PHASE 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT ON KAKAMAS SOUTH FARM 2092 NEAR AUGRABIES, SIYANDA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine if any archaeological or other heritage sites were present on 150 ha of natural veld bordering the R359 some 20 km north-west of Kakamas in the Siyanda District Municipality of the Northern Cape Province. The gently sloping ground, transected by gullies draining northwards to the Orange River, is largely surfaced by gritty beige – red sand with patches of quartz or schist rubble, which typically supports a sparse cover of grass and low bushes. A foot survey over the full extent of the terrain on Monday 1 September 2008 revealed a low density of lithics centered on an Older Gravel remnant, but nowhere did I see any archaeological sites, palaeontological bones, or early structures / graves. These findings led me to conclude that the inspected terrain has no heritage potential and that its proposed use for citrus production will have no impact on the heritage resources of the Northern Cape.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This report is part of an EIA on Kakamas South farm 2092 that is being compiled by Marquerite Geldenhuys of MEG Environmental Impact Studies for Oseiland Boerderye, which is owned by the Burger du Plessis Trust. The proposed conversion of natural veld to drip – irrigated citrus groves on that property, driven by increasing local and overseas demand for their fruit, will not in any way involve re – zoning or subdivision. My terms of reference were to detail observations based on a field survey of the terrain and to assess the significance of heritage impacts, should the intended development go ahead. Such a report is required by the National Heritage Resources Act (no. 25 of 1999), which states that no development may take place without heritage assessment and approval.

REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The nearest known archaeological occurrences are about a kilometre to the north, at Renosterkop, where two undated Ceramic LSA sites were located in the 1980's, the one, in a small shelter, overlying MSA (Morris & Beaumont 1991). And ~5 km further to the north – west, on the north bank of the Orange River, are cairn – marked graves on the farm Omdraai that were originally investigated by Dreyer and Meiring (1937), and most recently, in 1984, by A Smith (Morris1995).

There are handaxe sites near Upington, on the farms Droogehout 442 (AIA Phase 1 report dated 22 October 2205) and Ratel Draai (Beaumont *et al.* 1995), but Renosterkop Shelter and Zoovoorbij Cave (Smith 1995) are, as yet, the only regional sites with cultural stratigraphy. Both indicate a MSA presence of likely early MIS 5 age, followed by a hiatus, and then a LSA occupation, confined there, and at other localities in the region, to mid – late Holocene times.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The inspected 150 ha Kakamas South farm 2092, bounded on its north side by the R359, lies ~20 km north - west of Kakamas in the Siyanda District Municipality of the

Northern Cape (Figs. 1 & 2). The terrain there comprises a gentle declivity to the north, drained by gullies that link up and deepen downslope (Figs. 1 & 2), and is, typically, sparsely covered by grass and low bushes (Figs. 3 - 5). Monday 1 September 2008 was spent walking over its full extent with Marquerite Geldenhuys and botanist Noel van Rooyen, who called me to check whenever they spotted what seemed to be a likely artefact. The four corners of the stand (Fig. 2) were also established to be:

1. 28° 40' 41.3" S, 20° 25' 47.2" E
2. 28° 41' 21.4" S, 20° 25' 32.8" E
3. 28° 41' 38.2" S, 20° 26' 07.9" E
4. 28° 41' 05.3" S, 20° 26' 31.7" E

SUPERFICIAL SEDIMENTS

Exposures show that the entire property is underlain at 0 - 2 m depth by Precambrian schist, with occasional quartz veins, of which the weathered uppermost zone, in the form of clasts and coarse beige sand, forms the surface over much of the terrain, particularly its southern portion. A thin surface scatter of subangular – subrounded pebbles, noted in the broad vicinity of the entrance gate, opposite the Augrabies turnoff (Figs. 1 & 2), was followed for up to ~250 m upslope to a low 665 m high rise at 28° 40' 57.2" S, 20° 25' 59.0" E. There, an old diamond digger pit had exposed a bedrock outcrop flanked by up to 1.5 m of beige fluvial sands grading up to fine gravel, mainly based on 2 – 4 cm diameter banded ironstone clasts, at ~37 m above the modern Orange River (Fig. 6). This occurrence is thus an Older Gravels vestige, with a ~17 – 19 Myr (Miocene) age (de Wit *et al.* 1997) that is likely to have aggraded at a similar time to the one at nearby Renosterkop that the author investigated in the late 1980's (Morris & Beaumont 1991). Red Hutton Sands, typically up to 60 cm deep, that also cover patches of the property, particularly on its lower half, are taken to have formed during arid glacial times (perhaps MIS 3 – 4), and was seen to be undergoing rapid preferential removal, judging from its dominance on gully floors (Figs. 7 - 8). Nowhere on this farm was any trace to be found of present or former springs, seeps or underground ponding, as at Droëgrond (Smith 1995), while gully gradients would have prevented pools remaining for long in them.

