COBUS DREYER
Pr. Archaeologist/Heritage Specialist

P.O. Box 12910
Brandhof
9324
dreyerj@telkomsa.net

Tel: 051-444 1187
Fax: 051-444 4395
Cell: 083 357 7982

27 October 2005

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSED WIGTON – OSBORNE ESKOM POWER LINE ROUTE, NEAR HOPETOWN, NORTHERN CAPE

INVESTIGATION

The route for the proposed power line between the Wigton Substation and the Osborne Substation near Hopetown (Map 1) was visited on 29 June 2005. Subsequently I have also attended the meeting with the landowners on 28 July 2005 at Hopetown. Gys Hoon and Christine Fouché from Enviroworks Environmental Consults, Bloemfontein, took me to the site. On both occasions we were accompanied by officials from Eskom. An inspection of the final route for the power line was done on 21 October 2005 when I was taken around by Apie Cloete from ESKOM, Kimberley.

The site was examined for any possible traces of cultural and historical remains to establish the potential impact of the developments on any archaeological and cultural historical material. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is done in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999) and under the Environmental Conservation Act, (73 of 1989).

LOCALITY

The area under discussion lies to the north west of Hopetown in the Northern Cape Province.

The Eskom power line will extend from the Wigton Substation at Wigtown 224, from where it will follow the fence lines and roads to the N12 and continue on the south side of the Orange River to link up with the existing Substation at Disselfontein 77 (Maps 2-4). A new substation (Osborne Substation) will be constructed on the farm Wiglow 218.

During the examination I took GPS coordinates (Cape scale) to identify the main fixed points at the following places:

Wigton Substation on the farm Wigtown 224, 29°34’38”S 024°13’51”E Altitude 1106m (Map 3, Fig. 1).

Entrance gate Wigtown 224 and Birbury 213, 29°34’38”S 024°13’51”E Altitude 1106m (Map 3, Fig. 2&3).

(1) Corner of Springvale 214, Leinster 222 and N12, 29°32’16”S 024°12’17”E Altitude 1143m (Map 3, Fig. 6).

(2) Border between Leister 222 and Langford 221 on the N12 north of Hopetown, 29°33’32”S 024°09’56”E Altitude 1115m (Map 3, Fig. 7). This is where the power line will cross towards the Osborne Substation.

(3) Corner of Donegal 217, New Wexford 230 and Londonderry 216 where the power line will traverse on to Wiclow 218 (the site of the Osborne Substation) 29°30’56”S 024°05’05”E Altitude 1099m (Map 4, Fig. 8).

(4) The farmstead at Wiclow 218, location of the proposed Osborne Substation 29°31’02”S 024°04’00”E Altitude 1098m (Map 4, Fig. 9).

(5) Position of the New Osborne Substation at Wiclow 218, 29°31’09”S 024°03’44”E Altitude 1102m (Map 4, Figs. 10&11).

(6) Locality on Zuurgat 82 where the power line will cross the Orange River 29°32’02”S 024°01’02”E Altitude 1041m (Map 4, Figs. 12&13).

(7) Position of the power line on the border of Naauwtesfontein 78 and Disselfontein 77 29°32’02”S 024°01’02”E Altitude 1041m, along the route to the Disselfontein Substation (Map 4, Fig. 14)

(8) Disselfontein Substation where the proposed new line will connect with the existing ESKOM power line network (Map 4, Fig. 15). Locality at Disselfontein 77 29°28’31”S 023°54’29”E Altitude 1070m.

FINDS

Remains of a rectangular stone-walled enclosure (29°33’55”S 024°14’13”E Altitude 1105m), with measurements of about 10m x 5m, were discovered near the Wigton Sub-station at the farm Wigtown 224 (Fig.4). Although the structure is in a rundown condition and the origin, age and purpose could not be determined,

several tin cans with heavy soldering which clearly date from the Anglo-Boer War were found in the immediate vicinity of the walls (Fig.5).

A few Middle Stone Age flakes (Fig.16) were found scattered in a very rough and thorn covered area between the Disselfontein Sub-station and the Orange River.

No further remains of archaeological remains or material of cultural historical importance had been found.

DISCUSSION

Both the first visit to the area and the subsequent meeting with landowners at Hopetown appeared to be clearly investigating and exploring exercises. After discussions with landowners and other interested parties, it had been decided to erect the power line along the roads and existing power lines where the impact of the new line could have a lesser influence on the environment.

The impact of the new power line on sites such as the Anglo-Boer War remains at Wigton would likewise be minimal. There is an existing power line and it is near the railway line.

It is further anticipated that the new power line would cross the Orange River down stream in the hilly area closer to the Disselfontein Sub-station.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presence of Anglo-Boer War remains at the Wigton Substation and at other places in the region described in the literature could indicate that Anglo-Boer War and other material will be discovered during trenching activities at the site. It is, therefore, important to keep in mind that every archaeological and historical site is unique and should be treated as a non-renewable commodity. All efforts should be made to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or destruction of the features or the environment. In case of the discovery of any archaeological or historical material during the course of the work, all activities should temporarily be stopped in the specific area for inspection by the archaeologist or other specialists from the McGregor Museum, Kimberley.

