

2 Introduction *by PRJ Duffy*

The site was discovered by Mr S Nicholson, of Gitterpitten, Rendall, during ground levelling works by machine, intended to flatten a small knoll in the field. The presence of small quarry pits in the immediate vicinity had initially led the farmer to believe that the visible portions of the artificial mound were a stone dump or quarry site. Shortly after the works started it became apparent that the knoll might instead be a burial mound. The discovery was promptly reported to Julie Gibson of Orkney Archaeological Trust (OAT) who undertook a preliminary site inspection. This inspection verified the presence of a cist containing substantial quantities of cremated human bone, and identified a deposit of fuel ash slag and cremated material spread by machine disturbance from a second collapsed cist. The discovery was reported to Historic Scotland and an archaeological excavation was undertaken at the site of the find spot over 7 days during June 2003, as

part of the Historic Scotland Human Remains Call Off Contract.

Ferndale Farm is located at the eastern side of the Orkney Mainland within the parish of Rendall. The site is situated on the east-facing slopes of a field of improved pasture, to the west of the A966 (NGR HY 3836 2035). The area is characterized by gently sloping fields of improved pasture within a shallow valley, bounded by low rolling hills broken to the south-east, with views across Wide Firth to Kirkwall. Within the field, a large quarry pit to the north-east of the site and the other small quarry pits or dumps within the field boundary attest to a history of stone extraction in the area.

The specialist reports below are edited versions of the full texts, which form part of the site archive. The site archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland, RCAHMS, Edinburgh.