

6. NOTE ON EXCAVATIONS AT THE BROCH OF TAPPOCH IN THE  
TOR WOOD, STIRLINGSHIRE.

In the summers of 1948 and 1949 some excavation was carried out at the Broch of Tappoch, mainly on the ramparts. The site is at the top of a wooded hill, there

<sup>1</sup> Vol. lxxx. pp. 93-97.

# DUNAN NA NIGHEAN

Colonsay

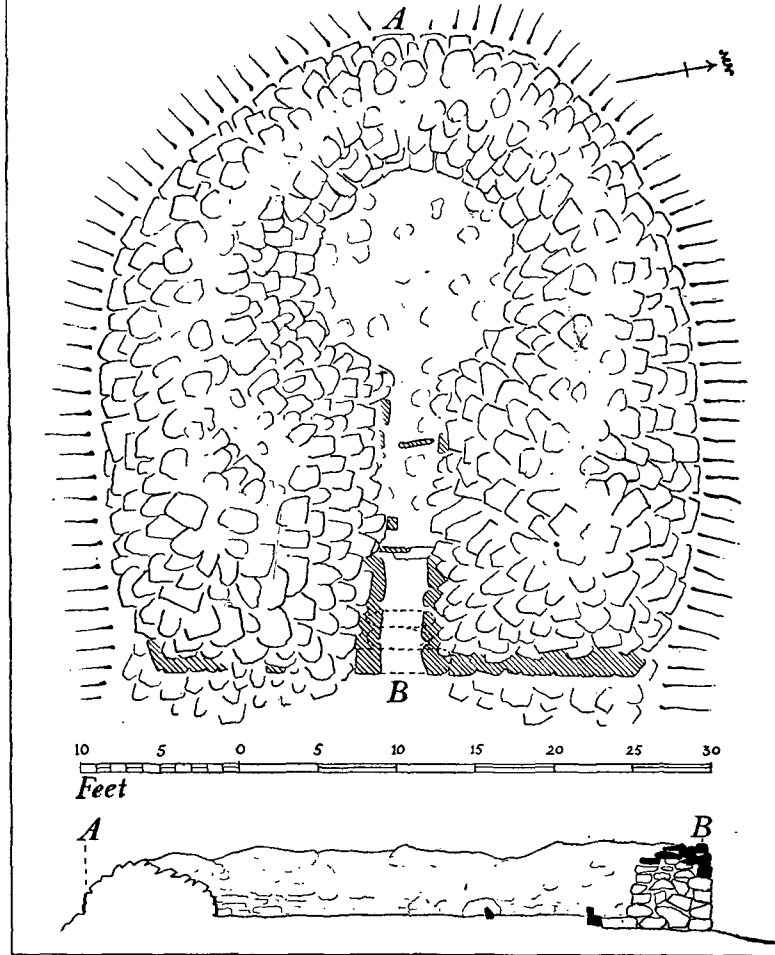


Fig. 2.

## SECTION AT DUNAN NA NIGHEAN COLONSAY

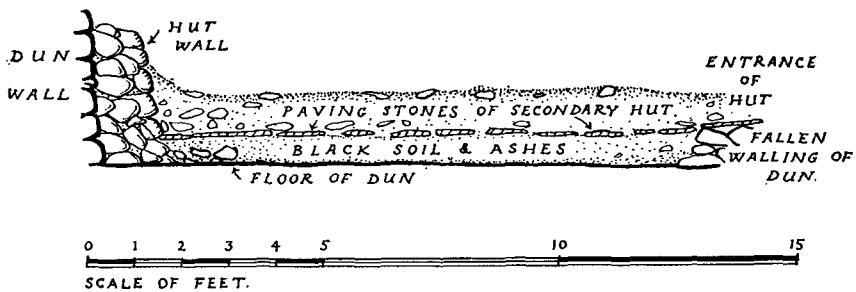


Fig. 3.

being a sharp drop on the west side. The inner rampart was visible for a great part of the circuit on the north, east and south, the outer on the south for about a third of the distance, apparently coming to an end at a point in line with the broch entrance on the south-east. For most of this section a natural ridge had been utilised. On the east side odd large stones lay on the probable line of the outer face, and on the north-east a section of outer kerb remains, but the rampart cannot be traced any farther.

The inner rampart, much of which was obscured when the inside of the broch was cleared in 1864, shows several types of construction. On the south-west the outer kerb of large irregular stones and the remains of a core of small stones and earth were uncovered; farther east an earlier double wall had been altered into a rampart with an earth slope and stone kerb on the outside; the present inner face may belong to this stage. The filling between the two walls was of large loose stones with sand, and above it sand and other material deposited in basket-fuls. It contained fragments of sheep-bone and a lump of slag, not produced by metal-working. There appears to be no gap in the rampart opposite the broch doorway. Just beyond this point, the outer face of the rampart was probably of several large orthostats, and seems farther on to have been built of smaller stones. Boulders again formed the kerb on the north-east, but few remain, the rampart being levelled to an indeterminate spread of small boulders. This continues on the north, the rampart coming to an end about 40 feet from the rock edge on the west; the position of large "kerb" stones in the spread may indicate reconstruction here at the butt end. There was no further trace of rampart, straight or curving towards the broch, on the north-west, and though continuation of its curve on the south-west may be so interpreted, there is a line of boulders on the west side that appears to be part of a continuation of the defences in the form of a wall between the broch and the cliff edge. There is no trace of a ditch at any point so far examined, though natural gullies may have been utilized on the north.

