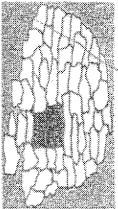


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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED
UPGRADING OF THE GRAVEL ROAD BETWEEN ALEXANDER
BAY AND KHUBUS, RICHTERSVELD,
NORTHERN CAPE**

INVESTIGATION

The road between Alexander-Bay (28°34'07"S. 016°30'57"E. Altitude 18m) and Khubus in the Richtersveld, Northern Cape, was inspected on 24 February 2005 in the company of Dr Johan du Preez of Cebo Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein.

The different borrow pits and stock piles along the road were examined for the presence of archaeological material. It should be borne in mind that this whole area is heavily disturbed by diamond mining activities.

LOCALITY

The existing gravel road (DR3246 & DR3247) between Alexander Bay and Khubus in the Richtersveld, Northern Cape, (Figs. 1&2) is selected for upgrading.

The following borrow pits and stock piles were investigated and plotted on GPS (Cape). (See Map1).

1. **STOCK PILE OF RIVER WASHED PEBBLES (Fig.3)**
28°34'07"S. 016°30'57"E. Altitude 23m.
2. **BORROW PIT 13,8BR**
28°30'23"S. 016°28'37"E. Altitude 19m.
Existing quarry
3. **BORROW PIT 40R (Fig.8)**
28°28'25"S. 016°51'11"E. Altitude 30m.

4. **BP2R (Fig.9)**
28°27'45"S. 016°53'30"E. Altitude 248m.
5. **BORROW PIT (NOT LISTED)**
28°27'43"S. 016°53'46"E. Altitude 25m.
Existing Borrow Pit
6. **BORROW PIT 5,0/R**
28°27'31"S. 016°55'17"E. Altitude 238m.
Sterile sand
7. **BORROW PIT 10,0/R**
28°26'47"S. 016°58'55"E. Altitude 173m.
In wall of dry river bed.
Igneous rocks 28°26'51"S. 016°58'47"E. Altitude 183m.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

Most of these borrow pit sites had clearly been exploited during previous road building activities, resulting in the disturbance of the soil deposit of the area. The existing gravel road consists of a well-built base, indicating rebuilding in recent times. This confirms the soil disturbance visible at most of the borrow pits.

Archaeological material was not found in association with any of the borrow pits or stock piles, although water washed pebbles were found in abundance.

The exploitation of the area by serious diamond operations also contributed to the damage of the environment in many cases.

No ceramics or other material of archaeological or historical significance were found at any of the sites.

GRAVE YARDS

✦ In two separate cases grave yards were found next to or very near the road.

GRAVES ABOUT 25m FROM THE ROAD (Fig.12)
28°33'33"S. 016°33'15"E. Altitude 9m

GRAVES NEXT TO THE ROAD NEAR BAKEN (Fig.13)
28°30'12"S. 016°43'40"E. Altitude 15m

These graves are of major regional significance and special precautions should be taken to avoid any damage to the graves or grave stones.

MITIGATION

Every archaeological occurrence is unique and should be treated as a non-renewable commodity. All efforts should, therefore, be made to avoid disturbance or destruction.

Concerning the areas for the proposed developments, mitigation measures are only needed in the case of the two grave yards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No obvious reason could be found to delay the commencement of the work and it is recommended that the proposed development may proceed.

Care should be taken to limit the disturbance of the immediate environment near the two grave yards. To avoid any damage or disturbance to the graves, the route should be planned to by-pass the graves. It is not recommended to exhume the graves for reburial elsewhere, as it will take time and could stir emotions.

It is stressed that in case of the discovery of any other stone tools and archaeological material of significance during the course of the work, all activities should temporarily be stopped in the specific area for inspection by specialists from the McGregor Museum, Kimberley.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr Johan du Preez of CEBO Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, took me to the site and supplied information on this investigation.

