosbif' was slightly spoilt as the bakery was shelled when the meat was in the oven, and the cooks left somewhat abruptly.

Game Pass Shelter, Kamberg – face-to face with spectacular rock art

Departing from our comfortable Glengarry Holiday Farm after a good breakfast, we headed towards the uKhahlamba-Drakensberg mountains for the short journey to the Kamberg Rock Art Centre, where a well-designed reception building greeted us. Our first stop was the auditorium to see an introductory film about Bushmen culture and history. The Kamberg facility came about after President Thabo Mbeki, who was holidaying in the region, paid a visit to Game Pass Shelter in 1999. He was upset by the fact that his guide could tell him little about the rock paintings and that nothing was being done to protect the art. He instructed Vali Moosa, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, to find a solution. Moosa proposed that the Rock Art Research Centre (RARI) at Wits University develop a rock art pilot project to encourage tourism, ensure the conservation of the art and involve local communities in a manner that would make them an integral part of the project and permit them to benefit economically therefrom. Two pilot sites were chosen: Kamberg and Wildebeest Kuil near Kimberley. The Kamberg site is run on a non-profit basis by the KwaZulu-Natal Rock Art Trust, which is a partnership between RARI, KZN Wildlife, AMAFA and local stakeholders.

Since about the mid-19th century, the Kamberg and Giant's Castle areas have been the home of the Hlubi people, who were moved there to serve as a buffer for white farmers who were having problems with stock-raiding Bushmen from the mountains. Other Zulu-speaking groups moved into this area of their own accord to escape the ravages of the Mfecane and its aftermath. The raiding of cattle was largely ended, but many Bushmen were killed. Others married into and lived amongst the Hlubi and other Zulu-speaking communities in the area. Their descendants and especially those who now act as guides to Game Pass shelter are taking renewed interest and pride in their Bushman ancestry.

Subsequent to the excellent video, those of the group (the majority) who felt fit enough to tackle the 90-minute, at times steep walk to Game Pass Shelter, set out with the guide. The walk provided lovely berg views and passes under Waterfall Shelter, considered to be a place of power by Zulu diviners. Finally, after a last steep uphill, we found ourselves in Game Pass Shelter, face-to-face with a large rock art panel covered by eland, apart from other images. Our guide introduced us to some of the intricacies of the main panel and smaller panels to the left of it, explaining the superb paintings and answering questions. The art at Game Pass Shelter has been admired for many years. A photo of the main panel that appeared in *Colony of Natal: An Official Illustrated Handbook and Railway Guide* by J Forsyth Ingram, 1895, was the first-ever image of southern African rock art to be published, and the greater world was first exposed to South

Africa's rock art through Game Pass Shelter in 1915 when *Scientific American* published photos taken at the shelter.

Henri Breuil and many other early researchers thought that Phoenicians or some other exotic group from afar must have executed the paintings. It was only during the late 1960s and early 1970s that researchers recognised that the art represented more than pretty 'pictures'. Game Pass Shelter paintings being central to the discovery. The realisation that the images are deeply spiritual grew from a combination of careful observation of the art and the study of records, such as the Bleek and Lloyd interviews with Bushmen and research done among Bushmen in the Kalahari. One painted panel at Game Pass Shelter, of a man holding the tail of an eland, led to a breakthrough and has consequently been dubbed the Rosetta Stone of southern African rock art interpretation. Prof. David Lewis-Williams realised that both the man and the dying eland were depicted with crossed legs, a posture that related directly to the oral records. Subsequent study has shown that the paintings do not depict rituals as such but illustrate spiritual journeys – many for the purpose of healing and rainmaking. Unlike Western paintings, rock art images are never 'finished'. They grow in meaning with each added image.

A delighted group of ArchSoc members returned to Glengarry, satisfied that they had been able to see one of South Africa's foremost rock art locations, and getting some strenuous exercise to boot.

Report by Reinoud Boers

Pietermaritzburg – archaeological exhibits, art, a famous college and a great curry

On 5 August 1962, Nelson Mandela, was arrested at a roadblock near Howick on the R103. He had recently visited Chief Albert Luthuli. At the place of his arrest, the **Nelson Mandela capture site monument** has been erected in memory of that occasion. It was designed by Marco Cianfanelli with the assistance of the architect Jeremy Rose. Fifty steel poles between 6,5 and 9,5 m high are so placed as to create an optical illusion of Nelson Mandela's portrait. The sculpture both affects and is affected by the surrounding landscape, visually shifting throughout the day as light and atmosphere behind and around it change.

After a walk around the site, we continued to Pietermaritzburg, where our first visit was to the **KwaZulu-Natal Museum,** a comprehensive museum covering the natural and cultural history of the province, with the largest research library in South Africa. We were met by Dr Gavin Whitelaw, the museum's archaeologist and chairman of ArchSoc's KwaZulu-Natal Branch, who took us around the extensive and well-presented archaeological exhibitions covering:

- The Early, Middle and Later Stone Age. The ESA collection was mainly gathered by Prof. Oliver Davies, while the MSA consists mainly of surface artefacts in contrast to the LSA artefacts that derive from excavations and includes painted Bushman art removed from Bamboo Mountain and other Drakensburg rock art sites.
- The Early and Late Iron Age collection. This is extensive and includes an EIA homestead exhibit. The evolution of crops, domestication, pottery and metal working was discussed. Iron smelting and working was a cause of expansion. Sheep 'arrived' from the Middle East and North Africa. This museum has made a great contribution to the knowledge of precolonial farmers.
- The museum's large rock art archive, which contains data from over 700 sites, many from painting sites in the uKhahlamba-Drakensburg World Heritage Site.
- Sixteenth-century Portuguese shipwreck material from various east coast sites, notably from the site of the *Santiago*, which sank in the Mozambique Channel in 1585. Maps from 1492 and 1502 are of interest as are early navigational instruments.

From the KZN Museum we walked to the Tatham Art Gallery. Its magnificent art collection is housed in what was the Supreme Court Building, whose construction commenced in 1864. But building work was halted because of a severe economic depression and the building was eventually only completed in 1875. It was designed by Peter Paterson, the then colonial engineer, in the Renaissance Pavilion Style. The art collection was started by Ada Susan Tatham, the wife of the Judge President. Enthusiastic Kobie Venter, who took us around the museum, said that it was fortuitous that his cousin was the president of the Royal Academy in London, as this gave his wife access to the world of artists, galleries and collectors. One of the subsequent principal benefactors was Col. Robert Whitwell, who in 1923 bequeathed some 400 paintings, sculptures, glassware, etc. In addition, he was a benefactor of the Durban and Harare Galleries. The contemporary collection was started in 1980 by Lorna Fergusson. Amongst the artists in the collection are Sisley, Samuel Palmer, Boudin and Sickert. The oldest exhibit is a large classical landscape by Dutch artist Van Wijarts (1635–1684). A large portrait of Cetewayo by Helen Travers hangs adjacent to a large portrait of Queen Victoria in one of the gallery stairwells. The gallery also has a large collection of South African ceramics. Subsequent to our visit, the gallery basement was flooded, causing irreparable damage to the gallery's collection.

