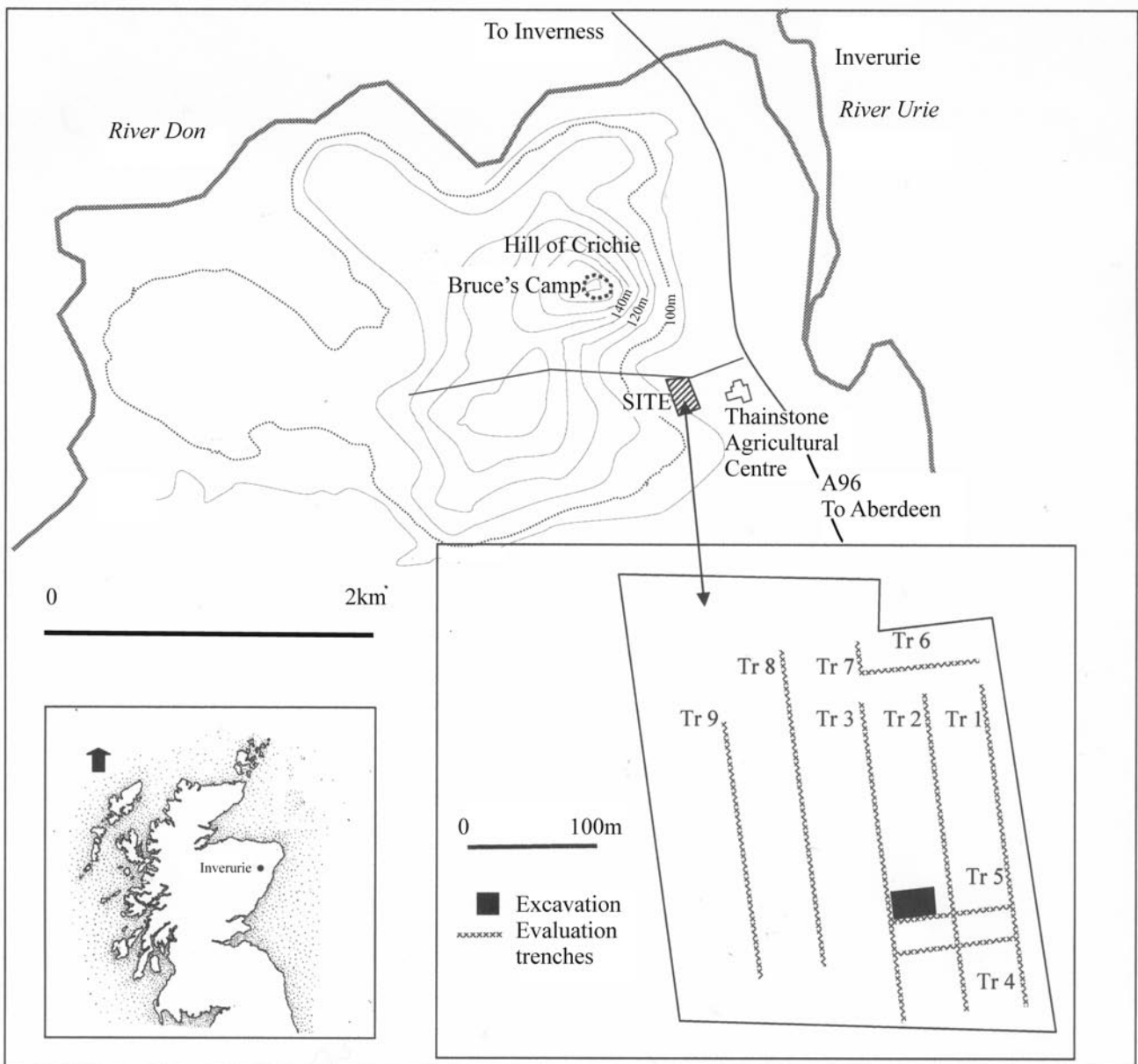


## 2 The Site

The site (NGR: NJ 773 181), which is adjacent to the Thainstone Agricultural Centre, is located c 2km south of Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, on land that once formed part of the policies of Thainstone House. As aerial photographs of the site showed faint traces of a possible enclosure c 50m in diameter centred at NJ 7733 1814 (Aberdeenshire Council Sites and Monuments Record Site No NJ71NE0151), an archaeological evaluation (illus 1, Trenches 1–9) was carried out on the site

in November 2002, prior to its development as a business park (Murray 2002). The evaluation showed little surviving archaeological material but the presence of a flint scraper (SF 1) and certain areas of burning at the south-east end of the site led to a watching brief being maintained during the soil strip in two areas. During the watching brief it became clear that some archaeological deposits had survived in the area of the burning. This part of the site was then excavated by hand.



Illus 1 Site location

## 2.1 Site location

The site is situated on the east-facing slope of an area of relatively high ground (illus 1: see the 100m contour) which stands within and dominates a loop of the River Don, beside its confluence with the River Urie. At the top of the high ground, above the present site, there is an enclosed settlement or fort (Bruce's Camp), possibly of Iron Age date. A major routeway beside the Don and Urie may have existed from at least the

Neolithic, with a concentration of sites along the river valleys (Shepherd 1986, 11–12). The same route has often been attributed as the line of march between the Roman temporary camps at Kintore and Durno, both generally linked with the Agricola campaign of 83 AD (Breeze 1996, 45–6, illus 29). It was subsequently used as the medieval road from Aberdeen to the north, and is now the line of the A96. The area on which the Thainstone site lies overlooks this routeway and potentially controls the river crossing.