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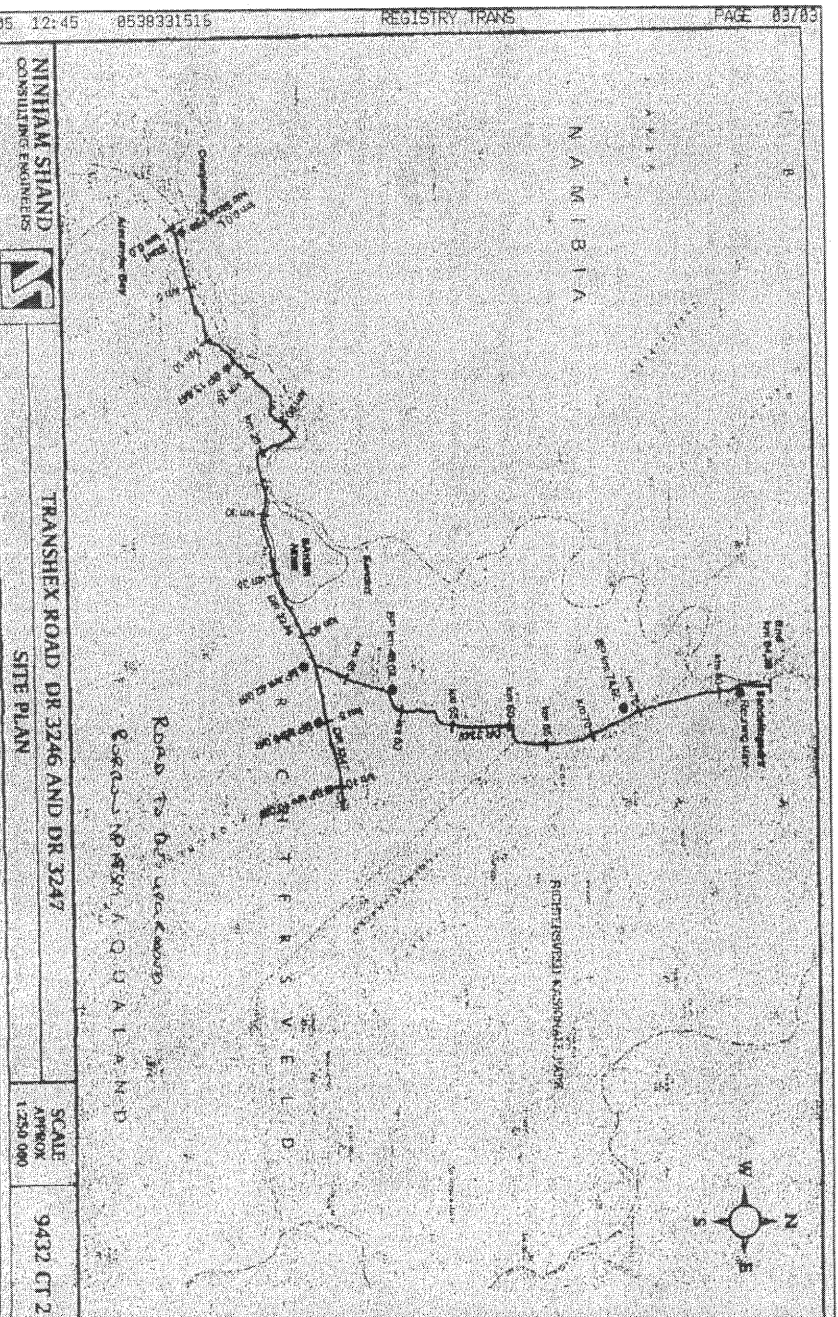
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Map 1

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:

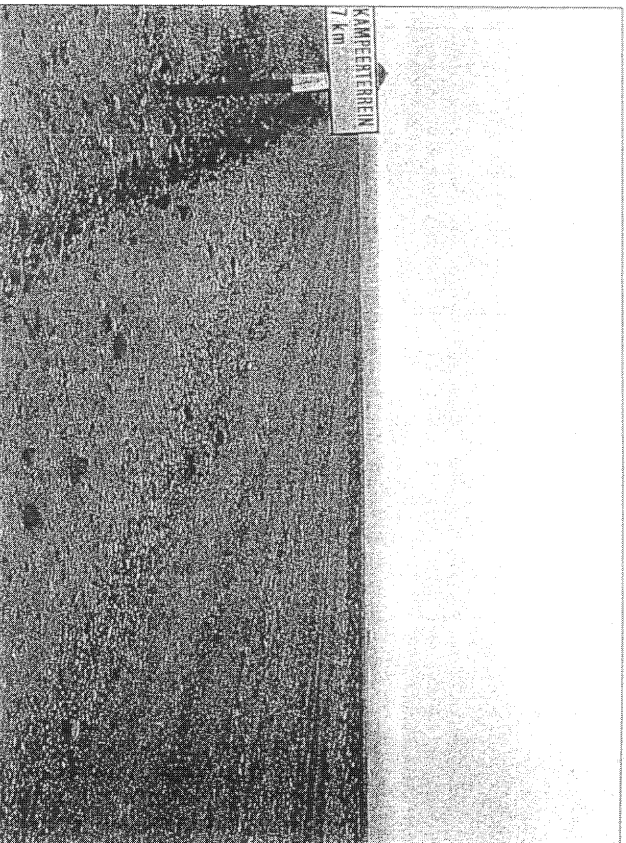


Fig. 1 On the way from Alexander Bay into the Richtersveld.

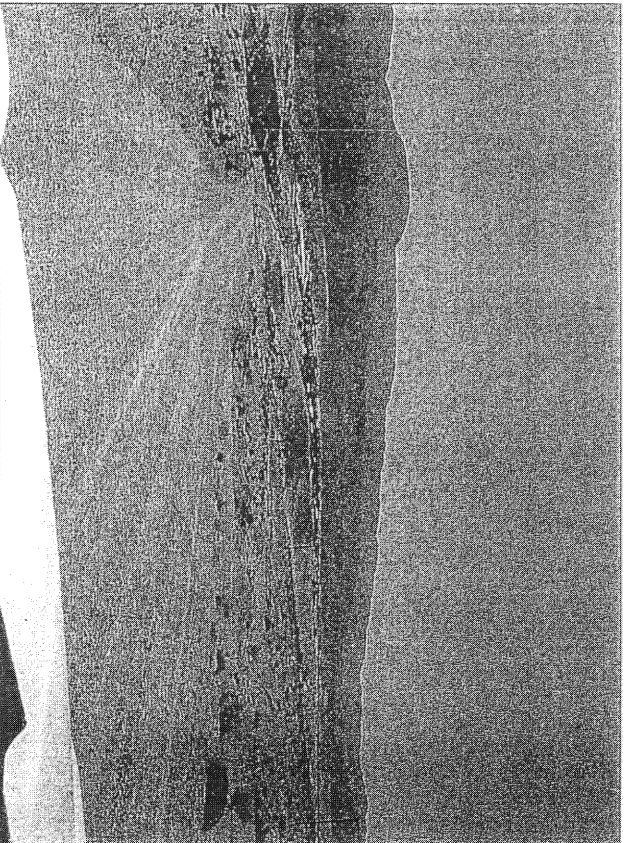


Fig. 2 The road from Alexander Bay to Knubus in the Richtersveld, a very desolate area.

