

CHAPTER S. SHALE HILLS

Field Note S5a. Mines at Sonderkosp



Clay mine below the crest of Sonderkosp.

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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 clay mines are described from west to east (See other Field Notes in this chapter).

There are four clay mines in the south of the Shale Hills area (Figure 1).

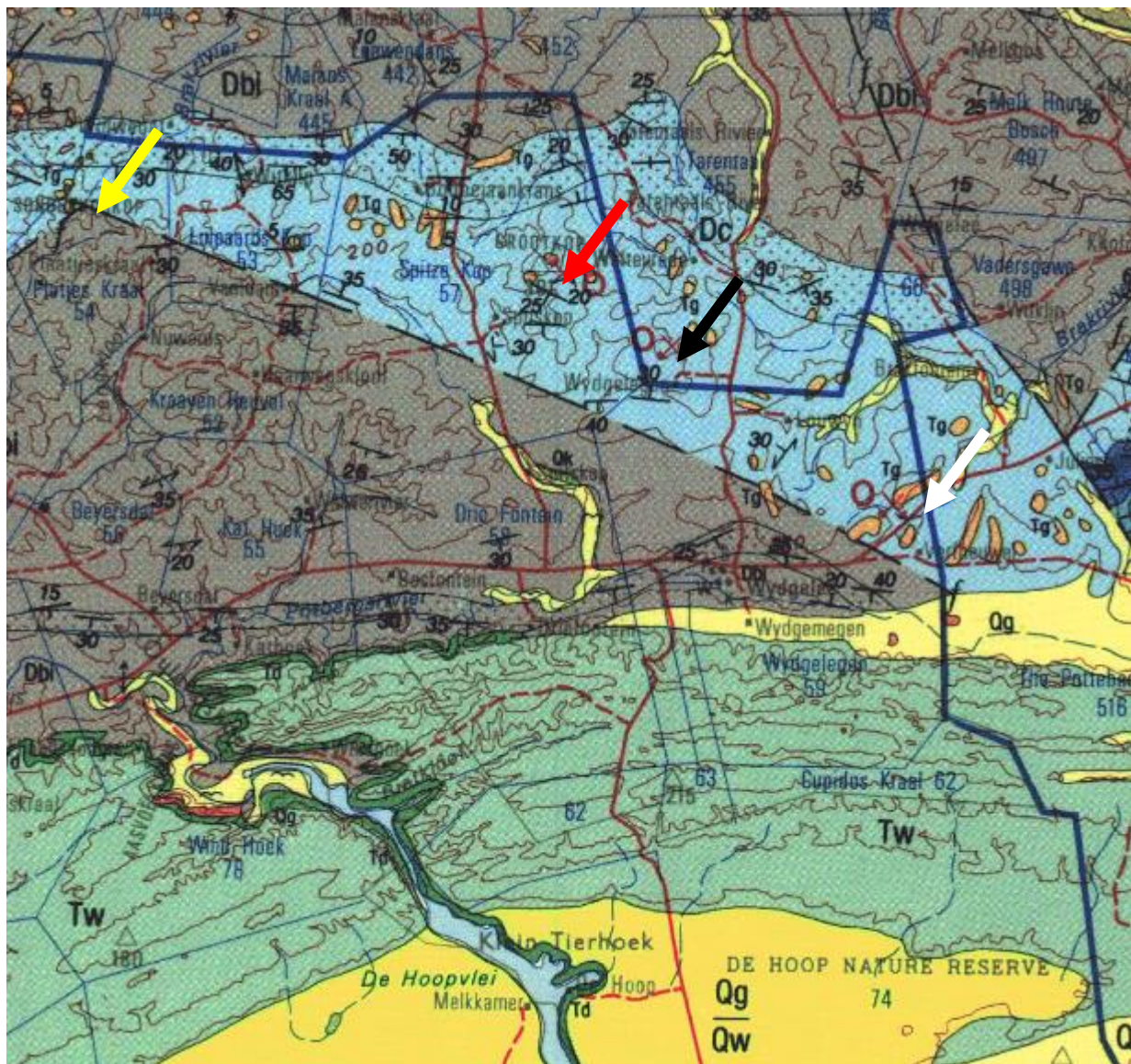


Figure 1. Geology map of part of the Shale Hills north of De Hoop Vlei, showing mine locations (arrows, from west to east): yellow – Sonderkoskop; red – Grootkop and Hill 288; black – Hill 254; white - Verheuwel.

This Field Note is about the clay mines at Sonderkoskop.

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

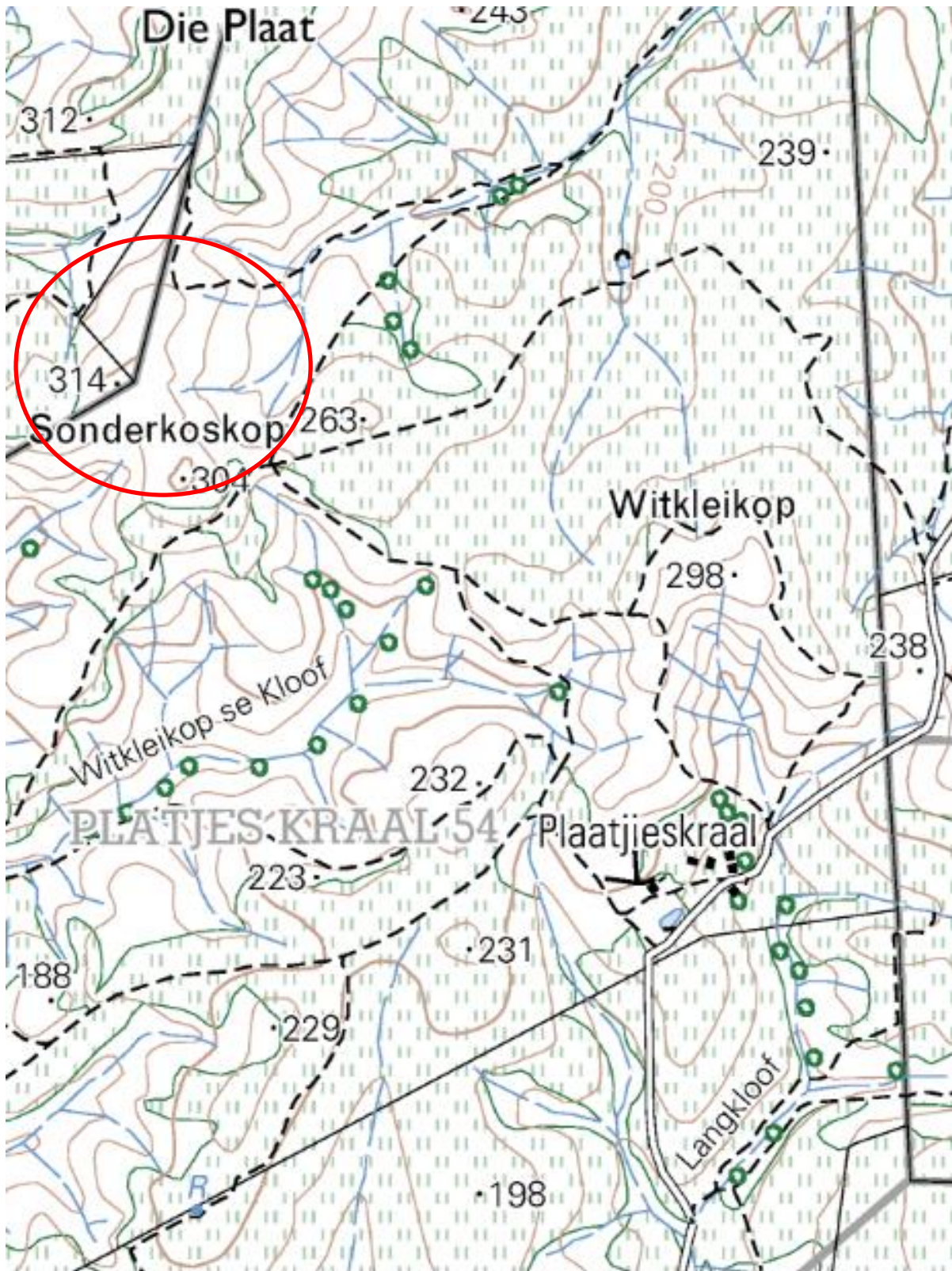


Figure 2. Topography map of the area around the farm Plaatjieskraal. Sonderkoskop is within the circle.

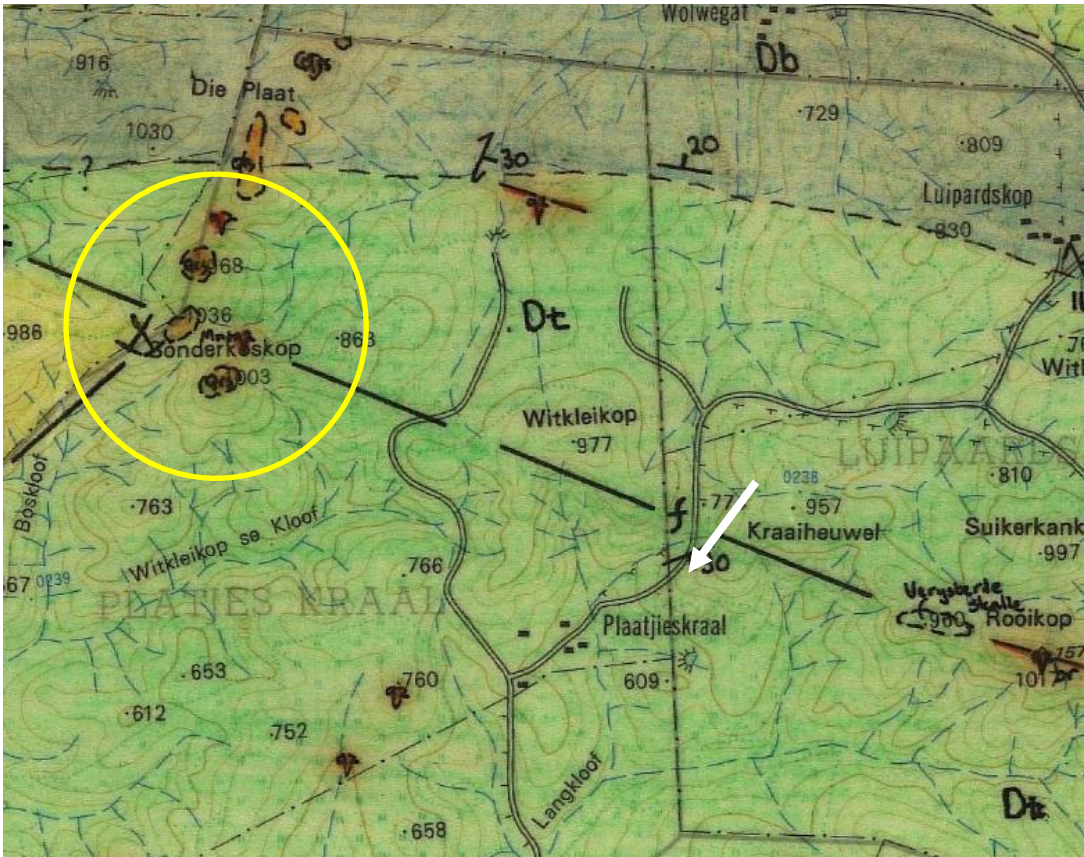


Figure 3. Geology map (1984; elevations in feet) of the area shown in Figure 2. Sonderkoskop is within the circle. Arrow points on Plaatjieskraal. Green areas are shales. The orange patches are silcrete (and in places ferricrete) capping. The Qz symbol is for quartz outcrops.

