



Archaetnos Culture & Cultural
Resource Consultants
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**A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF A GRAVE YARD
AT DELMAS COAL (KIPOWER) ON THE FARM HAVERKLIP 265 IR, CLOSE TO
DELMAS, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

For:

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SUMMARY

During July 2012, Dr. Julius Pistorius did a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) at Delmas Coal. A number of grave yards were identified. In September 2012, Archaetnos was requested to initialize the process to exhume two of these graves, which were in danger of being destroyed by mining activities. As a result permission was obtained from SAHRA to have the graves exhumed and reburied.

An extensive process of social consultation was done by African Grave Relocation Specialists (AGRS) who also served as undertakers for the project. The number of the permit obtained from the Burial Grounds and Graves Unit (BGG) of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) is Case ID: 1961 AND Permit ID: 268.

The mining area is located on the farm Haverklip 265 IR. This is close to the town of Delmas in the Mpumalanga Province.

The archaeological investigations at the site commenced during June 2013. It was believed that the site contained 2 graves, which proofed to be the case. No family members could be identified. Both graves contained skeletal remains, as well as other funerary objects. They also contained corrugated iron sheeting which was usually placed on top of the mortal remains. Both graves had grave dressing and headstones made of granite.

The mortal remains were reburied in the Delmas Municipal Cemetery. It is believed that the archaeological investigation, exhumation and relocation of the graves from the site were conducted successfully. Therefore the mining activities may continue.

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SUBMISSION OF REPORT

Please note that the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) or one of its subsidiary bodies needs to comment on this report.

It is the client's responsibility to do the submission via the SAHRIS System on the SAHRA website.

Clients are advised not to proceed with any action before receiving the necessary comments from SAHRA.

DISCLAIMER

Although all possible care is taken to identify all graves in a cemetery, the subterranean nature of these is such that it always is possible that some may have been overlooked during the study. Archaetnos and its personnel will not be held liable for such oversights or for costs incurred as a result thereof.

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1. INTRODUCTION

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The mining area is located on the farm Haverklip 265 IR. This is close to the town of Delmas in the Mpumalanga Province.

The archaeological investigations at the site commenced during June 2013. It was believed that the site contained 2 graves, which proofed to be the case.

2. AIMS

The aims of the archaeological investigation and exhumation of the graves were the following:

- Exhume grave site number 4 on the farm Haverklip 265 IR.
- Document the SAHRA and unknown graves in accordance with the stipulations of the SAHRA permit.
- To record all human skeletal and cultural remains from any possible burials that might exist on the site to facilitate their successful relocation.
- Make further recommendations if needed.

The reinternment of the human remains was to be done by AGRS. This was done at the nearby Delmas Municipal Cemetery.

3. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are dealt with mainly in two acts. These are the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998).

3.1 The National Heritage Resources Act

According to the above-mentioned act the following is protected as cultural heritage resources:

- a. Archaeological artifacts, structures and sites older than 100 years

- b. Ethnographic art objects (e.g. prehistoric rock art) and ethnography
- c. Objects of decorative and visual arts
- d. Military objects, structures and sites older than 75 years
- e. Historical objects, structures and sites older than 60 years
- f. Proclaimed heritage sites
- g. Grave yards and graves older than 60 years
- h. Meteorites and fossils
- i. Objects, structures and sites of scientific or technological value.

The national estate includes the following:

- a. Places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance
- b. Places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage
- c. Historical settlements and townscapes
- d. Landscapes and features of cultural significance
- e. Geological sites of scientific or cultural importance
- f. Archaeological and palaeontological importance
- g. Graves and burial grounds
- h. Sites of significance relating to the history of slavery
- i. Movable objects (e.g. archaeological, palaeontological, meteorites, geological specimens, military, ethnographic, books etc.)

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is the process to be followed in order to determine whether any heritage resources are located within the area to be developed as well as the possible impact of the proposed development thereon. An Archaeological Impact Assessment only looks at archaeological resources. An HIA must be done under the following circumstances:

- a. The construction of a linear development (road, wall, power line canal etc.) exceeding 300m in length
- b. The construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50m in length
- c. Any development or other activity that will change the character of a site and exceed 5 000m² or involve three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof
- d. Re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000 m²
- e. Any other category provided for in the regulations of SAHRA or a provincial heritage authority

Structures

Section 34 (1) of the mentioned act states that no person may demolish any structure or part thereof which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant provincial heritage resources authority.

