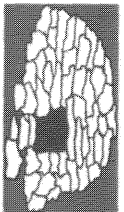


*Received 5.10.06*



**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

4 March 2006

**FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE  
ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS AT THE  
FARMS BOVENSTE OOG 681Q (MOOI RIVER), DIGBY PLAIN  
631Q, SOMMERVILLE 621Q, PRESTON PANS 591Q AND  
DRYLANDS 641Q, VENTERSDORP, NORTH WEST PROVINCE**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The different areas selected for developments are located on the farms Bovenste Oog 681Q (Mooirivier), Digby Plain 631Q, Sommersville 621Q, Preston Pans 591Q and Drylands 641Q, near the Klerkskraal Dam in the district of Ventersdorp, North West Province.

A variety of cultural and historical remains ranging from rectangular stone-walled house ruins, part of a stock kraal, prospecting holes, old mine shafts, a graveyard with about 37 graves and three separate graves near a cluster of rectangular stone-walls and Later Iron Age stone-walled settlements, were found on Bovenste Oog.

The graveyard contains the burials of members of the Van Zyl family, the original owners of the farm. The farm had tree houses of which the main farmhouse was used a hospital during the Anglo-Boer War. This building was regrettably demolished by the Department of Water Affairs during the construction of the Klerkskraal Dam in the 1960s.

The remains of smaller rectangular structures are the remains of the dwellings of farm labourers.

- Except for the graveyard and separate cluster of three graves, all the other remains of houses, prospecting and diggings are neglected beyond repair, and will be of minor significance during the present developments.

Other areas planned for development on the farms Digby Plain, Sommersville, Preston Pans and Drylands, were either used as plough lands with cultivated

grazing or is still pristine grassland, with no indication of any cultural and historical relics.

I recommend that in the case of the discovery of any cultural or historical artefacts or finds, the developers should stop the work and report the finds to the present archaeologist or contact a museum in the region.

Concerning the graves, I recommend that the graveyard and cluster of graves should be fenced properly and left out of the planning of the new developments. I also recommend that the Later Iron Age settlements should be avoided and the care should be taken not to damage these remnants.

## **INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION**

### **INVESTIGATION**

The different areas selected for developments at the Touch Stone Cattle Ranch are located on the farms Bovenste Oog 681Q (Mooirivier), Digby Plain 631Q, Sommerville 621Q, Preston Pans 591Q and Drylands 641Q, near the Klerkskraal Dam in the district of Ventersdorp, North West Province.

The sites were visited on 26 October 2005 and again on 17 January 2006. During the first visit we were accompanied by Mr Jaco Prinsloo, the owner. On the second visit the Game Manager took us to the sites.

The area was examined for possible archaeological and historical material and to establish the potential impact on any cultural material that might be found. 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 proposed residential and spa developments are planned on the farms Bovenste Oog 681Q (Mooi Rivier), Digby Plain 631Q, Sommerville 621Q, Preston Pans 591Q and Drylands 641Q, near the Klerkskraal Dam in the district of Ventersdorp, North West Province. The land is reached from the N14 main road between Ventersdorp and Krugersdorp and by taking the turn-of on the road from Welverdiend Station to Derby.

The following GPS (Cape scale) coordinates were taken:

**BOVENSTE OOG 681Q (MOOIRIVIER)**

- Fresh water spring 26°11'51"S 027°09'55"E Altitude 1467m (Figs. 1&2).
- Proposed Spa 26°11'51"S 027°09'55"E Altitude 1467m (Fig.3).
- Rectangular stone ruin (1) 26°12'01"S 027°09'50"E Altitude 1470m (Fig.4).
- Rectangular stone ruin (2) 26°11'51"S 027°09'55"E Altitude 1467m.
- Stone-walled complex (4mx5m) 26°11'51"S 027°09'55"E Altitude 1467m (Fig.5).
- Stock kraal 30mx21m 26°12'51"S 027°09'10"E Altitude 1477m (Fig.6&7).
- Quarry 26°11'51"S 027°09'55"E Altitude 1467m (Fig.8).
- Graves (3) 26°12'47"S 027°09'11"E Altitude 1470m (Fig.9).

L-shaped stone-walled house 26°12'44"S 027°09'12"E Altitude 1464m (Fig.10).