After lunch at the Tatham, we proceeded to the Msunduzi Museum (previously the Voortrekker Museum). The main building that houses this museum was in times past the Longmarket Girls Primary School built in 1905. It became the property of the museum in 1985. The tour, however, concentrated on the Church of the Vow, which commemorates the vow made by the Boers before the Battle of Blood River. Consecrated in 1841, it served for 20 years when a larger church came into use. Subsequently, the building served various purposes before falling into disrepair. A two-year restoration project commenced in 1910. The pulpit, made by German craftsmen, and a few of the pews are those of the original church. The adjourning EG Jansen building was constructed in 1955 to house collections, notably an original ox-wagon built in Victoria West in 1824. Adjoining a courtyard on the side of these buildings is a double storey homestead built by trekker-leader Andries Pretorius. It is furnished with furniture from the 1850s, most of which belonged to Voortrekkers who settled in Natal.

Later we drove to Maritzburg College, where we met historian John Deane, who serves on the school's archive and museum committees. This school was established in central Pietermaritzburg in 1863 and was relocated to the present site in 1888, which was then in the country. We visited Clark House (1888) and the Victoria Hall (1897). Clark House was originally the main school building and housed the entire school: classrooms, dormitories, dining room and staff accommodation. The building was proclaimed a National Monument in 1976. The Victoria Hall subsequently became the heart of the school and was the gathering place for daily assembly, served as the dining room and the venue for concerts, plays and Evensong. The hall boasts a large portrait of Queen Victoria and lining the walls are honours and scholarship boards. Both these accomplished buildings are a reflection of the Victoria Age. Clarke House, designed by Phillip Dudgeon, a gifted architect from Dublin in Ireland. During the Anglo-Boer War the facilities were used as a military hospital.

John Deane, who from 1995 to 2009 was chairman of the Colenso Homestead Restoration Project, gave a resume of Bishopstowe, the home of John Williams Colenso (1814–1883), the first bishop of Natal appointed in 1853. He was both brilliant and controversial. He built his home and the Ekukhanyeni Mission Station 10 km east of Maritzburg and lived here until his death in 1883. Bishopstowe burnt down a year after his death. Gavin Whitelaw excavated the substructure

in 1996. Participants completed a very busy day with an excellent meal at the Tandoor Restaurant, surely one of the best places to have a northern Indian meal or a curry in KZN.

Report by Keith McMullen

The Greytown area – Early Iron Age site and German missionaries

The day started off with a visit to the museum in Greytown which is situated in one of the old houses in the town. Unlike the other museums which we visited on our tour, it was of the old-fashioned type, with every nook, cranny, shelf and showcase crammed full of assortments of military memorabilia and domestic antiques.

After spending an interesting hour or so there, we proceeded to the Early Iron Age site at Ntshekane, which lies along a dirt road in an arid region of aloes and thorn trees. Here Dr Gavin Whitelaw recounted the history of Ntshekane. The site was originally excavated in 1973 by Dr Tim Maggs, who was the first professional archaeologist in the province. The area contains many dongas and rain water had exposed the site, which was in danger of being washed away completely. Tim Maggs mounted an emergency rescue mission to uncover and preserve it. The particular significance of this site is that radiocarbon dating of organic remains found here proved conclusively that the South African Iron Age had begun much earlier than was previously believed. Bantu-speaking farmers had arrived in the area about 1700 years ago and planted summer-rainfall crops. Year-round sweetveld grazing was available for their cattle and sheep. The availability of iron ore and hard wood for charcoal made the site suitable for smelting activities.

Much broken pottery has been found on the site. Originally it was thought that this only represented two phases of decorated pottery, but Gavin's more recent work showed that there were in fact three phases, namely Msuluzi from AD 650 to 790, Ndondondwane from AD 790 to 900 and finally Ntshekane from AD 900 to 1050. Pits were used as grain bins, for burials and as dumps. In Gavin's opinion, about six separate homesteads with cattle pens had existed on the 10-hectare site. The three different phases of pottery indicate that people lived on the site for about 400 years. At that time the vegetation would have consisted of dry valley bushveld, but the land is now overgrazed. The removal of trees for homesteads, fuel and smelting, as well as field clearance had contributed to the soil erosion. Iron smelting would, for instance, have required 8 kg of wet wood for each kg of ore. Dr Whitelaw pointed out that certain pits have particular fills, such as bottomless pots with a mass of stones dumped on top. This occurs on sites from Tanzania to the Eastern Cape. Gavin believes the pits probably related to girls' puberty rites where the pot symbolised the womb. The pot was broken after the rite, possibly symbolising defloration. The pots could have been covered over to hide them.

After leaving the site, we drove to Hermannsburg situated in an extended area settled by German immigrants in the 1850s. Our destination was the Deutsche Schule (founded 1856 as the oldest boarding school in Natal), specifically the Mission House Museum built by the first missionaries of the first mission of the Hermannsburg Missionary Society from Hermannsburg in Germany. The mission was founded by the dynamic pastor Harms in 1854. Over sandwiches and drinks in the dining room of the Mission House, we were given a most detailed history of the Lutheran mission movement and its activities in this outpost by the extremely knowledgeable curator, Mrs Inge von Fintel. The Mission House is very well laid out and comprises a number of rooms furnished as they would have been during the early days of the mission station, with original artefacts dating from that period. The Mission House has National Monument status and its outside kitchen is one of 15 oldest buildings in KZN.

Part of the group at lunch in the dining room of the Mission House Museum. Photo P Küstner.

For overnight we proceeded to Kearsney Manor, a magnificent English mansion built in the late 1800s by Sir James Hulett. Many of the bedrooms were very large and may originally have served some other purpose.

Report by Barry Jacoby

Eshowe – Colonial Natal

The sixth day of the tour began with an opportunity to explore Kearsney Manor, surrounded by sugar cane fields. It was started off as the family home of Sir James Liege Hulett (1838–1928), a pioneer sugar farmer and founder of Tongaat-Hulett Sugar. In this 22-bedroom home, he and his wife brought up their eight children. Hulett later signed a contract with the Wesleyan Church for its use as a school. This was the birth of Kearsney College which opened with 11 boys in 1921. In June 1939 the school moved to its present site at Botha's Hill. A chapel, now a national monument, stands in

The hall at Kearsney Manor

the grounds of the Kearsney Estate. The graves of Sir Liege and Lady Hulett, family members and people from the district are also found on the estate.