HERITAGE FINDINGS

A low density of lithics centered on the Older Gravel spread over the mid – northern sector of the property is taken to reflect occasional use of this regionally sparse source of high – grade raw material by early humans (Figs. 9 – 11). These artefacts seemed to be separable into two discrete weathering states, namely lightly smoothed and fresh, with many of the former being based on grey quartzite and most of the latter on banded ironstone. Smoothed flakes all had irregular plan – forms, unfaceted platforms and dorsals partly or largely covered by cortex, while cores typically showed alternate flaking along an edge, a reduction mode characteristic of the ESA. Fresh flakes were also limited to irregular plan – forms, but some had faceted platforms, and dorsals were more completely cleared of cortex, and, as expected, cores included specimens with peripheral preparation. All of this material, fresh and lightly smoothed, is best referred to two widely – spaced phases of the Acheulean, but this must remain speculative, given the almost complete absence of formal tools. The single exception was a rather coarse straight – edged side – scraper based on a fresh flake, while the lack of bifaces could well be real and reflect the generally too – small size of the local Older Gravel clasts. Elsewhere on the property, over upslope areas covered by schist residues, artefacts were extremely sparse and confined to occasional banded ironstone – based flakes that are taken to have been casually discarded there. No lithics were seen in the red sand patches, except where these were thin or disturbed, thereby suggesting that the human presence on this property has declined significantly since ESA times. Halfway up the western side of the terrace, near the flanking gravel road (Figs. 1 & 2) we came across a small scatter of undiagnostic tin and glass fragments and what seemed to be some minor levelling of the ground surface. These vestiges could well be the place where a small party camped for a short time early in the 20th century while digging for diamonds nearby, where they left pieces of a spade and some sieve mesh. Nowhere did I or the others see any archaeological sites, palaeontological bones or structures / graves of any age.

CONCLUSIONS

My conclusion is therefore that the inspected area contains no significant (stratified; *in situ*) heritage material and that its proposed use for the establishment of a citrus orchard will have no impact on the heritage resources of the Northern Cape Province.

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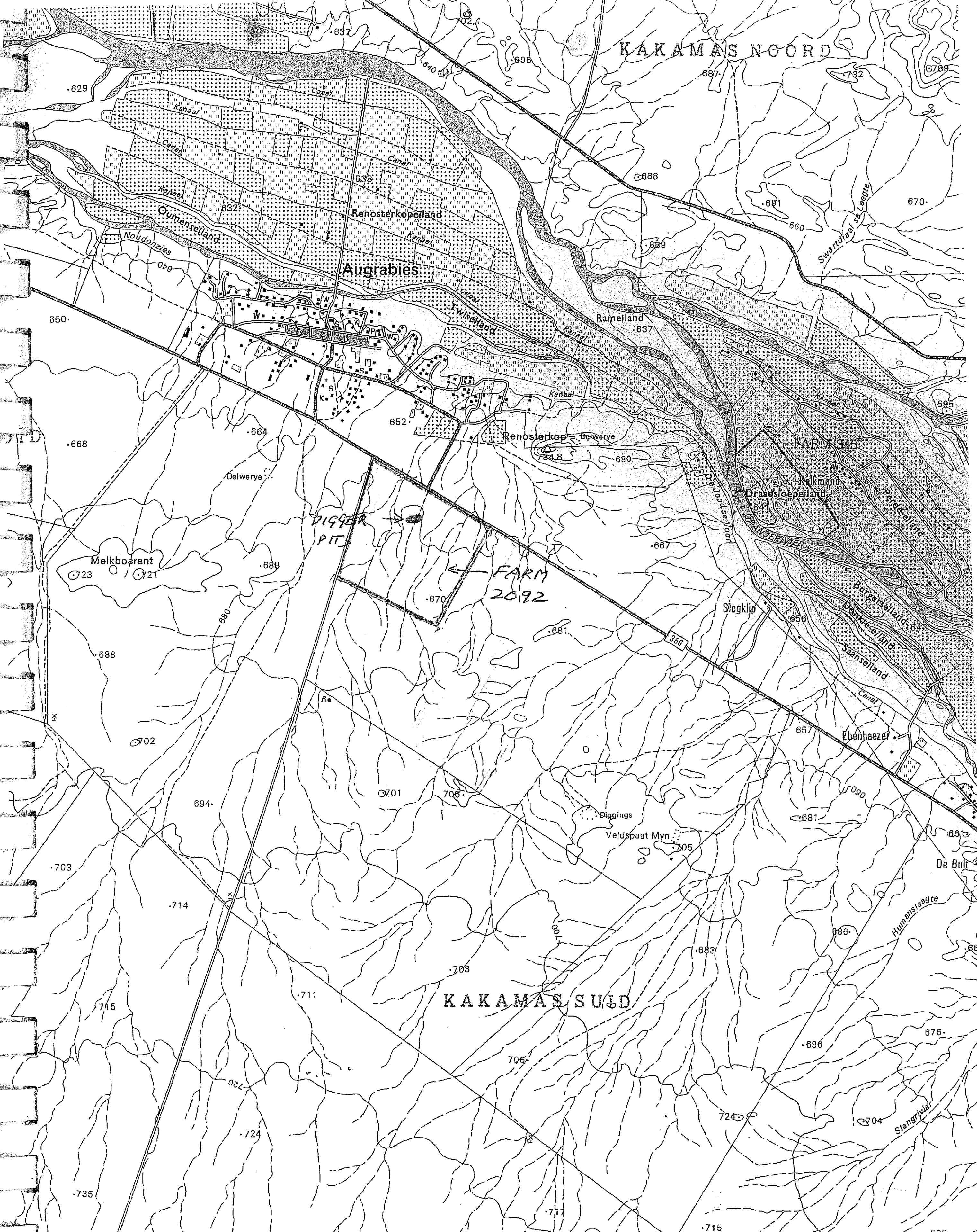