- Grave yard (37) 26°12'54"S 027°09'19"E Altitude 1468m (Fig.12).
- Stone-walling 26°11'51"S 027°09'55"E Altitude 1467m (Fig.13&14).
- Borrow pit 26°10'46"S 027°11'00"E Altitude 1521m (Fig.15).
- Proposed stands 26°10'55"S 027°10'45"E Altitude 1513m (Fig.16).
- Diamond mining shaft 26°11'51"S 027°09'55"E Altitude 1467m (Fig.17).

**DIGBY PLAIN 631Q**

- Manganese Mine 26°12'44"S 027°13'56"E Altitude 1583m (Fig.18).
- Ploughed field 26°12'35"S 027°14'28"E Altitude 1544m (Fig.19).
- Water hole 26°13'21"S 027°13'23"E Altitude 1560m (Fig.20).
- Farm shed 26°13'29"S 027°14'36"E Altitude 1551m (Fig.21).

**SOMMERVILLE 621Q**

- Rhus pyroidis cover 26°11'52"S 027°12'22"E Altitude 1505m (Fig.22).
- Grass cover 26°11'51"S 027°09'55"E Altitude 1467m.

Grass cover 26°11'51"S 027°09'55"E Altitude 1467m.

Water hole 26°09'54"S 027°13'36"E Altitude 1540m (Fig.23).

#### **PRESTON PANS 59IQ**

27°23'37"S 026°15'31"E Altitude 1317m (Fig.24).

#### **DRYLANDS 64IQ**

Water hole 26°14'29"S 027°13'36"E Altitude 1519m (Fig.25).

Grassland 26°14'32"S 027°13'34"E Altitude 1546m.

### **RESULTS**

A variety of cultural and historical remains ranging from Later Iron Age stone-walled living sites, rectangular house ruins, a rectangular stock kraal, prospecting holes, old mine shafts and graves were found on Bovenste Oog.

The farm contained tree houses at a time and it is related that the main farmhouse was used a hospital by the British forces during the Anglo-Boer War and was not burnt down. This house was unfortunately demolished by the Department of Water Affairs during the building of the Kerkkraal Dam in the 1960s.

The smaller rectangular houses at Bovenste Oog are the remains of the dwellings of farm labourers.

Except for the graveyard, all the other remains of houses and prospecting and diggings are neglected and deteriorated beyond repair, and will be of minor significance during the present developments.

Other areas planned for development on the farms Digby Plain, Sommerville, Preston Pans and Drylands, were either used as plough lands with cultivated grazing or pristine grassland, with no indication of any cultural and historical relics.

Information obtained from a grandson of the former owner of the farm brought some clarity on the history of the occupants of the land and the origin and purpose of some of the stone-walled features (Hennie van Zyl personal communication 8/3/2006). The respondent grew up on the farm and has first-hand knowledge of the different houses and other structures. Respondent relates that his farther had tragically been killed by lightning on the farm on 23 January 1961 and was buried in the graveyard (Fig.11).



## **FINDS**

### **1. GRAVEYARD**

A graveyard, which contains about 37 graves, is located near the old farmyard. In the graveyard are the burials, which date over several decades and represent members of the Van Zyl family, the original owners of the farm. The cemetery is fenced and most of the graves are still in a well-kept condition.

There is another cluster of three stone covered graves near some of the rectangular stone-walled structures. These graves do not have any inscriptions but Mr Van Zyl relates that these are the graves of farm labourers buried there.

### **2. RECTANGULAR STONE BUILDINGS**

Several clusters of the remains of rectangular stone-walled structures occur in the vicinity of the present level of the dam (Figs.4&5). Some of these features are the remains of houses occupied by other members of the Van Zyl family. Others are the remnants of houses for farm labourers.

There was also a stable for horses at the stock kraal (Figs.6&7).

### **3. DIAMOND PROSPECTING AND MINE SHAFTS**

Holes and shafts, which seem to indicate mining activities occur on the lower part of Bovenste Oog near the river and also higher up against the hill on the far end of the farm (Fig.16). These features could be the remains of prospecting and mining on the farm, which took place long ago.

### **4. STONE-WALLED CIRCULAR FEATURES**

On the higher part of Bovenste Oog away from the river, there are the remains of circular and semi-circular stone walled features (Figs.12&13). The walls resemble similar structures from the Later Iron Age in the Free State and trans-Vaal area (Maggs 1976, Taylor 1979).

