

CHAPTER S. SHALE HILLS

Field Note S5a. Mines at Sonderkoskop

The clays in the Shale Hills were mined decades ago, in open-cast and underground mines. Some of the mines are marked on the geology map. All the mines have been abandoned. The red clay mines are described from west to east (Field Notes S5a to S5d), then the white clay (kaolin) mines (Field Note S5e) and lastly the salt mines on the south bank of the Breede River (Field Note S5f).

There are four red clay mines in the Shale Hills area (within the Study Area) (Figure 1).

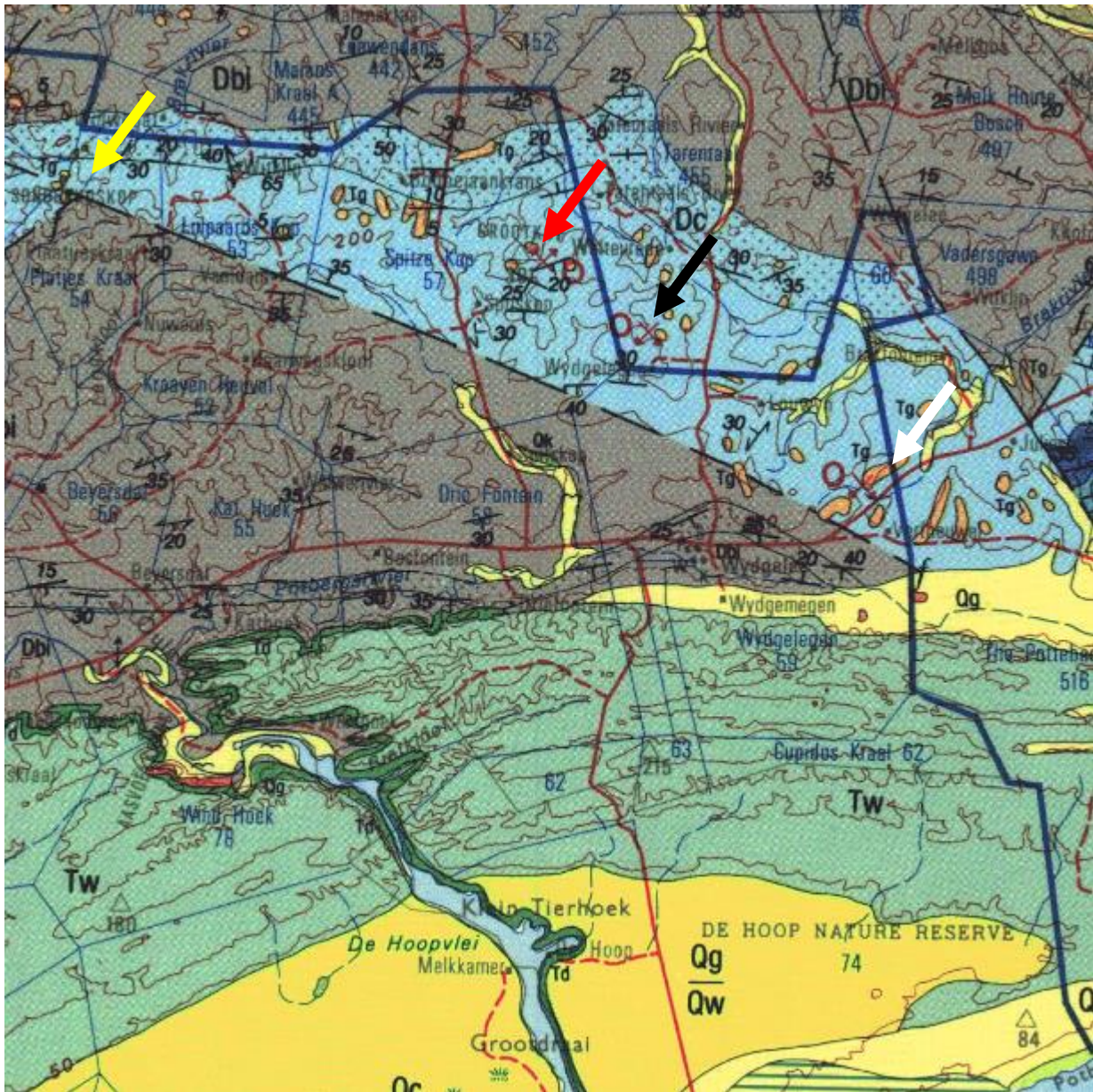


Figure 1. Geology map of part of the Shale Hills north of De Hoop Vlei, showing mine locations (arrows, from west to east): yellow – Sonderkoskop; red – Grootkop and Hill 288; black – Hill 254; white - Verfheuwel.

This Field Note is about the clay mines at Sonderkoskop.

Sonderkoskop is located ~2 km northwest of Plaatjieskraal Farm (Figures 2 and 3).

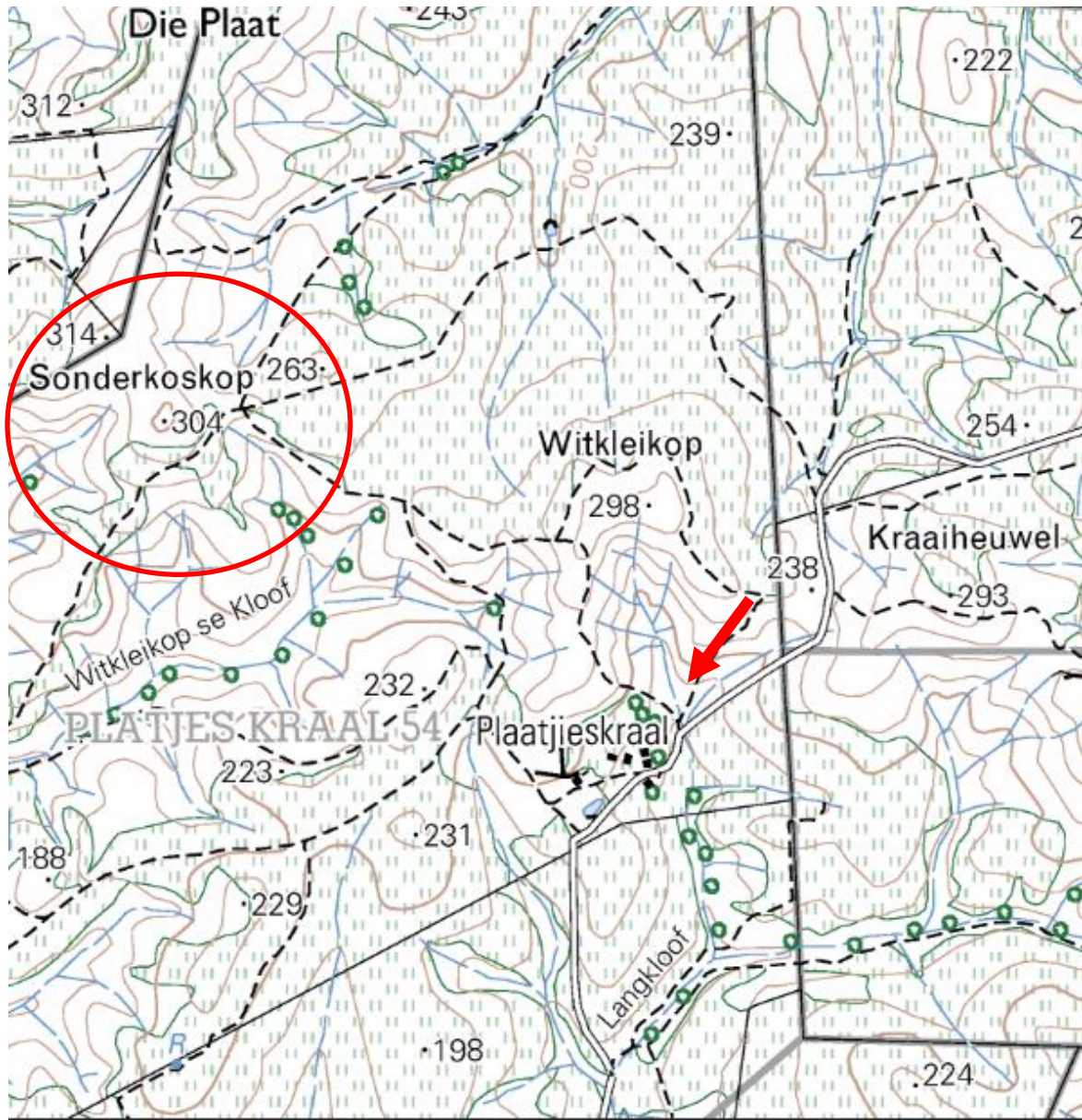


Figure 2. Topography map of the area around the farm Plaatjieskraal (arrow). Sonderkoskop is within the circle.

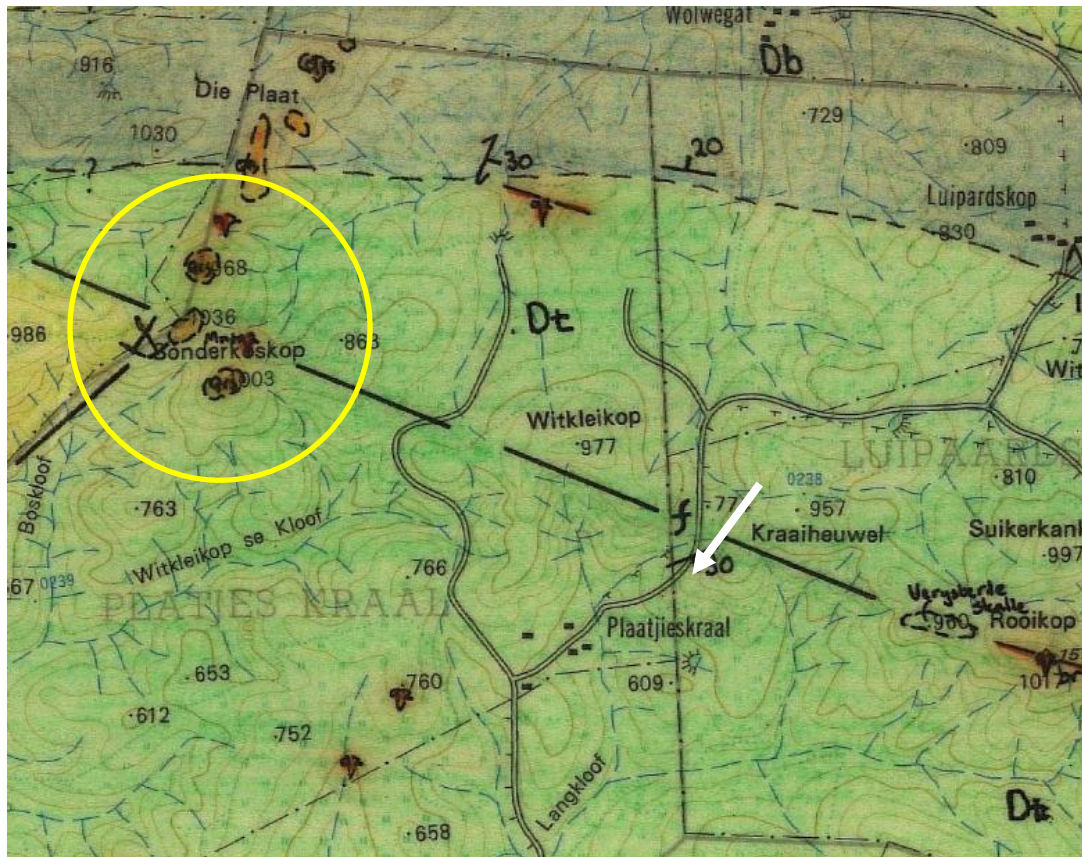


Figure 3. Geology map (1984; elevations in feet) of the area shown in Figure 2. Sonderkoskop is within the circle. Arrow points on Plaatjieskraal. Green areas are shales. The orange patches are silcrete (and in places ferricrete) capping. The Qz symbol is for quartz outcrops.

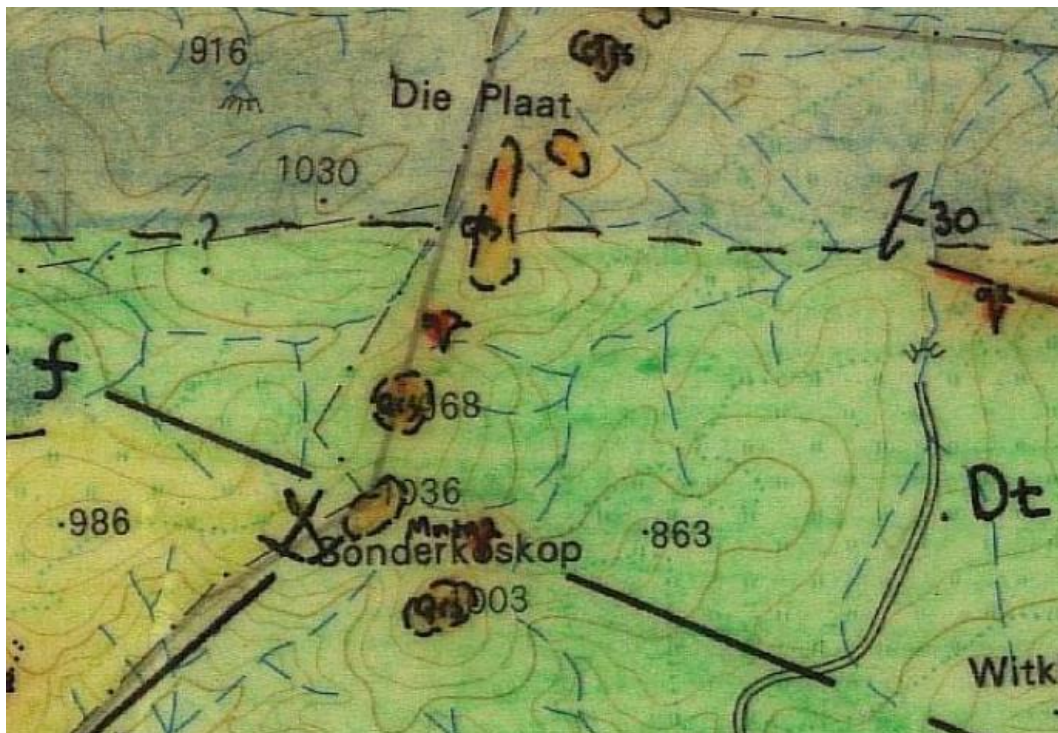


Figure 4. Enlargement of the area encircled in Figures 2 and 3. Note the mine symbol:

Mine not in production 

Sonderkospop has two peaks at 304 m and 314 m above sealevel (Figures 5, 6 and 7).

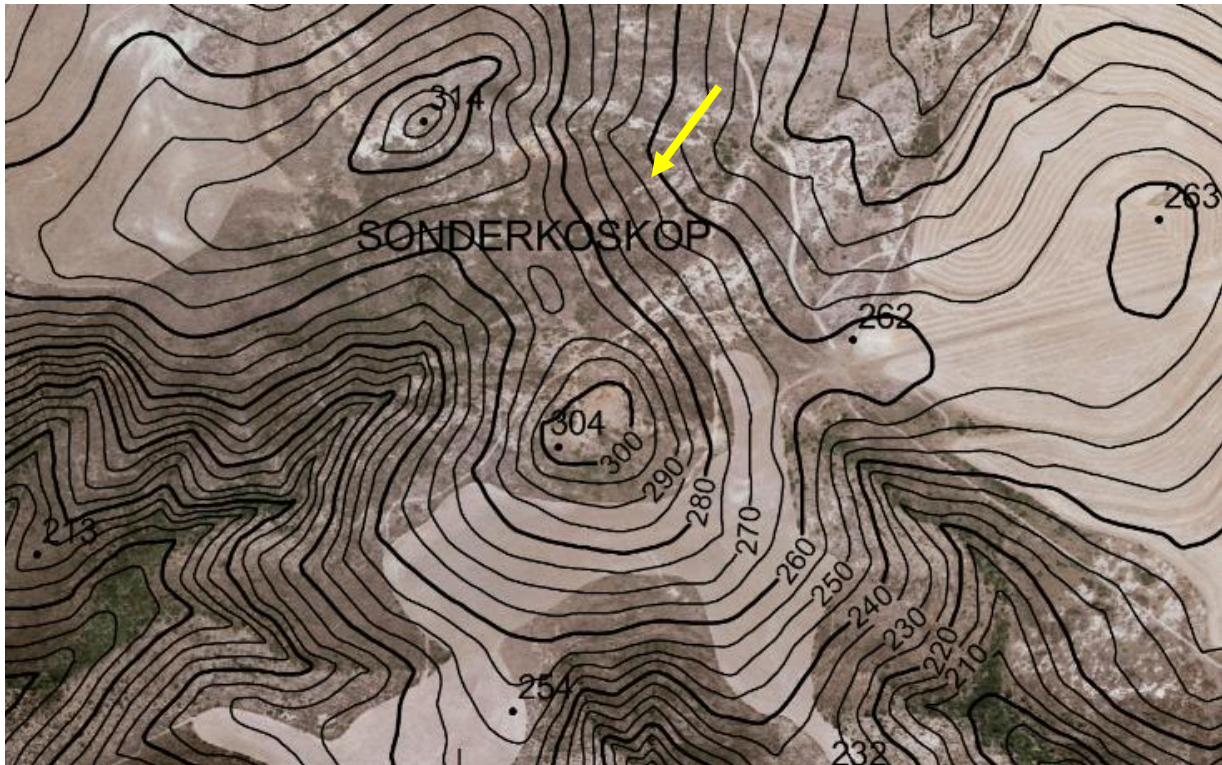


Figure 5. Topography map of Sonderkospop. The northern peak is 10 m higher than the southern peak.



Figure 6. Satellite image of Sonderkospop. Arrow points to the mine site.



Figure 7. The road to Sonderkoskop. View from the east.

Sonderkoskop and the adjacent hills are capped with Silcrete (Figure 8) (see Chapter C for silcrete).



Figure 8. Silcrete caps Sonderkoskop.
(The person on the left is J Groenewald, of the Renosterveld Research Centre)

Manganese is present at certain points below the silcrete capping (Figures 9 and 10).



Figure 9. Manganese below the silcrete capping.



Figure 10. Manganese below the silcrete capping.

Only minor mining activity took place on the southern and western slopes of the southern (lower) peak (Figures 11 and 12).



Figure 11. White clay was mined on the southern slope of the lower peak.



Figure 12. Red clay was mined on the western slope of the lower peak.
 (The person on the right is J Groenewald, of the Renosterveld Research Centre)

No mining activity took place on the higher peak (Figures 13 and 14).



Figure 13. View from the southeast of the higher peak.



Figure 14. Silcrete caps the higher peak.