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# Chapel-sites on the Isle of Lewis: Results of the Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites Survey

by Rachel C Barrowman  
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## 1. ABSTRACT

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The Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites Survey undertook research and fieldwork, the latter between 2004 and 2008, to explore and record the known chapel-sites on the Isle of Lewis in the Western Isles of Scotland. There is a scarcity of surviving contemporary historical documentation relating to Lewis in the medieval period, but archaeology has great potential to further investigate these fascinating and diverse sites. Research linked together previous antiquarian and local historical research, with walkover survey and description of each site on the ground. This was followed by targeted topographic and geophysical surveys of particular sites. At the end of the project it was possible to assess the cultural and research potential of this remarkable group of sites, and to identify gaps where further work was needed. More than 40 sites were identified and the remains recorded at each site were varied, some associated with old settlements, or traditionally linked with other chapel-sites nearby, others alone and isolated. The chapels themselves ranged from upstanding buildings still used for worship, to low grassy banks only just discernible beneath the turf or unlocated and kept alive only in oral tradition. This publication reports on the results of the survey work with a brief conclusion of the main findings.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 The Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites Survey (LCCS)

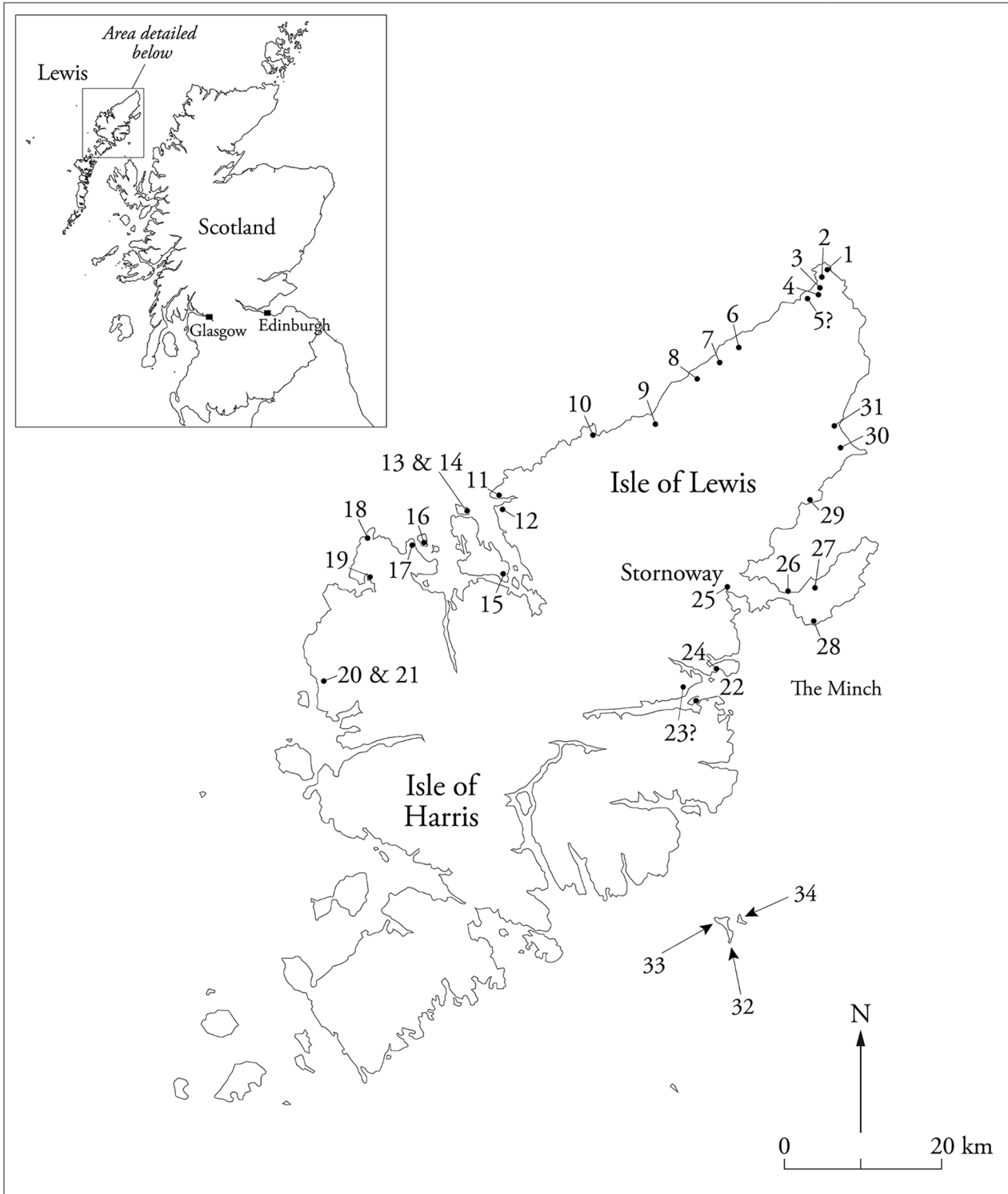
This paper reports the results of a survey and research project completed in Lewis over a decade ago, but the results have been revisited and checked in 2018/2019. The LCCS was set up in 2004 to record the archaeology of the chapel-sites on the Isle of Lewis in the Western Isles by surveying and studying the physical remains on the ground. Other than those surveyed by the RCAHMS in 1928, there has been little archaeological research focused on these fascinating sites, in contrast to the attention given to them by touring antiquarians, historians and naturalists. These interested travellers were drawn to describe, or at least name, the sites in written accounts of the natural history and ‘ancient relics’ they encountered in the Isles, in the 18th and 19th centuries (eg Martin Martin 1703; Hogg 1802–4 [1981]). They were also mentioned in passing by Captain John Dymes, who visited Lewis and whose report in 1630 described ‘worshipp of divers Sts. as doth appeare by their Chappells wch are yett to be seene ...’ (Mackenzie 1903: 592; full excerpt also cited in Stiùbhart 2015: 75), and also in the previous century there are references to a small number of chapels, and the parishes of Lewis, by Donald Monro, ‘Dean of the Isles’, who wrote the earliest surviving description of the Hebrides in 1549 (Monro 1549 [1994]; Munro 1961). However, other than these early accounts by visitors and later antiquarians, in Lewis there is a particular reliance on the archaeological remains when studying chapels, as there is a distinct lack of primary historical and sculptural evidence relating to them (Cant 1985; Armit 1996: 180–6; Abrams 2007; Thomas 2009). The LCCS attempted therefore to extend the archaeological recording of this group of sites. From the outset a wide approach was adopted that would link together all previous references to, and records of, these sites, including antiquarian and local historical research, local guidebooks, research by local history societies and other groups, and any ongoing archaeological survey work in Lewis that may have included chapel-sites. Walkover and targeted topographic and

geophysical surveys were then undertaken, and each site was described on the ground.

This report describes the results of these desktop studies and surveys undertaken in Lewis between 2004 and 2008. The author had previously been involved with the Viking and Early Settlement Archaeological Research Project (VESARP) at the University of Glasgow, which included work on the chapel-sites of Shetland (see Morris 2001 and references therein; Morris 2007; Morris & Barrowman with Brady 2008; Barrowman 2011). The work on Lewis built upon this work.

The chapel-sites of Lewis are a varied group in date, size and condition. The desktop study undertaken in the first year of the LCCS in 2004 identified 31 chapel-sites on the Lewis mainland, and six on the outlying islands (North Rona, Sula Sgeir, Flannan Isles and on the three islands in the Shiantis; see Table 1 below and Barrowman 2005). The majority of the chapel-sites identified were in a coastal location (Illus 1) and many were under threat from coastal erosion. There was considerable local historical interest in these sites, as demonstrated by the work of several local historians in the decade prior to the beginning of the project (Lawson 1991; MacLeod 1997; Robson 1991, 1997). At the end of the desktop research, a gazetteer summarising the results was produced, and each site was recorded and described, with management recommendations made, and an assessment of the cultural significance of each chapel-site and suggestions for future work (Barrowman 2005). Finally, five additional possible chapel-sites were also identified during the desktop research that had been surveyed by other projects, but were not confirmed as chapels (Sites 38–42; see 4.38–4.42 below).

In 2004 it proved unrealistic to attempt to complete walkover survey of all 42 identified sites as well as the desktop survey, and so 26, predominantly mainland Lewis, sites were prioritised in the time and funding remaining. Walkover survey of 24 of the 26 sites was successfully completed by the end of the 2004 season (the remaining two sites, Sites 24, An Teampall at Ranish, Lochs and 30, Teampall Mhìcheil, North Tolsta were visited in 2019). Plane table survey was completed of three of the six sites identified as warranting such survey (Sites 7, 12, 15), as the other three are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, had already been described



**Illus 1** Location of chapel-sites on mainland Lewis and the Shiant

and measured, and were therefore of lower priority (Sites 1, 19, 29). During the desktop and walkover surveys in 2004, more-detailed topographic survey was recommended for eight sites. In 2005 detailed topographic survey of four of these sites was undertaken – Teampall Mhealastadh, Uig (Site no.

20), Taigh na Cailleachan Dubha, Uig (Site no. 21), Teampall Pheadair, Swainbost (Site no. 4) and the chapel-site of St Mary’s on Eilean an Tighe (formerly known as Eilean na Cille) on the Shiant Isles (Site no. 32) (Barrowman with Hooper 2006). It had been planned also to survey Site no. 33, Àirighean



**Table 1** Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites gazetteer (\*MR = Plan of building published by McGibbon & Ross 1896–7; RCAHMS = Plan of building published by Royal Commission for the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland 1928; LAHAG = Lewis and Harris Archaeology Group)

Site no.	Name	Location	NGR	Canmore ID	Type of survey undertaken by LCCS
1	Teampall Rònaidh/ Rònain	Eoropie, Ness	NB 5229 6542	4418	Walkover
2	Teampall Mholuiadh	Eoropie, Ness	NB 51928 65157	4419	Walkover. RCAHMS and *MR
3	Teampall Thòmais	Habost, Ness	NB 50728 64062	4435	Walkover
4	Teampall Pheadair	Swainbost, Ness	NB 50861 63812	4434	Walkover. EDM topographic survey Feb 2005
5	Teampall Chliamain	North Dell, Ness	NB 49 62?	4381	Walkover – unlocated
6	Teampall a' Chrò' Naomh	South Galson	NB 43282 59301	4346	Walkover. RCAHMS
7	Teampall Bhrighid	Melbost Borve	NB 40989 57313	4361	Walkover and plane table Feb 2005
8	Teampall Pheadair	Shader	NB 3792 5499	4265	Walkover. EDM and geophysical survey 2007/8
9	Teampall Mhuire	Barvas	NB 3530 5173	4282	Walkover – unlocated
10	Teampall Eòin	Bragar	NB 28833 48905	4191	Walkover. EDM topographic survey. RCAHMS
11	Teampall Chiarain	Laimishader, Carloway	NB 18602 42588	N/A	Walkover
12	Teampall Mhìcheil	Kirvig, Carloway	NB 194067 41847	4126	Walkover and plane table Feb 2005
13	Teampall Dhonain	Little Bernera	NB 1505 4073	4125	None
14	Teampall Mhìcheil	Little Bernera	NB 1505 4073	4125	None
15	Teampall Chirceaboist, St Macrel's	Kirkibost, Great Bernera	NB 19130 34628	4113	Walkover and plane table Feb 2005
16	Teampall Pheadair	Pabbay Mor	NB 10446 37699	4095	Walkover
17	Teampall Bhaltois	Valtos, Uig	NB 0891 3673	4012	Walkover

Site no.	Name	Location	NGR	Canmore ID	Type of survey undertaken by LCCS
18	Taigh a' Bheannaich	Aird Uig	NB 03872 37898	4028	Walkover. RCAHMS
19	Baile na Cille (Teampall Chrìosd)	Timsgarry, Uig	NB 04800 33870	4056	Walkover
20	Teampall Mhealastadh	Mealasta, Uig	NA 98983 24198	3981	Walkover and EDM topographic survey Feb 2005
21	Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha	Mealasta, Uig	NA 99030 24181	3983	Walkover and EDM topographic survey Feb 2005
22	Teampall Chaluum Chille	Eilean Chaluum Chille, Lochs	NB 3858 2104	4233	Walkover. RCAHMS
23	An Teampall – St Pharaer?	Cathanais, Lochs	?NB 389 234	None	Unlocated
24	An Teampall	Ranish, Lochs	NB 399 248	280476	Walkover
25	Teampall Leannain	Stornoway	NB 4223 3280	4333	Unlocated – under modern buildings
26	Eaglais Chaluum Chille	Eye	NB 4846 3226	4308	Walkover. RCAHMS
27	Teampall Chùistein	Garrabost, Point	NB 5163 3355	4395	Walkover
28	Teampall Rubha Chirc	Bayble, Point	NB 50786 29213	4385	Walkover. LAHAG survey (Knott 2000c)
29	Teampall Aulaidh	Gress	NB 49020 41540	4337	Walkover
30	Teampall Mhicheil	North Tolsta	NB 5440 4801	4405	Walkover
31	Teampall Chaluum Chille	Garry?	NB?	None	Unlocated
Outer Isles sites					
32	Chapel on Eilean an Tighe	Shiants	NG 4183 9766	11411	Walkover and EDM topographic survey, May/June 2005
33	Àirighean na h-Annaid, Garbh Eilean	Shiants	NG 412 983/NG 411 983	11409	Walkover
34	Teampall Mhuire, Eilean Mhuire	Shiants	NG 4306 9860	11408	None

Site no.	Name	Location	NGR	Canmore ID	Type of survey undertaken by LCCS
35	North Rona – St Ronan's chapel and settlement	Ness	HW 8091 3235	1472	None. *MR, RCAHMS, Nisbet & Gailey 1960
36	Sula Sgeir – Sgeir an Teampuill/Tigh Beannaichte	Ness	HW 621 305	1470	None. *MR
37	Teampall Beannachadh	Flannan Isles, Uig	NA 7262 4684	3971	None. MR
Additional sites					
38	Dun Othail	Tolsta	NB 5425 5149	4416	None. McHardy et al 2009: 71–6
39	Luchruban	Butt of Lewis, Ness	NB 50781 66013	4420	None. McHardy et al 2009: 57–62
40	Cunndal	Eoropie, Ness	NB 5120 6563	224370	Walkover. RCAHMS
41	Eilean Fir Chrothair	Little Bernera	NB 1397 4191	270625	None
42	Pabbay Beag	Pabbay Mor, Uig	NB 09793 38873	280475	None

na h-Annaid on Garbh Eilean, Shiant Islands, but due to bad weather in May/June, it was not possible to access the site safely. This site has since been excavated by the Shiant Isles Project and is published online (Foster et al 2012). In 2008 detailed topographic survey was completed for two of the three remaining sites of highest priority – Teampall Pheadair, Shader (Site no. 8) and Teampall Eòin, Bragar (Site no. 10), with geophysical survey also completed for Teampall Pheadair, Shader. The results of the surveys have aided further interpretation of the rich archaeological remains at these fascinating sites, and have produced a baseline before they collapse or are further eroded (Barrowman 2008).

## 2.2 The Outer Isles (Sites 35–37): North Rona, Sula Sgeir and the Flannan Isles

There are four groups of offshore islands classed as belonging to Lewis: Rona (also called North Rona), Sula Sgeir, the Flannan Isles and the Shiant Islands. There were time and resources during the survey to visit

only one of these island groups, the Shiant Islands (see 2.1 'The Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites Survey' above). The desktop study in 2004 was tailored accordingly, and the other groups of outer islands were not included. Rona and Sula Sgeir are some distance from the Isle of Lewis (between 40 and 50 miles NNE of Ness), and the Flannan Isles are 20 miles off the west coast of Uig, Lewis. The Shiant Islands (Sites 32–34), however, are situated in the Minch, between Lewis and the Scottish mainland, and visiting the islands was made easier in that another archaeology project was in progress there, and resources could be pooled. In addition to this, North Rona and Sula Sgeir have been extensively photographed and written about, and in the case of North Rona, surveyed and recorded.

## 2.3 Additional sites (Sites 38–42)

Although during this phase of the project only known chapel-sites were researched, during the course of this research five additional sites were

identified as being potential early chapel or Early Christian sites. All of these sites had already been surveyed, excavated or recorded by other projects in Lewis and so were not included in the walkover or other surveys. However, they are included in the gazetteer (see Table 1) and are listed at the end as potential chapel-sites (see 4.35 'Additional sites' below).

## 2.4 Other work in the Western Isles

In 2001 Dr Barbara Crawford (University of St Andrews), Dr Ian Simpson (School of Environmental Sciences, University of Stirling) and Beverley Ballin Smith (then of GUARD, University of Glasgow) initiated the 'Papar Project', undertaking desk-based assessment, survey and soil studies of *papa* sites and place names in the north of Scotland, to investigate the factors behind the choice of locations for settlement by Early Christian communities (<http://www.paparproject.org.uk/introduction.html>). The fieldwork began in 2002 and included the location, identification and initial comparison of anthropogenic soils at Pabbay and Paible, Taransay, both in Harris. Midden deposits were identified adjacent to St Keith's chapel at Taransay, and at Bailenacille on Pabbay a deep topsoil was located beneath significant windblown sand adjacent to the Teampall Mhoire site (Crawford 2002; Ballin Smith et al 2003). A comparative study of settlement place names has also been undertaken as part of the project, which has, since the inception of the LCCS, studied three sites in Lewis – Pabay in Uig, which includes the chapel-site of Teampall Pheadair on Pabaigh Mor (see 4.16 'Site 16. Teampall Pheadair, Pabbay Mor' below; Site H1 <http://www.paparproject.org.uk/hebrides1.html>), Bayble in Point, which includes the chapel-site of Teampall Rubha Chirc (see 4.28 'Site 28. Teampall Rubha Chirc, Point' below; Site H6 <http://www.paparproject.org.uk/hebrides6.html>) and Pabanish on Little Bernera (Site H10 <http://www.paparproject.org.uk/hebrides10.html>). The results of the project are published on the project website, <http://www.paparproject.org.uk/introduction.html>.

While no other archaeological work on the chapel-sites has been undertaken in Lewis or Harris at time of going to press, research into the Duns

in South Uist and Benbecula identified a possible Early Christian and later Norse church at Loch Dun na Cille at Cille Pheadair, Eilean Buidhe, NF 7461 1905 (Raven & Shelley 2003), and a possible early monastic settlement at Pabbay, Loch Baghasdal, NF 7782 1947 (Raven 2003; see also Papar Project site H3 <http://www.paparproject.org.uk/hebrides3.html>). Excavation has been undertaken at Cille Donain, South Uist, where the site of the disused burial ground and church were identified, and other structures were also excavated (Fleming & Woolf 1993; Parker Pearson 1995). Structural, photographic, topographic and geophysical surveys have also been undertaken at the medieval ecclesiastical site at Howmore, South Uist (Reynolds et al 2004; Thacker 2015a). This site comprises the two medieval churches of Teampall Mhoire and Teampall Chaluim Chille, with a further, smaller chapel, Caibeul Dhubhgaill to the south of Teampall Mhoire, and the Clan Ranald burial enclosure, Caibeul Clann 'ic Ailean to the north-east of Teampall Chaluim Chille, as well as two post-medieval burial enclosures. The survey demonstrated that all four medieval buildings date to the 13th century and earlier, and were built on a natural mound.

Desk-based assessment, building recording and site surveys have also been undertaken at Howmore (Addyman 2000b), at Teampall na Trionaid, Carinish, North Uist (Addyman 2000c), Cille Donain, South Uist (Thacker 2015b) and at St Barr's church and the South Chapel of Cille Bharra, Barra (Lowe 2002).

## 2.5 A note on nomenclature

The Gaelic word *teampall* or *teampull* is literally translated as 'temple', but is usually used in Lewis to describe ruined pre-Reformation chapels, although the term *eaglais* (church) is sometimes used, especially for an upstanding ruin or church that was once a parish church (eg at Eaglais Chaluim Chille in Eye). *Taigh a' Bheannaich* (House of Blessing) is also found, particularly on more 'remote' sites (eg in Aird Uig, and on the Flannan Isles and Sula Sgeir). The place-name elements *cille* (cell/chapel/church) and *circ* (kirk/church) can also be found in associated place names (eg at Teampall Chrìosd in Baile na Cille, Uig and Teampall Rubha Chirc

in Point). Whereas the *teampall* name appears to be a universal term applied to all pre-19th-century churches/chapels, the other terms may be more specific (the place-name elements encountered in the names of the chapel-sites are discussed further in Barrowman forthcoming a). The English terms ‘chapel’ and ‘church’ are also used interchangeably in different sources. In this report, the term ‘chapel’

is used to denote where a small chapel or church building once stood, or stands in ruins. The larger, upstanding buildings are more often described as ‘churches’, especially those that were once head churches in a parish.

Gaelic names used in this report are italicised where they are used for the first time, and if there is an English equivalent, it is given afterwards.

### 3. METHODOLOGIES

with Gary Tompsett, Charlotte Francoz & Christine Rennie

The first stage of the survey was undertaken in 2004, and comprised the study of archaeological desktop sources, such as the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey maps and Name Books, and subsequent map editions, the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and local Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), antiquarian sources, local historical sources, local information and tradition and previous archaeological survey. It was found that many sites had multiple references, each repeating the same information. In this case the first mention of the information is reproduced and then cross-referenced where possible. Many of the sources, especially the RCAHMS inventory (1928), Muir (1885 – later reproduced by MacGibbon & Ross 1896), and the Ordnance Survey visits of 1964 and 1969, are directly quoted at length as being the most definitive account of any particular site. This is then added to where extra information has been recorded. The desktop study was used to produce a gazetteer of chapel-sites in Lewis, which was added to as the project progressed (see Table 1).

Walkover survey of all identified sites and their immediate locale was then undertaken in the winter of 2004–5 when vegetation was at its lowest. The number of sites and amount of information for each site was underestimated during the planning for the project, and also a stormy autumn and winter in 2004 held up the completion of the walkover survey until February 2005. As a result, not all of the sites identified by the desktop study could be visited in the initial year of the project. Sites which were found from the desktop study to be the least well recorded, not recorded by any other source (eg another archaeological project, or a Scheduled Ancient Monument), or badly eroding, were prioritised for walkover survey between February 2004 and March 2005. Each site was sketched and photographed, and a hand-held GPS system was used to record the NGR. Detailed descriptions were then produced for each site, together with an assessment of the condition and extent of the site and management recommendations for the future. Following the assessment of each site, specific sites were chosen for further, more detailed survey. Sites were chosen

because either they were not previously recorded illustratively, were barely upstanding and therefore not recorded elsewhere, or were immediately threatened, eg by coastal erosion which was in the process of destroying the site.

The majority of the more detailed surveys were undertaken in February 2005 with a plane table. This survey method, although now superseded by EDM and DGPS technology, had the advantage of being low-key and accessible to most volunteers, and produced a plan of the site in the field, as it was surveyed, within a limited budget and without the need for expensive and heavy equipment, fine weather or charged batteries. However, there were sites and conditions for which a plane table was not suitable, particularly those for which the chapel was only a small part of a much larger suite of archaeological remains, such as an extensive graveyard, or an abandoned settlement. For these sites, an EDM topographic survey was recommended, and conducted in Year Two of the project (2005–6).

Topographic survey was conducted at two sites, Teampall Pheadair in Swainbost, Ness and Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha (Teampall Mhealastadh) in Uig (Barrowman with Hooper 2006: 11–19). At Teampall Pheadair in Ness, the entire graveyard area was surveyed, including any walls and banks and other features, and the foundations of the church building. As many as possible of the unmarked gravestones (estimated at between 2,000 and 3,000) were surveyed in order to record the layout of the old cemetery. Even in February a large part of the cemetery was covered by thick tussocks of grass that obscured the layout of parts of the burial stones. It was decided therefore to concentrate on the inscribed gravestones and the burial lairs, and to plot as many as possible of the *lines* of unmarked gravestones, rather than the position of every single stone. In this way over half of the unmarked gravestone alignments were recorded, and the inscriptions on the memorial stones that are already recorded on a plan of the graveyard (Smith 2004) can be connected to the LCCS 2005 topographic survey. The survey was carried out using a Leica EDM total station from a single station set-up. Data was logged electronically, downloaded to LISCAD v2.02 for processing and exported to AutoCAD and Adobe Illustrator for map production.

At Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha, an extensive medieval or later settlement with later sheep fanks adapted from the stone structures, the entire scheduled area was surveyed, and also Teampall Mhealastadh and its burial ground immediately to the north outwith the scheduled area and the ruined structures of a settlement to the east of the point Rubha an Teampall. The topographic surveys were carried out using a Leica EDM total station, and a network of several stations. Data was processed as above.

In 2007 two further sites were chosen for detailed topographic survey, and also geophysical survey at one of these sites. Teampall Pheadair, Shader and Teampall Eòin, Bragar were surveyed in 2008 using a Leica TCR 1205 total station, and the methodology was the same as that used by the Ness Archaeological Landscape Survey (Barrowman 2008; Arthur 2015). At each site the surveyor operating the instrument, and an archaeologist using a staff with a reflective prism to record the visible features, surveyed the archaeological features. Once the archaeological detail was recorded a series of spot height recordings were made so as to provide a contour survey of each site. At Teampall Eòin, these spot heights were taken on the ground surface adjacent to each gravestone in the old churchyard (over 2,000 stones), thus enabling the readings to be used to record the position of gravestones as well as the detailed contours of the site. A DGPS was not available for

this survey, so instead several known features, such as jetties, fence lines and cemetery walls, marked on the Ordnance Survey (OS) survey were recorded at each location so as to position each survey relative to the OS national grid. The data was then downloaded for processing using Leica's LISCAD (7.0) software. After initial processing in LISCAD, the maps were exported to AutoCAD (2005) for finishing.

Geophysical survey was conducted at one site, Teampall Pheadair in Shader, where the possibility of earlier Iron Age structures below the chapel-site was evidenced and the site was free from fence lines and other 'noise'. In 2008 resistivity survey was carried out using a Geoscan RM15D resistivity meter with a twin probe array. The separation of the mobile probes was 0.5m, allowing readings to be taken up to 0.5m below ground level. Then a gradiometry survey was also carried out using a Geoscan FM256 fluxgate gradiometer with two internal sensors. This instrument allows readings to be taken approximately 0.75m below ground level. A series of 10m × 10m grids were set out along a baseline that was slightly off a north/south axis. This was done to ensure that any east/west aligned linear features, such as grave cuts, would be more likely to be detected than if the survey was oriented to true north. In an attempt to detect these smaller features, readings were taken every 0.5m on both the X and Y-axis, giving 400 readings for each grid.



## 4. THE CHAPEL-SITES

### 4.1 Site 1. Teampall Rònaidh/Rònain, Eoropie, Ness

#### 4.1.1 Summary

*Teampall Rònaidh*, also known as *Teampall Rònain* (St Ronan's), is situated on croft land to the north-east of the medieval church of *Teampall Mholuaidh* (St Moluag's) in Eoropie. All that remains of the chapel now is an irregular grass-covered stony mound on which parts of the footing of the walls of a building about 8m × 6m can still be made out (Illus 2). The mound can be seen from miles around as it is on the highest point at the north end of Ness. It is clearly visible from Teampall Mholuaidh and it is possible that the stone from Teampall Rònaidh was used to build the later medieval Teampall Mholuaidh nearby. There is a story in local tradition that St Ronan left Eoropie and went to North Rona on the back of *An Cionaran Cro* (a sea monster) (Carmichael 1972: 126–7; Robson 1991: 2–6; both cited in MacLeod 1997: 11).

#### 4.1.2 Desktop study

NB 5229 6542

Canmore ID: 4418

The ruin of Teampall Rònaidh is listed as the Church of St Ronan by Martin Martin (1703: 27).

The Reverend Donald Macdonald (1797: 270) in vol 19 of the *Old Statistical Account 1791–1799* (hereafter OSA) refers to 'St Ronan's' a little to the north of 'St Mulvay' in 'Eorapie'.

The site is identified from the Ordnance Survey (hereafter OS), 1st Edition at 1:10 560, 1853–4 (hereafter OS1), with reference then to the OS1 6-inch survey (1897–8) to check for further detail. The name was then checked in the Original Object Name Books (hereafter ONB) of the OS, Book 3A: 17, which describes it thus:

Teampull Rònaidh. The ruins of a small hut, on the summit of an arable knoll, at the Butt of Lewis. It is about 20 feet long, by 12 wide, and is supposed to be of great antiquity. It is said to have been built by a person named



Illus 2 Teampall Rònaidh, Ness, from the south-west



Rònaidh, who with his sister inhabited it. The supposition that it was a church, appears to be fabulous, as it is not borne out by either tradition or appearance. A part of the walls is now standing.

Interestingly, ONB 3A: 23 has an entry for *Cnoc a' Bheannaich* (Hill of the Blessings), close to Teampall Rònaidh, and Teampall Mholuaidh, on the north side of the beach at Tràigh Shanndaidh. This place-name element is found elsewhere in association with chapel-sites in Lewis (see for instance, Site 18, Taigh a' Bheannaich, Aird Uig).

Teampall Rònaidh was believed locally to be much the oldest church in northern Lewis, according to W C Mackenzie (Mackenzie 1919: 136).

The RCAHMS visited the site on 13 July 1914 and gives the description:

The ruin of Teampull Rònaidh, distinguished by an irregular rectangular stony mound about 24 feet long by 18 feet broad and orientated almost east-south-east and west-north-west, is on the summit of a slight elevation 500 yards north-east of Eoropie church and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile south by east of the Butt of Lewis Lighthouse (RCAHMS 1928: 2).

The OS visited the site on 16 June 1969, when it was found to be generally as described by the RCAHMS, although traces of the footings of the west end of the church could be seen.

Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 5354.

#### 4.1.3 Site description

Teampall Rònain is situated on croft land to the north-east of the medieval church of Teampall Mholuaidh in Eoropie. It is not accessible to the visitor, as it is situated on arable land and straddles two fenced crofts. The site was visited after the LCCS fieldwork in 2009, and recorded by the Ness Archaeological Landscape Survey (C S Barrowman 2015: 184, 237–8, 240–1). The chapel-site is an irregular grass-covered stony mound on which parts of the footing of the walls of a building about 8m × 6m can still be made out. There are no signs of a surrounding graveyard. The mound is on the highest point at the north end of Ness and is clearly visible as a mound on the skyline of the crofts to the

east of Teampall Mholuaidh (Site 2) from the path that approaches that site.

#### 4.1.4 Local information

Teampall Rònain is associated in local tradition with the island of North Rona in a tale that St Ronan was taken from Ness to North Rona on the back of a sea monster (Carmichael 1972: 126–7; Robson 1991: 2–6; both cited in MacLeod 1997: 11), and as can be seen from the desktop study above, is also known as Teampall Rònaidh. Traditionally Teampall Rònain and the island of North Rona are connected, and viewed as belonging to the earliest period of Christianity in Lewis. Although it is thought more likely by place-name scholars that North Rona derives its name from the Norse words *braun-ey*, meaning rough, or rugged, isle (Nisbet & Gailey 1960: 89), rather than from the saint, there is an early medieval oratory of Irish type on the island (with a later medieval chapel built onto it) and a group of 12 carved stones, most of which are simple, small, roughly shaped crosses, some with little crosses incised on them. The 'Rona Cross', a carved stone cross originating from the island of Rona (one of five carved crosses from this site; see Fisher 2001: 114–15), was deposited in the *Comunn Eachdraidh Nis* (Ness Historical Society), in 1992. It is one of only two pieces of Early Christian/Christian Norse sculpture surviving from Lewis (the other being a cross-incised stone found during excavations in a post-medieval blackhouse on the Shiant Isles in 2000; see Fisher 2001: 116, no. 56; <https://www.shiantisles.net/archives>). On mainland Lewis, modern features in the villages near Teampall Rònaidh are named after St Ronan (eg St Ronan's Drive). There was also a well by the road in Eoropie called either *Tobar Rònain* or *Tobar an Teampaill*, although this is linked more in local tradition with nearby Teampall Mholuaidh than it is with Teampall Rònain (F MacLeod 2000: 23–4). It is held locally that a cross-incised stone was found at Teampall Rònain, which has subsequently been lost, but this cannot be verified.

Traditionally the site is the precursor to Teampall Mholuaidh nearby and it is possible that the stone from the building at Teampall Rònain was used to build the later medieval church of Teampall Mholuaidh (see Robson 1997: 50–67).

## 4.2 Site 2. Teampall Mholuaidh; Teampall Eòropaidh; An Teampall Mhòr, Eoropie, Ness

### 4.2.1 Summary

The medieval church of *Teampall Mholuaidh* (St Moluag's) dates to the 12th to 14th centuries. It was roofless and being used as a shelter for sheep until funds were raised and the building was restored and re-roofed in 1912. Cement floors and metal gutters were avoided by the restorers, and a flagstone floor was laid and freestone and special slates were brought from Orkney (Eales-White 1991). It is now in good condition and used for monthly services in the summer by the Scottish Episcopal Church. The church is a simple oblong building, 14m × 7m, with a small sacristy on the north-east side and a small chapel on the south-east (Illus 3). There is no division between a nave and a chancel, although there are holes in the north and south walls that may suggest there was a wooden screen (Barber 1981). The church is traditionally considered to be the MacLeods' church, and is similar in construction to St Clement's church in Rodel, Harris (Barber 1981:

532; R C Barrowman 2015: 409; Stiùbhart 2015: 77–8). There are many oral traditions associated with this church, most relating to the 'superstitions and rites' conducted there, that is, local customs and latent and adapted Catholic practices, that continued to be followed at the church by the local population, such as the veneration of the saints and the placing of replica wooden body parts on the altar for healing, and the practice of sleeping tied to the altar overnight as a cure for lunacy (MacLeod 1997: 13–14; Robson 1997: 50–67; Stiùbhart 2006a, 2006b).

### 4.2.2 Desktop study

NB 5192 6515

Canmore ID: 4419

Category A Listed building (Historic Buildings no. 6603; listed 25 March 1971).

Captain John Dymes refers to St Moluag's and the practices that were still being followed there by the islanders on Lewis in 1630. Stiùbhart discusses the alternative names to Moluag that are seen in this,



Illus 3 Teampall Mholuaidh, Ness, from the south-west

and other, sources, the connection of that saint to the MacLeods, and also the Morrisons on Ness, and concludes that 'Teampall Mholuaidh was unquestionably one of the most important centres of worship in Lewis during the late medieval period' (Stiùbhart 2015: 77). The following is reproduced from Stiùbhart (2015: 75) verbatim, quoting Dymes' letter as found in Mackenzie (1903: 592).

In their religion they are very ignorant and have been given to the idolatrous worshipp of divers Sts. as doth appeare by their Chappells w<sup>ch</sup> are yett to be seene, but they are now most espetially devoted to one of their Sts. called St. Mallonuy whose Chappell is seated in the north part of the Ile, whome they have in great veneration to this daie and keepe the Chappell in good repaire. This St. was for cure of all their wounds and soares and therefore those that were not able to come vnto the Chappell in person they were wont to cutt out the proporcion of their lame armes or leggs in wood w<sup>th</sup> the forme of their sores and wounds thereof and send them to the St. where I have seen them lying vpon the Altar in the Chappell. Within the Chappell there is a Sanctum Sanctorum w<sup>ch</sup> is soe holy in their estimation that not anie of their weomen are suffered to enter therein. Anie woman w<sup>th</sup> child dareth not to enter within the doores of the Chappell, but there are certaine places without where they go to their devotions. They had two gen[er]all meetings in the yeare at this Chappell, the one at Candlemas, and the other at Alhollautide where their custome was to eat and drinke vntill they were druncke. And then after much dancinge and dalliance together they entred the chappell at night with lights in their hands where they continued till next morninge in their devotions. The last tyme of their meeting was at Candlemas last. They were prevented of their Idolatrous worpp by a gent. whoe is a Minister in the Ile, who albeit the place was farre from his abode and out of his Cure, hee mett them at their Assembly in the Chappell where he began first to reason w<sup>th</sup> them, then to admonish them and afterwards to threaten them with God His Judgm<sup>ts</sup> and the Lawes of

the Realme, in somuch as divers of the better sort of them promised to forsake that wonted Idolatry of theirs.

Martin Martin (1703: 28) refers to the 'church of St Mulvay' and how it was associated with Hallow-tide sacrifices to the sea-god Shony, which ceased only 32 years before Martin's visit.

The Reverend Donald Macdonald (OSA: 270) states:

The largest and most entire is that at Eorapie in Ness, dedicated to St Mulvay; it seems to have been the principal one, and undoubtedly used as a place of worship. It is 50 feet long, 24 broad, and 16 feet in the side walls; the people around it, pay it as yet a great deal of superstitious veneration, and indeed some of them retain still a few of the Popish superstitions.

MacKenzie in 1792 writes:

Tiample Maloni, at Ness, is a large building, and the architecture of a more modern date, which confirms the account of its being built by one of the first McLeods of Lewis. A superstitious veneration is still paid to it, and no burials are permitted within the verge of the ground that surrounds it. The country people send their friends that are long lingering in sickness, to sleep here for a night, where they believe the Saint grants them a cure, or relief by death. I have known an instance of this not long ago (MacKenzie 1792: 291).

William Daniell, during his tour of the islands in 1815, describes a visit to 'St Clements' in Ness, but judging by his description of the walk (5 hours) from Stornoway to Tolsta (in the rain and wind!), and then along the coast to the Butt of Lewis, he must be referring to St Moluag's (he was possibly confusing the church with St Clement's in Rodel in Harris, although see also Site no. 5 (4.5 'Site 5. Teampall Chliamain, North Dell, Ness' below):

At Ness are the remains of a chapel, or temple, as it is called, dedicated to St Clement. It has been surrounded by a dyke about fifty paces square, but of the structure there is little left, except the gable ends and the walls. It



was formerly a place of great sanctity, and still retains the fame ascribed to it in more superstitious times, of effecting a cure on all insane persons who sleep one night within its precincts. Patients afflicted with that malady are still brought hither occasionally; and it is affirmed that if they sleep, they uniformly recover, but not otherwise ... (Daniell 1820 [2006]: 204).

This site is identified from the OS1 and in the ONB of the OS, 3A: 19 is described as:

Teampull Fo'Luith. The ruins of a church, the walls of which are still standing and apparently not much decayed. It had four windows; two in the sides and two in the ends. It is one of the largest ruins of churches in the Lewis island. There is very little known regarding it, but it appears to be of considerable antiquity.

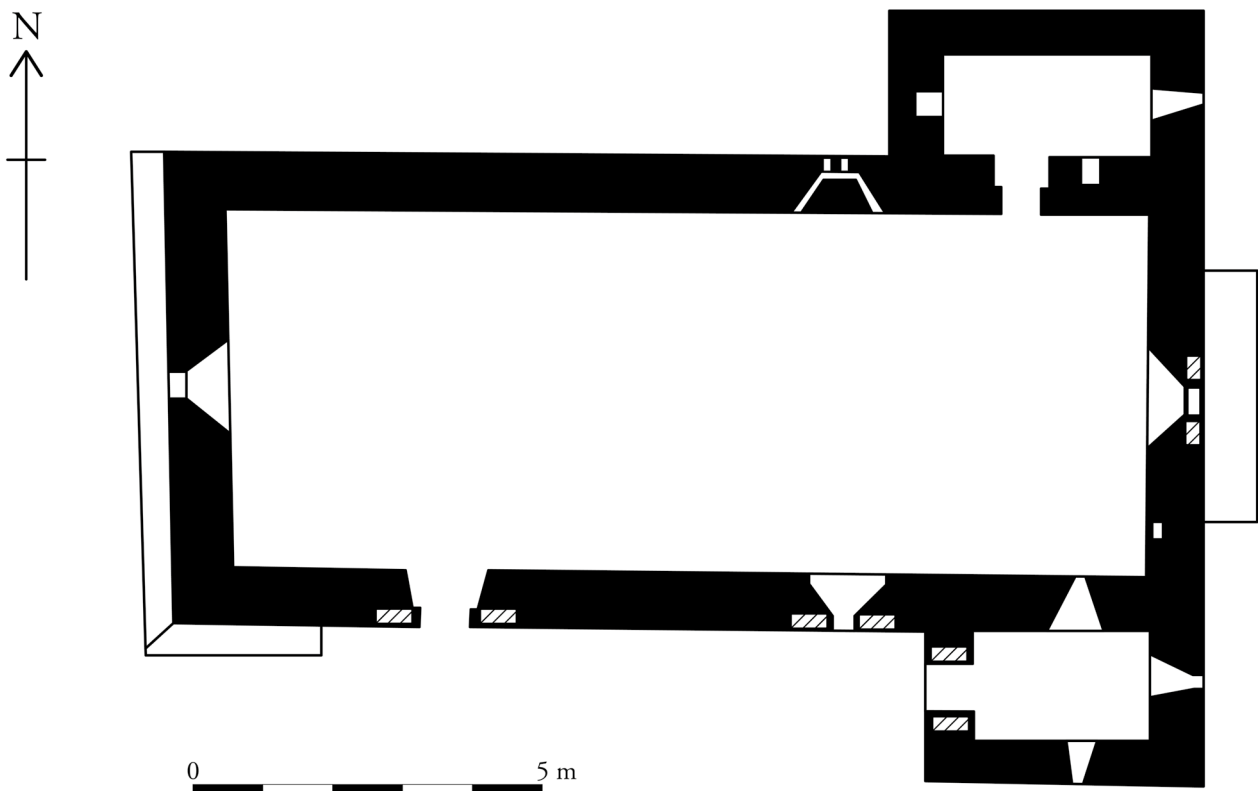
Teampull Moluach is briefly described, with a plan before restoration, in MacGibbon & Ross (1896: 99). Their description is taken from Muir (1885: 43):

Simple oblong; internally 44 feet long by 17 feet 9 inches wide, with north-east sacristy and south-east chapel both roofed with lean-to. Doorway at south-west, semi-arched; east window round head, rear arch pointed; west window smaller, round head with round rear arch. At top of east and of side walls two small square windows close together, and to west one large and round-headed of one stone. Windows in side buildings mere slits, flat in head.