## **ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT**

The impact on the cultural heritage remains of the proposed developments at Bovenste Oog 681Q (Mooi Rivier), Digby Plain 631Q, Sommerville 621Q, Preston Pans 591Q and Drylands 641Q will be of minor significance.

The sites where graves were is of major concern and should be preserved and protected.

The stone-walled remains of what is accepted as the remains of Later Iron Age settlements are also of great importance and should similarly be left out of the planning.

## MITIGATION

Mitigation measures will be required in the case of the graveyard and the cluster of graves. These features should be fenced and protected. The graves and graveyard should be maintained regularly.

The Later Iron Age stone-walls should be left untouched and should be excluded from any planning during the present and future developments on the farm. Care should also be taken not to disturb and destroy the walls during the construction phase.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend that in the case of the discovery of any cultural or historical artefacts or finds, the developers should stop the work and report the finds to the present archaeologist or contact a museum in the region.

Concerning the graves, I recommend that the graveyard should be fenced properly and left out of the planning of the new developments. The graveyard should be protected and maintained and should not be included into the lay-out of any recreational activities on the farm. The graves of farm labourers should likewise be fenced and protected against destruction.

I also recommend that Mr Hennie van Zyl (011-475 5252) should be invited to the farm and should be encouraged to tell the stories and to point out the various living houses and other features, which were in use during the time when he was living on the farm. This information could be incorporated into a brochure on the history of the farm.

There is no obvious reason why further planning and the developments on other parts of the land should not be allowed to continue.

I recommend that the proposed developments may proceed, with the implementation of the mitigation measures.

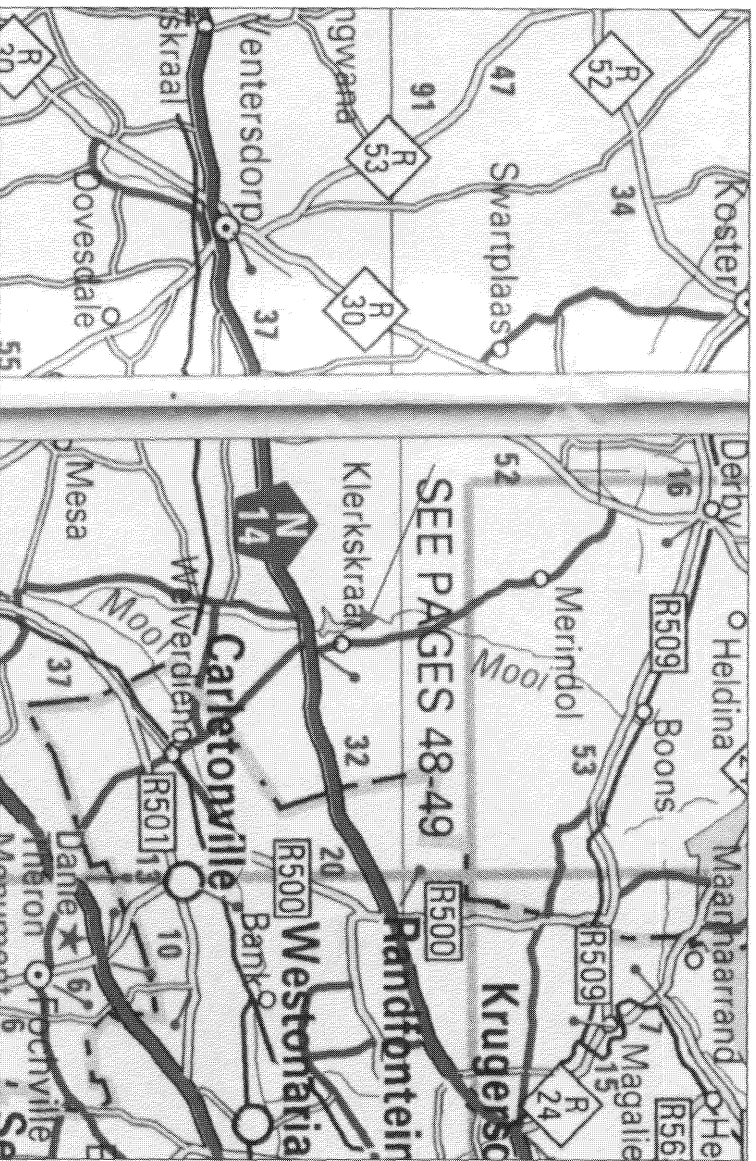
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the Dr Johan du Preez of MDA Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, for taking me on the project. I also owe gratitude to Mr Hennie van Zyl from Constantia Kloof, Roodepoort, for information on the origin and purpose of the different structures. Mr Van Zyl grew up on the farm and is a former Springbok Rugby player.

