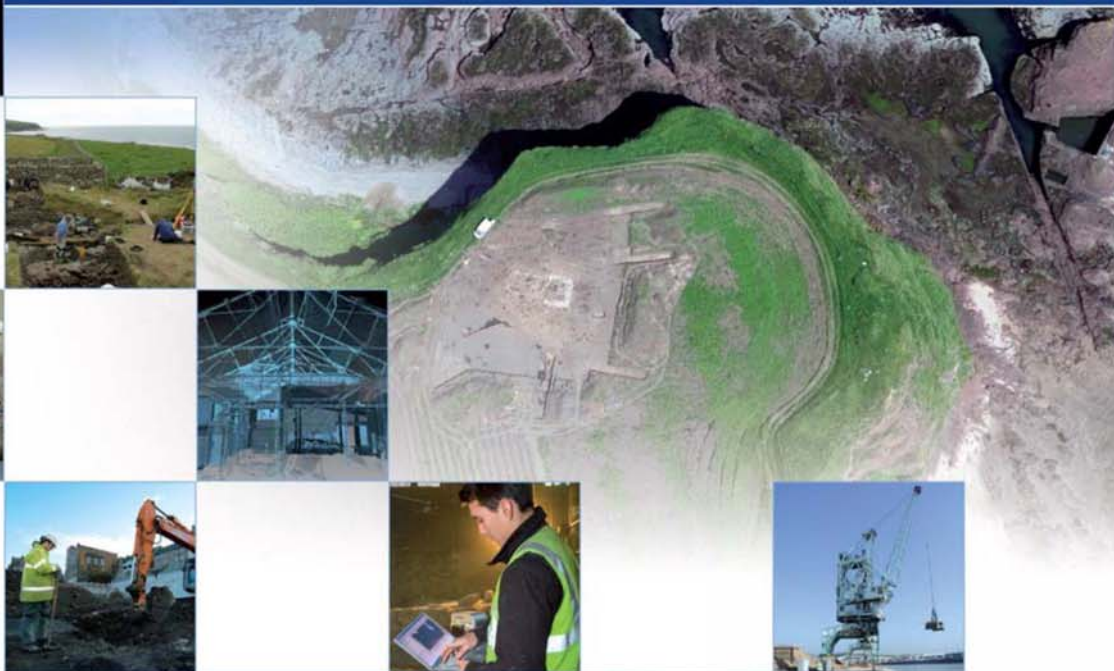


# Historic Scotland Human Remains Call Off Contract

## Mayback Boat Burial, Papa Westray, Orkney

### Archaeological Excavation Data Structure Report

AOC 22470-9  
31<sup>st</sup> July 2015



**AOC**  
Archaeology  
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# Mayback Boat Burial, Papa Westray, Orkney: Archaeological Excavation Data Structure Report

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**On Behalf of:** Historic Scotland  
Longmore House  
Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1SH.

**AOC Project No:** AOC22470-9

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**Prepared by:** Kevin Paton

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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

**Author:** Kevin Paton

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> August 2015

**Approved by:**

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> August 2015

**Draft/Final Report Stage:** Draft

**Date:**

**Enquiries to:** AOC Archaeology Group  
Edgefield Industrial Estate  
Edgefield Road  
Loanhead  
EH20 9SY

Tel. 0131 440 3593  
Fax. 0131 440 3422  
e-mail. [admin@aocarchaeology.com](mailto:admin@aocarchaeology.com)



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## Non-technical Summary

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This report presents the results of an archaeological excavation of an inhumation within a boat at Mayback, Papa Westray, Orkney under the terms of the Historic Scotland Human Remains Call-off Contract.

The human remains were identified by Mr Anderson of Mayback while he was excavating a service trench through the base of a newly built plant room attached to the S end of his cottage. His excavations had disturbed an upper leg bone and some other long bones of a definite human inhumation.

The archaeological works were conducted in order to save the remains from further disturbance by the planned construction works within and out with the plant room. They revealed a possibly disarticulated skeleton within a wide linear cut that was lined with stone along the top of its S edge. Over 180 iron nails that represent the remains of a boat, along with an iron shield boss were found within the grave. Evidence from the position of the skeleton and a number of the nails may indicate the burial had been disturbed in antiquity.

The excavations were able to excavate the majority of the grave, but some of the boat remains and stone lining is still in-situ under the foundations of the cottage and the plant room. It is highly unlikely that any human remains or large artefacts remain on site, with the likelihood that only a few nails from the boat would be present within the in-situ material.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group undertook an archaeological excavation of an inhumation found at Mayback, Papa Westray, Orkney under the terms of the Historic Scotland Human Remains Call-off Contract between 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015, and the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July 2015. This work was undertaken following the discovery of human remains by Mr Anderson of Mayback during the excavations of a service trench within a new plant room attached to the S end of his house (Plate 1). Upon his discovery, Mr Anderson contacted Julie Gibson, the council archaeologist for the Orkney Islands, who then requested assistance from Historic Scotland under the terms of the Human Remains Call-Off Contract.

## 1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The burial was situated at the S end of the house at Mayback, which lies along the E coast of Papa Westray, overlooking the Holm of Papa, Orkney (centred on NGR: HY 49547 52360, Figure 1). The house sits on a mound of dune sand that runs N-S along the coast line with the Loch of Maeback to the W, which is now predominantly marsh land rather than a loch.

## 1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 In the local area of Mayback, there are a number of medieval or post-medieval remains of possible farm buildings (HY45SE 77, HY45SE 44, HY45SE 78) and a threshing machine/windmill (HY45SE 30). The Mayback cottage itself is first depicted on the Ordnance Survey of 1879 (Figure 2) and may have been an early post medieval building, with modern additions added in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. An inspection of the site in 1982 by the Royal Commission (RCAHMS) suggested that the cottage sits on top of a farm mound consisting of soft loamy brown earth. Another survey of the area approximately 120 m S of Mayback suggested that boat noosts were present within the dune ridge that also includes the cottage (HY45SE 51).

1.3.2 At the far S end of the cottage, the Ordnance Survey of 1907 (Figure 3) shows a small square structure attached to the main building, which was a former water tower, demolished in April 2015. However, the exact location of this tower was approximately 2.5 m S of the cottage, as the new plant room was mainly positioned in between the former water tower and the cottage. Further S of the cottage and grave site, the cottage garden has been in existence since at least the 1870's, as the boundary walls for the garden are depicted on the OS map of the time (see Figure 2).

1.3.3 In addition to the post medieval and possible medieval remains are prehistoric remains in the form of two burnt mounds of stone, known as the Knowes of Maebeck (HY45SE 9). Furthermore, across the bay to an adjacent island, the Holm of Papa, are substantial prehistoric remains consisting of three chambered cairns (HY55SW 2, HY55SW 3, HY55SW 1) and a possible structure (HY55SW 20). A prehistoric settlement known as the Knap of Howar, the oldest known house in Europe, is also situated on the W coast of the island (HY45SE 1).

1.3.4 A crouched inhumation was discovered and excavated in late March 2015 by AOC Archaeology Group, approximately 100 m S of Mayback cottage (Johnston 2015). The burial was partially disturbed but survived in a good state of preservation below a natural sand dune and accumulated topsoil at the edge of the current shoreline. The inhumation was that of a robust fully grown adult lying on its right side in a tightly crouched position, orientated E-W. The grave cut was simple and no grave goods or items of personal adornment were recovered with the body. The skeletal remains were carefully recorded, planned and photographed prior to removal and the initial programme of post-excavation works has shown the remains are datable to 100-300 AD.

## 2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works set out in the Project Design (AOC 2015) were:

1. Upon arrival pre-excavation photography will be undertaken of both the general area of the human remains as well as detailed views of the feature in order to establish both the condition of the site prior to AOC conducting any works and the parameters of the site specifically to establish whether the burials are part of a larger cemetery.
2. The immediate vicinity (50 m by 50 m square centred on the burial) of the find will be subject to a visual inspection to determine the possibility of further remains. A written record of the feature and immediate area will be made which will include detail on the nature and extent of the archaeological remains present, and a description of the disturbance with reference to the processes at work on the site.
3. Once the site has been inspected, and it is determined whether the human remains form part of a larger burial feature, the exact nature of the threat will be determined and decision made on whether the burial can be preserved *in situ*, or whether to excavate it.
4. If the human remains are demonstrated to be a simple burial, the bodies will be fully excavated. Ground disturbance will be kept to the absolute minimum.
5. All of the archaeological remains at risk will be excavated and recorded including removal of the human remains and any other human remains such as cremation deposits.
6. The remains of the burial fill will then be excavated and 100% sampled. The burial will be recorded in plan using drawings and photographs, and a written record will be made on pro-forma sheets.
7. All finds including bone will be lifted and bagged as appropriate.
8. Any burnt bone and charcoal will be subject to 100% sampling.
9. Control soil chemistry/pollen samples will be retrieved from the topsoil (if present) and natural subsoil.
10. The position of the excavation area will be accurately located by Total Station survey and tied into the National Grid.
11. A series of photographs documenting the condition of the site including site access will be taken on arrival and departure.
12. A draft Data Structure Report will be produced within four weeks of the completion of fieldwork and once approved by the Human Remains Call-Off Manager would be issued within two working days of comments being received.
13. A costed single phase post-excavation research design will be produced and presented to Historic Scotland for approval. The document will contain a table clearly setting out the major themes to be explored within the post-excavation programme and methods for addressing issues identified.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 All of the above objectives 1 to 11 were conducted during the archaeological works. Initial determinations showed that the burial had been severely disturbed and truncated by the service trench and further works within the plant room would impact further upon the grave. It was decided that recovery of the human remains was the best course of action. Prior to further excavation taking place, the excavated material from the service trench was sieved.
- 3.2 As no feature edges or grave cut was evident within the plant room extents, the entire plant room base was excavated a further 0.1 m and cleaned in order to establish the extent of the grave or possible larger feature. This provided evidence of a stone lined cut, which was then the main focus of the excavations. The area to the S of the grave was also further reduced to ensure no other corresponding features were likely to be truncated by further works in the plant room.
- 3.3 The total area of the plant room measured 2.6 m (E-W) by 3 m (N-S). All excavation was conducted by hand by an experienced field archaeologist and all recording was carried out according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard practices.
- 3.4 After the initial works conducted in May 2015, further construction work around the plant room by Mr. Anderson located more nails to the E of the plant room and under the W foundations. In order to ensure the grave was fully recorded a second excavation was undertaken. This involved the excavation of a 2 m by 2 m trench to the E of the plant room entrance, surrounding the area already excavated by Mr. Anderson. A smaller investigative trench was also placed to the W of the plant room in order to ensure the grave did not continue in this direction.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Trench 1 – Plant Room

- 4.1.1 All excavations in Trench 1 took place within the newly built plant room, a roofed breeze block structure with access to the cottage via a doorway to the W edge of the N wall and access outside via a doorway to the N edge of the E wall. The variable weather had no effect on the excavations.
- 4.1.2 After initial photographs were taken of the plant room and the work conducted within, the spoil heap material [001] was removed from site and sieved for any stray bone or artefacts that may relate to the grave. Some fragments of bone and some iron objects (probably nails) were retrieved (SF's 1 & 2). As stated in the methodology, the sand deposits [004] within the plant room extents were excavated by 0.1 m throughout in order to remove any modern material and trampled sand from earlier work and to try and establish the outline of a possible grave or feature.
- 4.1.3 These initial excavations revealed a linear cut [002] in the SW corner of the plant room that most likely relates to the construction of the water tower. The cut was visible within possible dune sand [005] that underlies deposit [004]. A layer of large beach cobbles [006] was also revealed under deposit [004], aligned NW-SE across the plant room, that appeared to be overlying the skeletal remains [012] (Figure 4; Plate 2). Some of the stone must have been removed by Mr Anderson during his work, and upon consultation with him, he acknowledged that there had been an abundance of stone within the plant room during excavations to the initial floor formation level (0.1 m below plant room foundations).



- 4.1.4 Upon removal of this stone and deposit [005], a line of large beach cobbles [011] aligned E-W was revealed along the S edge of the grave (Plate 3). A similar line of stones [019] was also present along the N edge of the grave, but was not as substantial as [011] and did not continue to the W end of the grave, probably due to truncation during the building of the cottage (Figure 5; Plate 4). These lines of stone sat within cut [014] that was visible within a light grey silty sand deposit [013] that most likely represents an in-situ former soil horizon to the S edge of the plant room. This soil horizon was 0.2 m thick and overlay earlier dune sand or subsoil [016].
- 4.1.5 The grave was filled with a mixed deposit of sterile white dune sand and very light yellow sand [009]. The W end of the fill immediately under stone layer [006] contained an abundance of sea shells (possibly limpets) and was recorded separately as deposit [008]. Finds of over 140 nails and rivets were found within the fill that lined the S edge and possible N edge of the grave and along the base of the cut [014] (Figure 5; Plates 4 & 5). A number of nails were also mixed throughout the fill at different levels, but the majority can be seen to represent the hull of a small boat (Figure 6). The SW edge of the grave was more sterile than the rest, and as excavations continued, this phenomenon was explained by the presence of an animal burrow, most likely created by rabbits. This burrow also appeared to have disturbed the stone lining [011] in this area with some larger stones present at the base of the cut in this area alone.
- 4.1.6 The skeletal remains [012] were raised off the bottom of the cut and boat and appeared to be disarticulated once fully revealed (Figure 5; Plate 6). They sat upon a distinct layer of darker yellowish sand [018] that most likely represents the decomposition of the body over dune sand rather than a separate deposit within the grave. The skull was positioned facing east, in between the two broken halves of the pelvis to the immediate NW. Some ribs were to the S of the skull and further SE the longer arms and leg bones overlay each other. A few vertebrae and other degraded bones were found within the deposit [018] and the lower jaw was located at a lower level beneath the pelvis.
- 4.1.7 The final small find within the grave fill was a round iron shield boss with a square back (SF 66; Plate 7) that was situated at approximately the same level as the skeletal remains, to the E end of the grave. Despite the possibility of disturbance to the grave fill, the shield boss appears to have been in-situ, as some of the nails found were immediately underneath suggesting it was placed against the side of the boat.
- 4.1.8 Upon removal of the fill [009] to the base of the cut, a dark linear deposit [017] was noticed at the base measuring 0.03 m wide and 1 m long, truncated at its W end by the animal burrow (Plate 8). Some nails were present along either side of this deposit, which probably represents the decomposed wood of the boats keel.
- 4.1.9 Due to the limitations to the excavation area created by the extents of the plant room, further staining from the boat decomposition was visible under the foundations to the W and E ends of the grave (Figure 7; Plates 9 & 10).



Plate 1 - General view of plant room at S end of Mayback



Plate 2 - General view of excavations showing stone [006]



Plate 3 - General view of stone lining [011]



Plate 4 - Position of nails within fill [009]

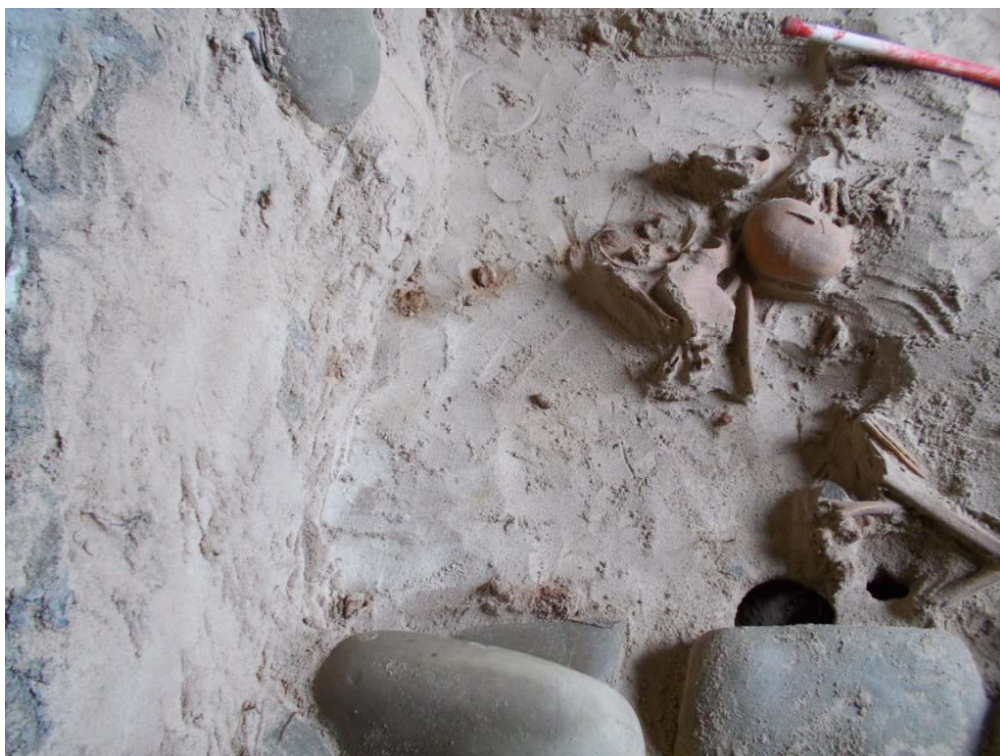


Plate 5 - Line of nails to N edge of grave [014]



Plate 6 - Detail view of skeletal remains [012]



Plate 7 - Detail view of shield boss



Plate 8 - General view of grave showing deposit [017]



Plate 9 - W-facing section of grave under foundations



Plate 10 - E-facing section of grave under foundations

## 4.2 Trench 2 – E of Plant Room

- 4.2.1 Trench 2 was located to the E of the new plant room, immediately outside the entrance and incorporating the area excavated by Mr. Anderson for his services (see Figure 4; Plate 11). The trench measured 2 m by 2 m and the soil make-up consisted of modern topsoil [020] up to 0.4 m thick overlying an earlier soil horizon [021] that contained some animal bone fragments. This earlier soil followed the slope of the dune sand from W to E and was 0.1 m to 0.22 m thick respectively.
- 4.2.2 This soil surrounded the top of two vertically set stones, [025] and [026] that appear to form markers at the NE and SE corners of the grave. This soil also covered a stone layer or possible wall [022] that was visible along the S edge of the grave (Figure 4; Plate 12). These stones were partly covered by dune sand [023], the top of which was heavily rooted, with lower levels where stone [022] was sitting on being completely sterile.
- 4.2.3 No cut for the grave was visible within the trench but the S edge of the grave was marked by stones [028], with iron nails present along their N face (Figure 5; Plate 13). Grave fill [024] and most likely the N edge of the grave had been severely truncated by the modern services (see Plate 12), so only a few lines of nails representing the boat were present. Similar to the findings of the initial trench, the boats keel was represented by a thick, dark stain [029] that was aligned ENE-WSW, with several nails and a large iron loop found within this deposit (Figure 5; Plate 14).
- 4.2.4 Upon further excavation around the marker stone [025], it was evident that they had been placed within a cut that would have left over 0.5 m of the stone protruding above the ground level at the time of the burial (Plate 15).

## 4.3 Trench 3 – W of Plant Room

- 4.2.1 Trench 3 was located to the immediate W of the plant room on the same E-W alignment as Trench 2, measuring 0.5 m out from the plant room foundations and 2 m wide. The trench could not be taken further W due to a live electric cable in this area and it also could not be extended further S due to the same cable (see Figure 4; Plate 16).
- 4.2.2 The soil make-up within the trench was similar to Trench 2 with modern topsoil [030] measuring up to 0.85 m thick, overlying earlier soil [031], and in turn overlying dune sand [032] (Plate 17). One large stone and some smaller stones above it [034] were present within the trench, aligned approximately E-W, with some iron nails found around them (Figure 5; see Plate 17). Unlike other areas, the nails did not form a line and were mainly present within an animal burrow that was underneath the stones.
- 4.2.3 No keel line was evident in the trench either, and indications are that the boat would have ended underneath the plant room foundations, with the grave only extending as far as the stones [034]. Despite being unable to excavate further W to ensure the entire grave had been exposed, there are no intentions for further services to be placed in this area, so any remaining grave features will remain in-situ.



Plate 11 - View of Trench 2 location prior to excavation



Plate 12 - General view of Trench 2 showing stones [022]





Plate 13 - View of Trench 2 showing stone lining [028]



Plate 14 - View of keel line [029] in Trench 2



Plate 15 - View of marker stone [025]



Plate 16 - View of service trenches to W of Trench 3 location



Plate 17 - View of Trench 3 showing stones [034]

## 5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 Given the number of nails found and the shape that the nails make within the grave cut it is possible to state with certainty that the grave found by Mr Anderson is a boat burial, most likely of Viking age given the shield boss present within it. This type of burial practice is a Norwegian tradition, seen in the UK and Ireland where there has been a Norse influence, i.e. Isle of Man, Ireland and the West Coast of Scotland (Owen & Dalland 1999). An approximate date can be given at this point from the pagan nature of the burial, making it more likely that it would date from before the 10<sup>th</sup> century, as Christianity is more prominent in the islands from around AD 995 (Owen & Dalland 1999).
- 5.2 In Scotland, there have been around ten boat or ship burials found to date, most of which were excavated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and therefore have not been recorded to modern archaeological standards. Of these, two (Sands of Gill, Oronsay and Cnoc nan Gall, Colonsay) are described as ship burials covered with prominent mounds and appear to be isolated burials. The other eight are much smaller in size, with the typical boat size being between 4 to 8 m in length, and possibly covered with discrete low mounds (Owen & Dalland 1999).
- 5.3 The Mayback boat would have measured between around 4.8 m long and approximately 1.4 m wide, and given the presence of so much stone within the plant room excavations, and the presence of stone layers [006] and [022], it is possible that the Mayback grave originally had a low mound of stone covering it. As well as the low mound it is likely that the burials location was marked by the upright stones at the E end of the grave, with the prow of the boat visible between the stones, projecting from out of the grave. This practice has also been suggested at the Scar boat burial (Owen & Dalland 1999).
- 5.4 Another interpreted feature of the known boat burials is the possibility of a chamber having been created over the boat, with planks used to seal the top of the boat (Owen & Dalland 1999). At Scar the chamber is thought to have been created using a large slab set on edge to divide the interior of the boat. No such stone was found at Mayback but the roofing of the boat is possibly evident from the large number of nails in the top of the grave fill that do not represent the boats sides. If the body was placed within an enclosed space this would help in interpreting the remainder of the burials features.
- 5.5 Looking at the position of the remains and the lack of grave goods it is suggested that the grave was disturbed in antiquity. This could have taken place when the original house at Mayback was constructed given the proximity of the foundations to the burial site. However, given the lack of modern artefacts within the grave, and the sterile nature of the sand deposits within, it is unlikely that the grave was disturbed by the house construction as you would expect some of the darker topsoil material to have been put into the grave when the house foundations were excavated into it.
- 5.6 It is more likely that the grave was disturbed when the area was a dune, not long after the burial was interred. If a chamber existed then this could have been opened, the body moved into the position it was found and the grave goods removed (all but the shield boss). After the disturbance the roofing timbers could have been left within the boat and the grave filled with sand, or the timbers removed could have been replaced and they later collapsed due to decomposition, and the boat would have filled with the dune sand, covering the remains, with the low mound of stone covering the grave also collapsing into and on top of it.

- 5.7 Finally, of the other boat burials investigated, it is interesting that most of these have been found close to other burials within known or possible cemetery sites. The cemeteries at Westness, Rousay, Pireowall, Westray, Cnoc nan Bhar, Oronsay and Machrins, Colonsay have all produced one or more boat burials within a larger cemetery site. Furthermore, it has been proposed that the burial uncovered at Scar, Sanday is also part of a larger cemetery hidden by the dune formations (Owen & Dalland 1999).
- 5.8 Given the recent discovery of further remains at Mayback that are likely to be pagan Viking burials, it is clear that the boat burial does form part of a larger cemetery within the dune ridge.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 All of the projects objectives were met with regards to the excavation of the grave. Due to the presence of the cottage and the landscaped garden area, the topographical survey has not provided much evidence of any other possible mounds close to the burial. Extension of the survey along the dune ridge was also inconclusive, with most undulating features probably relating to natural dunes or modern dumped material and animal burials.
- 6.2 The discovery of the boat burial within a dune ridge represents a significant addition to the burgeoning picture of early Viking activity on Papa Westray, Orkney. The skeletal remains, shield boss, nails and mineralised wood attached to them merit full study as recommended according to the Post-Excavation Research Design (AOC 2015).

## 7 REFERENCES

### 7.1 Bibliographic references

AOC 2015 *Mayback II, Papa Westray, Orkney: Historic Scotland Human Remains Call-off Contract Project Design* Unpublished client report

Johnston, N. 2015 *Mayback, Papa Westray, Orkney: Archaeological Excavation Data Structure Report* Unpublished client report

Owen, O & Dalland, M 1999 *Scar: A Viking Boat Burial on Sanday, Orkney*

### 7.2 Cartographic references

1879 Ordnance Survey *Orkney Sheet LXXI.9 (Westray)*

1907 Ordnance Survey *Orkney Sheet 071.09 (includes Papa Westray)*

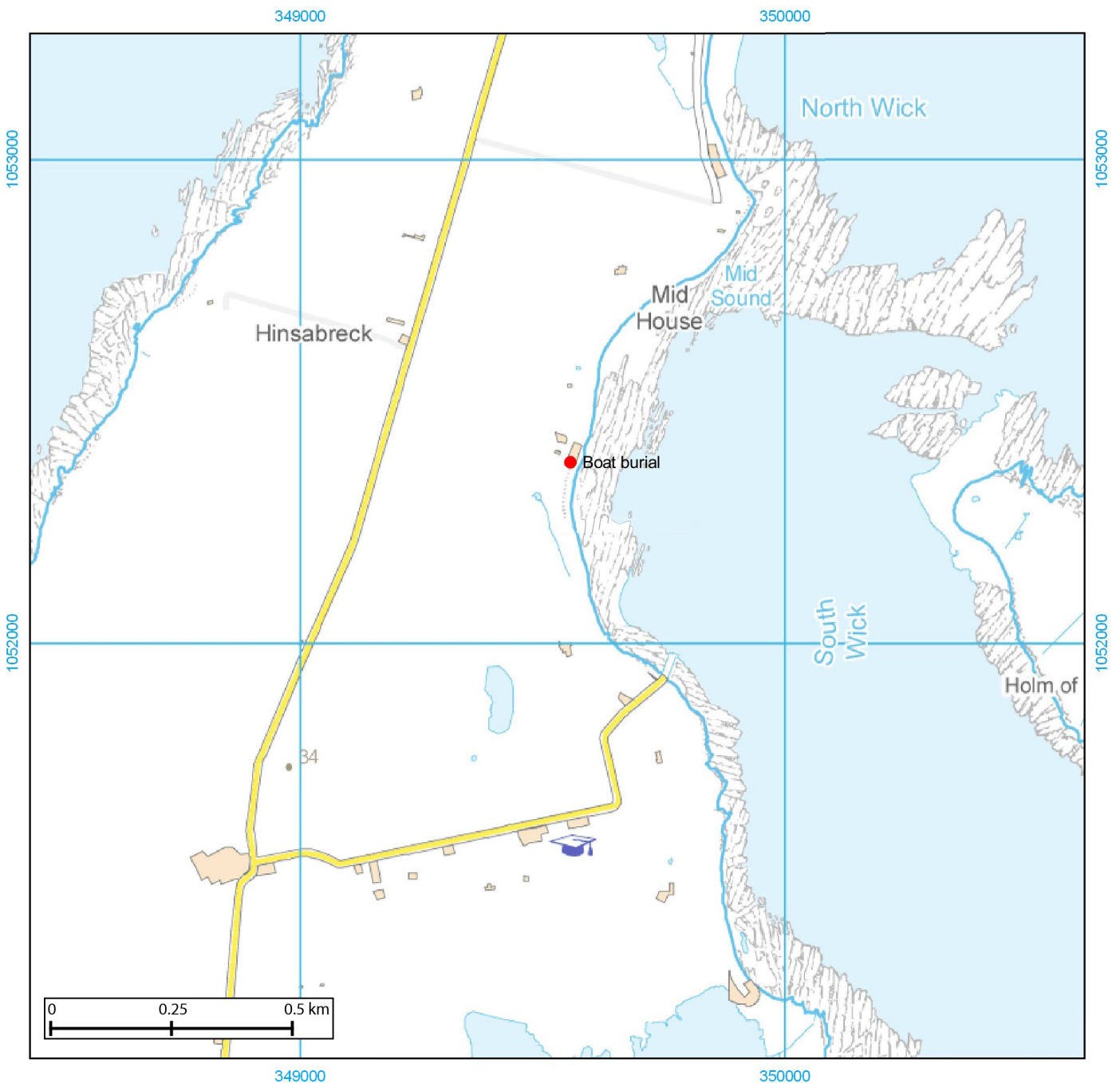
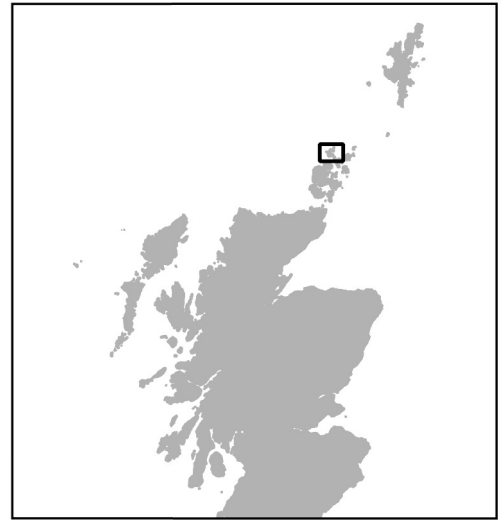
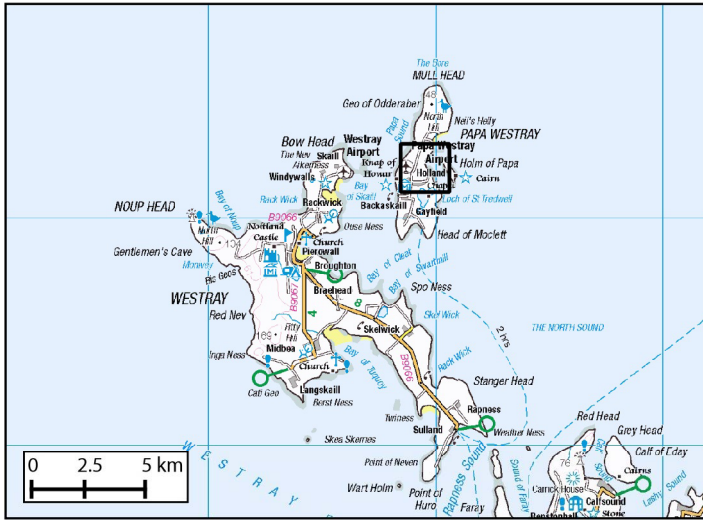
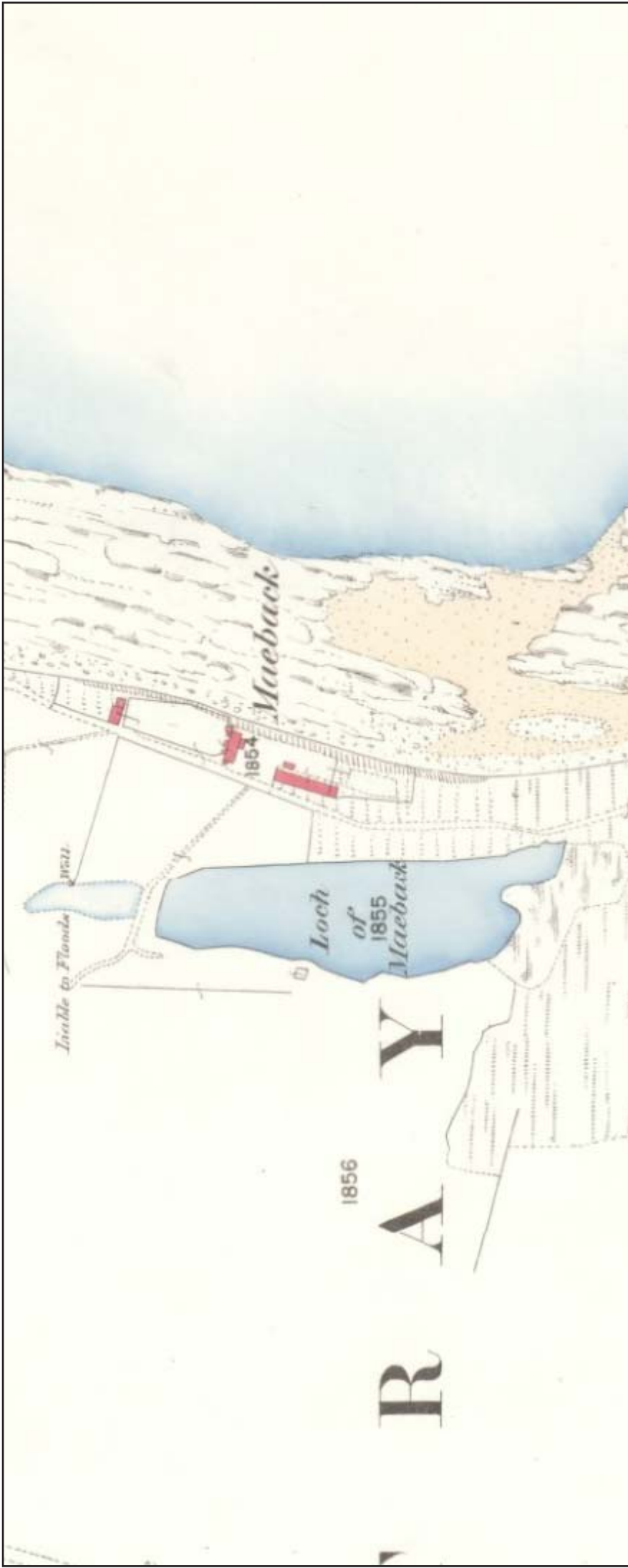
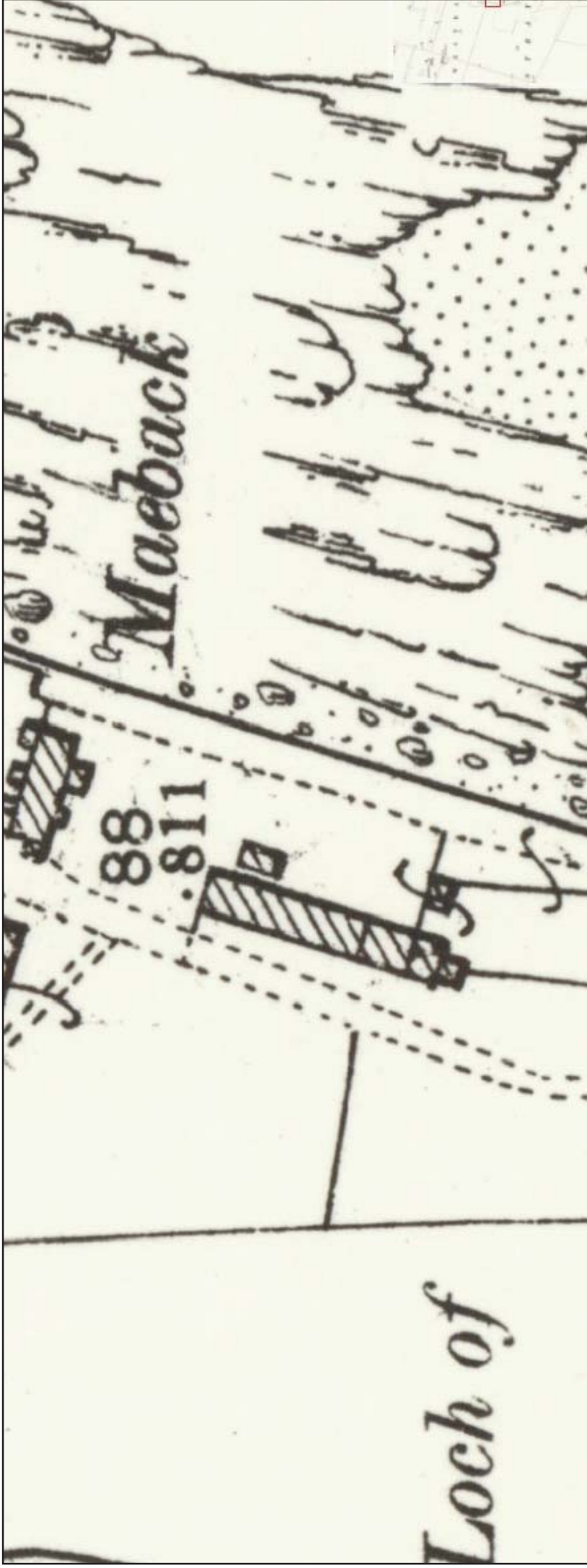


Figure 1: Site location



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FIGURE 2 - EXTRACT FROM 1879 ORDNANCE SURVEY



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FIGURE 3 - EXTRACT FROM 1907 ORDNANCE SURVEY



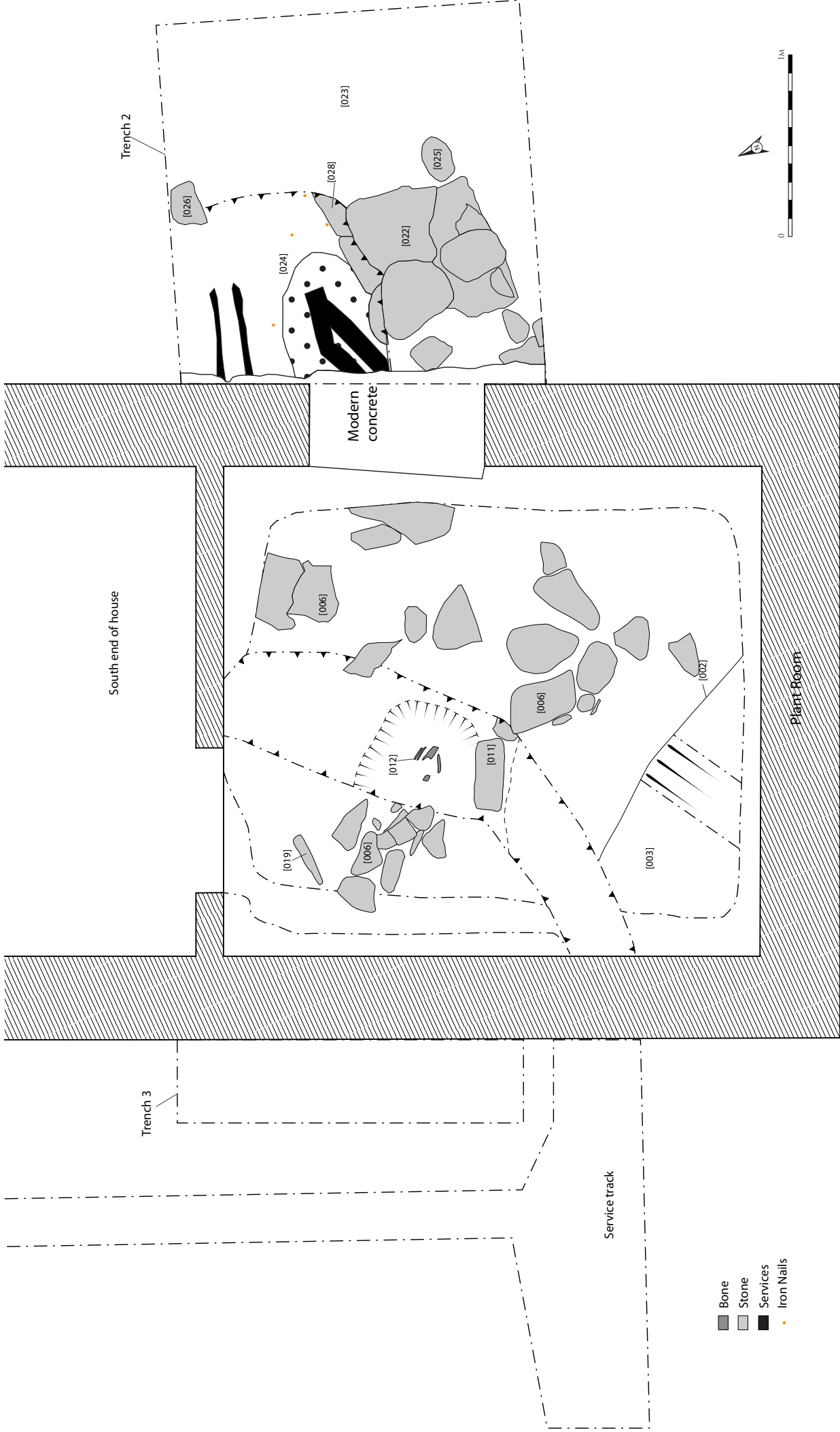


Figure 4: Plan of stone layer within and around grave

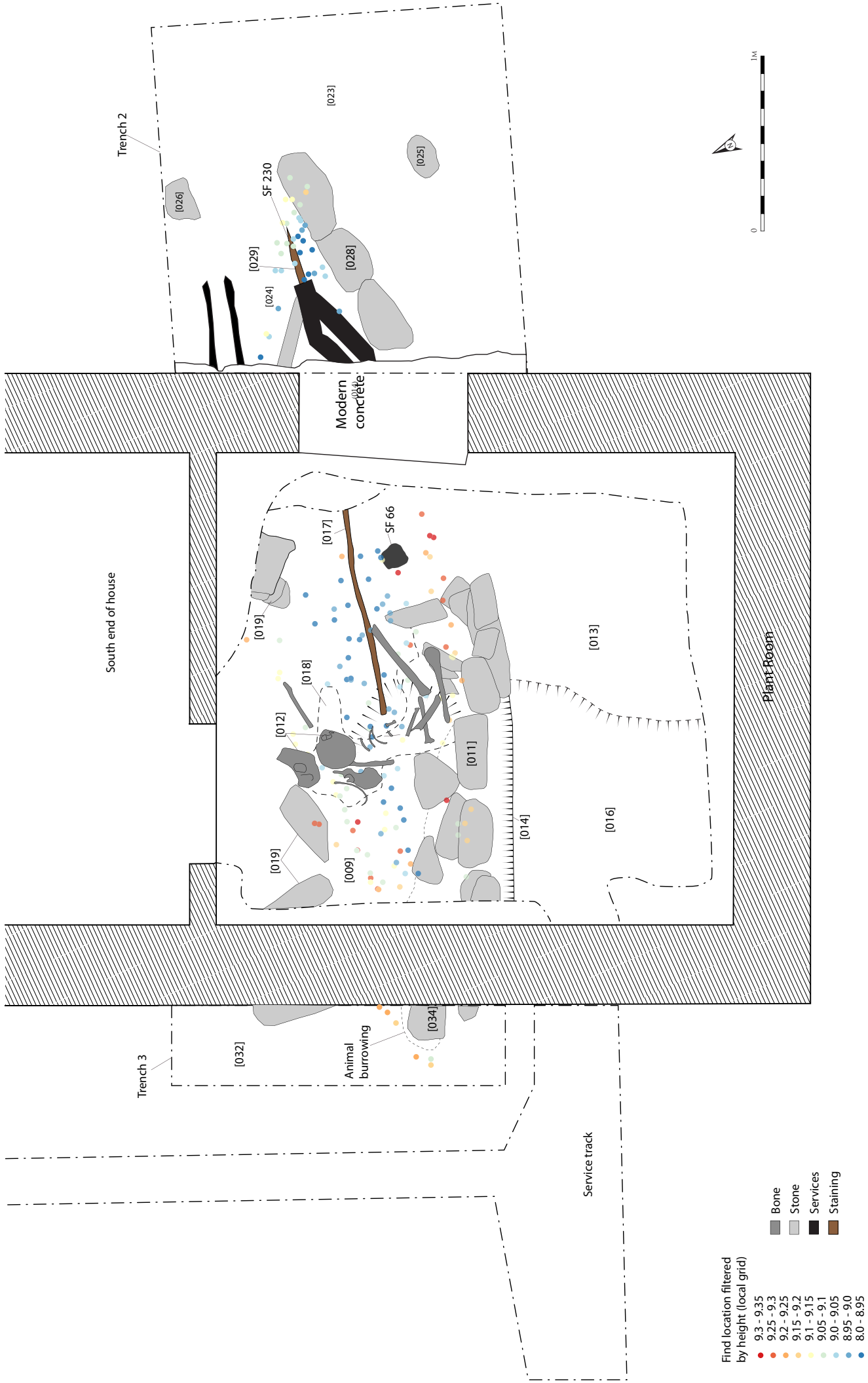


Figure 5: Final overlay of grave showing stone lining, skeletal remains, and iron objects

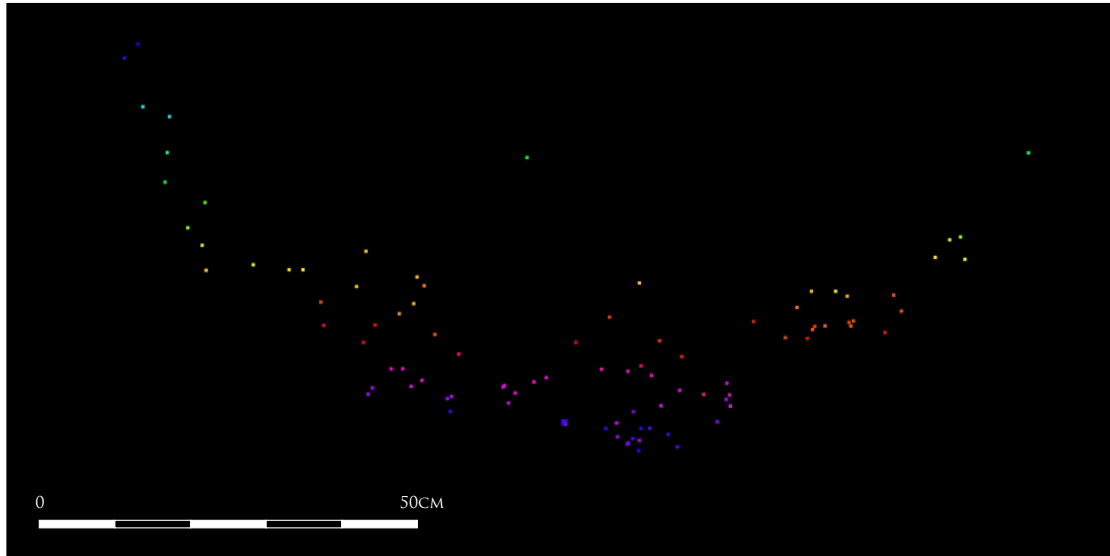


FIGURE 6: W-FACING PROFILE THROUGH GRAVE SHOWING POSITION OF NAILS TAKEN FROM THE ON-SITE SURVEY

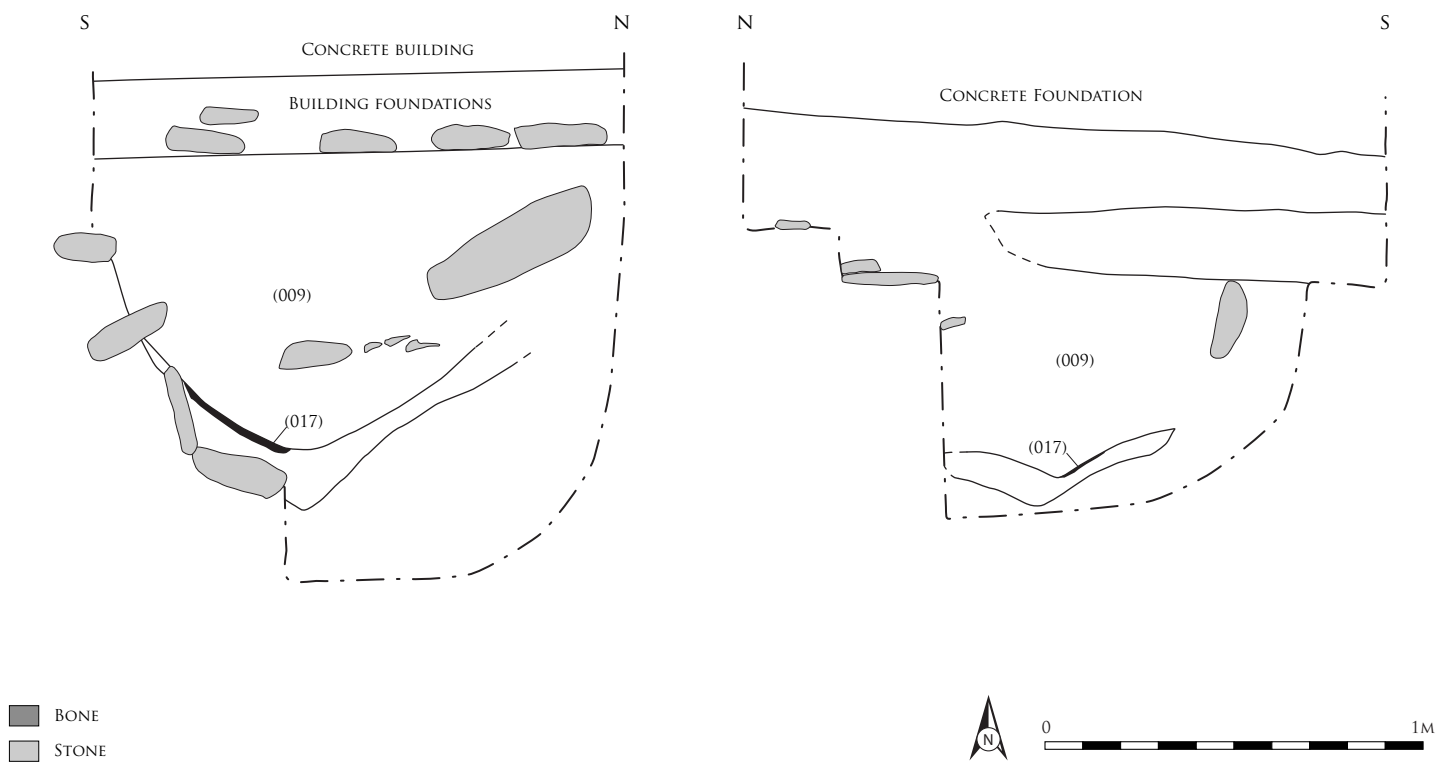


FIGURE 7: E-FACING AND W-FACING SECTIONS OF GRAVE SHOWING BOAT OUTLINE

# **Mayback Boat Burial, Papa Westray, Orkney: Archaeological Excavation Data Structure Report**

## **Section 2: Appendices**

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context No.	Description and Interpretation
001	Mound of spoil from Mr Andersons excavations left within plant room and sieved before removal. The deposit is a mixture of pale yellow sand and light brown silty sand. Finds included bone and iron. <b>Spoil heap from excavations prior to AOC arrival</b>
002	Linear cut aligned NW-SE within SW corner of plant room, measuring 1.6m by 0.62m by 0.15m. Only the NE edge visible in plan, SW edge under and possibly cut by plant room S wall. <b>Possible construction cut for a now demolished water tower.</b>
003	Dark brown silty sand with occasional medium stone inclusions, very similar to the topsoil that exists S of the plant room, measuring 1.6m by 0.62m by 0.15m. Lenses of sand in places. Fills cut [002]. <b>Fill of [002]</b>
004	Very light brown sand with occasional large pebbles and frequent shell inclusions, which sits directly under plant room foundations. Disturbed and mixed with dark brown silty sand in S half of plant room. <b>Undulating dune sand</b>
005	Light brown sand, similar to [004] but underlies it and cut by [002]. The stones of [006] sit within the deposit, as no cut for the grave was visible. The deposit measured 2.15m by 1.3m by 0.1m. It overlies [013] to the S of the cist. <b>Dune sand to S of the Cist.</b>
006	One layer of medium and large beach cobbles laid NW-SE above possible grave. Overall dimensions 2.36m by 0.66m by 0.1m at the thickest point. Larger stones to the SE measuring 0.43m by 0.29m, compared to the NW stones which measure 0.29m by 0.16m. Deposit [007] sits between the stones. Later indications of disturbance of stone N of SE end, at a lower level. Probably same as [022]. <b>Disturbed stone from possible foundation of wall or grave cap support</b>
007	Light brown sand within stones [006], measuring 2.6m by 0.62 by 0.1m. <b>Dune sand covering grave</b>
008	Similar to [009] deposit with an abundance of sea shell inclusions- sampled separately. Only present to the W end of grave surrounding possible in-situ stone of grave edge. The deposit measures 0.5m by 0.2m by 0.15m. <b>Possible deposition relating to original grave</b>
009	Light brown and yellow sand mix with frequent small flat, angular stones and occasional medium and a couple of large stones, measuring 2.15 m by 1.25m by 0.73m. Most likely these are disturbed cist stones. Contains possibly disarticulated skeleton [012] and an abundance of nails/rivets as well as a shield boss. <b>Fill of grave</b>
010	Dark brown compact soil with occasional foam construction material fragments. Overlies E end of cist wall edge [011]. <b>Material relating to the base of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2015) plant room</b>
011	W-E aligned wall like structure with a slight curve to the ENE at the E end. Stones found 4 courses high in places with the bottom two courses laid further in, providing a 60 degree angle to the N end. These may have been displaced by the animal burrow in this area. The deposit measures 2.38m by 0.51m by 0.45m and sits within cut [014] and covered by deposit [009]. Possibly representing a boat shape. <b>Stone lining of graves S edge</b>
012	Possibly disarticulated or disturbed skeleton within a boat. The skull is intact and sits close to the W end of the grave with a broken pelvis further to the side and some rib bones and leg/arm bones to the SE. A possible shield boss was found at the E end of the grave probably indicative of a Viking burial. The presence of over 100 rivets/nails further supports it as a possible boat burial. A number of smaller bone remains were scattered throughout and placed in sample tubs to aid collection. <b>Possibly disarticulated human skeletal remains</b>
013	Light grey, very slightly silty sand with occasional stone inclusions measuring 0.2m at the thickest point. The deposit, underlies the backfill or sand dune [005], is cut by [014] and overlies subsoil [016]. <b>Former soil horizon.</b>
014	Linear cut aligned E-W, measuring 2.3m long within the plant room, width unknown and a depth of 0.73m. The cut is filled by the Cist wall [011], grave fill [009] and skeleton [012]. Profile may be interpreted from nail positions. Only the south end of the cut is visible, northern end is more

	disturbed or is out with the excavation limits. Nail line indicates that the cut has possibly been removed along with N wall of Cist. <b>Cut for grave</b>
015	Probable boat burial within a stone lined cist or covered by a cairn, aligned E-W, measuring 4.8 m (visible) long by approximately 1.4m wide and 0.8m deep. Grave cut [014] only visible along S edge with Cist/cairn wall [011] to immediate N. S edge of boat represented by lines of nails progressing N as excavation depth increases. N edge not as easily followed as no obvious cut or stone lining. Skeleton [012] then placed in boat and filled with sand. Burial disturbed at unknown date and N edge of Cist/cairn removed. Bones displaced at this time and then reburied in a disarticulated manner <b>Viking warrior boat burial</b>
016	Light brown sand underlying former soil [013] and probably overlying dune sand to unknown depth. <b>Subsoil under [013]</b>
017	Mid to dark brown sand lenses within grave fill, aligned ENE-WSW through centre of grave. A number of nails revealed along the line indicates a probable scar left from boat plank decomposition. <b>Stain of boat keel</b>
018	Same as [009], slightly darker due to decomposition. <b>Grave fill underneath skeleton [012]</b>
019	Large beach cobbles aligned approximately E-W along N edge of plant room, with possible S face curving in similar way to stone line [011] on opposite edge. Only one layer of stone present and some stone shows signs of being displaced as it covers grave fill and nails. <b>Possible stone lining along N edge of grave</b>
020	Grey silty loam with occasional small stones and some large cobbles and slabbed stones that may have formed a crude path. Deposit is disturbed by water pipe related to the former water tower. Measures 0.4 m thick <b>Modern topsoil in T2</b>
021	Greyish brown slightly silty sand underlying topsoil [02]. Depth varies from W to E: 0.1 m to 0.22 m. Overlies stone layer [022] and grave marker stones [025] and [026], as well as natural dune sand [023]. Some animal bone fragments were found within. <b>Earlier soil horizon in T2 – possibly medieval</b>
022	Area of large slab stones covering grave stones on S edge of grave. Visible for 1 m from plant foundation and stops at grave marker [025]. Measures 1 m wide and is two full courses high, with narrower course at base (0.2 m thick). Probably same as [006]. <b>Possible foundation of wall or grave cap support in T2</b>
023	Pale yellow sand with abundant root holes containing dark topsoil. Cut by driven stones [025] and [026]. Upper rooted layer is around 0.15 m thick then sand is very sterile. <b>Natural dune sand</b>
024	Pale yellow sand with occasional small and medium stone inclusions. One large stone (0.61 m by 0.1 m by 0.12 m) along N edge of deposit with nails to the N. Deposit has mainly been excavated when modern services were placed under the plant room foundations. Measures 0.4 m thick. Same as [009]. <b>Fill of boat and grave cut in T2</b>
025	Large elongated stone sitting vertically within dune sand [023], with 0.1 m of stone protruding through the top of the dune material. Stone has no surrounding cut and was possibly driven into sand. Measures 0.25 m by 0.15 m by 0.91 m high. Located at SE corner of grave and forms an E edge to grave along with stone [026]. Abutted by stone layer [022]. <b>SE stone marker for boat burial in T2</b>
026	Large elongated stone sitting vertically within dune sand [023], with 0.1 m of stone protruding through the top of the dune material. Stone has no surrounding cut and was possibly driven into sand. Measures 0.24 m by 0.11 m. Not excavated to depth. Located at NE corner of grave and forms an E edge to grave along with stone [025]. <b>NE stone marker for boat burial in T2</b>
027	<b>VOID</b>
028	2 large beach cobbles aligned approximately W to E with nail line against the N face of the stones. Measures 1 m by 0.25 m by 0.12 m. Probable continuation of [011]. <b>Stone lining of graves S edge in T2</b>
029	Dark orange stain at base of grave representing keel of boat. Aligned ENE-WSW and would have connected with [017] within plant room. A number of nails were found along the length of it and an iron loop was found at its ENE end. Further towards the plant room foundation an animal burrow had truncated the line.

	<b>Stain of boat keel in T2</b>
030	Same as [020] measuring 0.55 m to N edge of Trench 3 and 0.85 m to S edge. <b>Modern topsoil in T3</b>
031	Same as [021] measuring 0.2 m thick. <b>Earlier soil horizon in T3</b>
032	Pale yellow sand with abundant rooting measuring 0.1 m thick, then becomes sterile sand (recorded as [033]). Same as [023] <b>Natural dune sand in T3</b>
033	Pale yellow sand with occasional large stone inclusions and some nails present. Covered by deposit [032] but probably represents an earlier phase of dune sand build up, Nails and stones most likely part of disturbance during water tower and house constructions. <b>Probable natural dune sand/possible grave fill – W edge</b>
034	Two layers of large beach cobbles sloping N to S, protruding 0.2 m from under plant room foundation. Possibly represents the W end of the graves S edge (same as [011] and [028]). Nails found in [033] were found to N and S of the stone indicating deposits may have been disturbed. <b>Stone lining of graves S edge in T3</b>

## APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

### Digital Photographs

Frame	Description	From	Date
1-9	Panorama from N of House	Var	19/5/15
10-12	Access to burial area	Var	19/5/15
13	View to E from N end of house with Holm of Papay in distance	N	19/5/15
14-15	Access shots	N	19/5/15
16	Shots showing proximity to coastline	NW	19/5/15
17-20	Access shots of the plant room	Var	19/5/15
21-25	View of plant room and panning to south	E	19/5/15
26	Foundations evaluations-S Wall	E	19/5/15
27	Service through SE corner of plant room	W	19/5/15
28	View of Holm of Papa from Plant Room	W	19/5/15
29-34	Access shots to plant room through house	Var	19/5/15
35-36	View of bones as left reported	S	19/5/15
37	Outside door to plant room	W	19/5/15
38	View of bones in situ from SE	SE	19/5/15
39	Service trench coming into plant room from West	E	19/5/15
40-49	Panoramic view from Plant Room	Var	19/5/15
50	View of bones from plant room	N	20/5/15
51	Open door of plant room	SE	20/5/15
52	View of bones from outside plant room	E	20/5/15
53	View of bones from outside plant room	E	20/5/15
54	View of spoil heap [001]	N	20/5/15
55	S wall foundation- former water tower	N	20/5/15
56	Service track through W wall	E	20/5/15
57	N wall of foundation	S	20/5/15
58	Doorway and E wall foundation	W	20/5/15
59	Depth of bone beneath ground level	S	20/5/15
60	General view of Plant room after [001] removed	E	20/5/15
61	General view of Plant room after [001] removed	N	20/5/15
62	Working shot of stone revealed	E	20/5/15
63	SE-Facing section of ditch [002]	SE	20/5/15
64	General view of ditch [002]	NE	20/5/15
65-67	General shots of stones being cleared	Var	20/5/15
68-70	Stone capping [006]	NW	20/5/15
71	SE end of stones [006]	NE	20/5/15

72	View of exposed bones and NW stones [006]	SW	20/5/15
73	View of exposed bones and NW stones [006]	SW	20/5/15
74-75	View of stones [006]	SE	20/5/15
76-78	General view of Excavation progress	Var	20/5/15
79	First nails exposed	E	20/5/15
80	Stones [006]	NW	20/5/15
81	View of stones [006] overlying [011]	N	20/5/15
82-83	General view of excavation progress	E	20/5/15
84-87	General view of progress showing nails within stone lining at W end	Var	20/5/15
88	Possible feature or ditch	NE	20/5/15
89	View of stone lining [011]	E	20/5/15
90	View of nail cluster to W end	N	20/5/15
91	View of E end of grave with bones in-situ	W	21/5/15
92	View of E end of grave with bones in-situ	S	21/5/15
93	Progress shot	E	21/5/15
94	View of remains partially exposed to W	E	21/5/15
95	View of stone to E	S	21/5/15
96	View of remains partially exposed to W	E	21/5/15
97	View of remains partially exposed to W	S	21/5/15
98	View of stone to E	S	21/5/15
99	General view of Cist	SW	21/5/15
100-101	S edge of Cist [011]	W	21/5/15
102	View of Cists E end	W	21/5/15
103	Detailed view of skull and other partially exposed bones	SW	21/5/15
104	View of Cist with stone from E removed and nails showing in places	E	21/5/15
105	Lines of nails at W end	S	21/5/15
106	Line of nails along Cist edge	W	21/5/15
107	View of remains exposed showing disarticulation	S	21/5/15
108	Line of nails along N edge with remains overlaying	E	21/5/15
109	General shot of excavations progress	W	21/5/15
110	Shield Boss being cleaned	SW	21/5/15
111	View of Cist contents	WSW	21/5/15
112	View of Cist contents	S	21/5/15
113	Detailed view of Shield Boss	S	21/5/15
114	Detailed view of Shield Boss	NW	21/5/15
115	View of Cist contents	NW	21/5/15
116	View of Cist contents	W	21/5/15
117-119	End of day progress shot	E	21/5/15
120-121	End of day progress shot	W	21/5/15
122-124	View of burial showing keel line [017]	E	22/5/15
125-126	View of keel line [017] next to shield boss	S	22/5/15
127-130	View of grave showing skeleton [012]	E	22/5/15
131-132	W-facing section of grave under foundations	SW	22/5/15
133-134	View of human remains [012]	S	22/5/15
135-145	Detailed views of skeleton for photo rectification	Var	22/5/15
146-147	E-facing section of deposits under W foundation	E	22/5/15
148-149	W-facing section of deposits under E foundation	W	22/5/15
150-152	View of grave with all nails and human remains removed	E	22/5/15
153-154	View of grave cut with all deposits and stone lining removed, showing E-facing section	E	22/5/15
155	W-facing section of grave under foundation	W	22/5/15
156	View of plant room entrance showing excavated trench and service ducts	NE	23/7/15
157	View of plant room entrance showing excavated trench	E	23/7/15



	and service ducts		
158	View of plant room entrance showing excavated trench and service ducts	SE	23/7/15
159	View of plant room entrance showing excavated trench and service ducts	SE	23/7/15
160	View of service trench showing depth	SE	23/7/15
161	Pre-ex view of area to be excavated (2 m by 2 m)	NE	23/7/15
162	Pre-ex view of area to be excavated (2 m by 2 m)	S	23/7/15
163	Topsoil and early soil horizon removed	S	23/7/15
164	Possible features within sand	S	23/7/15
165	Line of beach cobbles	E	23/7/15
166	Stone hole	N	23/7/15
167	View of T2 showing stone [022]	S	23/7/15
168	View of stone [022] and marker stones [025] and [026]	E	23/7/15
169	Close-up of [025] and [026]	E	23/7/15
170	Line of nails between service tracks	E	23/7/15
171	Detail view of stone [022]	E	23/7/15
172	View of stones [025] and [026]	N	23/7/15
173	General view of Trench 2	S,E,N	23/7/15
174-176	General view of T2 showing second layer of stone [022]	E	23/7/15
177	View of stone within inside of boat nails	E	23/7/15
178	View of stone within inside of boat nails	E	23/7/15
179	Line of stone [028]	NE	23/7/15
180	General view of T2	S	23/7/15
181	General view of T2	E	23/7/15
182	General view of T2	NE	23/7/15
183	General view of T2	N	23/7/15
184	View of keel	N	23/7/15
185	View of keel	S	23/7/15
186-188	Shot of stone [026]	W	23/7/15
189	View of T2 post-ex	E	23/7/15
190	View of T2 N-facing section	N	23/7/15
191-192	Shot of T2 backfilled to Mr. Andersons requirements	Var	24/7/15
193-194	View of service tracks in T3 area	S	24/7/15
195	Service track running E-W with live cable	W	24/7/15
196	View of T3 area and electric cable to W	N	24/7/15
197	Working shot of T3	N	24/7/15
198	Views of stones within T3 and some nails	N	24/7/15
199	Views of stones within T3 and some nails	S	24/7/15
200	Close-up of nails surrounding large stone and animal burrow underneath	S	24/7/15
201	View of T3	N	24/7/15
202	View of T3	S	24/7/15
203	Post-ex view of T3	S	24/7/15
204	S-facing section of T3	S	24/7/15

### APPENDIX 3: DRAWING REGISTER

Drawing No.	Details	Scale
1	Plan of plant room showing possible grave	1:10
2	Overlay 1 of burial [015]	1:10
3	Overlay 2 of burial [015]	1:10
4	E-facing section of grave [015]	1:10
5	W-facing section of grave [015]	1:10
6	Plan of Trench 2 once topsoil removed	1:10

7	Overlay 1 of Trench 2	1:10
8	Overlay 2 of Trench 2	1:10

## APPENDIX 4: FINDS REGISTER

Finds No.	Context No.	Description
1	001	Iron nails/objects
2	001	Mix of small bone fragments- possibly human
3	007	Bone
4	009	Iron Nail
5	009	Iron Nail
6	009	Iron Nail
7	009	Nail/Iron object
8	009	Iron Nail
9	009	Iron Nail
10	009	Iron Nail
11	009	Iron Nail
12	009	Iron Nail
13	009	Iron Nail
14	009	Iron Nail
15	009	Iron Nail
16	009	Iron Nails
17	009	Iron Nail
18	009	Iron Nail
19	009	Iron Nail
20	009	Iron Nail
21	009	Iron Nail
22	009	Iron Nail
23	009	Iron Nail
24	009	Iron Nail
25	009	Iron Nail
26	009	Iron Nail
27	009	Iron Nail
28	009	Iron Nail
29	009	Iron Nail
30	009	Iron Nail
31	009	Iron Nail
32	009	Iron Nail
33	009	Iron Nail
34	009	Iron Nail
35	009	Iron Nail
36	009	Iron Nail
37	009	Iron Nail
38	009	Iron Nail
39	009	Iron Nail
40	009	Iron Nail
41	009	Iron Nail
42	009	Iron Nail
43	009	Iron Nail
44	009	Iron Nail
45	009	Iron Nail
46	009	Iron Nail
47	009	Iron Nail
48	009	Iron Nail
49	009	Iron and wood
50	009	Iron Nail
51	009	Iron Nail
52	009	Iron Nail
53	009	Iron Nail

54	009	Iron Nail
55	009	Iron Nail
56	009	Iron Nail
57	009	Iron Nail
58	009	Iron Nail
59	009	Iron Nail
60	009	Iron Nail
61	009	Iron Nail
62	009	Iron Nail
63	009	Iron Nail
64	009	Iron Nail
65	009	Iron Nail
66	009	Iron Shield Boss
67	009	Iron Nail
68	009	Iron Nail
69	009	Iron Nail
70	009	Iron Nail
71	009	Iron Nail
72	009	Iron Nail
72	009	Iron Nail
73	009	Iron Nail
74	009	Iron Nail
75	009	Iron Nail
76	009	Iron Nail and wood
77	009	Iron Nail
78	099	Iron Nail
79	009	Iron Nail
80	009	Iron Nail
81	009	Iron Nail
82	009	Iron Nail
83	009	Iron Nail
84	009	Iron Nail
85	009	Iron Nail
86	009	Iron Nail
87	009	Iron Nail
88	009	Iron Nail
89	009	Iron Nail
90	009	Iron Nail
91	009	Iron Nail
92	009	Iron Nail
93	009	Iron Nail
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95	009	Iron Nail
96	009	Iron Nail
97	009	Iron Nail
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99	009	Iron Nail
100	009	Iron Nail
101	009	Iron Nail
102	009	Iron Nail
103	009	Iron Nail
104	009	Iron Nail
105	009	Iron Nail
106	009	Iron Nail
107	009	Iron Nail
108	013	Very fragmented ceramic sherds
109	009	Iron Nail
110	009	Iron Nail
111	009	Iron Nail
112	009	Iron Nail

113	009	Iron Nail
114	009	Iron Nail
115	009	Iron Nail
116	009	Iron Nail
117	009	Iron Nail
118	009	Iron Nail
119	009	Iron Nail
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121	009	Iron Nail
122	009	Iron Nail
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134	009	Iron Nail
135	009	Iron Nail
136	009	Iron Nail
137	009	Iron Nail
138	009	Iron Nail
139	009	Iron Nail
140	009	Iron Nail
141	009	Iron Nail
142	009	Iron Nail
143	009	Iron Nail
144	009	Iron Nail
145	001	Bone fragments from Mr Andersons excavations
146-199	-	-
200	021	Animal bone fragments
201	024	Iron Nail
202	024	Iron Nail
203	024	Iron Nail
204	024	Iron Nail
205	024	Iron Nail
206	024	Iron Nail
207	024	Iron Nail
208	024	Iron Nail
209	024	Iron Nail
210	024	Iron Nail
211	024	Iron Nail
212	024	Iron Nail
213	024	Iron Nail
214	024	Iron Nail
215	024	Iron Nail
216	024	Iron Nail
217	024	Iron Nail
218	024	Iron Nail
219	024	Iron Nail
220	024	Iron Nail
221	024	Iron Nail
222	024	Iron Nail
223	024	Iron Nail
224	024	Iron Nail
225	024	Iron Nail

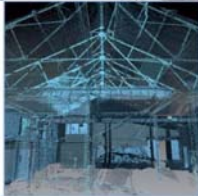
226	024	Iron Nail
227	024	Iron Nail
228	024	Iron Nail
229	029	Nails within keel underlying pipe (could not be surveyed)
230	029	Iron loop at base of keel
231	033	Iron Nail
232	033	Iron Nail
233	033	Iron Nail
234	033	Iron Nail
235	033	Iron Nail
236	033	Iron Nail
237	033	Iron Nail
238	033	Iron Nail
239	033	Iron Nail
240	033	Iron Nail
241	033	Iron Nail
242	033	Iron Nail
243	033	Iron Nail
244	033	Nails within E-facing section under foundation
245	033	Iron Nail

## APPENDIX 5: SAMPLES REGISTER

Context No.	Quantity (litres)
001	5
003	20
008	5
009	40
018	30
020	1
021	10
023	10
023	1
024	20

**APPENDIX 6: 'DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND' REPORT**

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Orkney Islands Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Mayback Boat Burial, Papa Westray, Orkney
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	22470-9
<b>PARISH:</b>	Papa Westray
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Kevin Paton
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	AOC Archaeology Group
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Excavation
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	N/A
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	N/A
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	Human remains, 180 (+) nails, shield boss
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	HY 49547 52360
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> July 2015
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (inc DES)</b>	N/A
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	<p>AOC archaeology undertook an archaeological excavation of an inhumation within a boat at Mayback, Papa Westray, Orkney under the terms of the Historic Scotland Human Remains Call-off Contract.</p> <p>The human remains were identified by Mr Anderson of Mayback while he was excavating a service trench through the base of a newly built plant room attached to the S end of his cottage. His excavations had disturbed an upper leg bone and some other long bones of a definite human inhumation.</p> <p>The archaeological works were conducted in order to save the remains from further disturbance by the planned construction works within and out with the plant room. They revealed a possibly disarticulated skeleton within a wide linear cut that was lined with stone along the top of its S edge. Over 180 iron nails that represent the remains of a boat, along with an iron shield boss were found within the grave. Evidence from the position of the skeleton and a number of the nails may indicate the burial had been disturbed in antiquity.</p> <p>The excavations were able to excavate the majority of the grave, but some of the boat remains and stone lining is still in-situ under the foundations of the cottage and the plant room. It is highly unlikely that any human remains or large artefacts remain on site, with the likelihood that only a few nails from the boat would be present within the in-situ material.</p>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRATIONS:</b>	N/A
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Historic Scotland
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	AOC Archaeology Group Edgefield Road Industrial Estate Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	admin@aocarchaeology.com
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b>	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



AOC Archaeology Group, **Edgefield Industrial Estate, Edgefield Road, Loanhead EH20 9SY**  
tel: **0131 440 3593** | fax: **0131 440 3422** | e-mail: **edinburgh@aocarchaeology.com**

[www.aocarchaeology.com](http://www.aocarchaeology.com)