It is included in their group of 'churches with pointed or late features' (ibid: 95), which date to the 13th to 16th centuries, or possibly later (ibid: 79-80).

The RCAHMS visited the site on 28 June 1921 and describe the building comprehensively (Illus 4). The description is included verbatim here:

Teampull Mholuidh, Eoropie. Standing in a field about 250 yards to the north of Eoropie village is Teampull Mholuidh, which has been roofed and restored in recent times and is in



Illus 4 Plan of Teampall Mholuaidh (redrawn by Gillian Sneddon, based on RCAHMS 1928: 2-3, fig 15)

good condition. Measuring internally 44 feet by 17 feet 8 inches it is oblong in plan, with a projecting sacristy 10 feet 1 inch by 5 feet 2 inches internally on the northeast, and a projecting chapel 9 feet by 5 feet 3 inches internally on the southeast, and lies almost due east and west. The main walls are 15 feet 10 inches high and 2 feet 9 inches in thickness, while the projecting walls are slightly thinner and are covered with lean-to roofs. The door, 2 feet 5 inches wide, is near the west end of the south wall, and is arched semicircularly and splayed internally, the rybats and front arch of sandstone having been inserted, a repair which has also been made in the north, south and east windows. The single main window in the north wall is at a higher level than the corresponding one in the south, both being splayed internally. Two small openings close together and 1 foot wide are placed near the wall head in the east end of each of the north and south walls. In the centre of each gable is a long narrow window, the western, 1 foot 3 inches wide with rybats much decayed, being arched semicircularly and splayed internally, while the eastern, 1 foot 1 inch wide with new rybats, also splayed internally, was a pointed rere-arch with moulded arris. Three putlog holes are seen about the centre of the north wall and two opposite on the south. South of the east window is a recess 10 inches wide and 11 inches deep. A door 2 feet 2 inches wide, with 1 foot 2 inch jambs, checks and square sconsons, leads to the sacristy, which has a slit window 6 inches wide, splayed inwardly in the east wall, a small lamp recess 11 inches wide by 1 foot 4½ inches deep in the south wall and another 1 foot 1 inch wide by 1 foot 2 inches deep in the west wall. The chapel is entered from outside the church by a door in the west wall, the present sconsons of which have been inserted. In the centre of the south and east walls is a slit window, 5 inches wide and splayed internally while a similar window 9 inches wide looks into the east end of the church. A splayed plinth (modern)[\*], projecting 1 foot 6 inches, runs along the west wall and turns the south-west corner and is also seen on the middle of the

east wall. The original building may date from the 14th century.

BELL. – A good bell in the church measures 1 foot 3 inches in diameter at mouth, 8 inches at crown, and is 10½ inches high. The canons are rounded and two rings circle the crown, which meets the shoulder in a third ring. The waist is rather straight and the widening soundbow comparatively small. There are two bands at the bottom near the lip, the upper being inscribed all round with the words TE DEUM LAVDAMVS 1631. L. W. in roman letters ⅝ inch high, and the lower with a very small pattern, now indistinct. The bell is said to have come from the old church of St Lennan, Stornoway.

Martin associates this ‘Church of St Malway’ with ‘an ancient custom to sacrifice to a sea-god called Shony, at Hallow-tide,’ which he describes (RCAHMS 1928: 2–3).

[\*] Excavations by Barber in 1977 subsequently revealed that the plinth along the east and west walls was, as a pre-1912 photographs suggested, an original feature of the building.

Simpson (1961: 7–8) saw Scandinavian influence in the presence of the two narrowing or side chapels at the east end of the church and was of the opinion that Teampall Mholuidh is 12th century (see references to Barber’s work below).

The OS visited the site on 16 June 1969, at NB 5192 6515, when it was found to be as described and planned by the RCAHMS.

There are 154 photographs, and excavation plans and other records, kept in the NMRS collection for Teampall Mholuidh, resulting from John Barber’s (Central Excavation Unit) work there in 1977 (Barber 1978). There are also sections and elevations of the gable and cross finial including full size details, and plans and elevations of alterations and additions to door and windows resulting from the restoration work in 1912. John Barber (1978, 1981) of CEU undertook excavations at St Moluag’s in 1977, when the current owners, the Scottish Episcopal Church, proposed to lay a drain around the church in the space between it and the surrounding wall. Four small excavation areas were opened at the corners of the building

and revealed that the church had been built onto the undisturbed clay of the area without formal foundations. The excavations also showed that the lower courses of the walls were slightly battered, and the plinth along the east and west walls was, as the pre-1912 photographs suggested, an original feature of the building. Barber suggests this may have been built by the builders of the church to spread the load of the gable walls over a wider area to prevent subsidence into the clays below. It is also a feature seen at St Clement's Church in Rodel, Harris, and at Kirkibost, Bernera (see 4.15 'Site 15. Teampall Chirceaboist; St Macrel's, Kirkibost, Great Bernera' below). Barber is of the opinion that, although the RCAHMS argue for a 14th-century date, and Simpson (1961: 7) for the 12th century, 'Whilst there is not direct evidence to support it the possibility that Teampull Mholuaidh was, like St Clement's, built in the 16th century cannot be ruled out' (Barber 1981: 532). Barber refers to the furnishings of the church as having little bearing on the date of the church building because, following the rebuilding of the church in the early 20th century, a variety of furnishings were gathered together which 'would blend with the old church,

and help to trick us into the belief that it had never fallen into disuse' (Meaden 1921: 171). A small stone cross, just 1m high and pierced through with three holes at the crossing of the arms, is wrongly attributed to the Flannan Isles. This cross was in fact brought from the island of North Rona, and is now housed in the Comunn Eachdraidh Nis (see 4.1.4 'Local information' above). The side chapel was 'so called since the restoration when a freestone altar was placed within it' (Eales-White 1991).

A postcard held in the Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, which was taken during the restoration of the church in 1912, is a record of its former state (Illus 5), and this, and other photographs were consulted by Barber (above). They depict the four walls standing almost to the gables, and it is possible from these to assess the original features of the church as opposed to those 'restored'. Miers et al (2008) state:

St. Moluag's Church (Teampall Mholuaidh) T-plan former kirk all of one build, believed to have been built under Norse patronage on an earlier Celtic site. However, the attributed



**Illus 5** Postcard of 'St Molua's temple, Eoropie, during restoration, 1912' (reproduced with kind permission of Comunn Eachdraidh Nis)

date has ranged from late 12th to early 16th century. Putlock holes suggest the earlier period; window details and a battered plinth redolent of St. Clement's, Rodel, the latter. The church takes the form of a rectangular cell, with small lean-to sacristy and chapel flanking the eastern gable; the plan bears strong similarities to the 12th century Gardar Cathedral in Greenland. Restoration in 1911–12 was sympathetic for its date, supervised by James S. Richardson (later Inspector of Ancient Monuments). He re-introduced ashlar dressings and used Orkney slates and flagstones, reroofing the bare interior with a simple, open timber roof. The pulpit, altar and font are 1911; evidence of a chancel screen is still visible. Now in the care of the Episcopal Church, St. Moluag's stands within a small walled kirkyard with a Celtic cross of revival Iona type.

#### 4.2.3 Site description

There has been much recorded and written about this well-known Category A listed upstanding building (see 4.2.2 'Desktop study' above). Teampall Mholuaidh is of prime historical and archaeological significance, being the best-preserved pre-Reformation church in Lewis, even before its restoration (as evidenced by photographs taken at the time). Architecturally and aesthetically it is a striking and picturesque building, almost unique in the Islands, matched only by St Clement's, Rodel in Harris, considered also to be MacLeod's church. The battered plinth at both churches is similar to the battered walls seen in late medieval strongholds in the Isles (R C Barrowman 2015: 415–16). This magnificent medieval building stands out in its rural environment, isolated against the treeless Ness landscape. It may once have been connected to a burial ground under the settlement at Eoropie (see C S Barrowman 2015: 241). It is now approached by a fenced and gravelled path.

The building is well maintained inside. Sandstone altars were added to the church and the chapel in the 20th century, and a stained glass panel has been hung in front of the east window in recent years. The various antiquities in the church were collected together at the time of the restoration,

and this includes the stone font at the west end of the church. Eales-White also refers to a stone pulpit that was put into the church when it was restored, and says that this was removed in 1998; also that a safe in the sacristy was broken open in 1999 and a gold chalice and paten discovered, which were given to the church at around the time of the restoration, but themselves date to the late 18th/19th centuries. The stone cross memorial outside the entrance to the church was erected in 1916.

#### 4.2.4 Local information

There is a considerable oral tradition associated with this site (see eg MacLeod 1997: 13–14; Robson 1997: 50–67), most of which was recorded by Martin Martin and later visitors to the islands, each with their own bias, and also scant historical references to the church in the post-medieval period (Stiùbhart 2015: 75–82). Perhaps the most well-known is that the church and nearby St Ronan's well were famed as a cure for lunacy (Mitchell 1862: 267–9). Teampall Mholuaidh is one of the busiest visitor attractions in Ness, due not only to its historical and aesthetic attraction, but also because it is easily accessible from the road along a footpath. It is used for monthly services, from Easter until September, and weddings, by the Scottish Episcopal Church. There have been two booklets produced on the church by local enthusiast Gerald Ponting (1982), and the former minister for the church, the Rev D J Eales-White (1991).

### 4.3 Site 3. Teampall Thòmais, Habost, Ness

#### 4.3.1 Summary

All that can be seen of *Teampall Thòmais* (St Thomas's) today is a roughly oval sunken area, around 8m by 10.5m, on the summit of a grassy knoll at the coast to the north-west of the old graveyard in Swainbost (Illus 6). Geophysical survey over the site in 2007 suggested there is a small rectangular building below the turf (Barrowman 2007: 42, figs 20–22; 2015: 185), and traditionally it is said that the stone was taken from here to build the more recent church of *Teampall Pheadair* (St Peter's) in the old graveyard nearby (see 4.4.4 'Local information' below).





**Illus 6** Teampall Thòmais, Habost, Ness, from the south-east (C S Barrowman 2015: 6.101; with kind permission of the author)

#### 4.3.2 Desktop study

NB 50728 64062

Canmore ID: 4435

The ‘Church of St Thomas in Habost’ is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27).

‘St Thomas’s in Swainbost’ is mentioned in the OSA: 270 (where St Thomas’s in Habost and St Peter’s in Swainbost are confused).

This site is identified from OS1, and in the ONB, 3A: 26 it is described thus:

Teampull Thomais. The site of an old church, on the sea coast, near the south of Amhainn Shainboist. It has been a ruin during memory of the oldest man in Lewis. Its stones were used in building Teampull Pheadair, which is adjacent to it. It is situated on the summit of a small knoll but the date of its erection is unknown.

The RCAHMS visited the site and record: ‘Teampull Thomais: there are not remains of a building’ and ‘The site of another church of the same name was pointed out by a local informant. It lies about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile north-west of Lionel crossroads and  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile due south of Eoropie (NB56SW 4)’ (RCAHMS 1928: 10).

The OS visited the site on 14 June 1969, when the site at NB 5074 6408 was found to be a disturbed area on a knoll with no definite traces of a building. The area of dunes indicated to be an alternative site for Teampull Thòmais by the RCAHMS was also visited by the OS on 14 June 1969, but they found that there was no local knowledge of a church and no trace of a building.

#### 4.3.3 Site description

There is very little to be seen at this site, which is located at NB 50728 64062 on the machair on



the Habost side of the Swainbost River. The site comprises an irregular smooth grassy mound on a natural knoll. It is very difficult to discern any walling or indications of any remains, but there are occasional stones jutting out of the turf here and there. A roughly oval sunken area can be discerned, defined by a shallow linear hollow defining a sub-rectangular area on the top of the mound. It is possible that this is robbed-out walling. The hollow measures 6.5m roughly north-east/south-west, curving around to south-east/north-west for 7m, and then north-east/south-west again for 8m, where there is a small hollow aligned perpendicular to this. The entire area of the hollow is 8m east to west by 10.5m north to south, and the hollows are around 0.5m deep at the most. This site is eroding due to its position on the summit of a knoll at the edge of the sea cliffs, which are actively eroding. Rabbit burrows were present as was wind erosion of eroding scars in the turf. Geophysical survey was completed at this site in 2007 by the Ness Archaeological Landscape Survey (Barrowman 2007: 42 figs 20–2; 2015: 56, 185, 240–1). There were ephemeral traces of a possible buried stone building, measuring 16m from NNE to SSW by 8m with a gap in the east side, although it could also be interpreted as a response to the local geology with the coincidentally regular shape outlining natural fault lines (Poller 2007: 42).

#### 4.3.4 Local information

There is very little local information on this site further to that recorded by the desktop study. It is reputed that there are burials in the vicinity of Teampall Thòmais, although there were no indications of this on the ground. There have been human remains excavated from the general area of the Swainbost machair, but none in the immediate vicinity of this site (see MacGregor 2001a; 2001b). Teampall Thòmais is reputedly the precursor to the later medieval Teampall Pheadair (St Peter's) nearby. If there was a building here it has clearly been almost completely robbed out in the past, as suggested by the local tradition that the building stones were carried away to be used to build Teampall Pheadair.

## 4.4 Site 4. Teampall Pheadair, Swainbost, Ness

### 4.4.1 Summary

The east gable-end wall and foundations of this large, late medieval church, which once served as the parish church for Ness, can be seen in the old cemetery in Swainbost, on the north side of *Abhainn Shuainboist* (Swainbost River). The church measured between 18m and 19m east to west, and 6m north to south, and the east gable end is still standing to a height of around 5m. Two later 19th-century grave enclosures have been built onto the ruined church at the east and north sides of the surviving east gable end.

Martin Martin (1703: 27) lists *Teampall Pheadair* (St Peter's) as one of the pre-Reformation chapels on the island in 1695, and it is described in the 1791–9 *Statistical Account*. It was probably restored and upgraded in 1722 when it became the meeting house for the north part of the Ness parish, and in 1795 the church was enlarged and re-roofed. It is thought that the original church was around 30 feet (9m) in length, being extended to the west to 63 feet (19m) when it was renovated in 1795 (Campbell 2004). Teampall Pheadair continued in use until a new parliamentary church was built at Cross in the late 1820s, with the creation of the new parish of Cross roughly equivalent to the old parish of Ness and having its own minister. The cemetery continued in use, with the stones from the ruined, disused church being used as grave markers, which can be seen continuing across the foundations of the ruined church. Burials continued even after 1922, when the present Habost graveyard to the north came into use.

The church and old graveyard (Illus 7) were surveyed by the LCCS in 2005 and thousands of low, rough, unmarked gravestones, organised around a system of north/south rows of closely packed headstones and footstones, were recorded. An area of infant burials was also identified, where an old stone font or stoup had been used as one of the grave markers (see Barrowman with Hooper 2006).

At the coast Finlay MacLeod records the ancient names *Cnoc an Annaid* and a *Na h-Annaidean*, between the old cemetery and shore (MacLeod 1997: 16).



**Illus 7** Teampall Pheadair and An Seann Cladh from the east

#### 4.4.2 Desktop study

NB 50861 63812

Canmore ID: 4434

The church of ‘St Peter in Shanabost’ is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27).

The Rev Donald Macdonald (OSA: 268) states:

There are two places of worship in the parish ... The one in the district of Ness, about 12 computed miles from the manse, an old Popish church, called St Peter’s, was enlarged and rebuilt last year; it is thatched with heath.

A new parliamentary church was built at Cross in the late 1820s and a parish of Cross, roughly equivalent to the old parish of Ness but now including ‘the two Galsons’, was separated from Barvas a short while later under its own minister, the Rev Finlay Cook. It is very probable that Teampall Pheadair was abandoned at this stage, although meetings addressed by a ‘reader’ may have been

held in part of the building for a little while longer. Twenty years later the Ordnance Survey found it in decay (Robson 1997: 69).

This site is identified from OS1 and in the ONB, 3A: 27–8 is described thus:

Teampull Pheadair. The ruins of a church situated on the margin of Amhainn Shaineboist. Attached to it is a graveyard which is the only one in the district of Ness. Three of its walls are still standing, but the fourth has partly fallen in. Formerly it was the parish church of Ness and became a ruin in 1829. It is said to have been built in 1756 and to have derived its name from its first pastor, but when it was first erected is unknown.

MacGibbon & Ross (1896: 83) record: ‘Remains, 63 feet long externally. In east end a flat-headed window 3 feet 5 inches high and 6 inches wide; in south wall five windows of much larger size, and apparently of comparatively modern date. North

side and west end blank.’ This description is taken from Muir (1885: 42).

The RCAHMS visited the site on 14 July 1914 and record:

Teampull Pheadair (‘Peter’), Swanibost – In a kirkyard on the right bank of the Swanibost River, about 400 yards from its mouth and  $\frac{7}{8}$  mile north-west of the township of Swanibost, are the remains of Teampull Pheadair, which has been a rectangular building orientated east by south and west by north. The greater part of the western gable is all that remains, the wall being 3 feet thick. About the height of the wall head is a scarcement of 4 or 5 inches in width, and two putlog holes appear in the gable above. In the centre is a widely splayed window 3 feet 4 inches high and 6 inches broad outside and 4 feet 8 inches high and 3 feet 4 inches wide inside (RCAHMS 1928: 6).

The OS visited the site on 13 June 1969 when the site at NB 5084 6382 was found to survive:

as a rectangular hollow oriented E–W, choked with vegetation and bounded by the greater part of the east gable (not the west, as described by the Commission), c. 5.0m of the N wall, and the footings of most of the south wall. It measures 19.0m by 6.0m externally, with walls 0.8m thick. Two late grave enclosures are built against the east gable and the surviving part of the north wall. The burial ground is still in occasional use.

The site was scheduled in 1992 and described thus: ‘The monument ... comprises the remains of a pre-Reformation church called Teampull Pheadair. The area to be scheduled is rectangular and measures a maximum of 22m E–W 10m N–S.’ Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 5359.

#### 4.4.3 Site description

This church is located at NB 50861 63812 and is as described in the Ordnance Survey visit of 1969, although the time of year of the OS visit (June) would have meant that the surveyor could not have seen the full extent of the wall footings that are visible during the winter when the vegetation

has died down. The church foundations when seen in the winter measure between 18 and 19m externally east to west, and 6m north to south. The east gable end is standing to a height of around 5m with vegetation growing on the top of the walls. It is constructed from rough stones and mortar. There are signs of erosion of the mortar in the wall and vegetation growing in the wall cracks. The window lintel is cracked and a timber prop has been put into place to prevent further collapse. There have been repairs to the wall of the northern burial lair; the eastern lair is in better condition.

The graveyard is enclosed by a wall, and is a polygonal shape, measuring overall around 105m east to west and around 88m north to south. There are thousands of low, rough, unmarked gravestones in the cemetery, organised around a system of north/south rows of closely packed apparent headstones and footstones. Many of these stones would have been taken from the then ruinous church building. It is very difficult to discern different phases of burial at this site, especially in the areas that are covered by grassy tussocks, even in winter. Each grave appears to have headstone and footstone, and smaller graves attest to infant burials. There is a group of these together, c 17m west of the west wall of the lair on the north side of the church. One of the burial stones in this group includes an incomplete, sub-rectangular stone bowl (font?) incorporated into the ground surface (see Illus 10). The inscribed memorial stones (114 in total) of the mid-19th century onwards were not recorded during the walkover as these have already been fully described, recorded and researched by Norman Smith in ‘An Seann Cladh’ (Smith 2004). There are many memorial stones to those lost in the *Iolaire* tragedy of 1919.

*Note.* HMY *Iolaire*, an Admiralty yacht, sank in the early hours of New Year’s Day 2019 as she was carrying sailors who had fought in the First World War back home to Lewis. The ship hit the rocks known as ‘the Beasts of Holm’ as she approached Stornoway on a stormy night, and although she was only a few yards offshore and within a mile of the harbour, at least 201 men out of the 283 people on board perished,

of whom 181 were islanders. It was one of the worst maritime tragedies of the 20th century, and almost unbearable for the people of Lewis to see sons, fathers and brothers who had survived four years of war drowned as they were within yards of home. Not surprisingly it was to have an effect on Lewis that can still be felt today, not least because a whole generation of young men was lost. For more information see *The Darkest Dawn: The Story of the Iolair Tragedy* by M MacDonald and D J MacLeod, Acair Books, 2018.

There are irregular, grassy raised areas within the graveyard, at the south-west corner and along the west side, the latter being revetted by a drystone wall. There are burials within both of these areas. Immediately to the east is a hollow area devoid of burials, parallel to the west wall where the sand has been eroded, or dug, away.

On the opposite (south) side of the Abhainn Shaineboist (Swainbost River) the old system of *feannagan* (lazy beds) on the slope can be clearly seen, as can the old coastal track.

#### 4.4.4 Local information

Local *seannchaidh*, Angus Gunn, of North Dell, who was an elderly man in 1870, is recorded as having said that when ‘Eaglais Pheadair’ was built, the roof for it was taken from Teampall Mholuaidh in Eoropie, and that when it was lengthened around 1795, the stones were taken from Teampall Thòmais which stood only two or three hundred yards away. Angus remembered seeing Teampall Pheadair roofed (Robson 1997: 72).

Finlay MacLeod (1997: 15) records that:

Between it and the shore is a place called ‘Na h-Annaidean’ and ‘Cnoc an Annaid’. ‘Annaid’ is an ancient name for a church location. This name also is found in Shader, close to St. Peter’s Chapel, and on Killegray in the Sound of Harris, and in Eilean Garbh on the Shiantis.

The ancient Gaelic *Annaid* name is also discussed by the RCAHMS in relation to the Shiant Isles and Shader in Lewis, but the name here in Swainbost is not mentioned (RCAHMS 1928: xiv).

The Comunn Eachdraidh Nis (Ness Historical Society) and the Habost cemetery committee have published a booklet, *An Seann Chladh*, which

records the memorial stones in the Swainbost old cemetery. In this book it is estimated that the graveyard accommodates upwards of 4,000 graves, out of which only 114 bear inscribed memorials, all other markers being of rough stone (Campbell 2004; Comunn Eachdraidh Nis 2004). The earliest decipherable tombstone (of Alexander Murray) is dated to 1857. Many of the burials date to after the beginning of the 19th century, when the church went out of use, as gravestones can be seen set into and over the footings of the ruined church walls. The rough stones used to mark these 19th-century graves would have been taken from the ruined church building.

The site of Teampall Pheadair is of high archaeological and historical significance as one of the original two parish churches in Ness (Barvas being the other one), which were important in the church organisation on the island during and after the Reformation (see 4.4.2 ‘Desktop study’ above). It is also very significant historically, not least because it contains memories of and connections with people and events still remembered by the people of Ness. There are gravestones here of individuals still renowned in the community, and also of those who tragically lost their lives in the *Iolair* disaster on New Year’s Day 1919.

#### 4.4.5 Topographic survey

The survey of Teampall Pheadair and An Seann Cladh is shown in Illus 8, with the detail of the Teampall wall footings shown in Illus 9. Twenty-seven burial enclosures, or lairs, were recorded, as were the 114 inscribed gravestones, which were distinguished between plain inscribed gravestones, square-section gravestones, needle-shaped monuments, gravestones with urn, grave slabs and a wooden grave marker. It is thought that between two and three thousand small, rough, unmarked gravestones are present in the cemetery, in alignments reflecting possibly footstones as well as headstones. The number of stones far exceeded the time available for survey, and so only the alignments of stones were recorded. By the end of the survey over half of the alignments had been recorded, covering the east side of the graveyard, where the density of stones is thickest.





Illus 8 Topographic survey of Teampall Pheadair and An Seann Cladh, Swainbost, Ness, 2005

## Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites Survey 2005



**Illus 9** Detail of footings of Teampall Pheadair from topographic survey

A revetted bank standing between 0.85 and 1m high and defining two sides of a rectangular area 12m × 5m adjacent to the wall on the north-west side of the graveyard was also recorded, in addition to a further raised, roughly triangular area or spur in the south-west corner, 30m × 17m maximum extent, raised up to 1m from the surrounding graveyard. The area 50m × 25m immediately between these two features on the south-west side of the graveyard, adjacent to the western gateway into the graveyard, is relatively level with very little invasive vegetation other than grass, and it contains fewer gravestones. It has the appearance of having been scoured or hollowed out, and if this is the case, this process may have been connected to the formation of the raised areas. The low area was particularly devoid of gravestones at the western gateway into the cladh. The raised spur in the south-west corner is densely packed with both burial lairs and marked and unmarked gravestones. From the inscriptions in this area it is possible that it was reserved for those families of particular standing in the community (see memorial stones 58 to 65 in *An Seann Cladh*).

The inscriptions in the rectangular raised area to the north and mentioned above give less of a clue as to the reason for its revetment.

Teampall Pheadair, as described in sources cited in 4.4.2 ‘Desktop study’ above, is located at the south side of the cemetery, and is illustrated in detail in Illus 9. A density of inscribed stones was noted inside the ruined building, and also of unmarked stones, that were set over the tops of the ruined walls and clearly post-date them. A broken sub-rectangular small stone trough was also noted during the walkover survey in 2004, and plotted on the topographic survey (Illus 9 & 10). It had been incorporated into what appeared to be an area of infant burials (designated as such by the small size indicated by headstones and footstones), although since 2005 when the cemetery was first surveyed, this area has become obscured by vegetation. The ruined church walls on the west and north sides were visible as uneven stone banks just below the topsoil and these are completely obscured by vegetation for most of the year. The ruined wall on the south side is more defined – the east and part of the north walls are still standing.





**Illus 10** Photo of stone trough in An Seann Cladh, reused as a grave marker (foreground). The cultivation ridges and banks of the old settlement can be seen on the hillside opposite the graveyard



#### 4.5 Site 5. Teampall Chliamain, North Dell, Ness (Unlocated site)

##### 4.5.1 Summary

The site of *Teampall Chliamain* (St Clement's) is now unlocated and only its rough whereabouts is known in local tradition, which holds that the chapel-site was in the area of old settlement in North Dell.

##### 4.5.2 Desktop study

NB 49 62?

Canmore ID: 4381

The church of 'St Clemen in Dell' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27).

The OSA: 270 lists 'St Clement's in North Dell'.

This site is not identified on the OS1, and in the ONB, Book 3C only, 'Dun Cleamon' is described.

The RCAHMS include Dun Cleamon as a site in 14 July 1914 (RCAHMS 1928: 10) but there are no notes, so presumably it remained unlocated. Captain Thomas in 1890 records 'Dun Cleamon, Dail o Thuath: its site is now ploughed over.' A polished stone hammer was found near the dun (Thomas 1890: 373).

The OS visited the area on 15 June 1969 but 'No further information' is recorded.

##### 4.5.3 Local information

Robson points out that Captain F W L Thomas (above) was drawing on information given to him by the Rev Malcolm MacPhail (see Robson 1997: 87). Robson suggests that the mention of ploughing may suggest that the site of the Dun was in a field of Dell Farm, somewhere between Baile Glom and the Dell River, where there was also a well (*Tobar Chliamain* at NB 490624; see F MacLeod 2000: 25). Robson also records a tradition that St Clement's was situated on rising ground at Arnistean, in North Dell, above the shore.

In the ONB, 2D: 11, *Buaille na Crois* is described nearby as 'A small arable hill of a circular form, at the village of Dail O Dheas. There are an enclosure and fence on it.'

The exact location of Teampall Chliamain remains unknown although its general whereabouts is known as being in North Dell. The location has

also been researched by the Ness Archaeological Landscape Survey, which recorded at least two locations to the north of Dell Beach (see C S Barrowman 2015: 183, 242).

#### 4.6 Site 6. Teampall a' Chrò' Naomh, South Galson

##### 4.6.1 Summary

*Teampall a' Chrò' Naomh* (Chapel of the Holy Cross) is situated in South Galson old cemetery (Illus 11). William Daniell made a painting of this chapel in 1819 that shows the building intact to the gable, but without a roof. This small, single-chamber building is now only partially standing, the gables having collapsed, and is inundated with windblown sand. The building measures around 7m long, has a doorway on the south side, and three windows in the north-east, south-east and east sides. It is set into a large sub-circular mound in the graveyard, and there may be the remains of an enclosure wall on its north and west sides.

Burials continued into the mound and over the windblown sand in the ruined chapel after it had gone out of use. There are rough unmarked gravestones across the old part of the cemetery, but these are almost impossible to make out due to the thick tussocky grass across the area. Several rows of stones in lines aligned north/south can be seen, visible below the turf to the east of the chapel, inserted into the top of the mound and down the sides. At the south side of the mound, at the bottom, are two later lairs, probably built of stone from the ruined chapel building.

The chapel lies just inland from an area of over 150m of coastline from which Iron Age, Norse and medieval archaeological remains have been eroding for over a century (see Neighbour et al 2000; forthcoming). So far 14 long cist burials have been excavated or recorded from the eroding coastline, one of which was accompanied by a penannular brooch and bone pin (Neighbour et al 2000: 562–7). The sandy cliff line at the site and immediately to the north is actively eroding, many finds have been recorded from there since the 19th century, and buildings can be seen eroding from the cliff section.





**Illus 11** Teampall a' Chrò Naomh, South Galson, from the south-west

#### 4.6.2 Desktop study

NB 43282 59301

Canmore ID: 4346

The 'Holy Cross Church in Galan' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27).

The OSA: 270 lists 'Holy Cross at South Galson'.

In 1815, during an exceptionally good summer, the artist William Daniell visited Lewis as part of his tour of Britain undertaken over several trips between 1813 and 1823. His extensive journey resulted in the publication six years later of 139 aquatint prints (Daniell 1820 [2006]) including one of Teampall a' Chrò' Naomh (Illus 12; Daniell 1820 [2006]: 205, pl 75), and also St Mary's chapel on Eilean an Tighe in the Shiant Isles, which he visited in 1818 (see 4.32 'Site 32. Eilean an Tighe (Eilean Taighe), Shiants' below). These prints are useful as they depict, at a time before the first OS survey, the extent and condition of these chapels, 100 years after Martin Martin's listing.

This site is identified from OS1, and in the ONB, 5A: 7 it is described thus:

Teampull na Crò Naomh. The ruin of a church on the sea shore, which is about 45 links long, by 30 links wide. Its walls are about 5 feet high. Tradition says nothing about it beyond that it was much resorted to by Catholics in former times. So much so that they came from all the adjacent islands on a pilgrimage to it. It was built of stone and mortar, with a loft. Attached to it is a graveyard in which are two vaults. Signifies Holy Fold Temple.

MacGibbon & Ross (1896: 83) describe it as 'Church, 18 feet 7 inches long by 12 feet wide. Windows flat-headed, one in east end and one in east end of both side walls; west end blank. Doorway, broken, is south-west.' Their description is from Muir (1885: 42).





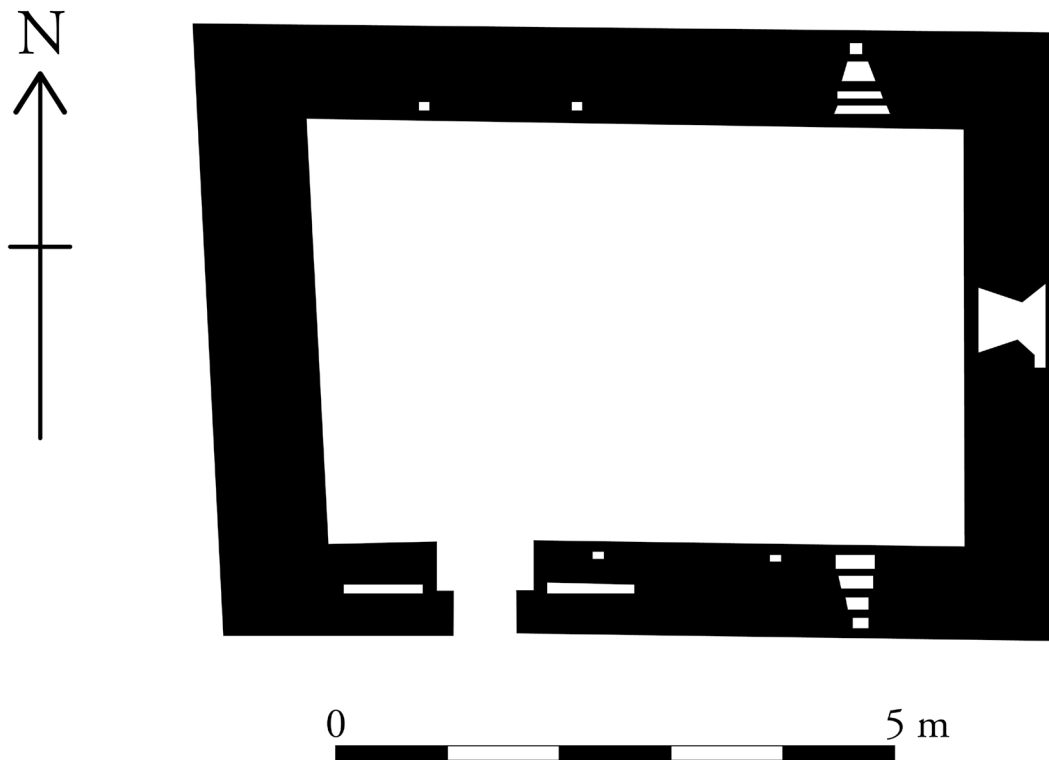
**Illus 12** William Daniell's engraving (1819) of 'Remains of a Temple at Galston, Isle of Lewis' (reproduced by Fiona Rennie from an original print by kind permission of Agnes Rennie, South Galson)

The RCAHMS visited the site on 28 June 1921 and record (Illus 13):

Teampull nan Crò' Naomh – Near the seashore and about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile west-north-west of Galson farmhouse, Teampull nan Crò' Naomh is situated within an old graveyard. It is oblong on plan and orientated. The two gables are destroyed, and the earth outside the church reaches almost to the wall heads, which are roughly 5 feet high on the inside. The church, measuring 19 feet by 12 feet 1 inch internally, with walls averaging 2 feet 6 inches in thickness, is entered by a door 2 feet 5 inches in width in the west of the south wall. Thirteen inches from the outside face this opening has  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch checks, with a bar-hole on either side and squared sconsons. The building has been lit by three windows at the east end, one window, 6 inches wide

and splayed inwardly with stepped sills, being placed in each of the side walls and the other in the centre of the east gable; the last appears to have been 1 foot 6 inches wide. In the north wall are three (?putlog) holes 7 inches wide, and three are also seen in the south wall, but only two are in a corresponding position to the former. As it stands the name would appear to mean Church of the Holy Blood, but Martin refers to the building as 'Holy Cross Church in Galan' (RCAHMS 1928: 2).

The OS visited the site on 21 June 1956 and recorded 'Part of the outer walls remains, in a crumbling condition', and again on 16 June 1969 when the site at NB 4329 5931 was found 'as described and planned by the Commission. The graveyard is still in use and the name is still known locally.'



**Illus 13** Plan of Teampall a' Chrò Naomh, South Galson (based on RCAHMS 1928: 2, fig 21)

The site was scheduled in 1977 and described as 'consisting of Teampull nan Cro' Naomh, a chapel 410 metres or thereby West North West of Galson ...'. Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 3945.

There is a Late Iron Age/Norse cemetery and multi-period settlement site eroding out of the sandy cliffs at South Galson, above a raised beach at the coastline north and west of the chapel-site and cemetery (Illus 14; see also Baden-Powell & Elton 1937). The site consists of a 40m-long cliff section, up to 5m high, from which long cists, partial structures and middens have been excavated as they are exposed in the eroding slope face. Geophysical survey undertaken inland adjacent to the eroding face has also revealed extensive settlement remains and possible structures including large Iron Age roundhouses, polycellular buildings dating to the early to mid 1st millennium AD, and rectangular buildings with curved corners thought by the surveyors to be Norse and/or medieval (Neighbour & Church 2001; Neighbour et al forthcoming; see discussion in C S Barrowman 2015: 235). There

have been several stray finds and excavations at the site since the 1920s to the late 1990s (Edwards 1924; Neighbour et al 2000; Neighbour et al forthcoming), including the piecemeal excavation of the long cist burials as they have been eroded from the site, one of which was accompanied by grave goods (a penannular brooch and bone pin – see Neighbour et al 2000: 562–7; see also Stevenson 1954; Ponting 1989). A small, circular enamelled harness-mount, similar to examples found in 8th/9th-century Viking Age contexts in Norway and the Isle of Man, was also found in the eroding coastline at the site (Graham-Campbell 1987) and is now on display at the Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway.

#### 4.6.3 Site description

This chapel is located at NB 43282 59301 and is still as described by the Royal Commission except that the north-west corner of the building has collapsed a long time ago and is covered by grass now. The walls are up to 0.8m thick. The window in the north wall is positioned 0.6m west of the north-east corner,





**Illus 14** Cliff line north of the graveyard at South Galson showing eroding structures

and is 0.25m wide externally, splayed out to 0.6m wide internally. It is about 0.7m tall. The bottom has become blocked by collapse. There is a deep infill of sand and vegetation in the interior of the building.

The chapel building is set into a large sub-circular mound in the graveyard. Overall the mound measures 35m north to south and 29m east to west, although on the top of the mound there is a slight hollow, surrounding the chapel building. The west side of this hollow is defined by a stony bank, first apparent 4.8m west of the north-west corner of the chapel, and curving around to the south at 4m beyond the south-west corner. The hollow continues, although the stones can no longer be traced, up to the south-east corner of the chapel. This may be the remains of an earlier enclosure wall, as the depth of windblown sand that has accumulated in the cemetery is considerable. The sand clearly covered the chapel to the height of the top of the mound prior to the insertion of many of the burials on the mound (see below) and was up to the wall heads of the chapel over a hundred years ago (see 4.6.2 'Desktop study' above).

There are rough unmarked gravestones across the old part of the cemetery, but these are almost impossible to make out due to the thick tussocky grass that covers the area. Several rows of stones in lines aligned north/south are just visible below the turf to the east of the chapel, inserted into the top of the mound and down the sides. Each east/west burial probably had a headstone and a footstone, as seen in other old cemeteries, such as the Ness cemetery at Teampall Pheadair, Swainbost. At the south side of the mound, at the bottom, are two later lairs (the two burial vaults described by the OS name book in the mid-19th century), and it is very likely that these have been built from stones from the ruinous chapel. One of these is used for storage of equipment for the upkeep of the modern part of the cemetery, to the east. To the south again of these lairs, the lines of rough unmarked stones are clearly visible, extending to the edge of the mound to the west. The modern gravestones begin to appear to the east of the burial lairs, apart from one stone that is set into the chapel mound on the north-west side (see Comunn Eachdraidh Nis 2014). The entire

cemetery is fenced off from the grazings and the fence is in good order. The modern part of the cemetery is on level ground and is well maintained.

The research potential of this site would be high, but cannot be realised due to the density of the burials into the chapel mound, and the thick vegetation that precludes any survey work. Archaeological excavation is out of the question and plane table survey of the chapel is unnecessary, as the Royal Commission has already recorded it. It is, however, undoubtedly a very important archaeological site, as the chapel is clearly on top of a large mound of material, in an area of significant Iron Age and later Norse activity.

There is confusion as to the origin of the name of this chapel. Various names have been recorded: *Teampall nan Cro' Naomh*, *Teampall na Crò Naomh* and *Teampall a' Chrò' Naomh*, it is not known whether *Crò'* is the shortened form of *crois* (cross), or is *crò* (enclosure), or is from the usage seen in *a Chriosda Chrò-naoimhe* for instance (O Christ of the Holy Blood), probably relating to Carmichael's use of the word to mean 'heart' (see Dwelly 1994).

## 4.7 Site 7. Teampall Bhrìghid, Melbost Borve

### 4.7.1 Summary

The grassy footings of *Teampall Bhrìghid* (St Bridget's) are on croft land but visible from the road at the coast at Melbost Borve (Illus 15). All that remains of the site now is a grassy mound, stones having been taken from the site for building in the past. However, the layout of the building can just be discerned, and it can be seen that it has two chambers, a nave and chancel, and is aligned ENE/WNW and 10–11m long and around 5m wide, externally. The building is situated on a roughly square, enclosing platform, around 15m × 16m, with indications of some small, unmarked gravestones and larger fallen stones scattered across it just under the turf. The platform is situated at the top of the slope above *Allt Grunnadal* (Grundale Burn) to the south. Encircling the platform there is an outer low turf bank, enclosing an area roughly 22m × 31m.

There is a tradition that there are burials within the ruined building, and stones can be seen



Illus 15 Teampall Bhrìghid, Melbost Borve, from the north-west



protruding through the turf that may be small burial stones. Local tradition holds that 'Swain, a Norse king' was buried with his crown at Teampall Bhrighid (MacLeod 1997: 16). It is said that the stones from the ruined chapel were used to build a large field wall to the south-west of the site, which divides Galson Farm lands from the Melbost crofts. *Tobar Bhrighde* (St Bridget's well), now concreted around, is situated to the west of the site (F MacLeod 2000: 27).

#### 4.7.2 Desktop study

NB 40989 57313

Canmore ID: 4361

The 'Church of St Brigit in Barove' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27).

The OSA: 270 lists 'St Bridget in Borve'.

This site is identified from OS1, and in the ONB, 5A: 22 it is described thus:

Teampull Bhrighid. The ruins of a church situated on the sea shore at the north east end of Eire. It has the appearance of the ruins of a hut and resembles a pile of stones more than the remains of a church. About a hundred years ago the interior was used as a burying ground but there are no traditional stories regarding either church or grave yard. It would appear that the church was dedicated to St Bridget.

The RCAHMS visited the site on 11 July 1914 and record:

Teampull Bhrighid ('Bride'), Mid Borve – On the right bank of the Grundale Burn, within some 200 yards of its mouth on the shore of Eire, about 5/8 mile north-west of Mid Borve, is the ruin of Teampull Bhrighid. It is now represented by an irregular grassy mound in an old burying ground, stones having been removed since 1888, when the land was given to crofters. It lies nearly east-north-east and west-north-west (RCAHMS 1928: 2).

The OS visited the site on 18 June 1969 when the site was found 'as described and planned by the RCAHMS. Many gravestones are visible in the disused graveyard, and the footings of the east half of the enclosing wall survive. Name not verified.'