Then we drove on to Eshowe, a hilltop town that blends into the Dlinza Forest that surrounds it and overlooks the hot and humid coastal plain. It is the oldest town of European settlement in Zulu- land. We visited the Fort Nongqayi Museum Village, which consists of several small museums, a restaurant and a craft shop arranged appealing- ly around a grassy area and enclosed by trees. A replica of the Norwegian missionary church from nearby Entumeni reflects the cross-cultural influences that have shaped the region's history. The largest building in the complex is Fort Nongqayi which was established in 1883. It housed the Zululand Native Police force (known as the Nongqayi) whose duty it was to protect the Resident Commissioner of Zululand. The unit assisted the colonial government during the Bhambatha uprising in 1906, but the fort was never attacked. The building now houses the Zululand Historical Museum. Inside are displays of cultural items such as beadwork, earplugs, clay pots and a reconstructed hut, as well as a representation of King Mpande, who in old age had difficulty walking, next to the sturdy wooden wheelchair made for him by Bishop Hans Schreuder. Fascinating too was a replica of a large three-handled silver beer cup presented to King Cetshwayo by Queen Victoria during his visit to Britain in 1882 while he was in exile from his former kingdom. The cup was lost during the Zulu Civil War but was found by chance on the bank of a stream 55 years later. The Zulu man who found it showed it to a trader who recognised its importance and negotiated an exchange for a military greatcoat, a cow and a galvanised bucket. Much later, in 1971, the trader, CR Harris, presented the historic cup to the Zulu nation.


Fort Nongqayi

The last room held a fine collection of mahogany and teak furniture that had belonged to John Dunn, colonial hunter, trader and white chief. Born to settlers, he made his own way as a hunter after being orphaned as a young teenager. He became friendly with Cetshwayo and married into many chiefdoms, eventually having more than 40 wives and about 117 children. We also visited the Vukani Museum, famous for its basketwork. The Norwegian missionary Rev. Lofroth and his wife started the Vukani Arts Association to preserve the craft and helped local basket makers to find a market for their work in Europe. His private collection of about 2 700 items forms the bulk of the work displayed in an airy, modern building designed by the Durban architect Paul Mikula.

An afternoon visit to Dlinza Forest offered welcome relaxation. The forest brings birding territory right into Eshowe. The indigenous forest is dense and deep, and offers marked trails as well as the magnificent aerial boardwalk, which runs 10 m high in the forest canopy. We climbed the viewing tower to an observation platform with panoramic views over the treetops. Overnight was at the historic George Hotel where we also sampled their locally brewed beer.

Report by Pamela Küstner

Ulundi – Zulu Kings and other royals

From Eshowe we drove to Ulundi to visit the the KwaZulu Cultural Museum and Ondini Historic Reserve. The museum houses one of the most representative collections of Zulu material culture in the country, in particular a fabulous collection of Zulu beadwork. The Ondini site museum focuses on the life of King Cetshwayo, the last king of an independent Zululand, and provides insight into the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. King Cetshwayo's royal residence has been reconstructed on the basis of archaeological findings.

The next visit was to Nodwengu, the site of King Mpande's capital and his burial site. Mpande was the third son of king Senzangakhona and a half-brother to kings Shaka and Dingane. After the murder of Dingane, he ruled the Zulu kingdom from 1840 to 1872, making him the longest reigning Zulu king. A huge, superbly constructed *iqukane* hut on the site serves as the interpretation centre. Here we were met by Arthur Konigkramer, the 20-year head of Amafa, an ex-MP and managing director of the *Ilanga* newspaper. He is fluent in Zulu, is a friend of Mangosuthu Buthelezi and has a wide knowledge of the history of the Zulu royal house. He led the way to the Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Museum and Documentation Centre, which has many fine Zulu tapestries. Located in a modern building with a life-sized statue of Buthelezi at the entrance, it was commissioned in 2015 by private interests to house the many important documents, letters and artefacts collected by Buthelezi over the years as the founder of the Inkatha Freedom Party in 1975, Chief Minister of KwaZulu until 1994 and Minister of Home Affairs from that date until 2004. He is still leader of the IFP and an MP.

Afterwards, we drove through thickly wooded hills with no signs of habitation to the eMakhosini-Opathe Heritage Park on the banks of the White Umfolozi river. This area is considered the birthplace of the Zulus. We made our way to the top of a hill to view a remarkable monument dating to 2002 called the *Spirit of eMakhosini*. The site has a fine view over the Valley of Kings. It consists of a circular concrete platform, the rim of which is decorated with stylised Zulu beading and bronze plaques depicting scenes from Zulu life. Surmounting the platform is an enormous black bronze replica of an *imbiza* or beer pot surrounded by large Kudu horns. Here a Zulu maiden, Isobel, gave us a talk on the history of the area. The 24 000 ha Opathe park is the resting place of seven Zulu kings. King Goodwill Zwelithini, who was responsible for the creation of the monument to the spirit of his ancestors, has one of his homes nearby. Shaka is known to have spent part of his childhood at his father's homestead in the area and Dingane's capital, Mgungundlovu, is situated nearby.

We spent the night at Owen's Camp situated next to the site of the mission station established by the American Rev. Francis Owen in 1837. In February 1838, he and his family witnessed from a distance the killing of Piet Retief and his party by Dingane. It is said that Owen had, in fact, warned Retief of Dingane's impending treachery and that Dingane informed Owen that he was aware that he had watched the proceedings through his 'glass'. To begin with, Dingane refused Owen permission to pack up and leave. When he relented, the Owen family abandoned the mission for Port Natal and set sail for England, never to return to Africa. That evening we had an enjoyable braai at Owen's Camp with some of the rebuilt huts of Mgungundlovu clearly visible on the adjoining ridge, listening to the many fascinating stories told by Arthur.

Report by Anita Arnott and Reinoud Boers

Dundee – Mgungundlovu and a fabulous museum

From Owen's Camp we had a clear view of the memorial to Piet Retief and his party.

Accompanied by Gavin Whitelaw and Arthur Konigkramer, this was our first visit of the day. It marks the site where Retief and his men were killed. Later a Voortrekker burial party interred their remains on the site. A large grave stone is simply marked 'Rust en Vrede'. Next to the mass grave lies a small memorial stone placed there by a group called 'Filmakers', who, in 2013, on the 175th anniversary of the Great Trek, made a film along the routes the Voortrekkers had taken. We climbed the hill, which is known as kwaMatiwane, to a small memorial at the top.

