



Speke Keeill, Mount Murray Hotel, Isle of Man

Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Results



**Speke Keeill
Mount Murray Hotel, Isle of Man**

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Contents

Summary

Acknowledgements

1	BACKGROUND	1
	1.1 Introduction.....	1
	1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology.....	1
	1.3 Archaeological Background.....	2
	<i>Early Christianity</i>	2
	<i>Keeills</i>	3
	1.4 Previous Archaeological Work.....	3
2	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	5
3	METHODS	5
	3.1 Geophysical Survey.....	5
	3.2 Evaluation Trenches.....	5
4	RESULTS	6
	4.1 Introduction.....	6
	4.2 Geophysical Survey (Figure 1).....	6
	4.3 Evaluation Trenches.....	8
	<i>Introduction</i>	8
	<i>Trench 1</i>	8
	<i>Trench 2</i>	10
	<i>Trench 3</i>	12
	<i>Trench 4</i>	12
	<i>Trench 5</i>	13
5	FINDS	13
	5.1 Introduction.....	13
	5.2 Prehistoric.....	14
	5.3 Pre-Norse.....	14
	5.4 Norse.....	16
	5.5 Post-medieval.....	17
6	PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE	17
	6.1 Introduction.....	17
	6.2 Charred plant remains.....	18
	6.3 Charcoal.....	18
7	RADIOCARBON DATING	18
	7.1 Introduction.....	18
8	DISCUSSION	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
	8.1 Introduction.....	19
	8.2 Prehistoric.....	19
	8.3 Pre-Norse: the cist cemetery.....	20
	8.4 Norse: the keeill.....	21

8.5	White Stones	22
8.6	Later Period.....	23
9	RECOMMENDATIONS	24
10	ARCHIVE	24
11	REFERENCES	25

Appendix 1: Trench Summaries

Figures

Figure 1:	Site and trench location, with geophysical results
Figure 2:	Mount Murray estate map, c. 1800
Figure 3:	Trench 1, keeill site, plan, section and photos
Figure 4:	Trench 2, plan and photos
Figure 5:	Trench 3, plan and photos
Figure 6:	Trench 4, plan, section and photos
Figure 7:	Trench 5, plan and photos
Figure 8:	Ogham stone with inscription
Figure 9:	Radiocarbon probability distributions
Figure 10:	Probability distributions of phase of burials
Figure 11:	Span of the burial events
Front cover:	Trench 1, keeill site, under excavation
Back cover:	Trench 3, grave 304, under excavation

Tables

Table 1:	Finds totals by material type and by trench
Table 2:	Summary of analysis of human bone
Table 3:	Assessment of charred plant remains and charcoal
Table 4:	Radiocarbon date results

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Summary

In September 2006 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' at the site of Speke Keeill, Mount Murray Hotel, near Douglas, Isle of Man, to investigate a small early Christian chapel and associated cist cemetery. The site was first recorded on an early 19th century estate map.

Over 174 keeill sites and several cist cemeteries are known on the Isle of Man and this project aimed to ascertain whether the chapel and the cemetery were contemporaneous or whether the keeill belonged to a later phase of activity as has been identified on other sites. The majority of the identified keeills on Man date to the period following the Norse arrival and very few are known to have a pre-Norse Christian date. The cist cemeteries generally belong to the pre-Norse period and have had keeills and later Norse burials inserted at a later date.

The results of the evaluation showed that like many sites on Man the cist cemetery belonged to the pre-Norse period, which was confirmed by radiocarbon dating to belong to the 6th to 7th century AD, the samples taken from three burials. The keeill was shown to be later than the cemetery as it was built upon an earlier grave which was subsequently disturbed. It was constructed in a typical Scandinavian style of turf and stone and was likely to date later than the 9th century AD.

A number of features were excavated which were clearly earlier than the cemetery, possibly Bronze Age in date, although definitive dating evidence was not recovered.

The latest activity on site was probably during the 18th and early 19th century, associated with John Murray the 4th Duke of Atholl, a keen antiquarian who appears to have had a double ditched enclosure constructed around the keeill site, possibly to protect it from agriculture. This enclosure cut through one of the cist graves.

Two very unusual discoveries were made at the site. The first was the recovery of a flat slate stone inscribed with ogham written in a distinctive form of Gaelic particular to the Northern Isles. This find shows evidence of the close links between the Isle of Man and other areas under Norwegian control in the 10th and 11th century. The second was the recovery of a plait of human hair from one of the cist graves; a very unusual survival.

Finally, the evaluation identified possible evidence of earlier Christian ritual, from the recovery of large numbers of white water worn pebbles. White pebbles were seen as sacred, following God's words to the Church of Pergamum, as recorded in the *Book of Revelations*. The idea of white stones as holy was continued by the actions of the 6th century Abbot of Iona, St. Columba, who used them for the healing of the sick and dying. These white stones were found in distinct piles around the altar of Speke Keeill.

Acknowledgements

This programme of post-excavation and assessment work was commissioned and funded by Videotext Communications Ltd, and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank the staff at Videotext, and in particular Michael Douglas (Series Editor), Melinda Corkery (Production Manager), Jim Mower (Assistant Producer), Jenny James (Production Coordinator) and Joanna Gatum for their considerable help during the recording and post-excavation work.

The geophysical survey was undertaken by John Gater, Claire Stephens and Ian Wilkins of GSB Prospection. The field survey was undertaken by Henry Chapman, University of Birmingham and landscape survey and map regression was undertaken by Stewart Ainsworth of English Heritage. The excavation strategy was devised by Professor Mick Aston (Bristol University). The on-site recording was co-ordinated by Steve Thompson and Naomi Hall both of Wessex Archaeology. Naomi Hall was also responsible for on-site finds processing.

The excavations and field walking was undertaken by Time Team's retained archaeologists, Phil Harding (Wessex Archaeology), Raksha Dave, Kerry Ely, Brigid Gallagher, Ian Powlesland and Matt Williams assisted by Claire Corkill Marion Hastings, Andrew Jamieson, Shane Kelly, Ray Moore and David Radcliffe.

The archive was collated and all post-excavation assessment and analysis undertaken by Wessex Archaeology. This report was compiled by Steve Thompson assisted by Naomi Hall with specialist reports prepared by Lorraine Mephram (finds), with Jackie McKinley (human bone), Chris J. Stevens (palaeoenvironmental material) and Dr Michael J. Allen (radiocarbon dating). The illustrations were prepared by Will Foster. The post-excavation project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Lorraine Mephram.

The work benefited from discussion with Mick Aston, Phil Harding, Jackie McKinley (Wessex Archaeology), Andrew Johnson (Manx National Heritage), Nick Johnson (Centre for Manx Studies), Dr Dawn Hadley (Sheffield University), Alison Fox (Finds Liaison Officer for the Isle of Man), Dr Katherine Forsythe (Ogham Specialist, Glasgow University) and Helen Geake (Cambridge University.)

Finally thanks are extended to The Mount Murray Hotel and Country Club and Jeffrey Fargher of Speke Farm for allowing access to the Site.

Speke Keeill

Mount Murray Hotel, Isle of Man

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'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name on it, known only to him who receives it'

Revelations 2:17 (NIV)

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Videotext Communications Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological recording and post-excavation analysis on an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' at the site of Speke Keeill, Mount Murray Hotel, Isle of Man (hereafter the 'Site') (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 This report documents the results of archaeological survey and evaluation undertaken by Time Team, and presents an assessment of the results of these works.

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The site is located approximately 5km west of Douglas on the Isle of Man and is centred on NGR 233500 474600. The site lies partly on the golf course belonging to the Mount Murray Hotel and Country Club at Santon, at a height of approximately 156m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), and partly within pasture fields belonging to Speke Farm to the east of the golf course, at a height of approximately 159m aOD. The two areas are divided by a trackway known as Speke Lane.

1.2.2 The underlying geology includes undifferentiated Carboniferous rocks, shale and slate overlain by thin topsoil (British Geological Survey, Isle of Man Solid & Drift Geology Map).

1.2.3 The keeill and associated features are just off the 13th fairway of the golf course, beside a hedge and track marking the boundary of Mount Murray Hotel property, and are located on a small hill. The site of the keeill structure is marked by an upright stone. Records suggest that this stone was placed to mark the site as an area to avoid when ploughing and that it has been at the location from at least 1940. This marker may come from one of the lintel graves in the area.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Early Christianity

- 1.3.1 Christianity came to the British Isles during the Roman period following Constantine's Christianisation of the Roman Empire during the 4th century AD. Celtic Christianity, originating and developing in Celtic countries up to the medieval period, evolved in virtual isolation from the Catholic Church, as a result of ineffective communication between the two branches of the religion (Kinvig 1975).
- 1.3.2 While eastern England became dominated by pagan Anglo-Saxons from the mid 5th century, Christianity continued to flourish in Ireland, Wales, and parts of Scotland. By the time St Augustine began the widespread conversion of the Saxon population at the beginning of the 7th century, differences between the Catholic and Celtic churches were varied, with different iconographies and rituals.
- 1.3.3 Christianity came to the Isle of Man sometime in the early 6th century AD, brought by settlers from Ireland (there is also evidence of Welsh Christian settlers at this time). Soon after this, monasteries were founded on the island – for example at Maughould, where some of the earliest crosses have been found, dating to the beginning of the 7th century AD (Dugdale 1998). Trench-Jellicoe describes Maughold as '*almost certainly an early foundation dating to the sixth-century*' (1985).
- 1.3.4 The development of Christianity on the Isle of Man was interrupted during the 9th century by an influx of Viking settlers who had been raiding the island from possibly as early as AD798. The *Annals of Ulster* recorded a raid on *Innis Patraic*, which was believed to be St. Patrick's Isle of Peel, although it is now generally believed to be Inispatrick, off the Dublin coast (Laing 1977, 208). The date of the earliest raids is unknown, although numerous attacks were recorded in the *Annals* and the *Lindisfarne Gospels* in the late 8th and early 9th century. For the next few centuries, the Isle of Man was used as an important base by Viking raiders to attack the western coast of England and eastern Ireland. Christian sites were adopted by the Norse visitors, who adapted them to their own use. Investigations at Chapel Hill revealed a Viking boat burial placed close to a keeill and Christian lintel graves (Madden 1999). It is well recorded outside of Man that the Norse repeatedly reused sites, both religious and secular.
- 1.3.5 This period of pagan Viking occupation did not last much beyond the mid 10th century (Kinvig 1975). Within around 100 years of their arrival the Norse settlers had revived and adopted the Celtic Christianity that had previously flourished on Man. Evidence of this can be seen in elaborate Celtic Crosses found all over the island, demonstrating a combination of pagan and Christian iconography. There can be no precise date for the Christianisation of the Norse in Man, although it is known for other areas under the control of the Kings of Norway that Christianity was adopted following the conversion and confirmation of Olaf Trygvasson in 994 under the sponsorship of King Æthelred. With Norway in the hands of a Christian

King, areas under Norwegian influence also received Christianity. The Isle of Man remained under Norwegian rule until after the Battle of Largs in 1263 (Roesdahl 1987, 216).

- 1.3.6 The Celtic system of organisation eventually became redundant during the early half of the 11th century when the Manx Vikings gradually adopted and forged stronger links with the Roman Catholic Church (Kinvig 1975). Rushen Abbey (a daughter house of Furness Abbey, near Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria) was founded during King Olaf's reign in c.1134-1153 and thereafter the history of Christianity on Man falls in line with that of other Celtic nations which adopted the Catholic Church. It is possible that the Isle of Man saw the effects of the Catholic Church earlier than the 11th century. Man appears to have had a relatively close links with Iona and the writings of Columba and his biographer Adamnan, and the Abbey to the north accepted the Roman Easter in AD 716 following the arrival of Egbert, a monk from Ripon (Lamb 1995, 246).

Keeills

- 1.3.7 There are 174 recorded keeill sites on the Isle of Man ranging from standing structures often incorporated into later churches such as Lonan Old Church, to earthworks such as Lag-ny-Keeilly, to sites without any obvious above ground remains (Woods 2001).
- 1.3.8 A keeill can be described as a single-cell, stone-built monastic structure, on an east-west axis, often surrounded by a boundary embankment. Many sites of this type have revealed evidence of an altar located at the east end of the structure, and they vary in length between 3.05m internally to 8.55m (Lowe 1987).
- 1.3.9 Keeills are usually associated with cemeteries, although they are not necessarily contemporaneous features - lintel graves may pre-date an associated keeill structure. In some cases burials are cut by the foundation of the keeill walls. Keeills have proved difficult to date through archaeological investigation due to a lack of dateable finds. Crosses or cross slabs found at keeill sites can only be dated imprecisely and, moreover, these features are not necessarily contemporaneous with the keeill itself.
- 1.3.10 Keeill sites have been placed within a 600 year time span from the 6th century AD, following the introduction of Christianity to the island, to the 12th century, following the establishment of the parish system (Freke 1992; Kinvig 1975). Surviving keeills are likely to date from this later period, which follows the conversion of the Vikings to Christianity; no evidence for a pre-Viking (i.e. pre-9th century AD) keeill has yet been found (Freke 1992).