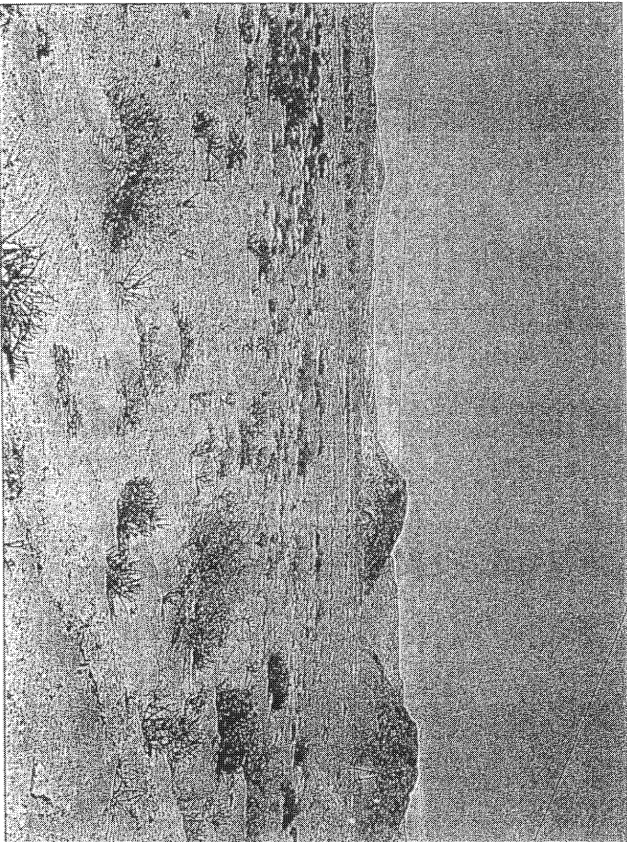


Fig. 3 A Stockpile in the distance.

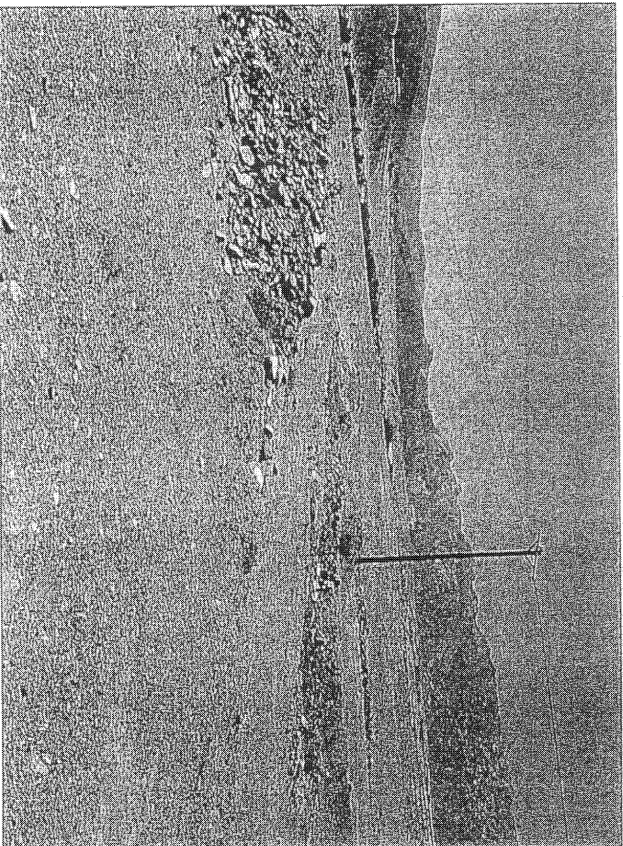


Fig.4 Borrow Pit BP2R.