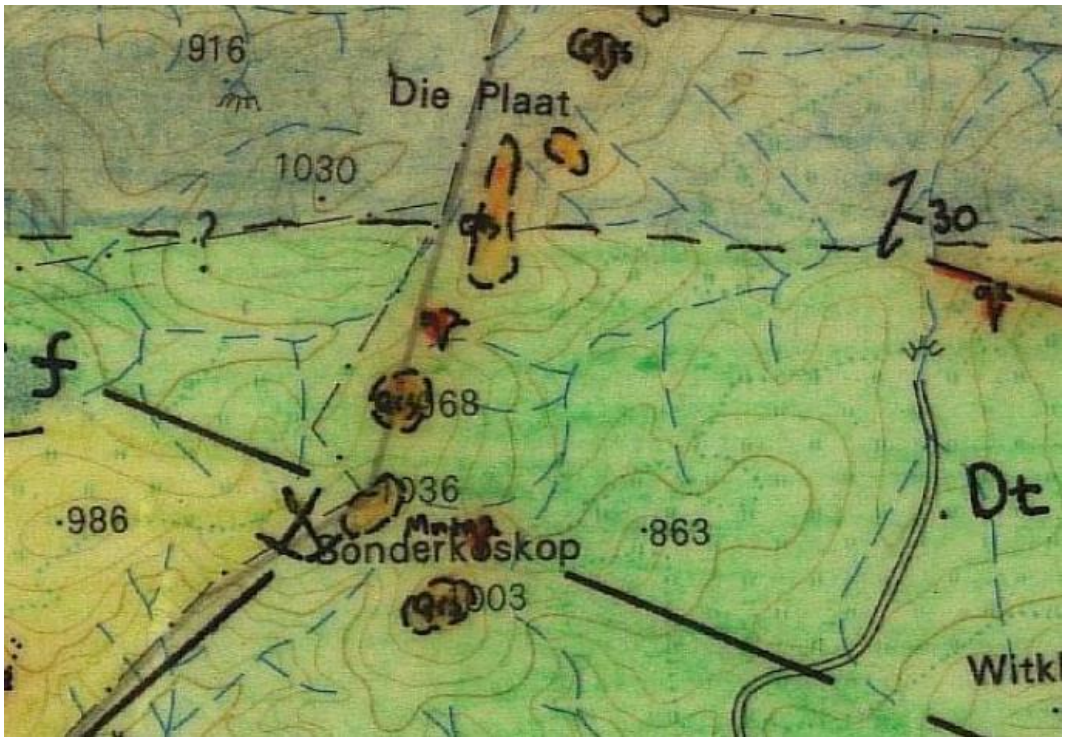


Figure 4. Enlargement of the area encircled in Figures 2 and 3. Note the mine symbol:
 Mine not in production X

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

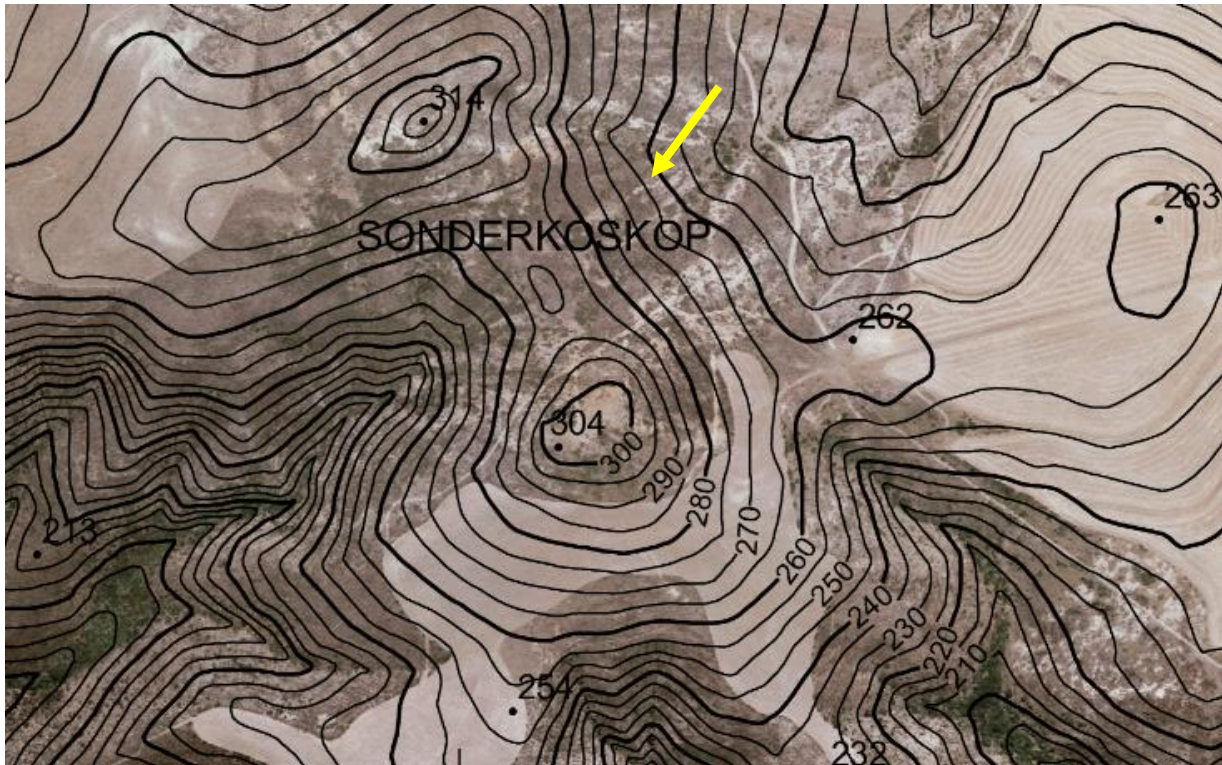


Figure 5. Topography map of Sonderkospop. The northern peak is 10 m higher than the southern peak.



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



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

Sonderkosp and some of the adjacent hills are capped with silcrete (Figure 8) (see Chapter D for silcrete).



Figure 8. Silcrete at the top of Sonderkosp.

Two open cast mines are shown in Figures 9 and 10.



Figure 9. White clay was mined on the southern slope. Note the silcrete blocks.



Figure 10. Red clay was mined on the western slope. Note the silcrete blocks.
 (The person on the right is J Groenewald, of the Renosterveld Research Centre).

Another small, white clay mine is located on the west flank of Sonderkoskop (Figure 11).



Figure 11. White clay mine (arrow) on the west flank of Sonderkoskop. Top – topography map. Bottom – View from the north.

The author could not obtain any information on the history of these mines.