Outside the "entrance" on the north some traces of light walling and a hut floor of trodden earth were discovered, which must necessarily have interfered with the rampart and entrance had they been still in use when they were made. On the south side some traces of paving were found immediately outside the outer rampart. It was not possible to do any further investigation at either point.

A trench was made against the broch wall on the south side, and it was found that the facing stone had been robbed, but that the original thickness of the wall where it encloses the stair passage must have been at least 20 feet; it was certainly not uniform throughout. Beyond this the foundations, large stones fitted neatly together and backed against a ledge of rock, extend about 8 feet. Over these and extending into the wall material was a burnt layer; it did not run right through under the wall, since it did not appear in a section made at the foot of the stair. This shows a hollow filled with a clean layer of small stones which may, if the 1864 clearing did not extend into the passage, be part of an original floor.

An attempt was made to excavate in the area between the broch wall and the inner rampart; after heavy rain this trench became unsafe and could not be completed, but it was noted that the stones tended to be of larger size at lower levels and that here there was greater thickness of debris beneath a turf-line, presumably that of 1864, than above it.

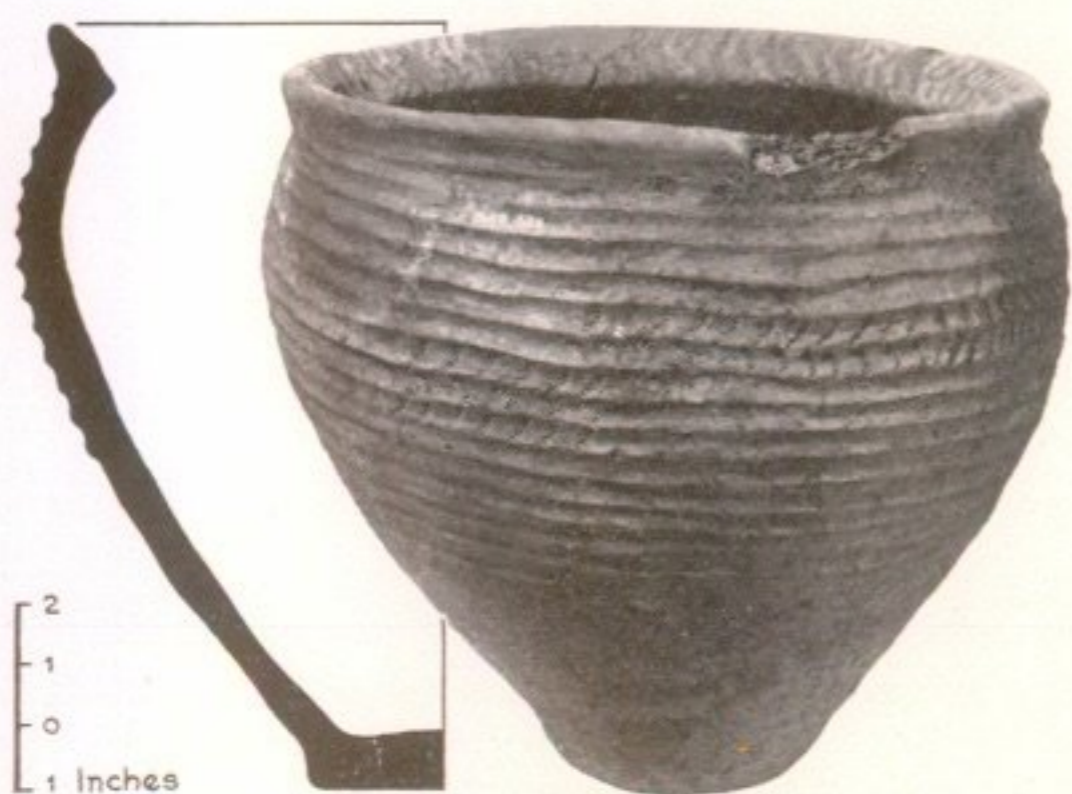
Two hearths were uncovered on the south-west; one, the smaller, on a ledge of rock lower than the inner rampart, the other against what was assumed to be its outer face, closer to the broch. Farther north, stonework indicating a well was found some hundred feet down the slope on the east side.



1. Mediaeval Ewer from Ashkirk. ( $\frac{1}{4}$ )



2. Beaker from Newhouse (Mittens), Birsay. (c.  $\frac{1}{2}$ )



3. Funerary Vessels from Wemyss, Fife. ( $\frac{1}{3}$ )

DOUGLAS E. ROSS, HUGH MARWICK, CAPTAIN WEMYSS.

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Few finds were discovered on the site; two sherds of the same vessel of an as yet unidentified Roman ware with grooved decoration were found unstratified among stones from the broch above the rampart stones on the north, and a rough piece of lignite from the surface of the rampart core behind a fallen orthostat on the east. Charcoal from all trenches was found to be from similar material: hazel, birch and oak.

The excavations were undertaken by the Falkirk Archæological Society in whose *Proceedings* a full report will appear. I have to thank Mr M. V. Orr of the Royal Botanic Garden, Miss Platt of the Royal Scottish Museum, and Dr Caulfield for examining the charcoal, bone and slag, and Professor Piggott and Mr R. B. K. Stevenson for their advice and encouragement.

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