Rorkes Drift tapestry at uMgungundlovu Multi-Media Centre

Our next stop was Dingane's capital from 1829 to 1938, Mgungundlovu, the 'Secret Enclave of the Elephant'. It is situated on a ridge with panoramic views of the surrounding valleys and hills. The walls of the first hall is lined with 17 beautiful tapestries illustrating the history of the Zulu kings, created by artists from the famous Rorke's Drift Arts and Crafts Centre. In another hall called the Hall of Kings, we watched an audio-visual on 400 years of Zulu history, from the earliest king in the 17th century. The praise singer to the kings in the video, Inyosi Mdletshe, is currently the praise singer to King Zwelithini. At the entrance to this hall is a plaque that reads 'Bayede' and shows a replica of the king's coat of arms – a leopard skin band with a tail. The guide told us that when people greet the king they must hold their arms out to form a circle such as would be made by two elephant tusks, bow, and say 'Bayede!'

A considerable number of huts at Mgungundlovu have been rebuilt in the traditional beehive shape. Gavin told us that when the huts were in use they would remained insect-free because of the smoke from the fires inside. A University of Cape Town project in 1974, led by John Parkington, had mapped and identified floor, and in 1975 some middens were excavated. Later, Frans Roodt studied the site of Dingane's hut and three homesteads behind it. He found grain pits and bell-shaped holes for casting beads. Brass, which came from India, was used for making tools and ornaments. To round off the Zululand leg of our tour we were taken by Arthur, who has a long association with the politics and history of the area, to the grave of King Jama, one of the ancestral Zulu kings. This gravesite falls under the National Monuments Commission and can only be visited with an authorised guide. It is a simple memorial but looks a little unkempt.

After bidding Gavin and Arthur farewell, we drove to Dundee, where we booked into another grand hotel of the past, the well-kept Royal Country Inn, which is over a hundred years old and has retained much of the atmosphere of the past century. We drove out to the Talana Museum for lunch. Talana means 'The shelf where precious items are stored' and that is a very good description of the museum. It comprises many buildings on a large property situated below Talana Hill, where the first major battle of the Anglo-Boer was fought. The Boers occupied Talana Hill during the night of 19 October 1899. The following morning, when the mist lifted, they shelled the British camp on the other side of the town. The British retaliated and drove the Boers off the Hill, but suffered significant causalities, including their commanding officer, Maj. Gen. Sir William Penn-Symons. Faced with a major threat by the advancing main Boer army, the British evacuated the town two days later.

Reinoud Boers thanks Gavin Whitelaw at Mgungundlovu

At the restaurant, we met by the feisty and enthusiastic curator, Pam McFadden, who took us around the exhibition halls. Pam was the driving force behind the development of the museum. Our first stop was at a small gazebo, which housed a bust of Gandhi. His connection with Dundee stems from his campaign of non-violent resistance and civil disobedience in the early 20th century, when he led local Indian coalminers to demand better conditions and pay. The bronze statue of Gandhi was donated to the museum by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations in New Delhi. An impressive red-brick building, termed 'Coalopolis', is a copy of the powerhouse at Burnside Colliery that closed in 1953. We entered through Henderson Hall and went first to the glass museum. It is believed to be the only glass museum in South Africa and contains a most beautiful and comprehensive display of bottles and decorative glass, including works by Liz Lacy, Shirley Cloete and David Reid. Here one also finds the Bead Gallery, which displays the bead culture of many African groups, as well as the use of beads in Europe and India. Even more impressive was the replica of a coal mine, donated by the Collieries Committee of the Chamber of Mines of South Africa, which had us wandering down long stopes so realistic it was hard to remember that we were at ground level. There were displays of miners' safety lamps and other tools, as well as the work of the proto rescue teams. We did not have time to visit the Satyagraha Centre, a building stemming from 1913, to commemorate Gandhi's passive resistance movement.

Report by Gerry Gallow

ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

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Trading places – connecting the world

Maritime trade and the Indian Ocean, 7th to 14th centuries: a space unified through exchange networks

Rina Faria, freelance bead specialist

The Indian Ocean region – the Monsoon Marketplace, as Ria Faria called it – has played a vital role in the world's commercial and maritime activities. The ocean is a great highway, linking a variety of peoples, cultures and economies. Sixteen countries in Africa, 18 countries in Asia and 57 groups of islands are connected by the Indian Ocean. A dozen land-locked countries have access to it. The seasonal pattern of monsoons meant that sailors using dhows to make long trading voyages would stay in distant ports for months at a time. Merchant

ships were able to sail without the need of protection from state navies for over 800 years, from 600 to 1450. One important factor in the expansion of trade was the economic and political revival of China, especially during the Tang and Song dynasties (618 to 1279). China also provided technological innovations, including larger ships and the magnetic compass, which facilitated trade.

Swahili Coast cities, Islamic empires in the Middle East, India, China and south-east Asia traded bulk goods like cotton cloth, foodstuffs and timber. In eastern Africa the trade route gave birth to some prosperous city states, like Kilwa (in present-day Tanzania), Sofala (Mozambique), and Mombasa and Malindi (Kenya). In Arabia, Persia and India there was a demand for East African products such as gold, ivory, quartz and leopard skins. Al-Mas'udi, an Arab historian and geographer, reported in about 915 that enormous ivory tusks and much gold came from Sofala. This is the earliest evidence of the gold trade out of southern Africa and Great Zimbabwe (1300 to 1450) to Persia, India and China. Imports were silks, spices, cotton and porcelain. Chibuene in southern Mozambique is the site of the earliest-known trading port in southern Africa. Exotic trade goods found there, especially glass beads produced in Middle East, indicate that it was southern Africa's main port of entry from roughly the 8th to the mid-10th century. Some of these beads have also been identified at sites in Botswana, demonstrating that Indian Ocean trade reached far into the interior from an early date.

Mapungubwe (ca. 1050 to 1270) was a nexus for local commerce and the Indian Ocean gold trade. Porcelain made in southern China in the 13th and 14th centuries has been found there. At Manda, an important trading town in northern Kenya, the remains of ivory-working were encountered during excavations. On the Indonesian island of Sumatra, a hoard of Chinese coins was found in a river estuary.

A first-century Greek manuscript, *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, recorded the location of trading depots and ports with enough accuracy for researchers today to be able to match archaeological sites with the text's descriptions. Muslim sailors popularised the astrolabe that made it easier to navigate by the stars. Boats using stern-post rudders were easier to steer and the triangular lateen sail allowed for ships to tack against the wind.

Improvements in trade and communication networks encouraged the spread of religions through conquest, mission work and cross-cultural exchange. Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism spread from India to south-east Asia. In the 7th century, Islam emerged in the Arabian Peninsula. Within one century, Arab conquerors were able to create an empire that extended from northern India to the Iberian Peninsula. As Islam was friendly to commerce, the creation of an Arab empire brought together in a single political system an immense range of economies and cultural traditions, and provided a vast arena for trade. After the 13th century, regions that had previously been heavily influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism became increasingly Islamic. Rulers and elites adopted Islam so they could have religious as well as economic ties to the people they were trading with. Islam did not spread as effectively to Thailand, Laos, Cambodia or Vietnam as these were not major centres of trade.