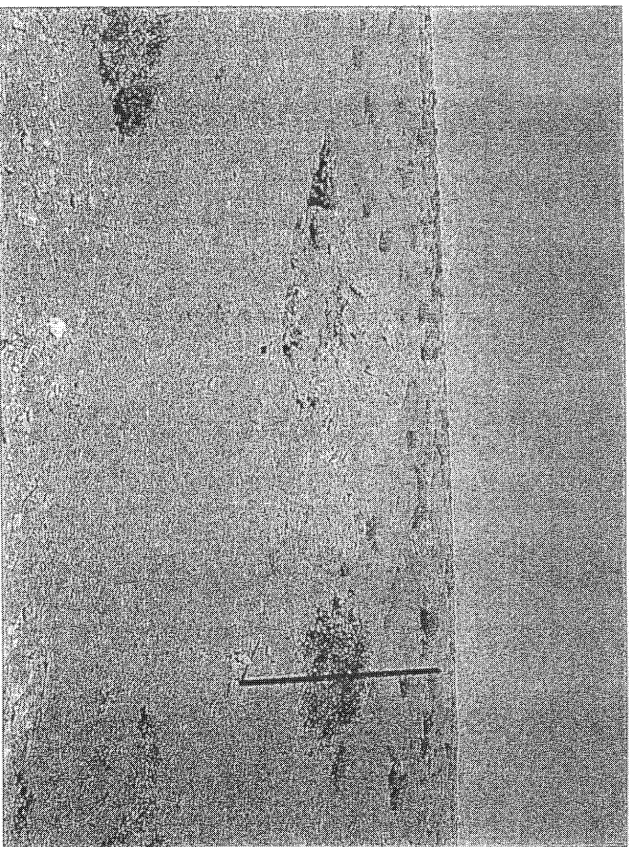


Fig. 5 Borrow Pit 5, 0/R.

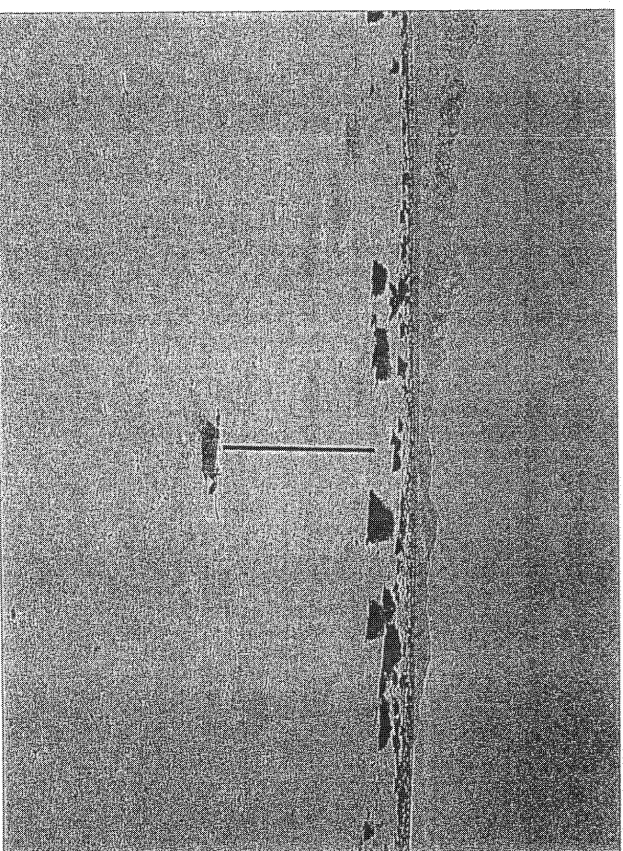


Fig. 6 Borrow Pit BP10 O/R.

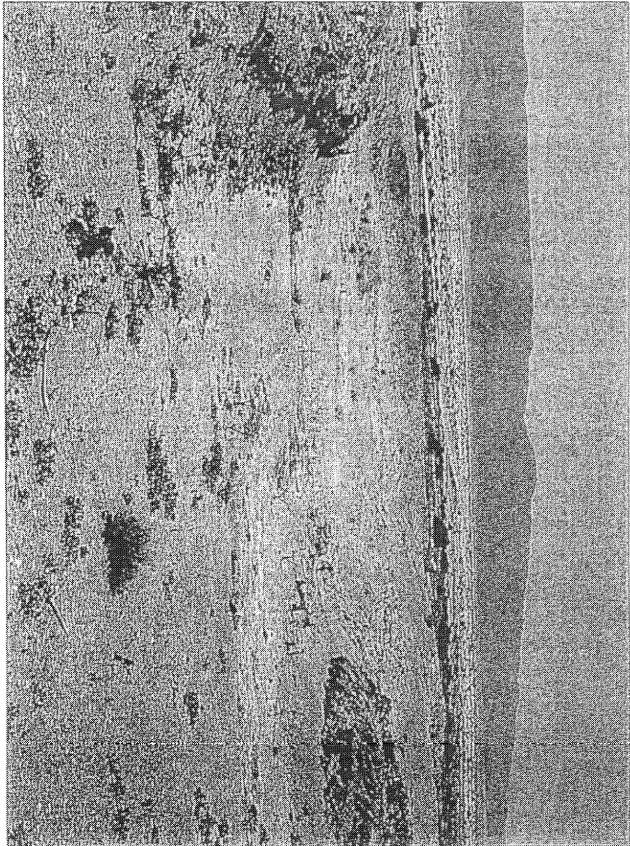


Fig. 7 Existing Borrow Pit 13,8 BR.

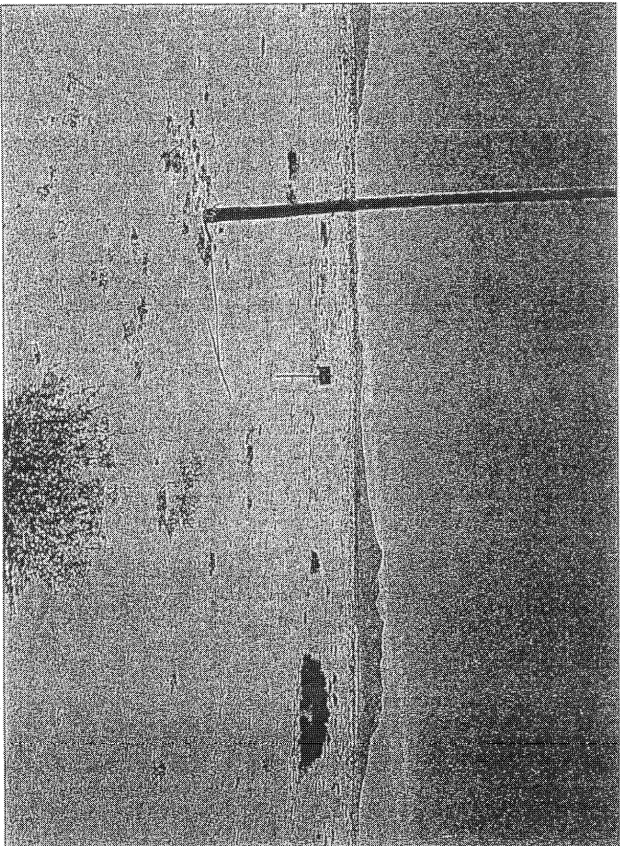


Fig. 8 Borrow Pit 40R.

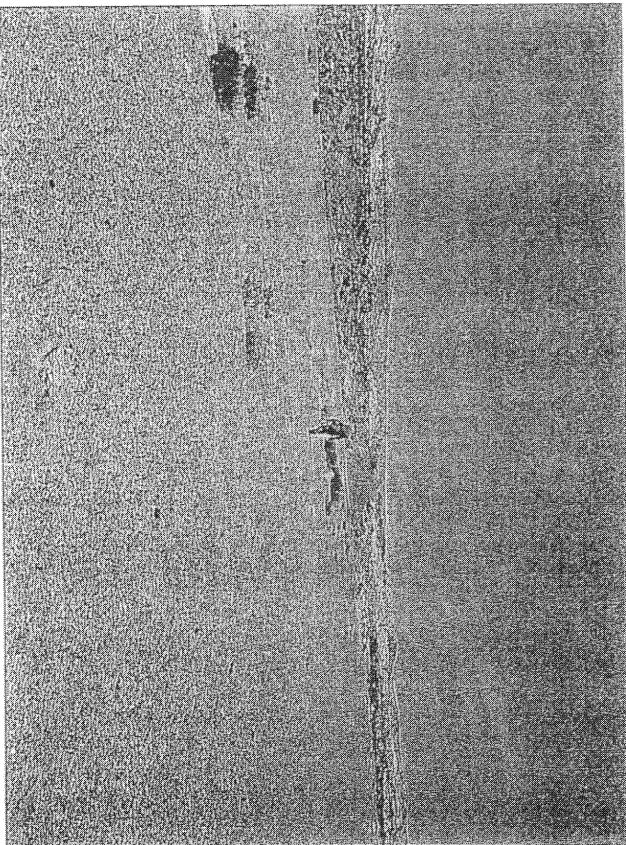


Fig. 9 Borrow Pit 2R.