The region at Disselfontein near the Orange River where Middle Stone Age flakes were found lies outside the area of present development.

No obvious reasons could be found to delay the commencement of further planning and development of the site. It is recommended that the proposed developments may proceed.

MITIGATION

Concerning the area for the proposed development, no mitigation measures are needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the Gys Hoon and Christine Fouché of Enviroworks Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, for taking me to the site. Apie Cloete took me on the final inspection of the proposed power line route.

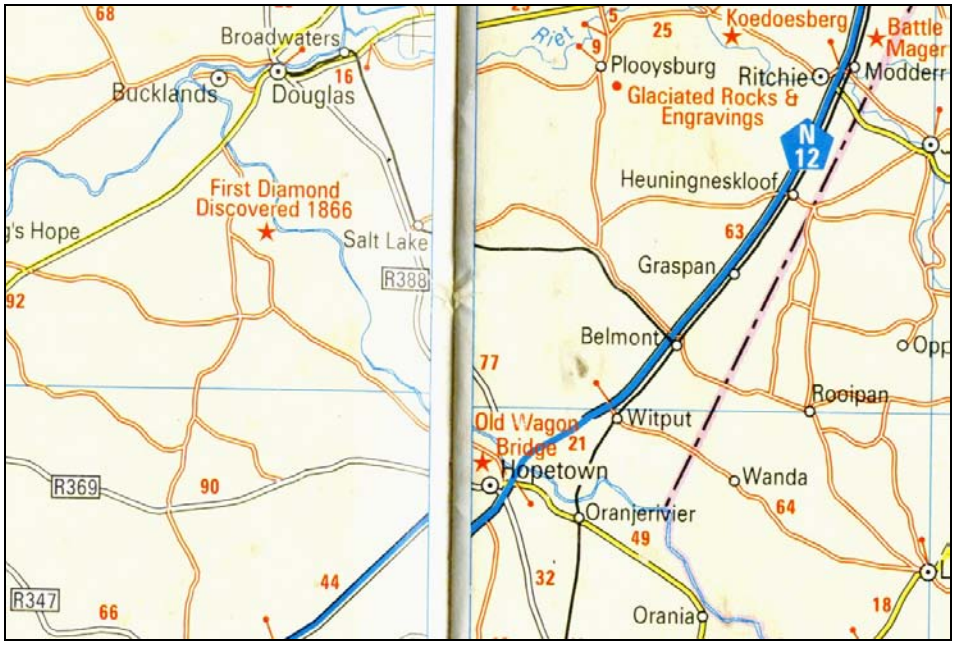
REFERENCES

DEACON, J. 1992. Archaeology for Planners, Developers and Local Authorities. Cape Town: National Monuments Council.

HUMPHREYS, A.J.B. 1986. Searching for the past. Cape Town: David Philip.

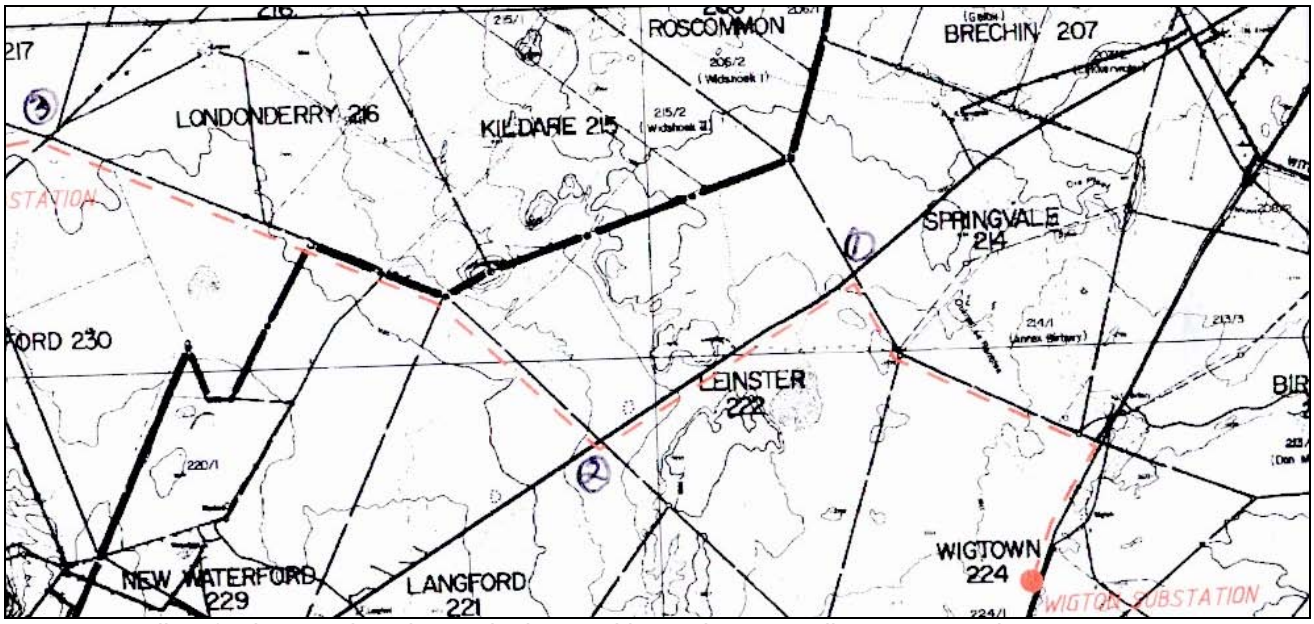
PISTORIUS, J.C.C. 1994. Eskom Archaeological Site Identification Guide. Johannesburg: Eskom.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:

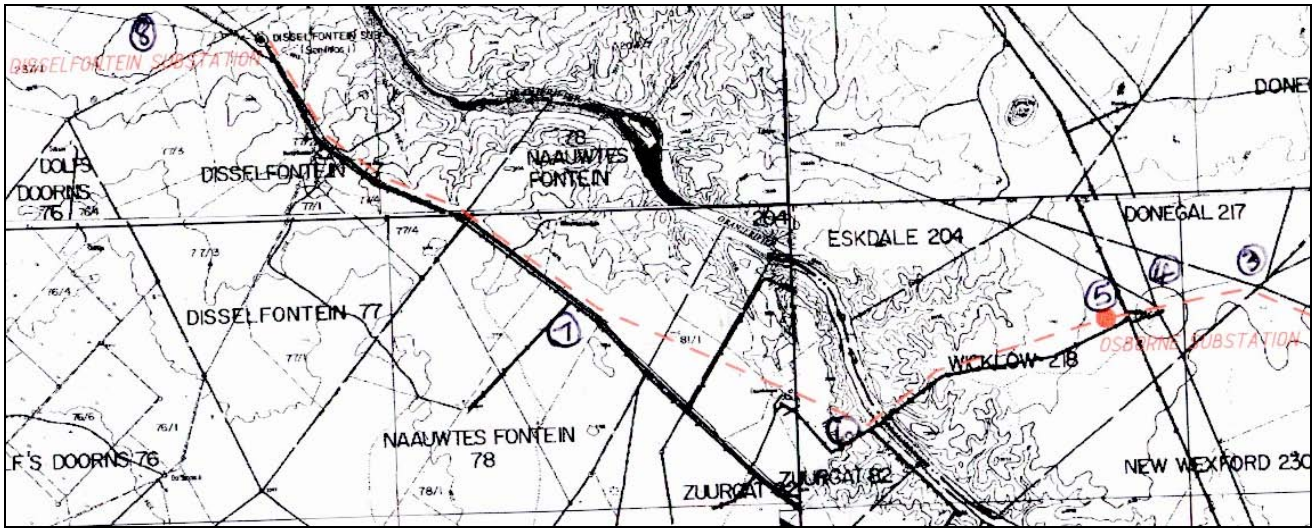


Map 1 Locality of Hopetown near the Orange River.

Map 2 Locality of the farms which will be effected by the proposed ESKOM power line (2924).



Map 3 Locality of Wigton Substation and other positions where coordinates were taken.



Map 4 Locality of Disselfontein Substation and other positions where coordinates were taken.
The new Osborne Substation will be placed at position 5 on the farm Wicklow 218.

Fig.1 Wigton Substation. Ballast banking of the old railway line is visible on the right.

Fig.2 The existing power line from Wigton Substation. Present railway line on the left. Photo was taken at the Birburry 213 entrance gate.

Fig.3 View of the remains of the old railway line at Wigtown 224.

Fig.4 Remains of a stone kraal wall at Wigtown 224.

Fig.5 Remnants of Anglo-Boer War milk and meat cans found near the stone kraal wall at Wigtown 224. (Spectacle case is 17cm long).

Fig.6 (1) Corner of Springvale 214 & Leinster 222 on the N12. Facing in the direction of the Wigton Substation.

Fig.7 (2) The border between Leister 222 & Langford 221 on the N12. The power line will cross here towards the Osborne Substation.

Fig.8 (3) Corner of Donegal 217, New Wexford & Londonderry 216 when the line will cross on to Wiclow 218 (the site of the Osborne Substation.).

Fig.9 (4) Facing the position of the Osborne Substation on the farm Wiclow 218.

Fig.10 (5) Locality of the Osborne Substation on Wiclow 218.

Fig.11 Close-up of the soil surface at the site of the proposed Substation at Wiclow 218.

Fig.12 View towards the Orange River. The power line will cross at the high cliffs in the centre right of the picture.

Fig.13 (6) The locality on Zuurgat 82 where the power line will cross the Orange River from Wiclow 218 on the opposite side. Existing pump installation in the foreground.

Fig.14 (7) Position of the power line on the border of Naauwtesfontein 78 & Disselfontein 77 along the way to the Disselfontein Substation

Fig.15 (8) Disselfontein Substation where the proposed new line will join the existing ESKOM power line network.

Fig.16 Middle Stone Age (MSA) flake artefacts from the area directly between the Disselfontein Substation and the Orange River. Pocket knife is 8cm long,