



Past Projects

Peers Cave

Peers Cave is situated in the Fish Hoek Valley on the Cape Peninsula of the Western Cape. It was previously known as Skildegat Kop (after its rock paintings), and was renamed after the Peers, a father and son team, who extensively excavated the cave from 1927. Their work produced 12 skeletons, including the rather famous Fish Hoek Man, previously believed to be dated from the upper Pleistocene. The remaining skeletons were more reliably dated to the Later Stone Age (LSA) and were found in association with ostrich eggshell beads, shell pendants, rusted iron, a leather bag, fragments of woven reed, mother-of-pearl ornaments, pieces of rope, bored stones, bone awls, and arrow points (Stynder 2009).

In 1947 Keith Jolly continued the work started by the Peers men, and later in 1963 the cave was again excavated by Barbara Anthony. The various excavations removed a considerable amount of deposit, and occurred before many modern archaeological practices were introduced; meaning that, among other things, some of the material that we look for and preserve has previously been discarded. Many questions that we ask today were not considered then (especially in 1927), and many of the answers to these questions are contingent on finding artefacts and remains *in situ*.

Prof Tom Volman from Cornell University invited the ACO to assist at Peers Cave, along with Royden Yates, to find out if, and how much, *in situ* deposit was still intact in the cave. The old excavations were opened up to examine the remaining sections, and to allow for a more detailed survey. Sadly the team

Phone: 021-7064104

Fax to e-mail: 086 6037195

www.aco-associates.com

Postal: C/O 8 Jacobs Ladder, St James, 7945

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found that very little *in situ* deposit remained from the terminal Pleistocene, and it was decided not to mount a major excavation.



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