#### 4.7.3 Site description

This chapel is located at NB 40989 57313. Low grassy banks are all that remain of the walling, although the layout of the building can still just be discerned, and it is aligned as described by the Royal Commission in 1914, ENE/WNW. There is clearly a lot of stone tumble obscuring the form of the building. However, it is around 9m wide and 13.5m long, externally, and appears to be divided into two separate parts by a small bank closer to the east end, that divides a larger central area of 5m × 5.5m internally, from a small area at the east end of 2m × 2m internally. The small dividing bank may be a later curved wall set into the earlier building, perhaps reuse of the old building for a shelter, but this is pure conjecture without excavation.

The building is situated on a roughly square, enclosing platform, around 15m × 16m. There are indications of some small unmarked gravestones and larger fallen stones (also unmarked) scattered across it just under the turf, although not the 'many gravestones in the disused graveyard' described in 1969 by the OS (see above), suggesting that some have been removed or have become overgrown with grass. The platform is situated at the top of the slope above Allt Grunddal to the south. The edges of the platform dip down at all sides, except on the north-west side, where a modern drain runs along the site, to the adjacent field and *Tobar Bhrighde* (St Bridget's well; F MacLeod 2000: 27). Encircling the inner platform there is an outer enclosing low turf bank, enclosing an area roughly 22m north-west to south-east by 31m north-east to south-west, which is cut by the modern drain to the west, and slopes down to the river at the bottom of the slope to the east (Allt Grunddal).

#### 4.7.4 Local information

After the croft improvements of the 1970s the area all around the site was re-seeded, but the enclosure and chapel were left untouched on account of there being burials there. This was when the modern drain was added to the west of the site.

The whole area of Melbost Borve was divided into crofts in 1888, having been divided from the lands of Galson Farm, and a large field wall was built to the west of the site, dividing the Galson Farm



**Illus 16** Plane table survey of Teampall Bhrighid, Melbost Borve, 2005

lands from the crofts of Melbost. The stone from the ruined chapel walls is said to have been used to build this wall.

The site is still popular with visitors, who come especially to visit the healing well, Tobar Bhrìghde, in the adjacent field and collect water.

#### 4.7.5 Topographic survey

In February 2005 the area of the outer enclosure, inner enclosure and ruined chapel were surveyed at 1:100 with a plane table during the Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites Survey (Illus 16; see Barrowman 2005: 23–6; fig 5).

### 4.8 Site 8. Teampall Pheadair, Shader

#### 4.8.1 Summary

The low wall footings and grassy mound are all that remain of *Teampall Pheadair* (St Peter’s) in Shader (Illus 17). The chapel-site is located at the coast on the north side of Mol Eire, north-west of Upper Shader, in the area of old coastal settlement. According to the Ordnance Survey Name Books

of 1853, the gable ends were standing not forty years before that (ie at the beginning of the 19th century), and the last burials around the building were a hundred years prior (ie in the mid-18th century). The footings of the walls can be clearly made out under the turf, and show that the church was two-chambered, aligned roughly east/west, with a small chancel and nave, the whole building measuring up to 11m east to west and 5m north to south. A small semi-circular recess in the outer face of the north nave wall may have held a stoup. The area around the building is enclosed by a series of low turf and stone enclosure walls that define a triangular area around the site, which is in turn divided into three smaller parts. There was once a small graveyard around the chapel and there are seven possible grave markers visible protruding through the turf north and east of the building.

To the north of the chapel there is another, more upstanding, ruinous building. This is a corn-drying kiln, built onto the north wall of the small rectangular enclosure around the chapel. The Royal Commission in 1914 recorded how part of

the 'footings of the chapel walls' had been laid bare by 'agricultural operations', and the kiln is clearly more recent than the chapel building; indeed, the stones from the ruinous chapel were probably used to build it.

The area to the south of Teampall Pheadair contains several low, grassy banks and mounds, concentrated along the slope towards the cliff edge. These are the remains of eroded structures and banks, and stretches of walling and finds of bone and pottery are regularly observed eroding from the top of the cliff to the south of the chapel-site. There are several *annaid* place names recorded nearby in local tradition, as well as nearby wells, *Tobar Anndrais* (St Andrew's well) and *Tobar Mhoire* (St Mary's well) (MacLeod 1997: 17; 2000: 28–9; Robson 1997: 80–4). The geophysical survey undertaken in 2008 confirmed that there is an earlier structure below and to the south of the chapel, and finds of pottery from the eroding cliff suggest that there was Iron Age settlement here (Barrowman 2008: 17–24).

#### 4.8.2 Desktop study

NB 3792 5499

Canmore ID: 4265

The 'Church of St Peter in Shiadir' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27). He also says that 'St Andrew's well in the village Shadar, is by the vulgar natives made to test to know if a sick person will die of the distemper he labours under.'

The OSA: 270 lists 'St Peter's in Lower Strather'.

This site is identified from OS1, and in the ONB, 5C: 10 it is described thus:

Teampull Pheadair. An old burying place with the site of a place of worship. It is upwards of a hundred years since anyone was buried here, except a sailor who was cast ashore about 40 years ago. The site of the church is pointed out by the natives who reside in the locality. It is not more than forty years since the gable ends were standing. There are no traditionary stories regarding either church or grave yard: nor can any further information be collected



Illus 17 Teampall Pheadair, Shader, from the east. The corn-drying kiln is on the right, Teampall Pheadair on the left



respecting its antiquity. It would appear from the word Pheadair, Peter, that the church was dedicated to Saint Peter.

The RCAHMS visited the site on 11 July 1914 and record:

Teampull Pheadair ('Peter'), Shader – On the shore at the northern extremity of Mol Eire, some  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile north-west of Upper Shader, and about 15 yards from the edge of the rock Craig Gille Phadruig, on which it is built, are the grass-covered foundations of Teampull Pheadair, orientated east-south-east and west-north-west, and measuring about  $33\frac{1}{2}$  feet in length outside. It seems to have consisted of a nave and chancel, as 22 feet from the western end, where the northern wall has been laid bare by agricultural operations, there is a return of 2 feet 2 inches in the wall. The nave being about 16 feet 8 inches wide outside, the chancel would be about 12 feet 4 inches wide externally and about  $11\frac{1}{2}$  feet in length. Where laid bare the northern wall remains from 1 foot 3 inches to 2 feet 3 inches in height (RCAHMS 1928: 1–2).

The OS visited the site on 18 June 1969, when the site was identified as 'The turf-covered footing of Teampull Pheadair, in which can be seen stretches of the outer wall face, indicate a nave and chancel oriented E–W. Externally the nave measures 7.8m E–W by 5m transversely, and the chancel 2.6m E–W by 3.4m transversely. No internal features survive. The name is still known locally.'

The RCAHMS (NB35 NE3) also note the occurrence of an *annaid* place name in the vicinity of Teampull Pheadair in Shader:

Na h'Annaidean, Shader – The name Na h'Annaidean ('the Annait's') is applied to a stretch of green pasture extending inland about 200 yards from the shore, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile north-east of Teampull Pheadair. Near the top of the grassy stretch is Tobar Aindreas (St Andrew's well), now filled up. This well, mentioned by Martin, was quite defined 20 years ago (RCAHMS 1928: 10).

Ponting et al (1977) record eroding midden and a stone structure (NB35 SE11) at the shore at the chapel-site.

The OS visited the eroding midden under the church site on 20 June 1969 and noted:

In the cliff face at NB 3793 5497, there is a layer of midden material about 1 foot below the present ground level, containing shells, animal bones and pottery sherds, the latter classified by Stevenson [RBK Stevenson, NMAS] as Iron Age 'bead-rim' ware. There are traces of rough walling protruding through the cliff indicative of a habitation site.

The monument was scheduled in 1992 and:

comprises a small medieval settlement, including the remains of a chapel dedicated to St Peter, underlain by Iron Age midden deposits. The area to be scheduled is irregular and measures a maximum of 120m NW–SE by 50m transversely to include the chapel, prehistoric midden and medieval settlement (Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 5341).

#### 4.8.3 Local information

A topographic survey and geophysical survey was undertaken of the whole scheduled area, within the enclosure around the chapel building, including the enclosure walls, the corn-drying kiln and the eroding cliff edges, by the Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites Survey in 2007 (Barrowman 2008: 9–13, 17–24; figs 2–5; pls 1–3, 10–13). Prior to the field surveys, further walkover survey was undertaken and local residents were also visited; the author is very grateful for the local traditions and memories they shared (in particular Mr Calum MacDonald, Lower Shader).

There is a local tradition that there was once an earlier church on the site, and Mr MacDonald and Dr Finlay MacLeod both referred to the *Annaid* place name to the north of Teampall Pheadair (see MacLeod 1997: 17). MacLeod records *Rubha na h-Annaid* 100 yards east of the chapel-site, and *Clachan na h-Annaid*, 100 yards south of Rubha na h-Annaid at St Andrew's well. Mr MacDonald referred to *Annaid a-muigh*, and *Annaid a-staigh* as a way of referring to the area out towards the shore north of Teampall Pheadair (pers comm). In

addition to this there is a local tradition of *Cill a' fhrangais*, and *Creag a' fhrangais* for a circular rocky formation out in the bay at Mol Eire to the south. The chapel itself was also known locally as *Eaglais Phadraig*, and it is generally thought that Teampall Pheadair is a later coinage, and although there is no documentation to back this up, it is a very interesting observation in reference to other sites. MacLeod records *Creag Gille Phadraig* beside the chapel-site, and *Clach an t-Sagairt* on the shore, now eroded away (MacLeod 1997: 17). There are also local traditions that all the lime for the chapel building was made on the site, and that there was a smithy built onto the enclosure.

Finlay MacLeod records that Tobar Anndrais (St Andrew's well), mentioned by Martin Martin, and one of the most important wells in the Western Isles, can be found east of the chapel-site, and Tobar Mhoire (St Mary's well) slightly to the south of it (MacLeod 1997: 17).

It was generally observed by all local visitors to the site that a considerable amount of coastal

erosion had taken place at the site within living memory, and from stories passed down from parents and grandparents. Up to 30m is said to have been eroded away from the north side of Mol Eire where Teampall Pheadair is situated, and on the ground the appearance of the flat rocky foreshore does suggest that there has been a considerable loss of land to the sea on this side of the bay. There are memories of cattle grazing on this area, which is now under water at all but low tide, and also of there being burials here that have since eroded away. Human remains, pottery, bone and carbonised material have also been picked up eroding out of the cliff section in this area on the north side of Mol Eire, which is recorded in the SMR as '*Rubha Bhlanisgaidh*', and pottery sherds found during the OS visit to the site in 1969 were identified by R B K Stevenson as Iron Age (see Barrowman 2005: 27). Pottery, burnt bone and shell midden were all noted eroding from the cliff section between the east part of the survey area and a small geo at the cliff just to the north of the chapel building. Walling is present in the cliff



**Illus 18** West part of structure eroding in the cliff at Rubha Bhlanisgaidh, from the south, below Teampall Pheadair



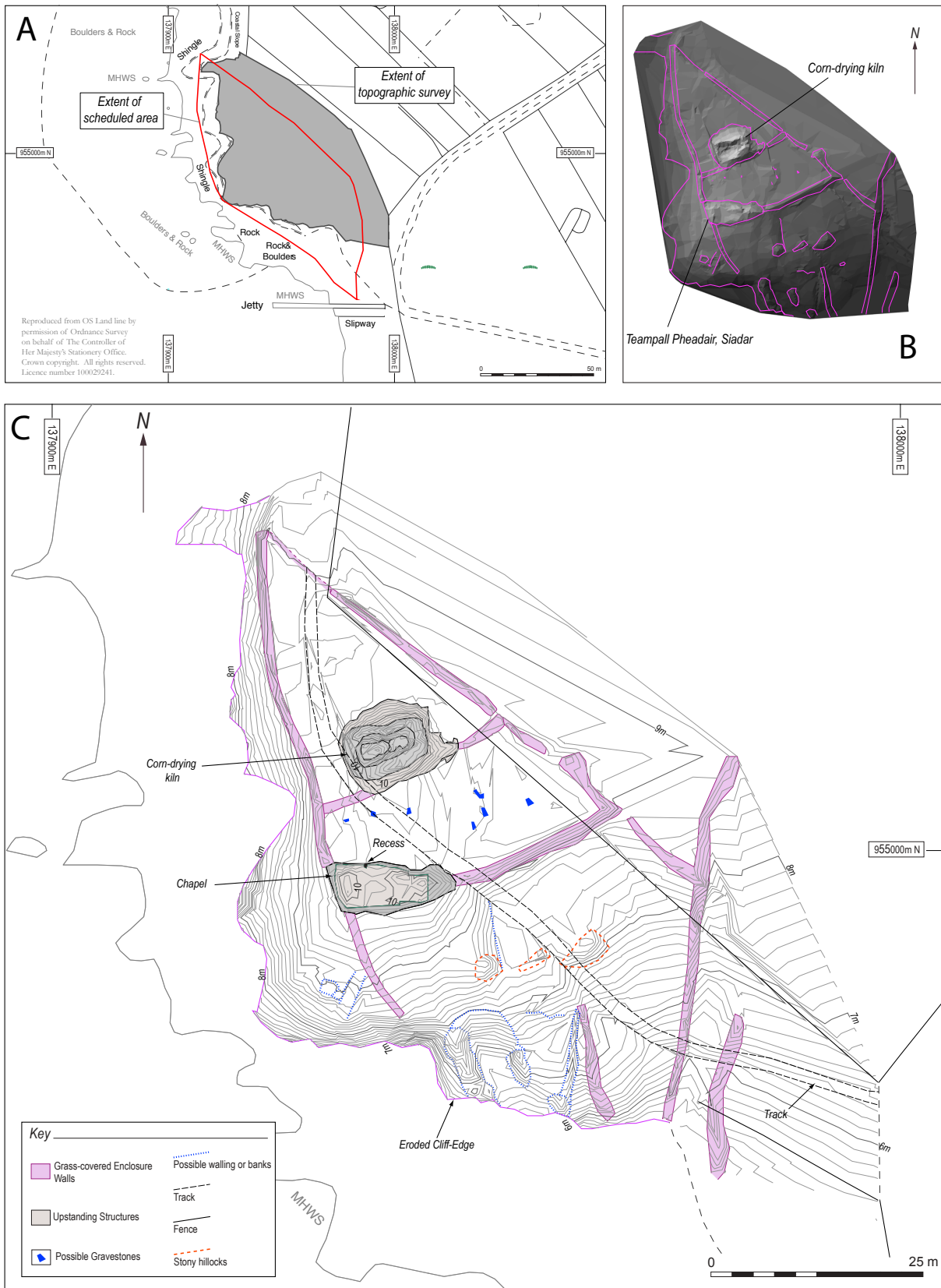


**Illus 19** East part of structure eroding in the cliff at Rubha Bhlanisgaidh, from the south, below Teampall Pheadair



**Illus 20** Eroding geo, north of Teampall Pheadair, from the west





Illus 21 Topographic survey of Teampall Pheadair, Upper Shader, 2008: a Location of site, b Hillshade view of site, c Topographic survey plan

section at several places, and corresponds to areas of low eroded structures and walling at the south part of the survey area (Illus 18 & 19). A shallow scoop observed at the cliff edge here was also pointed out during the walkover as being all that remained of a large cairn of stones, *Carn Mor*, which had once existed at the site, and which was known locally as a burial cairn. The stones were removed last century for road or bridge building (pers comm Mr Calum MacDonald). At the geo at the north edge of the site the sea is now eroding in behind the cliff section (Illus 20), and further pressure on the site in the near future is inevitable.

#### 4.8.4 Topographic survey 2008 (Illus 21) with Charlotte Francoz

The area around Teampall Pheadair is enclosed by a series of low turf and stone enclosure walls that define a triangular area around the site, which is in turn divided into three smaller parts (Illus 21). The chapel itself is situated in the south-west corner of a small rectangular enclosure, around 28m × 13m, in the centre of the triangular area (Illus 22). The

interior faces of the building walls are obscured by slump, and the chapel has the appearance of a low, grassy, wedge-shaped mound, with the turf-covered wall aligned east/west. The outer faces of the north and south walls are visible, and the stones forming the south-west and north-west corners of the nave are traceable through the turf, where the nave meets the chancel. The building measures externally up to 11m east to west, and 5m north to south, with the nave 8m long, and the narrower chancel 3m east to west and 3m north to south. There is a small, semi-circular recess towards the east end of the outer face of the north nave wall, which may be a recess in the wall, but due to the collapse and slump of the walls here it is difficult to see on the ground where the doorway would have been at Teampall Pheadair. The east wall of the chancel is also difficult to define as it has slumped into the adjoining south enclosure wall. North and east of the chapel building, seven possible gravestones were recorded (eg Illus 23a & b), although the size and position of the four examples on the east side of the track make it unlikely that these are grave markers, as they are all large stones and do not appear to be very deeply buried.



**Illus 22** Teampall Pheadair, Shader, from the east





Illus 23a & b Possible grave markers, from above

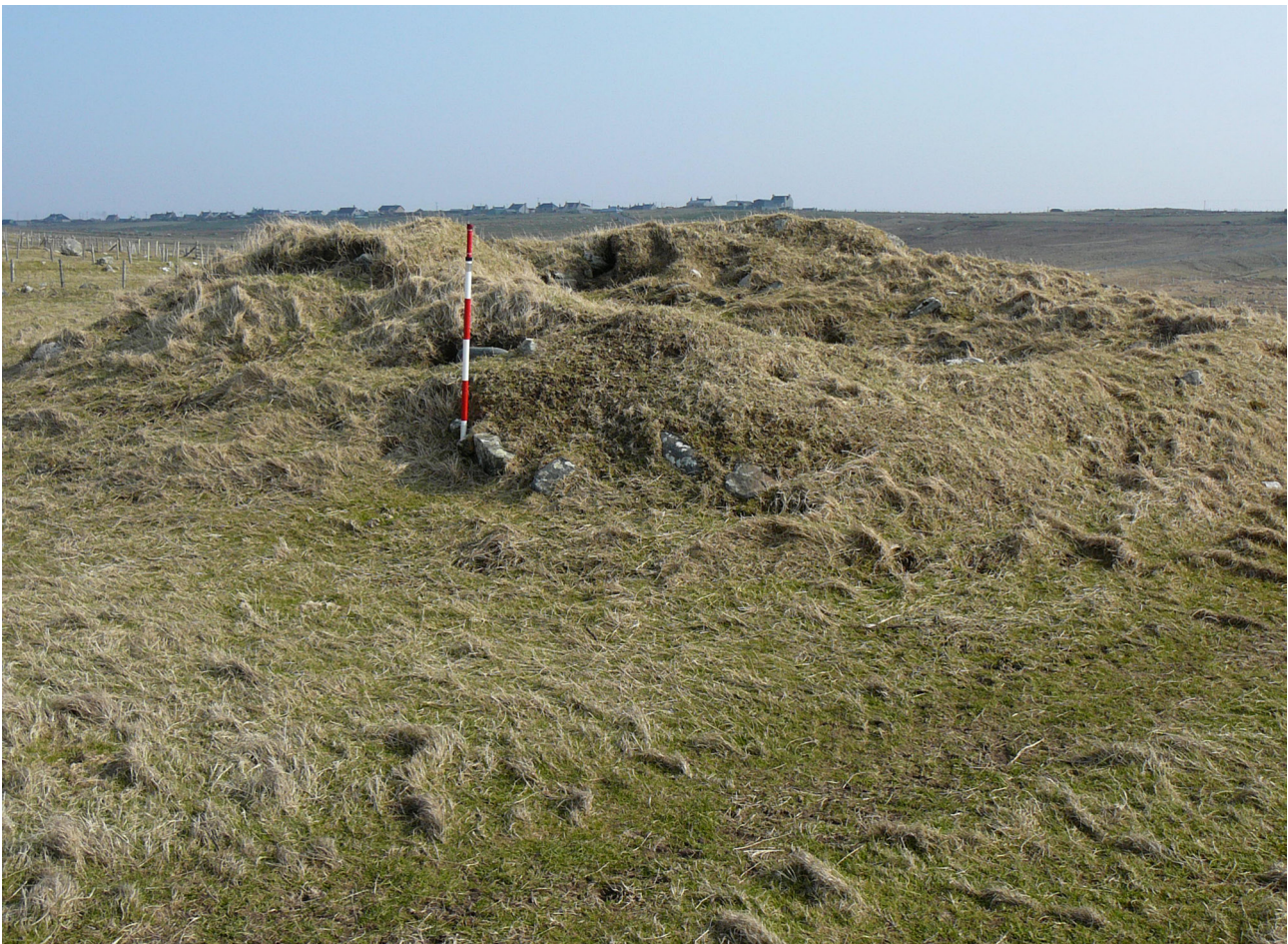


A second upstanding structure was also recorded in the survey area, to the north of the chapel. This is a corn-drying kiln, built onto the north wall of the small rectangular enclosure around the chapel (Illus 24). The kiln is better preserved than the chapel, and although collapsed, the building can be traced clearly, and measures around 10m × 5m overall, aligned north-east/south-west, although the mound of structural collapse overall measures 12.5m × 10m. The kiln, kiln platform and flue can still be discerned inside the structure, and the kiln is clearly later than the chapel, as it is more upstanding and built onto the enclosure.

The area to the south of the chapel contains several low grassy banks and mounds, concentrated down the slope towards the cliff edge. These are the remains of eroded structures and banks, and can be seen eroding out from the cliff section at the south edge of the survey area (see Illus 19 & 20). A large horseshoe-shaped hollow, around 9m × 12m overall, aligned north-west/south-east

at the south-west corner of the survey area (see Illus 21) is known locally as the area where stones were removed for local building projects. Adjacent to it to the east are further ephemeral indications of banks and walling, and to the north are three, probably natural, rocky knolls. Outside the enclosed area, on the west side of the site along the cliff edge, there are traces of further ephemeral structures that can be seen eroding in the cliff section (see Illus 21). It is possible that these structures pre-date the chapel, as they are situated outside the enclosure and are associated with deposits eroding at Rubha Bhlanisgaidh from which Iron Age pottery has been recovered (see 4.8.3 'Local information' above).

The grass-covered turf and stone enclosure walls to the south and east of the chapel are clearly part of old field enclosures which appear on the OS1 map (1853), and are associated with the pre-crofting settlement that can be seen as low grassy bumps and ruined walls to the north-east of the chapel, extending up the slope along the coast to the north-east in the



**Illus 24** Corn-drying kiln, from the north-west

area of the modern-day crofts, and south-east along Lambol Burn. A short stretch of field wall on the east edge of the survey area is a double wall built from large orthostats, each up to 1 × 0.8 × 0.4m, with turf infill. The remaining walls defining the triangular area around the chapel are lower turf banks, with some angular stones and beach boulders visible. The easternmost of these extends from the top of the cliff to the south, 40m across the survey area, and continues into the adjacent two fenced crofts, where it turns southwards. On the west side a low bank extends from the cliff edge south of the chapel northwards along the cliff top to a small eroding geo outside the north edge of the survey area. On the east side of the chapel enclosure, a further low turf enclosure bank links these latter three enclosures, and mirrors the modern fence line that marks the extent of the Shader crofts.

#### 4.8.5 Geophysical survey 2008

*Christine Rennie*

Comparison of the two sets of raw data obtained from the survey (Illus 25) shows that the resistivity survey was the more successful method for detecting features that were partially upstanding at the time of the survey. The walls of Teampall Pheadair, the church enclosure and the grain-drying kiln are all revealed as areas of higher resistivity that is often associated with stone structures. Although all of these stone features were detected to some extent by gradiometry, their morphology was not so recognisable and the graphic depiction shows a great deal of disturbance in these areas. Since the gradiometer took readings at a greater depth than the resistivity meter during this survey, this disturbance may be explained by the presence of iron-rich inclusions in the Lewisian Gneiss bedrock that lies below the recording depth of the resistivity meter.

##### 4.8.5.1 Anomaly A

This anomaly can be seen in both sets of results but is far more recognisable on the resistivity survey data than on the gradiometry, probably due to the iron-rich nature of the bedrock. These are the partially upstanding remains of a roughly rectangular structure that measures about 15m × 6m. There appear to be two components to the

structure, with the larger of these at the west end. These are the remains of Teampall Pheadair.

##### 4.8.5.2 Anomaly B

Again, this feature is more readily identifiable on the resistivity survey. It appears as a three-sided linear band of higher resistivity, and corresponds to the partially upstanding remains of a wall. The enclosure is completed by a fourth linear band at the west of the site.

One of the aims of the survey was to locate any graves within the church enclosure and, although this area does show some signs of disturbance, it has not been possible to identify any anomalies that would correspond to grave cuts.

##### 4.8.5.3 Anomaly C

This oval-shaped feature is upstanding and comprises stone walls that have partly collapsed into the centre. While the shape of the feature is more recognisable on the resistivity plot, two di-poles were identified from the gradiometry survey. Di-poles are areas where a negative reading are immediately followed by a high positive reading, and can be indications of the presence of metal or of areas of burning. During the survey, the rim of a metal vessel was recovered from the west side of this feature. This structure has previously been identified as a grain-drying kiln.

##### 4.8.5.4 Anomaly D

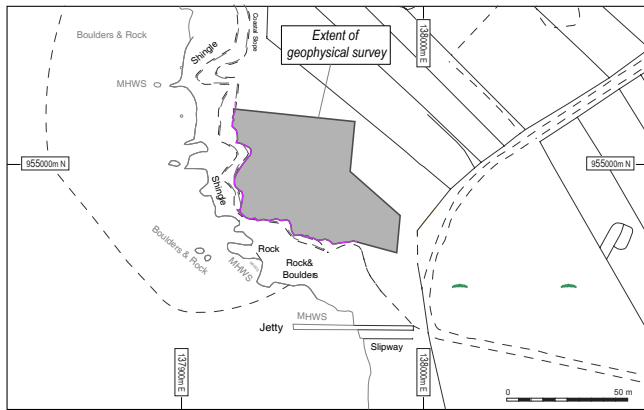
An area of higher resistivity lies at the south-west of the site, and structural stones can be seen in section from the shoreline. As this has not been picked up by gradiometry, it is likely that this represents the remains of one or more structures that have now been lost to coastal erosion.

##### 4.8.5.5 Anomaly E

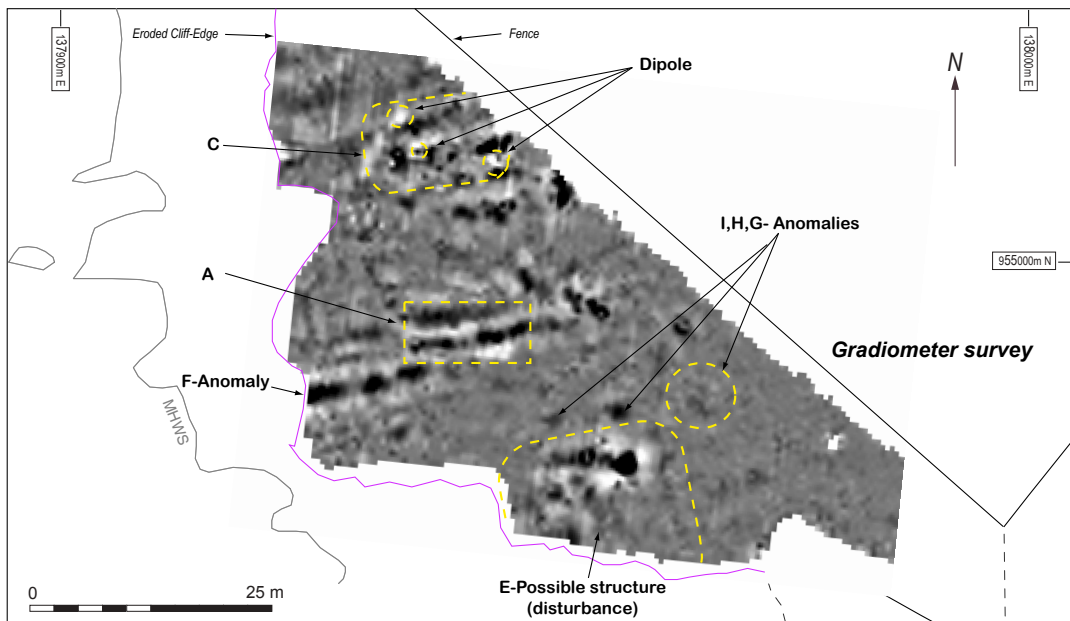
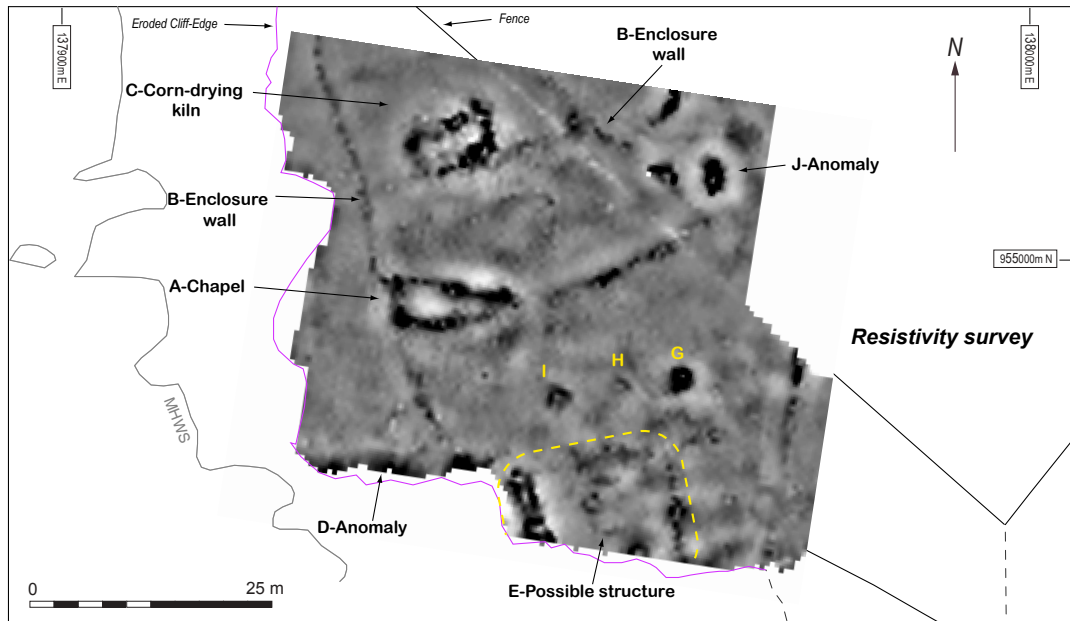
Two partially upstanding linear dykes are seen on the resistivity survey at the south-east of the site. These surround a visible scoop where, according to local information, stones were removed for other building purposes. Both surveys show this area to be very disturbed, and it is possible that the two stone dykes are the remains of another building.

##### 4.8.5.6 Anomaly F

A linear band of high positive gradiometry readings runs west from the south edge of Teampall Pheadair. No feature is visible on the ground in this area, and

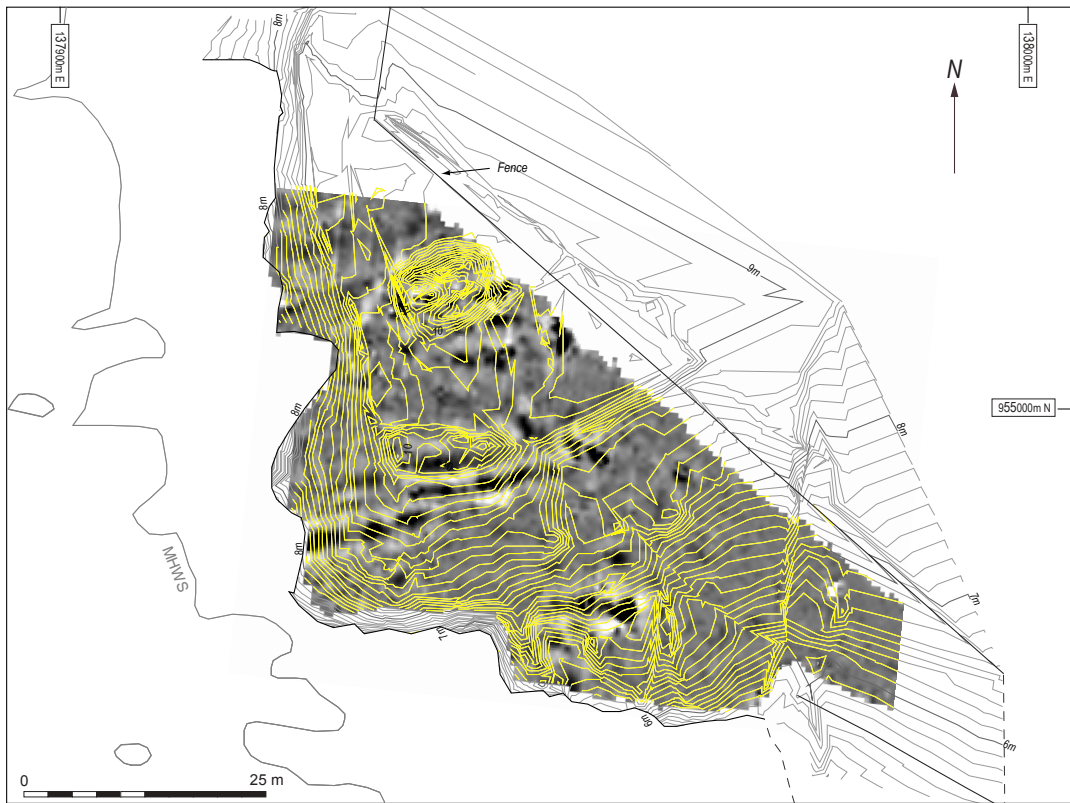
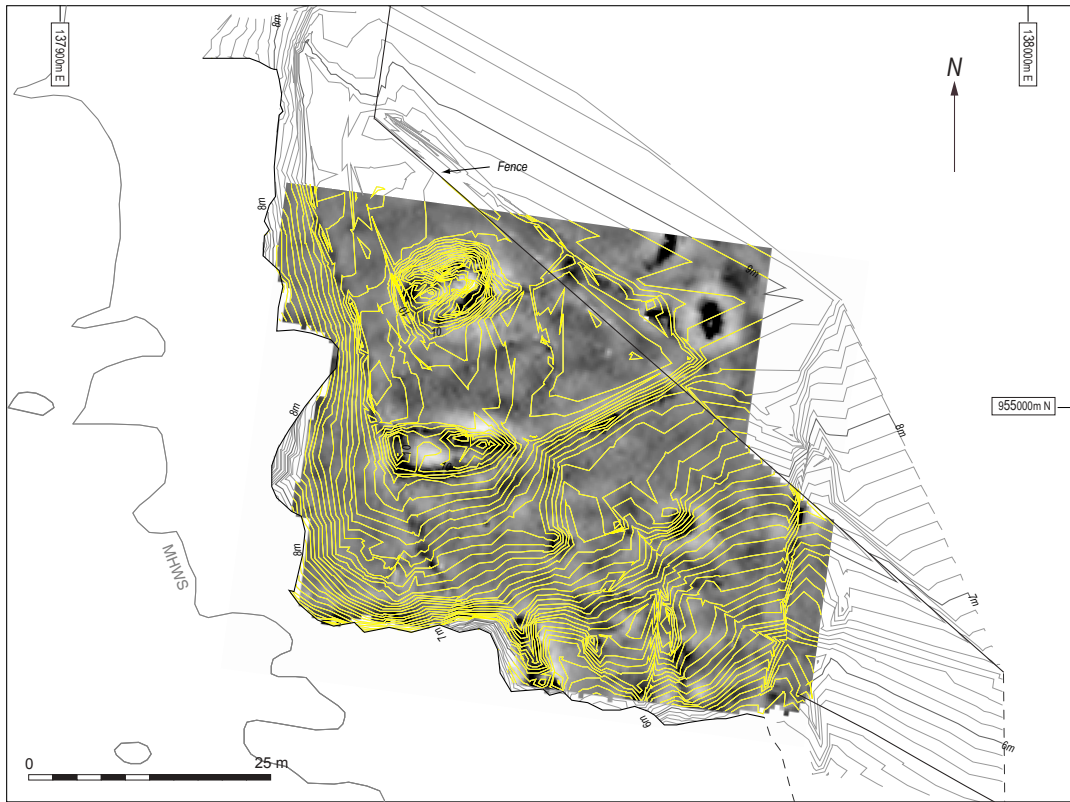


Results of geophysical survey at Teampall Pheadair, Siadar.



Illus 25 Results of geophysical survey at Teampall Pheadair, Shader, 2008





*Combined results of geophysical and topographic survey  
at Teampall Pheadair, Siadar.*

**Illus 26** Combined results of geophysical and topographical survey



the anomaly was not picked up by resistivity. It is probable that the bedrock is closer to the surface in this particular area, and that the gradiometer has detected the iron minerals within the Lewisian Gneiss.

#### 4.8.5.7 Anomalies G, H and I

These three anomalies were visible on both surveys and correspond to stony outcrops on the site. They are best seen on the resistivity plot, and have not been filtered out as being geological. It is possible that these are the remains of other structures, but the archaeological or geological nature of these features cannot be determined without excavation.

#### 4.8.5.8 Anomaly J

This corresponds to a rocky outcrop at the east end of the church enclosure. This too may be structural but, again, the nature of this stone feature cannot be determined without excavation.

If the geophysics results are overlaid by the topographic survey (Illus 26) it becomes possible to confirm with the geophysics ephemeral features that

can be seen on the ground. In particular this reveals that there is a considerable area of disturbance at the south edge of the site, with high and low readings in both geophysical survey methods indicating that this is an area of eroded structures, a fact that is hinted at on the ground and in the eroding cliff section.

### 4.9 Site 9. Teampall Mhuire, Barvas

#### 4.9.1 Summary

The site of *Teampall Mhuire* or *Mhoire* (St Mary's) is now unlocated, although it is thought in local tradition to be below the sand in *Cladh Mhuire*, the old cemetery at the shore in Barvas (Illus 27).

#### 4.9.2 Desktop study

NB 3530 5173

Canmore ID: 4282

According to Dean Monro in 1549 (Munro 1961), this was one of four parish churches in Lewis (the others being in Ness, Uig and Point).



Illus 27 Cladh Mhuire, Barvas, from the north-east

The 'Church of St Mary in Barvas' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27), who after his visit in 1695 describes only two parishes in Lewis, at Barvas, and Ui, in Point.

The OSA: 270 lists 'St Mary's in Upper Barvas'. The Rev Macdonald also notes: 'There are two places of worship in the parish. The church close by the manse is a perfect ruin, and is to be re-built this summer. The one in the district of Ness ...' (OSA: 268). Presumably the 'perfect ruin' close by the manse is the successor to St Mary's.

James Hogg in 1803 notes:

On the top of one of these hills is situated St Mary's chapel, an ancient place of Popish worship. It had formerly been on the very summit of the eminence, but the sand is now heaped up to such a height as to be on a level with the gables. Yet the eddying winds have still kept it nearly clear, so that it appears as a building wholly sunk underground. The baptismal font is still standing in a place in the wall prepared for it (Hogg 1802-4 [1981]: 113).

This site is identified from OS1, and in the ONB, 8B: 35-6 it is described thus:

Cladh Mhuire. A burying place on a sandy hill west of Barvas manse. There is neither tomb nor headstone in it nor is it even enclosed. There was formerly a church near it in which tradition says officiated a young priest who would allow no-one to be buried here unless he received a certain sum of money from the relations of the deceased in consequence of which demand the people interred their dead in the neighbourhood unknown to him. No trace of the church can now be found, it has long since fallen into ruin, and has been buried under the sand so that not even the site of it can be distinguished from any other part of the ground. No information can be obtained regarding the antiquity of the burying place, only that it has been the principal one in the parish from time immemorial.

William Daniell, during his visit to Lewis in 1815, visited Mr MacRae, the minister in Barvas, and was taken to see the 'ruins of a chapel dedicated

to the Virgin Mary. Being situated at the distance of about half a mile from the sea, the greater part of it is covered with sand blown up from the shore ...' (Daniell 1820 [2006]: 207).

The RCAHMS note in relation to this site: 'Church of St Mary the Virgin, by the shore at Barvas, is covered with drifted sand' (RCAHMS 1928: 10).

The OS visited the site on 20 June 1969, when the site was described thus: 'There is no trace of the church to be seen within the burial ground, enlarged, at NB 3530 5173. The burial ground is still used, and is known as "Cladh Mhuire".'

The Western Isles archaeologist records that the chapel is said to have been visible in 1884, following sandstorms and movement, though no longer identifiable; also that Cladh Mhuire is situated in an area of eroding sand which has a high instance of archaeological remains, from the Neolithic to crofting periods, encompassing both burial and settlement sites. The SMR records several sites and finds, as do Burgess & Church (1997), Cowie (pers comm to the Western Isles archaeologist) and Cook (1999).

Rescue excavations on Barvas Machair in 2000 uncovered the remains of Iron Age cremations and burials, as reported by M A MacLeod (2000):

NB 330 560 – 354 525

Rescue excavation of an eroding cemetery on Barvas Machair, Isle of Lewis revealed a number of cremations in stone-lined ditches, and a prone, extended female inhumation in a well-constructed cist. The cremations were dated by association with a rim and body sherd of decorated Iron Age pottery. The inhumation was accompanied by an iron bracelet, decorated with incised copper-alloy plates, which was found behind the back of the head. The lack of parallels for the bracelet makes it difficult to date, but its style is not incompatible with a Middle Iron Age date.

Sponsors: HS, Comunn Eachdraidh Bharabhais agus Bhru, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Finlay MacLeod records that a letter from the Pope in Rome, dated 27 May 1403, states 'To all the Christian faithful – Indult granting an indulgence to visitors to the church of St Mary in



Barwas in the isle of Lewis, diocese of Sodor, on certain feast days and those who contribute to its reparation', as if people could not normally use it, and that it was still being repaired (MacLeod 1997: 18).

Haws (1972) records: 'Barvas (Isles): Free parsonage. Rodoric Farquhar Hestorisson held the parish on 22 May 1536, and Sir Patrick McMaster (Martin) held the parish on 22 August 1566.'

