



NASIONALE KULTUURHISTORIESE MUSEUM
NATIONAL CULTURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY DONE FOR AMCOAL
IN THE KRIEL AREA OF THE EASTERN TRANSVAAL**

SUMMARY

A survey was conducted in the Kriel area of the Bethal district, with the aim of identifying any sites of cultural significance. No indication of any sites or activities of archaeological and historical significance was found in the area investigated. However, a large number of graves were identified. These will have to be relocated before strip mining of the area can be started.

SURVEY DONE AND REPORT PREPARED BY:

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Date of survey: 1st October 1992

Date of report: 12th October 1992

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT

The survey was conducted by request of Mr R. Hollis of Kriel Colliery, in order to establish the nature, extent and precise location of any archaeological or historical occurrence in the specific area, prior to proposed development taking place. This development being the complete strip mining of certain portions of the farms Onverwacht 70 IS and Aangewys 81 IS, in the Bethal district of the Transvaal.

APPROACH EMPLOYED

1. Preliminary survey

A literature survey was conducted prior to instituting the field survey in order to gauge the extent to which previous research had been conducted in the area. Various anthropological and archaeological source works were consulted, eg. Van Riet Lowe (n.d.), Holm (1966) and Van Warmelo (1977). No information pertaining to this specific area was found.

2. Field survey

Based on the preliminary survey and information gained from an on-site briefing by Mr Hollis of Kriel Colliery, the survey was done according to general archaeological principles and assumptions.

The area under investigation is in the form of a triangle, bounded on two sides by rivers. Generally speaking, this is gently rolling highveld, with the most important geographical features being the rivers and two natural pans. No hills, rocky outcrops or caves are present. It is assumed that any possible habitation of the area in the past would have taken place close to the water (either the rivers or the pans) and therefore the survey was concentrated in these areas. Most of the rest of the area under consideration here is subjected to intensive agricultural activities, with the result that any archaeological indicators visible on the surface would be disturbed as a result thereof.

A list of all sites found, corresponding to the map included on page 5 of this report, is given on page 4.

THE FINDS

1. Stone age

No indication of any material or sites pertaining to this era was found.

2. Iron age

Though one small piece of pottery and a few upper grindstones were found near the Steenkoolspruit, these can confidently be related to recently abandoned settlements, most probably belonging to farm labourers.

3. Historical sites

Two farm yards were visited. The farm house currently in use seems to be of relative recent origin. The only building that could be of some vernacular significance is the wagon shed. This building is typical of the highveld region - being built with stone with a corrugated iron roof.

At the older farm yard, now being utilized by farm labourers, only some stone outbuildings are still in existence. However, it is our view that it is not of any architectural merit or of historical significance.

In various other places, indications of former habitation, such as deposits of ash, including pieces of metal, glass and plastic, were found - see map attached. However, all of these seem to be of relatively recent origin.

4. Graves

In total 8 grave yards or burial places were identified. As this whole area will be subjected to extensive strip mining, all these graves will have to be relocated in a suitable place.

LEGISLATION

The relocation of the graves will have to be done in accordance with Transvaal Ordinance (No. 7 of 1925) and the

National Monuments Act (Act No. 28 of 1969). However, the local Regional Services Council might also have its own requirements concerning this matter, which will have to be pursued by AMCOAL self.

CONCLUSION

With the exception of the above mentioned graves, and taking into consideration the methodology used and accepting the general principles of archaeology, it is our view that nothing of cultural importance was found to prevent the area from being mined.

REFERENCES

1. Literature

Holm, S.E. 1966. **Bibliography of South African Pre- and Protohistoric archaeology**. Pretoria: J L van Schaik.

Van Riet Lowe, C. n.d. **The distribution of Prehistoric rock engravings and paintings in South Africa**. Archaeological Survey, Archaeological Series No. 7.

Van Warmelo, N.J. 1977. **Anthropology of Southern Africa in Periodicals to 1950**. Pretoria: Government Printer.

2. Maps

1:50 000 topocadastral maps - 2629 AC Evander & 2629 AD Bethal.

List of sites discussed in the report (corresponding to the map on page 5):

1. A number of relative recent (1950's) graves occur approximately 300 meter south of the farm yard. On the south side of the fence another couple of stone structures occur, which might also be graves. This, however, is difficult to establish as the road goes right over it.
2. A deposit of ash, including pieces of metal, glass and plastic. Possibly an old homestead of farm labourers. A bit further to the south west, just on the outside of the area under investigation, some poplar trees occur around a spring that is possibly related to the homestead mentioned.
3. Possibly an old homestead, as there is a row of six blue gum trees and an extensive deposit of ash, with bits of iron, porcelain and plastic included. Fifty meter east of this there appears what seems to be the outline of an old building. However, all of this has completely being ploughed over.
4. A number of graves (approximately 7), the last which date to the 1950's. A short stretch to the north of this is found stones, bricks and other material, i.e. metal, plastic, glass, etc. which indicates that this also might be an old habitation site, most probably of farm labourers. A grinding stone was found here. For the most part this was also ploughed under.
5. A grave-yard consisting of approximately 10 graves, dating from the 1930's to the 1980's. It is associated with a number of recently abandoned (and destroyed) homes, possibly of farm labourers.
6. A relative big grave-yard with upwards of 20 graves. Again, some recently abandoned houses are found in the vicinity.
7. Two graves next to each other, found on the south western side of the pan
8. Also two graves next to each other, found on the south western side of the pan, close to No. 8.
9. A big ash deposit, approximately 20 meter east of the graves in No. 8. A number of very small pieces of clay pottery was found here. However, other material found here seems to be of recent origin.
10. A number of stones occur in the ground, approximately 20 meter east of No. 7. This might also be a grave, but it cannot be identified with certainty unless it is investigated further.
11. Five graves found on the north western side of the pan. Some of these date back to the 1880's.
12. The older of the two farm yards, where some stone built outbuildings are still to be found.
13. This is the farm yard currently in use.

Map of the location of the various sites

Dr J. Deacon
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Dear Dr Deacon

Included a short report on a survey done by myself and mr Naude for AMCOAL. It covers an area of roughly 400 hectare. From the report you will see that, apart from a number of burial places, nothing of importances was found.

With kind regards

J.A. VAN SCHALKWYK