1.4 Previous Archaeological Work

- 1.4.1 The first published reference to the Site is from a Mount Murray Estate map dated c.1800 (**Figure 2**) which clearly shows a small, rectangular, east-west aligned building within a 'D' shaped enclosure annotated as '*old chapel*'. On the 1869 County Series map the area is noted as the '*Site of Chapel and Burial Ground*' (Sheet Number CS1310).

- 1.4.2 In 1935 the site was recorded in the fifth report of the Manx Archaeological Survey compiled by P.M.C. Kermode, published by the Manx Museum.
- 1.4.3 The entry for Speke reads: *'SPEKE. O.S. XIII, 10 (2301). This site mentioned by Cumming as the top of Bulrhenny hill, is 233 yards north west of the high-road and 283 yards south south-east of Speke House. Lintel graves had at different times been turned up by the plough, and in 1909 Mr. R. Lace examined fourteen of these, which were of the usual character. In one of them were remains of two adult skeletons. He tried to ascertain the original size of the cemetery; the boundaries were gone, but he found from the position of the burials that it had been about 200 yards in diameter.'*
- 1.4.4 Note 17 states: *'Speke' Ord. Surv. particulars: 'In a field to the immediate S.E. of Speke is pointed out the site of an ancient Chapel and Burial Ground. A number of stone lined graves are to be seen in the road running past the E. end of the field, and during the construction of the road a large quantity of human bones were found. There is no tradition regarding the spot.'*
- 1.4.5 In 1941, an Officer Cadet Training party camped at the keeill site. This group is listed on the Manx National Heritage NMR as reporting the discovery of an incised cross slab of Manx slate (Manx Museum number 171; Manx Museum NMR).
- 1.4.6 In 1967/8, L.S. Garrad submitted a report to the Manx Museum concerning the excavation of a lintel grave discovered by Mr Roy Cowin during a visit to the site. This followed the report of a sword hilt being discovered. Garrad reports that graves had been noted at the site in 1956, including three lintel graves recorded by the Manx Museum following the construction of a water pipe to the farm cottage. No records exist of these excavations. The 1967/8 discoveries consisted of a lintel grave marked with a slab measuring 57 x 29 inches (1.40m x 0.73m). The slab was lifted revealing a disturbed burial affected by bioturbation. The skeleton was severely degraded, with much of the skull, hands, feet and lower legs missing. The grave contained no grave goods. The skeleton was extended, with the head to the west and is described as an adult a man aged about 55, who showed signs of osteophytes in the spine.
- 1.4.7 Human remains were removed to the Manx Museum. Once cleared, the grave was measured at 18 inches (0.45m) in depth with sides of slate slabs cut into the topsoil. None of the slabs were carved or inscribed. A chance find of a 35mm diameter metal bell was made in the area by Mr Conwin; the type of metal is not specified in the Manx Museum records (Garrad 1967).
- 1.4.8 In 1981 Ross Trench-Jellicoe conducted a study of Manx crosses on the Isle of Man. Whilst inspecting the site of Speke Keeill he discovered an inscribed slab marked with a cross, 2.4m north-east of the marker stone in the centre of the keeill mound. Immediately behind this inscribed stone he describes another slab, unmarked, made of a darker slate. Trench-Jellicoe postulates that the cross slab (Manx Museum number 189) seems to be *'closely positioned into the Keeill, if not within it'*, but suggests that the site has been seriously damaged by ploughing, recommending that *'only excavation could*

reveal (the cross's) relationship to the general structure and reveal contextual evidence'.

- 1.4.9 In 1992, RPS Clouston Environmental Consultancy commissioned Geophysical Surveys of Bradford (GSB Prospection) to conduct a geophysical survey of the Speke Farm keeill site in advance of the construction of a golf course at the location. The survey successfully located the northern, western and southern boundaries of the chapel site, a double ditched enclosure forming a boundary to the chapel site, and a number of anomalies, thought to represent burials or domestic activity. This report remains confidential, and was not made available to the current project (Sheil and Redhouse 1992).

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1.1 A project design for the work was compiled by Videotext Communications in consultation with Andrew Johnson of Manx National Heritage (2006), providing full details of the research aims and methods. A brief summary is given here.
- 2.1.2 The project had three main aims:
- To characterise the archaeological resource at the site;
 - To provide a condition survey of the site;
 - To determine the extent of the site.

3 METHODS

3.1 Geophysical Survey

- 3.1.1 Prior to the excavation of evaluation trenches, a geophysical survey was carried out across the Site using a combination of gradiometer (magnetic) and resistance survey. The survey grid was set out by Dr Henry Chapman and tied in to the Ordnance Survey grid using a Trimble real time differential GPS system.

3.2 Evaluation Trenches

- 3.2.1 Five evaluation trenches of varying sizes were excavated. Their precise locations were determined as to investigate geophysical anomalies, or areas of high or important finds recovery from the fieldwalking.
- 3.2.2 The trenches were excavated using a combination of machine and hand digging. All machine trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision and ceased at the identification of significant archaeological remains, or where natural geology was encountered first. When machine excavation had ceased all trenches were cleaned by hand and archaeological deposits investigated.
- 3.2.3 The excavated up-cast was scanned by metal detector.

- 3.2.4 All archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Trenches were located using a Trimble Real Time Differential GPS survey system. All archaeological features and deposits were planned at a scale of 1:20 with sections drawn at 1:10. All principal strata and features were related to the Ordnance Survey datum.
- 3.2.5 A full photographic record of the investigations and individual features was maintained, utilising colour transparencies, black and white negatives (on 35mm film) and digital images. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and general context of the archaeology revealed and the Site as a whole.
- 3.2.6 At the completion of the work, all trenches were reinstated using the excavated soil.
- 3.2.7 A unique site code (SPK 06) was agreed prior to the commencement of works. The work was carried out on the 20th to 23rd September 2006. The archive and all artefacts were subsequently transported to the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury where they were processed and assessed for this report.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Details of individual excavated contexts and features, the full geophysical report (GSB 2006), the summary of the landscape and earthwork survey and details of artefactual and environmental assessments, are retained in the archive. Summaries of the excavated sequences can be found in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Geophysical Survey (Figure 1)

Introduction

- 4.2.1 Three areas were investigated using geophysics. Area 1 was centred upon the site of the keeill and the surrounding area to the west of Speke Lane. Area 2 was located to the east of Speke Lane, in the field belonging to Speke Farm and Area 3 which was located along the line of Speke Lane itself.
- 4.2.2 Conditions for the majority of the survey were good as the ground conditions consisted of short grass in Area 1 and pasture on a slightly sloping field in Area 2. However, Area 3 lay along a partially tarmaced road.
- 4.2.3 Some ferrous anomalies, notably along the southern boundary of Area 1 and adjacent to field boundaries in Area 2, were caused by the close proximity of wire fences. Other small ferrous anomalies within the magnetic data are likely to be the result of modern iron debris in the topsoil and will therefore not be discussed unless deemed necessary.

Results of the Gradiometer (Magnetic) Survey

Area 1

- 4.2.4 Anomaly (A) coincides with the position of the keeill, still visible on the ground as a raised mound with a small standing stone. There are suggestions in the magnetic data of an encircling ditch and/or bank that is roughly oval in shape. Given the context of the survey there are several anomalies that could be graves, a fact later confirmed by excavation.
- 4.2.5 Two strong curving ditch responses (B) form a half circle or oval enclosure around the keeill. The responses are parallel, approximately 10m apart, and were originally thought likely to continue into the adjacent field (but see below, **4.2.9**). The two parallel responses were later confirmed to be ditches. Between the two ditches are a number of pit anomalies, one of which proved to be another grave (i.e. outside the ditch/bank immediately surrounding the keeill). A number of other potential pit-type anomalies are scattered throughout the survey area and they clearly have archaeological potential, though whether they all represent graves is impossible to say.
- 4.2.6 Four distinct circular anomalies, potentially ring ditches, have been identified. The anomalies at (C) indicate two potential rings perhaps 'cut' by the inner enclosure ditch (B). Anomaly (D), on the southern edge of the outer enclosure ditch, is of a similar diameter to those at (C), while anomaly (E) is larger and comprises two close parallel ditches with a possible a pit (grave?) in its centre.
- 4.2.7 A linear trend (F), runs east west through the enclosure just north of the keeill and between anomalies (C). The response becomes weaker to the west and it may be cutting through the enclosure, suggesting it is a more recent feature such as a field boundary.
- 4.2.8 A few weaker, more tentative responses have been identified in Area 1, and are interpreted as having archaeological potential in view of the context of the survey.

Area 2

- 4.2.9 Following the 1992 geophysical survey it had been assumed that the ditches (denoted here as B) partially enclosing the keeill would extend into this field. It was surprising therefore to discover that this is not the case. The results suggest that either they abutted with the present field boundary or they followed a different curvature and completed their circuit under what is now the track. It seems highly unlikely that the ditches have been ploughed out because other features of archaeological interest have clearly been detected in this area.
- 4.2.10 Responses (G) and (H) have a similar size and shape to (C and D) in Area 1 and are presumed to represent ring ditches. A third anomaly (I) appears to consist of two parallel ring ditches with a potential pit towards its centre and as such is very similar to the responses (E) also in Area 1. A further ring ditch may be present at (J) but the weak responses and adjacent linear anomalies hinder the interpretation.

- 4.2.11 A strong linear response (K) runs northwest to southeast across the survey area and divides in to two weak linear responses just west of anomaly (J). This presumed ditch does not follow the alignment of existing field boundaries though the feature is presumed to have had such a function in antiquity.
- 4.2.12 A series of other linear responses, trends and potential pit-type anomalies form a complex pattern in the remainder of the field. Anomalies (L, M, N and O) run parallel and at right angles to the existing field boundaries and are assumed to be former field divisions. It is uncertain if all the pit-type responses are archaeological; some may relate to modern agricultural activity or could be natural in origin. In fact trial excavation on the edge of the field identified a modern pit containing animal remains. However, the majority have been highlighted as having archaeological potential in the interpretation because of the known archaeological features.
- 4.2.13 Linear responses running parallel to the present field boundary, at regular spaced intervals, are indicative of past ploughing trends. A few broad amorphous responses have been classified as natural although an anthropological origin cannot be dismissed.
- 4.2.14 Numerous, scattered ferrous responses occur through out the survey area. Most are suspected to be modern located either on or in the topsoil, however the possibility that some represent archaeological artefacts should not be ignored.

4.3 Evaluation Trenches

Introduction

- 4.3.1 Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4 were located just off the 13th fairway of the Mount Murray golf course and Trench 5 was located to the east in a pasture field belonging to Speke Farm.

Trench 1 (Figures 1 & 3)

- 4.3.2 Trench 1 was located over the site of Speke Keeill, as indicated by a standing stone possibly erected in the 18th or 19th century to mark the location.
- 4.3.3 The *in situ* archaeology of the keeill was encountered beneath the subsoil (102). The earliest identifiable deposit was the original subsoil (133/145), overlain by the original topsoil and turf (134). This buried ground surface was cut through by the foundation trenches for the walls of the keeill, as identified in two sondages excavated on the northern (Sondage 4) and southern sides (Sondage 5) of the keeill.
- 4.3.4 Apparently pre-dating the keeill was a possible cist grave (126), revealed in Sondage 2 close to the western wall of the keeill. The grave (126) was unexcavated but was formed from two parallel slate slabs (127), and infilled with (128). There were no overlying capping stones and the grave appeared to have already been disturbed. It is possible that following its disturbance

during the keeill construction, the remains were removed and interred elsewhere.

- 4.3.5 The keeill Group (138) was constructed of four dry-stone walls (109), (110), (111) and (112) in unworked Manx Series slate with occasional granite blocks and built within foundation trenches (141), (142), (143) and (144) respectively. Although the walls had collapsed inwards, forming large-scale demolition/collapse deposit layer (103)/(104)/(130)/(131)/(132), the four walls also showed evidence of slumping towards the outside of the structure suggesting that some external support had been removed. The excavation of Sondage 5 against the southern wall (110) showed that the wall had been supported by layers of turves banked up against it. The turves were recorded as deposits (135), (136) and (137) (see **Figure 3**, section 103b). The keeill appeared to have been built in a single phase, but as none of the walls were removed it could not be ascertained if an earlier structure lay beneath.
- 4.3.6 Sondage 1 was excavated through the demolition/collapse deposit on the inside of the keeill, inside the eastern wall (111), to investigate the internal structures sealed below. This sondage uncovered the altar of the keeill, recorded as Group (139).
- 4.3.7 Altar (139) was constructed from thin slabs of Manx Series slate forming a rectangular stone box, *c.*1.2m long by *c.*1m wide. The stone sides of the altar were recorded as (118), (119), (120) and (121) and were infilled with rubble deposit (122), which consisted of a deliberately placed deposit of slate slabs and granite stones to support the altar structure (see **Figure 3**, photo). Within the deposit were a number of large white quartzite blocks and water-worn white quartzite pebbles. Further white quartzite pebbles were found within the rubble deposit (103)/(104)/(132) in this area, where they appear to have been deliberately placed around the altar.
- 4.3.8 Two sondages were excavated to in an attempt to locate the doorway into the keeill, with Sondage 2 placed roughly centrally against the western wall (112), and Sondage 3 placed at the junction between (112) and southern wall (110). Sondage 2 found no doorway, but did uncover the remains of possible cist grave (126) (see above).
- 4.3.9 Sondage 3 was positioned at a point where the top of an upright slate stone could be seen. After the partial removal of rubble (131), two granite orthostats were revealed – (113) and (114) - which formed the doorway into the keeill. Once the entrance was identified, the floor surface of the keeill was investigated but, due to time constraints, it was not located within Sondage 3, and only the continuation of deposit (131) was exposed. No clear floor surface was located in any of the other sondages, and it is possible that the keeill had a rammed earthen floor.
- 4.3.10 Located immediately east of the keeill building and external to wall (111) was a small roughly square structure, Group (140), formed of unworked Manx Series slate slabs and granite slabs (106), within foundation cut (105). This feature was interpreted as possible founder's grave or reliquary. Within the void formed by lining (106) was deposit (107) which consisted

predominantly of rough white quartzite blocks and small quartzite fragments (see **Figure 3**, photo). This deposit was either packing for the lining (106) or positioned around whatever had been placed within the feature, perhaps a small box containing a piece of the founder's remains. Following the abandonment of the keeill, the reliquary may have been opened and the relic removed to another location. An environmental sample taken from the fill of the reliquary contained a moderate quantity of charcoal which suggests a nearby hearth or fire, but possibly relating to the reuse of the building after abandonment for shelter rather than to its use as a chapel (see below, **6.3.1**).

- 4.3.11 As already observed, the keeill appears to have been a single phase construction, but a number of features partially revealed to the west of the main building are slightly ambiguous. Two possible walls (123) and (125) may represent extensions to the main building.
- 4.3.12 Following the abandonment of the keeill, there was a period of natural infilling with material washing in and not being removed; this was recorded as (129). There then followed a period of either deliberate demolition or natural collapse, predominantly inwards to the centre of the keeill, recorded as (103)/(104)/(130)/(131)/(132), but with partial slumping of the walls to the outside clearly visible.
- 4.3.13 Towards the eastern end of the keeill structure, immediately north of the altar Group (139), was a slate slab incised with a cross recorded as Object Number (ON) 9. The slab was angled to the west at a *c.*30° angle with the cross facing east, and appeared to have slumped slightly. It was recorded for a height of *c.*0.060m above the level of the main collapse deposit; its whole surviving length was 0.94m. Although incorporated into collapse deposit (130) it probably originally derived from wall (111) and formed part of the keeill building, having been reused from its original function. It may originally have been a grave lintel which was disturbed when the keeill was built. The reuse of earlier cross-incised slabs within the fabric of keeill structures has been recorded elsewhere on Man.

Trench 2 (Figures 1 & 4)

- 4.3.14 Trench 2 was positioned to investigate two 'D' shaped concentric enclosure ditches identified from the geophysical survey (anomaly B), which surround the highest point of the small hill on which the keeill is located. These ditches were interpreted as part of the keeill complex. The 'D' shaped enclosure is visible on the *c.*1800 Mount Murray Estate map (**Figure 2**).
- 4.3.15 There appeared to be two distinct phases of activity within Trench 2, the earliest comprising three cist graves (206), (213) and (219), and the second the digging of the two concentric ditches (204 and (217)).
- 4.3.16 Grave (206) was aligned approximately east-west, and was dug directly into the underlying natural basal geology (203), lined with Manx Series slate slabs forming a rectangular cist grave (see **Figure 4**, photo). In the northwest corner of the grave the lining was formed of two large unworked white quartzite blocks, a very unusual material for grave lining (N. Johnson, pers. comm.). The grave was sealed by slate capping stones (209) positioned

across the grave and resting upon lining stones (206). The grave had then been backfilled with deposit (210) which overlay the capping stones. This type of cist grave is typical for the Isle of Man and the characteristics of the overlying capping stones gave rise to the name of 'lintel grave'.

- 4.3.17 Grave (206) contained skeleton (208), a female of 45 years old or older, lying in a flexed position on her left side. Much of the bone had been degraded by natural silting (211) which had washed into the grave. The femur of skeleton (208) has a calibrated radiocarbon date range of cal. AD 540-660 (NZA-26662).
- 4.3.18 Lintel grave (219) was only partially exposed in the western section of the trench, and remained unexcavated. The slate and capping were recorded as (220).
- 4.3.19 Grave (213) was aligned roughly east-west. Stone lining (214) created a cist grave (see **Figure 4**, photo), but it had been disturbed by the digging of ditch (217) which had removed much of the stone lining on the north side and disturbed the skeleton interred within. When the ditch was excavated the sealing lintels of the grave were probably removed; the skeletal remains (215), a fragment of skull from a sub-adult/adult *c.* 14-20 years of age, were pushed against the stone lining in the south-west corner of the grave. The grave had then been backfilled by deposit (216) to cover the disturbed remains. The skull has a calibrated radiocarbon date range of cal. AD 540-650 (NZA-26663). No clear evidence of the capping lintels was identified.
- 4.3.20 Ditch (217), which cut grave (213), was the inner of two concentric ditches which surrounded the keeill; the outer ditch was recorded as (204). Both were of similar depth, *c.* 0.30m, and were filled with similar deposits, (218) and (205) respectively, comprising loose silty clay with slate fragments. The inner enclosure ditch was also investigated in Trench 3 (see below).
- 4.3.21 The geophysical results and the Mount Murray Estate map of *c.*1800 both show that the ditches surrounded the keeill on three sides but did not cross the trackway (Speke Lane) separating the Mount Murray Golf Course from Speke Farm. This trackway aligns with a series of landscape divisions probably put in place during the 17th to 18th century and is therefore probably also of this date. It is assumed, therefore, that the 'D' shaped enclosure ditches respect and thus post-date this trackway; in other words, that the enclosure is post-medieval. This is despite the recovery of two sherds of Bronze Age pottery from the fill of ditch (204), which must be residual in this instance.
- 4.3.22 Of particular interest in this trench was the recovery of a slate slab incised with ogham (ON2), found within the subsoil to the north of grave (213). The incised ogham script is distinctive of the 10th or 11th century. The stone is discussed further below (section **5.4.4-8**).

Trench 3 (Figures 1 & 5)

- 4.3.23 Trench 3 was positioned to investigate the northern side of the inner 'D' shaped enclosure (anomaly B), as well as circular anomaly (C) and a curving anomaly to the south of (C), both identified from the geophysical results.
- 4.3.24 The earliest features excavated within Trench 3 were ditches (317) and (312). Ditch (317) was aligned roughly east-west across the trench and was cut through by lintel grave (304). The ditch was not excavated and so its true nature is unknown, but it is possible that it formed part of a series of prehistoric circular enclosures or possible barrows on top of the small hill.
- 4.3.25 The small ditch or gully (312) was located at the northern end of the trench. This feature was identified on the geophysical survey as anomaly (C) and was clearly a circular feature, with an internal diameter of *c.* 5m, and a possible entrance on the eastern side. It was provisionally interpreted as a small prehistoric enclosure, or perhaps a barrow, potentially contemporaneous with (317). The ditch contained two fills, (313) and (314), and appeared to have silted up naturally; no finds were recovered. The southern curve of the feature had been completely removed by the internal ditch of the double 'D' shaped enclosure (310).
- 4.3.26 Two cist graves were excavated within the trench. Grave (304) was aligned roughly east-west and was lined with Manx Series slate slabs (305) (see **Figure 5**, photo). Rubble packing (309) filled the gap between the grave cut and the lining, and the grave was covered with capping lintels (307). The skeleton (306) within was an adult female, *c.* 20-29 years old, supine and extended, with head slumped slightly to the left; a plait of hair was found preserved at the right shoulder (see **Figure 5**, photo). The femur of skeleton (306) has a calibrated radiocarbon date of cal. AD 530-650 (NZA-26664).
- 4.3.27 A second grave (315) was located to the east of (304). This was also aligned roughly east-west and ran under the eastern section of Trench 3. The internal dimensions of this cist grave were 0.86m long by 0.21m wide, and no skeletal remains were identified, although the size suggested a child's grave. The grave was lined with slate slabs (316) which had partially collapsed.
- 4.3.28 The latest feature within Trench 3 was ditch (310), running to the north of grave (304). This ditch marks the continuation of ditch (217) in Trench 2, and can be identified as the inner of the two post-medieval 'D' shaped enclosure ditches (geophysical anomaly B).

Trench 4 (Figures 1 & 6)

- 4.3.29 Trench 4 was excavated in order to investigate a number of anomalies identified from the geophysical survey. Beneath the topsoil (402), two cist burials (404) and (412), ditch (409) and tree-throw hole (415) were identified.
- 4.3.30 Grave (404) was lined with Manx Series slate lining (405) and overlain by capping slate slabs (407); it contained skeleton (406), an adult male aged *c.* 30-45 years. The capping stones were removed to reveal the skeleton (see

Figure 6, photo) but were then replaced, and no skeletal remains were removed.

- 4.3.31 Grave (412) was only partially revealed and was not excavated. The grave was lined with Manx Series slate (413) and sealed by capping lintel (414) which had collapsed in to the grave.
- 4.3.32 Ditch (409) probably represents the enclosure ditch for the keeill complex (identified as geophysical anomaly A), and therefore contemporaneous with the small chapel. The ditch contained two fills derived from the feature edges and natural silting and no dating evidence was recovered which might relate it to the keeill, although a prehistoric worked flint flake was found.
- 4.3.33 The tree-throw hole (415) was only partially revealed. It contained six fills, (416)-(421), all of which were naturally derived deposits. Layer (421) was the uppermost fill and appeared very similar to (134) in Trench 1; this might indicate the formation of an old ground surface in the hollow formed by the fallen tree.

Trench 5 (Figures 1 & 7)

- 4.3.34 Trench 5 was located on the eastern side of Speke Lane, and was designed to determine whether the two concentric 'D' shaped enclosures identified on the geophysical survey and revealed in Trenches 2 and 3 continued into the neighbouring field.
- 4.3.35 The only feature identified within the trench was a large modern pit (504) containing animal carcasses, which was not excavated. It was clear that the D-shaped ditches did not continue to the east of the trackway.

5 FINDS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Finds were recovered from four of the trenches excavated (no finds were recovered from Trench 5). These included items deriving from the use of the keeill structure and related activity, human remains from an associated cemetery which proved to pre-date the keeill, a few finds relating to earlier, prehistoric activity, and items associated with recent activity on the site. Of particular interest were the unusual preservation of human hair with one of the inhumed individuals, and an inscribed ogham stone.
- 5.1.2 All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and finds totals by trench are presented in **Table 1**. Subsequent to quantification, all finds have been at least visually scanned in order to gain an overall idea of the range of types present, their condition, and their potential date range. Spot dates have been recorded for selected material types as appropriate (pottery, ceramic building material, glass). All finds data are currently held on an Access database.

5.2 Prehistoric

- 5.2.1 A few finds, consisting of pottery and worked flint, can be ascribed to prehistoric activity. The pottery comprises two joining sherds from a thick-walled vessel in a coarse fabric tempered with igneous rock inclusions, recovered from the fill of ditch (204), one of the concentric ditches enclosing the top of the hill and the keeill structure. The sherds are undiagnostic but can be dated on fabric grounds as Early/Middle Bronze Age; the ceramic tradition is uncertain. In this context they appear to be residual, as the concentric enclosure ditches are believed to be post-medieval in origin.
- 5.2.2 The worked flint comprises one blade and one flake from topsoil in trench 1, and a second flake from ditch (409) in trench 4, potentially the enclosure ditch for the keeill complex.

5.3 Pre-Norse

- 5.3.1 Finds assigned to the pre-Norse period comprise the human remains excavated from three graves within the cemetery associated with the keeill complex.

Human Bone

Introduction

- 5.3.2 Human bone was recovered from three cist graves associated with an early Christian chapel or 'keeill', two in Trench 2 and one in Trench 3. No artefactual material was recovered with the remains and bone samples from three of the graves were submitted for radiocarbon dating to ascertain a closer date range.
- 5.3.3 Further human remains were revealed and recorded in a fourth cist grave in Trench 4, which was not fully excavated, and the remains were not removed for further study. A further feature in Trench 3 had the appearance of a small cist grave but contained no human remains, and an apparent cist grave in Trench 1, disturbed by the construction of the keeill, was also empty of human remains. A further two cist graves (one in Trench 2 and one in Trench 4) were not excavated.

Methods

- 5.3.4 The condition of the bone was recorded following McKinley (2004, fig. 6). Age was assessed from the stage of skeletal development (Beek 1983; Scheuer and Black 2000) and the patterns and degree of age-related changes to the bone (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). Sex was ascertained from the sexually dimorphic traits of the skeleton (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). Metric data and non-metric traits were recorded where possible (Berry and Berry 1967; Bass 1987; Brothwell and Zakrzewski 2004; Finnegan 1978).

Results

- 5.3.5 A summary of the results is presented in **Table 2**; full details are held in the project archive.

- 5.3.6 Two of the graves, (206) and (304), were fully intact and had suffered no disturbance, the cist structure and capping stones all remaining *in situ*. Grave (213) had been cut by the insertion of a ditch in antiquity, which had removed all except the western and southern slabs of the cist. Most of the human bone had been removed or otherwise lost (see below), the skull being redeposited in the south-west corner of the cist.
- 5.3.7 As a consequence of the grave construction – stone lined cists with slate flag capping stones – very little soil had infiltrated the cavities of the two undisturbed graves. Only thin (0.02-0.03m) lenses of fine slightly clayey silt had infiltrated between the capping stones to lie at the base of the graves. Where bone was in direct contact or had been covered by this, clearly highly acidic, silt, it had disintegrated. The surviving bone was in a highly variable condition ranging from well preserved to heavily degraded, with no obvious pattern. There was preferential loss of trabecular bone and no complete long bones were recovered. The effects of the acidic soil matrix are reflected in the low skeletal recovery (**Table 2**).
- 5.3.8 Each grave contained the remains of a single individual, the excavated sample showing a range of ages. The two sexed adults were female, but the occupant of a fourth, unexcavated grave (404) – an adult of *c.* 30-45 yr. – was probably male. It is probable, given the aggressive nature of the shallow grave fills, that immature bone – which, being smaller, would be covered by the fill to a greater extent – would not survive at all and it is possible that a very small, empty feature with the appearance of a cist grave, (315), originally contained the remains of a young infant.
- 5.3.9 These graves (at least four, with a maximum of seven) comprise part of a more extensive cemetery associated with the keeill, from which one other grave has been subject to prior investigation and found to contain the remains of an older adult male (Garrad 1978, 247). The remains from few such cemeteries on the Isle of Man have been subject to osteological examination. Eighteen graves were excavated at the Glentraught cemetery, Santan in the 1970s, 15 of which contained extant remains, including those of an infant, juveniles and adults of both sex; i.e. a normal domestic population (*ibid.* 247-9). The individuals buried at the cemetery at Speke Keeill appear to have derived from a similar domestic population.
- 5.3.10 It was possible to calculate only two indices; the platymeric index (degree of anterior-posterior flattening of the proximal femur) of the femora from (208) (both platymeric at 94.5 and 88.5) and the platycnemic index (meso-lateral flattening of the tibia) of the right tibia from (306) (mesocnemic at 66.7).
- 5.3.11 No dental lesions other than slight calculus deposits (calcified plaque) were observed in the two dentitions recovered ((215) and (306); 27 teeth and 39 socket positions). Lesions indicative of joint disease, including osteoarthritis in the right hip, were observed in the remains of the older adult female. Non-metric traits represent variations in the skeletal morphology and may, with other predisposing factors, indicate genetic relationships within a population (Berry and Berry 1967). There are, however, problems both with the applicability of recording methods and the uncertain heritability of traits

(Tyrrell 2000). Some traits, including extra sutural ossicles and congenital absence of third molars, are relatively common and have been attributed to developmental changes rather than genetic factors (Brothwell 1972, 95-98).

Human Hair

- 5.3.12 Associated with the adult female in grave (304) was a short, well preserved plait of brown hair. Hair is generally preserved in anaerobic conditions (either dry or waterlogged), and its survival in this country is very rare. In this instance condition would not have been entirely anaerobic, and bone survival had been affected by aggressive soil conditions, but the hair, which was not in direct contact with the soil, would have been protected by its environment from large variations in temperature. There is some soil (or other) residue on the hair, and it is possible that it was dressed with something (perhaps oil?) to preserve the arrangement; it is, however, equally possible that the appearance results from subsequent silting within the grave.
- 5.3.13 Preserved hair is known, of course, from the well publicised finds of bog bodies, and from post-medieval coffined burials (for example, within the Spitalfields crypt in London: Molleson and Cox 1993, 11-12), but otherwise hair found in dry conditions is less well known. Examples are known from late Roman burials at Poundbury, Dorset, where preservation appears to have been due to burial in lead-lined coffins packed with gypsum (Farwell and Molleson 1993, 205-6).

5.4 Norse

- 5.4.1 Artefacts recovered from the keeill structure itself were limited to a slate slab with an incised cross (ON9), and a group of white, water-worn quartzite pebbles, all found within the rubble collapse (contexts (104), (130) and (132)). Further pebbles were recovered from topsoil and subsoil in the same trench and are presumably related. Within the keeill structure the white stones appeared to have been deliberately piled around the altar, perhaps as offerings. These stones can be seen as evidence of the Christian belief in white stones as sacred, and as effective in healing the sick; their significance is discussed further below (section 8.5).
- 5.4.2 The slab with incised cross is less confidently attributed to the keeill itself. This is the stone first discovered in 1981 by Ross Trench-Jellicoe (see above, 1.4.8), standing at an angle, with the face bearing the cross facing away from the centre of the keeill towards the keeill wall. On excavation, the stone was found to lie within the rubble collapse of the keeill structure (context (130)), although its almost vertical position appears anomalous in this context. While potentially deriving from the keeill, it could equally well have been re-used from an earlier (pre-Norse) period.
- 5.4.3 The stone is fairly irregularly shaped although the sides have been smoothed into a curved profile. It is unlikely that the surface was dressed. The incised cross, which is positioned at the top of the stone (and just visible above ground when the stone was first recorded) measures approximately 290mm by 240mm and has been unevenly pecked out, to a depth of about 6mm.

The Ogham Stone (Figure 8)

- 5.4.4 A slate slab, approximately 0.32m by 0.20m, with an ogham inscription on one face, was found within the subsoil to the north of grave (213) in Trench 2 and recorded as ON2.
- 5.4.5 Ogham originated in Ireland in the 4th and 5th centuries where it continued to be used until about the 7th century. It continued in use longer in Scotland, well in to the 10th and 11th centuries, particularly in the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland where there was a mixing of the Norse and native Gaelic cultures along the Atlantic west coast of Britain. Ogham is notoriously difficult to date although the development of the script is known. The earliest form of ogham was written down the arris edges of stones or timber with lines or letter strokes scribed either side (Type I ogham). Later it was written on flat surfaces with a central line or stem used to imitate the arris edge, with lines scribed above and below this stem creating bundles of letter strokes (Type II ogham).
- 5.4.6 In some later Type II ogham inscriptions the component strokes of individual letters are joined at their distal ends by a horizontal bind-stroke parallel to with the stem; this improvement to the script is a form known as bind-ogham. Such bound letters are easier to read since the letters are quite distinct.
- 5.4.7 The stone from Speke Keeill is written in bind-ogham in a form of Gaelic particular to the Northern Isles, and dates potentially to the 10th or 11th century, although due to the difficulty in dating it could date from at least the 8th through to the 12th century. The inscription reads '*BAC OCOICAT IALL*' meaning 'corner/angle, fifty, throng/group' (K. Forsythe, pers. comm.). It is a deliberately written script but not a formal inscription and appears as perhaps idle doodling or graffiti, of which examples are known.
- 5.4.8 As the script is written on the flat surface when there is a perfectly good arris edge to the stone it shows the scribe was familiar with books and manuscripts and had seen ogham written in this fashion (Forsythe 1995, 694).

5.5 Post-medieval

- 5.5.1 The remaining artefacts – pottery, glass, ceramic building material, metalwork – relate to recent activity in the 19th or 20th century.

6 PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 A single bulk sample of 16 litres was taken from Trench 1 from the fill (107) of a stone-lined possible reliquary (140), at the eastern end of the keeill. The sample was processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and charcoals by standard flotation methods; the flot retained on a 0.5 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 5.6mm, 2mm and 1mm fractions and

dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded. Flots were scanned under a x10 – x40 stereo-binocular microscope and the presence of charred remains quantified (**Table 3**). Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997).

- 6.1.2 The flot was quite large, but the bulk of it comprised roots and modern seeds that may be indicative of stratigraphic movement, reworking or the degree of contamination by later intrusive elements.

6.2 Charred plant remains

- 6.2.1 No cereal remains were recovered as might be expected given that the structure is not believed to be associated with domestic settlement. No remains other than a single charred seed of redshank/persicaria (*Persicaria lapathifolium/maculosa*) was found, presumably brought in with tinder or through the burning of local vegetation.

6.3 Charcoal

- 6.3.1 Charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples (**Table 3**). A moderate quantity of charcoal was recovered and some of the larger fragments were ring-porous and so probably of oak or possible ash. A small amount of twig wood was also seen. The amount of charcoal suggests a nearby hearth or fire. Given the amount of rooting such material may be intrusive, and it is possible that it relates to the reuse of the building for shelter in the past or perhaps even relatively recently.

6.3.2 Potential

- 6.3.3 Analysis of the charcoal could reveal the exploitation and use of woodland resources for fuel, perhaps even associated with the use of the structure. However, as stated the association of the deposit especially given the amount of rooting is unclear and it may rather relate to the construction of short lived camp-fires after its abandonment.

7 RADIOCARBON DATING

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 In view of the general paucity of good dating for Norse activity, and Norse burials in particular, samples from three burials (skeleton (208) within grave (206)), an extended supine adult burial (skeleton (306) in grave (304)) and a disturbed child burial (skeleton (215) within grave (213)) were submitted for AMS radiocarbon dating. The specific research questions which the radiocarbon dating aimed to answer were as follows:

- Was the unusual flexed burial a part of the Norse burial tradition (i.e. AD 800-999), or did it belongs to an earlier or later tradition?

- Was the juvenile burial part of the same phase of Norse burial (i.e. AD 800-999), and potentially contemporaneous with the 10th or 11th century ogham stone buried nearby?
- Were all three burials broadly of the same date?

7.2 Results

- 7.2.1 The radiocarbon results have been calibrated with the atmospheric data presented by Stuiver *et al.* (1998) and performed on OxCal ver 3.9 (Bronk Ramsey 1995; 2001) and are expressed at the 95% confidence level with the end points rounded outwards to 10 years following the form recommended by Mook (1986).
- 7.2.2 When calibrated the results for the three burials all fall within the 6th to 7th century AD (**Table 4; Figures 9, 10**) and are statistically indistinguishable at the 95% confidence level (Ward and Wilson 1978). All three burials, therefore, belong to a pre-Norse tradition (i.e. cal AD 540-660), flexed burials were clearly a part of this tradition and the juvenile burial was evidently much earlier than the ogham stone. Furthermore, all three burials could be closely temporally related within a few generations (supported by a modelled span of no more than 80 years (**Figure 11**)).

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 The project undertaken at Speke Keeill was successful in achieving nearly all of its stated aims, by locating and assessing the character of the keeill and a number of lintel graves, by identifying a chronology of the structures and features, and by assessing the condition of the underlying remains. The project did not, however, ascertain the extent of the site, as the boundary of the cemetery was not located.

8.2 Prehistoric

- 8.2.1 The earliest phase of activity on the site has been inferred from the stratigraphical relationship and morphology of the features identified. Three or possibly four circular or curving ditches (anomalies C, D and E) were identified from the geophysical survey within Area 1, and a further four similar anomalies (G, H, I and J) within Area 2. Only one of these (anomaly C) was investigated through the evaluation trenching, as ditch (317). No dating evidence was recovered, but the ditch was cut by grave (304), showing that the feature pre-dated the cemetery.
- 8.2.2 These circular features have been tentatively interpreted as possible enclosures or barrows, and this is supported, albeit very indirectly, by sherds of Middle Bronze Age pottery recovered from post-medieval ditch (204). These sherds, together with three pieces of worked flint (from topsoil and

?keeill enclosure ditch (409)) are the only concrete evidence for prehistoric activity on the site.

8.3 Pre-Norse: the cist cemetery

8.3.1 A maximum of seven graves were identified within the cist cemetery, three of which were dated through radiocarbon determinations obtained from the human remains to within the period AD530-660. Two apparent graves were excavated but found to contain no human remains, and two graves remained unexcavated. These graves were dispersed across Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4.

8.3.2 The graves which were dated were relatively dispersed (two in Trench 2 and one in Trench 3), and do not form a discrete cluster within the cemetery; it might therefore be inferred that all the graves within the cemetery were broadly contemporaneous, and were perhaps dug within the space of two or three generations. Previous work within the area identified at least 17 cist graves (at least 14 in 1909 and a further three in 1956); with the newly discovered four (possibly five) graves gives at least 21 or 22 burials. No records were kept of the locations of the graves identified in 1909 except that *'Mr. R. Lace examined fourteen of these'* and that through their positions they covered an area of 200 yards (c.180m) in diameter.

8.3.3 The current programme of work did not locate the boundary to the cemetery. However, some indication of the size of the cemetery may be gained from a subsequent discovery. Following the work undertaken by Time Team, a further lintel grave was revealed to the south of the site, during the excavation of a soak-away just north of Speke Lodge at the junction of Speke Lane with the A5. Discovered towards the end of 2006, the grave contained human remains but remained unexcavated. The identification of this grave some 160m south of the graves identified during the evaluation suggests that the size of the cemetery is close to the 180m diameter estimated by Kermode in 1935.

8.3.4 The dating of the cemetery to the 6th/7th century AD identifies it as pre-Norse Christian, of which there are several other cemeteries on the Isle of Man. At Glentraugh, Santan, just south-west of Speke Keeill, the lintel grave cemetery excavated in 1976 by Garrad was undated but considered to be of 6th century date through its possible association with the Avitus stone. No evidence of a keeill was identified there, but it was thought that one could have been located just to the north of the main group of burials (Garrad 1978, 245-9; Kinvig 1975, 47).

8.3.5 At Chapel Hill, Balladoole, Arbory, north of Castletown Bay, an extensive lintel grave cemetery which was broadly dated to the second half of the 1st millennium AD was identified within an Iron Age enclosure. Several burials had been disturbed by the excavation of a Norse ship burial tentatively dated to c. AD850-900, and a later keeill (Keeill Vael) was constructed at the western end of the enclosure and dated to sometime after AD 1000 (Videotext Communications 2006, 4).

8.4 Norse: the keeill

- 8.4.1 The sequence of events at Speke Keeill appears to have echoed those at Chapel Hill, with the construction of a keeill positioned within a previously established cemetery, and as at Chapel Hill it seems likely that Speke Keeill was constructed following the Norse arrival, sometime after the 9th century. Several other sites on Man show evidence of an earlier, pre-Norse cemetery being built upon by a later keeill; these include North Keeill, Parish Churchyard, Maughold; Ballameanagh keeill, Lezayre; Upper Sulby keeill, Onchan and Keeill Woirry, Cornadale, Maughold (Lowe 1987, 78-9).
- 8.4.2 It is possible that the inner stone walls of Speke Keeill incorporated reused material from earlier structures. A cross-incised slab, possibly a reused grave lintel, was found in the collapsed rubble of the keeill and was possibly originally incorporated into the wall of the keeill. This reuse of cross-incised slabs as wall material was also observed at Keeill Vael, in Druidale, Michael, where five cross incised slabs were used in the rebuilding of an earlier structure, possibly a pre-Norse keeill (Gelling 1970, 82).
- 8.4.3 The keeills of the Isle of Man typically have the doorway in the western wall directly facing the altar. Several others have two doors, and there is a small group which have the door in the southern or occasionally the northern wall. Speke Keeill falls into this later group with the door located in the south wall at the south-west corner.
- 8.4.4 Slight and ambiguous evidence was found for additional structures to the west of the keeill, in the form of two possible walls, which may have marked an extension to the keeill.
- 8.4.5 Dating evidence for the construction of the keeill itself remains elusive. At the western end of the keeill an earlier cist burial had been disturbed by the building of the small chapel. Grave (126) had had its capping lintels removed (and any remains surviving within presumably removed and reburied). The keeill thus clearly post-dates the 6th/7th century cemetery, and further dating evidence comes from the keeill construction. This places it at the earliest within the 10th century when it is traditionally believed Christianity was adopted by the Norse on Man. The keeill was built utilising the local stone for the inner walls with the outer walls of turf, in a typically Scandinavian style. This style has been identified at such sites as the Norse homestead at Doarlish Cashen, Kirk Patrick, excavated in 1969, where walls constructed of turf with stone facing were revealed, although this building may in fact be as late as 13th century, from pottery recovered (Gelling 1970, 74-83; A. Johnson, pers. comm.). At Braaid in Marown an excavated long-house comprised substantial walls with stone interior and exterior faces and a presumed turf core; and two sites belonging to the Norse watch and ward system, located along the coasts at Cronk-ny-Merriu in Santan and Cass-ny-Hawin in Malew, revealed evidence of stone and turf construction. These structures again appear to be late, perhaps 13th or 14th century (A. Johnson, pers. comm.).

8.4.6 Further afield, other parallels for the construction and use of religious sites in the Norse period come from Orkney. Here the construction of a series of 12th and 13th century kirks (chapels) recorded by Lamb (1995) as the Peterkirk network, although later than the believed date of the keeills of Man, does show evidence of the reuse of sites by the Norse. Each kirk was constructed upon the site of an earlier broch. The Peterkirk network mirrors the organisation of the Church in the areas of Hessen and Thuringia in modern Germany, during the Frankish expanse into these areas in the 8th century, the reuse of earlier religious sites being a major theme. Egbert, the converter of Iona to the Roman Church, sent a number of his pupils to the continent and would have witnessed this church organisation (*ibid.*, 264), and it would also have been familiar to the Norse kings ruling the western coast of Britain from the Orkneys through the Inner and Outer Hebrides down to the Isle of Man.

8.5 White Stones

8.5.1 There was a distinct lack of finds recovered from Speke Keeill, which is not surprising as it was a religious site and not a domestic settlement. However, a large number of water-worn white quartzite pebbles were recovered from around the altar and the possible reliquary at the eastern end of the building. The white stones appear to have been deliberately placed, perhaps as offerings, having been brought some distance from the nearest river or beach. They may be associated with one of the Isle of Man's favoured Saints.

8.5.2 St Adamnan (c. AD 624-704), the ninth Abbot of Iona, was greatly revered by the population of Man for his use of the native tongue and especially by the women folk for his condemnation of the practice of taking women and children hostage in tribal raids. St. Adamnan's beliefs were based upon the teachings of St. Columba (c. AD 521-97) the founder and first Abbot of Iona. St. Adamnan wrote the *Life of St. Columba* between c.AD 696-704 and recorded his travels, and in one particular chapter the use of a sacred white stone for healing the sick.

8.5.3 Adamnan recalls that Columba sought the release of an Irish slave girl from Broichan the Druid, in the presence of King Brude and later travelled to the River Ness to find a white pebble and showing it to his companions said to them '*Behold this white pebble by which God will effect the cure of many diseases amongst the heathen nation*'. He then added '*Broichan is chastised grievously at this moment, for an angel being sent from heaven, and striking him severely...hath left him gasping deeply for breath, and half dead*'.

8.5.4 Columba continued '*If Broichan shall first promise to set the maiden free, then at once immerse this little stone in water, and let him drink from it and he shall be instantly cured; but if he breaks his vow and refuse to liberate her, he shall die that instant.*' Adamnan recalls '*The pebble was then immersed in water, and in a wonderful manner, contrary to the laws of nature, the stone floated on the water like a nut or an apple...Broichan drank from the stone as it floated on the water, and instantly returning from the verge of death recovered his perfect health and soundness of body.*' '*This remarkable pebble, which was afterwards preserved in the treasures of the king, through the mercy of God effected the cure of sundry diseases among*

the people, while in the same manner floated when dipped in water.' (Adamnan, Book II, Chapter XXXIV).

- 8.5.5 Speke Keeill was potentially constructed *c.*300 years after the death of Adamnan, yet it appears his teachings continued to be followed, with collected pebbles demonstrating the power of God in the eyes of the population.

8.6 Later Period

- 8.6.1 No date was ascertained for the abandonment and subsequent collapse/demolition of the keeill, though it was recorded that some keeills continued to be used right through to the 19th century, or became incorporated into parish churches, such as Keeill ny Traie, 'the chapel by the shore', which became part of Lonan Old Church.
- 8.6.2 The final phase of activity on the site was marked by the double 'D' shaped enclosure which surrounds the top of the hill on which Speke Keeill was positioned. The ditches were initially believed to be part of the surrounding enclosure of the keeill complex, but it now appears more likely that they are much later and probably relate to the activity of the 4th Duke of Atholl, John Murray.
- 8.6.3 Murray (1755-1830) was the eldest son of the 3rd Duke of Atholl, John Murray, who had been responsible for the selling of the regalities of the Isle of Man to the British Government in the Act of Revestment of 1765. When John the Younger became the 4th Duke in 1774 he believed his parents had not been paid enough (the 3rd Duke received £70,000) by the British Government for the control of Man and set about remedying the situation. The 4th Duke had a slightly romanticised view of the island and felt responsible for the land and the people within it, and by taking control he thought he would be able to provide for the inhabitants. In 1793 Murray was appointed Captain-General and Governor of Man by the British in an attempt to give him the authority he wanted and to prevent him pursuing claims for more money. The inhabitants of Man believed that Murray was looking after his own interests rather than theirs, and this seems to have been the case when in 1826 Murray received £416,000 for the final rights his family held on the island (A. Johnson, pers. comm.; see also Internet sources, below).
- 8.6.4 Murray's belief in the need to care for the inhabitants and the land led him to pay for repairs to public buildings and to commission a series of 20-30 paintings to record the landscape of the island. It is possible that his fondness of the preservation of historic buildings, especially those on his own estate, led to him constructing the 'D' shaped enclosure, perhaps to protect the keeill site from encroaching agriculture.
- 8.6.5 The enclosure is clearly visible on the Mount Murray Estate map of *c.*1800 (**Figure 2**), superimposed on a pattern of square and rectangular fields, although only the outer boundary is shown as what appears to be a hedgerow. The two ditches as identified from the geophysical results run parallel along their full length around the curving arc and then both straighten as they

approach the trackway where they appear to terminate. In Murray's attempt to preserve the keeill site he inadvertently cut through one of the graves of the pre-Norse cemetery.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1.1 The evaluation has produced important new evidence for the use of the site, in particular through the provision of radiocarbon dating for the cist cemetery, although firm dating for the construction, use and abandonment of the later keeill remains elusive.
- 9.1.2 Further detailed analysis is not proposed, but a summary of the results of this report, probably between 2000 and 3000 words with four or five supporting illustrations, is suggested as an adequate level of publication, the place of publication to be determined. This would comprise a brief introduction detailing the circumstances of the project and aims and objectives; a results section detailing the structural remains recorded; and a brief discussion of the results, with reference to the original aims and objectives.

10 ARCHIVE

- 10.1.1 The human remains and other finds recovered from the evaluation, according to the licence granted to Wessex Archaeology for the temporary removal of objects from the Isle of Man, have been returned to Manx National Heritage. The documentary records, including plans, photographs and written records, currently held at the Wessex Archaeology offices under the project code 62511 and site code SPK 06, will follow on completion of the project.

11 INTERNET SOURCES

- <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/famhist/v08n4.htm> *St Adamnan's Church, Lonan (Lonan Old Church)* in Isle of Man History Society Journal (IMHSJ), Vol.viii, no 4 Oct 1986
- <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/people/lords/atholls.htm> The Dukes of Atholl
- <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/people/govrnors/murray.htm> John Murray 4th Duke of Atholl
- <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/history/revest.htm> The Act of Revestment

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APPENDIX 1: Trench Summaries

bgl = below ground level

Trench 1		Type:	Hand Dug
Dimensions: 9.1m x 7.9m		Max. depth: 0.56m	Ground level: 157.20m aOD
context	description		depth
101	<i>Topsoil</i>	Current Topsoil and Turf, area of coarse grass (rough), at the edge of golf course. Loose mid brown yellow silty clay, with small fragments of slate (Manx Series), 0.06m.	0-0.12m bgl
102	<i>Subsoil</i>	Light to mid yellow brown friable silty clay with common to abundant slate and mud stone angular fragments.	0.12-0.22m bgl
103	<i>Layer</i>	Loose light-mid yellow brown silty clay deposit with abundant large slate and granite stones, overlying area of Altar Group (139). Rubble collapse of keeill structure. A number deliberately deposited water worn white quartzite pebbles incorporated in the rubble, potentially derived from offerings made at the altar. White stones potentially associated with the writings of Adamnan concerning the Life of St Columba and the Book of Revelations. Seals (122).	-
104	<i>Layer</i>	Loose light to mid yellow silty clay, with occasional small slate fragments and large slate slabs, 0.20m. Deposit located to the south of Altar Group (139) and similar to (103) and (130). Rubble collapse from the keeill structure which also contains water-worn white quartzite pebbles. The pebbles are concentrated around the altar. White stones potentially associated with the writings of Adamnan concerning the Life of St Columba and the Book of Revelations.	-
105	<i>Cut</i>	Construction cut for a possible founder's grave or reliquary outside the keeill adjacent to the eastern wall. Cut for a small cist which may have housed a relic. Component of Reliquary Group (140).	-
106	<i>Structure</i>	A simple stone lined box formed by two granite slabs and two slate slabs, all un-worked, sealed by large slab (108). Within box was (107). Component of Reliquary Group (140).	-
107	<i>Layer/ Structure</i>	Deposit of mid brown silty clay containing several large un-worked and rough white quartzite stones within box formed by (106). Quartzite stones possibly used as packing for the stone lining (106) or possibly packing around a relic contained with the stone box. (107) disturbed and no evidence of human remains identified suggesting possible removal of what was contained within the box. Component of Reliquary Group (140). White stones potentially associated with the writings of Adamnan concerning the Life of St Columba and the Book of Revelations.	-
108	<i>Structure</i>	A single large un-worked granite slab used to seal stone lined box formed by (106). If reliquary or founder's grave disturbed, slab (108) would have to be removed and then replaced. Component of Reliquary Group (140).	-
109	<i>Wall</i>	Northern east-west aligned wall of the keeill, forming the inner part of the wall with the external portion of the wall formed of turves (now collapsed and decayed). Formed of large un-worked and partially worked slate slabs, average size 0.40m x 0.20m x 0.10m, dry-stone with no mortar. Bonded to the north end of (111) at the east end and north end of (112) at the west. Walls (110), (111) and (112) built in the same manner to (109)	-
110	<i>Wall</i>	Southern east-west aligned wall of the keeill, bonded at the east end to the south end of (111). A possible doorway is located at the junction of (110) to the western wall (112) formed by upright jamb (113) and collapsed jamb (114).	-
111	<i>Wall</i>	Eastern north-south aligned wall of the keeill bonded at the north end to the east end of (109) and the east end of (110). Wall (111) is butted by Altar Group (139) on the west side and Reliquary Group (140) on the east.	-
112	<i>Wall</i>	Western north-south aligned wall of the keeill, bonded to the west end of (109), wall becomes very disturbed to the south where possible entrance way (113) and (114) are located. Component of Reliquary Group (140).	-
113	<i>Structure</i>	Single granite orthostat, butts west end of wall (110) and is possibly eastern	-

		upright door jamb for entrance into the keeill building. True nature of the stone unknown as not fully investigated, construction cut not investigated.	
114	<i>Structure</i>	Single granite orthostat (now collapsed) which is incorporated into main keeill collapse deposit (130) possibly part of the original door way in to the keeill.	-
115	<i>Cut</i>	Cut in to demolition/collapse deposit (130) for the placing of a large upright stone marker (116) to identify the location of the site, potentially from the 19 th century. Unexcavated.	-
116	<i>Stone Marker</i>	Single stone upright marker to identify the site of the keeill, set into cut (115) with packing material (116) around it. Potentially put in place during the 19 th century.	-
117	<i>Deposit</i>	Mid brown silty clay deposit with common fragments of granite and slate utilised as packing material to support upright stone marker (116) within cut (115).	-
118	<i>Structure</i>	Northern east west aligned un-worked slate slabs, associated with 119, 120, 121 forming part of Altar Group (139), with infilling (122).	-
119	<i>Structure</i>	Pitched, upright un-worked slate slabs forming the southern east west aligned wall of the Altar Group (139). Not fully exposed.	-
120	<i>Structure</i>	Pitched, upright un-worked slate slabs forming the eastern north south aligned wall of the Altar Group (139). Not fully exposed. Has collapse slightly to the west. (120) is located adjacent to wall (111).	-
121	<i>Structure</i>	Pitched, upright un-worked slate slabs forming the western north south aligned wall of the Altar Group (139). Not fully exposed.	-
122	<i>Deposit</i>	Mid grey brown silty clay containing abundant granite and Manx Series slate stones and fragments, as well as a number of unworked white quartzite stones, forming the internal filling of Altar Group (139) formed by slate upright slabs (118), (119), (120) and (121).	-
123	<i>Wall/ Structure</i>	North south aligned wall located to the west of the main keeill structure, which was not fully exposed and so is not fully understood, wall is 3.6m long and 0.9m wide and 0.40m high and was recorded for 4 courses of dry stone granite and slate slabs. Potentially forms part of enclosing wall around keeill structure or possible extension/porch to the main structure.	-
124	<i>Deposit</i>	Rubble spread located to the south west of wall (123) and potentially derived from its collapse, mid yellow brown silty clay with abundant slate slabs.	-
125	<i>Wall/ Structure</i>	Irregular aligned possible wall structure located to the north west of wall (123), only revealed in plan and so nature and function not fully understood.	-
126	<i>Grave</i>	Cut of unexcavated cist grave, located to the west of the main wall of the keeill, (112). Grave lined with slate slabs (127) and filled with (128), no lintel was revealed covering the grave and nature of the natural sediments results in the erosion of bone and grave was completely filled and son not excavated. As lintel missing possible evidence that grave already disturbed.	-
127	<i>Structure</i>	Pitched slate slabs forming the lining of cist grave. Unexcavated and so only revealed in plan.	-
128	<i>Fill</i>	Natural sediments filling grave (126), mid brown silty clay natural infilling potentially following the removal of the lintel sealing the grave.	-
129	<i>Deposit</i>	Layer of mid brown silty clay loam which fills the keeill structure following its abandonment and overlies the internal features of the keeill such as Altar Group (139), overlain by keeill structure collapse (130).	-
130	<i>Layer</i>	Demolition/abandonment deposit overlying infilling deposit (129), layer equal to (131), (132), (103) and (104). Layer deposited following the abandonment of the keeill, either deliberate demolition or natural erosion and subsequent collapse.	-
131	<i>Layer</i>	Equal to (130), but concentrated at the doorway of the keeill.	-
132	<i>Later</i>	Equal to (130) but concentrated to the west of Altar Group (139) in small excavated sondage.	-
133	<i>Original Subsoil</i>	Light yellow- mid orange brown silty clay layer which overlies the natural geology, possible original subsoil layer which underlies possible original ground surface layer (134).	0.13m thick
134	<i>Original Ground</i>	Dark grey brown silty clay. Probable original ground surface through which the keeill construction foundation trench was excavated, and eventually sealed	0.04m thick

	<i>Surface</i>	by the turves used to support the keeill stone walls.	
135	<i>Deposit</i>	Physically overlies (134) to the south of stone wall (110) , mid grey silty clay which forms with (136) the remnants of possible turves utilised to support the internal stone structure of the keeill. A typical Scandinavian building technique.	0.15m thick
136	<i>Deposit</i>	Associated with (135). Dark grey silty clay possible buried turf/grass line, part of turves utilised as to support the keeill stone structure.	0.02m thick
137	<i>Layer</i>	Mid grey slightly orange silty clay, build-up of material which overlies (136), possible remnant of the turf external structure, or potentially subsoil formation associated with the current topsoil.	0.15m thick
138	<i>Group</i>	Group number of the main walls of the keeill building, formed from walls (109), (110), (111) and (112) and door jambs (113) and (114). All the keeill dry stone walls slope outwards suggesting that an external support has been removed such as banks of turves.	-
139	<i>Group</i>	Group number for Altar formed from 4 slate walls formed from pitched upright un-worked stone slabs (118), (119), (120) and (121) with internal support and packing (122). A rectangular stone box c.1.2m long by c.1m wide The inner packing contains a number of white quartzite stones deliberately placed, potentially associated with the writings of Adamnan concerning the Life of St Columba.	-
140	<i>Group</i>	Group number for the possible reliquary or founder's grave situated outside the keeill structure adjacent to the eastern wall of the keeill (111).	-
141	<i>Cut</i>	Construction cut form wall (109), not seen.	-
142	<i>Cut</i>	Construction cut form wall (110), not seen.	-
143	<i>Cut</i>	Construction cut form wall (111), not seen.	-
144	<i>Cut</i>	Construction cut form wall (112), not seen.	-
145	<i>Layer</i>	Light yellow- mid orange brown silty clay layer which overlies the natural geology, possible original subsoil layer, on the north of the keeill.	-
146	<i>Layer</i>	Light yellow- mid orange brown silty clay layer, possible subsoil layer associated with (102) overlay cist grave (126)	-

Trench 2		Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 14.5m x 3.5m		Max. depth: 0.49m	Ground level: north end 155.64m a OD, south end 153.26m aOD
context	Description	depth	
201	<i>Topsoil</i>	Current topsoil and turf, well maintained grass immediately adjacent to the fairway. Loose mid brown yellow silty clay, with small fragments of slate (Manx Series), 0.06m	
202	<i>Subsoil</i>	Loose ,very stoney light yellow-mid yellow brown silty clay, with common fragments of Manx series and mudstone.	
203	<i>Natural</i>	Underlying natural basal geology, laminates of Manx series and mudstone.	
204	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of shallow ditch with concave base identified from Geophysics as one ditch of a pair of concentric 'D' shaped enclosures encompassing the top of the small hill on which the keeill is situated. Potentially 18 th or 19 th century and associated with the Duke of Atholl.	
205	<i>Fill</i>	Single fill of ditch (204) mid brown loos silty clay with common slate inclusions	
206	<i>Grave</i>	Cut of east west aligned cist grave, excavated into natural (203), and containing stone lining (207), skeleton (208), overlying capping lintel (209), deliberate backfill (210) and in-washing deposit (211). Grave 1.50m long by 0.70 wide and 0.55m deep.	
207	<i>Cist lining</i>	Manx series slate stone lining of cist grave (206), stones appear un-worked. At the north west corner are 2 large white quartzite stone forming part of the stone lining. This use of quartzite blocks as cist linings is very unusual for the Isle of Man.	
208	<i>Skeleton</i>	(208) was the skeleton of female, 45 years old or older, flexed and lying on her left side, much of the bone had been degraded by natural silting (211) occurring as material washed into the grave.	

209	<i>Capping stones</i>	A number of roughly hewn Manx series slabs utilised as capping lintels for Grave (206), resting directly upon (207).	-
210	<i>Layer</i>	Mid yellow brown silty clay deposit which overlies lintel capping stones (209), deliberate backfill deposit of grave (206).	0.23m thick
211	<i>Layer</i>	Light orange brown silty clay natural infilling deposit which washed into the grave through the gaps in the overlying capping stones (209), material has caused the partial degradation of the skeleton.	-
212	<i>Natural</i>	Equal to (203) but encountered at the base of grave (206).	-
213	<i>Grave</i>	Cut of cist grave which has been highly disturbed by the excavation of ditch (217). (213) cuts the natural (203) and contains un-worked slate slabs forming the cist lining. The lintel of the grave has been removed and the skeleton disturbed resulting in only fragmentary survival of bone (215). Survives for 0.65m long by 0.50m wide. Filled with backfill (216)	0.25m deep
214	<i>Cist lining</i>	Cist grave lining, the northern slab has been removed by the process of the digging of ditch (217).	-
215	<i>Skeletal remains</i>	Only fragment of skull survives from a sub-adult/adult c. 14-20 yr.	-
216	<i>Deposit</i>	Deliberate deposit within grave (213), mixed mid brown and mid grey silty clay, probably deposited following the disturbance of the grave potentially in the 18 th or 19 th century.	-
217	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of shallow ditch with concave base identified from Geophysics as the second ditch of a pair of concentric 'D' shaped enclosures encompassing the top of the small hill on which the keeill is situated. Potentially 18 th or 19 th century and associated with the Duke of Atholl. Equivalent to (310).	0.32m deep
218	<i>Fill</i>	Mid brown silty clay with common slate fragments, natural infilling of ditch	0.32m thick
219	<i>Grave</i>	Cut of unexcavated cist grave, only partially revealed and lost into the western trench edge.	-
220	<i>Cist lining and capping</i>	Unexcavated cist lining and capping of grave (219) formed of Manx series slabs.	-

Trench 3		Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 17.3m x 3.5m		Max. depth: 0.55m	Ground level: 157.71m aOD
context	Description	depth	
301	<i>Topsoil</i>	Current topsoil and turf, well maintained grass immediately adjacent to the fairway. Loose mid brown yellow silty clay, with small fragments of slate (Manx Series), 0.06m	0-0.29m bgl
302	<i>Subsoil</i>	Current subsoil, mid yellow brown silty clay	0.29-0.55m bgl
303	<i>Natural</i>	Underlying natural basal geology, laminates of Manx series and mudstone	0.55m + bgl
304	<i>Grave</i>	Cut of east west aligned cist grave, filled with cist slat lining (305), skeleton (306), capping lintel (307) natural infilling (308) and deliberate infilling (309).recorded as 2.10m long by 0.70m wide and 0.32m deep.	0.32m deep
305	<i>Cist lining</i>	Un-worked Manx series slate slabs used as cist lining.	-
306	<i>Skeleton</i>	(306) was the skeleton of an adult female c. 20-29 years old, supine and extended, with head slumped slightly to the left, with a plat of hair located at the right shoulder, the right arm was flexed at the elbow, with the arm across the body at the waist, left arm lost, and legs extended, and ankles close together.	-
307	<i>Capping lintel</i>	Manx series slate capping lintels sealing skeleton (306) within Grave (304)	-
308	<i>Deposit</i>	Light yellow brown silty clay natural silting deposit which has washed into grave (304)	-
309	<i>Deposit</i>	Mid grey brown silty clay infilling of void between grave edge (304) and lining (305).	-
310	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of inner surrounding ditch of 'D' shaped 18 th or 19 th century enclosure	0.18m deep

		equal to (217)	
311	<i>Fill</i>	Mid brown silty clay with common slate fragments, natural infilling of ditch	0.18m thick
312	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of small ditch/gully possibly part of prehistoric enclosure, with gradual sides and concave base.	0.17m deep
313	<i>Fill</i>	Light yellow brown silty clay.	0.06m thick
314	<i>Fill</i>	Mid brown silty clay with common slate fragments, natural infilling of ditch	0.11m thick
315	<i>Grave</i>	Cut of unexcavated cist grave, size suggests and infant	-
316	<i>Cist lining</i>	Slate lining and collapsed lintels of small grave (315)	-
317	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of ditch aligned roughly east west filled with (318) and cut through by grave (304). Unexcavated	-
318	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of ditch (317) mid brown silty clay. Unexcavated.	-

Trench 4		Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 15.8m x 1.5m		Max. depth: 0.42m	Ground level: 157.14m aOD
context	description		depth (bgl)
401	<i>Topsoil</i>	Current Topsoil and Turf, area of coarse grass (rough), at the edge of golf course, mid yellow brown silty loam loose and friable.	0-0.18m
402	<i>Subsoil</i>	Current subsoil, mid yellow brown silty clay	0.18-0.42m
403	<i>Natural</i>	Underlying natural basal geology, laminates of Manx series and mudstone	0.42m+
404	<i>Grave</i>	Cut of unexcavated cist grave, containing slate lining (405), skeleton, (406) and capping lintels (409).	-
405	<i>Cist lining</i>	Un-worked late uprights forming cist lining for grave (404)	0.24m thick
406	<i>Skeleton</i>	Supine extended skeleton of an adult aged c.35-40 years and probably male, not excavated.	-
407	<i>Capping lintel</i>	Manx series slate un-worked slabs forming lintel of cist grave, removed to investigate the skeleton, and then replaced.	-
408	<i>Deposit</i>	Post depositional infilling of the grave, material washing in through gaps in the capping stones, mid greyish brown silty clay.	0.15m thick
409	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of ditch which encompasses the very top of the hill on which the keeill is situated, south side gradual and convex with the north side highly disturbed, with an irregular base. Potentially contemporary with the keeill and forms part of the religious enclosure of the building.	0.37m deep
410	<i>Fill</i>	Mid grey silty clay loam lower fill of ditch (409), natural erosion of the feature edges and topsoil derived material.	0.08m thick
411	<i>Fill</i>	Mottled ,iron stained mid brown and orange silty clay, upper fill of ditch (409)	0.29m thick
412	<i>Grave</i>	Cut of un-excavated cist grave, lintel stones (414) had collapsed into the grave.	-
413	<i>Cist lining</i>	Un-worked slate slabs utilised as cist lining	-
414	<i>Capping lintel</i>	Slate slabs utilised as capping stones for grave (412).	-
415	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of probable tree throw, irregular in plan and only partially exposed, irregular sides and base. Filled with (416), (417), (418), (419), (420) and (421)	0.44m deep
416	<i>Fill</i>	Light grey brown silty clay, lowest fill of (415), derived from surrounding natural.	0.09m thick
417	<i>Fill</i>	Dark grey brown silty clay, fill derived from the surrounding ground surface, contains a charcoal lens	0.09m thick
418	<i>Fill</i>	Light yellow brown silty clay, fill with iron panning towards base.	0.12m thick
419	<i>Fill</i>	Orange brown silty clay fill of (415)	0.17m thick
420	<i>Fill</i>	Mid orange brown compact silty clay iron panning rich deposit.	0.02m thick
421	<i>Fill</i>	Mid brown silty clay deposit, potentially old ground surface deposit as very similar to (134)	0.23m thick

Trench 5		Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions:		Max. depth: 0.42m	Ground level: 159.53m aOD
context	description		depth (bgl)
501	<i>Topsoil</i>	Current turf and topsoil of pasture field, mid yellow brown silty loam, rare slate inclusions	0-0.21m
502	<i>Subsoil</i>	Mid brown silty clay with common stone fragments	0.21-0.42m
503	<i>Natural</i>	Mid orange brown relatively stone free silty clay, mottled with patches of grey clay.	0.42m +
504	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of large irregular unexcavated pit which contained modern animal bone.	-
505	<i>Fill</i>	Deliberate backfill of (504) slate rich and so showed natural clay overlies bands of slate as pit had dug through the clay and into the slate laminations.	-

Table 1: Finds totals by material type and by trench (number / weight in grammes)

Material	Tr 1	Tr 2	Tr 3	Tr 4	TOTAL
Pottery	13/118	11/334	-	-	24/452
<i>Prehistoric</i>	-	5/220	-	-	5/220
<i>Post-medieval</i>	13/118	6/114	-	-	19/232
Ceramic Building Material	4/692	-	-	-	4/692
Worked Flint	2/5	-	-	1/4	3/9
Glass	2/104	1/7	-	-	3/111
Metalwork (no. objects)	6	1	-	-	7
<i>Copper Alloy</i>	2	1	-	-	3
<i>Iron</i>	4	-	-	-	4
Stone	96/37,287+	1/2448			97/39,735+
Human Bone	-	2 individ.	1 individ.	-	3 indiv.

Table 2: Summary of analysis of human bone

context	cut	quantification	age/sex	pathology
208	206	c. 25%	adult >45 yr. female	osteoarthritis – r. hip; pitting – r. sacro-iliac; osteophytes – r. distal tibia; enthesophytes – lesser trochanter
215	213	c. 10% s.a.	subadult/adult c. 14-20 yr.	
306	304	c. 45%	adult c. 20-29 yr. female	calculus; non-metric traits - sutural ossicle, absence right maxillary M3

KEY: where all skeletal areas are not represented: s. – skull; a – axial skeleton

Table 3: Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

Feature type/no	Context	Sample	size litres								Residue
				flot ml	size	Grain	Chaff	seeds charred	Charcoal 4/2 mm	Other	Charcoal >5.6mm
Trench 1. Possible stone lined reliquary within Chapel											
105	107	1	16	200 ⁸⁰				1x Persicaria	5/		

NOTE: ¹flot is total, but flot in superscript = % of rooty material.

Table 4: Radiocarbon date results

<i>Feat type</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>material</i>	<i>result no</i>	$\delta C^{13} \text{‰}$	<i>result BP</i>	<i>Cal date</i>
Burial	208	Adult female flexed femur	NZA-26662	-20.7	1448±30	AD 540-660
Burial	215	juvenile skull	NZA-26663	-20.8	1470±30	AD 540-650
Burial	306	Adult female femur	NZA-26664	-20.4	1478±30	AD530-650

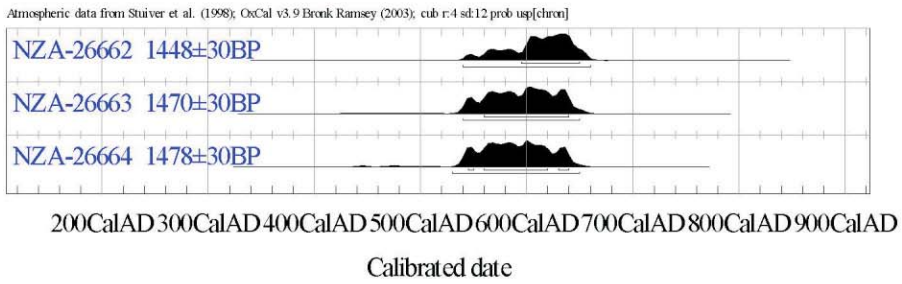


Figure 9: Radiocarbon probability distributions

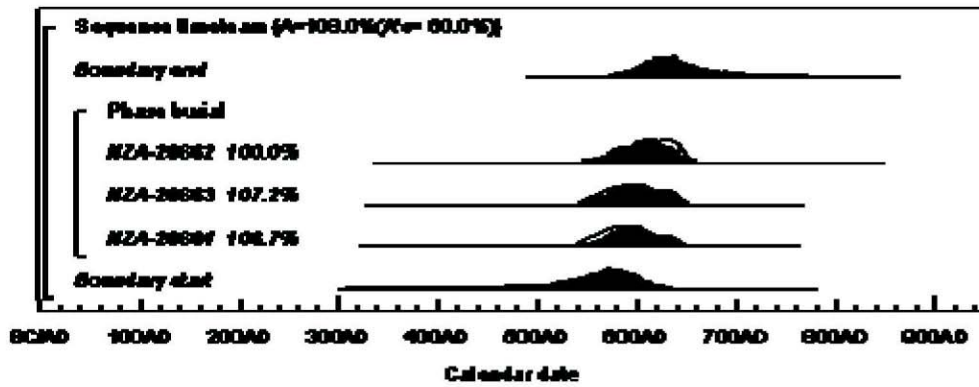


Figure 10: Probability distributions of phase of burials

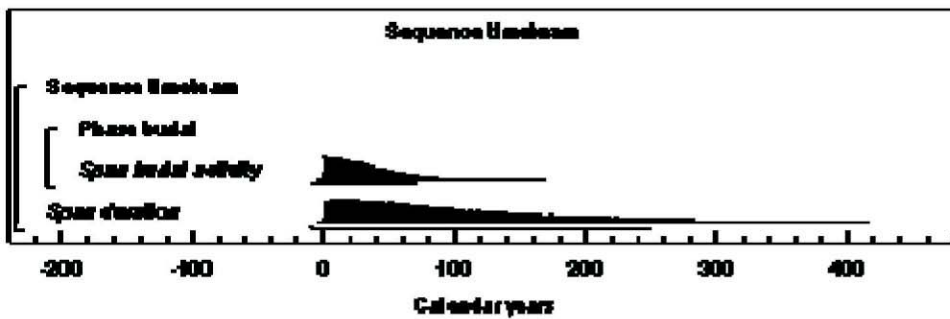
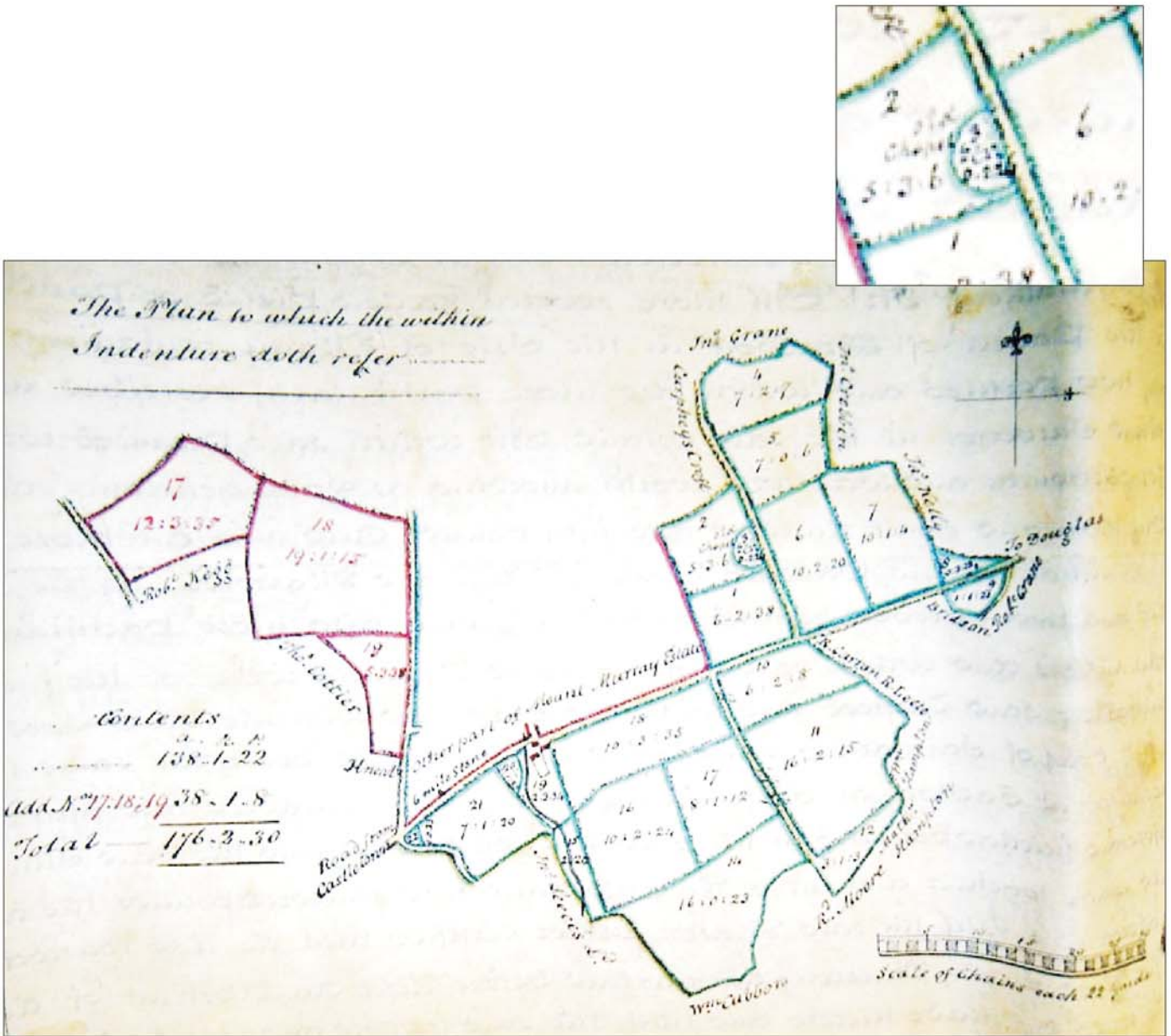


Figure 11: Span of the burial events



Site and trench location, with geophysical results **Figure 1**



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Mount Murray Estate map c.1800 with inset of Site showing 'D' shaped enclosure

Figure 2



Trench 1 from the east, showing keeill group (138) and reliquary (140) in the foreground

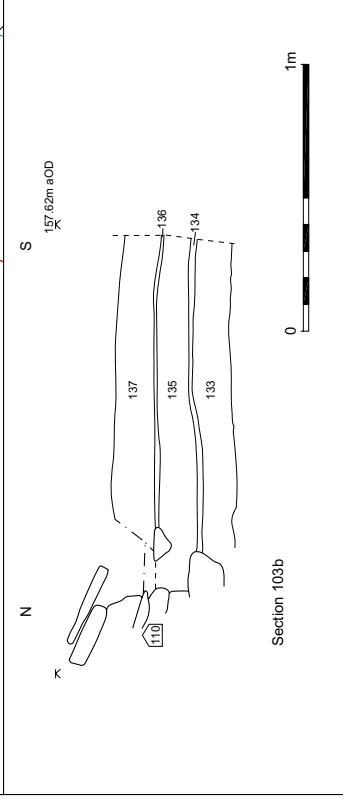


Altar group (139) from the west



Grave (126) next to wall (123)

Reliquary (140)



Section 103b

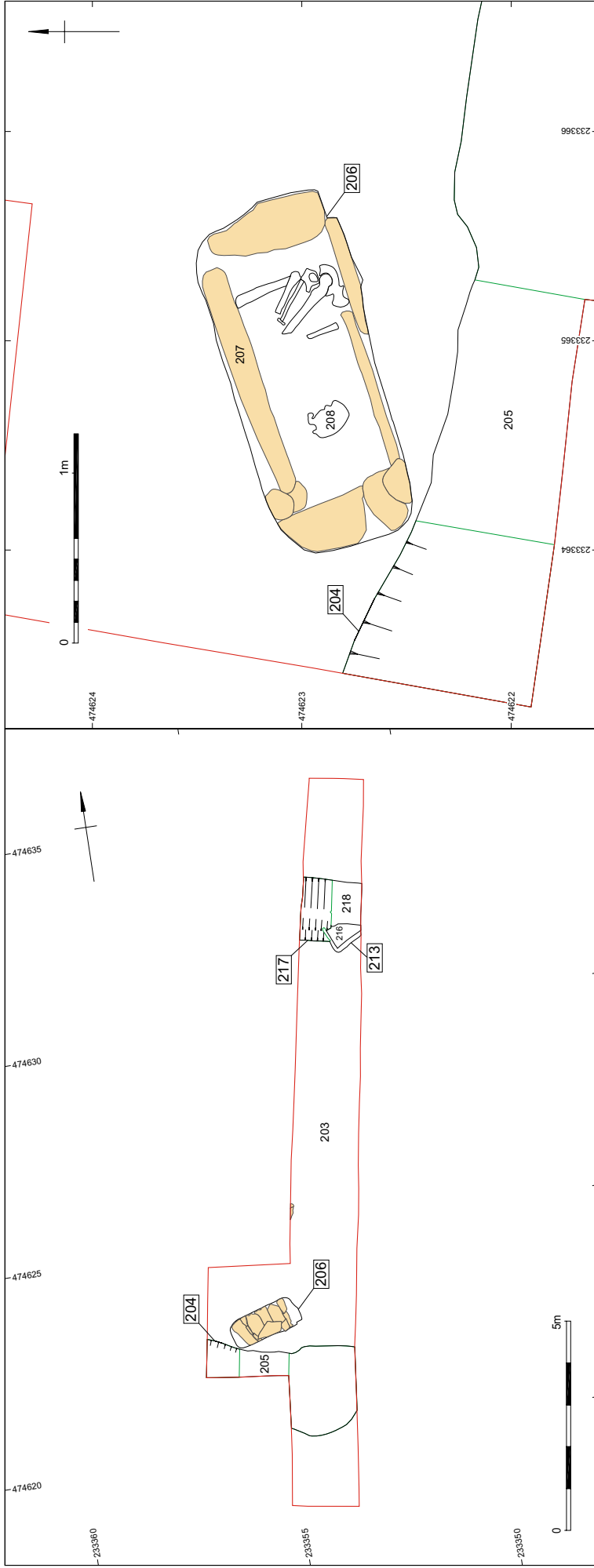
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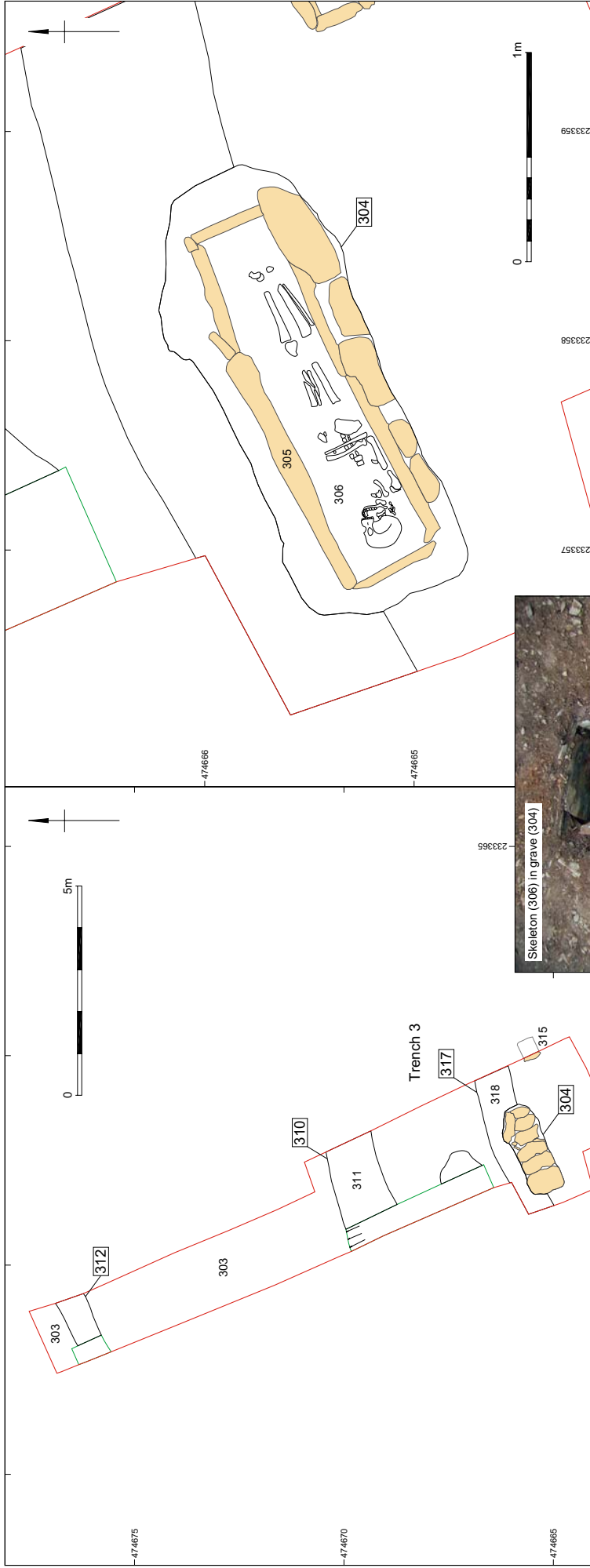
Trench 1, keeill site: plan, section and photos

Figure 3



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Trench 2: plan and photos Figure 4



Detail of skull of (306) and hair plait



Skeleton (306) in grave (304)

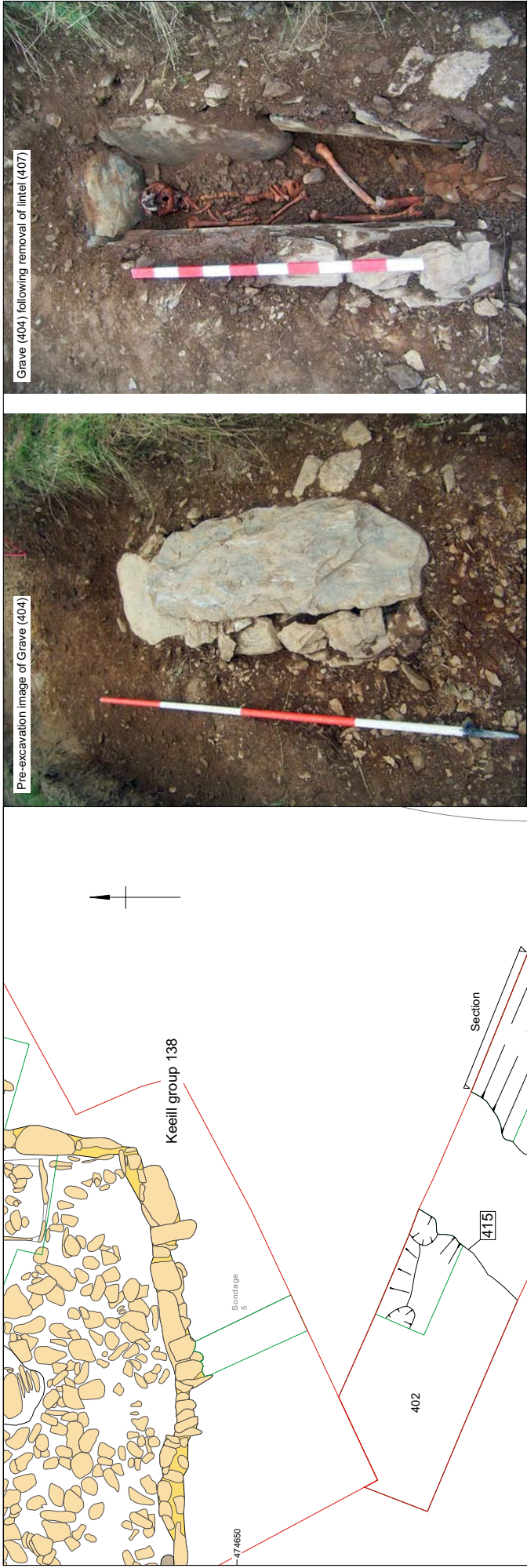


View of Trench 3

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Trench 3: plan and photos

Figure 5




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Trench 4: plan, section and photos

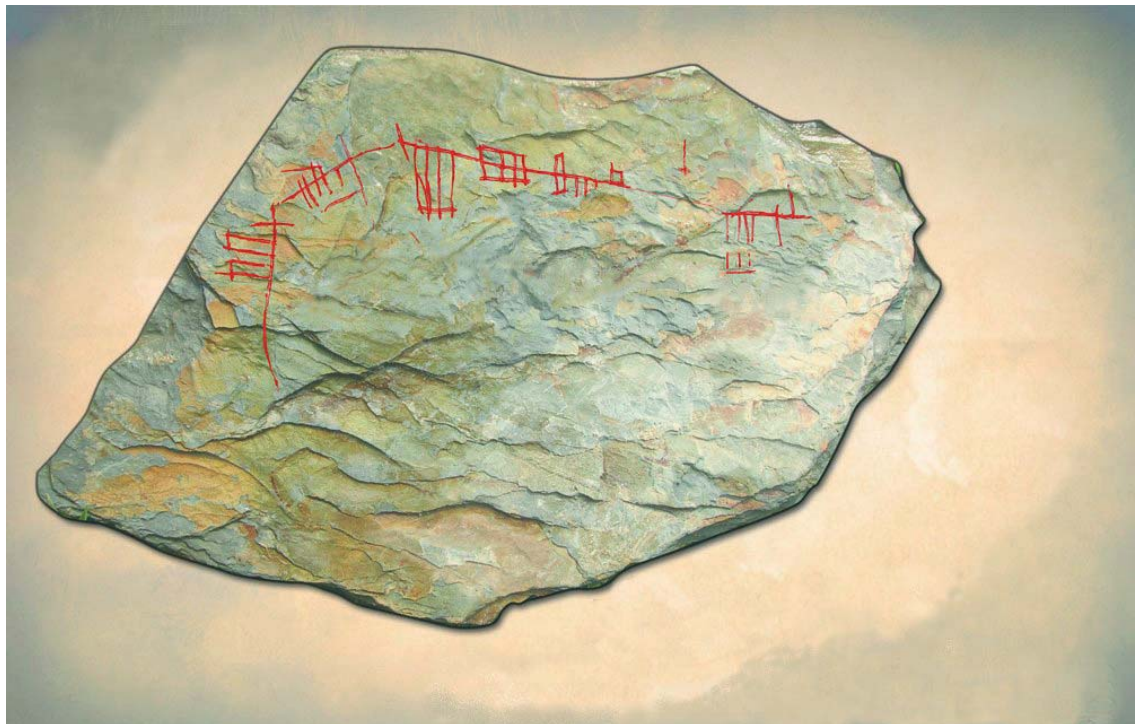
Figure 6




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Trench 5: plan and photo

Figure 7



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The ogham stone with image showing enhancement of the inscription

Figure 8



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