These priests were probably attached to the church which immediately succeeded Teampall Mhuire but pre-dated the church 'in perfect ruins' by the manse of the Established church (Haws 1972: 22).

#### 4.9.3 Site description

A visit to Cladh Mhuire in 2004 confirmed that Teampall Mhuire cannot be seen on the ground,



Illus 28 Flag or slate grave markers at Cladh Mhuire



but probably lies under the sand somewhere on the west side of Cladh Mhuire, Barvas, which is still in use. There have never been any signs of the chapel noted during gravedigging, although it was noted in the desktop study that the chapel was uncovered in the 19th century. The chapel is probably located in the oldest part of the cemetery where rows of low, unmarked gravestones can still be seen, similar to other cemeteries, such as *An Seann Cladh* in Swainbost, Ness (see Site 4). During a revisit to the site in 2018, three large flags or slates were noted, used as grave markers in this oldest part of the cemetery on the hill on the west side of the graveyard (eg Illus 28). It was thought possible that these originated from the ruins of Teampall Mhuire as they are very similar to the stone roofing slates from the ruins of Teampall Eòin that have been reused as grave markers in the cemetery at Bragar (see 4.10 ‘Site 10. Teampall Eòin, Bragar’ and 4.10.3 ‘Local information’ below; Illus 31, 32 & 33). However, the examples at Teampall Mhuire are larger, and without holes, and there is a local story that they

are Caithness slabs that were brought to the site (Finlay MacLeod pers comm).

#### 4.10 Site 10. Teampall Eòin, Bragar

##### 4.10.1 Summary

The ruins of *Teampall Eòin* (St John’s) are set on the side of a large sandy mound in the oldest part of a graveyard on the eastern shore of Port More, north of Bragar village (Illus 29). The chapel is reasonably well preserved, with the nave and chancel walls and the gable ends still standing. When the Royal Commission visited in 1921, an arched opening between the chancel and nave was still standing, although this had collapsed by the Ordnance Survey visit 50 years later, and piles of rubble collapse can still be seen in the interior of the chapel. Stone roofing slates found reused as grave markers in the cemetery may have originated from the chapel roof. Two drystone rubble enclosures are built onto the north wall of the chapel, each with an entrance on the north-east side. Lines of gravestones continue into the enclosures, suggesting that they post-date



**Illus 29** Teampall Eòin, Bragar, general view from the north

them. There are also burials, some with inscribed marker stones, within the ruined chapel itself. The recording of over 2,000 burials in the old cemetery during the topographic survey has made it possible to study the different phases of grave markers within the graveyard.

4.10.2 Desktop study

NB 28833 48905

Canmore ID: 4191

The church of 'St John the Baptist in Bragar' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27).

The OSA: 270 lists 'St John the Baptist's in Bragir'.

This site is identified from OS1, and in the ONB, 8C: 9 it is described thus:

Teampull Eoin. The ruins of an old church or chapel. The walls are all nearly dilapidated, except one on the west side near the sea. A grave yard is attached to the ruins. Teampull Eòin signifies John's or St John's temple.

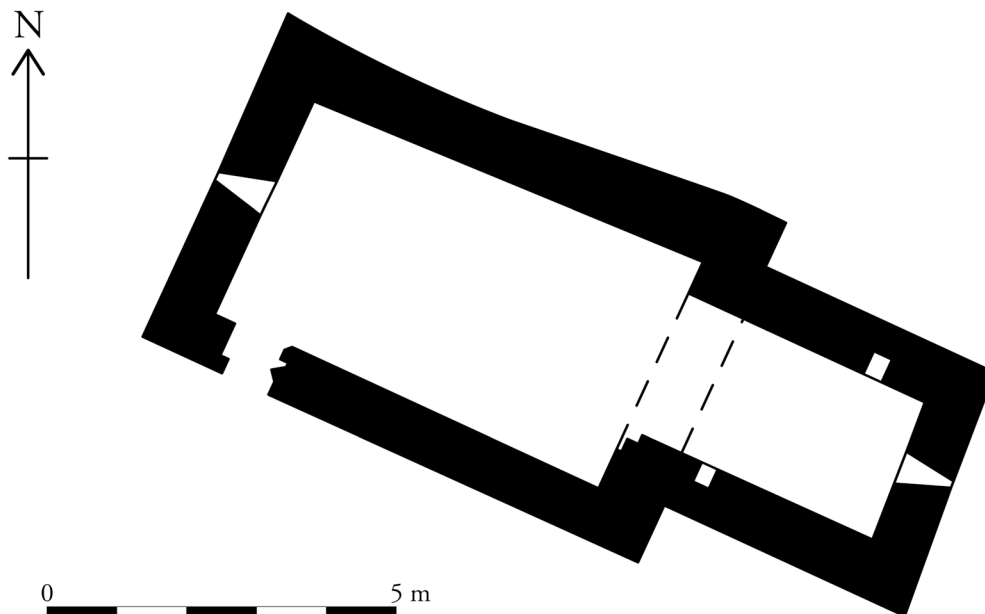
The 'Church of John the Baptist, South Bragar, Lewis' is described in MacGibbon & Ross (1896: 95):

Not much wasted; consisting of chancel and nave; respectively 12 feet 8 inches and 19 feet 10 inches long inside, with flat-headed windows – one east and one south in chancel, and one in west end of nave. Chancel arch and south-west doorway broken; former seems to have been pointed.

The description is taken from Muir (1885: 42), and is included in MacGibbon & Ross's grouping of churches built 'on the plan of nave and chancel' (1896: 79), ie where the nave and chancel are contemporary.

The RCAHMS visited the site on 30 June 1921 and made a full description of the church building (see Illus 30; also illus 41 in the RCAHMS volume shows the interior, looking west, with the chancel arch in place – it has since fallen):

Teampull Eòin ('John'), Bragar – Within a graveyard on the eastern shore of Port More, Bragar, and ¾ of a mile north of Bragar village, is the ruin of Teampull Eòin. It consists of a nave and chancel built of rough rubble, and the main axis lies nearly north-west by south-east, being 24 degrees from the direction of true east and west.



Illus 30 Plan of Teampall Eòin (redrawn by Gillian Sneddon, based on RCAHMS 1928: 1, fig 20)



The nave dimensions average 19 feet 9 inches by 11 feet internally, with walls from 2 feet 5 inches to 3 feet 5 inches in thickness. The gables are 11 feet 2 inches from floor to apex, and the side walls 6 feet high. It is entered by a door in the west end of the south wall, the west jamb, which has been checked, only remaining with square sconsons. A single flat-headed window, 3 feet 9 inches from floor to sill and 2 feet 11 inches high by 4 inches externally, splayed inwardly to a width of 1 foot 8 inches, is placed in the centre of the west gable. An opening through the 3-foot wall at the east end of the nave, the full width of the chancel and very much broken, has no doubt been the chancel arch, which seems to have had its springing about 2 feet 3 inches from the present floor level. The chancel, measuring internally about 9 feet long by 6 feet 10 inches wide, is lower than the nave, reaching only to a height of 7 feet 4 inches at the gable, which has in the centre a window 1 foot 2 inches from the floor and 3 feet high by 9 inches wide outside. Two small recesses 1 foot high by 1 foot wide by 1 foot 3 inches deep are in the walls at ground level, one in the north-east and one in the south-west of the chancel. The building may be of 15th century date (RCAHMS 1928: 1).

The OS visited the site on 17 June 1969 when the site was described thus: 'Teampull Eoin occupies a knoll within the enlarged grave-yard and is as described by the Commission, except that the arch shown in the photograph is now tumbled.'

The site was scheduled in 1977.

Finlay MacLeod records that the chapel is known by two names: St John's Chapel and *Cill Sgàire*, with *Sgàire* being a Norse personal name found in Lewis, and St John's Chapel the newer, more Roman name (MacLeod 1997: 19). He also says that the remains of an old village can be seen adjacent to the graveyard and a kitchen midden above the shoreline, from which an underground channel was discovered to the graveyard itself 'a few years back'. This was when the graveyard was

being extended and the well-built stonework of buildings was uncovered (Ann Campbell pers comm 2008). Pottery, animal bones and worked stones have also been found in the vicinity of the graveyard.

#### 4.10.3 Local information

Teampall Eòin, Bragar was visited with Dr Finlay MacLeod in February 2008. He pointed out the remains of an old village that can be seen adjacent to the graveyard and a kitchen midden above the shoreline, eroding from the grassy cliff at the shore to the west of the graveyard on the left side of the track up to the modern graveyard gate. The midden here, however, is not eroding at such a rate as that at Teampall Pheadair in Shader, as there is concrete sea protection at the base of the cliff, and the upper part of the slope is colonised by marram grass, with only rabbit burrowing presenting a threat at present in some small erosion scars.

Dr MacLeod also pointed out three flat sandstone roofing slates with holes in them that have been used as grave markers in the old graveyard (see Illus 31a & b and Illus 32a). These slates were recorded in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* by Mr Jim Crawford:

NB 28843 48882 5m from the E gable of the Teampall are three grave markers with pierced holes, which are clearly former roof slates with wooden peg holes, and the possibility exists that these are from the former roof of the Teampall, which would indicate that the roof was slated (Crawford 2007).

During the LCCS topographic survey further slates were identified; see Illus 32b, 33a & 33b.

#### 4.10.4 Topographic survey 2007 (Illus 34)

with Charlotte Francoz

Teampall Eòin is in the oldest part of Bragar cemetery, which is still in use and has been recently renovated and extended to the north and east. The old entrance to the graveyard can be seen in the south-west corner where the old 19th-century gateposts have been built into the cemetery wall.





Illus 31a & b Roofing slate grave markers 1 and 2 at Cladh Bhragair





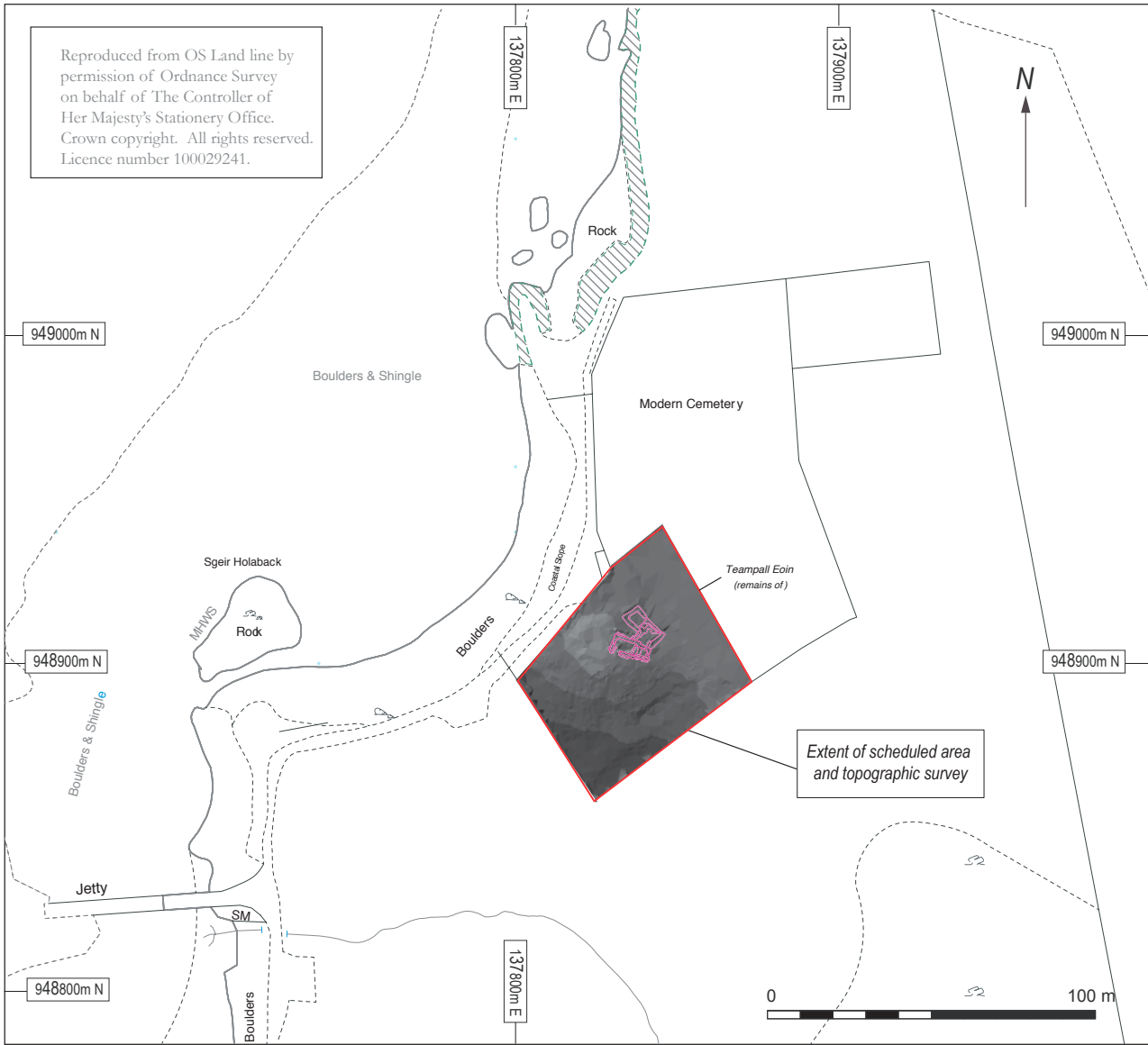
Illus 32a & b Roofing slate grave markers 3 and 4 at Cladh Bhragair





Illus 33a & b Roofing slate grave markers 5 and 6 at Cladh Bhragair





**Illus 34** Location of topographic survey area, Teampall Eòin, Bragar

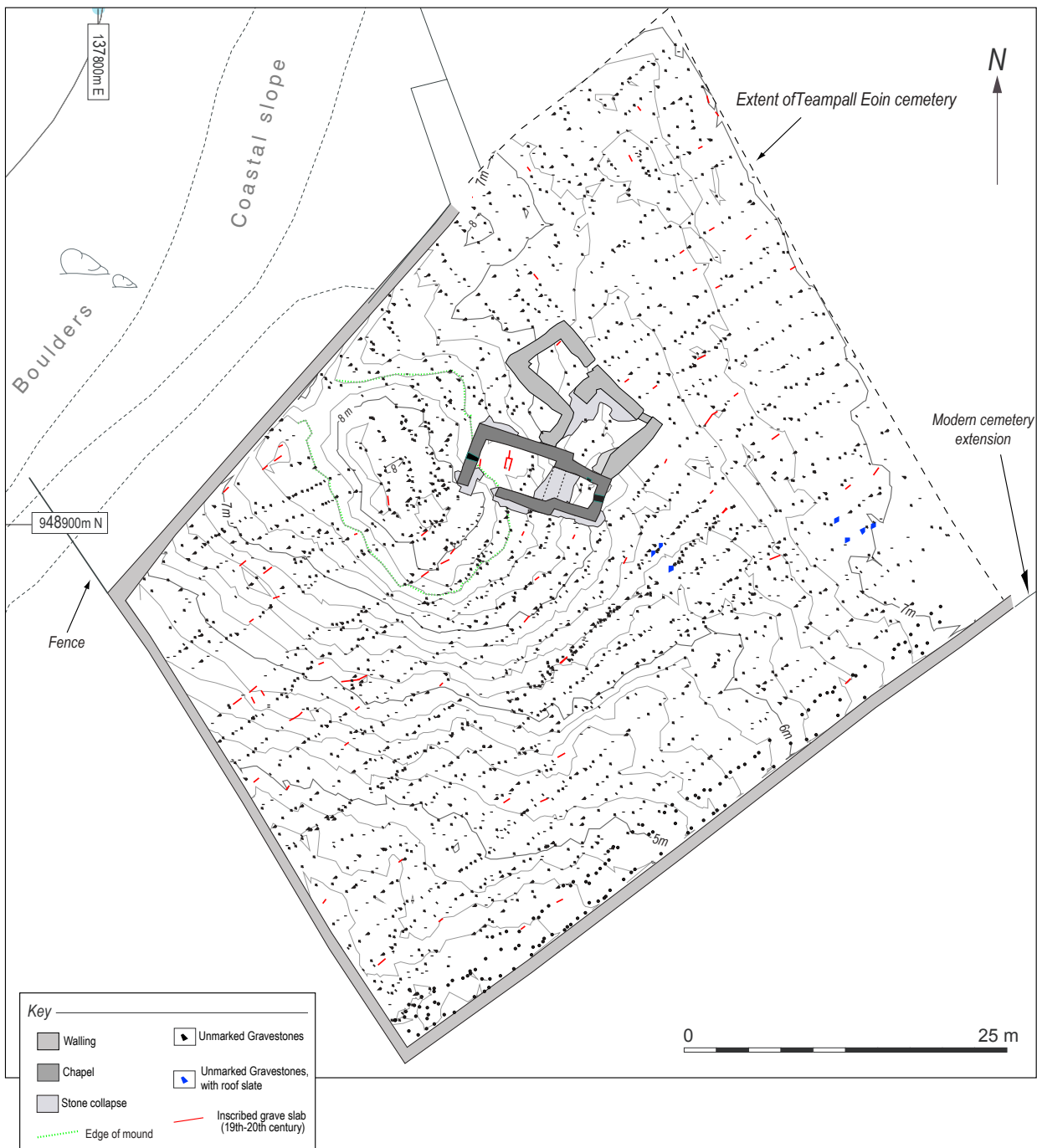
The old part of the cemetery contains over 2,000 graves, most of which are marked with plain boulders which were presumably taken from the ruined church building. The chapel is built into the side of a large sandy mound, 20m × 12.5m, on the north-west side of the old graveyard. The mound has a pronounced bank defining it on the south-west side, and the graves on the top of the mound, immediately west of the chapel, are on a different alignment to the graves outside the mound. It appears from the east side of the mound as if the mound is older than the chapel, and that the chapel is built into the side of it. However, the position of the unmarked gravestones on the top of the mound to the west of the church building suggest

that they were added subsequent to the collapse of the building, and must therefore post-date its use. This then begs the question: where are the older, medieval burials that accompanied the chapel when it was in use? It seems most likely that they are below later burials, and this would suggest that the ground surface has been banked up to the west of the church after its collapse. Indeed, it is possible that sand could have been deliberately mounded up here so as to accommodate more burials. There are local traditions that this was done at other small chapel-sites, such as Baile na Cille in Uig (see 4.19 ‘Site 19. Baile na Cille; Teampall Chrìosd, Timsгарry, Uig’ and 4.19.4 ‘Local information’ below; Barrowman 2005: 51). The topography of the site suggests,

however, that the chapel was built into a mound, but that the mound continued to be built up due to the ongoing use of the site for burial after the chapel itself had been abandoned.

The chapel building is aligned roughly east/west (actually ESE/WNW), and measures 11.5m east to west and 5m north to south externally. Within this the nave measures 6m × 3m internally, and the chancel 3.5m × 2m (Illus 35). There are two

19th/20th-century inscribed gravestones, as well as rows of unmarked gravestones, in the nave. The building is reasonably well preserved, with the four walls standing to roof height. However, the building is at threat of collapse in the medium term, as evidenced by the collapse that has occurred since the site was described by the RCAHMS in 1921, and then by the OS in 1969 (see 4.10.2 ‘Desktop study’ above). In particular, the chancel



Illus 35 Topographic survey, Teampall Eòin, Bragar, 2008





**Illus 36** North-west corner of nave and entrance in the south wall, from the south-west



**Illus 37** Rubble from fallen chancel arch close up from the west





**Illus 38** Detail of collapsed south wall of chancel from the south-east



**Illus 39** Enclosures on the north side of the *teampall*, from the north-east



arch, which is shown in photographs in the Royal Commission volume, had collapsed by the time of the OS visit. This collapse is still present inside the church building as a long mound of rubble, 2.5m thick and up to 1m high, across the nave–chancel junction. There are two flat-headed window openings, one in the west gable end (see Illus 36 & 37) and one in the east chancel gable end. A third on the south side of the chancel is now obscured by collapse (Illus 38).

During the topographic survey three further roofing slates were identified among the grave markers in the cemetery (see Illus 34b & 35). The discovery of roofing slates reused as grave markers in the graveyard is very interesting and suggests that the chapel once had a slate roof (rather than thatch, which is evidenced at other, larger, churches on Lewis, such as Teampall Pheadair, in Swainbost; see 4.4 ‘Site 4. Teampall Pheadair, Swainbost, Ness’ above; Barrowman with Hooper 2006: 15).

Two conjoining enclosures of unknown use are built onto the north wall of the chapel, on a slightly different alignment to it, being aligned north-east/south-west (Illus 39). They are built from rough drystone walling, and each has an entrance on the north-east side. The west entrance is 0.5m wide, and the east, which has a low lintel over it, is 0.8m wide. There is also a gap between the two enclosures, 0.8m wide. The rubble walling stands up to 1m in height and is up to 1m thick, and it is possible that the stone is from the ruined church. Lines of gravestones continue into the enclosures, suggesting that they post-date them. The enclosures clearly abut the chapel and are later than it and of a rougher build. There are no modern burials within them.

The recording of over 2,000 burials in the old cemetery has made it possible to study the different patterns and alignments, and possibly phases, of grave markers within the graveyard. This shows that on the chapel mound the stones are less well ordered than in the rest of the old cemetery, being mixed in their alignment and position. This may suggest that there are different chronological phases of burial here on this part of the site, rather than a sequential addition of burials along predetermined lines, as elsewhere in the old cemetery.

#### 4.11 Site 11. Teampall Chiarain, Laimishader, Carloway

##### 4.11.1 Summary

The site of *Teampall Chiarain* (St Ciaran’s) is said to be located on the east side of the Laimishader peninsula at the foot of a crag at the end of the path to the site (*Slighe Chiarain*). The supposed chapel building is adjacent to a field wall, and consists of two courses at most of a roughly circular building that has been almost completely robbed, and is further obscured by tumbled stone (Illus 40). A well, *Tobar Chiarain*, is situated on the east side of the wall, at the base of a small overhang. To the north and south of the supposed chapel-site there are piles of stones that could once have been further structures. On the west side of the field wall is the extensive medieval or later deserted settlement of Laimisiader, with associated systems of *feannagan*.

##### 4.11.2 Desktop study

NB 18602 42588

Canmore ID: N/A

‘St Kieran in Liani-Shadir’ is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27).

This site is not specifically identified from OS1 or in the ONB, but there are other names which indicate that Laimishader (which Martin calls Lianishadir) was the location of this chapel. ONB 12C: 143 describes it thus:

‘Cnoc na Crois’ (Hill of the Cross), on a small hill on the north side of Loch Carloway, to the east of Laimsiader. There is also a ‘Gob na Crois’ (Point of the Cross) down on the shore nearby. Between this and the Laimsiader settlement is ‘Beannachadh Chiaraig’, described as a heap of small stones on the place where a man is supposed to have been found dead. The oldest inhabitants of the parish state that as long as they can remember, it was customary for whoever passed the place to throw one or more stones on it.

The ONB records Laimishader as being a number of huts in ruins, which was at one time a village (Books 28, 36, 44, 78).

The OS visited the site on 18 June 1969 at NB 1861 4246, where:





**Illus 40** Possible site of Teampall Chiarain along the west side of field dyke at Laimishader, Carloway, from the east, overlooking Loch Carloway

beneath a crag and on the W side of a wall is a roughly circular setting of stones 3.2m in diameter internally. This is locally alleged to be the remains of St Ciarnan's Church, the rest of it having been used to build the wall, but this is doubtful, it being now totally unlike the remains of a church, and is more likely to be associated with the surrounding cultivation. St Ciarnan's well is said to have been in the area centred NB 185 426, formerly a marshy ire, now drained. There is only one roofed building in Laimishader but there are several old house foundations and remains of extensive late cultivation. No trace of earlier settlement. The tradition regarding Beannachadh Ciaraig is still known but the 'heap of stones' has been destroyed.

The slope to the south of the path to the site is marked as *Beannachadh Ciaraig*, and *Cnoc na Crois*

is further to the east of that (see 4.11.2 'Desktop study' above).

Finlay MacLeod (2000: 34) records that MacPhail wrote in the *Oban Times* in 1898 that those who were ill were brought to this chapel, walked clockwise around it and made to sleep the night inside. This was believed to cure the afflicted person. He also says that *Furan Chiarain* (Ciaran's well) is nearby to the east of a wall which runs across the neck of the headland, and that Martin Martin records that it could not successfully wash linen. MacLeod also records that the path down to Laimishader is called *Slighe Chiarain* (Ciaran's way).

The Western Isles archaeologist visited the site on 21 September 1999 and records that the site of the *Beannachadh* is still known, as is the holy well. The chapel building is believed to have been at the bottom of the path down to Laimishader from Borghaston.



## 4.11.3 Site description

The reputed location of this chapel was found as described by the OS, in the SMR and by McPhail (see 4.11.2 'Desktop study' above). At the end of the road at Borghaston, there is a path over the hill and down a crag onto the Laimishader peninsula. At the foot of the crag is a 19th-century field wall, built to define the eastern extent of the peninsula, which was part of the glebe of the minister for Carloway. The supposed chapel building may be located at the foot of this wall, at the end of Slighe Chiarain, and the wall overlies the eastern wall of the building. The chapel-site may be located at NB 18617 42443 on the west side of the field wall. It consists of two courses at most of a roughly circular building, 2.5m north to south and 2m east to west internally, 5m north to south and 4m east to west externally. Along the east side of the wall, at the end of Slighe Chiarain, is the

well, Tobar Chiarain at NB 18602 42588. The well is well maintained, surrounded by a stone setting, and with a drinking cup next to it. To the north of the chapel-site are piles of stones that could once have been further structures, but these are robbed out now. To the south, and also in the area around the chapel, there are indications of buildings and piles of stones, and suggestions of building platforms.

Beyond this structure, at the head of the bay of Port Laimishader is the extensive medieval or later deserted settlement of Laimishader, with three associated systems of *feannagan* (Illus 41). The settlement includes four rectangular enclosures and a D-shaped enclosure. There is also another, larger D-shaped enclosure at the coast on the west side of Port Laimishader. A head-dyke encloses the settlement, and *feannagan* can be seen stretching up the valley northwards from the settlement. The chapel and piles of stones around it are connected



**Illus 41** Southern part of post-medieval township at Laimishader, from the slopes of Beinn Laimisiadair to the west



with this settlement. The field systems and different buildings, both sub-rectangular and long houses, can be distinguished in this settlement and it appears that almost the whole MOLRS (medieval or later rural settlement) is preserved, with the exception of some later modifications to buildings used as sheep or calf pens, that are still being used as such. There are many more ruins here than are shown on the OS1 1898 6-inch map. Little Bernera, once the burial ground for Carloway, can be seen a short distance out seawards along Loch Carloway, as can the graveyard at Kirvig on the opposite shore.

The reputed chapel building is almost completely robbed, and stone has also tumbled from the walls obscuring its original shape. Only excavation could identify this building and, even then, it may not be possible to confirm its use when it is so severely eroded.

#### 4.12 Site 12. Teampall Mhicheil; Cladh Mhicheil, Kirvig, Carloway

##### 4.12.1 Summary

*Teampall Mhicheil* (St Michael's) is situated in the graveyard at Kirvig on the southern shore of Loch Carloway, across the water from Borrowston and Port Laimishader (see Site 11). Adjacent to the graveyard are the ruins of the post-medieval township of *Baile an Teampaill*. In the centre of the graveyard there is a rectangular mound aligned east/west and covered in unmarked gravestones and thick vegetation (Illus 42). In the north and west faces of the mound are up to three courses of drystone work. A plane table survey of the whole graveyard was completed in 2005 and, as well as the site of the chapel, also recorded the position and inscriptions of the inscribed gravestones on the site, as well as the lines of unmarked gravestones to Laimishader



Illus 42 Cladh Mhicheil, Kirvig, from the south-east, across Loch Carloway to Laimishader and out towards Great Bernera to the west

## 4.12.2 Desktop study

NB 194067 41847

Canmore ID: 4126

'St Michael in Kirvig' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27).

This site is identified as a burial ground adjacent to *Baile an Teampuill* and *Mol na Cille* in Cirrabhig from OS1, and the ONB records Baile an Teampuill and *Mhuil an Cille* (Books 28, 16 and 18).

The OS visited the site on 30 June 1969 and recorded:

It is locally believed that St Michael's Church stood on a low knoll within the disused burial ground. The knoll is now occupied by gravestones and obscured by heavy vegetation but on its N and W sides can be seen the remains of a dry stone wall c. 7.0m long on the N by c. 6.5m on the W. It is possible that this is part of the church, but it has the appearance more of a retaining wall.

Finlay MacLeod records that T S Muir wrote, 'Hardly anything of it remains, and the burying-ground is now but rarely used' (Muir 1861: 186).

The Western Isles archaeologist records on 21 September 1999 that this chapel is locally believed to have been built after that on *Bearnaraigh Beag* (Little Bernera), during the season of severe storms when bodies could not be transported to the island for burial on the traditional site.

## 4.12.3 Site description

Teampall Mhicheil is situated in a graveyard at Kirvig, and the knoll is as described by the OS. The chapel-site is located at NB 19406 41847. The chapel is not upstanding, but in the centre of the cemetery there is a rectangular mound aligned east/west. On its north side it is 1.1m above the general graveyard level. The mound is approximately 8m east to west and 5m north to south. The top surface is generally flat with small hummocks. It is also covered with gravestones, which are in three rows of small headstones and/or footstones, and these are closely packed. However, the mound is covered in thick vegetation, even in the winter. In the north and west faces of the mound are up to three courses of stonework, apparently drystone, with no evidence

of mortar. The maximum height of visible exposed stonework is 0.64m. On the east face of the mound, there is no visible or apparent coursed stonework, but there are upright grave-slabs leaning against the mound and forming its outer edge. There are at least eight headstones across the top of the mound. A plane table survey of the chapel and graveyard enclosure was completed (Illus 43).

The roughly square cemetery is bounded by a drystone wall of average height 1m internally and 1.6m externally, with a gate in the west side. Outside the wall there is a ditch, which is 1.2m wide and 0.3m deep. The wall is on average at ground level 0.7m wide. East of the mound there are three rows of graves, to the south and north there are four, and to the west two rows. Each row appears to have headstones to the west and footstones to the east. On average, the headstones are between 0.2m and 0.5m in height, as seen at other sites on the island. There are approximately 30 headstones in each row south of the mound, and they are very tightly packed together. On the north side there are at least 14 in each row. There are some grave-slabs which are full length and cover the graves. One enclosure has a relatively modern iron and steel chained fence. It contains at least three small graves, no more than 4 feet long.

To the south of the eastern half of the main mound, two of the rows of burials are raised almost to the same height as the main mound. On the eastern side, it is raised to a maximum height of 0.7m, and to the south it tapers off. Its sides where visible through the undergrowth are formed of leaning gravestones.

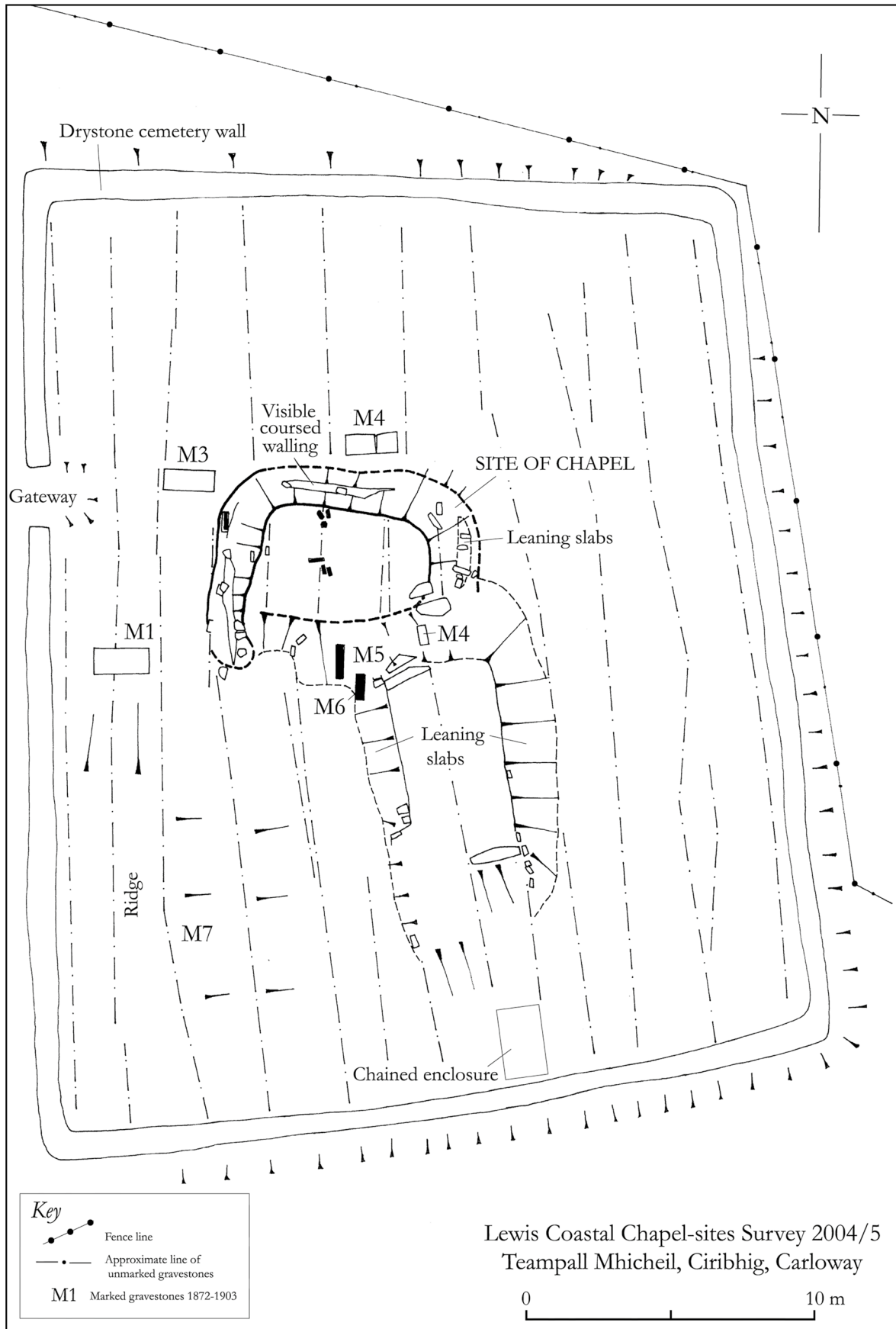
At the north-west corner, there is a difference in ground surface of 0.75m, between the inside and outside. The ground level within the graveyard is between 0.3m and 1m higher than outside the wall.

In the south-west corner, there is another raised area but it is mainly on a natural rise or knoll that continues outside the cemetery.

The whole area of the cemetery is choked with thick vegetation from spring until late autumn. This is mainly thick tussocky grass and the common flag iris. In the summer months the gravestones are completely obscured and none of the features within the cemetery can be seen.

The inscribed gravestones in this cemetery are not recorded anywhere else (cf Teampall Pheadair,





Illus 43 Plane table survey of Cladh Mhicheil, Kirvieg, 2005

Swainbost, for instance – see 4.4 ‘Site 4. Teampall Pheadair, Swainbost, Ness’ above), and so were recorded during the walkover survey. There were seven in total and their locations are marked with ‘M’ numbers on the plane table survey (see Barrowman 2005: 37–8).

#### 4.12.4 Local information

Mr Calum Iain MacArthur of Kirvig was very helpful with local information. The last burial took place at the site in 1938, as far as Mr MacArthur remembers. Originally the inhabitants of the Carloway district were buried on Little Bernera, but in bad weather Cladh Mhìcheil was used as a temporary measure until the weather improved. Later a permanent burial ground was established here, but it is not known when. There is a local tradition that soil was brought in to the cladh to raise up the level for the graveyard for burials.

According to Mr MacArthur the inhabitants used to paint their croft numbers on the otherwise unmarked grave stones in tar, but these numbers had not survived.

Mr Iain MacArthur of the *Comunn Eachdraidh Chàrlabhaigh* was also very helpful. In 1999 and 2000 the gate and walls were repaired at the burial

ground by the Comunn Eachdraidh, and the grass was strimmed.

#### 4.13–4.14 Sites 13 and 14. Teampall Dhonain and Teampall Mhìcheil, Little Bernera

##### 4.13–4.14.1 Summary

There is some confusion between these two chapel-sites, *Teampall Mhìcheil* (St Michael’s) and *Teampall Dhonain* (St Donan’s) on Little Bernera. One small rectangular building can be seen on the top of a rocky knoll on a headland overlooking a sandy beach, *Tràigh an Teampull*, on the east side of Little Bernera (Illus 44 & 45). It has recently been cleared of turf and is situated within an enclosed graveyard, adjacent to the 19th-century burial aisle of John MacDonald. This building is usually described as Teampall Mhìcheil. It has been variously suggested that Teampall Dhonain either lies below the later burial aisle (which itself resembles the wall footings of a rectangular building), is close by, lower down on a small raised area at the south end of the beach (and is also known as *Teampall Iosal*, or ‘Lower chapel’), or is situated on a rock outcrop on the north-west coast, on the opposite side of Bernera Beag (see 4.13–4.14.2 ‘Desktop study’ below).



**Illus 44** General view of Tràigh an Teampaill, Gob Buaille Phabanis, chapel and graveyard, Little Bernera, from the north-east





**Illus 45** General view of chapel and graveyard, Little Bernera, from the north-west. The grassy footings of Teampall Mhicheil can be seen adjacent to the upstanding 19th-century building and burial enclosure in the graveyard

4.13–4.14.2 Desktop study

NB 1505 4073

Canmore ID: 4125

Monro describes Bernera Beag, but not the chapel-sites:

Besides this Keallasay Iyis Berneray beg, ane half mile lang narrest, [ane] mile braid, ane laich roch Ile, full of little laich craigis and holvis betwixt, of naturall fertile earth, and infinite for wair on every schoir of the same. This Ile is well inhabite and manurit, and will gif zeirlie mair nor 200 bollis beir with delving only, pertaining to McCloyd of Leozus (Monro 1549 [1994]: 332).

Blaeu's map (1654) locates a church on Cealasaigh, the largest of the small islands off Bernera Beag, but there are no other references to the Cealasaigh chapel, or to Eilean Fir Chrothair to the west, which has stone beehive dwellings, referred to locally as *Am Beannachadh* (the blessing place) (James Crawford pers comm who has undertaken a survey of the island, see Crawford 2006a; also MacLeod 1997: 23; Blaeu 1654).

'St Dondan in Little Berneray. St Michael in the same Island' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27–8).

This site is identified from OS1 and in the ONB, 17B: 209 as:

Teampull Bhearnaraidh Bheag. A graveyard on a small sandy hill in which there is neither vaults tombs or headstones except one small enclosure on the east side of it about 3 feet high. This grave yard is not enclosed. Tradition says that there has been a Catholic chapel in this place but there is no trace of it now.

Also recorded on OS1 are *Beinn an Teampull* to the west of the graveyard and *Tràighe an Teampull* to the east. To the south is recorded the headland *Buaile Phabanais* and *Gob Buaile Phabanais* and *Tràigh Buaile Phabanais*, further examples of the Norse *papa* place name (see also 4.16 'Site 16. Teampall Pheadair, Pabbay Mor' and 4.28 'Site 28. Teampall Rubha Chirc, Bayble, Point' below).

Muir in 1885 stated: 'Part of another chapel – that probably mentioned by Martin as having been

dedicated to St Donan – was till not many years since standing on a lower part of the shore; of it no traces remain’ (Muir 1885: 57).

The OS visited the site on 22 June 1969 when the site was described thus:

At NB 1505 4070 at the higher, S, end of the now disused graveyard, are the turf-covered footings of a chapel orientated E–W and measuring approximately 6.3m by 3.2m internally. Only the inner face is occasionally visible, and no structural details survive. Some 30.0m to the NE on a low headland outside the grave-yard are the amorphous footings of an indeterminate structure, possibly the other of the two chapels mentioned by Martin. The graveyard, now being eroded, is full of graves, most of which are marked by head and foot stones (Book No. 17B: 209).

In an ‘Official Guide to Stornoway’ (1932), it is described how ‘Here and there stone-built cells which formed the places of sepulchre are laid bare owing to the sandy nature of the soil.’ St Donan’s is also mentioned by Scott (1906: 259; 1918: 269), Simpson (1935) and Watson (1926: 338) as a possible early site due to the dedication.

The Western Isles archaeologist records on 2 May 2002 that the footings of one chapel, adjacent to the 19th-century burial aisle, have been cleared of blown sand by Mr J Crawford, Gearraidh na h-Aibhne, who has also repaired the burial aisle, and has collected Iron Age pottery from rabbit burrows and erosion spots adjacent to the early chapel-site.

The site was scheduled on 20 January 2004, and described thus:

The monument known as Beinn an Teampuill, chapels and graveyard, Little Bernera, comprises a chapel within an enclosed, disused graveyard, as well as what may be the remains of a second chapel nearby. It is sited on the east side of the island of Little Bernera, on a small rise overlooking a sandy beach. The area to be scheduled is subcircular, measuring 78m from N to S by 70m transversely, to include the chapel, the graveyard, the possible second chapel and an area of ground in which evidence relating

to their construction and use may survive. Excluded from the scheduling are the above ground remains for the nineteenth-century and later burial aisles, the modern retaining sea wall, and all named burial monuments.

Finlay MacLeod (1997: 22–3) records that Teampall Dhonain is to be found at the south end of Tràigh an Teampaill and is also called Teampall Iosal (the Low Chapel); also that there is the nearby hill called *Cnoc an t-Sagairt* (the Priest’s Hill). He also refers to a tale told of a Norse king, Swain, and how he took Gealchos, daughter of a young priest, with him from Tràigh an Teampaill to Norway, but her heart broke mourning for Little Bernera, so he brought her back. Her song is still known. MacLeod records that nothing is left of Teampall Mhìcheil ‘save the rise of the walls. It is beside the burial aisle of John Macdonald which is built similar to an old chapel.’ He refers to T S Muir, who wrote in 1861: ‘Directly above a smaller traigh on the eastern side of the island, there is an open burying-ground, containing a few bare slabs of ancient type, and the groundwork of St Michael’s chapel occupying the top of a rock’ (Muir 1861: 177).