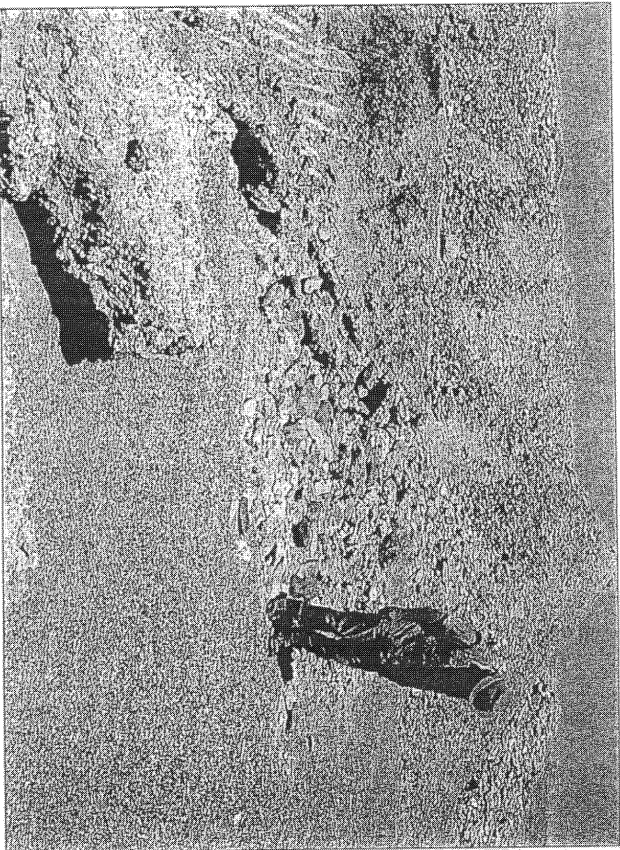


Fig. 10 River washed pebbles and stones at BP2R.