A structure means any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to land, and includes any fixtures, fittings and equipment associated therewith.

Alter means any action affecting the structure, appearance or physical properties of a place or object, whether by way of structural or other works, by painting, plastering or the decoration or any other means.

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Section 35(4) of this act deals with archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites. The act states that no person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority (national or provincial):

- a. destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;
- b. destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or palaeontological material or object or any meteorite;
- c. trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or palaeontological material or object, or any meteorite; or
- d. bring onto or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment that assists in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.
- e. alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years as protected.

The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after receiving a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). In order to demolish such a site or structure, a destruction permit from SAHRA will also be needed.

Human remains

Graves and burial grounds are divided into the following:

- a. ancestral graves
- b. royal graves and graves of traditional leaders
- c. graves of victims of conflict
- d. graves designated by the Minister
- e. historical graves and cemeteries
- f. human remains

In terms of Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage resources authority:

- a. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;

- b. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or
- c. bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

Human remains that are less than 60 years old are subject to provisions of the Human Tissue Act (Act 65 of 1983) and to local regulations. Exhumation of graves must conform to the standards set out in the **Ordinance on Excavations (Ordinance no. 12 of 1980)** (replacing the old Transvaal Ordinance no. 7 of 1925).

Permission must also be gained from the descendants (where known), the National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Premier of the Province and local police. Furthermore, permission must also be gained from the various landowners (i.e. where the graves are located and where they are to be relocated) before exhumation can take place.

Human remains can only be handled by a registered undertaker or an institution declared under the **Human Tissues Act (Act 65 of 1983 as amended)**.

Unidentified/unknown graves are also handled as older than 60 until proven otherwise.

3.2 The National Environmental Management Act

This act (Act 107 of 1998) states that a survey and evaluation of cultural resources must be done in areas where development projects, that will change the face of the environment, will be undertaken. The impact of the development on these resources should be determined and proposals for the mitigation thereof are made.

Environmental management should also take the cultural and social needs of people into account. Any disturbance of landscapes and sites that constitute the nation's cultural heritage should be avoided as far as possible and where this is not possible the disturbance should be minimized and remedied.

4. CONDITIONS & ASSUMPTIONS

The following conditions and assumptions have a direct bearing on the study:

1. SAHRA graves are all those with a date of death older than 60 years. Graves with an unknown date are handled as if they are SAHRA graves.
2. All recommendations are made with full cognizance of the relevant legislation.
3. Although care was taken to unearth all human remains at the site, there always is a possibility that some remains may have been missed. This is due

to the fact that not all graves are always marked. Should any remains be unearthed during work on the site, an archaeologist should be called out to assess the find.

4. Sometimes not all graves exhumed include human remains as many different factors may influence the preservation of skeletal material, such as the acidity and humidity of environmental conditions and the age of the individual concerned.
5. Even though some graves may not contain human remains, grave associations such as coffin wood, coffin lining, nails and grave goods are sometimes found indicating that it indeed is a grave.
6. Frequently some of the graves are identified by families although it may not contain any human remains or other grave goods.
7. Headstones and grave dressing also indicate a grave, although no other evidence may be found.
8. The disturbance of soil is another indication that a grave indeed is one, although no other evidence may be present.

5. METHODOLOGY

The graves were exhumed and documented within generally accepted guidelines of the archaeological profession. The documentation includes photography and the filling in of a burial relocation form which serves as reference to the grave as well as its new location.

The documentation comprised the following:

Archaeological Investigations

The archaeological investigations comprised of the undertakers excavating the trenches up to the level of skeletal or coffin remains, or up to the level of sterile soil. The archaeologists would then conduct further investigation to expose the possible remains and any associated material in situ.

Burial recording forms

Burial recording forms were then filled in to record all details of the burials (Appendix A).

Photographic

Photos of all excavations and remains were taken, while individual objects were also photographed for record purposes, if applicable (Appendix B).