MacLeod writes that Muir stayed with John Macdonald at Taigh a’ Chaolais at the time. Muir (1885: 57) later wrote:

Overlooking a smaller but equally beautiful traigh, at the east side, there is an open burying-ground, containing a few slabs, plain, but of ancient form; and elevated on a rocky mount, close by, are some remains of the groundwork and part of the east wall of the chapel of St Michael.

This site was included in the Papar Project survey, due to the nearby place names of Buaille Phabanais, Gob Buaille Phabanais and Tràigh Buaille Phabanais to the south of the chapel-site (see Crawford 2005 = The Papar Project: The Hebrides <http://www.paparproject.org.uk/hebrides10.html>). The Papar Project records that:

Both Beàrnaraigh Beag and Beàrnaraigh Mòr are named on the earliest map of the area, that compiled for Blaeu’s Atlas in 1654.



Blaeu's map shows a single large building on Beàrnaraigh Beag, as does Mackenzie's map of 1776, but not until Heather's map of 1804 is the chapel identified as such (Fig. H10.2). The two chapels and the 'papar' place-names lie on the east side of the island, ensuring that they are visible from the settlements along the eastern shore of Loch Roag. As this means they face away from the Pabaighs in west Loch Roag, the name does not seem likely to be linked to them. The headland of Gob Buaille Phabanais would have acted as a landmark, guiding anyone approaching Beàrnaraigh Beag – particularly those seeking the chapels – from the sea (Crawford 2005 (Site H10): 1).

Also that:

The dedication to St. Donnan of Eigg is unusual in the Outer Hebrides, there being only one other – that of Cill Donnain on South Uist, at the opposite end of the island chain. From Muir's description, this appears to be the chapel on the headland, which Macleod, far more recently, notes is still sometimes known as Teampull Iosal,

'the low chapel' (Muir 1861: 177; Muir 1885: 57; Macleod 1997: 22). Macleod certainly believes that Teampull Mhìcheil is the chapel next to the Macdonald burial aisle. Local tradition suggests that Teampull Beàrnaraigh Beag formed the principal place of burial for the people of this area and it is possible that Teampull Dhonain was simply replaced by Teampull Mhìcheil. In turn, Teampull Mhìcheil at Ciribhig, on the north side of Loch Chàrlabhaigh, is believed to have replaced St. Michael's chapel on Beàrnaraigh Beag. The difficulties of transporting bodies across to Little Bernera for burial led to the establishment of a temporary burial ground at Ciribhig, which later became permanent (Macaulay *c* 1984: 40–1; Barrowman 2005: 37–8, Site 12). On Beàrnaraigh Beag, it seems possible that the coffins would have been landed either on Tràigh an Teampull or on Tràigh Buaille Phabanais, though the existence of the place-name, Rudha nan Corp, 'point of the corpse', on the east side of the bay at Tanganais, suggests that this might have been the more usual landing



**Illus 46** Gob Buaille Phabanais from the north-west, with possible site of Teampall Dhonain in the foreground



place (Ordnance Survey 1850–3, Original Object Name Books, Ross-shire, Book 41: 227) (Crawford 2005 (Site H10): 5).

Survey and excavation work by James Crawford on Little Bernera has recorded the foundations of a rectangular building 4m × 5m externally and oriented roughly east/west on a rock outcrop on the north-west side of the island, and he has suggested that this is an ecclesiastical site, and may be St Donan's (Crawford 2009: 189).

#### 4.13–4.14.3 Site description

Sites 13 and 14 were not visited by the LCCS until 25 July 2017. Teampall Mhìcheil is situated on the top of a rocky knoll in the old graveyard at the south end of the beach, Tràigh an Teampaill. The grassy wall footings, which have been cleared out in recent years, are immediately adjacent to the upstanding, late-19th century building and burial aisle of the Factor, John MacDonald. The turf-covered footings are oriented roughly east/west, and measure approximately 6.5m × 3.5m

internally. During this visit it was noted that there are also possible building footings below and to the south of, outside, the graveyard, on a small outcrop (see Illus 45), and it is possible that this is Teampall Iosal, or 'Lower chapel', which is may also be known as Teampall Dhonain. Possible grassy wall footings were also noted on Gob Buaile Phabanais, although these may be natural boulders (Illus 46). The *buaile* wall could be clearly seen stretching across the neck of the peninsula.

#### 4.15 Site 15. Teampall Chirceaboist; St Macrel's, Kirkibost, Great Bernera

##### 4.15.1 Summary

There is some confusion as to the whereabouts of the 'St Macel in Kirkibost' listed by Martin Martin at the end of the 17th century (see 4.15.2 'Desktop study' below). The ruined building visited by LCCS and described by the RCAHMS and OS is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and comprises a ruined, long rectangular building, with the north wall almost completely collapsed and recently rebuilt (Illus 47).



**Illus 47** Teampall Chirceaboist, Bernera, from the north-west



However, it is held locally that this building was built some time after the end of the 18th century, and it is believed that there is a more ancient graveyard mound further up the slope inland from the site, close to the old settlement (as seen further to the west inland on the OS1 1854), which is more likely to be the location of the 'St Macrel' referred to by Martin. A plane table survey was conducted of the scheduled site in 2005 that also recorded further remains adjacent to the ruined church building.

#### 4.15.2 Desktop study

NB 19130 34628

Canmore ID: 4113

The church of 'St Macrel in Kirkibost' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27).

The 'church in Ruins' is depicted on the OS1 next to the ruins of the old settlement of Circebost.

In the 1791–9 *Statistical Account* for Uig, the Rev Hugh Monro (1797: 286 = OSA: 286) states that 'Two kirks were built two years ago' and that he is the third minister since the erection of the parish. It is not known which two churches Monro is referring to.

The *Origines parochiales Scotiae* (1854) interprets Martin Martin's St Macrel as a dedication to 'St Macra the Virgin' (OPS 1854: 386).

The RCAHMS visited the site on 17 June 1914 and described the church:

Church, Kirkibost, Bernera – Near the shore on the east side of the island of Great Bernera, to the east of the township of Kirkibost, about 300 yards north of Portmore, are the remains of an oblong church of late date orientated a little north of east and south of west, measuring 56 feet in length internally and 15 feet 10 inches in breadth. The walls, standing to an average height of 6 feet, measure 2 feet 3 inches in thickness. There are no windows in the north wall or gables, and the door and the windows, of which there were probably four, have been in the south wall (RCAHMS 1928: 18).

The OS visited the site on 22 June 1969 and noted the remains of the church as described by the RCAHMS. It was also noted that 'There is no trace of a graveyard, and no local knowledge regarding

its date or dedication, though it is believed to have fallen into disuse in the mid-19th century.'

The site was scheduled in 1992 (Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 5236) and is described thus:

The monument ... comprises the remains of a Late Mediaeval church dedicated to St Macra or Macrel. It is situated near the shore overlooking East Loch Roag. It is a simple rectangular building orientated a little N of E. The masonry is of roughly hewn stone with pinnings bonded with shell and lime mortar. Its internal measurements are 17.3m by 4.9m within the walls 0.7m thick and 1.8m high. Much of the N wall has been repaired in a make-shift way. A stretch of walling in the mid part of the S wall has fallen. There are the remains of three windows and an entrance (now blocked) in the S wall. The W gable has no window. There are no internal architectural details. Parallel to the N wall of the church, and 1.4m away, is a feature consisting of a raised rectangular mound set with several large embedded boulders. There is no graveyard in evidence. The area to be scheduled is rectangular and measures a maximum of 30m E–W by 20m N–S, to include both the church and the raised platform.

Finlay MacLeod (1997: 24) records:

In the village of Kirkibost in Bernera can be found the site of an old chapel. Locals believe that this is the chapel referred to in Martin Martin's book as 'St. Macrel'. *Origines* (1857) refers to it as 'Saint Macra the Virgin'.

An old graveyard is close to the chapel and another site called 'An Taigh Sgoile'. The chapel site is near Loch Mharcoil, and maybe it was called 'Teampall Mharcoil'.

Macaulay (c 1984) says that there is a Teampall Chaluim Chiulle in Great Bernera, but if there is, no-one knows where.

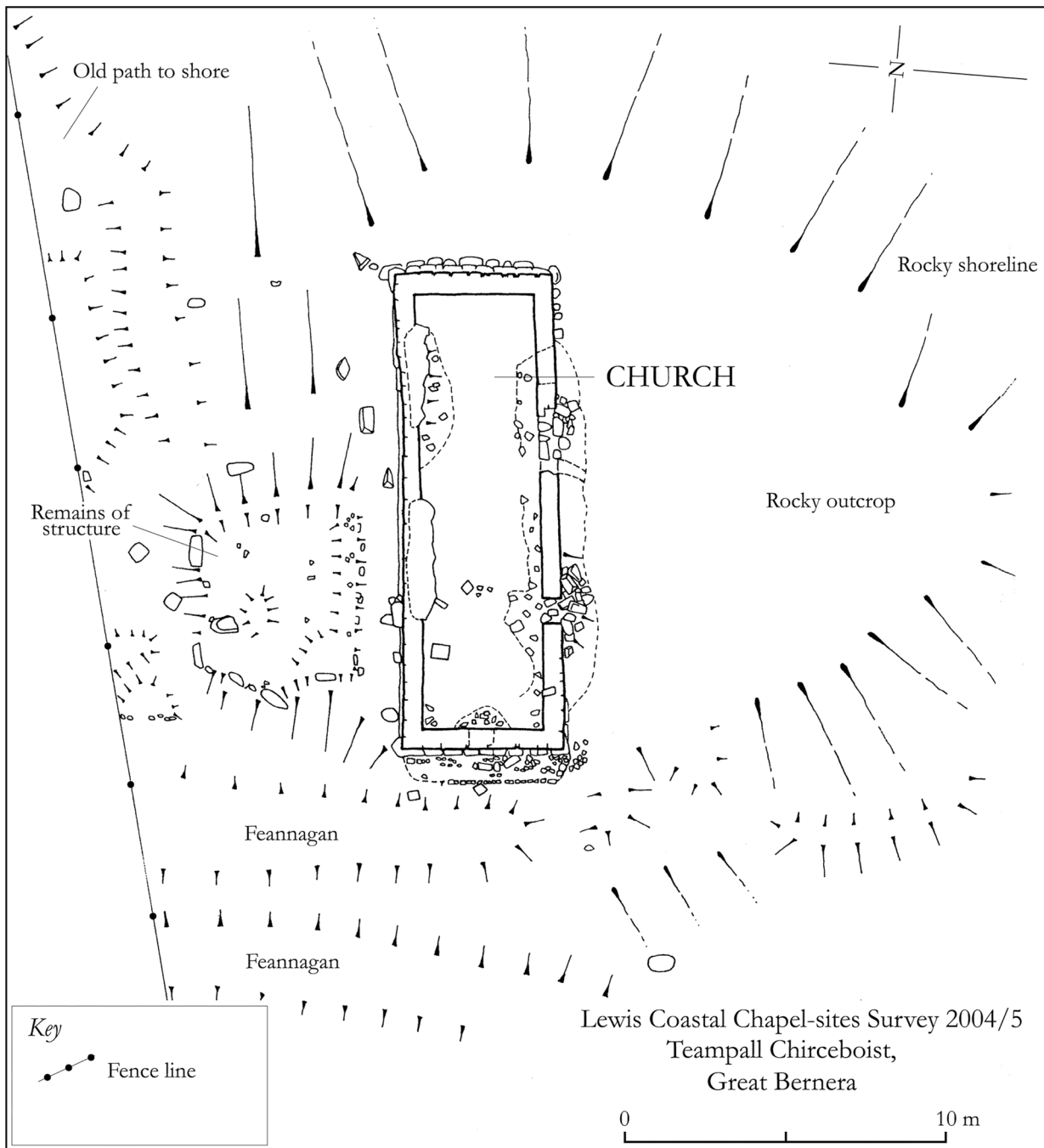
Burgess (2000: Appendix 11) identifies a possible early chapel on *Rubha Tigh Phail*, south of the chapel and suggests that the *Tigh* place name here may be evidence of an Early Christian site, although Phail appears more a personal name.

Knott visited the site in 2001 and records in the SMR (15.1.2001):

According to Rev Macaulay, a college or early religious establishment and seat of learning had existed here 'in pre-Viking times' on the slope on the north side of the glen below Loch Mharcoil. There are apparently no surviving traces of the buildings or the associated cemetery, beneath the more recent blackhouses and present croft house.

4.15.3 Site description

The building described by the Royal Commission and OS is located at NB 19130 34628. The north wall is badly collapsed and rebuilt crudely in drystone form. There is no evidence on the ground of any internal divisions, but a lot of tumble is apparent obscuring the ground surface. The masonry appears to be all of one build, as does the mortar used throughout the building. The walls stand on



Illus 48 Plane table survey of Teampall Chirceaboist, Bernera, 2005



an offset foundation course to the north and south. There are also two offset courses downslope to the east, and a stone-built platform to the west. These features were all recorded by plane table survey (Illus 48).

To the north of the church is a raised platform with embedded boulders, which is included in the scheduled area. The largest boulder is 1.2m × 0.7m × 0.5m, and the platform is generally raised around 0.4m above the surrounding area. It does not have the appearance of a graveyard due to its small size and there being only a small number of superficial small stones on the surface. Some of the large boulders are orthostatically set, and there are smaller stones in between on the north, west and south sides. There is also a bank on the east side. On the south side, there are the grassed over remains of the edge of the enclosure – a stony linear feature. It is raised and is fairly well defined, to a height of 0.2m. There is a dip towards the centre of the enclosure.

The church is situated adjacent to an area covered in the remains of settlement, including ruined buildings, enclosures and walls, and a small raised area defined by a revetment bank. The whole area around Port Mor is filled with old settlement ruins, including the area on the north-east slope above Loch Mharcoil, where walled enclosures and ruined buildings are evident.

#### 4.15.4 Local information

Mrs Noreen McIver, then of the *Comunn Eachdraidh Uig*, visited the site while the plane table survey was ongoing and informed us that the church was built by Murdo MacAulay, some time before 1820, when he moved from Kirkibost to Tobson. There are stories of Hugh Munro, the minister at that time (during the *Statistical Account* of 1791–9 – see 4.15.2 ‘Desktop study’ above), preaching in the church. This church therefore would not be the St Macra referred to by Martin Martin, as it could



Illus 49 Alternative site for Teampall Chirceaboist from the west



not pre-date the 18th century. Kirkibost also has only been resettled from the, probably later, 18th century when Bosta ran out of peat. There was believed to be a more ancient graveyard mound further up the slope inland from the site, close to the old settlement (as seen further to the west inland on the OS1 1854) (Illus 49).

#### 4.16 Site 16. Teampall Pheadair, Pabbay Mor

##### 4.16.1 Summary

*Teampall Pheadair* (St Peter's) on Pabay Mòr, Loch Roag is located at the south end of the island, on a ridge between a small lochan, *Loch an Teampuill*, and a small sandy bay, *Tràigh na Cille*. Partially

upstanding remains of walling and a grassy mound are all that remains of the building today (Illus 50), and the site has clearly been subject to sand inundation. The church was two-chambered: the nave can be clearly seen, and the footings of a small chancel may be made out under the turf. The building is aligned roughly east/west, and measures up to 10m east to west and 5m north to south. Two windows are traceable towards the west end of the south wall, and Crawford suggests that the church had a corbelled roof (see 4.16.3 'Site description' below). The best-preserved parts of the nave walls are still visible above the sandy turf to around a metre. According to local tradition there was once a small graveyard around the church. Crawford also



Illus 50 Teampall Pheadair, Pabbay Mor, from the south-west



records a local tradition that the building was used as a refuge by the MacLeods of Lewis (see 4.16.3 'Site description' below). It is thought that the mound into which the church is set indicates an earlier site below.

#### 4.16.2 Desktop study

NB 10446 37699

Canmore ID: 4095

This chapel is first mentioned by Dean Monro in 1549:

Pabay, an ile maire nor ane myle lange, and fruitfull and fertile mayne ile, full of corne and scheipe, quherein ther was a kirke, quherein also McCloyd of the Lewis ussit to dwell, quhen he would be quyeit, or yet fearst. This ile is guid for fisching, and pertains to McCloyd of the Lewis (Monro 1549 [1994]: 520).

The church of 'St Peter in Pabbay Island' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 28).

The Rev Alexander Macleod in the *Statistical Account* of 1845 (Macleod 1845: 153) mentions that 'At Mealister and Pabay, are the remains of nunneries.'

This site is identified from OS1, and in the ONB, 17C: 27 it is described thus:

A very large island, in Loch Roag composed in general of very good rocky pasture, with several small patches of arable land here and there. There were seven families living on this island formerly, but there are none at present. There is the ruins of a very small church to be seen here seemingly built in proportion to the population of the island.

Nearby there is also Tràigh na Cille, Cnoc na Cille, Sgeir na Cille and Loch an Teampuill. Pabbay itself is one of several examples of the Norse *papa* place name in the Western Isles (see also Sites 13 and 28). A small prominence at the south end of the island is recorded as being called *Crois* also. Richard Cox, who undertook a place-names survey of the 'papar' sites as part of the Papar Project, suggests that the Gaelic name *Crois* here means '[the] point', referring to the projecting point here, rather than to a religious cross (Cox 2005: 5), although Doreen

Waugh is of the opinion that this is an unusual name for a headland (cited in Crawford 2005 (Site H1): 5).

Muir records in 1861 (177): 'The scant remains of St Peter's chapel – rude and narrow oblong some eight-and-twenty feet in length in the middle of a nearly obliterated burying-ground ...'.

The RCAHMS visited the site on 17 June 1914:

Church, Pabay More, Loch Roag – On a ridge between the almost dry lochan, near the south end of the island of Pabay More and a small sandy bay on the east side of the island, are the slight remains of a small church built of stone and lime, rectangular on plan and orientated almost east-north-east and west-north-west, and measuring about 20 feet 9 inches in length internally and about 13 feet in breadth, the wall being about 2 feet 10 inches thick. The building is much dilapidated, and only one window is traceable towards the west end of the south wall. The best preserved part of the wall shows a height of 2 feet 6 inches, but the doorway is quite obliterated (RCAHMS 1928: 18).

W C Mackenzie in 1919 writes:

Fifty years or more before Ruari's death, Dean Monro of the Isles tells of him that he used to 'dwell in a kirk on Pabbay Mor', in Loch Roag, when he wished to be 'quyeit' or when he was 'fearit'. The remains of the little kirk are still to be seen ... (Mackenzie 1919: 33).

The OS visited the site on 8 July 1969 and found it generally as described by the RCAHMS, except that:

It is oriented NE–SW, with the window at the E end of the S wall. There are traces of a chancel, denoted by a mutilated turf-covered wall showing little of its stonework. There is a local tradition of a burial ground, but there is no sign of it.

The Western Isles archaeologist visited the site in 2001 and recorded:

A few plain marker stones are visible in the turf of the surrounding mounded slope. The presence of a cemetery is therefore almost

certain. The underlying mound also indicates that, as one would expect, the church is probably founded upon an earlier settlement site.

The site was scheduled on 2 February 2004. The site is described thus:

The surviving fabric is medieval in date but the Pabay place-name would suggest that there has been an early medieval church somewhere on the island. The area to be scheduled is a circle 40m in diameter, centred on the church, to include the church, graveyard and at least part of the settlement mound and an area around in which evidence for their construction and use may survive.

#### 4.16.3 Site description

The author visited the site in 2002 while conducting a human remains call-off (see Barrowman & Innes 2009) and met with the landowners, who pointed out the site of Teampall Pheadair. Subsequently Mr Jim Crawford kindly gave the author copies of photographs he had taken of the chapel in the summer of 2004. A further visit was then made in 2009.

This is a small, two-chambered church, aligned roughly east/west, and measuring *c* 10m east to west and 5m north to south. Two windows are traceable towards the west end of the south wall. The chancel is only just made out below the turf, but the best-preserved parts of the nave walls are visible above the sandy turf to *c* 1m. The photographs show that the church has been partly cleared out in recent years and alterations have been made to the east window, where a patch of new masonry and some rebuilding of stonework is apparent. Adjacent to the east wall is a trench, around 1m deep, and the south window can be seen clearly. The whole chapel has been cleared of sand since the OS visit in 1969, and there are patches of rebuilding evident in places around the walls. The chapel is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument and as such will be monitored by Historic Environment Scotland.

Mr James Crawford records that due to recent interference to the fabric of the building there are distinct remains of the tops of two lancet windows in

the west gable and roof springing of the walls, which would suggest the roof was corbelled (Crawford 2006b). In 2010, after further visits to the site, Crawford made a photographic record of the church and records that it was used as a refuge for the MacLeod of Lewis chiefs, and that the current fragmentary nature of the building may be due to damage from artillery used during the Scottish Crown's campaign against the MacLeods of Lewis in 1506 (Crawford 2010; see also Crawford 2005; <http://www.paparproject.org.uk/hebrides1.html>).

The Western Isles archaeologist at the time also identified a possible Early Christian site of cellular structures on Pabbay Beag, to the north-west of Pabbay Mor (Mary MacLeod pers comm 2004). Subsequent research by Professor Barbara Crawford and Janet Hooper for the Papar Project into the islands of Pabbay Mor and Pabbay Beag adds a comprehensive background to the site at Teampall Pheadair (see Crawford 2005 = The Papar Project: The Hebrides <http://www.paparproject.org.uk/hebrides1.html>).

#### 4.17. Site 17. Teampall Bhaltois, Valtos, Uig

##### 4.17.1 Summary

There is very little local information on this site, which is recorded as a small, square building on the OS1 map in the centre of the then circular and unenclosed cemetery in Valtos. There is very little to be seen at the cemetery today, which is now enclosed by a rectangular wall.

##### 4.17.2 Desktop study

NB 0891 3673

Canmore ID: 4012

This site is identified from OS1 and in the ONB, Books 42, 67 and 177, where it is described as "Teampull Baltos" or Bhaltois. A small, circular, unenclosed burial ground, to which no building is attached, but there is a ruin in it. It appears to be used by the villagers only.' The ruin is clearly marked as a small square structure on the later OS1 6-inch map.

Muir records in 1885 'the foundations of a chapel, internally 18 feet in length' (Muir 1885: 41).

The RCAHMS visited the site on 20 June 1914:



Teampull, Valtos – On hilly ground overlooking Traigh na Clibhe from the north-east, about 500 yards west of Valtos, is the site of a church in a burying ground. The foundations have entirely disappeared (RCAHMS 1928: 29).

The OS visited the site on 23 June 1969 and found ‘There is no trace of a church in the burial ground, which is still in use and now enclosed by a rectangular wall.’ This was identified during the Bhaltos survey as:

No. 16: The remains of Teampull Bhaltos are reputed to lie in the now enclosed, old graveyard of Bhaltos. No walling is now visible although the ground inside the graveyard is extremely irregular. The age of the structure is unknown. The graveyard itself has now been superseded by a modern cemetery sited towards the beach (Armit 1992: 47; Armit 1994).

Also identified during the Bhaltos survey was Site no. 18, ‘Teampull, Traigh na Berie, Uig’ (SMR no. 8620 – MWE143038: NB 09878 36190).

This is the site of a large settlement mound known locally as the site of a ‘Teampull’. The mound is c. 47m long, north-south, by c. 32m, by c. 3.5m high. It has gently sloping sides and a flat top with several set stones projecting through its surface. From a distance it appears clearly artificial. The modern road runs over its west shoulder. The clearest structure on the mound is partly defined by projecting orthostats on the tops at the northern end of the mound. These form a curved arc of walling. If they represented a circular structure then much of its east and west circuit must have been eroded. The mound appears to represent an accumulation of structures of unknown date and function. During the 1989 and 1992 surveys, the site appeared stable and did not show signs of active rabbit damage. Geophysical survey of the mound produced two complementary sets of data from magnetic and resistivity survey. Resistivity in particular demonstrated the presence of at least two well-defined circular

structures. Their degree of definition suggests that the structures may be well-preserved (Armit 1992: 48).

Finlay MacLeod records that to this day a knoll in the graveyard is referred to as *An Teampall*, and the surrounding area is called *Leathad an Teampaill* (MacLeod 1997: 25).

#### 4.17.3 Site description

There is very little to be seen at the site identified as the site of Teampull Bhaltos. The graveyard at Bhaltos has a very irregular surface, and no graves in the centre, which may indicate a building below the turf. However, there is no sign at all on the surface that there is a building on this site. The cemetery is enclosed by a modern graveyard wall. There are piles of stones and irregular mounds outside the cemetery to the north, and these are clearly the remains of old settlement.

#### 4.17.4 Local information

There is very little local information on this site further to that recorded by the desktop study. However, the OS1 6-inch map (1897) depicts the small, square chapel in the centre of the then circular and unenclosed cemetery in this location.

It is reputed that the chapel-site is actually situated on the mound identified as *Teampall Tràigh na Berie* by Armit (NB03NE 55: see 4.17.2 ‘Desktop study’ above), and survey and geophysics on this mound suggest there are two circular structures beneath it (Armit 1992). This site is possibly too far away from Bhaltos to be associated with that settlement in name, although it may refer to another chapel that once existed here. It is likely that Teampall Bhaltos was situated in the area of the cemetery, where there are remains of old settlement nearby, but there is nothing to be seen of it now.

### 4.18 Site 18. Taigh (Tigh) a’ Bheannaich, Aird Uig

#### 4.18.1 Summary

*Taigh a’ Bheannaich* (House of Blessings, or Blessing House) is situated on a small headland at *Druim Bheannaich* in Aird Uig, to the west of *Loch a’ Bheannaich*. The landward side of the headland is partially bounded by the loch to the east, and by



**Illus 51** Taigh a' Bheannaich, Aird Uig, from the west, looking across Loch a' Bheannaich towards Aird Uig

stone and stone and turf walls stretching from the north and south shores of the loch. The collapsed chapel building stands to up to 1.5m high in places (Illus 51). The interior of the east/west aligned building measures 6m × 3m, and the walls are on average 1m thick. The whole of the exterior of the south wall is covered with collapsed stone, as are most of the interior and the original doorway. There are blocked splayed windows or aumbries in the south and east walls. There are ephemeral remains of small circular structures recorded on the west side of the ruined chapel.

#### 4.18.2 Desktop study

NB 03872 37898

Canmore ID: 4028

This building is depicted on the OS1, but it is not named 'teampall', only *Beannachadh*. Nearby are *Druim a' Bheannaich*, *Geodha a' Bheannaich* and

Loch a' Bheannaich, and *Faing a' Bheannaich* to the north.

'Numerous ruins and fragments of chapels are found on the west coast of Lewis. Among these, near Gallowhead, the great west headland of the island, stands Tigh Beannachadh (blessing house),' according to MacGibbon & Ross (1896: 80), who then quote T S Muir's description:

a not greatly dilapidated chapel (a simple oblong), internally 18 feet 2 inches in length (by 10 feet 4 inches), with a broken east window, having an altar beside it and a doorway, and a niche in each of the side walls; the south doorway entire and flat-headed, the masonry very rude and without lime. It would seem to be a very old building (Muir 1885: 41).

The RCAHMS (Illus 52) visited the site on 20 June 1914 and recorded:



About 200 feet east of the edge of the cliffs and 100 feet west of Loch a' Bheannaich, near the southern end of the smallest of the three lochs on the promontory, are the ruins of a small church built of stone and clay, the walls standing to an average height of about 4 feet, with the fallen upper part of the wall filling up the interior to a considerable depth. The church, which is an oblong on plan, stands east and west and measures interiorly 18 feet 1 inch in length by 10 feet 8 inches in breadth, the wall being from 2 feet 7 inches to 3 feet 6 inches thick. The door, entirely broken down, is placed near the western end of the southern wall, and there are widely splayed windows apparently about 8 inches wide on the outside in the east gable and near the east end of the south wall. Some 6 inches beneath the latter and 1 foot 7 inches from the east end of the church is a small recess 14 inches high, 9 inches broad and 9 inches deep, while low down on the opposite side, 2 feet 3 inches from the east gable, is another recess 1 foot 2 inches high, 1 foot 5 inches broad and 1 foot deep. Some 32 feet south-west of the church is a spring, showing slight evidences of building around it (RCAHMS 1928: 17–18).

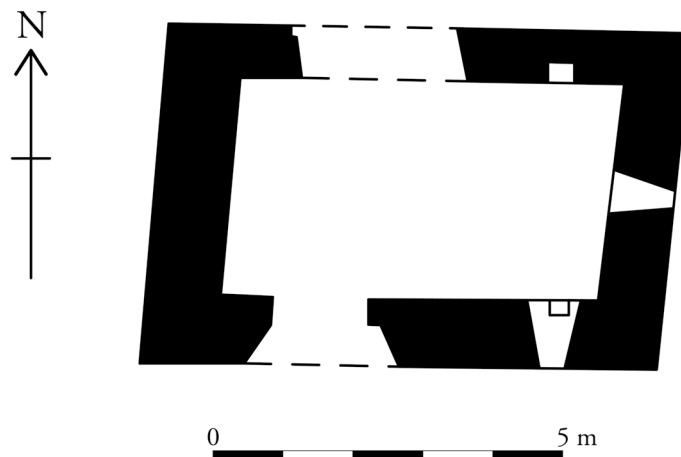
The OS visited the site on 1 July 1969 when the site was as described and planned by the RCAHMS, except that 'the spring is now filled in, but still shows a trickle of water'.

There are records of several cellular structures near the chapel (NB03NW 5) – a number of very small hut circles formed of small blocks of stone laid loosely on the surface of the ground, which in places shows a depth of only a few inches of soil. These were visited by the RCAHMS in 1914, who recorded:

About 11' east of the church are the foundations of an oval structure measuring internally 10½' E–W and 7' N–S, with faint indications of a partition across the middle; about 39' NW of the church on a rocky out-crop is a second, 5½' in diameter; a third lies about 47 yards west of the church, 6' in diameter and another about 42 yards from the building in line with the north wall shows the same internal diameter. In the last two examples the rocky outcrop is utilised to form one arc of the structure. Beside the third hut circle, on the rocks at a slightly higher elevation, is a small circular setting of stone 2'9" in diameter, with the enclosed area covered with small broken stones, said to be the site of a beacon. Another hut-circle lies 40' north of the last (RCAHMS 1928: 19).

A fieldwalking and mapping exercise was executed in 1998:

The stone-built chapel is enclosed on a broad promontory by a large wall that runs from the southern cliffs to an inland loch and from



Illus 52 Plan of Taigh a' Bheannaich (redrawn by Gillian Sneddon, based on RCAHMS 1928: 17, fig 53)

there to the northern sea cliffs. This wall survives as well-built drystone coursing up to 2m in height at its S end, but continues N of the loch as a mainly earth bank with small stones and turf. Surrounding the chapel are 10–12 cellular structures with diameters ranging from 2–3m. Many of these structures are located amongst bare rock on W-facing sea cliffs and have suffered extensive erosion. To the N of the chapel are six cairns of varying sizes 2–4m in diameter). Two of these cairns are kerbed and may be prehistoric (Burgess et al 1998).

The cairns are sites NB03NW 2 and NB03NW 3. The site was scheduled on 5 May 1992.

#### 4.18.3 Site description

This chapel is located at NB 03872 37898 and is as described and drawn by the Royal Commission

except that more collapse has occurred at the south-west corner. The interior of the building measures 6m east to west by 3m north to south, and the walls are on average 1m thick and stand to a maximum height of 1.5m. The north-west corner of the building has collapsed a long time ago and is covered by grass now. Also, the clay bonding noted by the Royal Commission was not identified, and may have since eroded away from the stonework. A large flat lintel stone lying in the doorway on the south side measures 1.2m long and gives an indication of the size of the original doorway. The whole of the exterior of the south wall is covered with collapsed stone, as is most of the interior and the original doorway. Opposite this doorway is what appears to be a further blocked doorway. This is not shown by the Royal Commission, but it is noted by MacGibbon & Ross (quoting Muir – see 4.18.2 ‘Desktop study’ above). The blocked splayed window on the south side can be clearly seen, and measures



**Illus 53** Aird a' Bheannaich headland from the north-east across Loch a' Bheannaich, with the wall from the north-east end of the loch seen as a line from the loch on the right of the picture





**Illus 54** Wall across the headland at the south-west end of the loch



**Illus 55** Ephemeral circular structures adjacent to Taigh a' Bheannaich, from the east



0.8m internally. The blocked splayed window in the east wall measures 0.35m externally to 0.7m internally. A later structure built into the top of the chapel can be seen as a circular area hollowed out from the stone rubble in the interior of the building at the entrance (Burgess et al 1998). Indications of three small structures were noted close to the east and west sides of the chapel, as noted by the OS (see 4.18.2 'Desktop study' above).

This chapel is situated on a small headland at Druim Bheannaich. The landward side of the headland to the east is cut off by Loch a' Bheannaich, a stone and turf wall that stretches from the north end of the loch to the cliffs on the north side of the headland (Illus 53), and a well-built stone wall from the south shore of the loch to Geodh' a' Bheannaich in the cliffs at the south end (Illus 54). The entire area is thus cut off from Aird Uig to the east. The chapel is situated on the headland to the west of the loch, and there are ephemeral remains of small circular structures recorded around the area of the chapel (Illus 55).

The chapel building measures 6m × 3m internally, with walls up to 1m thick, standing to up to 1.5m

high. It has suffered severe collapse, but hardly any further collapse has occurred since the OS visit over 40 years ago, and so the building would seem to be quite stable. Despite the exposed location of this site, it has not been eroded and is sufficiently well away from the cliff not to be at threat from coastal erosion.

#### 4.19 Site 19. Baile na Cille; Teampall Chrìosd, Timgarry, Uig

##### 4.19.1 Summary

*Teampall Chrìosd* (St Christopher's) is located in *Baile na Cille* in an enclosed burial ground on a small knoll at the coast overlooking *Tràigh na Cille* and *Sgeir na Cille* west of Timgarry, Uig (Illus 56). Parts of the walls of this small chapel can just be discerned on the highest point in the churchyard below the thick vegetation. The RCAHMS records three churches at the site – an old church built in 1724, an earlier church, *Capail Mor* ('Big Chapel'), and to the south of this a still earlier church, *Capail Beag* ('Little Chapel').



Illus 56 Baile na Cille burial ground, from the north-west, 2005



## 4.19.2 Desktop study

NB 04800 33870

Canmore ID: 4056

'St Christopher's chapel in Uige' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 28).

This site is identified as *Baille na Cille* on the OS1, and in the ONB, 23B: 67 it is said to be 'the name applied to the manse of Uig and the site of the number of some few huts ...'. *Sgeir na Cille* (p 68) and *Tràigh na Cille* (p 75) are also shown nearby.

The RCAHMS visited the site on 8 July 1914 and described it thus:

Teampulls, Capail Mor and Capail Beg, Baile na Cille ('Kirk-town'), Uig – A short distance to the south-southeast of the manse at Uig, at Baille na Cille, there is an old kirkyard, beside the highest part of which stood the old church, built in 1724. The site was occupied by an earlier church, Capail Mor ('Big Chapel'), the foundations of which are said to be traceable in spring. To the south of it is the site of Capail Beg ('Little Chapel'), possibly a still earlier church. Capail Mor was once a sanctuary, and there is a tradition that a Macleod fleeing from a Macaulay was killed just as he reached the threshold of the church (RCAHMS 1928: 18).

The OS visited the site on 28 June 1969 and recorded:

This burial ground is in a knoll, on the summit of which are traces of stony bands which may be the remains of the chapel, but they are now so obscured by grave slabs, loose boulders and vegetation that the general shape and outline is impossible to define. There is no trace of the other two chapels, and there is no local knowledge of them, nor of the dedication. Within the burial ground, which was last used over 20 years ago, is a stone font.

The site was scheduled on 27 April 1992:

The monument known as Cnoc Eothail, Baille na Cille, burial ground and site of chapel comprises the site of a pre-Reformation Chapel (thought to have been called St Christopher's) within a walled burial ground. The area to be

scheduled is oval measuring a maximum of 33m N–S by 40m E–W to include the entire burial ground.

The site was visited by the Coastal Erosion Assessment team in 1996. The stone font is recorded as a holy water stoup by the Western Isles archaeologist, 10 October 2000.

## 4.19.3 Site description

This chapel is located at NB 04800 33870, and is situated in an enclosed burial ground on top of a small knoll, as described in the OS and SMR above. The knoll measures roughly 30m north-east to south-west and 40m north-west to south-east. Even during September, the vegetation at this site was very thick, and obscured most of the low, rough unmarked gravestones that cover the site in thickly packed north/south rows. It could not be discerned whether there were headstones and footstones, or just headstones. The unmarked gravestones were on average 0.2m high and 0.35m wide, and about 18 rows of burials could be traced. There are also 31 larger, later gravestones in the burial ground, and these are all marked on a plan of the burial ground at the entrance to the site, with each memorial inscription recorded alongside the plan.

On the top of the mounded burial ground, the chapel walls can just be recognised under the thick grass cover (Illus 57). Part of the north wall aligned east/west can be discerned as a stony bank for 3.5m. It then curves around to the south for a further 3.5m. There is then a break to the west, and then the return wall of the south side of the building can be seen for up to 2m. The west wall could not be distinguished at all. The east wall is the most prominent and stands to up to 0.8m proud of the surrounding ground surface.

The burial ground is generally in good condition, and being cared for, as evidenced by the noticeboard and new gate at the entrance to the site. The thick tussocky grass vegetation in the burial ground itself and the site of the chapel building is very overgrown. There are signs of rabbit burrowing at the sides of the mound, but this does not appear to be very active at present, although the thick vegetation obscures the ground surface. Some of the later grave-slabs have fallen, but have been well recorded.



**Illus 57** Area of Teampall Chrìosd, Baile na Cille burial ground, from the north-east

#### 4.19.4 Local information

There is an interpretation board at the site that describes the local traditions concerning the history of the site:

There is a legend that this burial ground was once bare rock and a man called Eidheann brought the soil from a nearby hill, Cnoc Eidheann. It was carried in panniers on the backs of two white horses, and a wall was built to retain the soil. Under the mound is said to be a pagan temple or dun. There certainly are the discernible ruins of a very old chapel built after the mound was created. This chapel is thought to be dedicated to St Christopher, and has always been regarded as a sanctuary. In this burial ground are the remains of the many Uig people who were interred here over the centuries. At one time the burial ground was supposed to be for the exclusive use of

the males of the Clan Macaulay. There are the ruins of two other churches nearby. In the late 1820s during the Great Revival the Reverend Alexander Macleod preached to many thousands of people, many of whom travelled long distances to hear him. He addressed his congregation from a preaching box situated at the end of the manse. They gathered in all weathers on the sloping ground to the northwest known as Cnoc Eothail. The small thatched church at the time could only hold 205 souls. In 1829 a newly built church with seating for 1000 came into use. This was situated about 600 metres north of this point.

The remains of buildings to the north of the burial ground, aligned along the manse wall, can be clearly recognised, and one of these is identified as the remains of the thatched church (D Roberts pers comm).



## 4.20 Site 20. Teampall Mhealastadh, Mealasta, Uig

### 4.20.1 Summary

*Teampall Mhealastadh* is located just south of the point *Rubh' an Teampaill* in a small fenced-off graveyard enclosed by a revetted bank adjacent to the remains of an old settlement (Illus 58). The chapel is situated in the south-east corner of the graveyard, and measures 8m × 5.5m externally, with the walls visible as low, grassy banks with occasional stonework apparent. There is a doorway in the south wall, and a possible window or second doorway in the north wall, almost opposite. All the gravestones in the graveyard are low, rough, unmarked stones apart from one inscribed stone lying flat on the north side of the graveyard. A large stone, *Cladh Mhòr an Teampaill*, is located at the south end of the building remains to the east of the chapel-site.

### 4.20.2 Desktop study

NA 98983 24198

Canmore ID: 3981

The site is identified from the OS1, and in the ONB, 29C: 64 it is described thus:

On the sea shore in Mealasta village. This is an old graveyard in the village of Mealasta. At present there are only a few interred in it as the inhabitants have left this village. There has never been a church or any other kind of meeting house in or about this place as far as can be ascertained.

Also near to the site is *Cladh Mhòr an Teampaill*, an irregular, large rock in the graveyard of Mealastadh, and *Rubh' an Teampaill* nearby.

The RCAHMS visited the site on 18 June 1914 and record:

About 200 yards west of the Mealista farmhouse, on a rocky point on the south of the promontory *Rudh' an Teampaill*, rising only some 20 feet above high-water mark, are the foundations of an oblong church, measuring externally 25 feet in length and 15 feet, 8 inches in breadth, with the wall 2 feet 8 inches thick and orientated south of east and north of west. Between the church and the sea is a small burying ground (RCAHMS 1928: 18).



Illus 58 Teampall Mhealastadh, Uig, from the north

Mackenzie (1919: 137–8) records that:

At Mealista, Uig, there was a shrine to St Catan (see Teampall na h-Aoidh), near which has been found the remains of a nunnery, locally known as the ‘house of the black old women’.

The OS visited the site on 30 June 1969, when it was found that:

The graveyard, unenclosed and no longer in use, is at NA 9897 2421. Unable to locate any remains of the church described by RCAHMS in an area which has been utilized by wartime military structures. No further information regarding the ‘Shrine of St Catan’.

A chapel complex and cemetery were identified on the coastal erosion survey 1996 (Burgess & Church 1997).