Report by Hilary Geber

Two centuries of Portuguese presence along the East African coast: changes and continuities

Maria Suriano, Department of History, University of the Witwatersrand

In 1498 the Portuguese began to penetrate a long-established Indian Ocean trade where continental states – where they existed – rarely tried to control maritime matters. The Portuguese presence on the East African coast lasted until the fall of Fort Jesus to Muslim rivals in 1698. Until recently, historians agreed that the arrival of the Portuguese led to the destruction of previous trade networks. This view was based on the use of Portuguese official documents. Now, when we look beyond these sources, or read them 'against the grain', we can conclude that the Portuguese established themselves within existing structures.

The Portuguese came to East Africa by sea in the late 15th century to seek a new way to India, where they wanted to buy spices cheap to sell them dear in Europe. They aimed to undercut the long-established trade on the overland route between southern and eastern Asia and the Mediterranean. The growth of trade was accompanied by a revival of anti-Muslim sentiments among the Portuguese, who hoped to dispossess the Muslim traders who had previously monopolised this trade and, in the process, strike a blow for the 'true faith'. In the first few decades of the 16th century the Portuguese came close to achieving this aim. They sacked several Swahili port cities and made forced conversions to Christianity where previously there had been religious tolerance. They used force to try to monopolise the peaceful; trade of the past in some items and to control and tax the rest. They introduced passes, patrolled the waters of the Swahili coast searching for 'illicit' traders, and sought to force local Swahili rulers to pay a tribute and control the mines of the African plateau.

However, eventually the Portuguese state failed to achieve most of its aims. It could constrain and restrict, but did not have the financial means nor the naval or military ability to suppress the Muslim-dominated trade. Even if the Portuguese had been able to break into this trade, they were unable to monopolise it or to interfere in the processes of production. They found themselves tied into a complex network of commerce between countries bordering the Arabian Sea. Pre-existing Muslim economic links changed little as the Portuguese traded in the same Indian Ocean products. The Portuguese often relied on Muslim-dominated trade networks to acquire trade goods. In the hinterland, they depended on local rulers to allow the passage of goods to the coast. Muslim traders either cooperated actively with the Portuguese in a relationship of mutual dependence, or they continued their trade in locations outside Portuguese control. The Portuguese depended on Goans to build forts, and married Goan and African women. African realities, combined with smuggling and attempts on the part of the Portuguese traders, weakened the official system.

Despite these limitations, we can identify three major changes that followed from their advent in the Indian Ocean. First, the Indian Ocean was linked into an economic and political order that spanned four continents: Asia (Goa), Europe (Lisbon), Africa (the Swahili coast) and South America (Brazil). Secondly, the port of Mozambique became a prominent trading centre on the southern Swahili coast. Third, the Portuguese intrusion into ancient commercial networks opened up 'cracks' in the system that Dutch and English companies would later exploit to gain their own footholds in the commerce of the Indian Ocean.

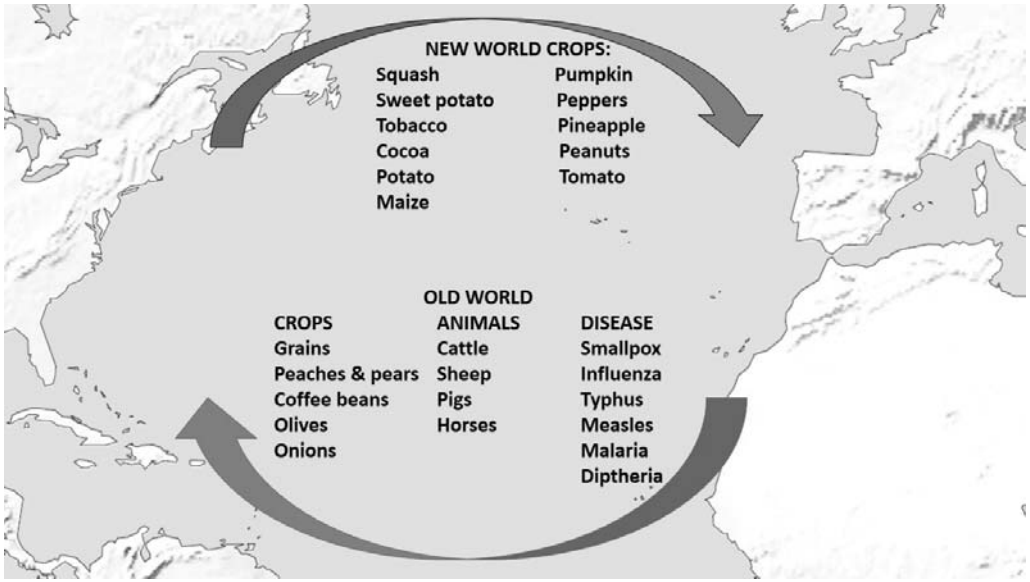
Report by Maria Suriano, edited by John Wright

'In fourteen hundred ninety-two …': the role of the triangular trade and the Columbian exchange in shaping the modern world

Dr Natalie Swanepoel, senior lecturer, UNISA, Pretoria

Dr Natalie Swanepoel extended our horizons westwards. She reminded us that Christopher Columbus had 'discovered' the Americas in 1492 when searching for a sea route to India, thus opening up trade routes in that direction. As a result, the Atlantic became a highway

of trade and ideas between Europe, Africa and the new world. It became known as the 'Triangle of trade' and the term 'Columbian exchange' is used to describe the transfer of animals, plants, people, ideas and, unfortunately, disease. During this time, commodities such as sugar and tobacco were introduced to Europe while others, such as coffee and indigo, made their way westwards to the Americas and the Caribbean. Enslaved labour from West Africa supplied the necessary cheap labour. Natalie developed her talk by choosing three focus areas. She discussed the circulation of ideas in relation to smoking and tobacco in West Africa, the exchange of things by looking at cowrie shells, and the movement of people by exploring the role of Africans in the Americas.



The 'Columbian exchange'

Smoking and tobacco in West Africa

Columbus was offered tobacco soon after he set foot in America and by around 1548, the Spanish had introduced tobacco to Europe. Soon, the smoking of tobacco had become a global habit. Tobacco was introduced to Africa from the Americas in the late 1500s and it gained rapid, widespread popularity and helped to sustain mercantilist and slave-trade economies. Tobacco was imported in bales and carried into the interior by traders. South America had direct access to West Africa whereas North America had to supply tobacco via Europe. Although Africans produced their own pipes, white clay pipes of European manufacture, particularly by the English and the Dutch, were commonly used to purchase slaves. West African pipe manufacturing evolved, with local craftsmen producing a variety of pipes that were aligned with other crafts in their decorative motifs. The stem-socket pipe, consisting of a short stem into which a long stem was inserted, became popular, the design and was possibly based upon similar pipes from the lower Mississippi River. Pipe smoking was ubiquitous in West African society and featured in courtship rituals. Pipes were regarded as valuable and help to date archaeological levels.

