
2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Site location and description

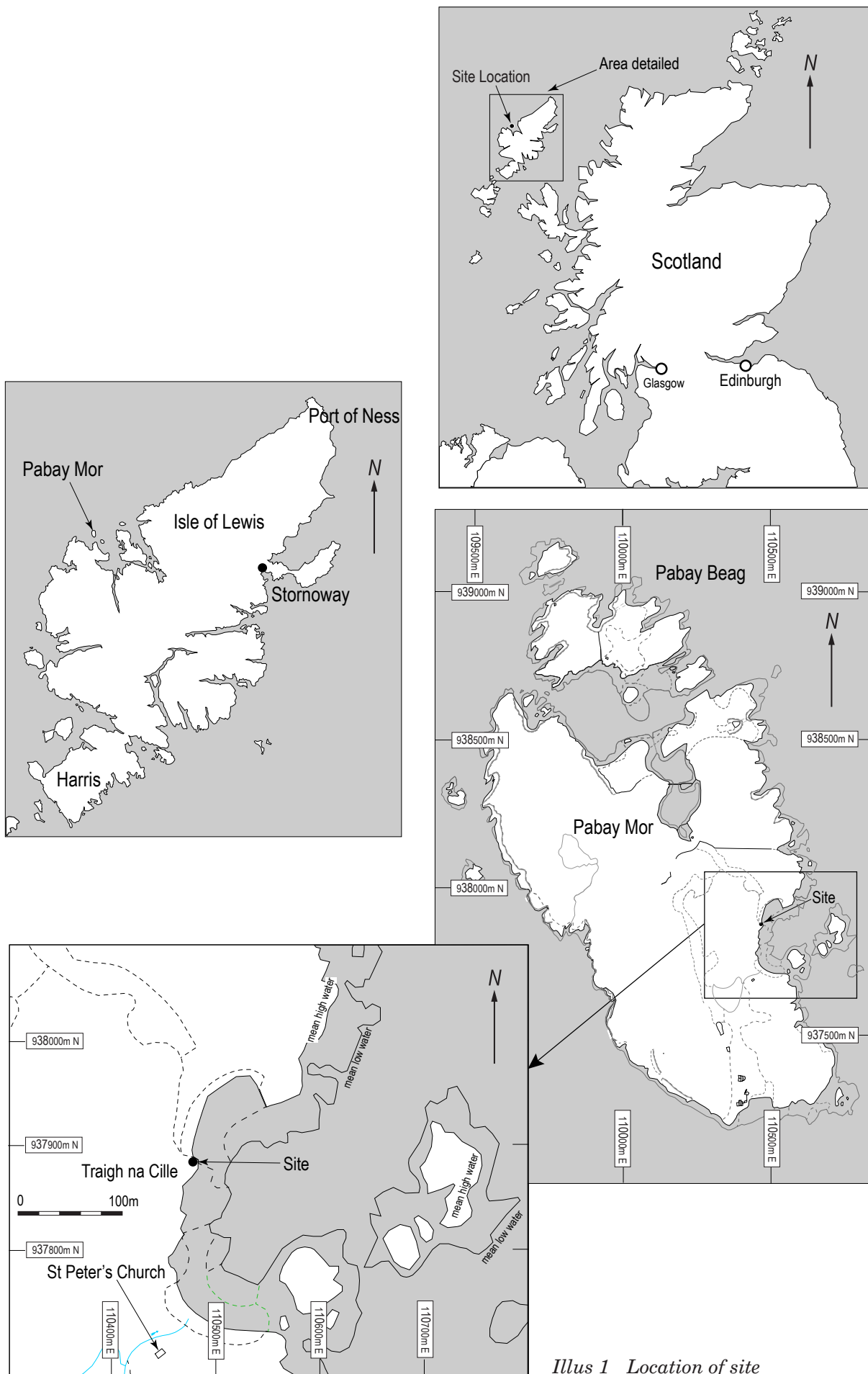
This report describes the discovery, excavation and identification of a crouched burial and group of disarticulated human remains recovered from the eroding sandy cliff on the east side of Pabay Mor, a small island off the west coast of Uig on the Isle of Lewis (*illus 1*). The burial was discovered at NB 1048 3795 at the north end of a sandy bay, Traigh na Cille, on the east side of the island. It lay towards the top of a large machair-covered mound of windblown sand that had accumulated at the top of the cliff. This sand had been eroding dramatically with each storm, to the extent that up to 1.5m was lost in the winter of 2001.

2.2 Circumstances of discovery and background to the excavation

Human remains were first observed at the site by the landowner, Mr John Hobbs, who in 1998 recovered a selection of human bone, including two skulls, femurs, a clavicle and a scapula, amongst other bones, from the eroding cliff and the beach below. The remains were subsequently deposited in the Uig museum. In 2002 he observed further eroding remains at the top

of the cliff and contacted the Western Isles Council archaeologist, Dr Mary MacLeod, who reported them to the local police. Dr MacLeod then visited the site on 14 August 2002 and noted that disarticulated remains were scattered within re-deposited sandy topsoil c 2.7m above the base of the sandy cliff, close to a marker stone. She also noted that the ground around the marker stone had been disturbed, and further investigation confirmed that some digging had occurred here previously and had resulted in the re-deposited soil and human remains.

The disarticulated and jumbled bones were carefully removed to reveal a dark soil which contained in situ human remains and a possible Bronze Age pot. Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division (GUARD) was then contacted by Historic Scotland and commissioned to excavate the remains under the provisions of the Human Remains Call-off Contract. On 16 August 2002 Rachel Barrowman attended the site on behalf of GUARD with Mark Elliot of the Museum nan Eilean. The site was found at the edge of an eroding sandy cliff, in a small rectangular de-turfed area of c 0.65 × 1m to the east of the marker stone. The site was fully excavated and recorded, and the pottery and remains were taken to the museum in Stornoway.



Illus 1 Location of site