

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/008/0003
	Site Name	Canteen Kopje, Barkly West, Northern Cape
	Date	
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-28.542571, 24.532245

Page No: 1 **SiteAutoID:** 29476

Site Category: Archaeological

Directions:

High

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: Just after crossing the historic bridge over the Vaal River one reaches the town of Barkly West. To the right of the road, between the town and the river, is an area where the coarse river gravels seem to have been churned up and pushed into heaps by giant moles. This is Canteen Koppie, an area of importance in the history both of the exploitation of diamonds and the development of archaeology in South Africa. After the first diamond had been picked up near Hopetown in 1867, others were found sporadically along the Vaal River until 1869 when rich alluvial diamond-bearing gravels were discovered at Canteen Koppie which was then known as Klipdrift. Thousands of diggers from all over South Africa congregated there and many came from overseas. A dispute now arose over the possession of the diamond-bearing terrain. The claimants were the South African Republic, the Orange Free State, the Griqua Chief Niklaas Waterboer and certain Koranna, Barolong and Bathlaping Chiefs. While this dispute was in progress in the middle of 1870, the diggers declared their own republic at Klipdrift, with Stafford Parker as President. When M. W. Pretorius, President of the Zuid.Afrilcaansche Republiek tried to exercise jurisdiction over the area, the diggers simply ignored him. Meanwhile England also took part in the dispute over the ownership of the area and appointed John Campbell as magistrate at Klipdrift, in terms of the authority granted to it by the Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act. Campbell's authority was somewhat vague but it represented the beginning of British administration of the area which was soon to be known as Griqualand West. In 1871 Sir Henry Barkly, Governor of the Cape Colony and British High Commissioner for South Africa, visited Klipdrift and was entertained with great ceremony by the diggers. Indeed, Klipdrift was later renamed Barkly West in his honour. At the beginning of 1871 diamonds were discovered on the farms Vooruitzigt, Buitfontein and Dorstfontein. The diggers transferred their attention from the alluvial diggings to the deep diggings and Barkly West was almost deserted, but the town continued to exist and some digging is still taking place in the vicinity even today. But Canteen Koppie also yields much evidence of occupation by prehistoric man. The gravel deposits of the Vaal River basin contain large numbers of stone implements of the Earlier Stone Age. In the exposed faces of the diggers' excavations one may still see such stone implements, lying in the positions they assumed when the gravels containing them were deposited. These implement bearing deposits also contain the fossilized remains of elephants, rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, giraffe, equine and buffalo as well as various antelopes. It is reason able to conclude that these animals were killed and slaughtered by the prehistoric men with their stone implements. Canteen Koppie bears witness both to modern man's feverish pursuit of wealth and his prehistoric ancestor's struggle for survival. Proclaimed 1948 Visual Description: Between the town of Barkly West and the Vaal river is an area where the coarse river gravels have be Colours: Site Features: Condition: Good Construction Date: Materials: Natural Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

Damage Types: