

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/233/0004
	Site Name	Sterkfontein Caves, Zwartkrans, Krugersdorp District
	Date	
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-26.016754, 27.733573

Page No: 1 **SiteAutoID:** 26820

Site Category: Archaeological

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: The Sterkfontein Caves are situated about eleven kilometres from Krugersdorp, on the farm Swartkrans. They are reached by a district road that turns off to the right from the road that leads from Krugersdorp to Hekpoort. The caves are not only of great interest to the ordinary visitor, but the vicinity is famous for its extremely rich and important prehistoric remains. As far as is known these caves were first discovered between 2nd January, 1896, and 12th July, 1897. Three years later they were opened to visitors when the drip- stone deposits were exploited for lime. In 1895 an eminent geologist, Dr. D. Draper, reported the discovery of fossil bones in the vicinity, but many years were to pass before the Sterkfontein and other caves became famous as the result of the work of Dr. Robert Broom and others, as well as the announcement of his discovery of parts of a fossilised skull and jawbone of a manlike ape known to science as Plesianthropus transvalensis. The fossils occur in breccia, which consists of earth, rock fragments and fossil bone material naturally calcified into a hard mass by lime from the surrounding dolomite. Subsequent work by scientists of the Transvaal Museum and the University of the Witwatersrand led to the discovery of remains of other animals that were contemporary with the manlike apes. More recent work by Dr. R. J. Mason, subsequently extended by Prof. P. V. Tobias of the University of the Witwatersrand on the western extension of the Sterkfontein site, has revealed numerous stone implements which Dr. Robinson ascribes not to Australopithecus but to Telanthropus, a more advanced form which Dr. Robinson believes had already reached human status. The caves and 3,4 hectares of land round them were protected by proclamation in 1945. Some years later the children of the former owner of the farm, the late Mr. I. E. Stegmann, donated 17 hectares including the proclaimed area to the University of the Witwatersrand as a nature reserve and for scientific research. This is now called the Isaac Edwin Stegmann Nature Reserve in honour of the former owner and the proclamation has been extended to include the whole reserve. Proclaimed 1945" Visual Description: Colours: Site Features: Condition: Construction Date: Materials: Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

Damage Types: