



SAHRA NEWS

SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY



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Bošwa jwa Setšhaba

UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA



DIVING ON A 19TH CENTURY WRECK, TABLE BAY



ROPES AND BOTTLES, THE COLEBROOK (1778), FALSE BAY

(PHOTO COURTESY OF C.SHAPIRO)

One of the many strands woven into the historical tapestry of our Rainbow Nation is the underwater cultural heritage to be found on and around our shores. Pre-colonial maritime sites, such as shell middens and fish traps, line the South African coast, and contain some of the oldest evidence in the world for the exploitation by modern humans of marine resources, dating back nearly 100 000 years.

Also scattered along the coast are thousands of shipwrecks, the physical remains of

the maritime expansion of Europe into the rest of the world from the 15th century. These sites contain information about the economics, politics and daily life of the maritime past, and preserve evidence of social practices - slavery for instance - that had a profound effect on the development of South Africa's recent social history. They serve to remind and inform us about the forces, which for better or worse had a profound effect on the recent history of South Africa, and helped to shape the nation we are today.

South Africa's historical shipwrecks and other maritime archaeological sites form a heritage resource that is both rich and diverse. Thousands of pre-colonial sites lie alongside at least 2700 historical shipwrecks of 38 different nationalities. As archaeological sites, these sites together contain a veritable treasure trove of information, which can throw light on a wide range of historical questions, of both national and international importance.

CONTACT: JONATHAN SHARFMAN NIKOLAY MAVRODINOV SHAWN BERRY - SAHRA MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGISTS



SAHRA's Vision is:

To identify, conserve, protect & promote our heritage for the present & future generations.



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The growing awareness of heritage conservation issues in South Africa reflects an international trend. Conservation of the cultural landscape has become a specialised field in its own right, guided by principles which have been set out in various conservation charters adopted by international and national conservation bodies.

These charters expound the values of universal appeal – but an ensuing debate in heritage circles begs the question as to what degree do these charters relate to Afro-Asian concepts of heritage? It is felt that these principles, terminologies and decisions on criteria would have to be redressed to truly portray a transparent and inclusive concept of outstanding universal appeal (a point raised at the World Heritage Convention, Durban 2005).

As the organisation that is responsible for the protection of places of cultural significance in South Africa, Sahra considers the adoption of a set of internationally acceptable principles which relate to South Africa's social, cultural and physical situation to be essential for the development of a sound conservation ethic and practice in this country. The precise usage of standardised terminology also contributes to clarity and understanding in the discussion of heritage conservation issues.

This approach aims to promote good management of the cultural landscape and to enable and encourage communities to nurture and conserve their legacy/ies.

We hope that the SAHRA newsletters create public awareness of the importance of heritage and the processes and procedures involved. Our focus is to be informative and educative, concentrating on the “why’s” and “how’s” and “importance” of heritage, in the South African context.

SOLAYMAN EBRAHIM



SAHRA HERITAGE CELEBRATIONS, LANGA - WESTERN CAPE

...there are many wonderful and charming stories and nursery rhymes that have their origin in England and Europe. I think it is fine to expose our children to those that teach universal lessons. Unfortunately, most still harbour crude and debilitating stereotypes that skulk between the lines. Surely it's time someone thought of doing a collection of poems, rhymes and songs that would be more relevant to contemporary South African children. Luckily, we are able to find a growing collection of African and South African children's books, but apart from the wonderful Thula Project, a CD collection of South African lullabies, there is virtually nothing to choose from that reflects a South African or African heritage.

- MARIANNE THAMM
FAIRLADY NOVEMBER 2004





SAHRA NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCIAL OFFICE (NCPO)

IDENTIFICATION AND DECLARATION OF SITES

Four sites have been identified as potential sites for grade 1 status. viz: Sol Plaatje House (No 32 Angel Street), Kuruman Moffat Mission Station, the Kimberley Big Hole and Hope Town Concentration Camp Cemetery.

HERITAGE AWARENESS PROGRAMMES

Learners from secondary schools were provided an opportunity to showcase South Africa's National Heritage through participation in a schools' debate competition.

THEME FOR DEBATES: HERITAGE CONSERVATION-A FUTURE FOR OUR PAST.

Learners presented their chosen topics, eg. Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Identifying Significant National Heritage Sites in the Province, Heritage Interpretation and Cultural Village trails , Ethics and Norms vs Economy.

Learners were judged on the following Assessment Criteria:

- Is their message related to the theme?
- Clear and Logical Use of Language
- Quality of presentation

Three winning schools were awarded trophies and medals. Other participants were awarded medals.

Excursions to identified sites in the Province during the year would include:

- Wonderwerk Cave
- The Kuruman Eye
- Kuruman Moffat Mission

PARTNERSHIPS

The NCPO has established positive working relations with the following stakeholders:

- Dept. Sport, Arts and Culture
- Mc Gregor Museum
- Sol Plaatje Museum
- SAHFIRO, etc



MOFFAT HOUSE



SOL PLAATJE

SA TOURISM

“BOVA”- 56 YEARS AFTER

One of the projects of the SAHRA Mpumalanga province was the Waterval Boven (also known as “bova”) train disaster of the 16th November 1949.



PREMIER OF THE PROVINCE, THE HON. TM MAKWETLA

BACKGROUND

Ever since the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand, workers were sourced out in neighbouring states like Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Angola, Malawi and Mozambique to work on the mines. These workers were transported by train to and from their respective countries

One of these trains derailed on the bridge above the Elands River.

62 mineworkers from Mozambique died in this tragedy and 53 of them were subsequently buried in an unmarked mass grave in Waterval Boven. This is one of the sites that link our country with one of our neighbouring states, Mozambique, under the theme “THE TIES THAT BOND US”.

These “Mozambican ties” are the Delagoa Bay line from Johannesburg to Maputo, the Samora Machel memorial (scene of the plane crash) and the Nkomati border post.

A memorial was unveiled by the Premier of the Province, the Hon. TM Makwetla on the 26th November 2005, in memory of these and other workers who died in the line of hard labour in South African mines.

NASENSKOLEN



“If we look into the future (of South Africa), is it not a heritage we need to leave to posterity, that all the different races co-mingle & produce a civilization that perhaps the world has not yet seen?”

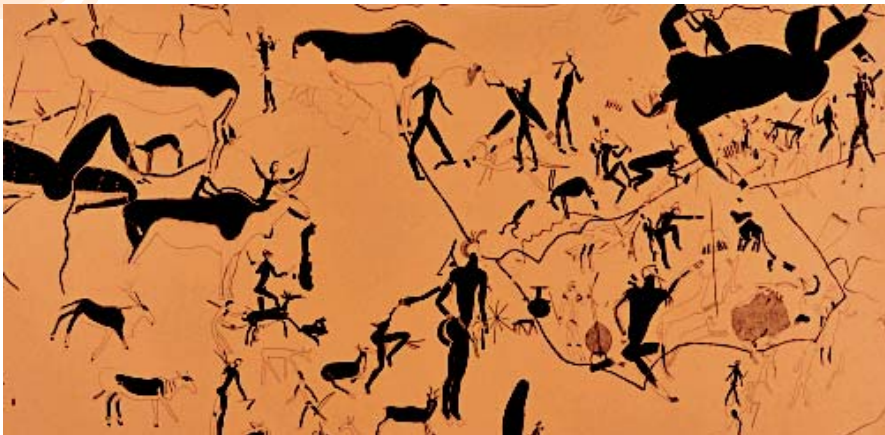
M.K. Gandhi, in his speech in JHB in 1908.

CONTACT: MOLEBIEMANG MANONG (MS) - PROVINCIAL MANAGER - SAHRA NORTHERN CAPE OFFICE

CONTACT: NEO JANUARY - PROVINCIAL MANAGER - SAHRA MPUMALANGA OFFICE



THE /XAM PEOPLE AND THEIR LANGUAGE



THE FIGURE IN OUR COAT OF ARMS COMES FROM THE LINTON PANEL, A FAMOUS PANEL OF ROCK ART NOW HOUSED AND DISPLAYED IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM IN CAPE TOWN. IN 1917, THIS PANEL WAS REMOVED FROM THE FARM OF LINTON IN THE MACLEAR DISTRICT IN THE EASTERN CAPE.