#### 4.20.3 Site description

Teampall Mhealastadh is located at NA 98983 24198 in a small graveyard at the edge of the coast, and adjacent to the remains of at least four later buildings of an old settlement. The graveyard is now contained within a fenced area 21m × 22m maximum, with a gate, although in 2005 when the site was surveyed, the old fence was broken down and there was considerable erosion from sheep and rabbits. The graveyard comprises an irregular raised grassy platform on a rocky area, just south of the point Rubh’ an Teampaill. It is roughly 20m north to south by 10m east to west and is enclosed by a revetment bank on the west, south and north sides. The east side has been obscured by the addition of later buildings, and the west side is cut by the shoreline. At least two, two-part, later structures are situated at the east side of the graveyard (centred on NA 98994 24194), aligned north/south, and immediately adjacent to the east chapel wall. To the north of the chapel, and adjacent to it, is a further building aligned north/south at NA 98988 24205. The chapel building is in the south-east corner of the graveyard, and measures 8m east to west and 5.5m north to south externally. The walls are visible as low, eroded grassy banks, with stonework protruding through the turf in places, especially at the doorway in the south wall. There is a possible window or second doorway in the north wall, almost opposite.

The doorway in the south wall is around 1m wide, and the walls of the chapel are about 1m wide, from the bottom of the bank on either side. The graveyard fence is in good condition.

All the gravestones in the graveyard, bar one, are low, rough, unmarked stones of around 0.3m high on average. There are lines of gravestones aligned north/south across the graveyard, with what appears to be headstones and footstones. Many of the gravestones are now just below the turf, but there appeared to be at least five rows of burials, with 46 stones in each row on average. North of the north-east corner of the chapel is a setting of 12 stones, including three large stones, in a sub-circular arrangement, 2m north to south by 2.5m east to west. The one inscribed stone is lying flat on the north side of the graveyard, and a small wooden plaque has been added explaining the inscription (‘John Thomson. Aged 27 years. Lossiemouth fisherman. Lost off Vatersay. 22.06.1875’).

The burial ground is generally in good condition as the ground surface is covered in grazed vegetation. The west edge (the shoreline) was eroding significantly in 2005, but since the insertion of the new fence around the graveyard, this has slowed the erosion considerably and protected the revetment wall on the west side of the burial ground. In 2005 the furthest west line of gravestones was already collapsing down the cliff, and there were stray finds of human bone reported, but during a visit in 2019 the erosion had slowed considerably, and the vegetation has been allowed to re-establish itself.

Cladh Mhòr an Teampaill was located as described in the OS. It is located at the south end of the building remains at the east of the chapel-site.

#### 4.20.4 Local information

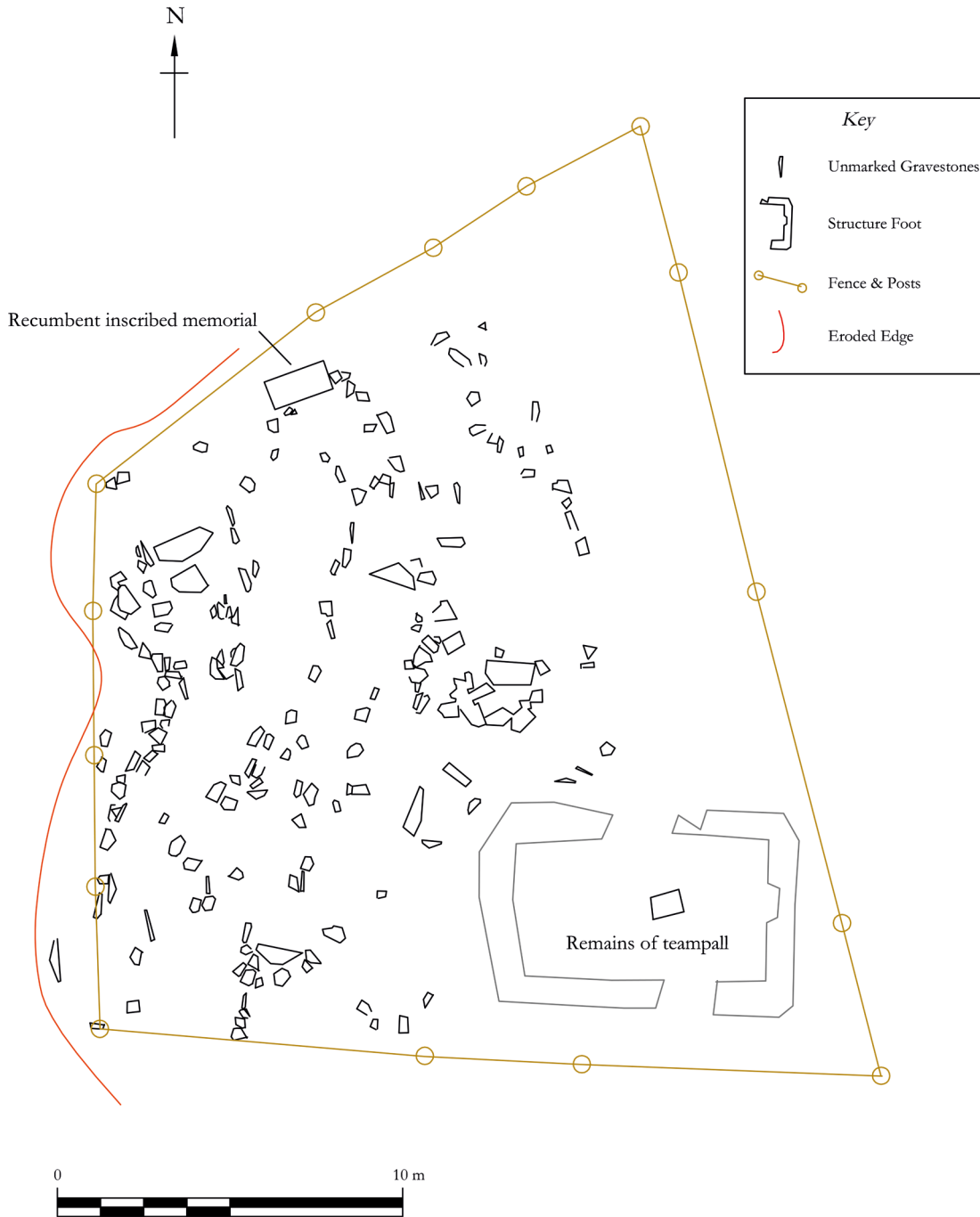
No particular local information was gathered from this site.

#### 4.20.5 Topographic survey 2005

A topographic survey was carried out of the area around the chapel and of the scheduled area of Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha to the south (see 4.21 ‘Site 21. Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha, Mealasta, Uig’ and 4.21.5 ‘Topographic survey 2005’ below; Illus 60). The graveyard is defined by a revetment



### Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites Survey 2005



Illus 59 Topographic survey of Teampall Mhealastadh, Uig, 2005

wall and the chapel is situated at the south-east corner of the area, as described in full during the walkover (see 4.20.3 'Site description' above). The graveyard comprises all unmarked stones, except one inscribed recumbent grave marker on the north side of the site. To the east of the graveyard, and partially overlying it, are low grassy banks and hollows representing the remains of three adjacent turf and stone structures (P, Q and R: see Illus 61) measuring 45m overall in length, and up to 10m wide. Structure P at the south end has two compartments and lies immediately to the north of Cladh Mhòr an Teampuill.

#### 4.21 Site 21. Taigh (Tigh) nan Cailleachan Dubha, Mealasta, Uig

##### 4.21.1 Summary

The site of *Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha* is an abandoned medieval or later rural settlement situated south of Teampall Mhealastadh at *Mol Tiacanais* (see Illus 61). Monro in the *Statistical Account 1791–9* refers to the site as 'Teah nan cailichan dou, or The

house of the old black women', although there do not appear to be any references in oral tradition to Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha other than its name and location (see MacLeod quoted in 4.21.2 'Desktop study' below). The remains at the site comprise a complex of several buildings, which after the LCCS walkover in 2004, were surveyed in February 2005. The buildings identified are all in close proximity to each other, including a later upstanding sheep fank modified from the ruined buildings, a circular turf structure, largely well-preserved stone and turf buildings and an upstanding building and enclosure on the east side of the area, including one used as a corn-drying kiln. To the north of the burn are two enclosures and a further eroded turf structure. To the north of this, outwith the scheduled area, are the further remains of upstanding structures. There is a tradition that the Uig chessmen were found in a souterrain at Mealastadh (now unlocated) and investigative work has been undertaken at the eroding sandy edges of Mol Tiacanais in 2011 (see 4.21.2 'Desktop study' below).



**Illus 60** General view of area of eroded structures at Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha, Uig, from the west



## 4.21.2 Desktop study

NA 99030 24181

Canmore ID: 3983

The Reverend Hugh Monro in the *Statistical Account* 1791–9 (OSA: 288) says ‘At Melista are the remains of a nunnery, called still in the language of the country, Teah nan cailichan dou, or The house of the old black women.’

The site is identified from the OS1 and in the ONB, Books 78 and 87, which state that a number of chessmen were found here about 70 years ago (ie c 1780) and that they were sold to a society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh. These are the Lewis chessmen, whose provenance has recently been researched by Caldwell et al (2010: 168–72), who conclude: ‘On the basis of the evidence presented ... there can be no certainty about the hoard’s findspot, but the strong possibility emerges that it was deposited at Mealasta ...’ (ibid: 172). A paper written in 1832 states that the hoard was found in an underground stone structure near the site of Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha, and Caldwell notes that, interestingly, Thomas recorded that there has been a souterrain at Mealasta, the stones of which had been removed for building purposes (ibid: 170, 172).

Muir, like others, confuses Teampall Mhealastadh (see 4.20 ‘Site 20. Teampall Mhealastadh, Mealasta, Uig’ above) and Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha:

At Mealastadh, on its south-west side, are traces of a small building called Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha, House of the Black Old Women (Nuns); and in an open, grassy, and flowery burial-ground, the foundations of a chapel, internally about 19 feet in length, and a rudely-formed font of elliptical shape.

The RCAHMS visited the site on 18 June 1914 and record, ‘All trace of this nunnery (“house of the black women”) is obliterated, the site being occupied by a sheep fank, which doubtless has absorbed the stones’ (RCAHMS 1928: 30).

Mackenzie (1919: 137–8) records that ‘At Mealista, Uig, there was a shrine to St Catan (see Teampall na h-Aoidh), near which has been found the remains of a nunnery, locally known as the “house of the black old women”’.

The OS visited the site on 30 June 1969: ‘The name applies to the remains of a typical black house structure oriented N to S measuring 11.2m × 4.6m internally within walls 1.3m thick. There is still a strong local tradition regarding this site.’

MacLeod (1997: 29), however, records that:

Strangely there is no reference in oral tradition to Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha – only the name and location. In Lewis one often spoke of the distance along the west coast by saying ‘From the House of the Black Women in Uig to Taigh Mholuidh in Eoropie’.

Information from RCAHMS, 9 June 2004:

An oblique photograph ... has recorded the remains of the blackhouse orientated from N to S, with sheep pens about 20m to the SW. This blackhouse was recorded as roofed on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Rosshire, Island of Lewis 1854, sheet xxix). The sheep pens overlie the footings of further N-S oriented structures which were recorded as unroofed ruins on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Rosshire, Island of Lewis 1854, sheet xxix), but do not appear on the current edition of the OS 1:10,000 map (1973). To the W of these footings are the remains of another slightly shorter possible blackhouse, also recorded as roofed on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map, which overlies more footings. Further similar building footings visible on the aerial photograph are recorded as ruins on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Rosshire, Island of Lewis 1854, sheet xxix), to the N and on the rocky edge of the coast to the NW.

In 2011 sampling of the archaeological deposits within the scheduled area at Mealasta was undertaken by the National Museums Scotland and University of Durham, to recover dating material and assess the nature of occupation following Caldwell’s research on the Lewis chessmen (Caldwell et al 2010), as a now unlocated souterrain recorded from Mealasta (see RCAHMS site no. NA92SE 2) is described in some sources as the findspot for the Lewis chessmen (Caldwell pers comm 2010). The project cleaned the eroding section of machair at Mol Tìcanais, and

recorded an enhanced soil horizon below the turf, several shallow pit or ditch features and the potential eroding corner of a drystone walled building. A series of boreholes were cored with a bucket augur behind the eroding edge to test the potential for further deeper soil or midden horizons within the scheduled area (information from RCAHMS).

#### 4.21.3 Site description

This large medieval or later deserted settlement, with associated enclosures and field systems, is very well preserved. Parts of the building remains have been adapted for use as a sheep fank and the majority of the buildings are upstanding, if ruinous. The site was revisited in 2019 and no major changes were evident.

The site is complex and is undoubtedly connected with Site 20, Teampall Mhealastadh and its graveyard, to the north. The settlement at Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha has been scheduled due to the ecclesiastical link suggested by the name 'House of the Black Women'. However, a direct translation of this Gaelic description into English then used to render the site as a nunnery (due to the wearing of black habits) may be too simplistic. *Dubh* may be used in Gaelic to denote a tanned appearance or dark hair, for instance (see Dwelly 1994).

#### 4.21.4 Local information

No further local information was gathered for this site, apart from information from D Roberts that the coastal section here contains modern rubbish from camping trips, as well as older midden material. The name has become known in the community through the antiquarian rendition of it to mean a 'nunnery', but there are no local stories relating to it, other than the saying recorded by MacLeod (1997; see 4.21.2 'Desktop study' above).

#### 4.21.5 Topographic survey 2005

The remains of a complex of several buildings were surveyed in the scheduled area at Site 21 (Illus 61), all in close proximity to each other, including a later upstanding sheep fank modified from the ruined buildings (A), a circular turf structure (B), a stone and turf structure (C), largely well-preserved stone and turf buildings (D to G) surrounding structure A,

an upstanding building (H) and enclosure (I) on the east side of the area, two large structures (J and K), in the centre and west of the settlement, with up to four compartments each, one used as a corn-drying kiln. To the north of the burn are two enclosures (L and N), and a further eroded turf structure (M). To the north of this, outwith the scheduled area, are the further remains of upstanding structures (O).

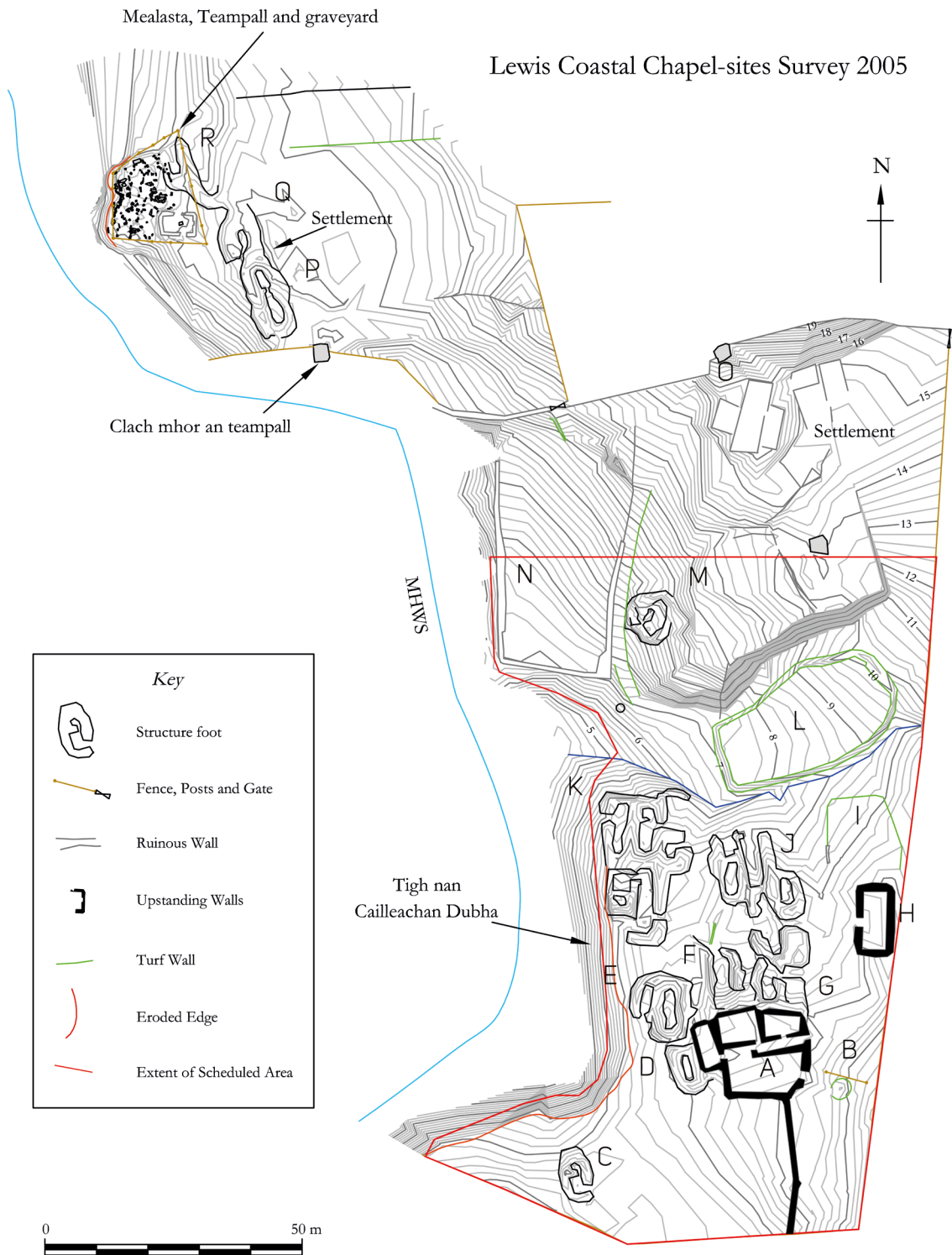
The largest structure (A) lies to the south of the site, and is composed of a series of upstanding stone structures now modified and used as a sheep fank. It has five compartments, all of which are *c* 1.2m lower than the surrounding ground surface. Six metres from the south-east corner of this structure is a small circular turf-walled structure (B) 4m in diameter and eroded. Thirty metres from the south-west corner of structure A is a small turf and stone structure (C) 10m × 6m externally. Immediately to the west of structure A is a sunken rectangular structure (D) measuring approximately 7m × 4m externally. The walls are turf-covered and low. Abutting this is a further turf and stone walled structure (E) measuring 14m × 10m. The less well-preserved remains of at least two other structures (F and G) lie to the east of this – these cover an overall area measuring 20m × 15m. These structures sit closely to the west and north of the sheep pen.

The upstanding stone walls of a larger house (H) lie 10m to the east. This is partially collapsed and stone rubble lies around. This building measures 14m × 7m externally. A low turf wall encloses an area (I) to the north of this building, with an overall internal measurement of 15m × 12m. It was recorded as roofed on the OS1 (1854) 6-inch map (see information from RCAHMS, 9 June 2004, reproduced at 4.21.2 'Desktop study' above).

Two further turf and stone walled structures lie to the west. The first (J) has at least four compartments, and an overall external measurement of 15m square. Again to the west of this are the remains of a larger turf and stone walled structure (K) measuring 30m × 18m overall. This structure has at least four compartments, one of which was used as a corn-drying kiln.

The burn passes to the north of these structures, and on the other side there is a large turf-walled enclosure (L). This encloses a low-lying area of ground which is sheltered to the north by a rock outcrop and higher ground. Large boulders sit to





Illus 61 Topographic survey of Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha and Teampall Mhealastadh, Uig, 2005

the north-east of this higher area, and there is a small slumped and eroded turf structure (M) to the west. This is circular in plan, and measures 10m in diameter. A further, large stone-walled rectangular enclosure (N) lies to the west of this, measuring approximately 45m × 20m.

North of this lie further remains of upstanding settlement (O) immediately south of the fence line, and the chapel and graveyard are 100m to the north-west.

The structures (D to G) underlying the sheep pens (A) were recorded as unroofed ruins on the OS1 (1854) but do not appear on the current edition of the OS 1:10,000 map (1973; see RCAHMS 2004, above).

#### 4.22 Site 22. Teampall Chaluim Chille, Eilean Chaluim Chille, Lochs

##### 4.22.1 Summary

*Teampall* or *Eaglais Chaluim Chille* (St Columba's) is on the southern shore of *Eilean Chaluim Chille* in the mouth of Loch Eireasort on the east coast of Lewis (Illus 62). Due to its dedication it has become

known in local tradition as the site where Columban monks first arrived in Lewis. The ruined church building on the site is, however, clearly medieval or later. It is situated in the centre of an enclosed graveyard and measures 10m × 6m, with the walls standing up to 2m high in places, although large parts of the south and east walls have collapsed (Illus 63). There is a small window at the east end of the south wall, and the remains of a possible entrance can be seen in the collapse at the west end. There are three 19th-century gravestones within the ruined church, and many recumbent grave-slabs and rough uninscribed grave markers in the enclosed graveyard.

##### 4.22.2 Desktop study

NB 3858 2104

Canmore ID: 4233

'St Columkil, in the Island of that name' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27).

The Rev Robert Finlayson (1836: 163) in *The New Statistical Account of Scotland* (Parish of Lochs) states:



**Illus 62** Cladh Chaluim Chille, from Eilean Chaluim Chille, looking north-east, back towards mainland Lewis





**Illus 63** Teampall Chaluim Chille, from the south-west

There is a ruin on the island of St Colm, in the entrance of Loch Erisort, which was once a religious edifice. The ground surrounding this ruin, is the only place of interment in the parish of Lochs. St Colm is the place on which the first factor sent to the Lewis by the McKenzies, then of Kintail, resided. It is the general opinion, that the said ruin on the island of St Colm is the ruin of a place of worship, erected in the days of ‘Mac Mhic Mhoruchi’ which was the patronymic of the first factor sent to this island by the McKenzies.

This site is identified from OS1 and in the ONB, 33C:

Eilean Chaluim Cille. A large island on which is the ruins of a church, and what is supposed to be the ruins of a monastery. Tradition says they were built by Columb Cille, or Columb Kill, who lived on this island (p 54).

and

Eaglais Chalum Cille. A small rectangular stone building which is in ruins and supposed to have been built by Columb Kill. The workmanship of the part of the building now standing is of a very rude order. It is enclosed by a stone wall. The intervening space forming a graveyard. There are a few small buildings adjacent to it also round in form, in one of these the saint is supposed to have dwelt (p 93).

MacGibbon & Ross (1896: 83) describe, from Muir (1885: 55):

St Columba’s Isle. At the mouth of Loch Erisort is St Columba’s Chapel, externally 35 feet 6 inches in length and 18 feet 7 inches in width. East elevation nearly entire; contains flat-headed window, 4 feet by 6 inches, and in west gable smaller one same shape. South side contains a narrow lanciform window, and

broken doorway on left. North side nearly gone.

They include it in their grouping of 'Churches with pointed or late features' (ibid: 95) which they date to the 13th to 16th centuries (ibid: 79–80).

The RCAHMS visited the site on 22 June 1914 and describe it thus:

St Columb's Church, Eilean Chaluim Chille, Loch Erisort – This church, which stands in a graveyard on the south-eastern shore of Eilean Chaluim Chille, in Loch Erisort, about 2 miles east by south of Keose, is oblong on plan and measures internally 29 feet 6 inches by 13 feet 3 inches, the walls still standing to an average height of 6 feet and measuring 2 feet 6 inches thick. It is orientated almost due east and west. The door is about the middle of the north wall. A widely splayed window with rounded top and built up externally opens in the south wall 2 feet 6 inches from the east end. No other windows can now be traced (RCAHMS 1928: 11).

The OS visited the site on 23 June 1969, when the site at NB 3858 2104 was found to be as described by the RCAHMS, and 'situated in a disused graveyard ... The entrance in the south wall, together with a round-headed splayed window, was blocked when the church was used as a private burial vault.'

The site was scheduled on 17 February 1992 and described thus: 'The monument ... comprises the remains of a single-chambered early mediaeval church within a burial ground. The area to be scheduled is irregular and measures a maximum of 30m N–S by 30m E–W to include the Church and burial ground.' Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 5345.

The site was surveyed and described in detail by Chris Burgess during a survey and evaluation of Eilean Chaluim Chille, immediately prior to the LCCS survey starting, and his description is reproduced verbatim below:

Situated on the southern shores of Eilean Chaluim Cille, approximately 300 metres to the south-west of the modern causeway, this building measures 10 metres from west to east, 6 metres from north to south and stands to a maximum height of 2 metres. Its

walls are up to 1 metre thick constructed of rough stone boulders bonded with a coarse mortar. Large areas of collapse can be seen at the west end of the south wall and the south end of the east wall making the identification of an entrance difficult. A window may be seen at the east end of the south wall. This window is formed as a crude 'Saxon' (one centred) arch, and the opening tapers from 0.75 metres on the building's interior to 0.5 metres on its exterior. Standing 1.25 metres tall the form of this opening, though crude in construction, is similar to those seen in other teampulls around the shores of Lewis, most notably that at Eoropie – St Mholuidh. The remains of a second opening can be seen in the collapsed area at the west end of the southern wall. The true form of the opening is unclear due to the tumbled nature of the wall at this point, however, its location and size, 1 metre width, suggest that it is likely to be the remains of a door or entrance. Internally, three recent (nineteenth century) gravestones can be identified standing towards the west end of this structure. The presence of these stones has contributed to the argument in recent years of the date and origin of the building. The site, or at least the island, on which it stands is traditionally held to be the site of the first arrival of Christian, Columban, monks in the northern Western Isles. What seems certain is that the current structure isn't the one that the early Christian settlers would have built. That structure is likely to have been similar in form to the early church identified on Iona, being constructed of wood, or if timber was scarce perhaps turf. The debate over the current – upstanding – structure seems to be whether it is medieval or late post-medieval (17th century) in origin, and therefore whether it is the remains of a medieval (Roman Catholic) Teampull similar to those seen primarily on Lewis's west coast, or whether it was constructed primarily as a mausoleum during the 17th and 18th centuries. The examination possible during the current survey suggests that the structure has its origins at least in the medieval period. In form, size and construction it is very



similar to many of the Teampull sites on the west coast of the islands, not least Tigh na Bheanach at Gallen Head (Aird Uig) which is thought to be a relatively early church. Furthermore, those architectural details visible – particularly the window at the east end of the southern wall – suggest parallels in style with churches such as those at Eorpie and Galson, both of which have been firmly dated to the medieval period. The enclosure surrounding this building (15.4) also includes a number of apparently early grave slabs on its east side, between the chapel's east wall and the enclosure's east wall. These 'rude' markers are typical of those associated elsewhere in Scotland and wider Europe with the burial of early Christian monks. However, on Lewis the use of such crude grave markers can be seen right through to the late 19th century, so the date of these features remains in question (Burgess 2004: 86–8).

The graveyard surrounding the chapel (SMR no. 10272 – MWE144717) is also extensively recorded by Burgess:

Surrounding the chapel building (15.3) on the southern shore of Eilean Chaluim Cille, the remains of this irregular structure are orientated from west to east and measure 30 metres along its north side and 20 metres along its south side. These are linked by a 22 metre long wall on the west side and on the east by a long curving wall that follows the shore for 34 metres. The walls are all constructed of drystone, and on the west and north sides stand to a maximum height of 0.5 metres. On the east and south sides, where the wallsrevet the enclosure against the shore (to below high water level) the walls survive to a height of 2 metres. Internally, the graveyard is dominated by recumbent grave slabs, the majority of which are located at the east and north-eastern edges of the enclosure. Smaller concentrations of slabs can be seen in the west and southern parts of the enclosure. The full distribution of grave markers is difficult to establish as the area of collapse dominates much of the south-east corner of the enclosure where it abuts the shore. These graves appear

to date primarily to the 18 and 19th centuries. The chapel or Teampull (15.3) is located centrally within this enclosure, and between its east wall and the eastern side of the enclosure are a number of 'rude' grave markers. These are rough markers with no engravings formed by orthostatic stones standing no more than 0.5 metres tall. While elsewhere such stones are known to mark the location of early medieval and medieval burials – often monastic in origin – on Lewis such markers are used well into the 19th century. These crude markers are mixed amongst more formal stones at the eastern end of the enclosure, but seem to form a definite group covering an area of c 6 metres from north to south and 15 metres from east to west (Burgess 2004: 88–9).

Burgess also notes further modern burial monuments, remains of blackhouses and a stone setting on the hill above the site (Burgess 2004: 90–2, 150), which are the remains of a medieval or later deserted settlement on the island.

The place name *Crois Eilean* is recorded on the promontory *Dubh Thòb* at the north-east end of the island where there is a stone marker cairn (Burgess 2004: 97).

On the Lewis mainland side, at Cromore, one of the crofts is known locally as *Lios an Teampull* (Garden of the chapel), and there is a tradition that the priest's house was here and an orchard connected with the island church, which may have been the parish church for Lochs before it was replaced by the church at Keose after the Reformation (Carol Knott pers comm: Comunn Eachdraidh na Pairc/ Pairc Historical Society 2008: 3–4; 10–11).

There is also a bay on the north coast of the island called *Port nam Marbh* (port or landing place of the dead), indicating that this was where coffins were landed from the district on the north side of the island before being carried across the island to the cemetery (ibid: 4).

#### 4.22.3 Site description

When this site was visited it was found to be as described by Burgess (2004) and other visitors to the site. The church and burial ground are approached by a flat grassy track that runs from

the causeway over to the island, to the burial ground and on up the hillside into the area of old settlement. The chapel building lies in the centre of a small, enclosed graveyard, and measures 10m × 6m, with walls standing to 2m high in places. The enclosed graveyard is in an area of old field systems, enclosures and stone and turf walls, and there are sub-rectangular and cellular building footings scattered in the area around the graveyard, and on the adjacent small hills. The south side of the island is fertile and green, and sheltered from the prevailing winds by the higher ground on the north-east side of the island.

#### 4.23 Site 23. ?St Pharaer, Cathanais, Lochs

##### 4.23.1 Summary

This chapel-site is listed by Martin Martin as ‘St Pharaer in Kaerness’, but remains unlocated (Martin 1703: 27). It is likely that it is situated in Lochs, as Martin lists it between ‘St Columkill’ to the south in Lochs (see 4.22 ‘Site 22. Teampall

Chaluim Chille, Eilean Chaluim Chille, Lochs’ above) and ‘St Lennan in Sternbay’ (see 4.25 ‘Site 25. St Lennan’s Church, Stornoway’ below) to the north in Stornoway.

##### 4.23.2 Desktop study

Macdonald (1978: 108) places it at Cathanais, Swordale, on Loch Luerbost, where, he suggests, it was the first parish church for Lochs, before the new one was built in 1831 at Keose nearby.

MacLeod (1997: 30) records that some do not accept that this is the location of the chapel to which Martin refers, and that he might really have meant the Ranish chapel (see 4.24 ‘Site 24. An Teampall, Ranish, Lochs’ below).

#### 4.24 Site 24. An Teampall, Ranish, Lochs

##### 4.24.1 Summary

*An Teampall* is situated in a small, rectangular enclosed graveyard on a knoll in Ranish, which



Illus 64 An Teampall, Ranish, from the north-west



contains the remains of two buildings. One, the low, partially upstanding walls of a 19th-century burial lair, is built adjacent to the other, an earlier and slightly larger rectangular building represented by grass-covered stony banks. This latter building is the medieval chapel, although its dedication is unknown. The graveyard contains several unmarked gravestones, although it is very overgrown.

#### 4.24.2 Desktop study

NB 399 248

Canmore ID: 280476

The settlement to which this chapel was presumably attached (to the east) is recorded as a township and head-dyke (NB42SW 3; NB 4050 2480), to the east of the chapel-site, and the burial ground is on the OS 1st and 2nd Editions.

The site of the old burial ground is shown on the OS1 and is named in the ONB, 33B: 102 as ‘Turham Glas/Torran Glas – At the western end of Ranish village near the southern bank of Tab a Deas. A burying ground in the centre of which is a ruin. Signifies green little knoll.’

The burial ground had probably gone out of use by 1833, when the Rev Finlayson records: ‘There is a ruin on the island of St Colm, in the entrance of Loch Erisort, which was once a religious edifice. The ground surrounding this ruin, is the only place of interment in the parish of Lochs’ (Finlayson 1836: 163).

The township was recorded by the RCAHMS on 25 June 1997, and is described thus:

A township comprising sixty roofed buildings, one partially roofed building, eleven unroofed buildings, several of which are annotated as Ruins, several enclosures and a head-dyke is depicted on the 1st Edition of the OS 6-inch map (1854, sheet 33). Eighty-nine roofed, five partially roofed and forty-one unroofed buildings are shown on the current edition of the OS 1:10 000 map (1973).

MacLeod (1997: 30) records that the Torran Glas is called ‘*Cnoc an Teampaill*’, and that the remains of the old graveyard are still evident, and the lower part of the chapel walls. He records the building as 20 feet long by 12 feet

wide, and that there is no local knowledge of its name.

The SMR description runs:

What we could see was an old burial ground enclosed by a drystone wall, rectangular in shape. The enclosed area measures some 15m N–S by 22m E–W. In the W half of the burial ground are the remains of two small structures: drystone mausoleum (family burial enclosure) approximately 6 × 3.5m, now ruinous but with walls almost a metre high in places, and the foundation of another building to the south of it. This second building was originally a little larger than the mausoleum, around 4.5 N–S × 7.4m E–W. The walls stand to around 0.7m but are covered in turf, and the interior of the building is also obscured by tumbled stone and turf. There is a particularly large concentration of tumbled stone at the east end; if the building is to be interpreted as a former chapel – which seems reasonable – the east end would have housed the altar. It is impossible to make out any architectural details of the building, which was probably disused by the time the mausoleum was built; it looks as though the south wall of the mausoleum may have been built over the north wall of the chapel, and perhaps was constructed in part out of the stones from the earlier building (Hothershall 1996).

#### 4.24.3 Site description

The small enclosed cemetery by the road at Ranish now includes an interpretation board, with a reconstruction drawing of the chapel. The low ruinous walls of a rectangular enclosure in the graveyard are the remains of a 19th-century burial lair, and the sub-rectangular grass-covered footings adjacent to it are the footings of the medieval chapel. The graveyard is very overgrown, and uneven underfoot, due to the presence of small unmarked gravestones just underneath the grassy growth. An area of scrubby trees, alder and Hebe, is found between the graveyard and the road.

## 4.25 Site 25. St Lennan's Church, Stornoway

### 4.25.1 Summary

The pre-Reformation church of St Lennan's in Stornoway is listed by Martin Martin, and according to Mackenzie a further church was built by the first Earl of Seaforth when the earlier church fell into disrepair (see 4.25.2 'Desktop study' below). MacLeod records that one of the church doors was later used as the outside door of a shoemaker's shop in the town, and that the church was demolished in the 19th century, when there are also records of the tide intruding into the graveyard and exposing human remains (see MacLeod 1997: 31). The site of the church is on North Beach Street, below the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Crown Hotel.

### 4.25.2 Desktop study

NB 4223 3280

Canmore ID: 4333

A pre-Reformation church of 'St Lennan in Sternvay' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27) as well as 'Stornbay church' at the end of his list (28).

In the *Statistical Account* of 1845, the Rev John Cameron writes that:

from time out of memory, the parish consisted of three districts, viz. Stornoway, Gress, and Ui. In each district, there was a place of worship erected; and the ruined walls of two chapels are still remaining, one at Ui, the other at Gress. It was only within the last forty years that the ancient place of worship in Stornoway was levelled, for the purpose of building a safer and more commodious church for the increasing population ... The church in Stornoway was dedicated to St Lennan, that of Ui to St Collum, and that of Gress to St Aula. In the district of Ui, the ruins of another chapel are visible; it was dedicated to St Cowstan. All these churches were sanctuaries in ancient times within the walls of which all criminals were safe (Cameron 1845: 115).

According to Mackenzie (1919: 146–7), St Lennan's was built by the first Earl of Seaforth, who died in 1633, the pre-Reformation church having fallen into disrepair.

The OS visited the site on 1 May 1964 and record: 'A plaque referring to this church is located inside the Sailor's Home at NB 4223 3280.'

Stray finds of human remains during development are recorded in the SMR, in addition to the other work by Knott (see below).

MacLeod (1997: 31) adds the following information:

It was situated in a graveyard on North Beach close to where the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Sailors' Home are at present. One of the chapel doors was later used as the outside door of a shoemaker's shop in the town.

He also draws attention to a reference by Macaulay (*c* 1984: 42), who says, 'The pre-Reformation church at Stornoway was dedicated to St Adamnan', but does not disclose the source of his information. Donald Macdonald, in his *Tales and Traditions of the Lews* (Macdonald 1967: 297) and cited by MacLeod, writes of an account by Lord Teignmouth in 1829 that tells of how the tide was intruding into the graveyard and exposing the remains. It is also related that the building was in danger of falling and that it was one Dòmhnall Ceòrd who eventually demolished it for the reward of one and a half bolls of meal: 'Oh, Donald Ceàrd of the boll and a half meal. Had you been given the other half you would have had even the pope's own image on the ground' (MacLeod 1997: 31).

MacLeod also records (*ibid*) that the bell from this church is still used in St Peter's Episcopal church in Stornoway, possibly having first been used in the Episcopal church in Ness, as the RCAHMS record concerning the bell at Teampall Mholuaidh in Ness, 'The bell is said to have come from the old church of St Lennan, Stornoway' (RCAHMS 1928: 2–3).

In 2000 human remains were found while digging a wall trench at the rear of the former Fishermen's Mission building, North Beach Street, during conversion works. Disturbed bones from several individuals, clay pipe fragments and an iron nail with wood traces were recovered from waterlogged shingle layers. A section of lime-mortared stone wall from an earlier building at a slightly different alignment to the present street and frontages was also observed. This part of the town was occupied by St Lennan's Church and graveyard in the 17th century (Knott 2000a).



Crawford adds that St Lennan's 'may represent a corruption of Adamnan and may point to the influence of Iona in Lewis' (Crawford 2005 (Site H6): 6).

#### 4.26 Site 26. Eaglais na h-Aoidhe; Eaglais Chaluim Chille, Eye

##### 4.26.1 Summary

*Eaglais Chaluim Chille* (St Columba's) or *Eaglais na h-Aoidhe*, is situated on the west-facing coast of the Eye peninsula, at the east end of the neck *Bràighe na h-Aoidhe* joining Point and Sandwick on the east coast of Lewis. The church stands on the north side of a large enclosed graveyard beside the shore, and its walls stand to gable height (Illus 65 & 66). It was originally a single oblong building, 19m × 5m internally, probably built in the 14th century, with an entrance in the middle of the south wall (now blocked). An extension, 7m × 5m internally, was then added to the west end, a doorway knocked through to it in the west wall of the original church, and a new

doorway knocked through the south wall towards the west end of the original church. The chancel was once separated from the nave by a rood screen, the slots for which can still be seen in the walls, with a loft above. Within the chancel are two grave-slabs against the north and south walls respectively. One depicts a figure, said to be Roderick MacLeod (d 1498), and the other an inscription to his daughter Margaret MacKinnon (d 1503), with an interlace cross, decorated with animals and foliage. The church was at severe threat from coastal erosion, and between 2008 and 2011 coastal defences were upgraded and the church was consolidated and conserved. The western part of the building is now roofed and Perspex covers the windows to protect the grave-slabs inside (Illus 67 & 68).

##### 4.26.2 Desktop study

NB 4846 3226

Canmore ID: 4308

The church of 'St Colum in Ey' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27).



Illus 65 Eaglais Chaluim Chille, Eye (Eaglais na h-Aoidhe), from the south-west





(Above) Illus 66 Interior of Eaglais Chaluim Chille, Eye, looking east



(Left) Illus 67 Interior of west chapel, from the south-east, showing carved grave-slabs and fonts

When William Daniell visited and sketched Stornoway in 1818 he described:

An ancient Gothic chapel on the point of Uy, in which is a tomb of very rude sculpture, representing the figure of an armed knight, one of the oldest Macleods of the island. The chapel itself is roofless, and in a most deplorable state, but a part of it is still used for public worship (Daniell 1820 [2006]: 201).

The *Statistical Account* of 1845 by the Rev John Cameron says, 'The chapel at Ui has strong walls still standing. The south-west end of it is roofed and slated; the minister of Stornoway used to preach there, once in six weeks, before the Government church was erected' (Cameron 1845: 126).





**Illus 68** Detail of carved grave-slab and font

This site is identified from OS1, and in the ONB, 28A: 13 is described thus:

An old place of worship the date of its erection not known it is built on an isthmus or neck of land from which the Ecclesiastical Parish of Uy takes its name as Uy in the Danish language signifies an 'isthmus'. It is dedicated to St Colum and is now in perfect

ruins with the exception of the SW end which is roofed and slated in which divine service was performed once in six weeks previous to the new Established church being erected. Tradition relates that in the chapel of Ui eighteen lairds of McLeod the original possessors of the Island were buried under one stone. William Earl of Seaforth also lies there interred.