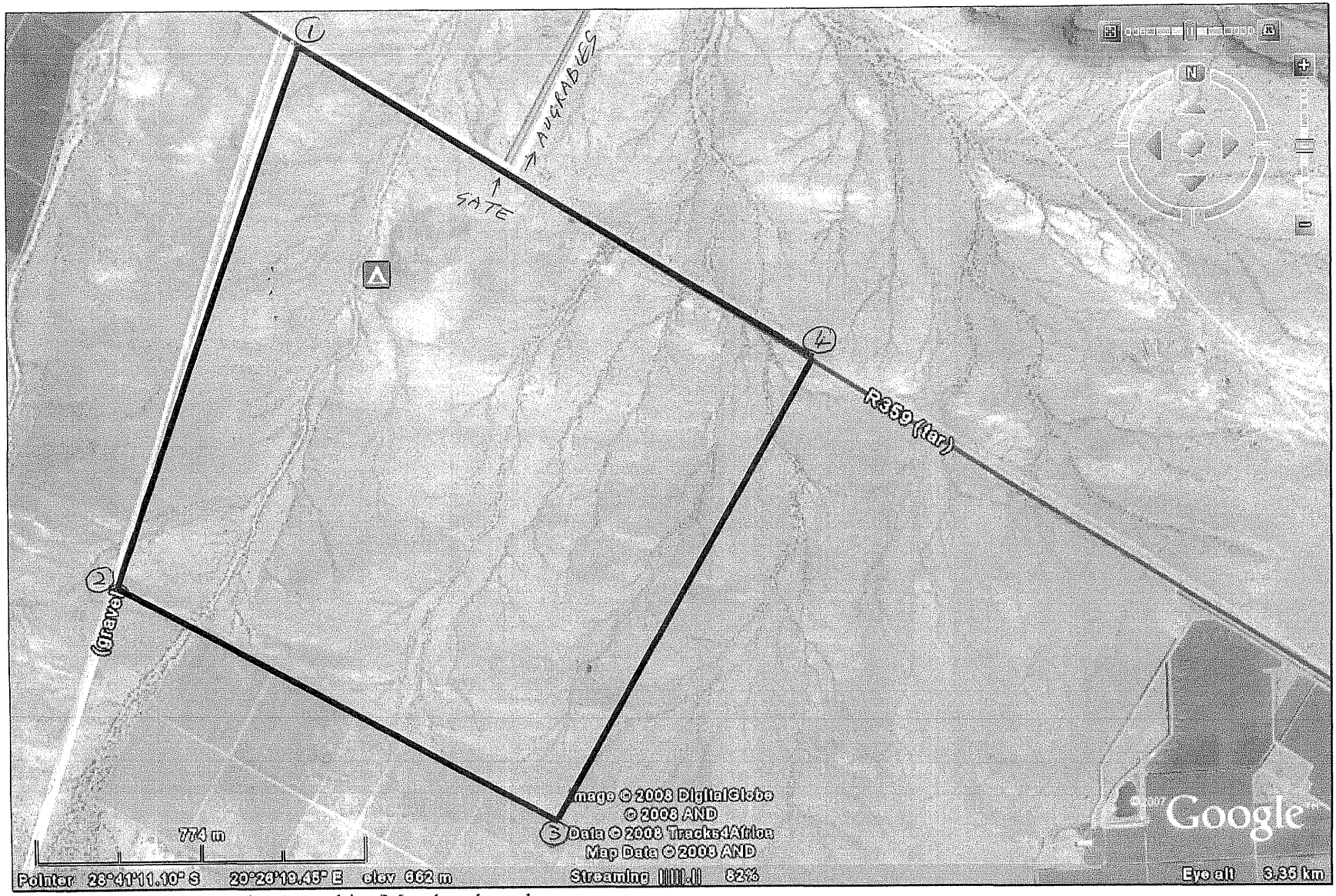
FIG. 1. AUGRABIES 2820CB.

