

I.

ANOTHER LATE VIKING HOUSE AT FRESWICK, CAITHNESS.

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The Viking settlement on the sands of Freswick was described in these *Proceedings*, vol. lxxiii. pp. 71-109, by Dr A. O. Curle. He not only reported upon the excavation of a long house, a smithy, a bath and other structures, covering several architectural periods, but also gave a comprehensive account of the site's topography and collected the literary references to the region's occupation in Viking times. These matters need not, therefore, be repeated here. The great storms of 1940 blew the sand from the wall-tops of another complex of structures, 3 or 4 feet below the modern turf line, at a point to the north-east of Dr Curle's excavations and on the seaward edge of the high dune. These walls did not escape the watchful eye of our Corresponding Member, Mr Simon Bremner. Early in 1941 he warned the Inspector of Ancient Monuments that the newly exposed complex was endangered by a sand-pit that was being worked inwards from the shore to the east. As a result I went to inspect the site on behalf of the Ministry of Works and Buildings in the Easter vacation. I then cleared the sand away down to the bases of the walls at what we now term the doorway BC and pier CD and established the secondary character of wall WX (fig. 1).

As the sand was needed for Government work and the structures affected were clearly much dilapidated, I could not recommend the issue of a Preservation Order, but nevertheless felt it desirable that the buildings should be scientifically examined and planned before removal. Accordingly the Society made me a grant to meet the cost of a "rescue dig," and in the last weeks of June 1941 I cleared all the threatened area. I was fortunate enough to secure the help of Mr Simon Bremner and of Peter Kennedy, also of Freswick, a scholar at Wick High School, to both of whom I wish to express my gratitude for their generous and understanding co-operation.

The structures examined lie at the seaward end of a north and south bunker from which the wind has carried away 3 to 5 feet of recent drift sand exposing a tough layer of midden-like material littered with stones, bones, and sherds, and demonstrably continuous with that on and in which Dr Curle's buildings stood. To the south this layer has been undermined by sea and gale, and the sand slopes almost precipitously to the

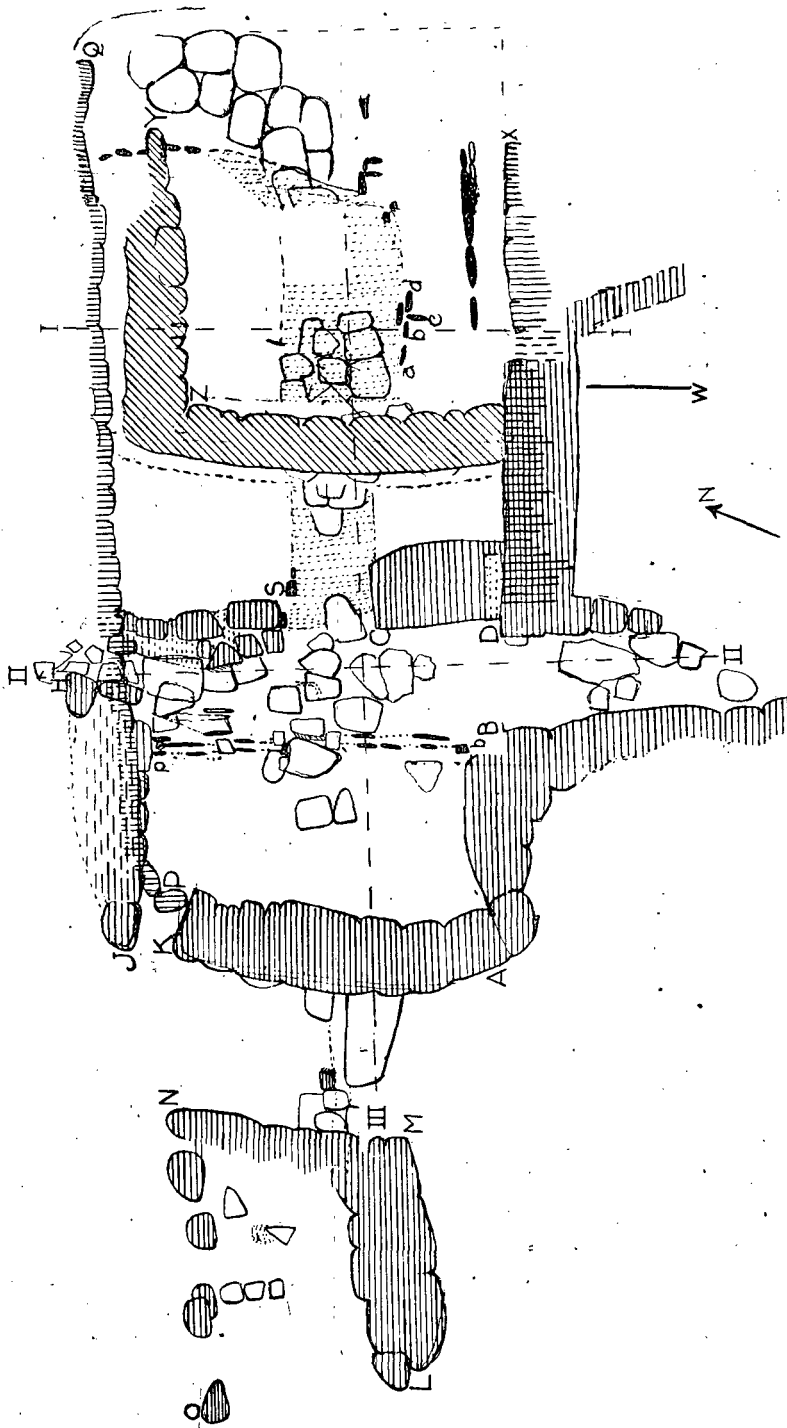


Fig. 1. Plan of constructions: vertical shading, phase I; horizontal, phase II; oblique, phase III; stippling, ash layers.

shore some 50 feet below. The section exposed in the sand-pit showed that the occupation deposit once extended much further eastward and that under it there is at least 40 feet of pure sand uninterrupted by any earlier midden-bed or band of fossil humus. (Further inland the sand accumulation below our Viking horizon is interrupted by a well-marked occupation layer from which Mr Bremner has recovered flints and sherds, probably of the Bronze Age. But here only a few feet of sand separate the prehistoric deposit from the shelf of the "25-foot raised beach.")

Our excavation exposed a single complex of buildings, obviously representing more than one architectural period. It gave no indication of the presence of connected buildings either to the west or north. In the latter direction other buildings of our phase I may underlie the midden deposit of our latest occupation, but such must have been reduced to the barest stumps and in any case are not threatened by the sand-pit. To the south and east erosion and sand-digging have set a rigid limit to the possibilities of uncovering further structures.

The earliest phase of the complex is represented by a "long house" with an overall length of 28 feet. Its north wall PQ, though partly overlaid by later constructions, was traced over the whole of this length running some 20° north of east. It is founded on a laid bed of stiff grey clay. The basal course which alone is preserved over the whole length is formed of relatively thin slabs, on an average 6 to 7 inches thick and 7 to 8 inches wide. The second course, preserved in places near the east end, follows the same principles. The west wall has been replaced by or incorporated in the later wall KA of phase II. Similarly the contemporary wall AB must cover the western part of the original south wall. Judged by its construction, however, the inner face at least of wall DE and its eastern continuation EX may really represent the original south wall of the long house, for it is built entirely with slabs, in contrast to the boulder construction characteristic of phase II (Pl. II, 2). Its eastern extremity has been lost through the erosion of the sand dune. The same fate has probably overtaken the east wall of the house, for this is missing altogether. In the north-east corner, however, its line can be reconstructed on the one hand from the outer margin of the clay bed on which it was founded, on the other from the limits of the paved interior.

The centre of the house was occupied by a long fire represented by a bed of peat ash, 5 to 8 inches deep at the centre, which begins 4 to 5 feet from the probable line of the east wall and extends westward nearly 15 feet. The ash bed in the eastern part of the house rests partly upon, but also underlies, a paving of thin slabs rotted by the heat of the fire. Traces of a kerb of small stones on edge survive to mark the southern margin of the hearth. Of these the outermost stone at c proved on examination to be a segment of a flat rotary quern of micaceous schist (from

Shetland). Slabs projecting at right angles southward from this stone and from *d* may be the margins of post-sockets. Near the west end of the hearth there were somewhat dubious traces of a similar kerb of very small stones on the northern margin of the ash, but none were noted on the south here. At the western end of the hearth an oval fire pit, about 2 feet across from east to west and nearly as wide as the hearth proper, had been dug into the underlying sand to a depth of some 6 inches. It was filled with layers of ash varying in colour from red and purple to yellow, forming a deposit with a total depth of $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches, while the sand below it had been reddened by heat to a depth of a further 5 inches.

Apart from the burnt paving slabs under the hearth only the eastern end of the room had been paved (not quite certainly in phase I). For the rest the floor was formed of grey clay or a tough brownish midden mixture, trodden hard. Eight inches to a foot from the south wall a line of four slabs on edge with a total length of 5 feet 3 inches and varying in depth from 7 inches at the west end to 17 inches at the east (Pl. II, 2, in front of staff) may have formed the supports for a platform corresponding to the *pallr* of a classical Viking house.

To a second phase of occupation are attributed the existing walls HJ, KA, and AB with their extensions, the outer face at least of wall DE (F1-F2) and probably also the piers CD and SR. All are built in a different style of masonry to PQ, using large boulders from the beach set on edge or on end for the foundation course and making extensive use of water-worn stones for the upper courses too (Pl. I). Where, as in AK, the wall is two courses thick, the inner and outer faces have not been bonded together by headers save at the ends.

For the new house at least the strip DE of the original south wall seems to have been retained, but it was given a new outer face the boulder foundations of which rest on midden material, 7 inches higher than the base of WX (Pl. I, 1, right). Beyond a doorway, 3 feet wide, the south wall is continued by the wall BA built in boulder masonry and bonded into the west wall AK. This ends on the north with a header forming the southern cheek to a doorway 2 feet wide, across which lie as a sort of threshold the westernmost foundation stones of wall PQ (Pl. III, 1, right). Wall AK is standing 2 feet 9 inches high on the inside and 2 feet 6 inches on the outside, the foundation course being rather higher up. The north wall is now represented by a dilapidated section JH only $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet long that diverges south of the line of the original wall PQ. The stones of the latter are separated from the foundation course of the new wall by a thin sand blow only an inch thick, which may be equated with the sand layer intercalated between the surface of the phase I hearth and the paving or floor deposit of phase II in the interior of the house. The north wall seems to be finished off deliberately by the stones at H (Pl. I, 1, beside



1. Entrance looking north.



2. West room looking south.



1. West room looking south-east.



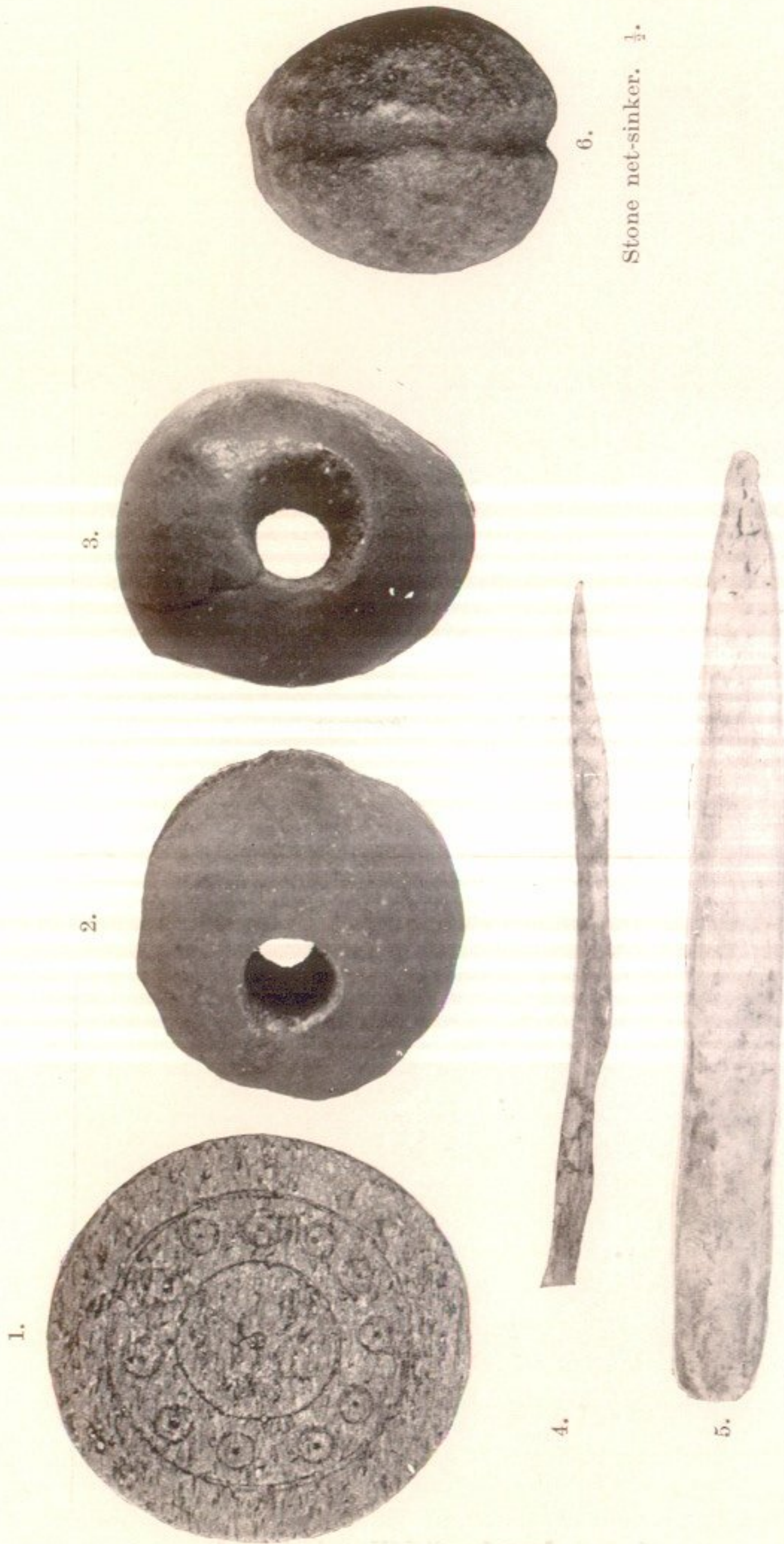
2. South wall of east room.



1. North-west corner.



2. Exterior of wall MN and channel.



Whalebone draughtsman, femur head whorls, and bone implements. 1.

staff), as if there had been here a door corresponding to that at BD on the south side of the room. But east of this break there is no trace of a continuation of the new north wall. I believe the stones of this section have been removed to build the still later structure YZW. In that case the house of phase II may have continued as far east as did the original house.

The hypothetical eastern room would have been separated from the well-preserved west room by the dividing wall formed by the piers DC and SR. CD (Pl. II, 1, behind staff), which still stands 1 foot 9 inches high, has been built largely of thin slabs resting upon the joints of the wall DE

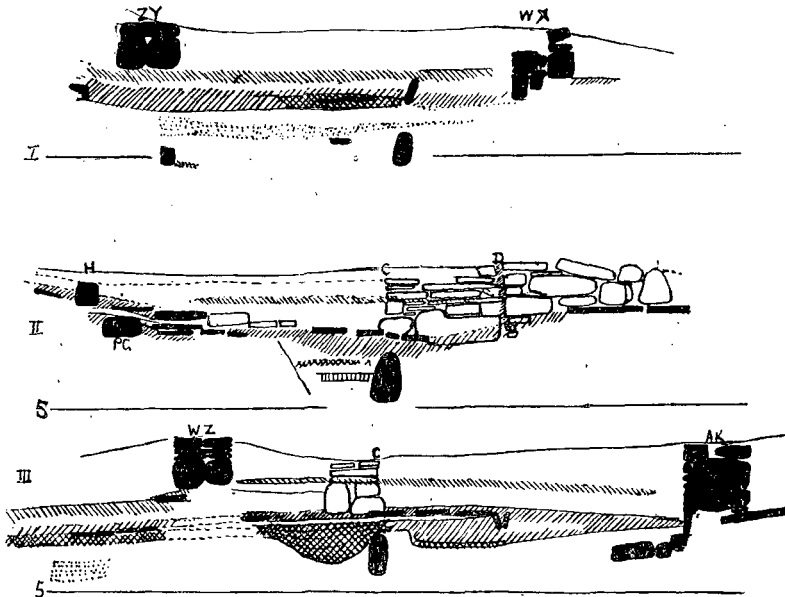


Fig. 2. Sections I, II, and III; ash layers cross hatched.

rather than being bonded into it. But it terminates in boulders in phase II style. Its western face forms the cheek to the door, the projection of the original wall at D constituting the check. Its base is faced with a thin slate on edge, trimmed along the top to accommodate the next course. Immediately above this comes a bar-hole which may have run right through the pier, but is now blocked by cracked slabs above. This pier rests upon the midden floor of phase II and projects over the edge of the fire-pit of phase I, which is separated from the later floor and masonry by an inch of drift sand (Pl. I, 2 and fig. 2, XY).

The northern pier, RS, is much dilapidated. Two boulders in line form its eastern face, and are related to the hearth of phase I in the same way as the terminal boulders of CD. The western face seems to have been built with flat slabs resting on paving slabs, but most have perished, and

the stump has been overlaid with later paving. Nevertheless the northernmost foundation-stone has been properly bonded into the foundation of wall PQ, 9 inches west of R.

The floor of phase II in the eastern room between the piers and the later wall WZ consists of a tough brownish deposit full of fish-bones, separated from the floor and hearth deposit of phase I by an inch of sand. About 2 feet from the door represented by the gap CS and opposite to it begins a layer of paving-stones which mark the phase II floor over the older hearth and continue eastward under wall WZ (Pl. II, 1). Beyond this later boundary there are 4 inches of tough brown midden recalling in consistency and composition the phase II floor overlying the ash of the earlier hearth, and a similar deposit extends north and south of the long fire. But still farther east it is possible that the upper layer of ashes belong to phase II.

In the west room and between DC and RS the phase II floor is represented by an irregular pavement of slabs underlying the deposit of midden and fish-bones. On the west this pavement is bounded by a groove, *bp*, roughly marked by pairs of thin slates sunk edgewise in the floor (Pl. I, 2, centre). This groove is about 3 inches wide and, judging by the widths of the marginal slates, 7 to 9 inches deep. From $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 feet from the south wall (*b*) this groove is interrupted by a definite gap, the two ends of the groove being marked by transverse stones: A sandstone slab 3 inches thick and 15 inches long at the gap rises above the pavement slates like a threshold, and west of it paving continues 27 inches beyond the groove. It is accordingly suggested that the groove is the socket for a wooden partition that was interrupted by a doorway. Just east of the groove near its northern end a slab on edge rising 2 feet high from the floor, into which it was embedded 7 inches deep, and 2 feet 4 inches wide, might be a facing to this partition (Pl. I, 1, in front of and to left of staff).

In this case the paved area will serve as a hall or passage between the east room already described and the west room proper. In the latter very little pavement survived; the midden deposit was thinner and less tough, and almost faded out about a foot from the wall. On the other hand large stones, presumably fallen from the walls, were scattered about in seeming disorder. Over the whole area from about a foot away from wall AK across the stump of pier RS up to wall ZW and less clearly beyond it, the drift sand filling the construction was interrupted about 1 foot above the phase II floor by a black band of tough material absolutely sterile. Mr Bremner suggested that this black matter was roofing, principally sods, a suggestion in which I concur (fig. 2).

Entrance to the building of phase II was afforded primarily by the door on the south. It is preceded by a paved passage $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet long flanked by very flimsy walls one course thick (Pl. I, 1). The paved floor of the passage is level, but a foot higher than the paving of the interior. Accord-

ingly the entrant must have stepped down at D, but no stone threshold survived nor was the floor deposit as well defined as usual at the crucial point (fig. 2, II).

There was further a second doorway of some sort in the north-west corner at KJ (Pl. III, 1). Across this gap but outside it two large slabs, measuring respectively 2 feet 8 inches by 2 feet by 4½ inches, and 2 feet 6 inches square by 2 inches thick, were lying in the sand with edges against wall AK. They may well have been lintels. However, this gap led to nothing but blown sand without any trace of paving.

Finally, there must have been at some time a north entrance east of H. The form of this door in phase II cannot be accurately determined, but a pavement underlying the base of pier RS on its western side may be held to prove the existence of a door even then. Later, when at least the west side of SR had been broken down, a fresh pavement was laid over the stump of the pier to form a sort of ramp or step leading to a much disturbed pavement that slopes up north of H to the surface of the dune beyond it.

Finally, when nearly a foot of sand had accumulated over the phase II floor (Pl. II, 1, back), a new construction, WXYZ, was built over the eastern part of the houses. Probably the old south wall was still utilized in this phase III. But for the west boundary a new wall was built up against DE and was continued eastward by wall YZ. Both these walls are constructed in the same style as those of phase II, two courses wide with large boulders for the base (Pl. II, 2, right). In their best-preserved portions they stand 1 foot 4 inches to 1 foot 8 inches high and are 2 feet wide, but the eastern end of ZY is broken down. No hearth or other fittings were found in the area enclosed by YZW. A few horizontal slates project from beneath ZW, but suggest rather foundations than paving-slabs. Between X and Y, however, remains of a pavement, broken up by grass roots and the subsidence of the sand into small fragments, survived. Otherwise no definite floor could be detected in the whole area, only a thin layer of dirty sand. This deposit slopes down eastward so that it is 6 inches lower between XY than under ZW, and is consequently separated from the phase I-II floors on the east by an extremely thin layer of drift sand. No relics can confidently be attributed to phase III.

The outer face of wall AK was found to rest on a horizontal slab 3 inches thick, some 18 inches wide, and over 4 feet long. Four inches farther north another slab, parallel to the first, also runs under the wall so that the pair seem to form a sort of channel into the west room of the first house (Pl. III, 2, centre). The eastern end of the channel is, however, blocked by the slab on edge that faces AK on the inside (Pl. III, 2, to left of staff). Westward, however, the channel was traced for 4½ feet till it ran under a new wall MN parallel to AK. MN proved to be the eastern boundary of

a very ruinous structure LMNO. Of this the south wall is represented only by foundation slabs and the north wall only by a discontinuous line of boulder on end, while the west wall is altogether missing (Pl. III, 2, foreground). There is not even an internal face to wall MN. No floor was found to this structure. Only in the south-east corner where the channel runs out eastward to AK was there a thin deposit of brown-stained sand, which was found also in the channel outside MN. On the other hand, about a foot above the foundation of LM there is a secondary floor, including a few paving-slates extending westward for some 4 feet from the

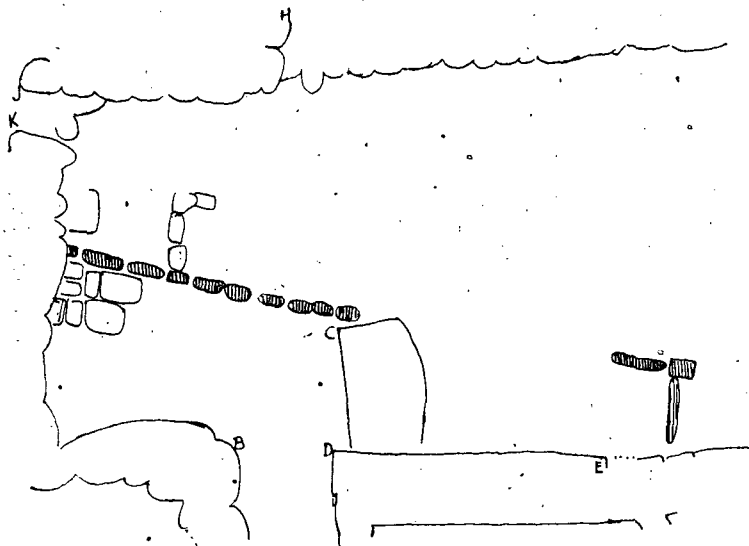


Fig. 3. Constructions of phase O.

ragged inner side of MN to a line of small blocks running south from NO. On this floor in the north-east corner stood a large pot that had been crushed between fallen stones, while a "draughtsman" of cetacean bone lay just beside it. Two feet to the south-west was a small patch of ash.

In the fire-pit at the west end of the phase I hearth near C we encountered the top of what proved to be a slab on edge, 15 inches high. This turned out to be one of a series of close-set slabs that ran westward to the base of wall AK (Pl. II, 1, staff stands against slabs). The eastern end of the same line of slabs was subsequently discovered under the kerb of the phase I hearth in the east room (Pl. II, 2, foreground). There, exactly 21 feet from its western end under wall AK, the line came to an end in a stouter pillar and turned southward to run under wall WX (fig. 3). Under the west room a pier *lx*, one course wide and two courses high, has been built out northward from this line for 2 feet 6 inches (Pl. III, 1,

foreground), and there is another pier parallel to this under AK. South of the line a sort of paving of stout slabs some 4 inches thick extends for $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet east of AK, flush with the top of the uprights and 9 inches below the floor of phase I (Pl. III, 1). The slabs stood in or rested on pure drift sand. There was no floor at their bases nor any deposit south of them. To the north between *utx* there was a layer of dirty sand mixed with a few sods a foot below the phase I floor-top.

These puzzling remains seem to have no organic connexion with the constructions of phase I or later. They are built in a different style, are differently orientated, and have in fact been disturbed and interrupted by the phase I hearth. They apparently represent an occupation (phase O) appreciably earlier than our phase I. As a piece of hopelessly rusted iron was found between the uprights and *wv*, this occupation itself must fall within the "Iron Age." But it would seem to have been of a very temporary nature, for no floor nor occupation deposit was found at the base of the walls, nor was any such exposed in the sand-pit section to the east, nor yet in trial pits sunk to the west of wall AK. Perhaps more extensive digging under the midden deposits to the north would disclose more substantial remains of phase O. But in war-time such speculative operations in an area not threatened by disturbance did not seem justified.

RELICS.

In point of view of relics the complex examined in 1941 proved much poorer even than those explored by Dr Curle in 1937-38. Moreover, save for a single stone whorl, none can be referred with complete confidence to the later phases II or III. One femur-head whorl, a pyramidal "loom-weight," and a couple of atypical sherds from the eastern end of the area may probably belong to phase II, but the two floors were here separated by such a very thin layer of blown sand that this attribution is uncertain. Building LMNO again, from which two interesting relics were recovered, is more reminiscent in its construction of phase II than of phase I and in absolute height lies on the later horizon. But it is not physically connected with structures of any specific period in the main complex and is not underlain by any deposit corresponding to phase I. Its contents can therefore be referred to a late phase only with great reserve. The remainder explicitly belong to the long house of phase I.

The relics recovered are as follows:—

Two *femur-head whorls*, a type common also in the buildings of the same settlement excavated by Dr Curle (Pl. IV, 2-3).

One *stone whorl*, 3.5 cm. ($1\frac{3}{8}$ inch) in diameter and .7 cm. ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch) thick found near *b* at Easter, and certainly not older than phase II. It is of a type current at all times from Early Iron Age to Recent.

Two *pyramidal loom-weights* or net-sinkers measuring 3×4 cm. at the base and 7 cm. high. The perforation of one is unfinished. Though not found on the western site at Freswick, the type is common on Viking sites in Scandinavia and in Shetland.¹

One *grooved "net-sinker"*—a pear-shaped piece of sandstone with diameters of 7×6.6 cm. ($2\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$ inches) encircled by a groove along its major axis with a transverse notch at the wide end—a type not previously recorded from Freswick though known elsewhere in the county² and common on Viking sites in Norway (Pl. IV, 6).

One broken *pin* or needle of bone.

○ About a quarter of the upper stone of a *flät rotary quern* of mica-schist. If circular, the stone would have been about 36 cm. ($16\frac{1}{2}$ inches) in diameter and 4 cm. ($1\frac{1}{2}$ inch) thick with a central hole 7 cm.

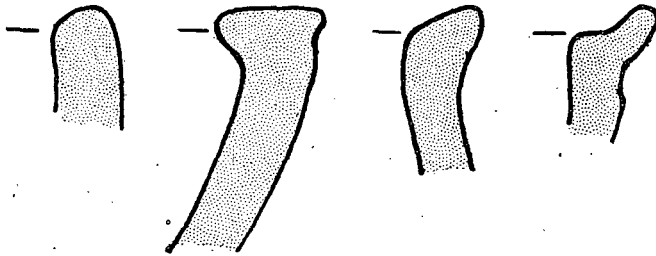


Fig. 4. Sections of pot rims. 1-4.

(3 inches) across. The boring for the hole to take a vertical handle has been begun about 3 cm. from the edge but has been left unfinished. Our fragment was actually used as part of the hearth kerb of the long house.

Pottery was not very plentiful and extremely fragmentary. All sherds seemed to belong to hand-made undecorated vessels. As usual in Viking pottery, traces of vegetable temper were always conspicuous. No complete vessel was recovered, but the fragments seemed to belong to coarse cooking-pots. The bases were flat in all cases where evidence was available, but well-defined necks are not represented in our collection. On the other hand the rims show very sophisticated treatment, as do those recovered by Dr Curle. Most of our rims were in fact flattened and squashed down inwards or less often outwards; one small sherd has indeed almost an internal flange (fig. 4, 2). As Dr Curle has pointed out, this sort of treatment is foreign to the Viking pottery of Shetland.³ But it was applied to Irish pottery, from the eighth⁴ to perhaps the

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxix, p. 303, fig. 39, 4 (Jarlshof).

² *Ibid.*, vol. vii, p. 50 (Birkle Hills).

³ *Ibid.*, vol. lxxiii, p. 106.

⁴ *Eg. Ant. J.*, vol. xvi, p. 189, fig. 5, 11-12, and p. 196 (Larriban, Antrim).

thirteenth century,¹ which also shows vegetable temper, and recalls that of the much older Iron Age A wares of England and the cognate Final Bronze Age pottery of Old Keig and Jarlshof,² though the fabric of these earlier wares is quite different.

This treatment is admirably exemplified in the most nearly complete vessel recovered. The bowl standing in the north corner of building LMNO must have been intact when stones from the wall fell upon it. Unfortunately their impact so completely pulverized parts of the imperfectly fired pottery that a complete reconstruction has not been possible. But it is certain that the vessel was a flat-based open bowl with an internal diameter at the rim of about 24 cm. ($9\frac{1}{2}$ inches). The walls are 7 mm. ($\frac{1}{8}$ inch) thick, but the rim itself (fig. 4) is 1.4 cm. ($\frac{7}{12}$ inch) wide; for it has been flattened down and rolled over, forming a pronounced internal shelf round the bowl's mouth. Now this pronounced case of rim treatment cannot, we admit, be confidently assigned to either of the phases here distinguished. But it was quite definitely associated with the only relic recovered that might be dated by external comparisons—a whalebone draughtsman.

The playing man is a disc of cetacean bone .65 ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch) thick and 4.6 cm. ($1\frac{7}{8}$ inch) in diameter, precisely like a modern draughtsman. The upper face is decorated with two engraved concentric circles round a central dot. The larger circle is defined by a double line. The space between it and the inner circle is filled with a ring of ten small circles each with a central dot (Pl. IV, 1).

Such a piece is clearly differentiated both in size and decoration from the playing men so frequently found on Roman sites and on native sites in Scotland and elsewhere outside the Empire. It is no less obviously distinct from the domical playing men characteristic of burials and habitation sites of the Viking Period properly so called.³ Our piece, on the contrary, belongs to a large family, going back in Scandinavia and England to the twelfth or thirteenth century, that presumably represents the direct ancestors of contemporary draughtsmen. (Whether they were used in draughts—dame—or some other board game is another question, too complicated for discussion here.) A very close parallel to our piece was found in the Tyskebryggen in Bergen in a deposit dating from before the great fire of 1248.⁴ Dr Grieg mentions other draughtsmen, also decorated with dot-and-circle ornament though arranged in different patterns, from Bergen, Oslo, and Trøndhjem in Norway, and

¹ *U.J.A.*, vol. i. (1938), p. 131 (Doommore, Antrim).

² Childe, *Prehistoric Communities*, p. 210.

³ Described by Jan Petersen in *Oldtiden*, vol. iv. (Oslo, 1914), pp. 84 ff.

⁴ S. Grieg, *Middelalderske Byfund* (1932), p. 260 and fig. 233.

from Lund, Sigtuna, Gotland, and Ragnhildholmens Castle in Sweden. The last-named specimen, like that from Tyskebryggen, Bergen, can be dated by its context to round about 1200. A number of similar draughtsmen have turned up in and around London, but apparently without any precise context. They have been described by Dr R. E. M. Wheeler¹ among relics of the Viking Period. He mentions examples from Norman castle-mounds at Warrington and at Rug, Merionethshire.² In Ireland similar pieces are not uncommon. Specimens from a crannog at Cloonfinlough, Co. Roscommon, and from Drumcliffe *souterrain*, Co. Sligo,³ would seem on general grounds likely to belong to the Dark or Early Middle Ages. But Mr T. D. Kendrick⁴ has recently seen a specimen allegedly found in a rich Viking grave in north-western Ireland. Finally, from Scotland the National Museum possesses four pieces bearing more elaborate patterns—rosettes and crosses as well as dot-and-circle motives⁵ found in a drain at Castle Donnan, Ross-shire. In the St Andrews Cathedral Museum there is a disc similar in size to ours, but decorated with interlacing work,⁶ found at Kirkhill.

Hence, surveying the accessible material from not too distant regions, I can find no piece that is at all likely to be older than A.D. 1100, while the best dated specimens are more probably a century later. The lower limit for such pieces is admittedly quite indefinite. Hence the Freswick draughtsman is not at all likely to be older than 1200 and might quite well be substantially later. The same date would seem to be a fair upper limit to the pot associated with the piece.

CONCLUSION.

The principal interest of this poor and dilapidated series of ruins is that they may illustrate the transformation of the classical long house of the Viking Age into something very like the black house such as survived in the Hebrides last century. The structure of Period I exhibited all the essential features of the long house. The reconstruction of Period II has been subdivided into at least three parts; a new door has been cut in the rear wall opposite the entrance; a pavement has been laid between these two doors, the western end partitioned off and an opening contrived in the end wall. The result is a structure agreeing in essentials with the core of the black house at Harbost, Lewis, described by Aage Roussell,⁷

¹ London Museum Catalogue, *London and the Vikings*, p. 48.

² Illustrated by Dalton, *Catalogue of Ivory Carvings in the British Museum* (1909), p. 83, No. 206.

³ Wood-Martin, *Pagan Ireland*, figs. 350-2.

⁴ Information kindly conveyed in a letter to the author.

⁵ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. vii, p. 361. (I owe this reference to Mr Darroch.)

⁶ Hay Fleming, *St Andrews Cathedral Museum*, p. 197. (Reference kindly supplied by Mr J. S. Richardson.)

⁷ *Norse Building Customs in the Scottish Isles*, p. 16 and fig. 4.

if the barn and store-room built against the rear wall under a separate roof be ignored. There again we find doors in the opposite side walls joined by a paved way, though the rear door there leads into the barn, while whatever lay beyond its counterpart at Freswick has disappeared. To the right at Harbost we have the "fire room," separated from the paved way by a wooden partition instead of masonry walls. To the left lies the byre divided off only by a step down where our house had a wooden partition. Finally in the gable end is an opening used for carrying out the dung in spring.

Accordingly the later Freswick house reveals in a rudimentary and unspecialized form a plan from which the Hebridean croft—perhaps, but along divergent lines, also the Orkney and other "Norse" types of farmhouse—can be derived. But here in Caithness, although directly superimposed upon a true Viking long house, it does not at all obviously grow organically out of this, but involves instead radical alterations of the older scheme.