Tobacco pipe excavated at the Kpaliworgu site, Upper West Region, Ghana

Cowrie shells were the money of the slave trade

During the period under discussion, cowries were imported in their tens of millions, about 50 to 80 t/y. Known as *moneta*, they were harvested in the Maldives, shipped to Ceylon, then to Europe and eventually to West Africa, where they were used to buy slaves and other goods destined for the New World. The British and the Dutch had the monopoly on the cowry market. Cowrie auctions took place in six different West African towns to satisfy the demand. It was easy to understand why cowrie money was so successful: they are attractive to look at and can be traded by weight, volume or by counting, while being difficult to counterfeit. They are also extremely durable and survive rough sea voyages, camel caravans and crude storage methods without deteriorating. Cowries became the regular market currency over a large part of West Africa, but they were severely devalued in the 19th century by the importation of thousands of tons of cheaper Zanzibar cowries. This glutted the market, causing the currency to collapse. Cowrie shells have featured strongly in West African society to this day, and have been widely used for dowry and funeral payments.

Cowrie headdress, Bolgatanga craft market, Upper East Region, Ghana

'Black Rice': Africans in the Americas

When Africans were sold as slaves, they did not necessarily arrive in the Americas without useful knowledge. They brought with them agricultural experience in the cultivation of crops such as indigo and rice. We do not always think of rice as an African crop but *Oryzagalberrima* (red rice) was domesticated in the Inland Niger Delta in Mali over 3 000 years ago. On the terrible, overcrowded slave-ship voyages, rice was brought along as provision and leftover seed was used to grow crops at the destination. Although the rice trade was soon dominated by Asian varieties, the tidal rice region in South Carolina and Georgia was similar to the West African rice growing area, and the cultivation knowledge brought by the slaves was valued, particularly as rice was sought after in Europe. Slave advertisements marketed slaves 'who are well acquainted with the culture of rice'. Evidence of African culture still exists in rice-growing regions of America. Sweetgrass baskets, originally used for pounding and winnowing rice, are today sold along Highway 17. In the paddy fields, the rice-trunk concept (originally a hollowed-out log) used for regulating water flow, is used both in South Carolina and West Africa. Knowledge transported across the Atlantic has endured.

Report by Pamela Küstner

Phoenician trade: routes, goods and secretive cahoots*

Anne Marie Smith, doctoral student in Biblical Archaeology at Unisa

Anne Marie Smith started her talk by discussing the oldest recorded trading voyage undertaken by the Phoenicians. In about 3000 BC, a convoy of 40 ships transporting cedar wood left a Phoenician port in the Levant and travelled to Egypt. Cedar wood was used in the construction of sarcophaguses because of its pleasant smell. Later, at around 1000 BC, we find the symbol for Phoenician trading ships in Egyptian hieroglyphs. But who were the Phoenicians? The name 'Phoenician' was given to groups of people in and around the Levant by outsiders and does not signify a closed, unified group. Nevertheless, the Phoenicians emerged as a major trading power on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean by about 1200 BC. They were a conglomerate of city states located on rocky outcrops along various coasts. Warships were needed for protection as trading ships, harbours and coastlands were vulnerable to attack by pirates. We find archaeological evidence of Phoenician settlements on the coasts of the Levant, Asia Minor, the Black Sea and the Balkans.

One such port city is that of Ashkelon in Israel. Smith discussed the recent excavation of the remains of 1200 dogs at this city. Why so many dogs were found buried there has long been a mystery. It was previously argued that the dogs were used in ritual healing to lick wounds. However, no cultic healing centre or temple has been found. Smith suggests that the reason for so many dogs being present at Ashkelon could be a Phoenician trade in dogs for hunting purposes. Hunting was a known practice in antiquity and it is likely that the Phoenicians traded dogs extensively in a burgeoning market. The Phoenicians brought back monkeys and peacocks from their expeditions to Ophir, said to be in the East, possibly in the Indus Valley. They also traded beasts of burden in Beth Togarma, which could have been in Anatolia. Ashkelon was devoted to profit-making enterprises and the Tyrians (Phoenicians from Tyria) used Ashkelon as a trading hub.

Report by Law Pinto

· A longer article on the Phoenicians appears in the December 2017 issue of *The Digging Stick*

The Dutch East India Company (VOC) as a 'company state'

Nigel Penn, Professor of History at the University of Cape Town

Prof. Nigel Penn described how the Dutch East India Company (VOC) was a ground-breaking institution of the early-modern period. Launched in 1602, the VOC operated during a period of transition in Europe when communities were migrating from rural to urban settings. Over the 200 years of its operation, the VOC would become one of the most powerful monopolies in the world. While considering itself to be honourable, it was not. The VOC was a hybrid between a trading company and a state as it had its own army and navy, was able to wage war and make treaties, and was able to capitalise on trading opportunities. Although named 'Dutch', it was independent of the Dutch government. The VOC was owned by 17 wealthy men, known as the Heeren XVII, and their combined wealth made them more powerful than either the Dutch or English states. The VOC and its English counterpart, the English East India Company, supplanted the Portuguese state-run businesses that had already established trading posts in the East Indies and elsewhere. It was the Portuguese's lack of independence to act immediately that left them vulnerable to attack.

Jan van Riebeeck arrives at the Cape

The VOC, like its English counterpart, was a merchant venture, which enabled it to appear like a trading company in Europe, while in effect acting like a state overseas. Historians agree, however, that the VOC never intended to colonise, that they were not imperialists but 'emporialists', a word derived from emporium and meaning traders. They only wanted the economic advantages of the goods trade. It wanted to control the spice trade, predominantly emanating from the East Indies, and they were prepared to use military force to gain such control. They were often in conflict with local tribesmen, the English and anyone else who got in the way. Perceiving India to be relatively poor in spices or other goods, the VOC relinquished control of India to the English and established trading posts and colonies in places like Batavia (in modern-day Indonesia) and Malaysia.

With respect to Cape Town, the VOC only intended to start a refreshment station to resupply ships and had no intention of making a profit. Their focus was Batavia, which had 20 000 inhabitants in 1780 compared to just 2 000 in the Cape. Although the Dutch maintained colonies in Asia until after the Second World War, it was the Cape where they established their strongest colonial presence. VOC employees were instructed to grow fresh food for sailors but were not to interfere with existing trade. The modest colony used slaves imported from Batavia and other places to help with the farm work. Many VOC employees in the Cape did get rich but often only by pilfering from the company for which there were generally few consequences and no moral stigma, although some, like Willem van der Stel, did suffer consequences.

