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The aim of *Southern African Field Archaeology* is to communicate basic data to professional archaeologists and the public.

Manuscripts of original research undertaken in southern Africa will be considered for publication. These may include reports of current research projects, site reports, rock art panels, rescue excavations, contract projects, reviews, notes and comments. Students are encouraged to submit short reports on projects. *Southern African Field Archaeology* also welcomes general information on archaeological matters such as reports on workshops and conferences.

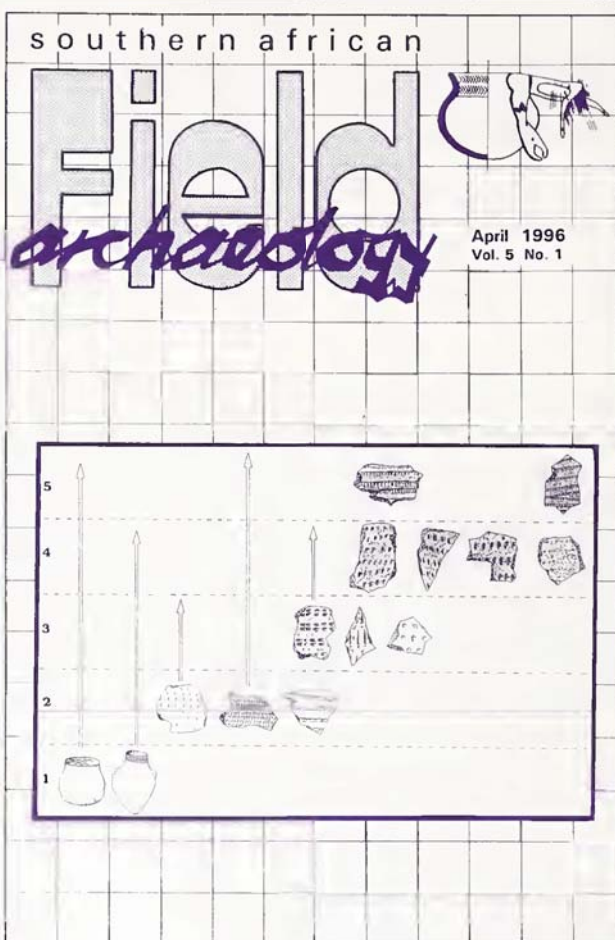
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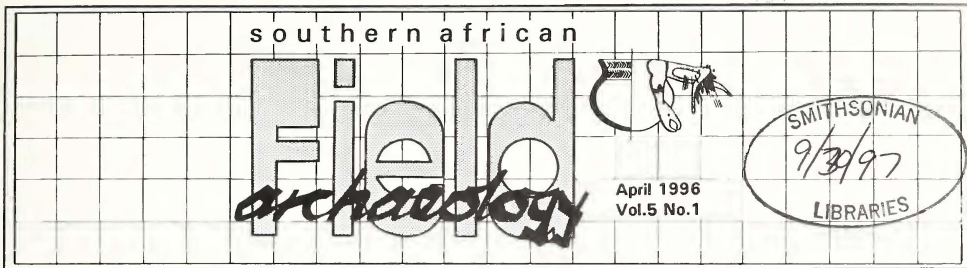
Cover illustration:
Diagram of ceramic types and motifs from rock shelters in the upper Karoo, p. 3.

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OPINIONS

The activities of the Southern African Association of Archaeologists Education Standing Committee over the last year or so have included the organisation of an 'Archaeological representation in school history syllabuses' workshop, provincialising the interim core history syllabus, and liaising with the Parliamentary Education Portfolio Committee. At the SA3 conference held in Bloemfontein in July 1996 it was clear that public education is a strong concern of many archaeologists. Increasing numbers of our profession are involved in *curriculum* content formulation, teacher and pupil training, and resource material production.

The proposed new *curriculum* framework for General and Further Educational Training represents a drastic departure from the content-based core (subject) *curricula* and syllabuses with which most of us are familiar. On the other hand, we need to reformulate our archaeological contribution to school-based teaching and learning. Our input should contribute to areas of learning as diverse as Economic Education and Physical and Natural Sciences, for example. In doing so, we should provide a thematic rather than a chronological picture of the past, with learning outcomes clearly identified.

On the other hand, archaeologists need to examine closely the emphases and structures of their research programmes, particularly in view of the number of frozen posts in institutions throughout the country. Perhaps our research should be structured to encourage a popular awareness of the ways in which people have contributed to South Africa's multicultural identity. This could mean that our activities do not directly benefit archaeology as a discipline at all. Instead,

we could foster an understanding and acceptance of diversity, and promote the tolerance that our multicultural society requires.

If we excavate sites for their potential social and political value, research designs should allow (and budget for) the widest dissemination of heritage information possible. If we achieve this by inviting members of the public to excavate our sites, who should be involved? School pupils and teachers, or foreign students and visitors who pay their own way? Or should we restrict our activities as public archaeologists to writing articles for popular publications, and obtaining local media coverage?

Both public and research-orientated archaeologists would benefit the future of our discipline by

going beyond the acknowledgement that archaeology has a social and political role to play through education. We need to accord public archaeology the same recognition that has traditionally gone to rock art studies and historical and spatial archaeology, for example. If institutions obtain funding to establish public archaeology programmes, we will be able to lay legitimate claim to social and political relevance and possibly defrost those frozen posts.

Beth Wahl
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