GPS Data

A GPS reading for the site was taken in order to locate it on a map of the area. The reading thereof is 26°14'37.788"S; 28°51'36.0"E.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The proposed development area is located to the south-east of the town of Delmas in the Mpumalanga Province. The topography of the surveyed area is very flat, with a slight slope to the south-east where the Steenkoolspruit is draining the area.

The area has been mostly disturbed by past human activities, including previous mining activities and agriculture. The area still contains many maize fields and large dumps left by previous mining (Figure 1-3).

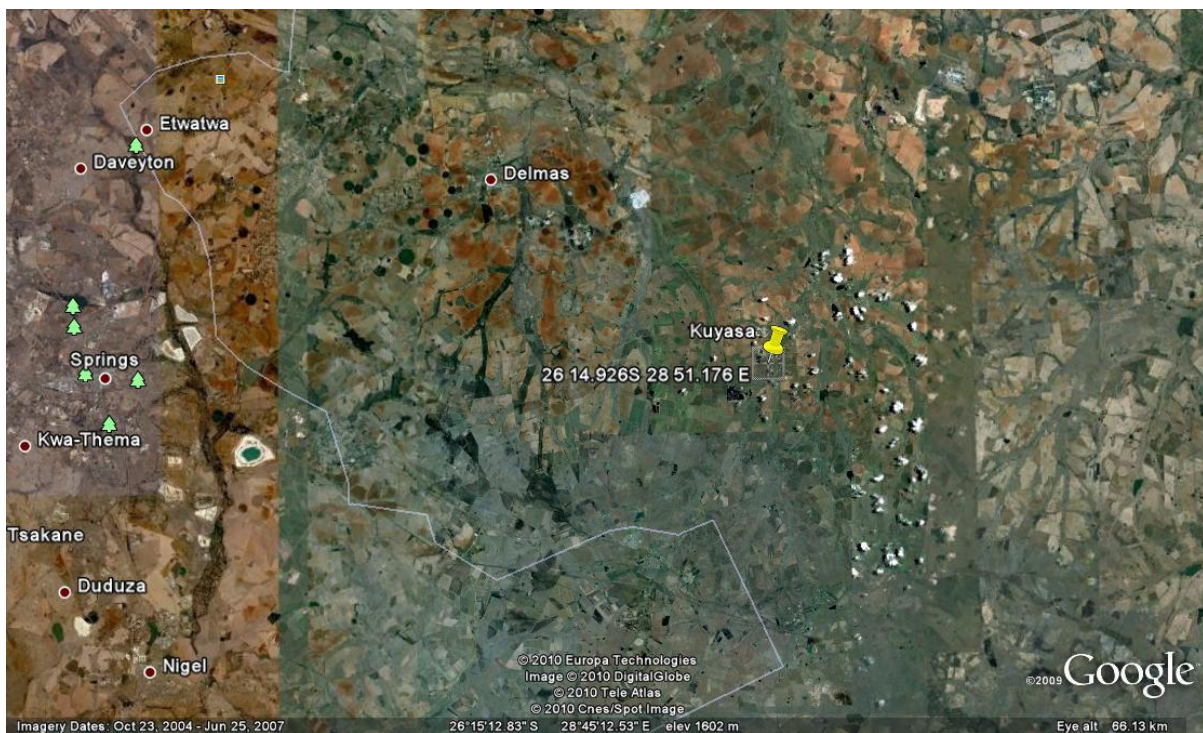


Figure 1 Location of the mine (in yellow) in relation to Delmas. North is at the top.