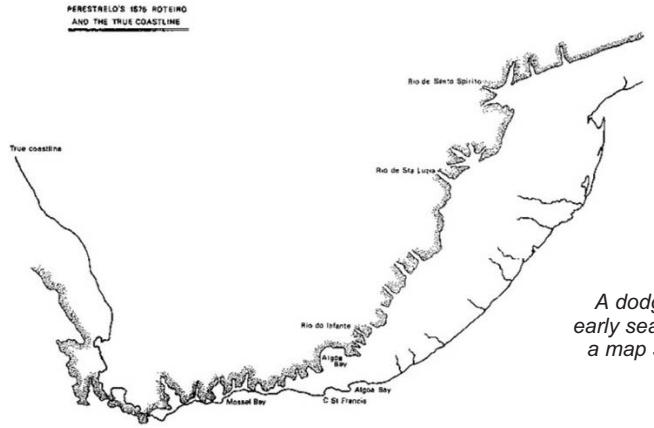
Rank within the company was regarded as more important than wealth, but it was the company's disregard for corruption that was its undoing It was declared bankrupt in the 1790s and collapsed. At the same time in the Cape, energy was being diverted into eliminating corruption and this allowed the British to invade without facing any resistance. Napoleon's invasion of Holland was the death knell for the company, which ceased to exist in 1795 as either a company or a state

Report by Louise Mackechnie

Sunken cargoes: evidence from South African shipwrecks for international maritime trade

John Gribble, maritime archaeologist and manager of the Maritime Underwater Cultural Heritage Unit at the SA Heritage Resources Agency

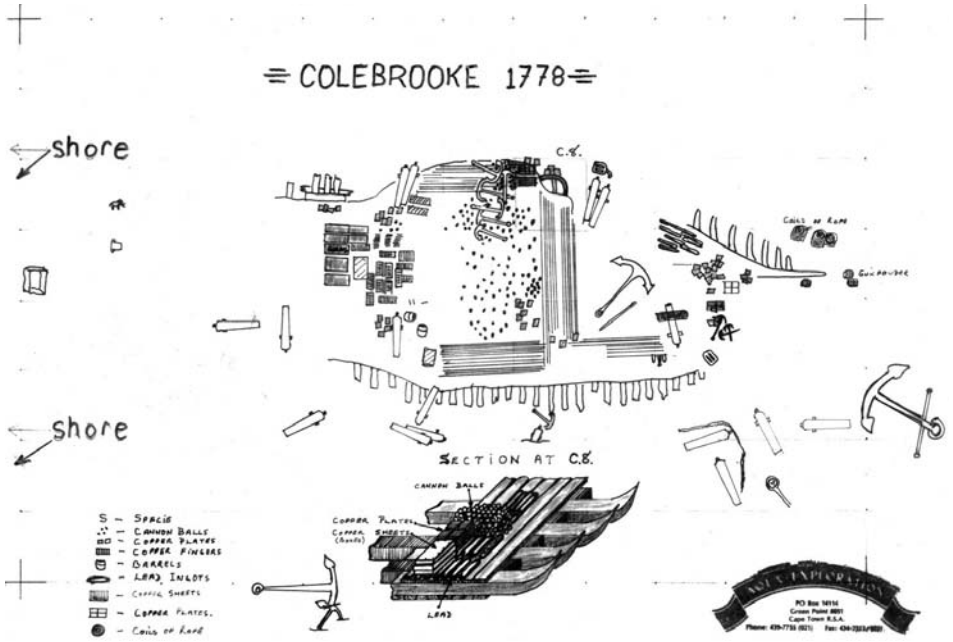
John Gribble emphasised South Africa's pivotal position in east-west maritime trade, with the first documented journey being undertaken in 1488 when Portugal's Bartholomew Diaz travelled as far as modern-day Mossel Bay. He was forced to return home because of an impending mutiny, but ten years later Vasco de Gama completed the journey, pioneering a route to India. This resulted in increasing marine traffic over the generations and has left the South African coast littered with a rich cultural heritage in the form of thousands of shipwrecks from 28 different nationalities. Although archaeologists are interested in all wrecks, including ancient boats from forgotten peoples, currently most is known about those wrecks that carried lucrative payloads. Rather than being thoroughly investigated for all their artefacts but archaeologists, treasure hunters have often plundered them for their riches.



A dodgy map used by early seafarers overlain by a map showing the true coastline

One reason for the abundance of shipwrecks along the South African coast are the dangerous seas and severe weather. In one event in Table Bay in 1865, 18 ships were lost. Other reasons were that early explorers were misled by poor or dodgy maps, some of which may have been planted deliberately, and the fact that early explorers were unable to measure longitude accurately. Both these factors resulted in many shipwrecks occurring close to shore. The vast majority of shipwrecks were ships belonging to the Dutch and English East India companies. On the homeward journeys, these ships usually carried cargoes of porcelain, tea, cotton, silk, and herbs and spices, although some ships had dedicated cargos such as slaves. Cargoes were very valuable and as the shipwrecks often occurred near to shore, surviving sailors were tasked with guarding them. Pepper, a valuable spice, was responsible for a settlement at the Cape as sailors were left in Table Bay for months to guard a cargo of salvaged pepper. Pepper is also known to have caused one ship to sink. The cargo broke free and blocked the pumps, rendering them inoperable when the ship started taking on water.

On the outward journeys ships carried lighter cargoes usually consisting of building materials, such as glass and nails. Ballast was therefore required, and this was commonly in the form of lead



Underwater map of the Colebrook shipwreck, which sank in 1778

ingots or other non-ferrous metals, such as copper, which were sold in the East. These ingots were commonly date-stamped and are useful for dating wrecks. Bullion was also carried on board the ships and urban legend has it that this was often in the form of gold, but it is most likely that it was in the form of silver, which was used a currency in the East. It is the legend of gold that has seduced treasure hunters to explore South African shipwrecks. Modern day maritime archaeologists are more interested in the full range of artefacts and constructing a record of life aboard the ships. John Gribble explained that the lack of oxygen in these marine environments has preserved the wrecks in almost pristine condition. He showed photos that not only of porcelain but also the straw used to pack them, the ropes, and the bottles and jars still filled with pickled foods like olives and fish. He told us that there were several active marine excavations underway and expressed his hope that one day more ancient wrecks would be found.

Report by Louise Mackechnie

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

Lourenço Pinto, branch chairman, presented his report for the year to May 2017 ***(25 May 2017)***

The Northern Branch continued to be the largest branch within the society with approximately 350 members. That number had stayed fairly stable with the inevitable losses being balanced by new members. He urged all members to become ambassadors for archaeology, to help promote the society, and encourage friends and family to join.