Very little is known about the languages of South Africa's San people, as most of these beautiful, ancient languages were never recorded. Fortunately, the /Xam language was recorded almost in its entirety, thanks to the work of a German linguist, Dr WHI Bleek.

/Xam speakers originally occupied a large part of western South Africa. By 1850, only a few hundred /Xam speakers lived in remote parts of the Northern Cape.

Today, the language is gone. But it survives in 12 000 pages of hand-written testimony taken down word-for-word from some of the last /Xam speakers in the 1860s and 1870s. These pages record not just the /Xam language, but also their myths, beliefs and rituals. A comprehensive /Xam dictionary was produced by Dr Bleek at that time, but was only published years later. (DF Bleek, 1956. A Bushman Dictionary. New Haven, American Oriental Society).

A /Xam rendering of 'Unity in Diversity' (The motto on the South African Coat of Arms.)

Like most San groups, the /Xam people did not use abstract nouns. They had no words to equate exactly with the English concepts of 'unity' or 'diversity'. 'Unity in Diversity', therefore, has no exact

/Xam equivalent. The closest equivalent /Xam phrase is:- !ke e: /xarra //ke which, if translated literally, means: diverse people unite. The phrase can be written in lower case or capitals.

The symbols used for the click sounds follow the Lepsius-Rhenish Mission Society-Bleek system developed in the 19th century. This remains the standard system used by most authors when representing clicks in Khoisan languages.

The three clicks in the phrase:-

!ke e: /xarra //ke are:

- !** Place the tip of the tongue against the gum root in the middle of the mouth and click hard. This is similar to the q sound in Zulu, for example in iqanda (egg)
- k** Not pronounced and followed by a short ê sound, as in nest.
- e:** A very long ê which is pronounced with a dip in the voice, like a sheep bleating; similar to ê-hê-hê-hê.
- /** Place the tongue softly against the root of the teeth in the middle front of the mouth. Then click with the middle of the tongue. The sound is similar to the c sound in Zulu, for example in ucingo (telephone).
- x** Similar to a prolonged gggg sound in Afrikaans, leading to ggarra.
- //** Another click, this time with the side of the tongue against the palate, similar to the x sound in the word Xhosa. The k is not pronounced.

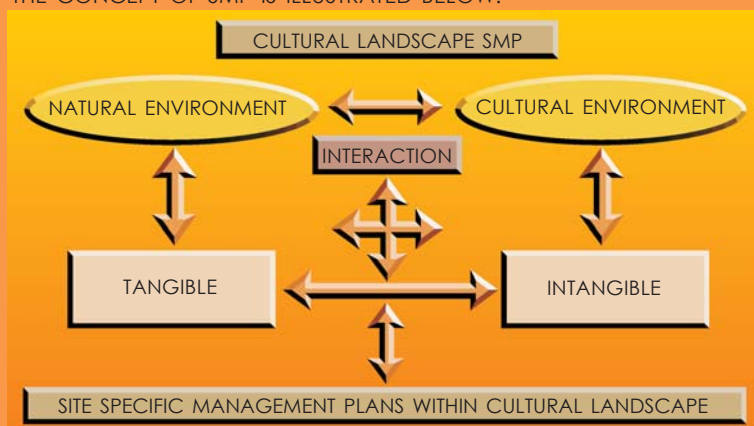
SOURCE: DR BEN SMITH, WITS ROCK ART INSTITUTE.

SITE MANAGEMENT PLANS [SMP'S]

Site Management Plans are an integral part of SAHRA's work. SAHRA has recently developed a policy for SMP's. Most if not all of our heritage sites are usually large cultural landscapes. Each landscape has a natural and a cultural component. Each in turn has a tangible and an intangible component. Within such landscapes we also have smaller component sites. Each smaller site may need a different man-

agement approach and hence a different site specific management plan. All of these components react to and interact with one another and with humans who ascribe meaning to these sites. For instance, the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape has Iron Age archaeological sites that need to be treated differently from rock art sites or fossil sites. Most of our Cultural Landscapes need an overarching SMP which integrates the natural and cultural, tangible and intangible, as well as specific site components. Why? Because some natural events such as fire, drought, floods may affect cultural aspects of a site. Clearing alien vegetation is often a natural environmental necessity but when such aliens are attached to the cultural aspects of the landscape they need to be managed more appropriately than the wholesale clearance of such vegetation. Hence the need for integration. Likewise some

THE CONCEPT OF SMP IS ILLUSTRATED BELOW:



cultural aspects may not be that significant when the natural environment is taken into perspective. The Cape vegetation is an example where biodiversity may be the key and not necessarily relatively insignificant cultural aspects. We also ascribe meaning in intangible forms to these tangibles. The Protea has a culturally derived [intangible] meaning when it is attached to our cricket team or is represented as our national flower.