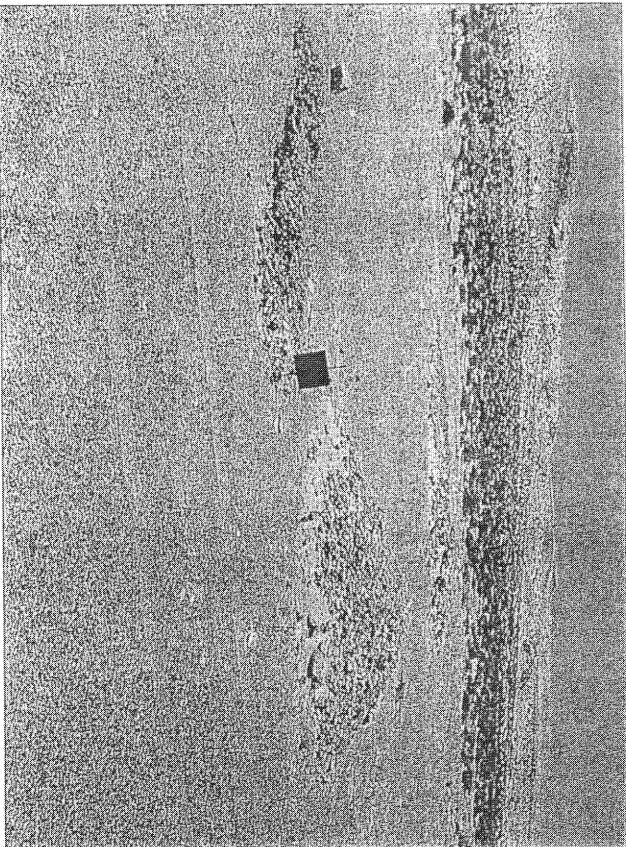


Fig. 11

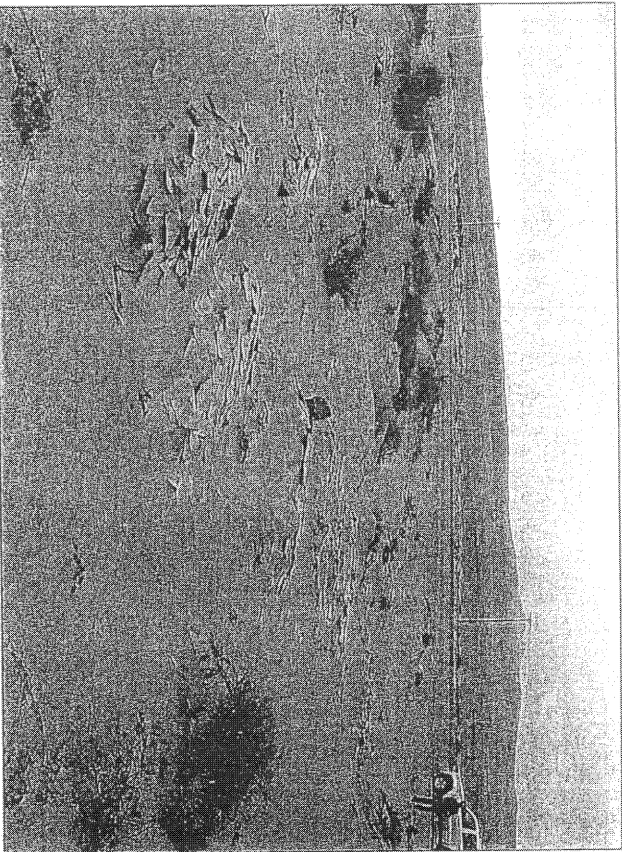


Fig. 12 A total of 14 graves found about 25m from the road.

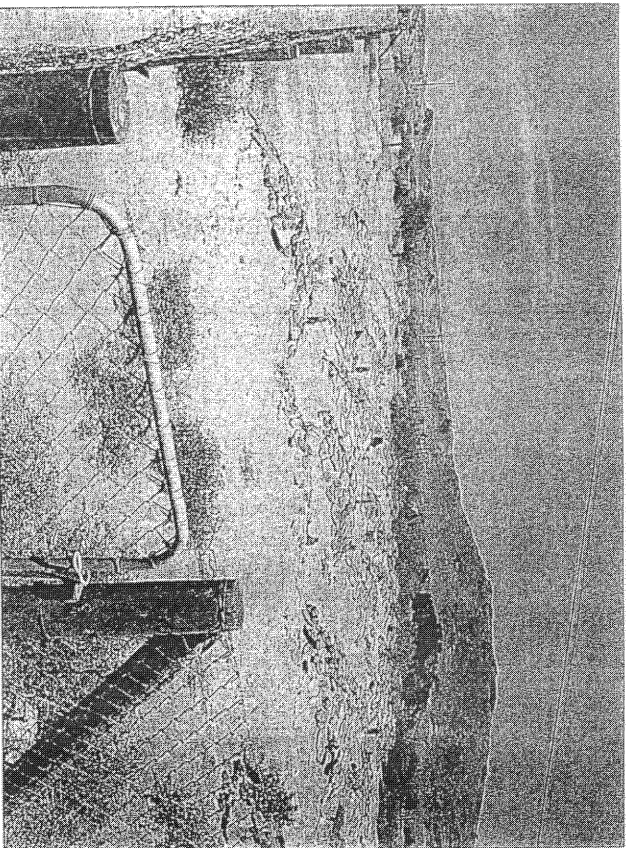


Fig. 13 A neatly fenced grave yard next to the road near Baken.