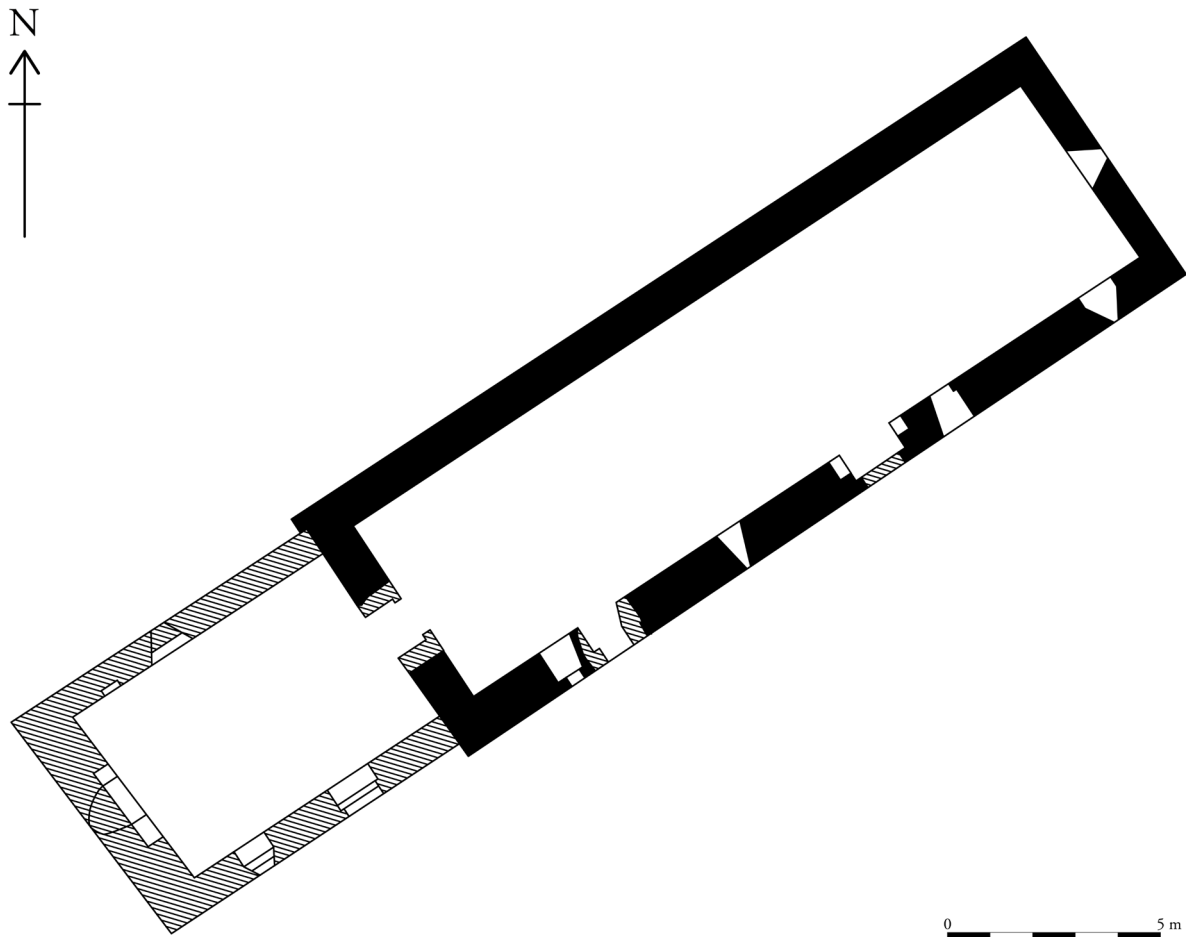
MacGibbon & Ross (1896: 91, from Muir 1885: 39) describe it thus:

A long narrow building of two compartments, divided by a thick wall, containing arched passage. Eastern compartment internally 62 feet in length by 17 feet in width; western one 23 feet by 16 feet 3 inches. Different parts erected at different times from character of masonry. In eastern or larger compartment, windows are mere flat-headed slits, flush outside, widely splayed inside; east one 4 feet 4 inches by 7½ inches; south one 3 feet 8 inches and only 3 inches wide. In western division masonry less primitive looking; resembles Norman windows – one in west end, one in north side, and one, together with door, in south side; all round-headed, flush outside, and widely splayed inside.

MacGibbon & Ross (1896: 79) include St Columba's in their group of 'Churches with a chancel or nave added to an older structure'.

The RCAHMS (1928: 12–14, figs 39–40, 42–4) visited the site on 27 June 1921 and describe the church building (Illus 68) and carved stones in detail, with photographs and a plan:

Eye Church – At the neck of the Eye Peninsula, 4 miles east of Stornoway, the ruinous church of Eye stands within a graveyard beside the shore; while the building is roofless the walls are complete. The church has been a single chamber oblong on plan measuring 61¾ feet by 16¾ feet within walls 2 feet 8 inches to 3 feet 5 inches in thickness and 12 feet high, and was built probably in the 14th century. In the late 15th or early 16th century an addition measuring 23 feet by 16¾ feet was erected at the western end, the west gable then



**Illus 69** Plan of Eaglais Chaluim Chille, Eye (redrawn by Gillian Sneddon, based on RCAHMS 1928: 12, fig 39)

being partly reconstructed. The church is built of the local gneiss with a mingling of a coarse reddish sandstone also found close at hand; the latter material has been extensively used in repairs of the church walls. The original entrance to the church is near the middle of the south wall, and is 3 feet 7 inches wide with semicircular head, checks and slightly splayed sconsons, but is now built up. Four feet to the east of this door inside is another 2 feet 2 inches wide with pointed arched head chamfered, which has led into a projection (vestry?) now demolished. Over these doors are a small window splayed internally and, close together, two putlog holes with two corresponding on the north wall probably for the rood screen. There are also two small slit windows similarly splayed with pointed rear arches, while another 5 feet above floor to sill is situated in the centre of the east

gable. A modern door with wooden lintel has been slapped through at the west end of the south wall and beside it, higher up, is a window 1 foot 7½ inches wide. In the centre of the west gable a door 3 feet 6 inches wide with semicircular head, chamfered arrises, checks and square sconsons, leads to the addition, which has been entered by a similar door, now a window, on the south. It has a semicircular-headed window 2 feet wide with chamfered arrises, checks and sconsons splayed internally in each outside wall. Below the window in the west wall is a semicircular arched recess 1 foot 9 inches wide by 1 foot 5 inches deep, with a bold edge roll and quirk moulding on jambs. A small recess, 1 foot 6 inches wide, has been built up in the north wall. The building generally is in a fair condition, but the other side is threatened by an encroachment of the sea upon a sandy site.



The carved stones are described, in particular:

Now affixed to the walls of the church are two memorial slabs, which formerly lay on the floor. That on the south wall bears a figure in high relief of a usual western type, wearing a quilted coat reaching to the knees, a camail or tippet of mail on the neck and shoulders, and a pointed helm or bascinet. Elsewhere the bascinet and camail went out of fashion within the first quarter of the fifteenth century, after usage for about a century; but it is unsafe to base precise inferences for the Islands on this chronology. In the Highlands the quilted coat persists till the seventeenth century at least. The left hand of the figure rests upon the hilt of a sword with a pear-shaped pommel and quillons depressed towards the blade, while the right hand grasps a spear below the head. The slab undoubtedly commemorates one of the Macleods of Lewis, a line which failed early in the seventeenth century: any identification with a particular member can be only conjecture. It is perhaps possible to collate it for an approximate date with the slab on the opposite wall. This shows an assemblage of carved devices, including both foliage and animals, with an elaborately designed panel at the top. The whole surface is now much worn, as is also the inscription which was cut around its edges. Only a few detached words are fairly legible, but when in slightly better condition the whole was read as HIC JACET MARGARETA FILIA RODERICI MEIC LEOYD DELLEOD-HUIS VIDUA LACH-LANNI MEIC FINGE-ONE OBIIT M V III. Margaret Mackinnon was mother of John the last Abbot of Iona.

The RCAHMS (1928: 12) also record a historical note, with references:

In 1506 John Polson ('Polyson'), precentor of Caithness, received a presentation to the rectory of Ey in Lewis in the event of it having to be vacated by John Macleod. In 1534 and 1536, Sir Magnus Vaus was rector, and in 1552, Sir Donald Monro, probably the Dean of that name, who wrote the Description of the Western Isles (1549).

The OS visited the site on 3 April 1964 when the church was found to be as described by the RCAHMS.

Skeletons were also found in the course of road widening at the base of the dunes near the cemetery (McCullagh 1989; 1990).

The site was scheduled on 6 March 1997 and is described as in RCAHMS. Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 1684.

There are records of middens eroding out of the beach near Aignish Church (see Curwen 1939), and a penannular bronze brooch, discovered in 1919, is now in the Museum nan Eilean, Stornoway.

The historical background of this church, and of the people buried in it, is provided in a fascinating publication by Bill Lawson (1991), the well-known genealogist and historian of the Western Isles. This book researches the history of the individuals commemorated on the inscribed memorial stones in the church (see 4.26.1 'Summary' above) and also the general historical background of Aignish, in the 17th to 19th centuries.

As the sea has eroded the coastline, the graveyard to the north of the church has been lost to the sea. The church is now situated immediately on the coastline, and in 2000 historical and archaeological evaluations were undertaken at the site in advance of improving the coastal protection and the fabric of the church building (Addyman 2000a):

A general site assessment was undertaken, reviewing the historical source material and evaluating the standing fabric of the ruined church in advance of conservation works and coastal protection (eg installing of arch supports in the church; Knott 2000b). A reassessment of the phasing of the church is presented whereby the chancel area is felt to represent the earliest surviving fabric, perhaps of the late 14th century. This was subsequently extended (nave walls) and the east gable rebuilt. The final phase represents the reconstruction of the W end and the addition of a substantial burial aisle, perhaps in the later 16th century.

Further work was undertaken two years later (Addyman 2002):

Investigation of the wall heads of the ruin was undertaken in October 2002 in order to identify any surviving evidence for the form of early roof structures in advance of possible reinstatement.

Turf was removed from the wall head at the NE corner of the main body of the church, revealing five sockets within the wall head masonry demonstrating the position of roof trusses at 0.75m intervals. Timber impressions survived to demonstrate that these had been roughly dressed and some 14–17cm in section. The lower ends of the rafters had been held in place by an ashlar-piece/sole-piece assembly. The easternmost rafter was embedded within the wall head of the E gable. The latter had apparently been detailed with flat skewes and projecting skew-putts. This was considered to represent evidence for the last surviving roof structure over the main body of the church, which was itself not the original structure. The junction with the existing W aisle roof was also examined. The internal cross wall dividing the two chambers relates to the construction of the W aisle, and some provision must have been made for the drop in level between the main roof to the E and the lower secondary roof structure to the W. In the 19th century, as the church became progressively derelict, the roof of the central part of the church was lost and its former junction with the W aisle roof structure (which was retained) was remaining in situ on either side. On the N side a few West Highland type slates also remain in place.

The W aisle roof structure differed in details to that to the E, in that horizontal sockets at the upper internal wall heads showed that the roof had had wall plates on either side to which had presumably been affixed an ashlar-piece/sole-piece assembly. With a probable high collar it is possible that this chamber's roof structure had originally been lined with boards and painted.

Research by the Papar Project (<http://www.paparproject.org.uk/hebrides6.html>):

Ui appears to have remained as an independent parsonage until immediately

prior to the Reformation (Mackenzie 1903, 521; Cowan 1967, 64). The former parish church of Ui, dedicated to St. Columba and under the patronage of the Macleods of Lewis, was the principal church of Lewis throughout the medieval and early modern period. The last service was held there in 1828, after which it was replaced by the government church at Knock (*FES* vii, 202). The last person to be buried inside the church, around 1900, was a Margaret Macleod of Bayble (Anon. c.1960, 35 [cited in Crawford 2005]). Margaret Macleod was well over 100 years of age, but the reasons for her burial within the church are not known. In spite of its generally accepted dedication to Columba, the site at Ui was believed by W C Mackenzie to have traditionally been founded by St. Catan in the sixth or seventh century (Mackenzie 1919, 137); the OPS places this church in Stornoway, perhaps picking up on Martin Martin's mention of a 'Stornway Church', but it is possible that it could refer to Teampull Rubha Chirc (Martin 1703 [2003]: 28; OPS, 381–2; Carol Knott, pers comm; Crawford 2005 (Site H 6): 6).

Between 2008 and 2012 conservation and consolidation work was undertaken at the site to improve the management of this important medieval church by Urras Eaglais na h-Aoidhe. This included a standing building survey in 2010 that identified seven phases of building from the 13th/14th centuries onwards (Knott & Thacker 2011):

Seven phases of building were identified, facilitated by classification of the mortars and plasters. Earliest was a 9.7m long fragment of a previously unrecognised earlier church identified within the N wall, built primarily of local coarse red sandstone and bonded in shell-lime mortar, presumably dating to the 13th or 14th centuries. This was extended at some time probably in the 14th century, creating a large parish church of simple rectangular plan divided between nave and chancel by a rood screen with loft over, lit by



a rood loft light. Later, a lean-to sacristy or burial aisle was added to the S wall, and two adjacent pointed-arched doorways, both with dressings of fine sandstone, were inserted. After a series of further alterations, the aisle was removed, and a substantial chapel/burial aisle with round-headed arches was added to the W end. This work involved the first use of limestone mortar, as well as roof level detailing such as corbels, kneelers and at least one rainwater spout. After further remodelling and use of the nave, the main church roof was eventually removed with some care, the W annex converted to a stand-alone chapel, and a new area set aside for burial monuments in the former chancel in the 18th century. By the mid-19th century the building was effectively abandoned and the remaining roof lost, although the surrounding graveyard continued in use.

This was followed by improvement works by the Urras Eaglais na h-Aoidhe, which included the installation of a roof over the western chapel and Perspex covering for the windows, further improved management within the church building (eg Spall 2014), and the commissioning of a geophysical resistivity and GPR survey, which was completed in August/September 2017 (Ovenden 2018):

NB 48469 32260 A programme of geophysical survey was undertaken, 22 August – 1 September 2017, within Eaglais na h-Aoidhe and its graveyard as part of wider research into the graveyard and its burials. The Church of St Columba, Eye (Eaglais Chalum Chille or Eaglais na h-Aoidhe/Uidh) is largely from the 14th century with 16th-century enlargements.

The survey aimed to identify possible buried grave slabs and potential earlier features in the church and graveyard, an area of c0.5ha. Survey was also extended beyond the existing graveyard walls, covering an additional 0.5ha, with the aim of identifying the potential earlier limits of the graveyard. The resistance and ground penetrating radar (GPR) surveys detected a

wealth of anomalies which supported as well as complemented each other. The resistance survey and limited GPR survey beyond the current graveyard walls predominately identified agricultural trends, natural variations and rabbit activity. However, to the E of the extant graveyard wall a high resistance anomaly consistent with potential wall footings has been detected which may indicate an original eastern extent of the graveyard.

Within the graveyard the results can be broadly divided into responses from burials, possible earlier limits of the graveyard, potential structural features and natural variations. Generally, the resistance survey has not clearly identified burials. However, the GPR survey has identified a wealth of burials. The GPR shows a clear distinction between burials in the W and the E of the graveyard with the responses in the western half much more coherent and regular. There are indications of a boundary suggesting the western original limit of the graveyard prior to the western extension.

Of possible interest is an apparent lack of burials in the area of a group of family burial plots which lie on an area of high ground in the SE of the graveyard. It may simply be that the relatively steep slope in this area precluded burials, but a resistance anomaly suggestive of a possible structure has also been detected in this area. However, interpretation of a possible structure is extremely tentative. Furthermore, the remnants of two possible mausoleums and/or burial plots have been tentatively identified in the data, although one appears to have been removed. Unfortunately, no clearly defined structures were identified within or adjacent to the church. This is thought to be due to the extensive amount of ground disturbance and tumble within these areas.

Archive: Rose Geophysical Consultants

Funder: The Ui Church Trust funded by Heritage Lottery Fund

#### 4.26.3 Site description

The site is as described in all sources cited in the desktop study above. The church is now a popular visitor attraction and there are several leaflets and display boards at the site. The remains of an earlier churchyard wall can be seen in the banks of the burn to the west of the church, and rough stones seen to the south of the church are suggested in a leaflet at the site to be a possibly earlier boundary to the graveyard.

### 4.27 Site 27. Teampall Chùistein, Garrabost, Point

#### 4.27.1 Summary

The site of *Teampall Chùisdean* (St Constantine's) is in an area of fenced crofts in Garrabost in Point, probably on slightly irregular ground on the brow of the hill in the area of pre-crofting settlement. *Tobar Chùisdean* (Constantine's well) is situated at the top of the cliff line and falls from here down the cliff to the beach below.

#### 4.27.2 Desktop study

NB 5163 3355

Canmore ID: 4395

The church of 'St Cutchou in Garbost' is listed by Martin Martin (1703: 27). He also says, 'The well at St Cowsten's church, never boils any kind of meat, tho' it be kept on fire a whole day' (ibid: 7).

The *Statistical Account* of 1845 (Cameron 1845: 115) states, 'In the district of Ui, the ruins of another chapel are visible; it was dedicated to St Cowstan', and 'Part of the walls of St Aula remain; but the chapel near Garrabost is levelled' (ibid: 126).

This site is identified from OS1, and in the ONB, 21A: 41 is described thus:

This chapel was situated on a piece of sloping ground on the north of and adjacent to 'Alt Buaille Luice' at about 4 chains west of Tobar an Leothaid. About 40 years ago the remaining walls of this ancient edifice were completely levelled by the people of this neighbourhood, who used the stones for building the walls of huts etc. At present there is not the smallest vestige of anything on the ground that would

lead a person to believe that such a building had stood there. The above mentioned well is the nearest to where the chapel stood.

Muir (1861: 167) records:

Of St. Cowstan's chapel, once in Garrabost ... nothing now remains, the site having sometime since been ploughed and put under crop; but the holy well, still remembered as that consecrated by the patron saint, and regarded as the sweetest water in the place, still trickles down its steep declivity to the shore.

The RCAHMS list St Cowstan's Chapel and well as a site (RCAHMS 1928: 17).

The OS visited the site on 23 April 1964, when the whole area was found to be divided up into small plots by barbed wire fences.

MacLeod (1997: 34) records that some think the dedication is to St Constantine.

#### 4.27.3 Site description

There is now nothing to be seen at the site of Teampall Chùisdean, as marked on the OS1 map. The area is as described by the OS in 1964, being covered now by the crofts of Garrabost. The site of the Teampall is on slightly irregular ground that can be seen on the brow of the hill in the crofts. This may indicate the area of pre-crofting settlement at Garrabost, and it would be likely that the chapel would be situated in this same area, close to the settlement. Tobar Chùisdean, however, is still well known. It is situated at the top of the cliff line at NB 61368 33760, and falls from here down the cliff to the beach below. Immediately to the north of the beach is Dun Mòr, a promontory fort and Scheduled Ancient Monument.

#### 4.27.4 Local information

Mr Macleod of Garrabost was kind enough to take the author to Tobar Chùisdean, which lies at the end of his croft. Mr Macleod grew up in Garrabost and has memories of when everyone would drink from the well. His recollection is that the chapel is on the brow of the hill, where there is old settlement.



## 4.28 Site 28. Teampall Rubha Chirc, Bayble, Point

### 4.28.1 Summary

*Teampall Rubha Chirc* is located about half a mile east of Chicken Head, on the south coast of Point. The drystone wall footings of the rectangular chapel building measure roughly 5m × 6m and are set within a small rectangular stone and turf enclosure (Illus 70). They are surrounded by smaller sub-rectangular turf and stone cellular buildings, most of which can be seen to post-date the enclosure wall, and by the remains of cultivation (*feannagan*, or ‘lazy beds’). There are also later, roughly rectangular shielings outwith the enclosure to the north. The chapel walls stand to 0.6m at the most, and the interior is full of rubble collapse. The site is also known as *Taigh an t-Sagairt* (the Priest’s House) or *Uaighe nighean an t-Sagairt* (the grave of the priest’s daughter). The two-chambered, sub-rectangular stone and turf building immediately west of the chapel, and later than it, is possibly a corn-drying kiln.

### 4.28.2 Desktop study

NB 50786 29213

Canmore ID: 4385

The first mention of this site is by Dean Monro in 1549:

Fabill. Besouth this (the Pygmies Isle) [ie Luchruban, Ness], at the southeist shore of the Lewis, lyes ane ile, callit Ellan Fabill, verey guid for waike store and fisching, pertaining to M’Cloyd of the Lewis (Monro 1549 [1994]: 514).

Interestingly, it is not listed by Martin Martin.

This site is shown as a *Teampull* on OS1, and in the ONB, 28A: 25 is described thus:

The ruins of a small building on the sea shore near Ceann na Cearc. Tradition says it was a Catholic Chapel at some period. There is nothing visible that would lead to that conclusion but the ruins of what seem to have been a small hut.



Illus 70 General view of Teampall Rubha Chirc, from the north-east

The inlet below the chapel-site is named *Ath an Teampuill* on OS1, and in the ONB, 28A: 44 it is described thus:

A small bay or creek on the seashore on the edge of this Bay there is still to be seen the remains of an old churchyard in the centre of which stands the ruins of an old house which tradition says was built by a Brother and Sister who having had connection with each other were banished from the north part of the island and came here for refuge. Afterwards a child was born which they threw from this place from this circumstance the name originated.

The RCAHMS visited the site on 23 June 1914:

Teampull, Chicken Head – About  $\frac{5}{8}$  mile, east of Chicken Head, in a small enclosure on the left bank of a small rivulet near the edge of a cliff which rises more than 100 feet out of the sea, are the foundations of a stone and mud building measuring about 18 feet in length and 15 feet in breadth, orientated west-north-west and east-south-east. In the vicinity are the foundations of other structures, which have the appearance of ruined shielings (RCAHMS 1928: 14).

Fragments of hand-made pottery were found at the site in 1924 (Donations 1924).

The decoration on a sherd from Eye, Lewis, in NMAS was made by impressions of a swivel-ring headed pin of a type dated by Stevenson between the 7th and 10th centuries (Stevenson 1955; Young 1955).

The OS visited the site on 22 April 1964 and found the site as described by the RCAHMS:

The walls are well-built, some of the stone being roughly dressed, and are 3ft 9 ins. thick. The entrance is not evident. The building stands in a rectangular garth, as shown on OS1/2500 map, bounded on the north by a rock outcrop. Its east and south walls are evident, but its west wall has been destroyed by the superimposition of five shieling-type structures, which have presumably used it as a quarry.

The site was scheduled in 1992. Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 5333. The document describes the monument as consisting of:

the remains of a chapel of Early Medieval date situated near the coast where a stream flows over the edge of the cliff. The site is known in Gaelic as ‘Tigh an t-Sagairt’ (The Priest’s House) or ‘Uaighe nighean an t-Sagairt’ (the grave of the priest’s daughter). The footings of the single chambered oblong chapel are no more than 0.5m high. It is orientated WNW and ESE, measuring 6.6m by 5.1m externally over walls 1.2–1.6m thick. The walls are well built of large roughly dressed stones. Surrounding the chapel are the remains of a rectangular wall of turf and stone. The wall is well defined in the S (15.5m from the chapel) and E (23.5m) where it runs uphill to end at a rock outcrop. The wall is obscured in the W where later shieling huts have utilised its material. The edge of the stream bank, where it forms the boundary of the enclosure, has been built up with earth and stones.

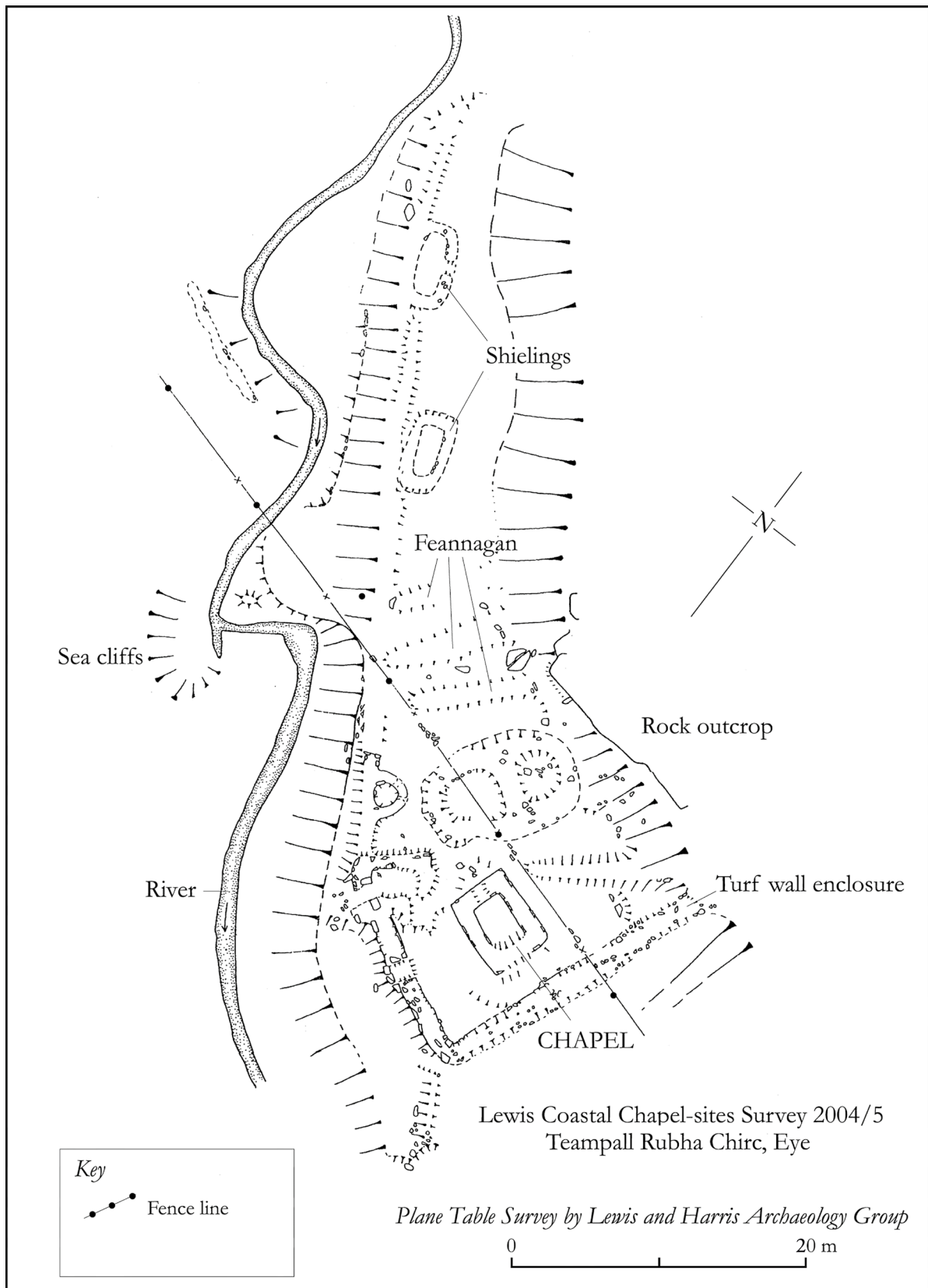
Carol Knott, with the Lewis and Harris Archaeology Group, conducted a plane table survey at the site (Illus 71):

A plan of the chapel was drawn, and a survey of associated remains completed as part of an ongoing project. This drystone chapel, 5.7 × 4.8m, externally, sits within a walled garth, probably originally rectangular. The west side of the enclosure seems to have been remodelled with the insertion of a NE–SW aligned two-chambered cellular building, and a number of other structures and field system. Damage to the site from marine erosion, sheep tracks and rabbits being monitored (Knott 2000c).

The site is included in the Papar Project (Crawford 2005; see Site H1 <http://www.paparproject.org.uk/hebrides1.html>), in which its location is described as follows:

The townships of Upper and Lower Pabail/ Bayble (on some earlier maps written ‘Bible’ or ‘Fabill’), lie on the south side of the Eye peninsula, to the east of Stornoway in Lewis.





**Illus 71** Lewis and Harris Archaeology Group plane table survey of Teampall Rubha Chirc (Knott 2000c; reproduced by kind permission of the author)

Two small islands – Eilean mòr Phabaill and Eilean beàg Phabaill – lie at the south end of Pabail bay, with a single island, Eilean a Chàise (Cheese Island), at the north end.

To the west and the northeast of the bay, the coastline extends as a series of cliffs, punctuated by small bays and inlets. Gob na Creige (Ceann na Circ on the OS 1st Edition map) or Chicken Head, c. 3.4km west of the Pabail islands, defines the southernmost point of the Eye peninsula. When sailing up the east side of Lewis, Gob na Creige – and the little offshore island of Eilean na Crotach, which lies midway between the headland and Pabail – form two of the principal landmarks.

Just to the east of Eilean na Crotach, on the edge of the cliffs, is an unnamed chapel (c. 2.5km west of the Pabail islands), the only site of ecclesiastical significance on the

lands of Pabail and close to its boundary with Suardail, the next township to the west.

#### 4.28.3 Site description

This site was visited but not subjected to full walkover survey as this has already been done by the Lewis and Harris Archaeology Group, in tandem with a plane table survey, and the results lodged in the SMR (see 4.28.2 ‘Desktop study’ above) and DES (Knott 2000c). The site was found to be as described in the Scheduled Ancient Monument description in the SMR, and as in the DES entry. It is unusual in being a single chapel building, within a small enclosure, with later, smaller cellular buildings around it, post-dating the enclosure wall, and outwith it (Illus 72). The east/west aligned chapel walls stand to 0.6m at the most, and the interior is full of rubble collapse. The site was visited with local archaeologist Carol Knott, who completed the plane table survey of the site with members of



Illus 72 Teampall Rubha Chirc, from the east



the Lewis and Harris Archaeology Group, and also published a description of the site in DES (Knott 2000c). Carol kindly gave the project a copy of the plane table survey for inclusion in this report (see Illus 71 above).

The site at Teampall Rubha Chirc is of particular note due to its proximity to the settlement of Bayble in Point (Pabail – a Norse *papa* place name). The name of the site itself is translated as ‘Chicken Head Chapel’, from the Gaelic for chicken (*cearc*). However, it is more likely to have derived from the word *circ* (= church, cf kirk). The cellular buildings at this site may all post-date the chapel, although this is not possible to investigate fully without excavation. Nearby there is also recorded *Geodha Mhor an Teampuill*, *Geodha Beag an Teampuill*, *Rubha an Teampuill* and *Ceann na Circ*. The site is also on the Pabil headland, near *Beinn Phabaill*, and the settlements of Upper and Lower Bayble. This is one of several occurrences of the Norse *papa* place name in the Western Isles (see also Site 16,

St Peter’s on Pabbay, and Site 13, St Donan’s on Little Bernera).

This site has now been included in the Papar Project led by Dr Barbara Crawford, who has researched the site and its history in relation to the place name at Bayble (Crawford 2005; see Site H1 <http://www.paparproject.org.uk/hebrides1.html>).

On revisiting the site after the excavation of a corn-drying kiln (*àth*) on Dùn Èistean, Ness in 2006 (see R C Barrowman 2015: 134–45, 384–6, 402), and the completion of the LCCS topographic survey of the corn-drying kiln adjacent to the footings of Teampall Pheadair, Shader in 2008 (see 4.8 ‘Site 8. Teampall Pheadair, Shader’ and 4.8.4 ‘Topographic survey 2007’ above), the author suggests that the structure surveyed by the Lewis and Harris Archaeology Group that lies immediately west of the ruined chapel building may be a corn-drying kiln (Illus 73). It is situated in a similar position to other medieval/post-medieval corn kilns, ie away from contemporary



**Illus 73** Corn-drying kiln to the west of the *teampall*, from the north



settlement and near a source of stone (the old chapel). The presence of a kiln may be indicated by the name *Ath an Teampuill* given to a small point of land immediately to the west of the chapel on the OS1 map (from the Gaelic, *àth* for kiln; see Dwelly 1994), although equally it could be from *àth*, Gaelic for 'ford', as Richard Cox, in his place-names study for the Papar Project, suggests ('the ford of the church'), with location uncertain (Cox 2005: 12). However, the stream to the west of the site is easily stepped over, and even in full spate would be unlikely to require a ford, so it would seem just as likely that the name here refers to a kiln if a ford is not present (Richard Cox, pers comm).

Cox also draws attention to *leabaidh a' mhinisteir*, 'the minister's bed', outwith the site. This is located to the west of *Teampall Rubha Chirc*, on the cliffs at NB 49939 29290, and is described in the ONB, 74: 49 as:

A Point of Land on the sea shore the name of this place originates from the circumstance of a minister having taken shelter here for many weeks from the enemy at the Period of the Persecution of the Covenanters. There is no way of getting to this place unless by water as the rocks project over it which secures it from the Eye of persons walking along the High Water Mark.

Crawford also draws attention to the township of Eagleton, which although a relatively late foundation, has a name that may derive from the Gaelic *eaglais* (church) (Crawford 2005 (Site H6): 3).

#### 4.29 Site 29. Teampall Aulaidh, Gress

##### 4.29.1 Summary

*Teampall Aulaidh* is a small rectangular church, with the walls standing to gable height, in the cemetery



Illus 74 Teampall Aulaidh, Gress, from the south-west



on the west side of the main road at the south end of Gress (Illus 74). The church measures roughly 6m × 4m, with a window in the west wall, and a small door and window in the south wall. Over the door is a stone with the date 1681, which may be the year the building underwent repairs, and the initials IB MK (see below). There are three graves inside the church and modern lean-tos added to the external east and north walls as the burial ground is still in use.

#### 4.29.2 Desktop study

NB 49020 41540

Canmore ID: 4337

Martin Martin lists the church of 'St Aula in Grease' (1703: 27).

The Rev John Cameron in 1833 records in the *Statistical Account* of 1845 (Cameron 1845: 115):

But, from time out of memory, the parish consisted of three districts, viz. Stornoway, Gress, and Ui. In each district, there was a place of worship erected; and the ruined walls of two chapels are still remaining, one at Ui, the other at Gress ... The church of Stornoway was dedicated to St Lennan, that of Ui to St Collum, and that of Gress to St Aula.

Gress church is shown on OS1, and in the ONB, 15C: 33 is described thus:

This church which is now in ruins was a plain stone building of an oblong form without any ornamental work whatever. The form of the walls are still in middling repair. There is an unwallled burying ground attached to it. It is one of the most ancient places of worship in the islands.

MacGibbon & Ross (1896: 83, based on Muir 1885: 44) write about 'St Aula, Gress':

Church, 18 feet 10 inches long by 14 feet wide, slightly dilapidated. One window narrow and flat-headed in west end, and in south wall flat-headed door and window. Over door a stone with date 1685\*, in which year the building probably underwent repairs.

\* The date, although now eroded, is 1681, not 1685.

The RCAHMS visited the site on 24 June 1914:

Church, Gress – The walls and gables of this simple church are still standing. It is 19 feet by 13 feet 11 inches internally and is orientated south of east. Above the door is the date 1681 with the initials IB MK There are no particular features (fig 17) (RCAHMS 1928: 14).

The OS visited the site on 20 April 1964 and found the site as described by the RCAHMS, and the description over the door weathered though still decipherable. It is also described that:

The door is on the S wall with a window to the W of it. The only other window is in the W wall. There are three graves inside the church. Modern lean-to structures have been added to the exterior of the E and N walls to house biers and other equipment related to the surrounding burial ground, which is still in use.

Talbot (1973) records in *Discovery and Excavation Scotland*:

No mention is made of the slight earthwork enclosure around the churchyard or of two early stones standing between the church and the road. One is roughly shaped into a cross and compares in size and form with that shown on pl. IIIa in Lamont, W D *Ancient and Medieval Sculptured Stones of Islay*. The other is fragmentary and consists of one arm of a cross which had an open circle instead of a boss.

However, this is a case of mistaken identity as there is no such enclosure around the churchyard, and no early stones standing between the church and the road.

#### 4.29.3 Site description

Teampall Aulaidh is as described and is well cared for and monitored by the Gress cemetery committee and is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument (no. 5343). The walls stand to gable height, in a hollow

in a large mound of sandy material (now grassed over) at the south end of the cemetery. In a hollow on the east side of the building small, unmarked, gravestones and rubble can be seen, so it is clear that material has built up after the church has gone out of use. The rectangular church has a window in the west wall, and a small door and window in the south wall. The lintel over the door has the date 1681, and the initials IB MK, carved into it, although the stone is now very eroded. There are three graves inside the church, and a small font or stone trough. Modern lean-tos have been added to the external east and north walls for housing materials for the modern cemetery.

#### 4.30 Site 30. Teampall Mhìcheil; Cladh Mhìcheil, North Tolsta

##### 4.30.1 Summary

*Teampall Mhìcheil* once stood in the north-east corner of the graveyard *Cladh Mhìcheil*, by the shore

at *Tràigh Mor*, North Tolsta (Illus 75). Nearby is the area of old settlement. Macdonald (1984) records that parts of the church walls were still standing in 1820 (see 4.30.2 'Desktop study' below).

##### 4.30.2 Desktop study

NB 5440 4801

Canmore ID: 4405

Martin Martin lists the church of 'St Michael in Tollosta' (1703: 27).

Cladh Mhìcheil is shown on OS1, and in the ONB, 10D: 27 is described thus:

A burying ground on a small sandy place prominently situated on the eastern side of Allt Lochs Lisabhat. It seems to be an ancient spot and is marked by a number of rude stones varying in height from one to three feet, placed in it as memorials to the dead. Tradition states that in this place a Temple once stood, all trace of which has long since ceased to exist.



Illus 75 Cladh Mhìcheil, Tolsta, from the north-east



Next to this site, to the north-west, is a small low cultivated hill called *Sean Bhaile* (Old Village).

The RCAHMS list this church under 'sites', and Muir (1885: 43–4) mentions it but writes that there is now no trace of it.

The OS visited the site on 14 June 1964 and records that:

The tradition of the church is still known locally. It is believed to have stood at approximately NB 5440 4801, near the N corner of the present fenced cemetery, which is still in use, but the area is covered with blown sand and there is no trace of it nor of the old graveyard wall, although many rough, weathered gravestones still survive. The name 'Cladh Mhìcheil' is still known, applying to the old burial ground.

Donald Macdonald from Tolsta, who wrote a book about the village in 1984, states:

There is now no trace of the old chapel, dedicated to St Michael ... which stood about fifty yards up from the north east corner [of the graveyard], where its large foundation stones can still be found. In 1820 part of its walls were still standing and ponies used to shelter here on cold winter nights (Macdonald 1984: 55).

#### 4.30.3 Site description

The north-east corner of Cladh Mhìcheil, where the chapel is said to have been, is a clear, mossy corner of the graveyard, devoid of newer gravestones, although there are lines of unmarked stones protruding through the mossy turf.

### 4.31 Site 31. Teampall Chaluim Chille, ?Garry

#### 4.31.1 Summary

This site has not been located. Martin Martin lists a church of 'St Collum in Gariou' (1703: 27), between 'St Michael in Tollosta' (Site 30) and 'St Ronan in Eorobie' (Site 1).

#### 4.31.2 Desktop study

This site is not located, but it could be located in Garry. Also there is a stream recorded to the north of Cladh

Mhìcheil in the ONB (10D: 11) as *Alt Chalum Chille* in Tolsta, although this is marked as *Allt Chalum Ghille* on the OS1, and subsequent, maps.

MacLeod (1997: 37) cites the *Origines parochiales Scotiae*, 1851, which places the chapel-site at *Cnoc a' Ghearraidh Ghuirm*, in Coll to the south, but it is not known whether this is correct.

Robson (2003: 41) is of the opinion that this chapel was situated in Fivepenny, Ness where Blaeu's atlas records the place name *Garinen*.

### 4.32 Site 32. Eilean an Tighe (Eilean Taighe), Shiantas

#### 4.32.1 Summary

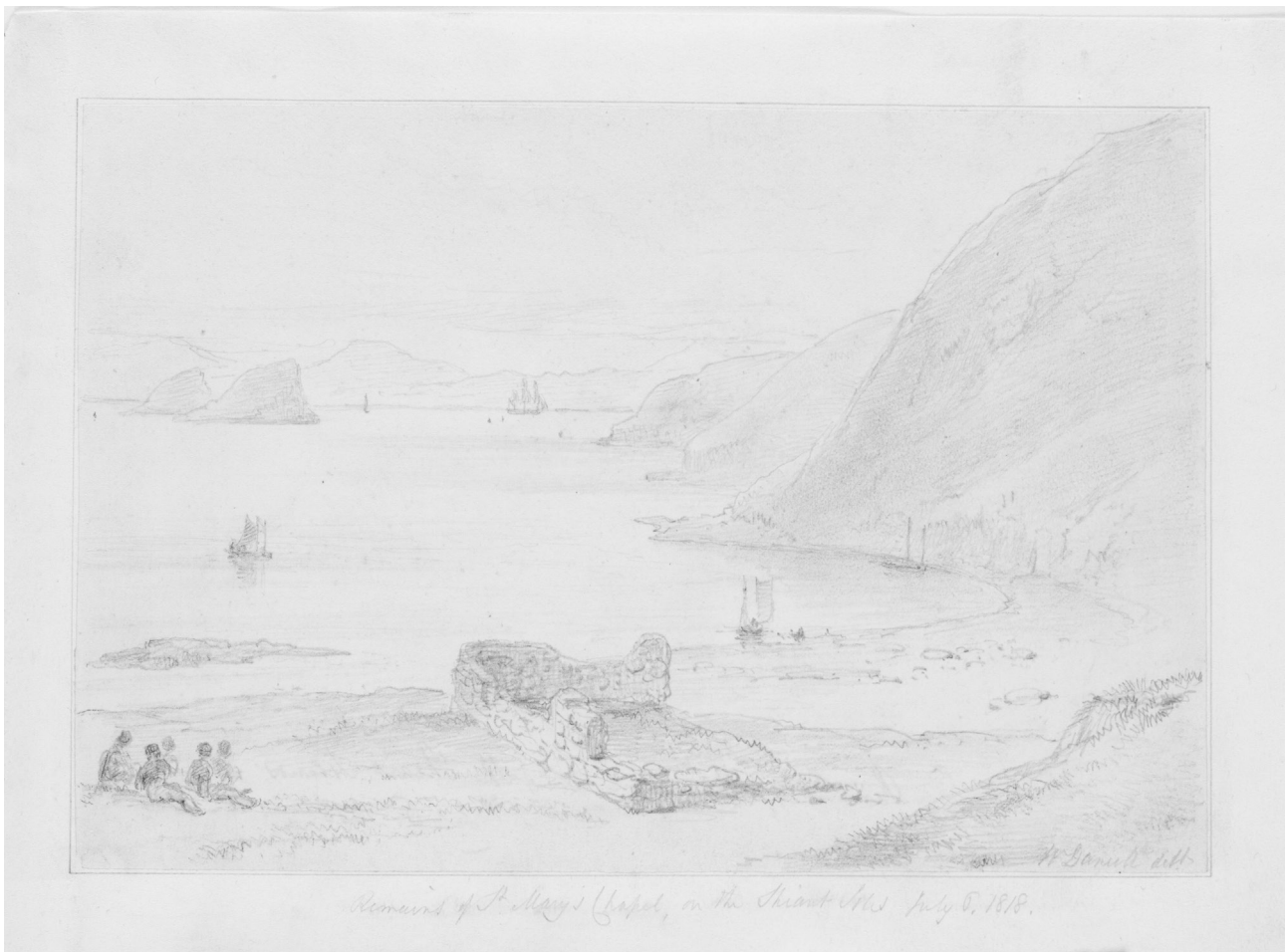
In July 2004 the author had the opportunity to visit *Eilean Garbh* (Rough Island) and *Eilean an Tighe* (House Island) of the Shiant Isles, during excavations directed by Pat Foster, formerly of Sheffield University (SEARCH), now based in the Czech Republic at the Institute of Archaeology at Prague. The work had been ongoing at the site since 2000, when the owner of the islands, Adam Nicolson, invited Foster's team to do an archaeological survey and excavation on the islands. The Shiant Isles Project (SHIP) was initiated in 2000 and continued annually until 2010 (Foster 2000; 2001; 2004a; 2004b; 2009; Foster & Hooper 2005a; 2005b; Foster et al 2006; Dagg 2007; Foster & Dagg 2008; Best & Mulville 2010; Foster et al 2012). The aim of the project was to attempt, within the logistical and environmental constraints, to reveal the total archaeological landscape of the islands. To this end archaeological site surveys, environmental assessments and archaeological excavations were undertaken. The work has been reported in a series of interim reports published on the Shiant Isles internet home page <http://www.shiantisles.net>. There has been no excavation of the chapel-site on Eilean an Tighe, although a cross-incised 'pillow stone' has been recovered from early occupation layers in one of the blackhouse ruins excavated on the island (see Foster 2000; Fisher 2001: 116).

#### 4.32.2 Desktop study

NG 4183 9766

Canmore ID: 11411

There are traditions of early church sites on each of the three principal islands of the Shiantas – Eilean



**Illus 76** Sketch by William Daniell (1818) showing St Mary's chapel, Eilean an Tighe, Shiant Islands (© National Library of Scotland, reproduced with permission: Licensed content 000-000-578-586-R)

an Tighe (House Island), Eilean Garbh (Rough Island) and *Eilean Mhuire* (Mary Island) – as well as a tradition that the islands as whole are considered to be sacred (Daniell 1820 [2006]: 198) due to the Gaelic name for the islands, *Na h-Eileanan Seunta*, from the Gaelic *seunta* (sacred, charmed, blessed; see Dwelly 1994). Of the three islands, the chapel on Eilean an Tighe is the most described by visitors and antiquarians.

Martin Martin says, 'Island-More hath a chapel in it dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and is fruitful in Corn and Grass' (Martin 1703: 26). There has been confusion that Martin is referring here to Eilean Mhuire (see 4.34 'Site 34. Eilean Mhuire, Shiant Islands' below), but from his description it is clear that he is referring to the largest island of the group (hence 'Island-More'), which is Eilean an Tighe (formerly known as *Eilean na Cille*, Church Island; see also discussion in Nicolson 2001: 144–5).

Macculloch describes, on the west side of Eilean na Kily (Eilean na Cille), 'a ruinous square enclosure, the remains of a house ... The smallness of this building makes it probable that it was really the cell of some ascetic monk or hermit' (Macculloch 1824: vol 3, 327).

Muir (1885: 56) wrote, 'On the west side ... On this level space there are traces of a burying-ground, and the foundation of what seems to have been a chapel of small size.'

This site is identified as ruins and a graveyard at the north end of the island from OS1, and in the ONB, 49B: 26 it is described as 'The largest of the Shiant Islands ... It contains one ruin which was built of stones and mortar and which is said to have been a place of worship formerly and a graveyard latterly.'

A sketch by William Daniell, dated 1818, shows the stone footings of a small church, which he calls St Mary's, in a position which can be clearly



identified as being close to that of the later cottage in the lower of the two settlement areas not on Eilean Mhuire, but on Eilean an Tighe (Illus 76; see Nicolson 2001: 144–7). Daniell had visited the islands in the summer of 1815 and also made sketches of the cliffs of Eilean Mhuire (see 4.6.2 ‘Desktop study’ above; Daniell 1820 [2006]: 198).

Murdo Mackenzie’s map of ‘The Lewis’ shows the Shiant islands, naming the southern one as ‘Ilanakily’ (Island of the cell or chapel) (cited in Robson 2003: note 38).

The OS visited the site on 7 July 1969:

The area described by Muir, centred at NG 418 976, is occupied by a shepherd’s house and various dry-stone enclosures of recent date. According to the shepherd (who lives on the mainland but has visited the island regularly for over 40 years), a burial ground is thought to have existed at NG 4183 9766, where a human skull was dug up about 30 years ago, but no trace of it remains. He knew nothing of the chapel described by Muir but stated that visitors to the island had identified an alleged chapel amongst the buildings of the deserted township at NG 419 972. No evidence of this chapel could be found.

The RCAHMS visited the site on 30 August 2000 and recorded:

NGR: NG 4183 9726 Eilean an Tighe, Shiant Isles. A carved stone set face downwards was found in a house-ruin of post-medieval date, 500m SSE of the cottage at the isthmus, during archaeological excavation in 2000. The stone is a rounded beach-pebble of Torridonian sandstone, 0.27m by 0.24m and 0.12m thick. On the upper surface an equal-armed cross incised with firm V-section grooves is contained in a 0.18m circle formed by a more rounded groove up to 22mm in width. It bears a remarkable resemblance to the pebbles or cloche breaca on Inishmurray (Co. Sligo, Eire), which were used for ritual cursing. While most are undecorated and some bear spiral ornament, one bears a very similar encircled cross. Information from Pat Foster (Institute of Archaeology, Prague), and Mary MacLeod (Western Isles Council)

per RCAHMS (Ian Fisher) 30 August 2000. The Commissioners are indebted to Mr A Nicolson for making this stone available for study, and to Dr M Macleod for information about the site. An excavation report by P Foster (Institute of Archaeology, Prague) is forthcoming (Fisher 2001: 116).

There are burials recorded in the vicinity of the area of settlement, and a low mound which lies just to the north of the present bothy on Eilean an Tighe has been identified as a possible cemetery mound (Nicolson 2001: 145; Foster 2004a; Hooper 2006; see Site H31 at <https://www.shiantisles.net/archives>).

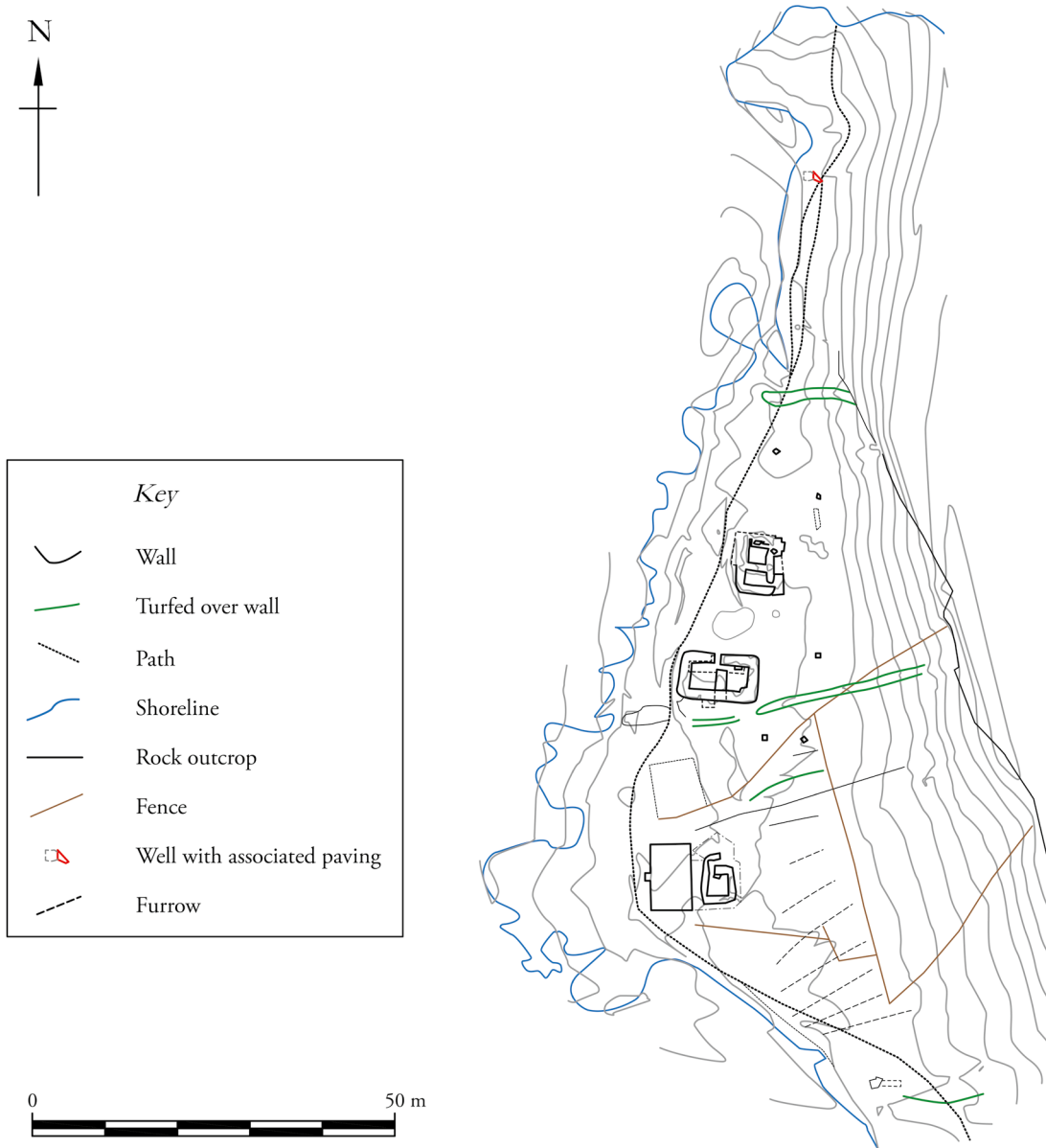
All work undertaken by Pat Foster and the Shiant Isles Project (SHIP) is reported on the Shiant Isles website (<https://www.shiantisles.net/archives>; see also Nicolson 2001). Archaeological work continued annually at the site from 2000 to 2010, and included site surveys, environmental assessments and archaeological excavations. The three main islands of the group have been surveyed, and the sites on each island were numbered from one onwards, but with the prefix of HI – House Island, RI – Rough Island and MI – Mary Island to distinguish between them. Excavations concentrated on the lower (coastal) and upper settlement areas of Eilean an Tighe, or House Island (Sites HI 1–13 and HI 14–18 respectively), and on site RI 41 on Garbh Eilean, or Rough Island, which has the place name of *Annat* (see 4.33 ‘Site 33. Garbh Eilean (Eilean Garbh), Shiantis’ below).

#### 4.32.3 Topographic survey 2005

*Janet Hooper*

During the 2005 excavation season (28 May–25 June) topographic survey was undertaken on and around the chapel-site on Eilean an Tighe under the auspices of the Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites Survey.

The individual settlement areas on Eilean an Tighe are relatively small and discrete and could be recorded without the need to establish complicated traverses. In areas where there were few archaeological remains, additional points were taken to ensure that the topography could be re-created accurately. The data was typed up and downloaded into LISCAD for reduction into planimetric form. This enabled an



**Illus 77** Topographic survey of settlement area on Eilean an Tighe, Shianta, 2005

overall map of each settlement area to be produced and a contour model created. This plot was then taken into AutoCAD to facilitate the addition of further detail (for example, site numbers) and other artwork.

The survey results provided a means of documenting the current condition of the remains as a benchmark against which ongoing damage by the black rat population could be measured. A framework of fixed survey points was established to enable the survey to be extended in the future, as well as to help in locating excavation trenches. The topographical

survey focused on the upper as well as the lower settlement area on Eilean an Tighe. All archaeological features were plotted, the locations of the excavation trenches and test pits were recorded, and the extent of coastal erosion around the cottage was documented.

### 4.33 Site 33. Garbh Eilean (Eilean Garbh), Shianta

#### 4.33.1 Summary

The site with the place name *Àirighean na h-Annaid* is a settlement of two confirmed stone-built



roundhouses within a D-shaped enclosure set at the south coastal margin of Garbh Eilean (Foster et al 2012). One of the houses was excavated over a number of seasons by Foster et al, producing evidence from the Bronze Age and Iron Age from within a possible roundhouse. This was followed by the construction of early medieval stone corbel roofed huts, which the excavators suggest are linked to the *annat* place name of the site, and are dated by Pictish plain-ware pottery. These huts were shortly abandoned and the site was not occupied until reuse in the 18th century as shielings. In the late 19th or early 20th centuries the stone from these shielings was reused in the construction of a crude sheep fank and field walls nearby.

#### 4.33.2 Desktop study

NG 412 983/ NG 411 983

Canmore ID: 11409

Watson (1926: 233, 269) mentions *Annait* in the Shiant Isles (the Holy Isles), presumably in the vicinity of *Airidhean na h-Annaid* on Garbh Eilean at NG 412 983.

This site is identified as ruins in an enclosure wall on the south side of the island on OS1, and in the ONB, 49B: 10 it is described thus:

Airidhean na h-Annaid. Six small shielings in ruins, which were built of peat-moss and stone. Attached to them is a small portion of arable land. They are all enclosed by a fence.

The OS visited the site on 7 July 1969:

At Airidhean na h'Annaid, a sheltered shelf on the otherwise exposed and rugged Eilean Garbh, there is a sheepfank which overlies earlier buildings including, probably, the 'cell' seen by MacCulloch. The earlier structures have been severely robbed during the construction of the sheepfank. The most clearly defined feature is a D-shaped enclosure (?cashel) 28.0m NNW–SSE by 23.0m transversely within a boulder-faced rubble wall, 1.3m in thickness, which is situated on a steep slope and overlooked by a rock face immediately to the W. In the SW corner of the enclosure the ruins of a rectangular building can be traced, sunk slightly below

ground level, and measuring internally 3.8m N–S by 3.0m transversely, with a crude recess in the NE corner (probably MacCulloch's 'cell', possibly a shieling hut), apparently the remains of a circular structure, about 3.5m in internal diameter. Without excavation it is impossible to be certain of the nature of this site, but it is probably of early Christian monastic or eremitic origin.

Information from the RCAHMS 23 June 1997:

What may be a township comprising seven unroofed buildings, all annotated as Ruins, and what may be a head-dyke is depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (1898; sheet 49). One unroofed building, two enclosures and the remains of the head-dyke are shown on the current edition of the OS 1:10000 map (1972).

The Western Isles archaeologist records that *Annaid* suggests the presence of a holy/healing well in the vicinity (25 August 1999).

Foster (2000) records:

On Rough Island two sites, RI 2 (NG 4166 9825; NMRS NG49NW 8) and RI 41 (NG 4117 9829; NMRS NG49NW 2), were evaluated with small trenches to gain dating material. Site RI 41 is located on the S coast of the island, and is composed of an enclosure, massive stone platform and at least one circular stone-built hut. The construction of a modern sheep fank with associated enclosure walling appears to have severely damaged the earlier monuments. The original survey of the site encouraged a comparison with the platformed Neolithic site at Allt Christal on Barra. Three trenches were cut, one across the early enclosure wall and two next to the round hut on the platform. Again, only the upper peat soil was removed down to archaeological deposits but the excavation produced abundant pottery, which is not comparable with any found so far on the islands (except for a single sherd at RI 2). It is hand-made, thick, gritty and friable, fired at a low temperature and is undecorated. Trenches 1 and 2 both revealed stone faces of internal

walling belonging to two further huts. Within their compass the upper surface of collapsed walling and large flat roofing lintels were revealed. Trench 3, across the enclosure wall, showed it to be 2m wide with well-built external faces. The humped profile revealed in the section suggested that originally it may have attained considerable height. However, it is now thought that the platform is most likely a natural formation resulting from the collapse of the upper cliff face. The ceramics do not compare with other Neolithic pottery found in the Hebrides or with any of the material found so far on the Shiant, which reduces the possible date range of the material considerably. A Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age date is not out of the question, but the well-built rather massive enclosure wall may suggest an early medieval date and it is tempting to link the site with the 7th–10th-century AD Early Christian cross stone found in the excavations on House Island last year (DES 2000: 95–6) (Foster 2001).

Further excavation is reported on three years later (Foster 2004a):

During late August 2003 the SHIP project continued work at the early medieval, possibly monastic, site (RI 41) on Rough Island and the multi-period settlement site on House Island (HI 15). Activities included an environmental assessment, the investigation of the range of potting temper materials available on the islands, and the production of a set of fired clay tiles as a comparative collection. A small number of new sites were found, underlining the fact that field survey work should never be considered complete. A plane table survey was carried out of the excavation sites and their environs, and also the main settlement area on House Island.

NG 4117 9829 Garbh Eilean (Rough Island). In 2003, previously exposed deposits (DES 2001: 101–2) were removed, some samples being wet-sieved on site. Their removal revealed further earlier structural and depositional phases. Additional plain Pictish pottery of the 6th–9th century was recovered,

which suggests that although more than one phase of occupation is represented, only one cultural period is present. The identification of the site as an early monastic enclave still awaits some definitive proof, although there is some circumstantial evidence, including its *annat* place name, for its ecclesiastical credentials.

The 2004 excavations continued with the excavation of two more occupation phases. Pottery with applied wavy line decoration recovered from both phases showed that the site had passed from the Late Iron Age to the early medieval. Structural features included part of the Iron Age roundhouse wall upon which the early medieval roundhouse is built. The Iron Age central hearths appeared exactly under those of the medieval house, indicating that both roundhouses are of a similar diameter although the medieval house is less well designed and its wall circuit is more ovoid. Close to the Iron Age hearth was a square setting of vertically embedded stones containing a large stone slab: a worktop most likely used for food preparation. This discovery of a second Iron Age site on the islands suggests that the late prehistoric population may have been much higher than at first thought. The most notable finds are several Iron Age glass beads.

There was no further evidence to support the site's interpretation as a monastic enclave. We can now be fairly certain that the early medieval roundhouse was still standing and its stone corbelled roof was intact when it was used as a shieling hut sometime in the late 17th to late 18th century. Only after this time does the mass of dumped roofing lintels and walling stone appear in the record within the house. This is most likely the point at which the nearby sheep fank and field walls were constructed, using the roundhouses as a convenient stone quarry, perhaps sometime in the 19th century.

Archive to be deposited in Stornoway Museum and the NMRS.

Sponsors: Hunter Trust, Adam Nicolson (Foster 2004a).



Foster reports that following Late Bronze Age and Late Iron Age phases, there is evidence for the

construction of early medieval stone corbel roofed huts with many characteristics of an early Christian enclave, which may also be connected to the use of the *annat* place name. Occupation then appears to cease abruptly and the huts may have been left relatively abandoned until their more intensive re-use in the 18th century as a shieling (see Foster et al 2012: Introduction; see also Part 2).

#### 4.33.3 Site visit

The islands were visited between 6 and 8 August 2004, and record shots were taken of the excavation at the *Annaid* site on Garbh Eilean, and of sites around the island, although unfortunately the slides taken have since deteriorated in quality and cannot be reproduced. Garbh Eilean is joined to Eilean an Tighe by a land spit, and one of the two settlement areas on the south-west side of the island is given the name *Airidhean na h-Annaid* on the OS1 map from the word *annaid*, usually associated with the site of an early medieval church. This area lies in a sheltered hollow at the base of the valley that divides the island, and is enclosed by a D-shaped earth and stone bank, within which are the remains of two roundhouses, lying to one side of a later fank (see Hooper 2006). One of the two roundhouses has been excavated by Foster between 2002 and 2009 and are published on the project website (Foster & Dagg 2008; Foster 2009; Foster et al 2012). Six periods of use were identified dating to the Late Bronze Age, Late Iron Age, early medieval period, and the 18th/19th centuries.

### 4.34 Site 34. Eilean Mhuire, Shiants

#### 4.34.1 Summary

*Eilean Mhuire* (Mary's Island) is the third Shiant Isle in the group. Unfortunately it was not possible to visit this island during the LCCS visit to the Shiants. No excavation work has been undertaken here, although the SHIP has surveyed the island.

#### 4.34.2 Desktop study

NG 4306 9860

Canmore ID: 11408

In the 1791–9 *Statistical Account* for the parish of Lochs, the Rev Alexander Simpson (1797: 276 = OSA: 276) records:

In the channel between Lewis and Sky, a third of the way nearer the former than the latter, are three islands, named Shiant, or Holy Islands, well known to mariners; one of them, in particular, seems to have been dedicated to the Virgin Mary; it is named Moair, or Mary's Island; in it there are the remains of a Popish chapel.

This site is identified on OS1, and in the ONB, 49B: 54 it is described thus: 'Eilean Mhuire ... contains a large group of ruins and 5 or 6 enclosures ... It is said to have been a refuge of a Priest in the days of Knox.'

The OS visited the site on 7 July 1969:

The remains of this chapel situated at NG 4306 9860 consists of turf-covered wall-footings, indicating internal measurements of 4.8m E–W by 3.6m transversely. The well-built walls, apparently bonded with lime mortar, vary in thickness from 0.9m in the S and E and 1.1m in N to 1.3m in the W. The doorway which appears to have an inward splay, is at the W end of the S wall. There are traces of an enclosure wall to the W, probably the graveyard and about 10.0m to the SE there is what appears to be a later sheep-shelter. Name or dedication is not confirmed.

MacLeod (1997: 41) writes, 'Teampall Mhuire was situated on Eilean Mhuire ... Apparently it had strong limestone walls, and was situated in the graveyard.'

The owner of the islands, Adam Nicolson (2001: 144), says:

On Eilean Mhuire, which is slightly separated from the other two islands, are the stone footings of what is usually assumed to be a medieval chapel dedicated to St Mary. Eilean Mhuire is the most fertile of the three islands

and the outlines of a number of turf buildings, which are potentially medieval in date, can be seen on the flat plateau close to the chapel. The identification of this site as the chapel dedicated to the Virgin relies on the equation of Eilean Mhuire with Martin's Island-More' (see 4.32.2 'Desktop study' above).

The chapel-site has been surveyed by Pat Foster and the SHIP project, and a description of the site is published on the project website (<https://www.shiantisles.net/archives>) as follows:

MI 2 NGR NG 4308 9860

Interpretation: Chapel. Positive.

Location: 3m. north-west of the shieling MI 1 on a low rise forming the north-west side of the shallow central valley.

Description: A rectangular single roomed building internally 5 × 3.60m. with walls of between 0.65m. and 1.25m. width of stone reportedly bonded with mortar. (SMR report of OS visit 1969). Unfortunately this was not verified during this rapid survey. The structure is covered extensively with vegetation masking some of the essential details such as the possible doorway in the west end of the south wall and the recessed appearance along much of the north wall internal face. There appears to be a further gap in the northern wall, but this narrow (0.65m wide) opening may just be an eroded portion of walling being used and emphasised by crossing sheep. The earthen enclosure boundary bank runs to the western half of the northern wall where it appears to expand and clasp the building. This may be due to the possible mound that the chapel appears to be built on and the boundary bank may actually be running into that rather than the chapel. There is a further, smaller, enclosure to the west of the chapel which begins from the main boundary bank at a point to the north of the chapel from where it curves south stopping to the south of the chapel just short of the turf hut foundation MI 3 close to the shieling MI 1. This small enclosure may be related to the

shieling rather than the chapel as suggested in the SMR report. This building has always been marked on maps as the chapel of St Mary and has a long traditional pedigree which lends support to the identification. The regular well constructed walls and single squared room they enclose also all tend to suggest a possible chapel, but the dedication cannot presently be proven.

Provisional date: Medieval.

#### 4.35 Additional sites

As has been discussed above, five additional sites were identified during the initial desktop research that have traditionally been associated with early chapel-sites. No further research was undertaken on them.

##### 4.35.1 Site 38. Dun Othail, Tolsta

NB 5425 5149

Canmore ID: 4416

This site on a pinnacle of rock on the east coast of Lewis, north of Tolsta, was surveyed by the STAC project (McHardy et al 2009: 71–6) which recorded five structures (Structures A, C, D, E and I) on a series of three terraces covering an area of 20m × 20m on its seaward side protected by a defensive wall (Structure B). The five structures comprised a rectangular building and a semi-circular wall abutting a rock outcrop on the middle terrace, and three sub-rectangular buildings on the lower terrace. The site is comparable to other late medieval defended sites, such as Dùn Èistean, due to its situation overlooking the Minch, its defensible position, and its location in local tradition to the troubled times of the 16th and early 17th centuries (R C Barrowman 2015: 421).

However, the tradition has also grown up that it is a chapel (MacGibbon & Ross 1896: 81; from Muir 1885: 43), although it is uncertain where this tradition originated. MacLeod (1997: 37) refers to Dun Othail, with Luchruban, as having been 'chapels, or prayer houses, as could have been in Eilean Fir Chrothair' (see 4.35.2 'Site 39. Luchruban, Ness' below). It is also recorded as a known site by the RCAHMS (1928: 11, 17).

## 4.35.2 Site 39. Luchruban, Butt of Lewis, Ness

NB 50781 66013

Canmore ID: 4420

This sea stack, once joined to the Ness mainland, is about 1km west of the Butt of Lewis, and is still just accessible by scrambling and climbing the rocky coast. The stack has been researched and surveyed by the STAC project (McHardy et al 2009: 57–62) and the Ness Archaeological Landscape Survey (C S Barrowman 2015: 158–9). The following is taken verbatim from the latter:

A small island or detached eroding promontory to the west of the Butt of Lewis. A small, dry-stone, sunken building sits on the south-east corner of the island, which has been earlier described as a kirk or oratory (Mackenzie 1905; MacGregor 1967, 178; Monro 1549; Thomas 1971, 85–6). The island was joined by a promontory in the early 1600s, as recounted by Captain Dymes in 1630 [cited in MacGregor 1967: 176]. Excavations at the beginning of the twentieth century revealed the interior of two conjoined chambers, the one to the north-east being circular, and to the south-west being rectangular. They were joined by a short passageway, and a slab-built drain ran from the circular chamber through the connecting passage and out into the entrance passage. Pieces of hand-made and unglazed pottery, a number of bones and small quantity of peat-ash were recovered (Mackenzie 1905, 252). One sherd of the pottery was identified as part of a Neolithic bowl in 1946 (Stevenson 1946, 141).

Today, the two compartments can still be seen, the rectangular one measuring approximately 2m by 2.5m internally and the circular one is smaller with collapsed walling obscuring its inner wall faces. The whole structure is surrounded to the north by a turfed-over mound which may be the spoil taken from the Mackenzie excavations, and beyond this, a low, turfed-over circular enclosure wall. Recent discoveries of pottery eroding from the site have been identified as probably late prehistoric (Iron Age) in date

(MacSween 2009). The site was surveyed by the STAC in 2005 (McHardy et al 2009, 57–62), who also noted two more possible sunken features to the north and north-west of the main building (ibid, 59). It is possible that the site represents a denuded Iron Age roundhouse with later alterations, which had been built over earlier, Neolithic remains, perhaps similar to Dunasbroc.

MacLeod refers to the tradition that is recorded by Dean Monro (1549): ‘At the northern poynt of Lewis there is a little ile, callit the Pigmies ile, with ane little kirk in it of ther awn handey wark’ (Monro 1549 [1994]: 82–3; cited in MacLeod 1997: 37–8). MacLeod also refers to an anonymous account written between 1577 and 1599 that reiterates this tradition of the pygmies’ church. Blaeu’s map of 1654 also shows the chapel and calls the island ‘Ylen Dunibeg’ (Island of the little people) (ibid). It is possible that a corruption of *An Dun Beag* (the small dun) has led to *Duine Beag* (little people), cf extensive discussion in Mackenzie (1919: 247–67). The island was visited by the Royal Commission in 1921, who include a plan of the ‘oratory’ (RCAHMS 1928: 9–10, fig 37).

## 4.35.3 Site 40. Cunndal, Eoropie, Ness

NB 5120 6563

Canmore ID: 224370

A promontory enclosure with a complex of multi-cellular buildings, traditionally herring huts, but with earlier buildings below (Burgess 1999: 100). Surveyed during the Ness Archaeological Landscape Survey (C S Barrowman 2015: 132–3), the description from which is reproduced verbatim below:

About 18 conjoined oval and rectangular turf structures form a semicircular enclosure (the interior to the west) around a small promontory directly above Cunndal beach. There are three larger structures or buildings to the west on the promontory. Linked with Luchruban in local tradition, apparently the original settlement of a race of ‘pygmies’. Also known as being used for curing herring and/or drying seaweed in nineteenth century, but may possibly be ecclesiastical in origin



(Mackenzie 1905, 255–6; Cowie 1995; Burgess and Church 1997, 276; Robson 1997; Robson 2002; Burgess 2003, 51; Barrowman with Arthur 2006, 14).

#### 4.35.4 Site 41. Eilean Fir Chrothair, Little Bernera

NB 1397 4191

Canmore ID: 270625

Stone beehive structures on small island to north of Little Bernera – still called Am Beannachadh locally (MacLeod 1997: 23). The huts have been drawn and photographed by Mr J Crawford (Crawford 2006a), from which the following description is taken:

NB 14005 41840 Eilean Fir Chrothair  
Footings of protective wall to landing place.

NB 13975 41903 Intact both (beehive)

NB 13985 41930 Collapsed both (beehive)

NB 13955 41965 Collapsed rectangular stone corbelled structure

NB 13950 41950 Two standing stones, formally prone, now re-erected in former sockets.

NB 13970 41935 Collapsed both (beehive)

Eilean Fir Chrothair is in all likelihood a retreat site for the island of Little Bernera. At some historical period a NW sea of some intensity has destroyed the rectangular building, two of the bothan and the two standing stones on the summit, the remaining intact both escaping because of its protected position.

#### 4.35.5 Site 42. Pabbay Beag, Pabbay Mor, Uig

NB 09793 38873

Canmore ID: 280475

Settlement of drystone circular, oval and sub-rectangular buildings, some corbelled, noted by the Western Isles archaeologist 2002. Walkover, photographs and descriptions were undertaken by Mr J Crawford (Crawford 2008) and his descriptions are reproduced below:

Pabbay Beag

NB 10051 38717 Remains of rectangular building c 5m long in rubble stone, remains of door jamb 0.8m high × 0.65m wide on its

E. The S wall of the structure has been eroded by the sea.

NB 1055 38721 Remains of shell midden and lens of charcoal running NE for 14m along an eroding shore.

NB 10089 38739 Small rectangular structure 1.8m × 1.9m which appears to open out on to a small terrace on the NE. The structure sits atop a rocky knoll with a setting of small stones running from the terrace.

NB 10065 38767 Remains of circular hut (shieling type)

NB 09934 38885-09954538761 Turf and stone dyke running across island dividing cultivated land from rough grazing

NB 09867 38922 Remains of small cairn

NB 09801 38934 Rough rectangle of stones 1m high, probable wind shelter

NB 09816 38926 Possible remains of 4m diameter hut circle foundation

NB 09819 38935 Possible remains of 5m diameter hut circle foundation

NB 09820 38928 Possible remains of 5 × 3m rectangular hut foundation

Note: The last three structures have to be exceedingly ancient due to the extreme exposure of the site.

NB 09890 38813 Much denuded cairn incorporating hornblende boulder

NB 09966 38758 D-shaped enclosure measuring 4.5 × 3.3, rubble stone footings still extant to a height of 0.5m

NB 09991 38763 An unusual 40 × 21mm rectangular setting of stones only just showing above turf height and concave between stone settings.

NB 10011 38781 Possible field clearance which interrupts runrig running from the head dyke, NB 09934 38850 – NB 09954 38761, to the rear of the beach at NB 1005538721

NB 10053 38735 Circular depression 0.6m deep and 2m in diameter which may represent an attempt at providing a water source for habitation on the island.

## 5. CONCLUSION

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Analysis and discussion of the results of the survey is reserved for an accompanying print paper in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (see Barrowman forthcoming a), but a few general observations in relation to our knowledge of the archaeology of the medieval church in Lewis and the Western Isles can be made here.

The distribution of the majority of the chapel-sites reflects, in the main, the dominant pre-crofting coastal settlement pattern in Lewis, as most are in, or adjacent to, deserted post-medieval townships, and all are on or near the coast. It is possible that these townships may have their roots in the medieval period or earlier, but this is difficult to unravel without excavation. Often the upstanding ruins and associated field walls and cultivation systems are clearly post-medieval, some used within living memory as sheep fanks, but the structures reuse stones from older buildings on the site, including the ruined chapel itself. Such township sites identified during the survey include those at Teampall Chiarain, Laimishader (Site 11), Teampall Pheadair, Shader (Site 8), Teampall Mhealastadh and Taigh nan Cailleachan Dubha (Sites 20 and 21) in Uig, Teampall Chaluum Chille on Eilean Chaluum Chille (Site 22) and Teampall Pheadair, Swainbost (Site 4), where the old road and cultivation ridges are seen nearby, to name just a few. It is impossible in these cases, without excavation, to determine whether there was ever settlement contemporary with the chapel. In the case of Teampall Pheadair in Swainbost, which was the parish church for Ness, the building was built after the Reformation. But even in this case, there is the site of an older, smaller, chapel nearby (Teampall Thòmais; St. Thomas's), which local tradition holds was robbed in order to build the new church of St Peter's. At other sites, such as Teampall Mhìcheil (Site 12), the nearby post-medieval township takes its name from the old chapel (in this case, Baile an Teampaill), suggesting that the name at least post-dates the chapel.

There are also sites on or near the coast that have been robbed and adapted to build temporary shieling huts away from areas of settlement. These include Site 18 (Taigh a' Bheannaich, Aird Uig), Site 28 (Teampall Rubha Chirc, Point) and Site 33 (Àirighean na h-Annaid, Garbh Eilean in the

Shiants). Unusually, one of these has been excavated – Àirighean na h-Annaid on Garbh Eilean, and, most excitingly, one of two stone-built round huts within the enclosure at the site has been identified as a Late Bronze Age to Late Iron Age roundhouse, into which were built early medieval stone corbel roofed huts, containing Pictish plain-ware pottery (Foster et al 2012). Following abandonment in the early medieval period, the huts were reused as shieling huts around a millennium later in the 18th century. This gives us a glimpse into the potential of similar sites. For instance, at Taigh a' Bheannaich in Aird Uig on the west coast of Lewis, there is no associated enclosure, but there are the ephemeral remains of possible huts near the chapel, and the chapel is situated on a wide coastal promontory that is divided from coast to coast inland by a loch (Loch a' Bheannaich) and a stone and turf wall, which cuts it off from the landscape of Aird Uig. At Teampall Rubha Chirc in Point, as well as the small, rectangular chapel, there are the remains of five shieling huts and a possible corn-drying kiln within an enclosure wall, all of which have reused the stone from the ruined chapel.

Those sites found on the outer isles of Lewis are traditionally considered to be Early Christian. Due to their location, these sites have survived relatively untouched by later development. The chapel and oratory on North Rona (Site 35; MacGibbon & Ross 1896: 73–4; RCAHMS 1928: 3–4, figs 23–25; Nisbet & Gailey 1960; Robson 1991; 1997: 27–41; MacLeod 1997: 38–9; Fisher 2001: 3, 11, 114–16), and Tigh Beannaichte on Sula Sgeir (MacGibbon & Ross 1896: 75–6; RCAHMS 1928, Site 36; MacLeod 1997: 40; Robson 1997: 42–9), are both *c* 40 miles NNE of the Butt of Lewis, and Teampall Beannachadh on Eilean Mòr in the Flannan Isles (Site 37: MacGibbon & Ross 1896: 77–8; RCAHMS 1928: 30, figs 76–77; MacLeod 1997: 42) is *c* 18 miles off the west coast of Uig. Unfortunately, these sites could not be visited or surveyed by the LCCS due to the logistics associated with their being offshore and requiring a larger budget to survey. They have, however, been visited and described by antiquarians and visitors (eg Muir 1861; 1885; Stewart 1933) as well as the RCAHMS and OS, and the settlement and churchyard area of North Rona has been surveyed more recently (Nisbet & Gailey 1960). The oval enclosure and

corbelled oratory on North Rona is said to date to the 7th or 8th centuries and there are 12 examples of carved stones of local gneiss on the island, most of which are simple cruciform stones, some bearing crosslets, and all in various degrees of preservation. These stones probably originated as burial markers and most of them were found in the burial ground to the north and west of the chapel, where at least 25 headstones were identified (Nisbet & Gailey 1960: 109, 112; Fisher 2001: 114–15, no. 55). Fisher cites comparisons both to early 7th- to 9th-century Irish examples, as well as later 11th- to 13th-century examples from North Uist, Iona and Unst in Shetland, as well as Norway itself (Fisher 2001: 17). On Eilean Mòr in the Flannan Isles at Teampall Beannachadh or St Flann's Chapel, a small oratory, very similar to the oratory on North Rona and to Irish examples such as Skellig Michael, can also be dated by analogy to the 7th or 8th centuries, and similar corbelled buildings used for fowling on Sula Sgeir, c 7 miles west of North Rona, include one situated on *Sgeir an Teampuill* and identified as Tigh Beannaichte (Muir 1885: 98–9).

A second group that may be attributed to an early date are those associated with early place names. This includes the *papa* place name, derived from the Norse word *papa* for priests (eg Pabbay, or Papay, meaning 'island of the priests', and Papil, deriving from 'settlement of the priests'). These names imply that there were already 'priests' on the island when the Norse arrived and are evidence for contact between the two peoples. The Papar Project directed by Dr Barbara Crawford has researched the history, archaeology and soils of these sites, with the aim of exploring the relationship between the native Christians found on the islands at this time and the incoming Norse who named them (Crawford 2002; 2005). There are three examples of such sites on Lewis, all associated with chapel-sites. Teampall Rubha Chirc, discussed above (Site 28), is on a small promontory near Bayble (derived from 'Papil') in Point. Teampall Pheadair (Site 16) is on the island of Pabbay Mor on the west side of Lewis, in Loch Roag (where there is also a Pabay Beag). A third site is also found in Loch Roag on a small headland called *Pabanis* (derived from *papa*-nes, 'the headland of the papar') at the south-east corner of the island of Little Bernera, adjacent to the sites of Teampall Mhicheil and Teampall Dhonain (Sites 13 and

14). Sites associated with the ancient Gaelic word for church, *annaid*, may also be contenders for an earlier date (see Macdonald 1973; Clancy 1995). These include *Cnoc na Annaid* or *na h-Annaidean*, near Teampall Pheadair, Swainbost (Site 4), *Rubha na h-Annaid* near Teampall Pheadair, Shader (Site 8) and *Àirighean na h-Annaid* on Garbh Eilean in the Shiantas (Site 33) (see above; MacLeod 1997: 15, 17, 41).

The chapel-sites on mainland Lewis are in a range of different conditions. Many survive only as low grassy banks, but are still discernible as either unicameral, such as Teampall Rònaidh, Eoropic (Site 1), or bicameral, with a nave and chancel, eg Teampall Bhrìghid, Borve (Site 7) or Teampall Pheadair, Shader (Site 8). These latter two examples are comparable in dimensions, but also in that there are suggestions of earlier remains surveyed from below them, as also at the ruinous, but partially upstanding, Teampall Eòin in Bragar (Site 10). In the Northern Isles, where excavations have taken place, similar medieval chapels have been shown to overlie Norse and Late Iron Age structures and/or burials (eg St Ninian's Isle, Shetland, see Small et al 1973; Barrowman 2011; and St Boniface, Papa Westray, Orkney, see Lowe 1998). While none of the sites in Lewis has been excavated, the presence of mounds and midden material at Sites 8 and 10 suggests there may be earlier sites below the chapel building (see further discussion in Barrowman forthcoming a and b).

Of those Lewis chapel-sites where stonework is evident, some are partially upstanding ruins, as at Taigh a' Bheannaich, Aird Uig (Site 18) and Teampall Aulaidh, Gress (Site 29) whereas others are only low mounds of rubble, often in small graveyards, eg Teampall Chrìosd, Baile na Cille, Uig (Site 19) and Teampall Mhìcheil, Kirvig (Site 12). In contrast to this, a small group of chapels are larger, partially upstanding and served once as head churches of a parish, eg Teampall Pheadair, Swainbost (Site 4) and Eaglais na h-Aoidhe (Site 26). The partially upstanding Teampall Eòin, Bragar (Site 10), gives a clearer indication of how the smaller, bicameral churches once looked, as do the single-chambered churches such as Teampall a' Chrò' Naomh, South Galson (Site 6). The best-preserved church building is the 12th–14th-century Teampall Mholuaidh (St Moluag's church,



Site 2), which is a listed building and still in use by the Scottish Episcopal Church. In addition to these sites, four of the chapel-sites are now unlocated (Sites 5, 9, 23, 31) and survive only in local tradition.

The majority of the chapel-sites identified in Lewis are of high cultural significance. Only one pre-Reformation church is still upstanding and roofed in the whole island (Site 2, Teampall Mholuaidh), while Site 26, Eaglais na h-Aoidhe, is upstanding to gable height, and houses late medieval carved grave-slabs in the newly roofed west end. The rest are at best ruinous buildings, and at worst uneven grassy mounds or banks. There is considerable oral

tradition in some cases of the more recent history of these sites, but there is very little known about them prior to the 16th century and this lack of knowledge enhances the significance of them as archaeological sites. The Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites Survey has recorded through desktop research, topographic survey and geophysical survey the most threatened chapel-sites before further damage from coastal erosion, but further excavation is needed. These sites are the scant remains of a major part of the island's story for which history is largely silent, and they therefore have great potential to open up our understanding of this aspect of pre-Reformation Lewis.

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The final preparation of the illustrations was by the following:

John Arthur produced the 2005 topographic survey drawings, Janet Hooper produced the Shiantis Isles drawing, Christine Rennie processed and analysed the 2007 geophysical data and produced the geophysics plots, Charlotte Francoz produced the survey drawings and illustrations for all the 2007 sites, and Gillian Sneddon prepared the final illustrations for publication.

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- LCCS Lewis Coastal Chapel-sites Survey
- ONB *Object Name Books of the Ordnance Survey (6-inch) 1850–3, Ross-shire, Isle of Lewis*
- OPS 1854 *Origines parochiales Scotiae: The Antiquities Ecclesiastical and Territorial of the Parishes of Scotland*, vol 2, part 1. Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1854.
- OS1 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition at 1:10 560, 1853–4
- OSA Old Statistical Account, vol 19: *The Statistical Account of Scotland 1791–1799*, edited by Sir John Sinclair. 20 vols. Edinburgh: William Creech.

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