25′ +5Y

7 8 9 10 Kilometer

Gedruk deur die Staatsdrukker, Privaatsak X85
Printed by the Government Printer, Private Bag X85

Die ruitlyne van die Suid-Afrikaanse Koördinaatstelsel word in die kantruimte



The **site, erf 2092** next the Augrabies/Marchand road.

FIG 2

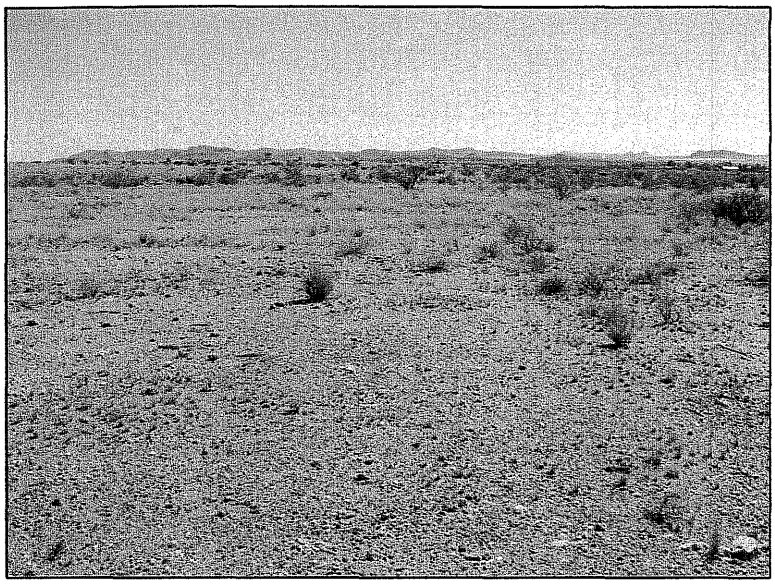


FIG. 3. VIEW TO NORTH SIDE

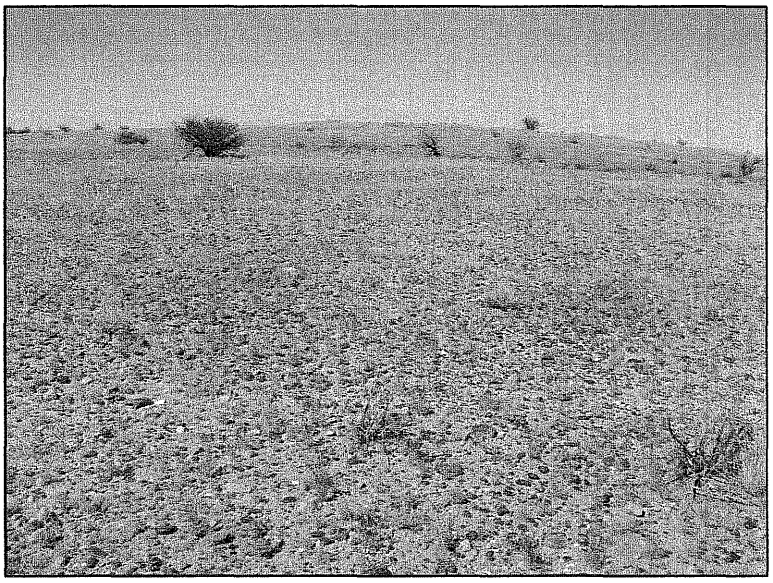


FIG. 4. VIEW TO SOUTH SIDE

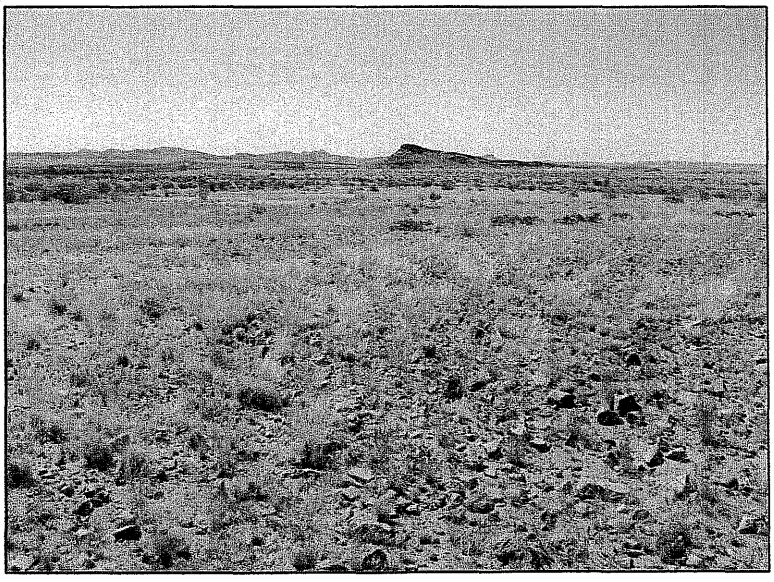


FIG. 5. VIEW TO NORTH-EAST

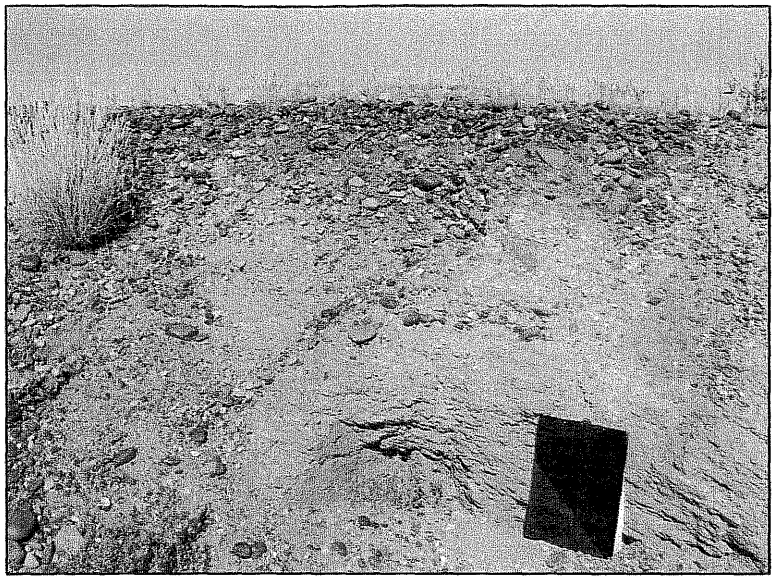


FIG. 6. DIGGER PIT

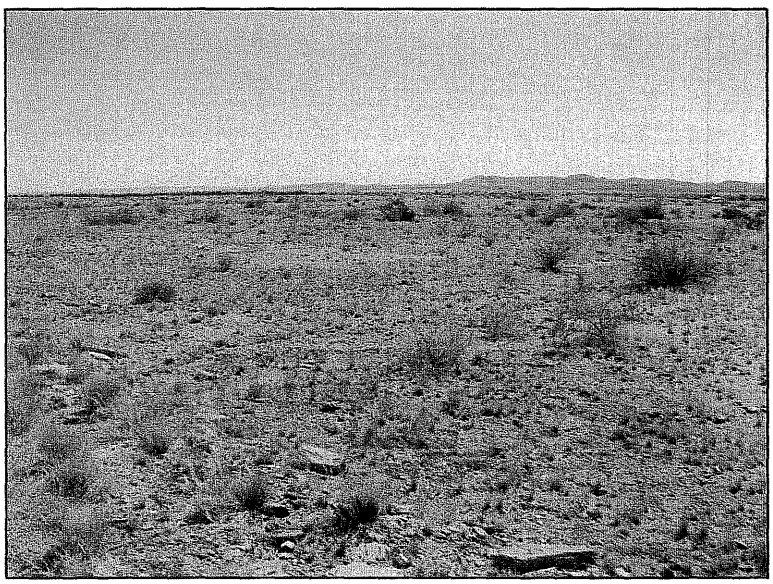


FIG 7. PATCH OF HUTTON SANDS

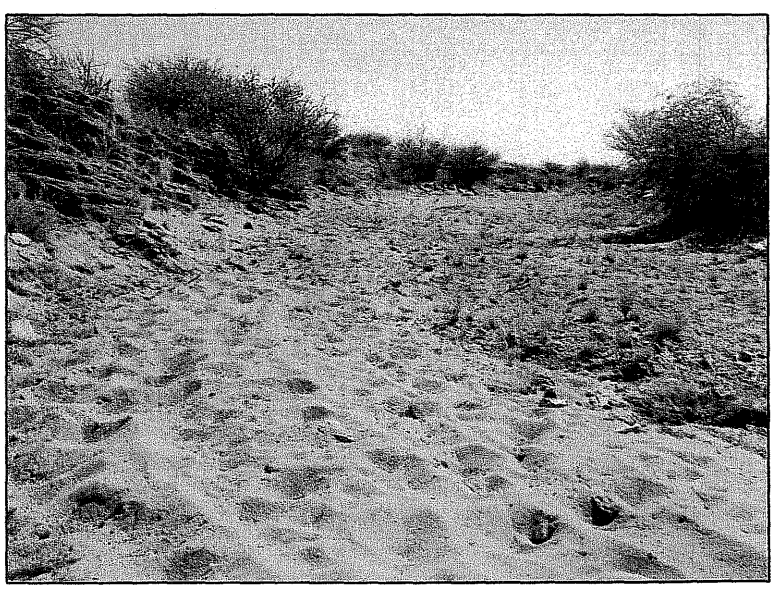


FIG 8. TYPICAL GULLY FLOOR SURFACE

FIG 9. LIGHTLY SMOOTHED ARTEFACTS, MAINLY FLAKES WITH MARKED BULBS

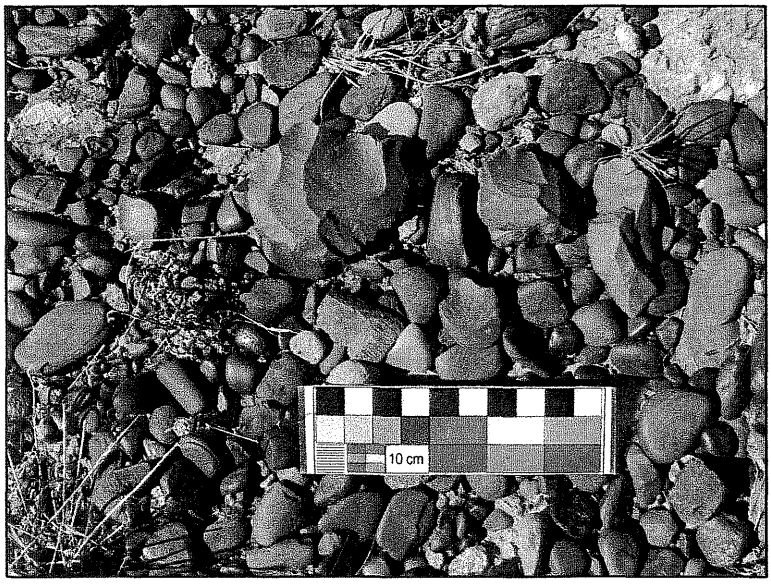


FIG 10. FRESH SPECIMENS, INCLUDING A COARSELY PREPARED CORE

FIG 11. TWO LIGHTLY SMOOTHED CORES & TWO FRESH ITEMS, INCLUDING THE SCRAPER (FAR LEFT)