CONTRIBUTED BY R VINEY: CULTURAL HERITAGE OFFICER-SAHRA



TSHIGOMBELA DANCERS



VENDA DRUMMERS

LIVING HERITAGE UNIT

There are many possible definitions of living/intangible heritage but they all show that it is socially constructed, and it mostly manifests itself in intangible form. Intangible heritage informs the practicing community about who they are and their past that has formed them. Immaterial heritage is transmitted by usage, and observation through individuals, families, community, and society usually orally or by practice. It can be defined as a collection of practices, traditions, expressions, skills, and knowledge that are passed from one generation to the next. This understanding forms a complex system of knowledge that is unique to a particular population within a specific geographical area.

This financial year continues to unfold numerous exciting opportunities and challenges that seem to broaden the conservation scope of heritage resources. Since living heritage is a relatively new field within the South Africa heritage fraternity, SAHRA is continuously embarking on a radical campaign of raising awareness and public education regarding the importance of conserving living heritage as well as the benefits to be realized in this course.

CONTACT: THABO MANETSI - MANAGER OF LIVING HERITAGE UNIT





SOME TERMINOLOGY

- CONSERVATION means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.
- CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE is the aesthetic, historical, scientific and social value for past, present and future generations.
- PLACE means site, area, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, together with pertinent contents, surroundings and historical and archaeological deposits.
- HISTORIC means significant in history.
- HISTORICAL means belonging to the past.
- PRESERVATION means protecting and maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration or change, and may include stabilization



LANGA PASS OFFICE

where necessary. PRESERVATION is appropriate where the existing state of the fabric itself constitutes evidence of specific cultural significance, or where insufficient evidence is available to allow other conservation processes to be carried out.

- RESTORATION means returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by re-assembling existing components. It is based on respect for all the physical, documentary and other evidence and stops at the point where conjecture begins. Restoration is

limited to the completion of a depleted entity and should not constitute the major part of the fabric. RESTORATION is appropriate only if there is sufficient evidence of an earlier state of the fabric and if returning the fabric to that state recovers the cultural significance of the place. RESTORATION is appropriate where a place is incomplete as a result of damage or alteration and where it is necessary for its survival, or if it recovers the cultural significance of the place.



PHOTO: CAPE PRODUCTIONS

SAHRA HEAD OFFICE

;-) "Yes, it snows in Cape Town"

The making of a Smart Car ad flighted in Europe.

ARCHIVES

SAHRA is tasked in terms of the NHRA (No. 25 of 1999) to establish and maintain an inventory of the national estate. Part of this network is the Archives in the SAHRA Registry Section.

The Archives contain existing heritage conservation records generated by SAHRA and its predecessors. This includes information of all heritage sites and any other places and objects with which SAHRA and its predecessors have been involved. More specifically, it contains information on sites and objects protected through the publication of notices in the Government Gazette or Provincial Gazette.

Access To The Public : Heritage conservation records may be accessed, provided that the information may be withheld if its disclosure may impact negatively on the privacy or economical interests of the owner or any person with an interest in a property, or a potential investor, or on the continued conservation of a heritage resource.



from left to right: ASHLEY VAN DIEMAN (senior Registry Clerk), PETER FARMER (Head Information and Auxiliary Services) and BENEDICT RODGERS (senior Registry Clerk).



COURTESY "SOUTH AFRICAN COUNTRYLIFE" MARCH 2003

ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological sites are places where people lived and left evidence of their presence in the form of artefacts, food remains and other traces such as rock paintings or engravings, burials, fireplaces and structures.

The NHRA protects all archaeological sites, especially those that were inhabited by the indigenous people of South Africa.

More than a century ago, Charles Darwin stood almost alone when he argued that Africa was the most likely place for the origin of humanity.