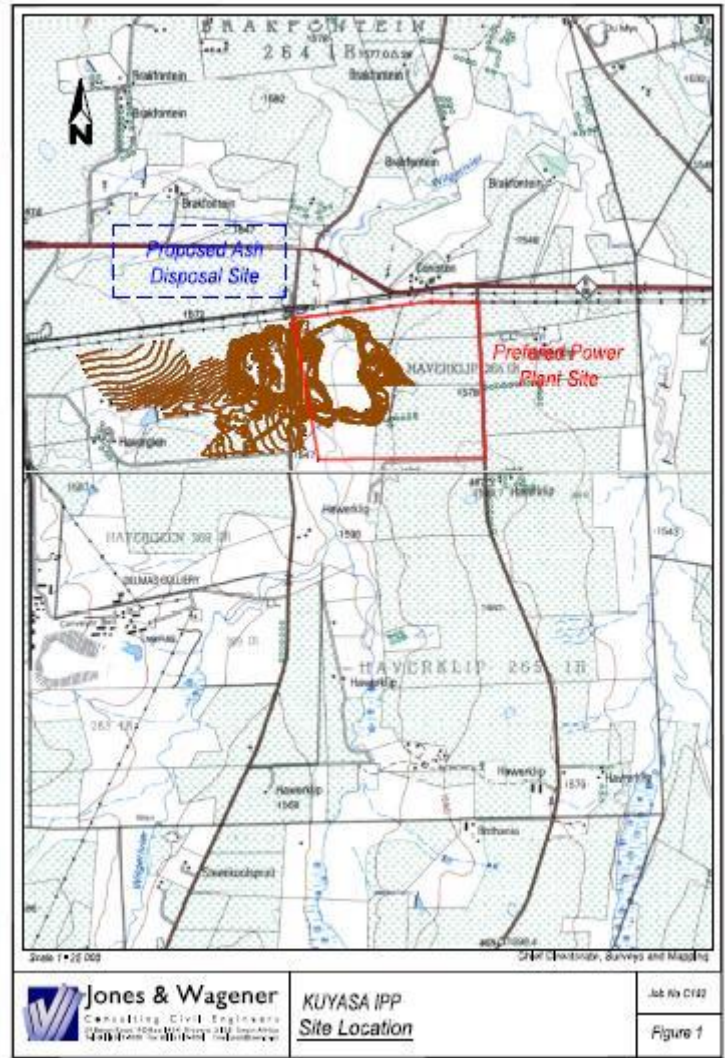


Figure 2 Map of the mine development.

7. DISCUSSION

After the initial assessment it was concluded that there were 2 graves (Figure 4-6). During a site visit to document the above ground remains (grave dressings, headstones etc.) it was found that there may be a third. The original two graves (number 1 and 2) were well-defined with granite stone dressing and headstones. The headstones had inscriptions. The third was only defined by a flower pot, embedded in the soil. After investigation it was found that this was not a grave and that the flower pot most likely came from one of the graves. The evidence relating to these being graves are summarized in Table 1.



Figure 4 The grave site.

Grave no 1 belong to Dirk Jakobus Gerhardus Stephanus Botha, born on 13 August 1890 and who died on 25 January 1940. Grave no 2 is that of Wilhelmina Hart Botha (born Bruwer), born on 9 February 1900, who died on 27 April 1966. Both of the graves included human remains. The remains were still in a fair condition.

In the case of no 1 the remains were placed in a very solid wooden coffin and despite it having been in the ground for over 70 years, parts of the coffin were still intact. Resultantly it preserved the human remains quite well. In the case of no 2 the remains were only in the soil for 47 years.

Grave goods and associated artifacts were found in both. At no 1 it consisted of pieces of coffin wood, coffin handles and nails, and a few sea shells. At no 2 it consisted of cloth and plastic coffin liner. Both graves were covered with corrugated iron sheeting, which is a typical burial practice. This was placed on three metal rods.

The graves were a bit shallower than usually, with no 1 being 1,60 m and no 2 being 1,64 m deep. A thick concrete layer (approximately 30 cm) was placed on top of both graves and the granite dressing was mounted on this. The graves were also fenced in by a metal palisade.

Grave goods and associations were placed inside of the new coffins to be reburied with the mortal remains. The headstones will also be reused here. Detailed documentation is to be found in Appendix A and photographs are contained in Appendix B.