The committee had arranged a wide range of interesting archaeological topics and locations for the monthly lectures and outings during the past year. At the previous year's AGM, Prof. Simon Hall, who presented a lecture on Archaeological encounters with recent Karoo history, had been welcomed. This was followed in June by an equally fascinating lecture entitled 'The bees are our sheep', in which Faye Lander looked at the transition to livestock-keeping during the last 2 000 years in southernmost Africa. The July lecture by Prof Stefan Grab looked into how lightning strikes and geomorphic processes in the High Drakensberg have environmental implications that impact archaeological practice. The fifth annual Pretoria lecture, left the confines of South Africa with Dr Ceri Ashley providing a lecture on the archaeology of a 19th century mission station in north-western Botswana. In September, Prof Lyn Wadley gave us a fascinating talk on how archaeologists can learn from the Ju'/hoan San in Nyae Nyae, Namibia. Their way of using traditional glue, adhesive and poison to make composite weapons helps us to understand hunter-gatherer' use of technology in the past. For something completely different, Brendan Billings, in October, took us on a journey into the Nile crocodile's brain to find the beginnings of cognitive ability. In February this year, Christa Kuljian presented a critical review of science, race and the search for human origins. In March, Dr Alex Schoeman outlined the story of an African farmscape looking at soils, climate change and farming innovations in Soputh Africa's Bokoni region. The next month, Dr Elizabeth van Heyningen provided a talk on the concentration camps of the South African War and the reasons behind the high mortality rate of so many young children, which lead to quite a heated discussion.

With the outings of the past year the committee had also tried to balance a variety of interests, from a visit to the Iron Age sites of the Pilanesberg with Francois Coetzee and Graham Reeks, and a later visit to Telperion and Ezemvelo nature reserves near Bronkhorspruit, which boast stone walling, an old furnace and slag, the graves of the Anglo-Boer War and rock art. In July, the hominid site of Swartkrans in the Cradle of Humankind was visited. Dr Morris Sutton led members around the site where archaeologists found the fossils of *Paranthropus robustus* and early Homo. In September, for Heritage Day, a walking tour was enjoyed of Sophiatown led by Mbali Zwane and her children who entertained members with songs from Sophiatown of yesteryear. In October, the committee finally managed to arrange a trip to Suikerbosrand. The resort had been plagued by problems and when the tour was finally on the way, the coach broke down. However, Karim Sadr and guests did not allow their spirits to be dampened and the tour was still a success. In November we had an opportunity to visit the Standard Bank Gallery for a walkabout with Jill Weintraub through the exhibition 'On the Trail of Qing and Orpen'. To end 2016, we took the cableway up the Magaliesberg with Professor Morris Viljoen and had interesting geological and historical discussions.

This year started with a bang with a controversial outing to Freedom Park in Pretoria led by Badresh Kara. The tour led to heated discussions on who and which events should be commemorated, and which should not. Following this, in March, we explored our backyard when we went on a walking graffiti tour of Braamfontein with Jo Buitendach. Extended tours to the southern Cape coast and the Klein Karoo with Dr Janette Deacon last year, and Kwa-Zulu Natal with Dr Gavin Whitelaw this year, were most memorable. Reinoud Boers was thanked for arranging these tours.

Last year's Annual Symposium was entitled 'Pushing the Boundaries – Issues in Southern African Archaeology'. Six speakers provided a series of lectures that included 'Controversies in defining humanity and intelligence in archaeology: lessons from our early hominin ancestors' by Matt Caruana, 'Back to the future in Later Stone Age research' by Tim Forssman, 'The infiltration of the first herders south of the Zambezi and their relation to contemporary East and Central African cultures' by Karim Sadr, and 'Moving beyond cultural boxes in southern African Iron Age research' by Foreman Bandama. A thorough talk on contested interpretation in rock art research was given by Jill Weintraub and lastly Ndukuyakhe Ndlovu gave us a sobering but optimistic presentation on the future of archaeology in southern Africa and why archaeology matters. The event was well supported and greatly enjoyed by all present.

In August and September of 2016, Reinoud Boers organised an extended tour of Anatolia, Mesopotamia and eastern Turkey. A few sites could not be reached because of military action in the region. The tour included good archaeological lectures and visits, and offered a once-in-a-lifetime experience for participants.

The chairman thanked all the speakers and tour or outing leaders who had provided their expertise during the past year. He also made special reference to the continued support that the committee and the branch received from the academic communities of the Witwatersrand, Pretoria, UNISA and Johannesburg universities, as well and independent professionals. The chairman made special mention of the help and assistance the committee received throughout the year from the branch's eight patrons. They are Professors Tom Huffman, David Lewis-Williams, Karim Sadr, Innocent Pikirayi, Francis Thackeray, Lyn Wadley, Jan Boeyens, and Bruce Rubidge. Links with National Council in Cape Town had been maintained through three committee representatives and the Branch's external representative Dr Janette Deacon. A special thanks to Janette.

The Northern Branch and its members are very fortunate to be able to produce a publication twice a year called *Artefacts.* Consisting of reports of lectures and outings of the branch, it is compiled and edited by Reinoud and Marion Boers, with John Wright as sub-editor. The chairman thanked them for what was not always an easy task of collecting the reports. The Boers are also responsible for the glossier Society publication of the *Digging Stick,* which is an interesting magazine enjoyed by members and academics.

The Northern Branch is very proud of its continuing policy of supporting archaeological research and education by providing funds for research projects. At the Annual Pretoria lecture, held in August last year, the Hanisch prizes were awarded to the top students at the University of Pretoria and in May this year the chairman attended the University of the Witwatersrand annual prize-giving for the Science Faculty and presented two van Riet Lowe prizes. This is a joint prize awarded by the society and the university through the van Riet Lowe Trust. Barbara Dunn was chosen for the UNISA award in view of the excellent work which she produced for her BA Honours archaeology research project, entitled *Cultures of copying: an archival and digital re-examination of the copies of Abbé Breuil from his 1948 and 1950 expeditions to Namibia's Erongo Mountains*. This award was presented by Jan Boeyens at the Kwa-Zulu Natal AGM in May this year. This branch received a number of applications for 2017 research grants. After due consideration, a R15 000 grant was awarded to Dawn Green, an archaeologist in the Eastern Cape, for producing a booklet on rock art in the area to be distributed to settlements, schools and museums. In her words: 'I wish you could know what an impact this will have on our school children and rural communities, many of whom have absolutely no access to information'.

A major change in the past year was that the name of the branch was changed from the Trans-Vaal Branch to Northern Branch at a special general meeting last year. The branch is managed by a dynamic team of committee members without whom the task as chairperson would be impossible. He gave special thanks to Gerry Gallow's T team – Marylyn McManus and Dot Mepham. The chairman remembered a number of friends and colleagues that had passed on. He acknowledged Norman Blight, Professor Erskin, Grant Walker, Stephen Tooke, Rodney Maud and Peter Beaumont. He thanked all members who had enthusiastically supported our efforts throughout the year and helped the branch thrive.