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## 2 Introduction by Gavin MacGregor

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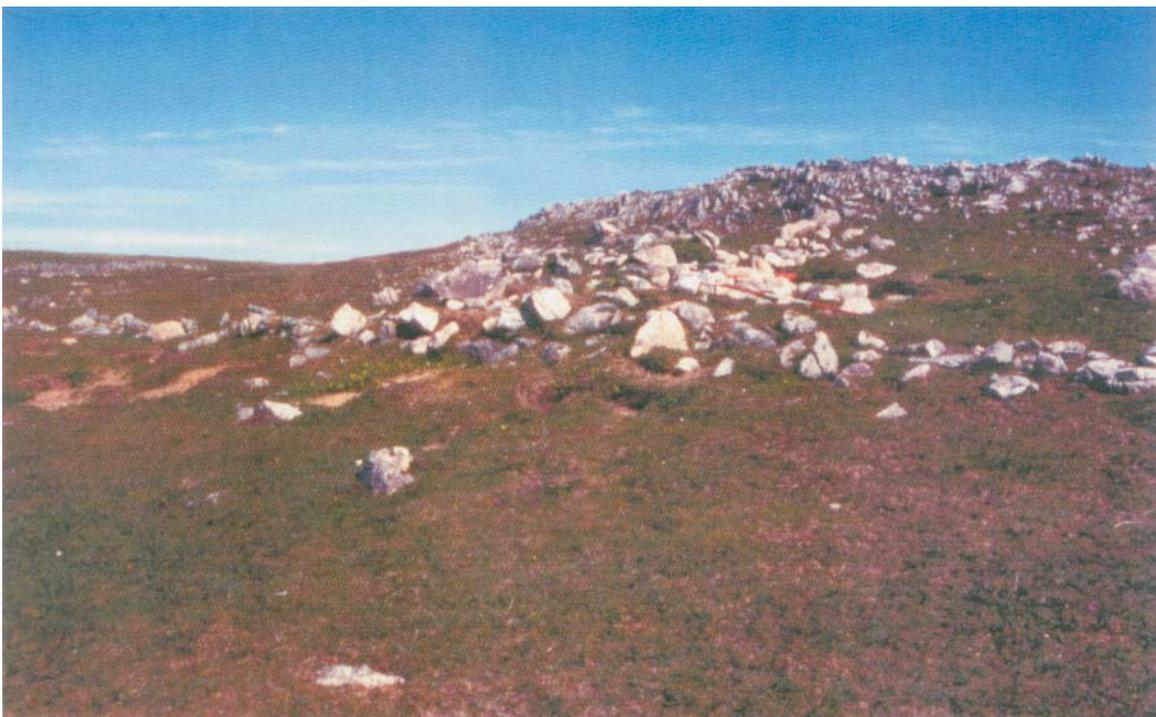
A human skull (now known to belong to the burial Skeleton 2: [Section 4.1](#)) was discovered in February 1998, apparently dislodged by burrowing rabbits from beneath a cairn at Loch Borrallie, Sutherland. A visit by Historic Scotland led to the conclusion that the date and nature of the burial rite and its relationship to the cairn were unclear. It was possible that rabbit burrowing could disturb further human remains at the site, with an associated loss of archaeological information. This ultimately led to evaluation of the site being undertaken by Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division (GUARD) over two days during July 2000, as part of the Historic Scotland Human Remains Call Off Contract.

The site is located to the north of Durness (NGR NC 3790 6761) on a peninsula between the Kyle of Durness and Balnakeil Bay ([Illus 1](#)). The peninsula is characterised by undulating hill slopes with light, freely draining sandy soils and several large areas of sand erosion. The peninsula contains a significant number of archaeological remains, ranging from prehistoric to post-Medieval in date ([Reid \*et al\* 1967](#);

[Lelong and MacGregor forthcoming](#)). In several areas of severe erosion, or deflated dunes, archaeological deposits can be temporarily revealed ([Lelong and MacGregor 2002](#)).

The cairn measures some 7 m north / south by 3.5 m east / west and is situated against a south-facing outcrop of quartzite ([Illus 2](#)). It is broadly sub-rectangular in form, but there is a notable arm to the cairn extending c 2.0 m up the slope. This may indicate that the cairn is partially buried by later deposits at its east side or is more complex in form ([Illus 3](#)). A later field dyke, badly denuded and tumbled, appears to have incorporated the southern edge of the cairn. Two small, low, circular kerbed cairns, c 1.0 m diameter, are located close by along the same contour (the nearest of which, context 003, is shown on [Illus 4](#)).

The site archive has been sent to the National Monuments Record of Scotland, RCAHMS, Edinburgh. The finds have been allocated to Inverness Museum and Art Gallery by Historic Scotland's Finds Disposal Panel.



*Illus 2* Loch Borrallie cairn: a general view of the cairn and the quartzite outcrop



*Illus 3 Loch Borralie cairn: another general shot of the cairn and outcrops*