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- DEACON, J. 1992. Archaeology for Planners, Developers and Local Authorities. Cape Town: National Monuments Council.
- DREYER, J.J.B. 1992. The Iron Age Archaeology of Doornpoort, Winburg, Orange Free State. Navorsinge van die Nasionale Museum, Bloemfontein, Vol.8(7):262-390.
- DREYER, J. 1996. Introduction to Free State Iron Age Archaeology. In: Guide to archaeological sites in the Free State and Lesotho. Southern African Association of Archaeologists (SA3), 14th Biennial Conference, Bloemfontein, Post-conference tour 5-8 July 1996. Bloemfontein: National Museum.
- DREYER, J. 2000. Mountains and Rivers of the Free State - Manual for field research / Berge en Riviere van die Vrystaat – Handleiding vir veldnavorsing. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State, Department of Anthropology, Occasional Paper No. 2.
- HUMPHREYS, A.J.B. 1986. Searching for the past. Cape Town: David Philip.
- LOUBSER, J.H.N. 1993. A guide to the rock paintings of Tandesberg. Bloemfontein: Navorsinge van die Nasionale Museum 9(11):345-384.
- MAGGS, T.M. 1976. Iron Age Communities of the Southern Highveld. Pietermaritzburg: Natal Museum.
- PISTORIUS, J.C.C. 1994. Eskom Archaeological Site Identification Guide. Johannesburg: Eskom.
- SURVEYOR-GENERAL O.F.S. 1973. Index of Orange Free State Farms. Bloemfontein.
- TAYLOR, M.O.V. 1979. Late Iron Age settlements on the northern edge of Vredefort Dome. M.A. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Map 1 Red arrow indicates the locality of Kierkskraal Dam in relation to Potchefstroom, Ventersdorp and Carletonville.



Fig 1 The spring at "Bovenste Oog" Moolrivier, Ventersdorp.



Fig 2 View away from the spring at Bovenste Oog van Mooirivier.

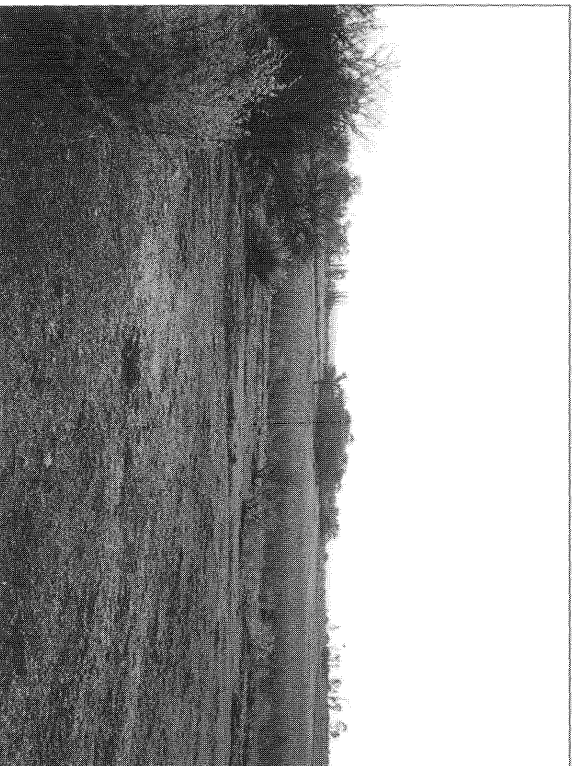


Fig 3 Site for the proposed Spa at Bovenste Oog.





Fig 4 Remains of a rectangular stone-walled structure at Bovenste Oog.



Fig.5 Another rectangular stone-walled ruin at Bovenste Oog.



Fig. 6 Stone-walled stock kraal 30mx21m.



Fig. 7 Detail of the stone-wall of the stock byre.

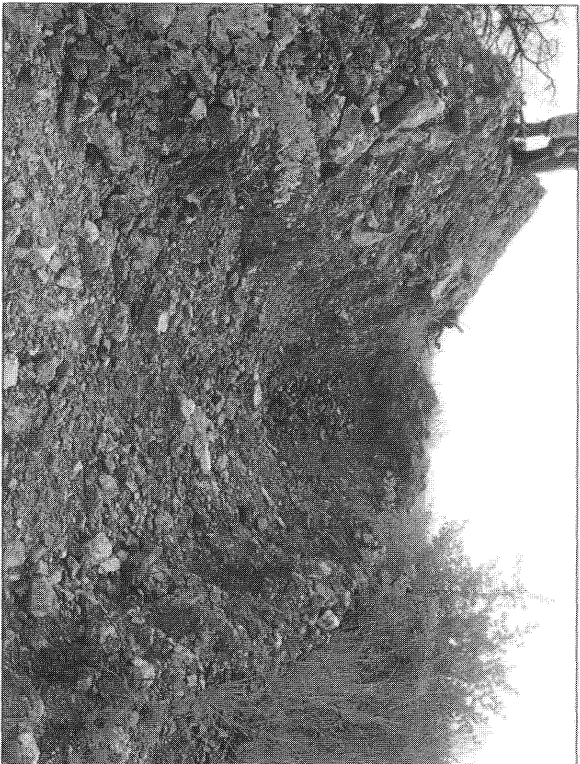


Fig 8 Recent soil digging at Bovenste Oog.



Fig 9 A group of 3 graves near the rectangular structures at Bovenste Oog.





-Fig.10 Remains of an L-shaped rectangular stone-walled house.



Fig.11 The grave of Gideon van Zyl \* 13.6.1903 †23.1.1961.

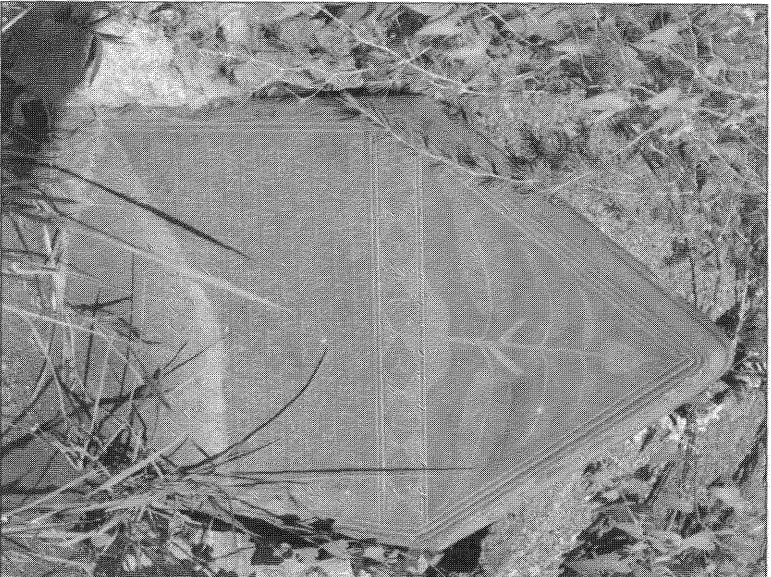


Fig. 12 One of the graves in a graveyard with about 37 graves at Bovenste Oog.



Fig. 13 Stone-walling which resembles structures dating Later Iron Age at Bovenste Oog.



Fig. 14 More Later Iron Age stone-walling at Bovenste Oog.



Fig. 15 Old borrow pit at Bovenste Oog.

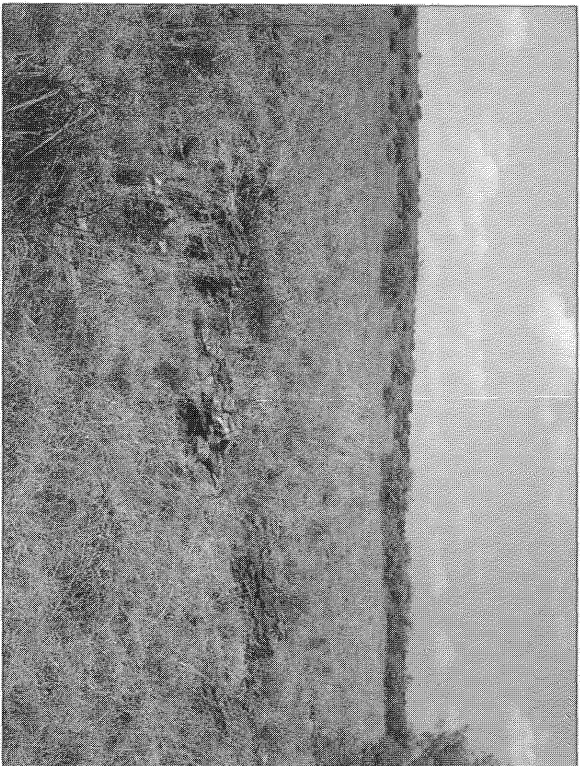


Fig. 16 Area proposed for the development of residential stand at Bovenste Oog.



Fig. 17 One of several mining shafts at Bovenste Oog.



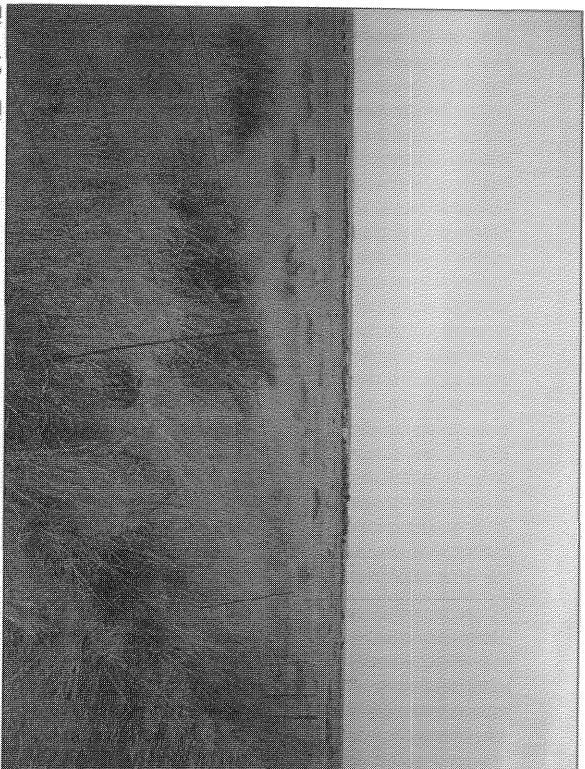


Fig. 18 The manganese Mine at Digby Plain.



Fig. 19 Mealie fields earmarked for development at Digby Plain.

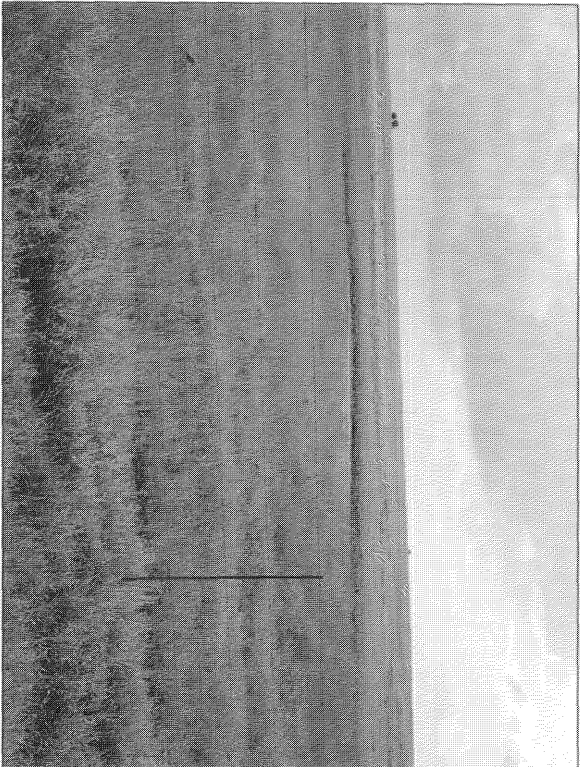


Fig.20 Proposed site for the water hole at Digby Plain.



Fig.21 Farmyard at Digby Plain.



Fig 22 Grass covered veld at Somerville..



Fig 23 Site proposed for a water hole at Somerville.



Fig.24 The site proposed for development at Preston Pan.



Fig.25 Site proposed for water hole at Drylands.