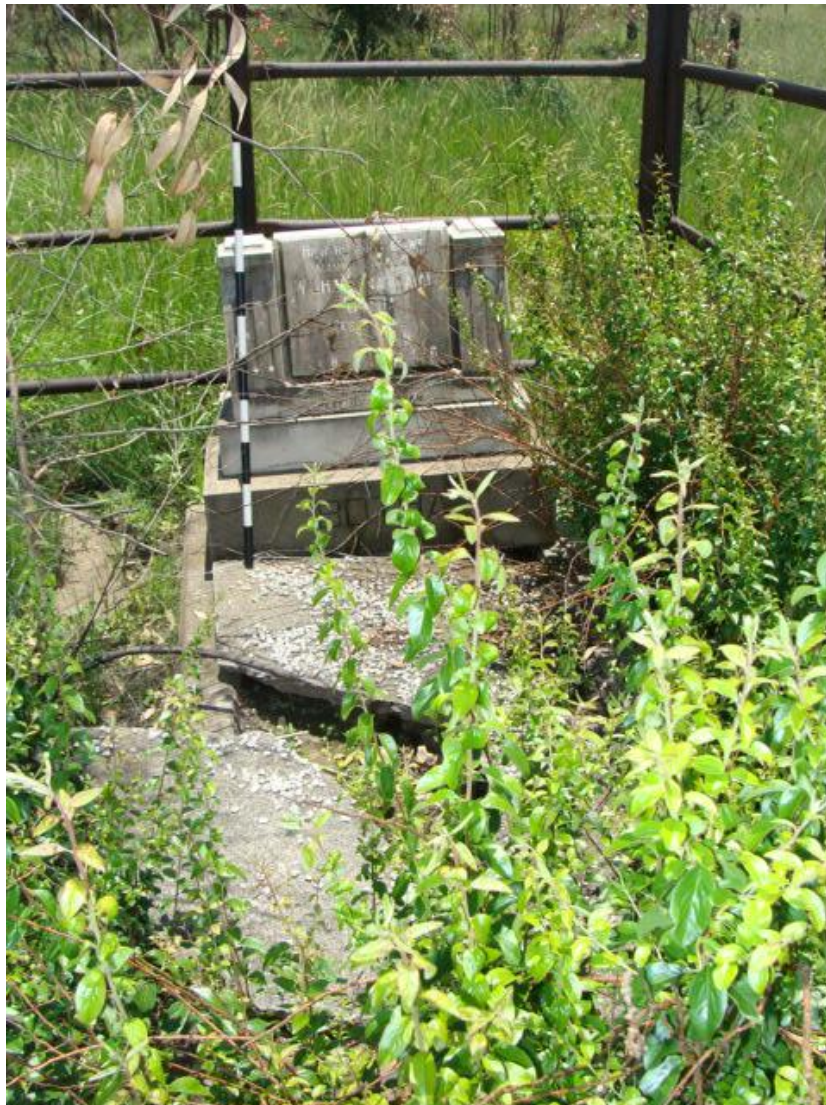


Figure 5 Grave of Dirk Jakobus Gerhardus Botha.



Figure 6 Grave of Wilhelmina Hart Botha.

TABLE 1: GRAVE EVIDENCE

Grave number	Headstone	Grave dressing	Identified by families	Human remains	Grave goods/ associated remains	Disturbance in soil
1	X	Rectangular placed stones		X	X	X
2	X	Rectangular placed stones		X	X	X
3	No grave					

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is concluded that the exhumation of the graves was done successfully. All indications of graves were exhumed. The mortal remains and grave goods were taken for reburial.

It should be noted that even though care was taken to exhume all mortal remains there are always a possibility that some graves may still be found during work on the site. It does sometimes happen that no proper above-ground markings are visible. Therefore, should any human remains be found, during activities on the site, an archaeologist should be contacted immediately to investigate the find and to see to it that it be exhumed and relocated in an appropriate way.

Finally it is recommended that mining operations in the area may continue.

9. REFERENCES

- Republic of South Africa. 1980. Ordinance on Excavations (**Ordinance no. 12 of 1980**). The Government Printer: Pretoria.
- Republic of South Africa. 1983. **Human Tissue Act** (Act 65 of 1983). The Government Printer: Pretoria.
- Republic of South Africa. 1999. **National Heritage Resources Act** (No 25 of 1999). Pretoria: the Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. 1998. **National Environmental Management Act** (no 107 of 1998). Pretoria: The Government Printer.

APPENDIX A

BURIAL RELOCATION FORMS

APPENDIX B

PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION