

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

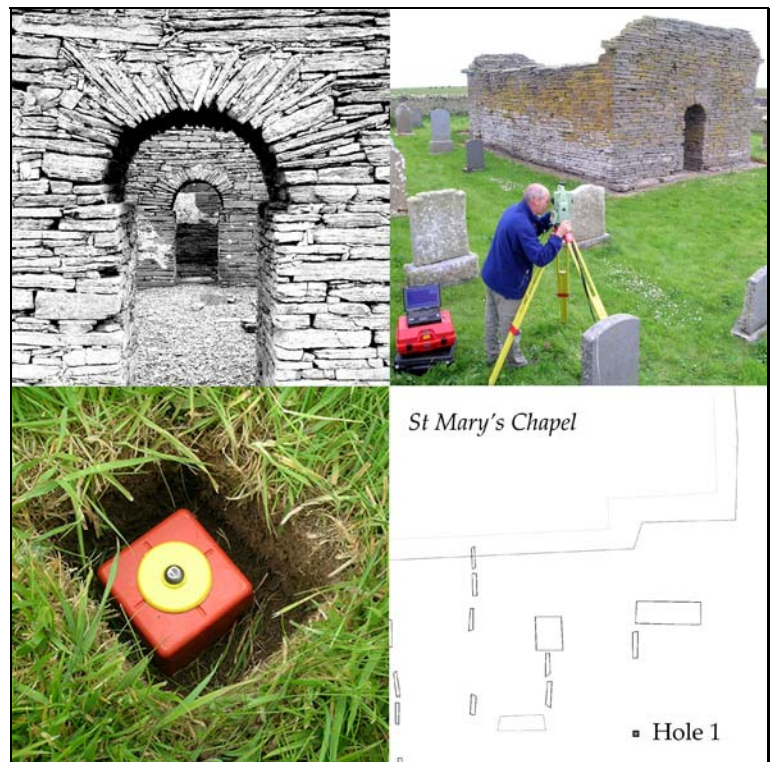
Updated on 15/06/2007

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Orkney Islands
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	St Mary's Chapel, Wyre
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90317-2009-01
PARISH:	ROUSAY AND EGILSAY
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Andrew Hollinrake
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Minor excavation
NMRS NO(S):	HY42NW 4
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	BURIAL GROUND, CHAPEL
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	HY 4429 2628
START DATE (this season)	30 June 2009
END DATE (this season)	30 June 2009
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Four small holes were excavated around St Mary's Chapel, Wyre, for the installation of permanent survey points. These were required as part of survey work to monitor movement of the chapel walls. All four holes were dug to a depth of 125 mm and revealed no finds or features of archaeological significance.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Historic Scotland
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS

Historic Scotland
Properties in Care
Minor Archaeological Works
2009

St Mary's Chapel, Wyre, Orkney
Minor excavations
and archaeological monitoring,
June 2009

HS PIC Index No. 90317
Project code: HSCO-90317-2009-01



20 July 2009
Kirkdale Archaeology

<u>Site</u>	St Mary's Chapel, Wyre, Orkney
<u>N.G.R</u>	HY 4429 2628
<u>Project Description</u>	Minor excavation and archaeological monitoring
<u>Project Code</u>	HSCO-90317-2009-01

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Summary

June 2009: Four small holes were excavated around St Mary's Chapel, Wyre, for the installation of permanent survey points. These were required as part of survey work to monitor movement of the chapel walls.

All four holes were dug to a depth of 125 mm and revealed no finds or features of archaeological significance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake excavation at St Mary's Chapel, Wyre, Orkney. This comprised the excavation of four small holes to allow the insertion of permanent 'Feno' survey markers. Previous survey markers had been either disturbed or removed entirely and it was intended to install these more substantial survey points to help detect, over time, any movement of the chapel's walls using electronic distance measurement equipment 'tied-in' to these survey points.

The markers comprised a long metal spike with anchor wires and a hard plastic head. A survey point was then fixed into the top of this head. Although these markers had an overall length of 350 mm, the holes required to accommodate them were only 125 mm deep, enough to contain the plastic head and allow the removed turf to be replaced and cover the marker, thus protecting it from disturbance during grass cutting, while the spike extended below the excavated hole for a further *c* 285 mm. This meant that the tip of the spikes reached a maximum depth of 410 mm.

The work was undertaken on 30 June 2009.

2.0 DESCRIPTION

The desired approximate locations for the survey points were shown on a supplied Historic Scotland plan, with final positions determined both by convenient lines of sight and by checking for obstructions below surface using a 400 mm survey 'arrow'. Also, the holes were required to be a minimum distance of 1.50 m from the interior faces of the boundary wall to avoid any disturbance to the wall's foundations.

Probing with the arrow encountered frequent stone, often very near the surface, and this guided the location of the holes not only to avoid disturbing the remains of what may have been fallen headstones but also out of practical necessity, since it would be impossible to dig a deep enough hole through these stones.

The holes all measured 150 x 150 mm in plan, with a maximum depth of 125 mm. In all four holes, the turf and topsoil, **001**, had a depth of *c* 90 mm, soft, mid brown, silty clay soil, with occasional small stones up to 5 mm across. Below this only the upper 30-35 mm of **002** was excavated, moderately compact, mid brown, slightly silty clay, with <5% small stones, grits and sandstone fragments up to 10 mm. There were a few angular sandstone fragments up to 15 x 60 x 100 mm, perhaps slightly more of which were encountered in Hole 3.

3.0 INTERPRETATION AND OBSERVATIONS

Nothing of archaeological significance was seen in the excavated holes, although it could be said that the soil seen below the turf and topsoil appeared to be redeposited natural subsoil, which is what one might expect in a graveyard. Fortunately, the depth of excavation was not sufficient to encounter any human remains.

The stones encountered during probing with the arrow were most likely the remains of fallen headstones, and in some places the outlines of what seemed to be complete headstones or slabs over graves were detected.

A1.0 APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CONTEXTS

No	Description
001	Turf and soft, mid brown, silty clay soil .
002	Moderately compact, mid brown, slightly silty clay,

A2.0 APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DRAWINGS

No	Type	Description	Scale
1	Plan	Location plan (see Fig. 1)	1:500

A3.0 APPENDIX 3: LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Frame	Description	From	Date
7579	Hole 1 location	N	30/6/2009
7580	Hole 1 after excavation	N	30/6/2009
7581	Hole 2 location	SW	30/6/2009
7582	Hole 2 after excavation	W	30/6/2009
7583	Hole 3 location	S	30/6/2009
7584	Hole 3 after excavation	S	30/6/2009
7585	Hole 3 after excavation	S	30/6/2009
7586	Hole 4 location	NE	30/6/2009
7587	Hole 4 after excavation	E	30/6/2009
7588	Hole 4 after excavation	E	30/6/2009
7589-90	Hole 1 Hole 1 showing survey marker installed	-	30/6/2009
7591	General views of site, work in progress etc	-	30/6/2009

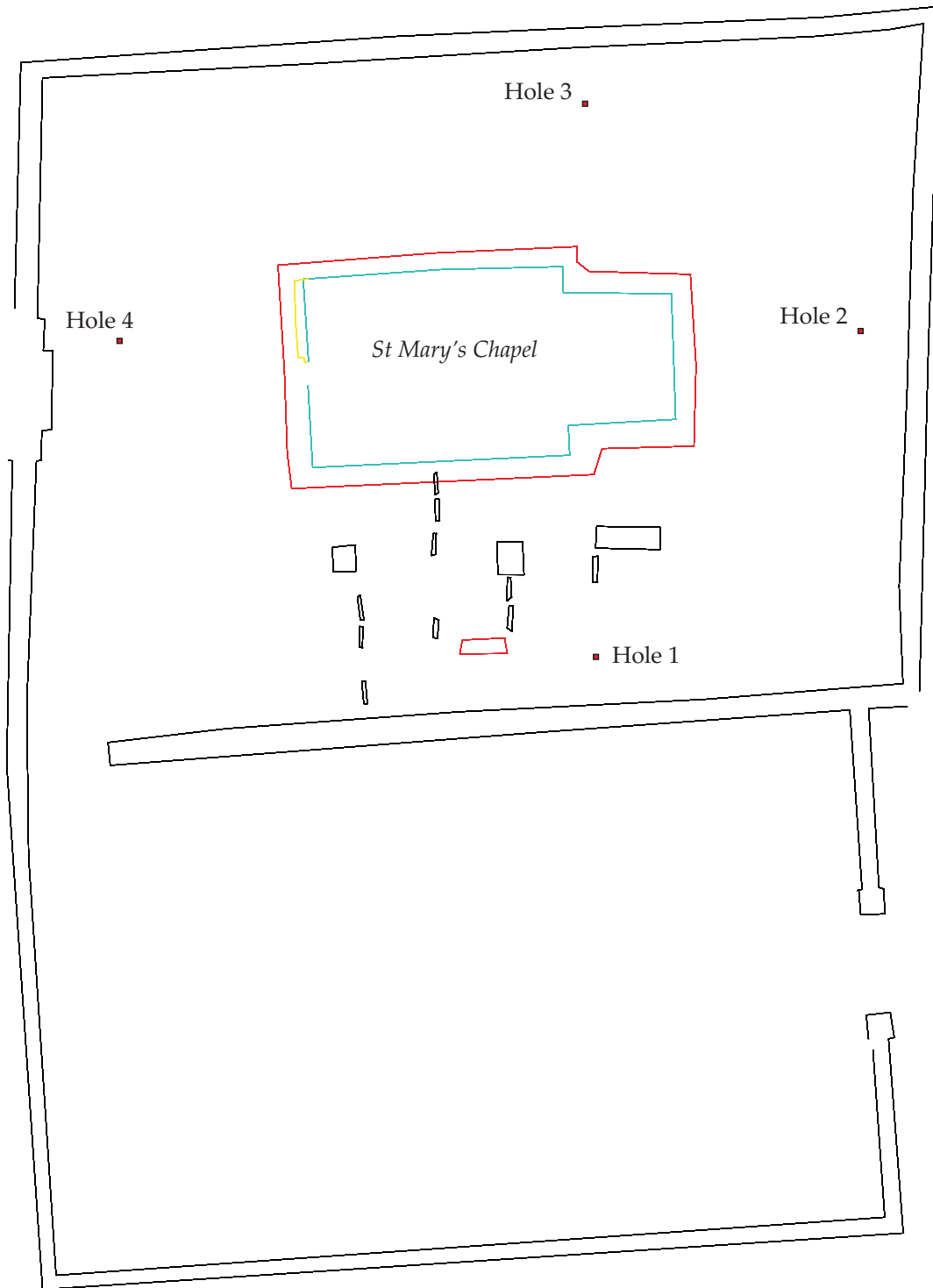


Fig. 1 : Location plan (1:200)

