

First Report
NMC Permit 8/95/07/001/51

Suffolk Hill, Colesberg
Report and Recommendations
concerning human remains

D. Morris & E.A. Voigt
McGregor Museum, Kimberley
July 1995

FIRST REPORT ON
NMC PERMIT NO 8/95/07/001/51
SUFFOLK HILL, COLESBERG

For the exhumation and reinterment of human remains and associated relics and artefacts in historical graves from the farm Suffolk Hill to the Garden of Remembrance in Colesberg, Northern Cape Province.

Investigation history

Mr Steve Lunderstedt reported the finding of human remains and associated relics and artefacts exposed by a burrowing animal from the base of a memorial at Suffolk Hill. The memorial, to members of the Suffolk Regiment who died there on 6 January 1900, was erected in 1902. The matter was brought to the attention of the NMC by Mrs Belinda Gordon, curator of the Colesberg-Kemper Museum. Mrs E.A. Voigt, Director of the McGregor Museum, was informed of the situation with a view to investigating the site and taking any necessary action. A permit to carry out an exhumation and reinterment, if necessary, was issued on 3 July 1995 in the name of D. Morris and E.A. Voigt; and the site was visited by us, in the company of Mrs Belinda Gordon on 21 July 1995.

Site inspection

The site consists of a cobble platform which supports a cairn of stones upon which is mounted the memorial to the fallen soldiers. It was believed that all human remains from here had been exhumed previously and reinterred in the town, either in 1905-6 when the Anglican Church in Colesberg re-buried 96 bodies moved from local battlefield graves, or in 1965 when further human remains were exhumed and reinterred by the War Graves Board. However, a small animal burrow into the western side of the cairn had indeed exposed human bones and artefacts, including corroded buttons and buckles, and fragments of leather. Some of these remains had been removed for safe-keeping and temporarily housed at the Colesberg-Kemper Museum.

Actions and recommendations

It was considered by the permit holders that there was no need to exhume human remains and associated materials still in the grave, that those from the animal burrow already removed for safe-keeping be replaced with due reverence, and that the peripheral animal burrow be closed up and sealed.

The platform should be cleared of vegetation and the cobbles cemented in place. This platform could possibly be extended slightly along the sides to provide better support for the cairn. A trench should be dug around its perimeter in order to provide a cemented footing around the base of the grave. This ought to

prevent any further penetration by animals.

The cairn erected on the platform and supporting the memorial is in urgent need of re-pointing in places.

Mrs Belinda Gordon of the Colesberg-Kemper Museum is prepared to supervise this work, which would be documented in accordance with the regulations of the National Monuments Act, and reported upon once completed.

David Morris and Elizabeth Voigt
McGregor Museum

27 July 1995

Copy: National Monuments Council, Northern Cape Office
Mrs Belinda Gordon, Colesberg-Kemper Museum.