Anatomically modern humans, people like us, have been living in Africa for at least the last 120,000 years. Europe, by contrast has had anatomically modern human occupants for just the last third of this time period. These early Europeans, like the first inhabitants of Asia, Australasia and the Americas were all, ultimately, descended from the same, African ancestry.

Everyone living on earth today shares this ancestry. We are all Africans. Africa also gave the world technology and culture: as the oldest stone tools dating back to more than two million years ago are found in Africa.

San hunter-gatherers, who lived all over South

Africa, were still making stone tools in the late nineteenth century. Their rock art is one of South Africa's greatest heritage treasures.

But, where did modern human behaviour begin? This is a difficult question to answer. Until recently, some people equated this with the figurative art in the cave of Chauvet in France. It dates to some 33,000 years ago.

Amongst the oldest dated figurative art in Africa comes from Apollo 11, a site near to the Namibia - South Africa border. Here, pieces of painted stone were found buried in ground deposits dating to 27,000 years before present. Although this is younger than the French find, many have predicted, on the basis that modern humans evolved in Africa, that evidence of the oldest art would, eventually, be found in Africa.

In January 2002, news of a key new discovery on the southern Cape coast was made public. Professor Chris Henshilwood announced the uncovering of a piece of ochre decorated with a delicate geometric pattern (see picture above). He dated the piece conservatively at 77,000 years old.

Certainly, the piece was made before any modern human had walked in Europe. Africa is not only the cradle of humankind, but seems also to be the place where art and culture as we know it, began.



INTERNATIONAL HERITAGE AND SAHRA:

PROTECTING THE MIJIKENDA FORESTS OF KENYA.

“Never wear anything above the knees or too revealing, but most importantly, respect the values of the particular culture or cultures that are your hosts”.

Advice given to the twenty-two participants of the Africa 2009’s Seventh Regional course on conservation and management of immovable cultural heritage (held in Kenya).

The Rabai Cultural Landscape (see Figure 1) was identified as the site for which a conservation management plan was needed. Named after the Rabai people who are one of the nine Mijikenda tribes of Kenya. Kayas were originally fortified villages of the Mijikenda people used as a defensive measure against their enemies.



FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

Rabai Kaya elders (see Figure 2) were concerned that the Kayas were threatened. The aim of the exercise was for participants to learn how to produce a conservation management plan.

Some of the taboos associated with the Kayas:

- No shoes when entering the Kaya
- No menstruating women allowed in the Kaya
- Tangas (sarongs) to be worn when entering the forest.
- Non-Rabais cannot become elders
- Curses are put on those who cut down trees in the Kaya, without the permission of the Kaya elders.



A SACRED POND IN KAYA MUDZI MUVYA

The most sacred sites, for instance, where the Fingo are buried, were not shown to participants. In the past, most Mijikenda, would have lived in the centre of the Kaya where the Fingo is buried (see Figure 3).

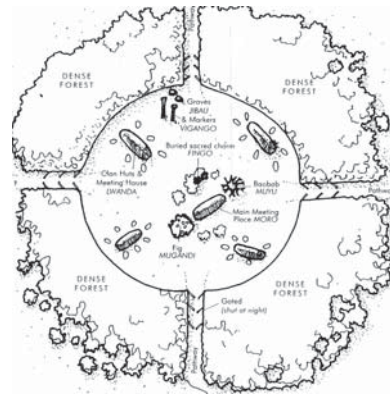


FIGURE 3

The following were some of the threats identified in Kaya Mudzi Muvya:

- The collection of fire wood.
- Encroachment by farming
- Erosion

Due to the Rabai community’s participation from the onset of the process, a platform was created for different interests groups in the community to listen and talk to each other.

Irrespective of the participant’s previous heritage skills, all worked together to gain the valuable skills for producing a conservation management plan.

Contributed by Cecilene Muller:Heritage Objects Officer:SAHRA (Special thanks to CHDA and all participants of the Africa2009 programme who contributed to a collection of images).

SAHRA NEWS
SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

- Info on SAHRA provincial offices
- More info on our national and world heritage sites
- What makes a site a national or world heritage site?
- Explanation of even more jargon
- More about the NHRA (our Act)
- Our council members and committees

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE OR CONTACT

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