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THE CHAPEL AND ENCLOSURE ON THE BROUGH OF DEBRNESS,  
ORKNEY: SURVEY AND EXCAVATIONS, 1975-1977

CHRISTOPHER D MORRIS with J BERRY

DEERNESS

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THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS  
OF THE PARISH OF DEERNESS

Kenneth A Steedman

INTRODUCTION

This list of sites and monuments in the parish of Deerness, which is almost entirely the work of Kenneth A Steedman, has been edited by Norman Emery and Christopher D Morris, to bring it broadly into line with the layout of the list produced for Sanday and North Ronaldsay by Dr Raymond Lamb, Archaeology Officer of the Orkney Heritage Society (Lamb 1980). It originated as part of an independent piece of work by Mr Steedman, forming a dissertation for the degree of B A with Honours in Archaeology at Durham University, supervised by C D Morris. The fieldwork was undertaken in 1979, and the study presented in 1980. Copies of the dissertation are lodged with the National Monuments Record for Scotland, and with the Archaeology Officer for the Orkney Heritage Society. Ultimately, this material will form part of the publication of the Orkney Survey by Dr Lamb and, therefore, wider discussion of the material is not undertaken here, but left to that publication. The original number sequence is retained here, and sites listed in this sequence, rather than by type of monument (see Illus 59, 2: E13). Surveys and sketch plans of particular monuments (nos 12, 37, 42, 43, 54) were undertaken and are reproduced in the original dissertation: they are not reproduced here. Equally, drawings of artifacts are not included here. Photographs of some sites are in the original dissertation.

CATALOGUE OF SITES

1. Hirkady. Eroded site. HY 5382 0705  
North-facing coastal section which appears to have eroded 10 m since O S 1:25000 survey of 1966. Visible in the section is midden material and stone of an almost totally eroded site. From the eroded midden was extracted a right scapula of a sheep or goat, comprising neck and distal blade and part of thoracic margin.
  
2. Swarta Geo. Eroded site. HY 5594 0801  
On the east side of Swarta Geo, eroding site with stonework visible through the turf.
  
3. Denwick. Covenanters Graves. HY 5708 0872  
Kettlewell Monument with graves of Covenanters reputedly captured at Bothwell Bridge and drowned at Scarva Taing while being transported. Three graves marked by small flat stones.  
O S HY 50 NE, no 1.
  
4. Denwick. Grave? HY 5727 0881  
East of Scarva Taing near the cliff edge. Two small slabs on edge with a horizontal stone, possibly representing a grave. Uncertain whether it is associated with Covenanters graves.
  
5. Denwick. Cairn. HY 5749 0864  
Earth and stone cairn on west bank of West Burn of Denwick. 10 m N-S, 8 m E-W and 0.6 m high. Dug into in several places. Two vertical stones interpreted as probable cist.  
O S HY 50 NE, no 2.

6. Mull Head. Probable Earth house, and hut circle or cairn.

HY 5940 0969 and HY 5936 0951

Small cairn interpreted by O S in 1964 as possible earth house, though it appears to be no more than a prominent cairn? for navigation.

O S HY 50 NE, no 15.

Dubious hut circle or cairn.

O S HY 50 NE, no 16.

7. Howan Lickan. Mound. HY 5930 0930

Roughly circular mound c 5 m diameter. "Howan" indicates the presence of a mound; second element untraceable.

8. Brough of Deerness. Chapel and buildings. HY 5960 0873

Peninsula site originally joined to the Mainland, now accessible only by steep cliff path. Small stone chapel within a rectangular yard marked by a low stone wall. The chapel is surrounded by at least 30 buildings, mostly rectangular, aligned both E-W, and N-S, with indications of a dividing track. South of the chapel are a number of depressions, one of which is a well. Around the southern edge of the cliff is a dry stone breastwork with remains of an entranceway. See report below on survey and excavation. The site is in the care of the Secretary of State for Scotland.

O S HY 50 NE, no 4; R C A M M S 1946, II no 62; Low 1879 55-6; Anderson 1881, 101-4; Tudor 1883, 278-9; MacGibbon and Ross 1896, 101; M P B W 1967, 35; Lamb 1974, 93-4, 1976; Morris 1976, 1977, 1978 a,b.

9. Large Burra Geo. Boat noust. HY 5947 0871  
 Small boat noust 5 m by 3 m, partially scooped out of the slope and completed with dry-stone walls.
10. Kami Geo. Earthworks/ ? Boat noust. HY 5922 0752  
 Small group of earthworks, including a bank 0.5 m high, 45 m long and 1-2 m wide, aligned roughly north-south and of rough earth and stone construction. 10 m west of the bank is a three sided building, turf covered, with sides 2.5, 5.0 and 7.5 m long. Illus 60.
11. Stack of Moustag. ? building. HY 5926 0743  
 Inaccessible stack site with indications of a low circular mound c 10 m diameter and about 0.6 m high. Lamb discounts the interpretation as a broch, quoting a site of similar appearance at Dinnacaix, Kircardinshire, which produced a Pictish symbol stone. The alternative interpretation relates it to the Brough of Deerness as a dependant hermitage. The stack may well have been connected with the mainland at Biggan of Kami (no 12). The name Moustag probably represents the 'stack of gulls'. Illus 60.  
 O S HY 50 ME, no 20; R C A H M S 1946, II, no 628;  
 Lamb 1974a, 83; Lamb 1976, 147, 154.
12. Biggan of Kami. Mound, with major structures. HY 5918 0744  
 The name probably derives from O N hrygge, a ridge, and either O N Kasht, or Gaelic casus, meaning twisted or bent. Mound on a protruding area of land, composed of stone, in which the R C A H M S noted a ruined stair, not now visible. The R C A H M S and O S describe the site as a broch, while Lamb relates it to Shetland blockhouse forts; however, the site may be a complex of structures. There are traces of "outbuildings" around the site, though less to the west. During fieldwork a long bone shaft of an

unidentified large animal was recovered. Recent excavations have been undertaken here by Mr P S Gelling. Illus 60 .

O S HY 50 NE, no 20; R C A H M S 1946, II, no 628.

Lamb 1976, 147.

13. Sandside. Eroded site. HY 5914 0698  
Collapsed building debris, not dateable, though some stones may have been part of a herring processing factory. The house of Sandside, ruined in the 18th Century may have had outhouses at this site.  
During fieldwork an ox-right femur was recovered. It comprised the latero-distal fragment of the shaft with foam.  
Low, W 2879, p 53, R C A H M S 1946, II, no 623; J Foubister, pers comm.
14. Upper Stove. Mound. HY 5864 0706  
On the west side of a small drain below Upper Stove Farm. Mound c 12 m diameter, 1 m high, partly cut by drain. Fabric of the mound is reddish clay soil with stones.  
Illus 61 .
15. Upper Stove. Mounds. HY 5852 0728  
Three mounds near the top of the slope below Upper Stove Farm.  
25 m E-W, 20 m N-S, 2 m high. Reported by the farmer as being difficult to plough due to stone. Illus 61 .
16. Upper Stove. Mound. HY 5846 0726  
Small mound 13 m diameter, 1.5 m high. Illus 61 .
17. Upper Stove. Mound. HY 5839 0726  
Low mound 10 m diameter, 1 m high. Illus 61 .



18. Upper Stove. Mound. HY 5820 0730  
 200 m N of Upper Stove Farm. Mound 35 m N-S, 20 m E-W, 1.5 m high.  
 Probably affected by ploughing. Illus 61.
19. Upper Stove. Mound. HY 5803 0774  
 0.5 km N of Upper Stove Farm, on the border of an extensive marsh in a  
 low valley. Mound 9 m by 14 m, aligned N-S, 2 m high containing dark  
 peaty earth and stone.
- 19a. Nether Stove. Stone heap with socket stone. HY 5815 0690  
 Socket stone found on a stone heap at Nether Stove Farm. 150 mm x 145 x 45 mm;  
 made from a single split stone with circular depression ground in it, 50 mm  
 diameter x 20 mm deep. Kept by farmer.
20. Millfield. Mound. HY 5743 0704  
 Mound 250 m east of the desertedcroft of Millfield, 9 m diameter,  
 0.6 m high.  
 O S HY 50 NE, no 4; R C A H M S 1946, II, 663.
21. Millfield. Mound. (Site of) HY 5745 0693  
 Mound, site of, said to have yielded stone implements. Now under  
 pasture.  
 O S HY 50 NE, no 4; R C A H M S 1946, II, no 663.
22. The Ward. Burnt Mound. HY 5689 0739  
 Mound of burnt earth and stones, 87 m above sea level, 23 m E-W, 14 m N-S,  
 2 m high. Extensively dug into by Second World War army buildings and  
 O S triangulation pillar. "The Ward" recalls a system of warning fire beacons  
 and rallying points organised by the Norse Earls which continued to the

18th century. Illus 62.

O S HY 50 NE no 7; R C A H M S 1946, I, 55.

23. Nr Greentoft. Burnt Mound. HY 5691 0700  
Illus 62.

24. Nr Greentoft. Burnt Mound. HY 5686 0698  
Burnt mound, as 23, c 300 m east of Greentoft Farm buildings, referred to in the R C A H M S as being at Millfield. One is reported to have been called "Koffer Howe". Both are c 10 m x 7 m x 0.4 m. They had been ploughed when visited and fragments of burnt stone were in evidence. Some implements are said to have come from the site. Illus 62.  
O S HY 50 NE no 3; R C A H M S 1946, II, no 644.

25. Nr Greentoft. Burnt Mound. HY 5670 0682  
Long mound 50 m by 17 m and 2 m high, 200 m south-east of Greentoft Farm and in adjacent field to that containing nos 23 and 24. Extensively ploughed and farmer reports burning and reddened stones being revealed.  
Illus 62.  
Mr Eunson, Lower Gritley, Deerness, pers comm.

26. Greentoft. ? Circular Structure. HY 5667 0696  
Farmer reports that during ploughing a curved spread of stones forming a circle c 20 m diameter is revealed on a slight rise cut by a road. No evidence of facing or coursing. One of the stones has a dish-shaped cavity carved into it, while other stones, geologically of different types, do not come from the immediate vicinity. The curved feature cuts through two fields. The northernmost, known as "The Blood Field", is associated with a legend of a battle between Picts and Norsemen. The interpretation may be related to the discovery of at least one cist grave,

and possibly a cemetery. The cist was found in May 1869, Petrie reporting it as 5' x 1'8" x 3'6" and containing two skeletons heaped at each end. Illus 62.

The perforated hammer purchased by N M A S in 1888 found at "Bloody Quay", Deerness, may have been found here (no 57).

O S HY 50 NR nos 6 and 25; R C A H M S 1946, II, no 662;

Petrie notebook no 10, 4 in N M A S; Mr Work, Greentoft, Deerness, pers comm.

27. Greentoft. Mound. HY 5676 0717

Damaged mound, c 5 m diameter and 0.5 m high. A larger mound was removed in heather clearing operations in 1860. Petrie describes the exploration of a barrow near "Warthill, Deerness", in 1861, which is probably this barrow. Five cists were discovered. Illus 62.

P C A H M S 1946, II no 664; Petrie misc papers in N M A S; Mr Work, Greentoft, Deerness, pers comm.

28. South Keigar. Earth house. HY 552 063

In ploughing a field along the north side of the farm road in spring 1931 an earth house was located. Roughly oval in shape aligned approximately SE — NW, 13' long and 4' wide. Interior of the capped chamber contained black earth, clay and an upper layer of clay and stones. No objects were found.

A circular hole surrounded by rough cobbles, full of soft black earth, and capped with a stone, found in same field. Two stones set edge onto each other in the ground, one marked with a rough cross, were also found in the field. When the farmer, Mr Clouston, dug a hole to bury stone from the earth house excavation, he located stone slabs set in a "V" shape. Between

the stones was a red clay pack, while outside was a soft black earth.  
O S NY 50 NE nos 9, 11, 12, 13; Randall 1934, 26-28.

29. Hurnipe Point. Boat Nousts. HY 5437 0648  
HY 5439 0642

150 m north-west of Hurnipe Point and c 10 m from the beach edge, a 9 m long and 3 m wide (int) boat noust, partly dug into the slope, with the addition of a wall on the north. The base is covered with rubble. A second noust 60 m away, 7 m long x 2 m wide (int) and 6 m wide (ext) dug c 0.5 m into the ground. Int height 1 m. The presence of slabs may suggest a flagged base.

30. Hurnipe Point. Boat nousts and buildings. HY 5446 0634  
HY 5448 0635

Two boat nousts. One is rectangular, 9 m by 5 m with walling on three sides and evidence of a flagged base. 1 m to 1.5 m deep. The other noust, 3 m away, is 8 m by 6 m, with evidence of walling only at the east end. HY 5448 0635. Natural mound on top of which are two buildings 10 m by 11 m, and 6 m by 6 m.

31. Eyes Howe. Broch. HY 5490 0611

Broch, grass covered, 24 m diameter, 3 m high, with evidence of walling on the north side. On the west side is a 1 m high scarp. During the R C A N M S visit to the site, a hammer stone and tooled stone were discovered, now untraceable. A scheduled site.

O S NY 50 NW no 14; R C A N M S 1946, II no 624; M P B W 1967, 35.

32. Brusbuster. Mound. NY 5501 0573

Low mound 400 m north-east of Brusbuster Farm. Roughly rectangular 18 m by 16 m by 1.5 m high, composed of black earth with large number of stone chips.

33. Braebuster. Mound, ? Chapel. HI 5451 0514  
 Mound, damaged, 300 m south-west of Braebuster Farm; 25 m E-W, 17 m N-S, 1.7 m high with evidence of walling. This mound was a triangulation point on the 1882 6" O S map, and Timothy Pont recorded "Braebuster" on his map of Orkney. Braebuster - O N breiddi-bolstaðr, broad farm settlement, with the farm originally an urisland. It is possible that this mound is the site of the urisland chapel.  
 Blaeu 1654, vol 5, 151v; Marwick 1951, 113; Marwick 1952, 76.
34. Braebuster. Mound. NY 5482 0903  
 Roughly circular, flat-topped mound, 350 m south of Braebuster Farm. 6 m diameter x 1.5 m high. Stone kerb 0.5 m from the top, with a slab on the mound top which may represent a fragment of roofing.
35. Braebuster. Boat Mounds. NY 5487 0480  
 NY 5491 0483  
 550 m south of Braebuster Farm and 300 m east of Braebuster Ness, are six boat mounds. The largest is 8 m and widths vary between 3 and 4 m internally. All are scooped into the ground, with upcast used to form the sides. They are 1-2 m deep with the base 1 m above the present beach level. NY 5491 0483. Second group of two mounds, 40 m to the east of the group of six. They are 7 and 4 m long and 4 m wide (int). The base level of the mounds is also 1 m above beach level.
36. Blougg. Urn burials. NY 571 060  
 Three burials were found in 1929 and 1933 near the crest of House Hill, a natural mound. The 1929 example comprised a cist 0.51 x 0.41 x 0.45 m deep set into natural boulder clay and floored with thin slabs. The cist contained cremated bones to a depth of c 0.11 m, in which was found a small urn.

205 mm high and 164 mm wide, made of probable Shetland dolomite steatite. In 1933 two burials were found; one contained a cinerary urn 380 mm high 310 mm max width, 130 base diameter. It contained bone, ashes, remains of a smaller vessel, and a flat stone covered the urn mouth. Another cavity contained a second urn, 1.5 mm away, along with dark greasy material, probably human remains covered by a stone.

O S HY 50 NE no 5; R C A H M S 1946, II no 636; Marwick 1929, Grant 1933, 343-5.

37. Millhill. Deserted Croft. HY 5759 0623

Deserted croft of two buildings, in one of which was a bench built against a wall, 1.5 m x 0.35 m x 0.30 m high, of dry-stone construction apparently after construction of the wall.

38. Skail. Multi-period site. HY 588 065

Multi-period site around Skail farm under excavation by Mr P S Gelling (Pers comm and forthcoming).

The earliest evidence is immediately south of farmer's bungalow, at HY 5788 0638. The earliest two sub-circular enclosures c 12 m diameter in figure-of-eight plan, though separated by paved path. Finds included a bronze knife. Two uncorrected C14 dates are from the early 2nd century b c. Roughly 200 m away (HY 5870 0658), pathways, pits and stone settings were found with barrel-shaped flat-rimmed ware. This was succeeded by a round house of c 15 m diameter, used for several centuries and constantly repaired. Two uncalibrated C14 dates of 70 b c  $\pm$  100 and a d 190  $\pm$  110 received. Probably in the late 5th century a d the round house was abandoned, and disturbed remains of rectangular structures and paving represent a later occupation in the late 6th/early 7th century. An early Norse house (HY 5881 0651) was constructed out of a pre-Norse one, though the relationship is unclear.

This first Norse building was superseded by a structure over 21 m long. Over the years it was reduced in size. At a late stage, probably 11th century, it was 7 m x 4 m in size. Excavations in 1950-63 revealed massive post-Norse stone buildings with a 12th century square stone tower at HY 5884 0644. A bone comb was found in 1961 at HY 5881 0652 by J R Foubister. It was said to have gone to "an Edinburgh museum", but is not now located.

O S HY 50 NE no 19; Cruden 1960; Wilson and Hurst 1961, 311; Wilson and Hurst 1965, 207; Wilson and Hurst 1966, 176; Webster and Cherry 1972, 169-70; Gelling, forthcoming.

39. Skaill. Church and hogback; socket stone. HY 5886 0636

HY 5882 0636

12 m east of the present 1796 church stood a pre-Reformation church dedicated to St Mary. Low in 1774 described two steeples, the right hand steeple entered from the quire, with a turnpike stair giving access to a small vestry from which it was possible to enter the other steeple. As the church was considered "small, ruinous and irreparable" in 1789, the new church was built. When the foundations were being removed between 1870 and 1880, two coins of Edward 1 of England, c 1280 a d were found and presented to Kirkwall Museum in the 1930's (now lost).

HY 5882 0636. Hogback, which originally stood in the north-east corner of the churchyard, now moved into the church session-house. Made of red sandstone, 1.73 m long, 0.5 m and 0.36 m wide at the ends, and 0.23 and 0.20 m high at the ends. Slightly arched ridge, with sides decorated with four rows of tegulae; ends undecorated. Lang type B3, late 11th/early 12th century.

Petrie records a socket stone "found in a mound of stones and rubbish near the church of Deerness". It was 8" (200 mm) diameter of sandstone, with a cup-shaped depression cut into its upper surface, 4½" (110 mm) diameter

and 2" (50 mm) deep.

Donated to M M A S by Petrie (not in Catalogue, Soc Ant Scot 1892).

O S HY 50 NE no 18; Soc Antiq Scot 1866, 42, no 4; Scott 1871, V, 387;

Spence, 1903; Clouston, 1927. 13; R C A H M S 1946, II, no 622; Lang 1974, 232.

40. The Howan. Site of Mound. HY 5889 0633

Grass-covered mound interpreted by R C A H M S as a broch, with evidence of midden material. A hammer-stone and pottery were recovered. Trial excavation in 1970's revealed probable Bronze Age ard-marks under the sand mound. The mound is now largely removed, though traces of midden are visible near the beach.

O S HY 50 NE no 21; R C A H M S 1946, II no 629; Lamb pers comm.

41. Cornquoy Nevi. Mound. HY 5865 0590

200 m north-west of Cutpool Farm and 100 m from the coastal feature known as Cornquoy Nevi is a mound 30 m by 18 m by 1-2 m. While ploughing, the farmer discovered a vertical stone 6' x 2' x 1', now used as a culvert bridge.

Burnt stones are still uncovered during ploughing.

Mr Foubister, Gridigarth, Deerness, pers comm.

42. "The Howie". Buildings. HY 5885 0550

150 m south-east of Roanabay Castle is a mound 24 m E-W, 23 m N-S, 1-1.5 m high, known as "The Howie" or "Howan Greenie". R C A H M S describe results of excavation at the beginning of the 20th century on the south side of the mound which revealed two "passages". These probably relate to a lower level of occupation overlain by a large rectangular building 8 m wide, 14 m long, possibly of Late Norse date. The site is scheduled.

O S HY 50 NE no 22; R C A H M S 1946, II, no 650; M P B W 1967, 32.



43. Quoy's. Site of Buildings. HY 5729 0497  
HY 5728 0499

In June 1974 a cottage 10 m x 6 m was demolished. It comprised a main room with four box beds, and kitchen annex at a lower level, to the east. The building had no proper foundations, the walls resting on horizontal slabs. Below the north wall, and a layer of soil, was an earlier wall. Under the floor levels were found one composed of cobbles, the other of clay. On the cobbled floor were rotted beams and seaweed thatch. Shell middens were found, but it is unclear which floor they were associated with. From the clearance work, three spindle whorls (two decorated), a long whetstone, red sandstone net sinker, steatite pouring spout, decorated lead fishing weight, perforated bone disc from a large sea mammal, and a piece of steatite were found (now in Tankerness House Museum, Kirkwall, nos 1979, 221, 222, 223, 225, 229, 227, 225, 230). All could be Norse. A circular quern-stone was found, but now lost.

HY 5728 0499. 30 m to the north-west, a circular base ? of a corn-dying kiln was found around 1960 during construction of a farm building. A coin of unknown date was found in the foundations of the base. Area 1979.

A gold Munsberg 'jetton' of the late 16th century was found on the farm and presented to Tankerness House Museum (no 1979: 231). Area 1979.

44. Lower Gritley. Burnt Mounds and ↑ building. HY 5658 0444  
HY 5660 0443  
HY 5661 0441  
HY 5663 0442

450 m to the south-east of Lower Gritley Farm is a group of burnt mounds, damaged by ploughing. R C A H M S records five or six in the 1930's, but they were ploughed in the 1950's and now only four are visible. All revealed burnt stone when ploughed.

HY 5661 0444. A few metres to the north-east of the mounds is a stony area, conceivably the site of a building associated with mounds.

O S HY 50 SE no 2; R C A H M S 1946, II, no 645; Mr Eunson, Lower Gritley, Teerness, pers comm.

45. Stonehall. Mound. HY 5538 0346

Mound c 20 m diameter, 400 m south-west of Stonehall Farm, site of the original croft known as "Sandy Aitkin's". The old township of Sanday, known from 1600 as Sandakin, Sandyaiken. Sandaitken, probably arose from the the family name Akin, Aiken, Aitken, known to have possessed nearly all the township land from an early date.

Marwick 1952a, 79.

46. Mussaquoy. Burnt Mound. HY 5659 0369

Burnt mound 12 m x 10 m x 1.2 m, 350 m east-south-east of Mussaquoy Farm. Mr J Foubister of Mussaquoy quarried into it c 50 years ago, on the west side, and revealed several large stones, including two 0.3 m high, 1.7 m apart.

O S HY 50 SE no 1; R C A H M S 1946, II, no 646.

47. Little Cottage. Mound. HY 5708 0448

At the rear of Little Cottage - mound c 25 m x 15 m x 2 m. May be dune sand.

48. Newark. Eroded middens and buildings. HY 5745 0415

Traces of buildings and midden visible in eroded section over a length of 65-70 m, 80 m behind Newark Farm. Amongst the eroded material is a cemetery with chapel (no 49).

49. Newark. Fortified house; chapel and cemetery; HY 5746 0413  
earth houses.

Human bone has been found in the sea-eroded bank since 1930 at least, close to a chapel referred to in Timothy Pont's map of Orkney in Blaeu's 1654 Atlas as "The work of Deerness". Site excavated by Dr D Brothwell, London University, Institute of Archaeology. Several skeletons were associated with the small chapel dated to the 10th century on coin-evidence from below the floor. Over the cemetery and chapel was a 16th or 17th century fortified house. Two earth houses were found below the chapel and cemetery, one of which was 10 m long. Material is still being eroded. During the fieldwork a number of bones were recovered:- large animal rib fragment, along with human bone, probably from one individual; left femur with both epiphyses fused, distal end and most of the shaft of a left tibia, with distal end fused; proximal fragment of the left tibia with epiphysis fused but visible; three fragments of a complete right tibia with epiphyses fused; distal end of a left radius; fragment of cranial vault ? juvenile; proximal end of a left metatarsus II; 4 rib shaft fragments; complete left metatarsus I; complete metacarpus III and IV; shaft fragment of radius; complete left calcaneus; complete right calcaneus; two pieces of rib shaft; ? scapula fragment, and unidentified bone fragment.

Blaeu 1654, vol 5, 151v; O S HY 50 SE no 3;

R C A H M S 1946, II, no 654; Brothwell 1977, 182.

50. Backland. Broch. HY 5770 0401

"Howie o' Backland", mound 40 m diameter, c 3 m high. Trial trench by Dr D Brothwell revealed it to be a broch, with walls 0.3 m high. "Quoyburing", a quoy in the Skae tunship of Deerness in 1595 probably refers to the site, and also it appears in records as Boorin, Burrian, is O N borg, a fortified structure.

Marwick 1952a 78; Brothwell, pers comm.

51. Ayre. Eroded Midden. HY 5852 0384

Sea-eroded midden 500 m south of Barns of Ayre, containing burnt earth, shell and pottery over a 23 m long stretch. Several sherds of mediaeval hand-made pottery donated by Dr D Brothwell to N M A S in 1969/1970 presumably came from here.

The mediaeval pottery fragments housed in N M A S:

HR 1303. Body sherd and base fragment, sandy pink-buff ware, black interior, ext-grass-marked, thumb impressions above basal angle. Est diameter 50 mm.

HR 1304. Base sherd, black ext, red/brown int, grass tempered.

HR 1305. Two small rim sherds, sandy-pink ware, grey int, square sectioned rim.

HR 1306. 13 small body sherds, grass-marked, similar ware but from several pots.

During fieldwork, a body sherd with remains of a base in thick orange/red, grass-tempered pottery was found. 40 mm x 28 mm x 5 mm, black interior.

See Antiq Scot 1970, 296, no 18.

52. Ayre. Buildings. HY 5857 0384

Two buildings on top of a bank which lines the beach. The westernmost is 5 m x 5 m x 0.3 m covered by grass, the other building is 6 m x 4.5 m with stones visible particularly on the east side.

53. Barns of Ayre. Mound. HY 5898 0427

450 m east of Barns of Ayre Farm is a mound 20 m N-S x 14 m E-W x 1.5 m high. Some stone in and on the mound.

54. Barns of Ayre. Earth banks. HY 5912 0408

600m east-south-east of Barns of Ayre Farm is a small group of local earth banks ? for drainage or land partitioning.

55. Point of Ayr. Mound.

HY 5906 0394

Mound c 8 m diameter, 1 m high, on the shore and partly eroded, stone visible on the east side and through the turf.

#### ISOLATED AND UNPROVENANCED FINDS

56. Found "in course of digging in the ruins of an old house in the parish of Deerness, Orkney". Donated by J Farrar and now in N M A S.

GG 1. Hammerstone pounder 130 mm x 60 mm x 30 mm both ends worn, one end chipped.

GG 2. Hammerstone pounder fragment, 90 x 55 x 25 mm chipped.

GG 3 and 4. Two stone balls, not traceable.

GG 5. Perforated sandstone 130 mm diameter, 50 mm thick, hollowed on both sides with small hole through.

GG 6. Flat piece of whalebone, 345 x 60 x 10 mm. Two clear holes and ? a third, with marks of cutting on sides.

GG 7 and 8. Fragments of deer horn one 110 mm long, the other 60 mm long. Clear marks of cutting.

GG 9. Bone comb 95 mm x 40 mm. Double sides, straight ends, ring and dot decoration. Incomplete. Two iron rivets remaining.

GG 10. Boar's tusk, not traceable.

GG 11. Spindle whorl 40 mm diameter, 40 mm thick. Hole 8 mm diameter. Red clay, oval section.

GG 12. Rim sherd 60 x 53 x 7 mm. Ext reddish brown, int grey.

GG 13. Rim sherd 50 x 53 x 7 mm. Orange fabric.

GG 14. Body sherd, 60 x 53 x 7 mm. Int grey, ext reddish brown. ? same as GG 12.

- GG 15. Rim sherd 58 x 58 x 13 mm. Black, heavily burnt int. Lumpy fabric.
- GG 16. Rim sherd 65 x 73 x 11 mm. Grey int, red burnt ext.
- GG 17. Rim sherd 70 x 60 x 8 mm. Grey int, red ext, gritty fabric.
- GG 18. Not traceable (pottery).
- GG 19. Rim sherd, 42 x 57 x 6 mm. Black and grey gritty fabric.
- GG 20, 21. Not traceable (pottery).
- GG 22. Rim sherd, 46 x 33 x 7 mm. Red/orange gritty fabric.
- GG 23. Rim sherd, 44 x 47 x 7 mm. Grey int, red burnt ext.
- GG 24. Body sherd, 90 x 70 x 6 mm. Black and grey gritty.
- GG 25. Body sherd, 53 x 40 x 8 mm. Orange red, rough fabric.
- GG 26. Body sherd, 78 x 62 x 16 mm. Grey/pink, thick, slight markings on exterior.
- GG 27. Body sherd, 40 x 34 x 6 mm. Pink/orange/brown fabric.
- GG 28. Body sherd, 50 x 35 x 5 mm. Black gritty fabric, red surfaces, slight lines on ext.
- GG 29, 30. Not traceable (pottery).
- GG 31. Rim sherd, 30 x 30 x 10 mm. Khaki ext, black int, lumpy fabric.
- GG 32. Rim sherd, 43 x 23 x 6 mm. Orange gritty fabric.
- GG 33. Rim sherd, 33 x 27 x 6 mm. Pink/orange gritty fabric.
- Soc Antiq Scot 1866, 42; Soc Antiq Scot 1892, 236.

57. Bloody Quay.

AH 89. Hammerstone, 120 x 50 x 32 mm, perforated 20 mm diameter hole.  
 Granitic polished cushion nose-head. Deposited in N M A S.  
 Soc Antiq Scot 1889, 16, no 22; Soc Antiq Scot 1892, 45.

58. Loxness.

ME 167. Spindle whorl, 45 mm diameter, 12 mm thick, 13 mm diameter hole.  
 Red clay. Dot and line decoration † with letter M.

AX 137. Hammerstone, 15 mm long, 65 mm wide, 4 mm thick, with one end particularly damaged.

Deposited in N M A S in 1887 from a broch.

Soc Antiq Scot 1892, 49, 80.

59. Deerness.

AC 128, AC 246-7. Elongated stone implements donated to N M A S in 1867-87.

Soc Antiq Scot 1892, 10, 12.

60. Possibly from "Brabister".

AW 48. Socket stone of red sandstone deposited with N M A S.

Soc Antiq Scot 1889, 16, no 22; Soc Antiq Scot 1892, 70.

61. Deerness.

AW 28,29. Socket stones, sandstone boulders with hollows on their flat sides.

Donated to N M A S by G Petrie in 1877.

Soc Antiq Scot 1892, 69.

62. Deerness.

Objects found in a broch in Deerness in 1943.

GA 1177. Body sherd, 58 x 52 x 9 mm, light grey brown gritty fabric.

Scratched line decoration on ext.

GA 1178. Body sherd, 63 x 48 x 12 mm, orange-brown fabric, scratched line

decoration ext and int.

GA 1179. Body sherd, 48 x 40 x 7 mm, orange-brown, burnt, with scratched

line decoration ext and int.

GA 1180. Body sherd, 46 x 44 x 6 mm, orange-brown scratched line decoration

on ext.

GA 1181. Body sherd, 90 x 73 x 9 mm, coarse grey-brown fabric, ext partly burnt, line decoration on int.

GA 1182. Body sherd, 48 x 34 x 7 mm, orange-brown fabric, V-decoration on ext, scratched on int.

Presented to M M A S by Captain L L E Moreton.

See Antiq Scot 1946, 152.

63. Deerness.

Urn, 330 mm high, 300 mm at neck, found in the centre of a short cist in a mound in Deerness Parish. It was found to be three-quarters full of bones and ashes. Also a stone implement.

Callander 1933, 346-7.

64. Deerness.

Flint arrowheads found in 1890-1920 in an area centred on NY 594 097 by Mr W Bichan of Denwick, Deerness. Now lost.

O S HY 50 NE no 17.

65. Deerness.

"Elf Arrowheads pretty frequent here, but most of them with the points broken".

Low 1879, 57.

66. Deer Sound and Mirkady.

Deer antlers occasionally eroded from mosses on the shores.

Mr Work, Greentoft, Deerness, pers comm.



APPENDIX by C D Morris

67. Deerness: on slope and summit of "a low hill" [sic].

"Ancient buildings", stone vessels similar to those which are often found in the 'broughs' or 'round towers' and two barrows. Several cists with burnt bone and two "rudely fashioned clay urns" were outside the cists. One measured 17" deep, 12" wide at the mouth and 6" at the bottom. The average thickness of the clay vessel was  $5/8$ ".

Combe ed 1886, 303-4.

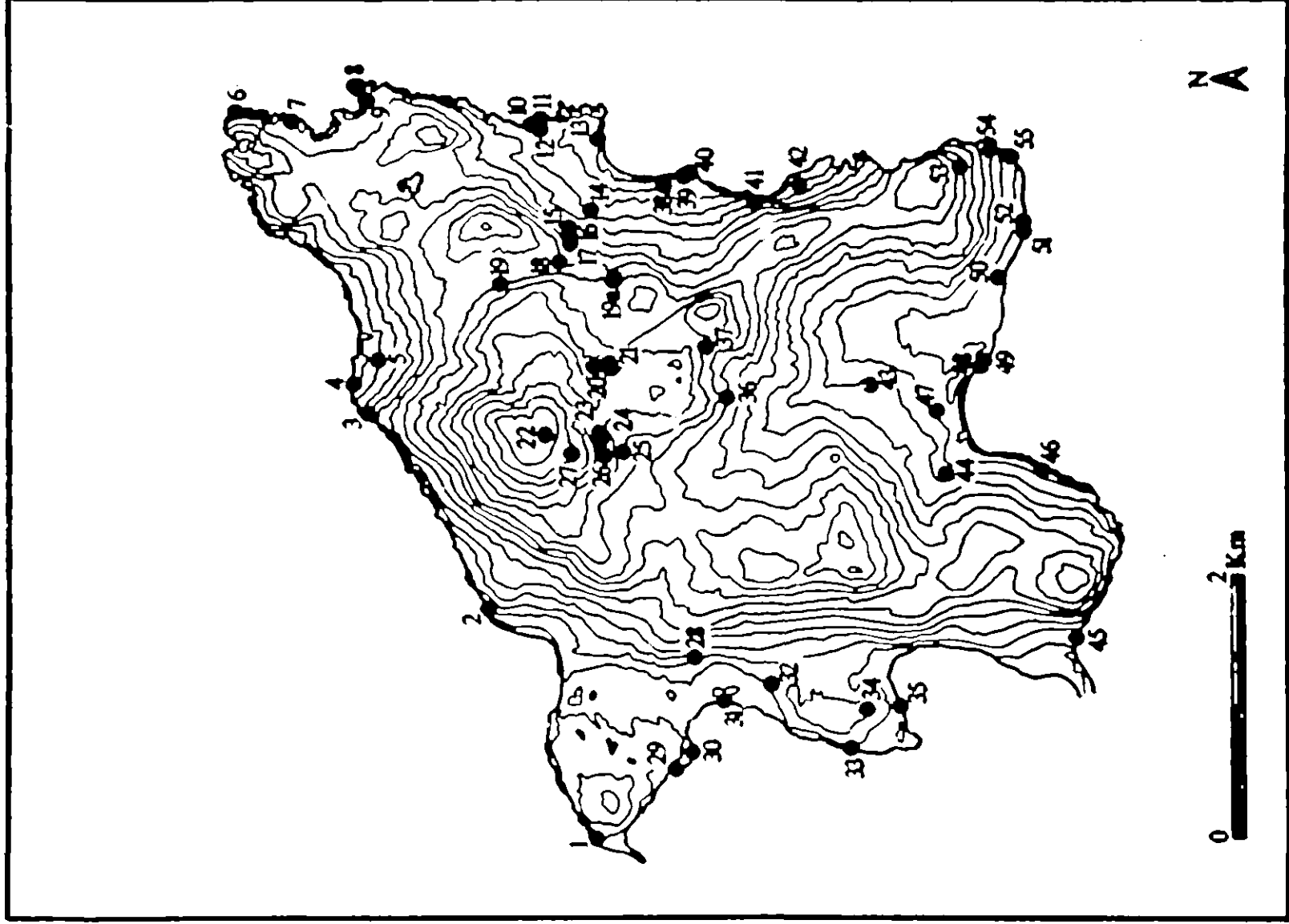
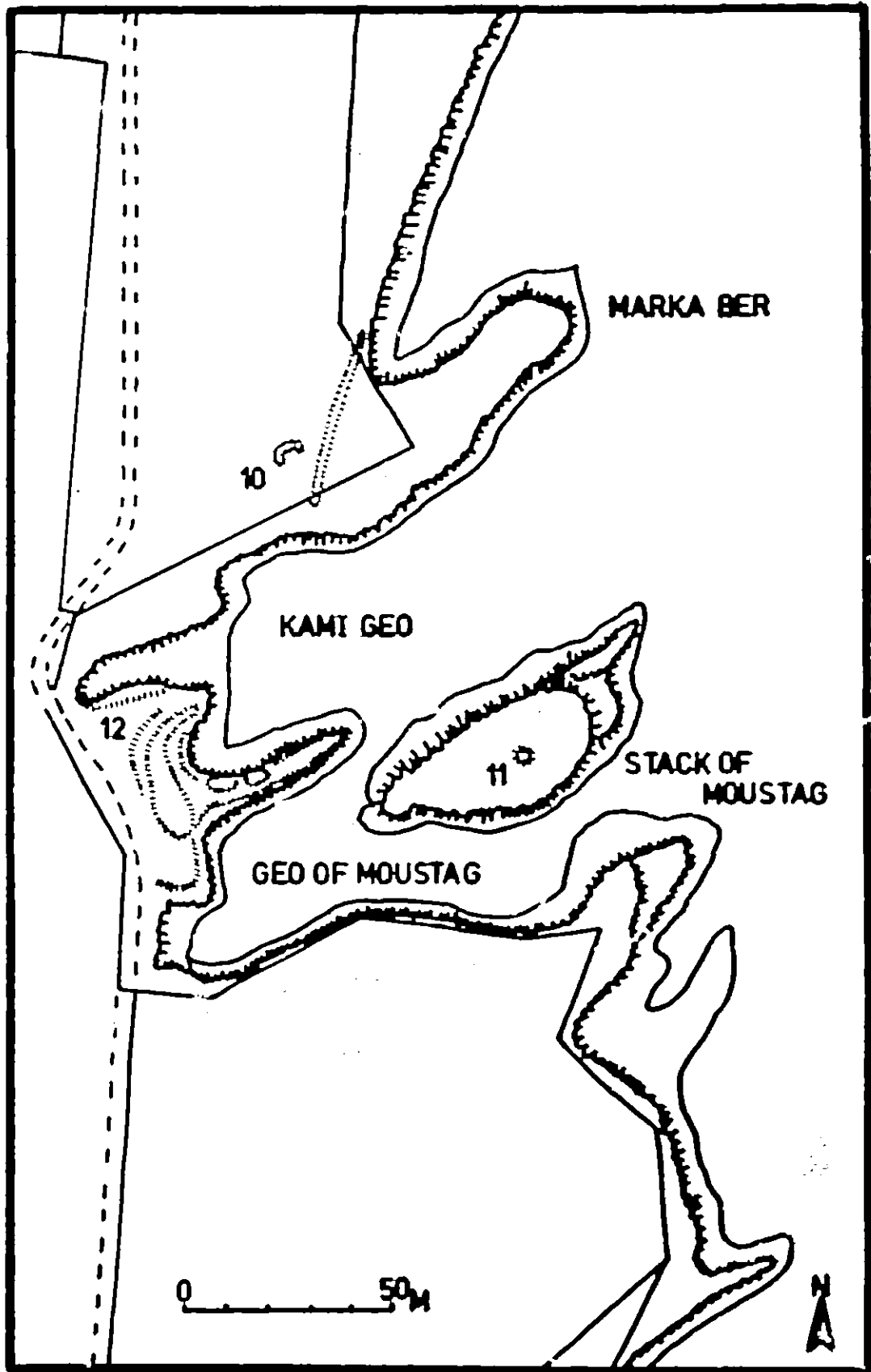


ILLUSTRATION 59 MAP OF SITES ON ILES DES PINS PENINSULA



ILLUS 60 DUNDERS FINNELA : SITES 10-12

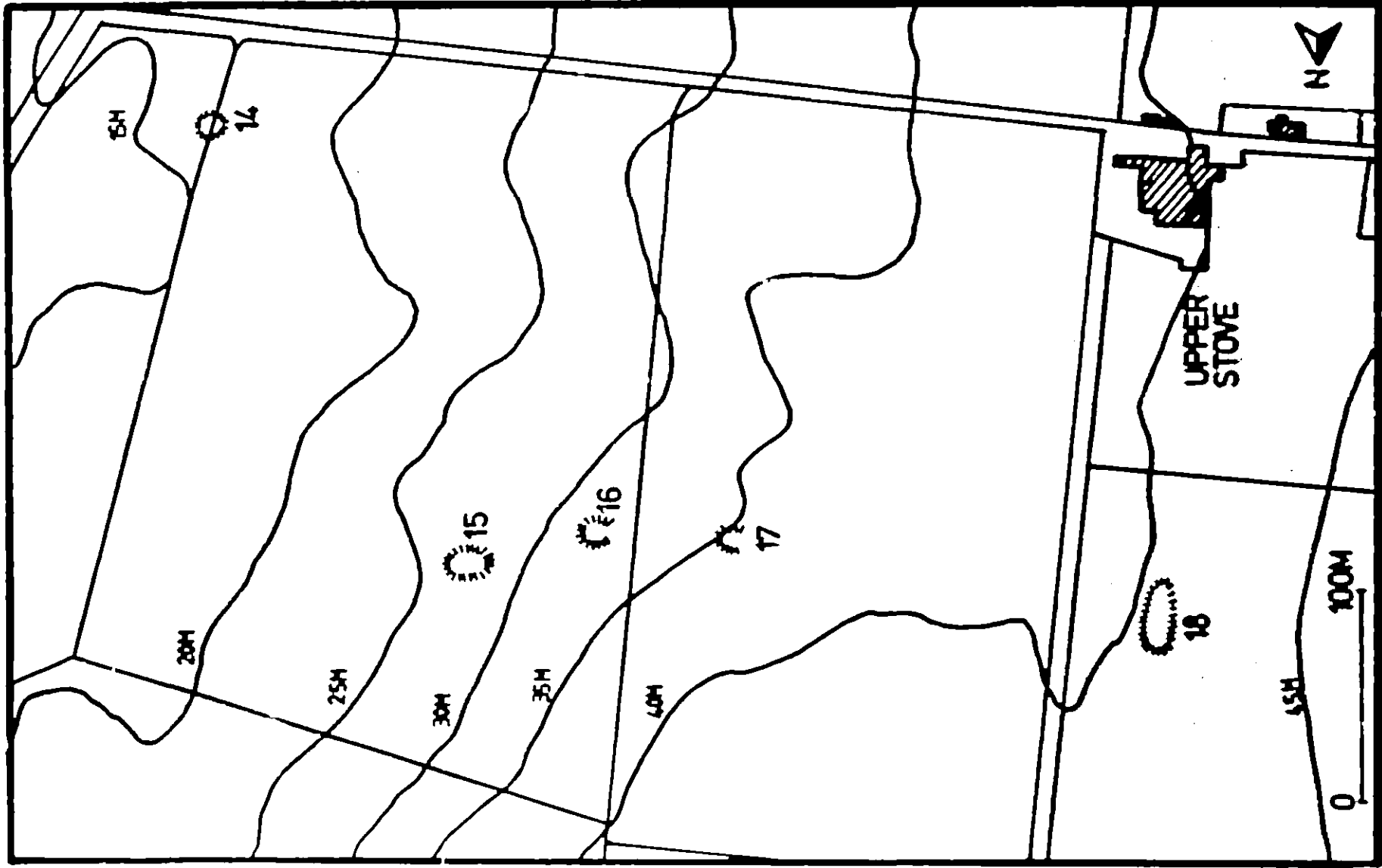
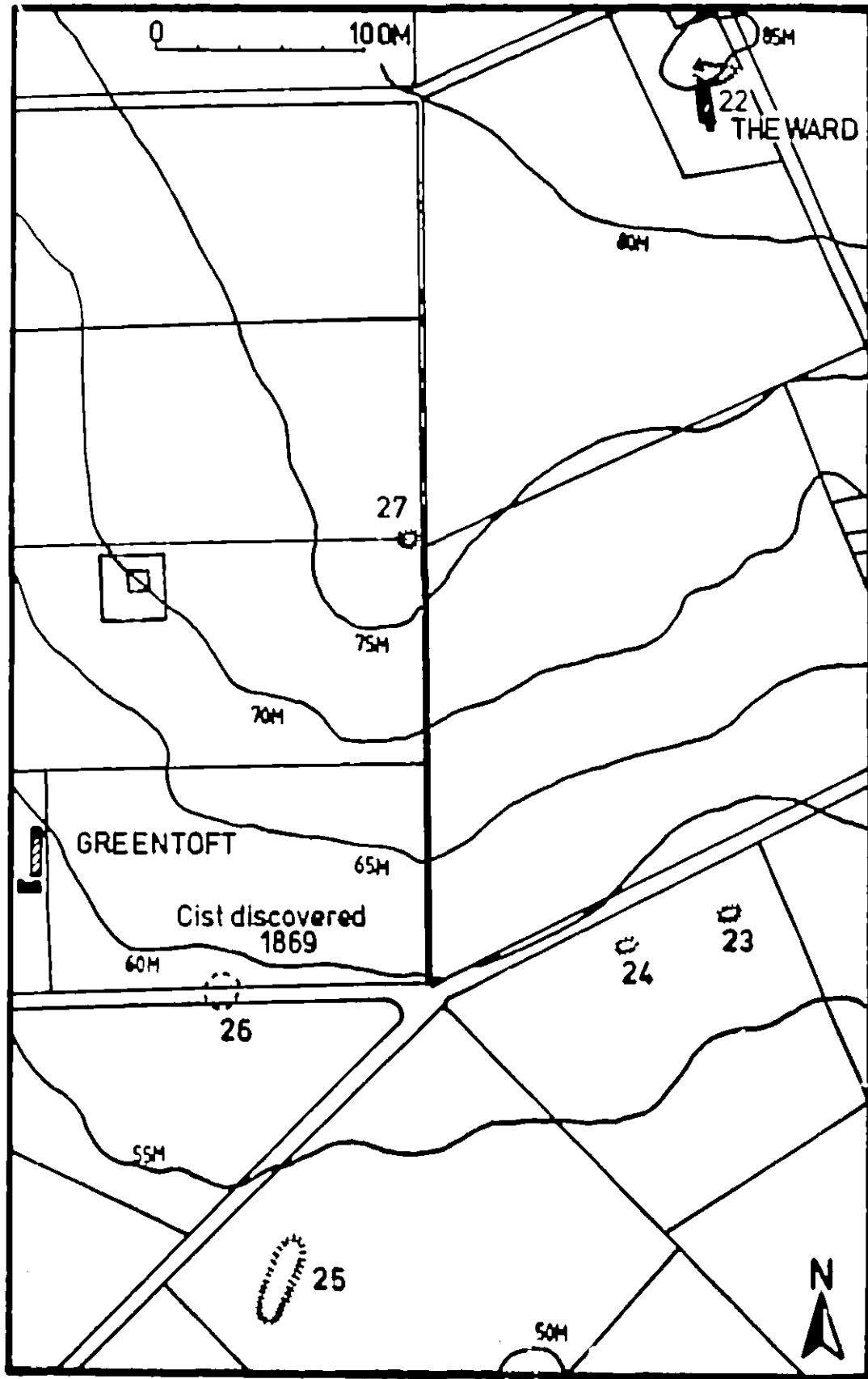


FIGURE 61. BARRIAGE FORTIFICATION : SITE PLAN 14-18



ILLUS 62 DORRINGS PENINSULA : SITES 22-27

## THE SURVEY-METHOD UTILISED AT THE BROUGH OF DEERMESS, 1977

Fred Bettess

### THE CHOICE OF SURVEY-METHOD

A survey was required which would establish the existence and placing of a relatively large number of buildings and depressions, and relate them both to the topography of the Brough itself and to the ruined chapel which was the subject of excavation. The buildings were represented by very low, grass-covered mounds outlining the base of the walls; the chapel walls averaged about one metre in height. In fixing the position of features of the type involved here, great accuracy is not feasible, for the centre line of a mound, for instance, cannot be pinpointed with precision. Also, at the scale of plotting, 1:200, no length of under 5 cm is easily distinguishable. In view of this, it might have been thought that a plane-table would be used, but in an area subject to windy conditions, as Orkney is, a plane-table can be a liability. As the time available was restricted, and the field operations for tachometry can be performed quickly, even with relatively unskilled operators, it was decided to use a self-reducing tachometer to establish the positions relative to two survey stations.

### Tachometry

As is well known, conventional theodolites and levels have a system of cross-wires which incorporate two short horizontal lines, one above, and one below the main horizontal cross-wire. If a levelling staff is held so that it is in a vertical plane at right angles to the line of sight, readings can be taken against the two short cross-wires. The difference between the readings, multiplied by 100, is the distance from the centre of the instrument to the staff. As long as the line of sight is kept horizontal, this system is simple and effective, but if

inclined sights are required the vertical angle must be measured, and the readings have to be corrected by using a trigonometrical formula which is complex and tedious to apply.

The introduction of self-reducing tachometers has changed the situation. In these instruments a mechanism varies the distance between the two cross-wires in relation to the angle of inclination so that the procedure described holds good. Thus, if, for example, the readings against the cross-wires are 1.637 and 1.386, the difference is 0.251, and so the true horizontal distance from staff to centre of instrument is 25.1 m, regardless of inclination. However, there is a limiting radius of operation of about 200 m, as it becomes more difficult to get an accurate reading as the distance to the staff gets larger. In addition to the two staff readings, a horizontal angle-reading is also taken after the alignment of the instrument to some known direction, with the horizontal angle set to zero.

#### GENERAL PROCEDURE ADOPTED

Reconnaissance of the site showed that it was possible to command all the area to be surveyed from two instrument stations, and two instruments were set up over pegs 40 m apart. The alignment sight in both cases was to the other peg, which then gave the base to which all subsequent work could be related. After the placing of surveying arrows in all salient points of a feature or group of features, and the production of a sketch with numbers referring to these points, readings were taken from the appropriate instrument. For ease of plotting, the distances and bearings were reduced on site to x and y rectangular co-ordinates, by the use of a small electronic calculator with trigonometric functions. Theoretically, the simple use of a protractor would have sufficed, but, without a very large protractor, there can be a considerable loss of accuracy - quite apart from its cumbersome nature. After plotting, a visual check, supplemented by a few linear measurements, was made to eliminate any possible errors, and to

ensure the work was acceptable. The process of plotting on site thus ensured that the general picture could also be checked for duplications and omissions.

The ruined chapel was a much better defined object to survey than the grass-covered mounds. Measurements had been made during excavation and, hence, simply required to be related to the main site-survey. Angular observations from each instrument were more appropriate than tachometry, and these were made to the best defined corners of the standing masonry. Since the distance between the two instruments was known, a simple trigonometrical solution gave the x and y co-ordinates, which were then plotted.

Although the use of tachometry for surveying had previously only been experienced by the professional surveyor in the group, it was found that the instrument work was soon mastered by archaeologists, and a high rate of output achieved. The use of two teams, as might be expected, more than doubled the speed of output, and clearly the biggest limitation in this work is the number of surveying arrows available. About eighty were used in this survey, and not found to be excessive. In all, the operation took four days from arrival on site to production of a complete plan, including a survey of the edges of the peninsula. Better weather, and initial familiarity with the system, would have reduced this. More detail was picked up than had been expected, and the method chosen seemed completely justified, and certainly appropriate to some other situations.



PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS AND REFERENCES TO THE BROUGH OF BERNESS

C. 1384. JOHN DE FORDUN (GOODALL ED. 1759, I, 47)

Under the list of Orcades Insulae, is included an entry for "Borch de Bernes".

C. 1529. "JO BEN" (MACFARLANE 1908, III, 307, 318)

Descriptio Insularum Orchadiarum

In the northern part of that parish there is in the sea a natural rock where men ascend to the top on hands and knees with very great difficulty. There is a chapel there which is called (the Bairnes of burgho). Hither out of various islands men, youths, boys, old men, innumerable servants flock together; but having come, with naked feet, as I formerly said, praying they ascend, where none except one can come to the chapel at one time; There is there a fountain pure and sparkling, which indeed is wonderful; then the men with bended knees, and clasped hands, distrustful that there is a God supplicate (the Bairnes of Brughe) with many incantations, throwing stones and water behind their backs, and walking twice or thrice round the chapel. Having finished their prayers they return home affirming that they have performed their vows. Here they do not worship God purely.

We are indebted to Dr O T P K Dickinson, of the Department of Classics and Ancient History, University of Durham, for checking this translation and offering the following alternative, more literal translation of the marked section:

... distrustful that there is a God pray to (the Bairnes of Brughe) with incantations in this manner, throwing stones ...

It should be noted that doubts have been voiced about the date and the Latin text used in this edition and translation (Johnston 1908; MacDonald 1936).

C. 1608. TIMOTHY PONT (BLAEU 1654, VOL 5, 151V)

Orcadum et Schetlandiae insularum accuratissima descriptio.

This map refers to "The Eairnes of Brugh".

See Cash 1907, and Moir 1973, 37-53.

1693. THE REV JAMES WALLACE (1883, 40-1)

Anciently, as they are yet in great measure, they were much given to Superstition, as appears by the many Chapels that are dispersed here and there through the Countrey; But the Chapels to which most frequently they made their Pilgrimage, were to the Chapel of the Brough of Birra, and to the Chapel of the brough at the Mulehead in Deirness, these two Chapels standing at the furthest extremities of the Mainland East and West, nor to this hour are these Pilgrimages omitted by the common People who still for the obtaining of some good or deprecating of some evil, do frequent some Chapels that they have most Veneration for. Besides they have this general Custome, the day that is dedicat to the Memory of the Saint who is Patrone of the chief Kirk (where Sermon is made) is kept holy by the common People of the whole Parish, so that they will not work on that Day; And these that live next the smaller Chapels do moreover keep holy that Day that is dedicated to the memory of that Saint, that, that Chapel is denominate by.

1773. THE REV GEORGE LOW (MARWICK 1924, 52)

... Papa Westra famous for the superstitious regard paid by the inhabitants to St Treduels Chapel and loch-(Wallace). This is not the only Chapel to which superstition has affixed an extraordinary veneration; the Chapel of the Burch of Birra, and that on the Mull of Deerness the extremities of the Mainland; the Chapel of Olet in Sanda and several others

were much sought to by the inhabitants in former times, especially when under any misfortune, disease or any other difficulty; they then vowed an alms to these Chapels, and seldom failed to pay in money or in Corn, and this they imagined would gain them the goodwill of the Supreme power, by this oblation they would be freed from their difficulties; but if the cure should not follow they took care not to lose much; for the most part these offerings were very trifling, a small piece of money or a handful of corn, they imagined would suffice! these offerings were presented at particular chapels only, probably those dedicated to the most reputable saints, and whose mediation they thus imagined they could procure: however these superstitions are now much wearing out, and are practised only by a few of the oldest, and the most ignorant of the inhabitants some of whom are remarkably tenacious of their former Customs.

1774. THE REV GEORGE LOW (LOW 1879, 55-6)

The Hul of Deerness is at about a mile's distance from the Church, a large peninsulated rock, the access very difficult; on the top is a small Chapel, to which, notwithstanding the danger, even old age scrambled its way thro' a road in many places not six inches broad, where certain death attended a slip, but such was the force of superstition! Towards the land this rock is fenced with a very strong stone wall, and within many foundations of small huts, which plainly demonstrate that this had served more purposes than that of religion, which in all probability has been but the latest. Like that in Stroma ... it surely has been a rock fort, many more of which are observable thro' these isles, and the huts have been for shelter both to men and goods in time of publick disturbance, which of old was far from being infrequent.

1797. "A FRIEND TO STATISTICAL ENQUIRIES". (OSA 1799, XI, 258, 269;  
REPRINTED IN CLOUSTON 1927, 7-16 AND OSA 1978, XIX, 201-212)

On the top of the Mull or Burch of Deerness, there is a small chapel, to which superstition has made even old age scramble, through a path in many places scarce six inches broad, and there a single false step led to certain death. (p 9, Clouston 1927).

W P L Thomson (1978, xxix) suggests the author may have been The Rev James Alison.

1805. THE REV GEORGE BARRY, 25

Near the very top of the Mull, (which signifies a promontory), and the boundary of the mainland to the north-east, a chapel had been reared in the dark ages, the access to which is equally difficult and dangerous; and this circumstance, perhaps no less than other motives, might have continued to render it a place of devout pilgrimage, into which the people took great delight frequently to scramble, in order to perform their vows, and leave their superstitious oblations. For some time past they have begun to see the folly of a practice so repugnant to the spirit of rational religion.

1867. SIR HENRY DRYDEN, (1670, 11-12, REPRINTED IN MAGGIORON AND ROSS 1896, 101-5, WITH FIGS 68-71)

The brough is on the east coast of Deerness, and measures on the top about 400 feet north and south by 240 feet east and west. It is separated from the mainland on the south-west by a narrow ravine or "geo", which is almost wet at high water (Fig 68).

The brough is highest on the north, and at that part is about 90 or 100 feet high. (Fig 69). The coast hereabouts is steep and rocky. The use of the word brough for a detached rock, when no feet is placed on it, is not infrequent.

The chapel (Fig 70) is near the centre of the brough, enclosed in a yard 57 feet by 45 feet, of which only the foundation remains. The entrance into this is not evident. The chapel is a parallelogram, 24 feet 5 inches by 17 feet 4 inches outside. The west wall is 3 feet 2 inches, and the others 3 feet 11 inches thick. Only about 4 feet 6 inches and 5 feet in height remain above ground. It stands nearly true east and west, the west end facing a little south of west. It is built of clay slate from 1 foot to 3 feet long, and 2 to 7 inches thick, now much covered with yellow lichen. It has only one doorway (Fig 71), which is in the west end, and apparently was only 2 feet wide; but the west wall is irregular, and appears to have been altered and repaired. The upper part of the doorway is gone, but probably it was square headed, with a stone lintel. The jambs are not splayed, and have no rebate for a door, nor is there any bar hole.<sup>28</sup> By digging at the west doorway it appeared probable that the floor inside was about 6 feet below top of sill of east window, but the level is uncertain, as the interior is much covered with debris.

Apparently there was only one window, which is in the east end. (See Fig 71). The top is gone, so that it is doubtful whether it was flat or arched. One jamb is gone and the other somewhat mutilated, but 1 foot 9 inches in height of it remains. The window had a clear opening of 1 foot 3 inches, with jambs splayed inside, to 3 feet 6 inches in width. It appears to have had the outer 11 inches of the jambs parallel, and to have contained glass. On a part of the east wall is built a beacon for the survey.

In the north wall, near east end, is an aubry 2 feet 4 inches wide, not less than 2 feet 4 inches high (top is gone), and 1 foot 11 inches recessed.

<sup>28</sup> See account of doorway in chapel on Brough of B'ray for notice of this point.

It has no traces of having had a door. Supposing the floor to have been 6 feet below the sill of east window, probably the side walls were about 8 feet high, and the points of the gables about 18 feet from floor. The roof was probably of large slabs of stone along the eaves and above these, either of smaller slabs or of "divots", fastened down with "simons" as on houses.

The external length is equal to the diagonal of the square of the width. About 35 yards south of the chapel is a tank or well.

On the south edge of the brough are stones which appear to have once formed a wall, and at this point is the entrance from the "geo".

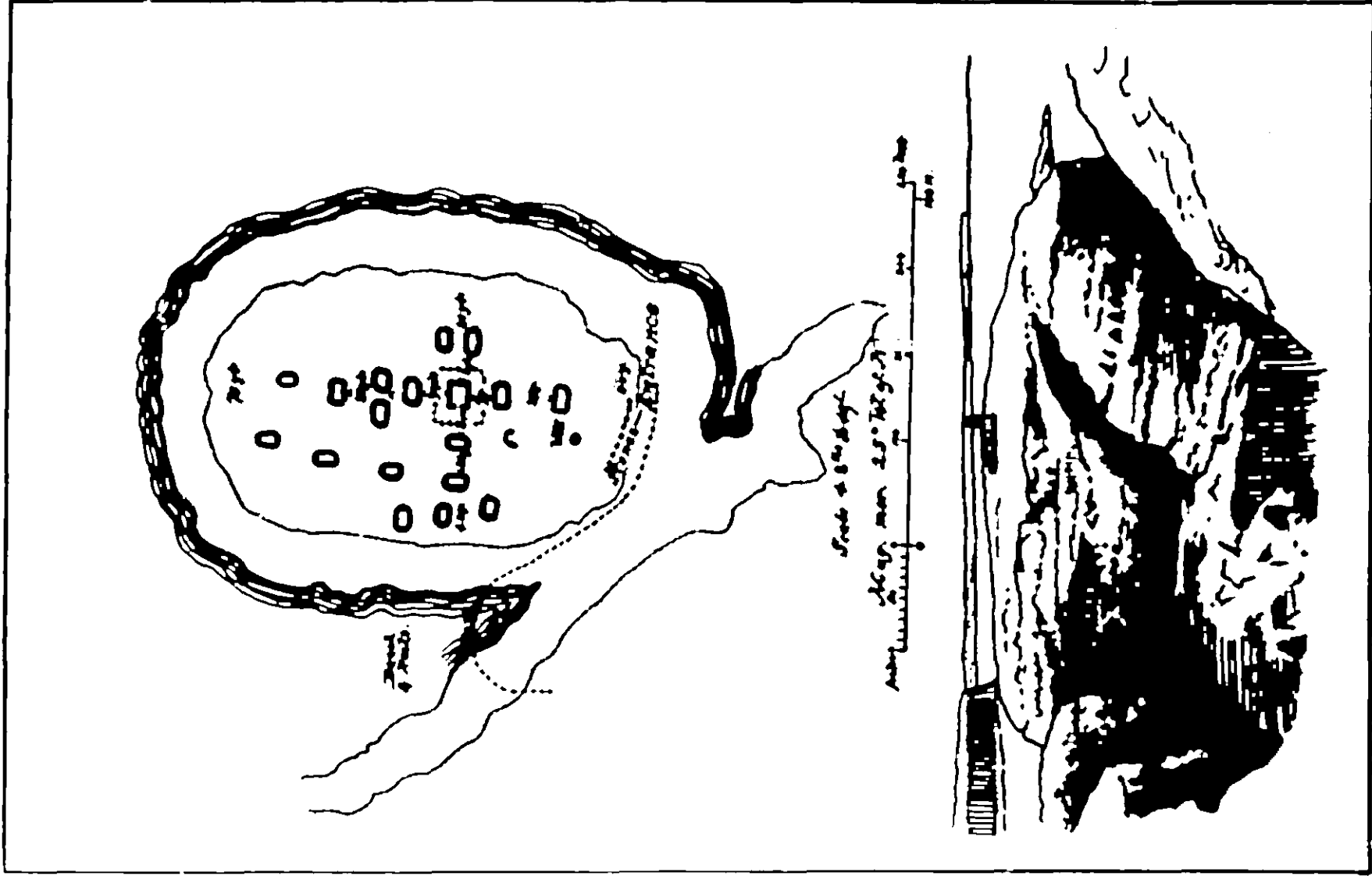
Spread over the top of the brough are foundations of at least 18 huts. They are mostly parallelograms, of about 24 feet by 12 feet outside, and the walls 2 feet 6 inches and 3 feet thick. These were for the use of devotees who used this as a place of pilgrimage.

A survey of our coasts and lakes will show how strong a partiality existed in early times for selecting as sites for churches and monastic establishments small islands, isolated rocks, or promontories difficult of access—for instance, the two St Michaels mounts, Lindisfarn, Iona, Ireland's eye, Inisfallen, etc. Nor was this taste for isolation peculiar to the coasts. We find throughout Europe, and indeed in the East also, numbers of peaks difficult of access, bearing such buildings. The brough of Deerness and the brough of Birca are good examples.

Planned 1866 [manuscript addition]

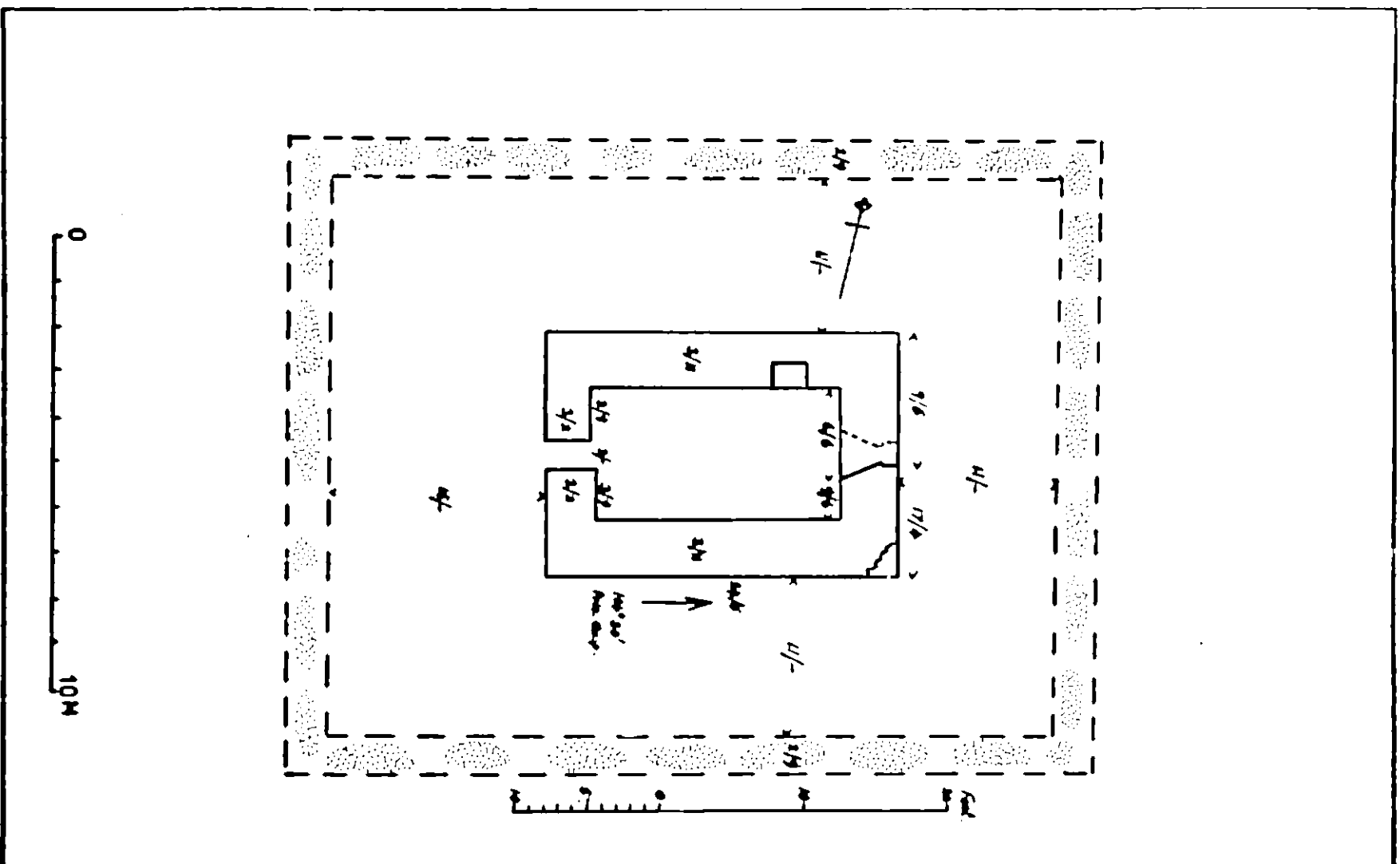
1848. J H N [EALE] 114-5

Deerness ... has a ... chapel - the latter also [like Birca] a famous pilgrimage, and built on the top of the steep promontory called Moulthead, on the Brough of Deerness. The poor ruins of this building, very small, and architecturally worthless, are still regarded with veneration; and, it is said, are even yet the object of pilgrimage. 2 : C11



ILLUS 63 & 64 DEWITT'S PLAN AND PERSPECTIVE DRAWINGS OF

THE BODIES OF DEFENSES (of Maclean & Ross 1896, Flgs 68-9)

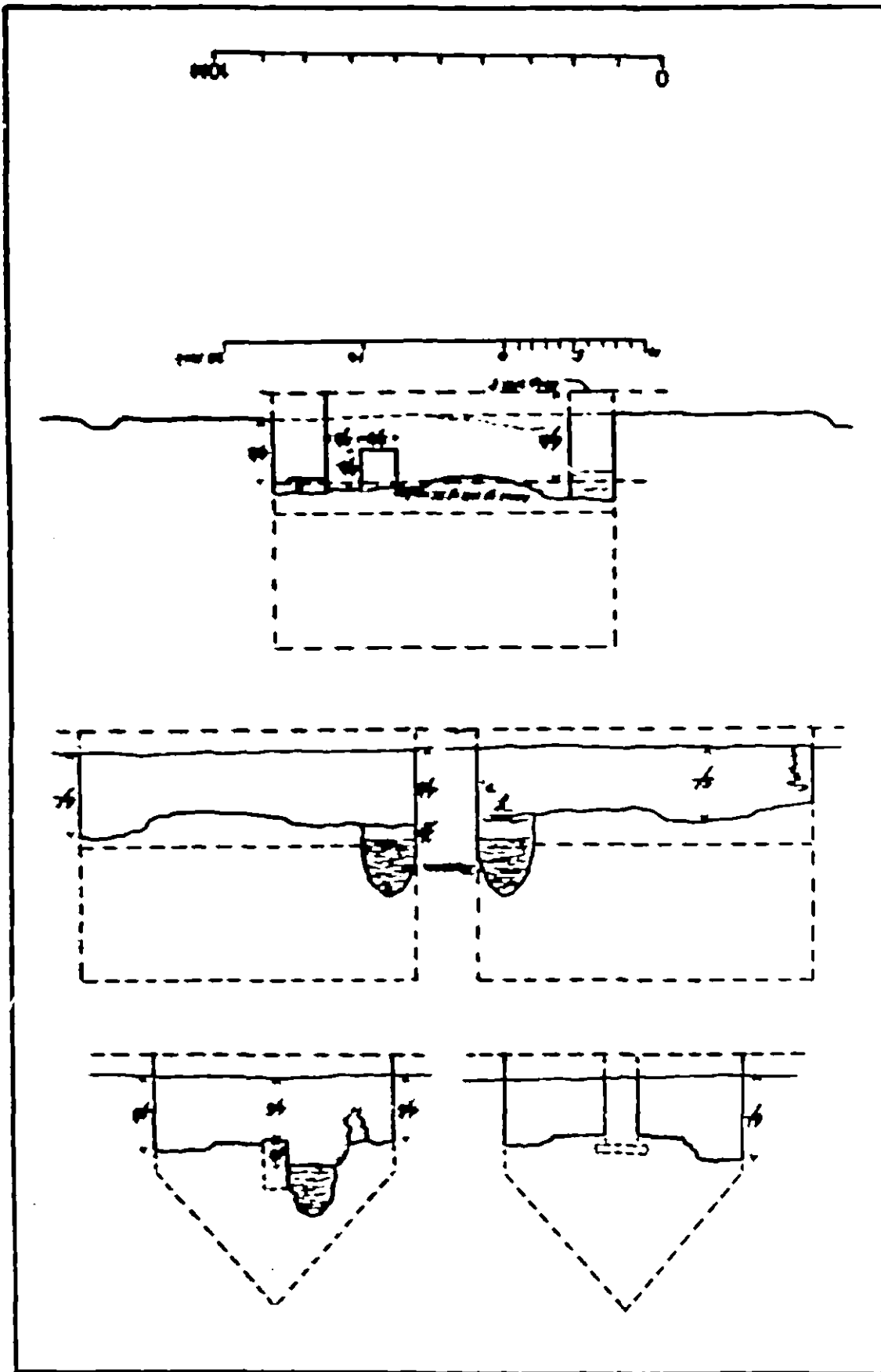


ILLUS 65 DESIGN'S D PLAN OF THE DRAINAGE AND ENCLOSURES  
 SECTION OF DRAWINGS (of Macalister & Sons 1896, FIG 70)



RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF THE CLIMATE (OF THE NORTH & SOUTH, FIG. 21)

ILLUSTRATION 66



1873. JOSEPH ANDERSON, XCIX-C

There are the remains of a chapel similarly situated [to that on the Brough of Birsay] on the Brough of Deerness, at the east end of the Mainland. The Brough of Deerness is an outlying rock, nearly 100 feet high, and covered with green sward on the top. The chapel stands near the centre of the area, and is surrounded by a stone wall enclosing an area of about 60 feet by 45. The chapel, which is a smaller and ruder building than that on the Brough of Birsay, is a simple parallelogram of not more than 17 feet by 10 inside, the walls being from 3 to 4 feet thick. The doorway is in the west end, and there are the remains of a window in the east end, but the heads of both are gone. Around the chapel there are foundations of about a score of stone-built huts scattered irregularly over the area of the Brough. They are irregularly built, with a tendency towards the rectangular form, the walls being from 2½ to 3 feet thick. Several of them are nearly as long as the church, but not so wide, the internal area measuring about 18 feet by 6. Low (1) states that in his time, notwithstanding the difficulty and danger of the access to the Brough, "even old age scrambled its way through a road in many places not six inches broad, where certain death attended a slip." Jo Ben, in 1529, mentions that people of all classes and conditions were in the habit of climbing up to the top of the Brough on their hands and knees to visit the chapel called the "Bairns of Brugh;" and when they had reached the top, "on their bended knees and with hands joined they offered their supplications with many incantations to the Bairns of Brugh, throwing stones and water behind their backs, and making the circuit of the chapel twice or thrice." There is still a fine spring on the Brough, which doubtless had the reputation of a "holy well" in connection with these superstitious practices. The Brough was fenced with a strong stone wall toward the land side in Low's time, and from this and the remains of the huts he concludes that it had been a rock fort subsequently converted into a sanctuary by the ecclesiastics.

(1) Low's Tour through Orkney and Zetland, MS. in the possession of David Laing, Esq.

1879. JOSEPH ANERSON (1881, 93-4 AND 101-4)

[In Scotland], as in Ireland, it is only on the smaller uninhabited and inaccessible islands that we find such traces as we are in search of. These lonely rocks were not only the earliest outposts of the Christian Church, but where the primitive structures were not superseded by the grander constructions of later times ... I select three groups for presentation as the most typical.

... it must be borne in mind that the antiquity of the type is one thing, and the antiquity of the specimen is a totally different thing. The type of these structures may have ranged over four or five centuries, and without the assistance of definite record or dated characteristics, it is impossible to say to which of these centuries any of its specimens is to be assigned.

The third ... group of structures of this type which I have to describe is that on the Brough of Deerness (Fig 40)<sup>m</sup>. It is situated on a small island lying close to the cliffs which rise to form the significant promontory of Deerness of Orkney. The islet is accessible from the land by descending a precipitous pathway in the side of the cliff, crossing the narrow channel filled with boulders which is dry at low tide, and clambering up a rocky footpath which leads to the summit of the Brough. The area on the top is level, and covered with grass. It measures 400 feet by 240 feet, and is from 50 to 100 feet above the level of the sea (1). Near the centre of the area

<sup>m</sup> - [reproduction of Dryden's overall plan]

- (1) These measurements are mostly taken from Sir Henry Dryden's plans and descriptions of Ruined Churches in Orkney and Shetland, copies of which are deposited in the Library of the Society. The descriptive notes were published in the Orcadian in 1967. I am also indebted to Mr James Walls Cursiter, F S A Scot, Kirkwall, for the results of an examination of the ruins, with a view to the verification of several details which he kindly made for me last summer.

is a small church placed within a quadrangular enclosure, which has consisted of a stone wall about 3 feet thick, and of which nothing but the foundation now remains. The church itself is a simple oblong; the walls are lime-built, and about 3 feet thick, measuring externally 24 feet 5 inches, by 17 feet 4 inches long and 10 feet 2 inches wide. It has a doorway in the middle of the west end, 2 feet wide. The jambs are not splayed, and have no rebates for the door, which seems to have been hung on the inside of the wall. The lintel and almost the whole of one side are gone. The only window in the building is in the centre of the east end, the sill being about 6 feet from the ground. The head of the window is gone. It had a clear opening of 15 inches wide, with jambs splaying internally to 3 feet 6 inches in width, and the outer part for 11 inches parallel. In the north wall there is a recess or ambry 2 feet 4 inches wide, the same in height, and 2 feet in depth into the thickness of the wall. Scattered over the area round the church are the foundations of a group of cells, 18 in number, constructed of uncemented stones. They are mostly elongated on the ground plan, with rounded corners; the walls from 2 feet 6 inches to 3 feet thick; and rudely built of uncemented stones. The largest of these cells measures about 24 feet by 12 externally, and its internal area is about 18 feet by 6. The settlement was protected on the side next the land, if not entirely enclosed, by a stone cashel (1). Low, who visited the place in 1774, records that on the land side it was still fenced by a strong stone wall, and this feature led him to the belief that it had been originally a stone fort. There is a well close by the church, and we are told that in the sixteenth century the place had still such a reputation for sanctity, that at certain seasons people of all classes and conditions frequented it, climbing to the top of the rock on hand and knees. Even old age might be seen scrambling

(1) Mr Cursiter traced its remains for 86 yards in April last. He states that it is about 3 feet thick, faced only on the outside, and banked up on the inner side with earth.

its way through a road in many places not 6 inches broad, and where certain death attended a slip. The motive which drew so many to a place so difficult of access and so remote from population must have been powerful. What they did thus described; - Having made the circuit of the chapel three times, they offered their supplications with clasped hands and bended knees, occasionally throwing stones and water from the well behind their backs. Such practices as these are simple survivals of the earlier habit of pilgrimage. A belief in the special efficacy of devotional ceremonies performed at churches founded by particular saints, soon took the place of those feelings of reverential attachment to the founder's memory, which first drew pilgrims to the spot. But the strange thing here is that the founder is unknown. The church has now no name. It had no name in 1774 when Low visited it. It had no name in 1529 when John Bellenden lived in Orkney and wrote his account of it (1). That the notion of its peculiar sanctity survived so long after the name was lost, is proof that the feeling in which it originated was strong. The intrusion of the Norse heathenism in the ninth century extinguished many of the Christian traditions of the Northern Isles. But it did not extinguish them all ... But without the assistance of record we cannot proceed to apply this general conclusion to particular examples, and whatever may be the date or the story of the foundation of this settlement on the Brough, the archaeological result of this investigation of the existing remains is, not that they are of the time, but that they are of the type, of the earliest Christian settlements.

(1) Low's Tour of Orkney and Shetland in 1774 (Kirkwall 1879), p 55. Descriptio Orchadiarum Insularum per me Jo. Ben ibidem incolentem, anno 1529, (MS, Advocates' Library), printed in the Appendix to Barry's History of Orkney.

1883. JOHN R TUDOR, 278-9

Another three-quarters of a mile or so beyond the Gleup brings you to the Brough of Dearness. This is a stack or rock nearly insulated at high tide. You first have to descend to the beach and then clamber over some large boulders till you reach the western side of the stack, which is from 80 to 100 feet above sea-level. A very narrow and dangerous path, except to people with very steady heads, leads to the summit, which consists of a plateau, oval in shape, of about 400 feet by 240 feet. On the land side are the remains of a stone castle or wall. In the centre or nearly so, of the plateau are the remains of the old chapel of pilgrimage<sup>1</sup>, measuring externally 24 feet 5 inches by 17 feet 4 inches, and internally 17 feet 4 inches by 10 feet 2 inches. The door is at the west end, and there appears to have been only one window at the eastern end, and that, like the door, is mutilated. In the north wall is an ambry or recess. Scattered all over the plateau are the remains of cells, eighteen in number, built of uncemented stones; the largest of which measures externally 24 feet by 12 feet, and internally 18 feet by 6 feet.

On the landward side is a wall. Anderson<sup>2</sup> is of opinion that both chapel or cells go back to the days of the monastic phase of the early Celtic church.

It is not impossible, therefore, that these rude buildings may have been erected by Cormac or some of his followers, and be nearly thirteen hundred years old.

When Jo Ben wrote in 1529, the chapel was known as "the Cairn of Bugh", and he narrates how persons of all ages and classes from the different islands made pilgrimages to the place, and how bare-footed, on hands and knees, they climbed with difficulty to the top by a path that only admitted one to ascend at a time. Once at the top, with bent knees and hands clasped, they proceeded three times round the chapel appealing to the Cairn of Bugh, every now and then throwing stones and

1 Dryden's Windsor Churches

2 Anderson's Scotland in Early Christian Times, First Series, pp 101-5.

water behind their backs. Even at that date, when the first mutterings of the Reformation storm were as yet only heard in the distance, all recollection or tradition as to whom the chapel was dedicated seems to have disappeared. And at the present day, it is said, no inhabitant of the parish ever visits the chapel without leaving some offering behind.

1892. JAMES H MACGIBBON, 61 and 66-7.

Celtic churches, somewhat after the Irish type, were situated at the two extremes of the mainland - the Broughs of Birney and Deerness....

Coming now to the ruins of a church and monastic buildings situated on the Brough of Deerness, it seems clear that we have there a visible link uniting us to the long past. It is highly probable that these are the oldest ecclesiastical remains which we possess of a type so primitive. Had they been situated anywhere but on an inaccessible headland, they would have disappeared long ago. The Brough of Deerness measures 400 feet by 250 feet and is from 90 to 100 feet above the level of the sea. Near its centre is the ruins of a small church, within a quadrangular enclosure, consisting of a stone wall about 3 feet in breadth, of which nothing remains but the foundations. It is a small oblong building, with limebuilt walls 3 feet in thickness, measuring outside 24 feet by 17 feet, with the door in the west end, 2 feet wide, while the jambs are not splayed, and there is no rebate for the door, which seems to have been hung on the inside of the wall, and may have been the skin of an animal sufficiently large to cover the opening.

Scattered over the area of the brough and round the church are the foundations of a group of eighteen dry-built cells. The settlement was protected on the side next the mainland, if not entirely enclosed, by a stone cachel, which, prior to the extermination of these in Ireland in the early part of the century, led to the conclusion that these on the brough were the remains of a stone fort. The

church had no name so far back as 1520, when John Bellenden lived in the islands and wrote his account of them, yet at that time, far remote from the period of its erection and dedication, so great a halo of sanctity surrounded the place, that people of all ages and conditions made pilgrimages to the shrine.

1896. DAVID MACGIBBON AND THOMAS BOSS, 101-5, FIGS 68-71

[The section on the "Chapel on the Brough of Deerness". is, as the rest of the Orkney and Shetland chapter, based on Sir Henry Dryden's work "about forty years ago", deposited with the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.]

1901. THE REV J B CRAVEN, 11-12 AND 16-17

The Brough of Deerness is a rock nearly insulated at high tide. To get to it you descend to the beach, and then reascend a steep and narrow path. The rock itself is about 100 feet above the sea level, and its top is a grassy plateau, flat and open to all the winds that blow. The writer well remembers the first day on which he visited it. After tramping along over wet and slushy peat ground, the descent and ascent were made. It was a cold and dark day, with occasional heavy showers. The scene was gloomy and sad in the extreme. In the middle of the plateau stands a ruin, believed to have been a church, and around it are a series of stone heaps, supposed to have been the huts of a colony of early ecclesiastics. A well is at the southern side. It required a great deal of faith to believe that what lay before us was any more than some sheep shelters. But the place was and is sacred ground. Till within recent times pilgrimages were made to the 'Bairns of Brugh', and offerings (not of great value) were left by visitors, who appear to have, on the common protestant principle, expected a great deal for very little. The customs associated with the pilgrimages, of going three times round the chapel on bended knees, "and every now and then throwing stones and water behind their backs", look more like



paganic rites than any remains of Christian customs. The chapel which stands near the centre of the brough, was enclosed in a yard 57 feet by 45 feet. Only the foundation remains. "The chapel is a parallelogram 24 feet by 5 inches by 17 feet 4 inches outside". Only about 4 or 5 feet remain above the ground. It stands nearly east and west. There appears to have been only one window at the east end, which, however, shows signs of having been fitted for glass. In the north wall near the east end, is an aubry 2 feet 4 inches wide. On the edge of the brough appear the remains of a stone cashel or wall. The dedication of the chapel is unknown. Such fortified groups of buildings are common in Ireland and the west of Scotland and must be of a very early date. Perhaps the actual fragment of this chapel is the oldest in Orkney. Certainly the fortification on the isolated brough shows that it was founded when the native Christians, or, rather, their teachers, required protection.

The Brough of Birsay is in some respects the western analogy of that at Deerness. But access is much easier, and the semi-island is larger.

1906. L. DIETRICHSON AND JONAN MEYER

#### English Abridgment (pp 8 and 10-11)

The name "broch" is also employed for a few helms fortified by Nature or art (Deerness and Birsay). Their purpose is sufficiently distinct, and their age, concerning which opinions have differed greatly ...

#### Ruins of Celtic Churches in Preservation

(1) The church on the Brough of Deerness, with a collection of beehive-houses. Until quite recently, pilgrimages were made to this church ...

... Wallace says - and the present author's observations leads him to the same result - that pilgrimages were made to the church on the Broch of Birsay, presumably because the original church, like that on the Broch of Deerness, was an old Celtic sanctuary ...

Norwegian Text (pp 53-4) translated by Christopher D Morris

Preserved Celtic Church ruins

53  
1. The Church on the Broch of Deerness (Fig 22 and 23)<sup>24</sup>. Many strange superstitions are linked with the old church up on Mainland's most south-easterly promontory, the Saga's Dyrnesnuli (Hullhead), which here forms the previously mentioned Naturally fortified, so-called Broch of Deerness. The broch is separated from Mainland, only by a deep and small ravine with the Island associated with the Plateau, only approachable by a steep, small and hardly safe path. The Plateau rises up almost vertically about 33 m in the air and is about 133 m long from North to South and about 80 m broad from West to East. In the middle of the Plateau lies a very old church ruin, which has all the marks of it being Celtic. It is surrounded by a stone wall, of which only the foundations are left. Where the entrance to this enclosure has been is not obviously visible. The church, which forms a simple parallelogram, is almost accurately orientated. This is built in dry stone walling, of the customary dark mudstone, whose stones are from 0.33-1 m long and 0.05-0.15 m high. The walls rise up now only 1.66 m above the ground and are densely covered with yellow moss (lichen, liverwort). The church has a door opening exposed, which is found in the west wall, but this is asymmetrical and appears to have been modified. The door's upper part has disappeared - probably was in the past a rectilinear shape. The doorposts do not expand, either in or out, and we have no estimate for door panelling, rather one does not see a hole for any beam. There is only trace of one window,

<sup>24</sup> Fig 22. Ground plan of church on the Broch of Deerness.  
Dryden's Fig 70 in MacGibbon and Ross 1896.

Fig 23a. Church on the Broch of Deerness, overall plan.  
- Dryden's Fig 68 in MacGibbon and Ross 1896.

Fig 23b. Church on the Broch of Deerness. Perspective,  
- Dryden's Fig 69 in MacGibbon and Ross 1896.

which is in the East wall. Its higher part has disappeared, but it has no doubt had flat lintels - or possibly an imitation, in a stone-cut, round arch. By digging around the entrance it is clear that the window lies about 2 m above the floor, but the level is not certain when the interior is filled up with rubble heaps. One of the window's jambs has wholly disappeared, and the other is in part ruined; but of its height of 0.41 m is left. The sill tapers out from it in the Irish church's customary manner, nevertheless the outermost was running in parallel 0.30 m, and Dryden means [this], so that the window - naturally in an older period - has had glass. In that case, then, the parallels are departing from the Irish Church's usual course towards the outer wall, in the older alteration.

Up against a part of the eastern wall is raised a cairn. In the North wall towards the eastern end one finds an aubry without any closure. The roof has perhaps consisted of large flagstones. Almost 33 m South from the church is found a well, and on the Broch's southern side remains of a stone wall there, where the entrance up to the Plateau from the depths comes up, and where also the entrance has been. Scattered around the church lie the foundations of at least 18 small huts, mostly rectangular, but [also] the rounded-off form. This has assuredly been arranged for use by Pilgrims - also quite like the Irish "beehive-houses". The precipitous, dangerous path up the broch's vertical side was still, long after the Reformation, the subject of visits of numerous Pilgrims, who in superstitious piety travelled the dangerous way crawling on their knees. The site has always, owing to its antiquity and its origin from the Celtic fathers, been surrounded with the people's holy veneration. As one sees, the site has clearly Celtic characteristics and is certainly older than the coming of the Norsemen.

Dimensions: Yard around the church 18.70 m x 14.75 m. Church 8 m x 5.68 m outer dimensions. West wall thickness c 1 m, the other walls c 1.02 m. The door 0.66 m broad. The window's light opening externally 0.41 m, internally 1.15 m. The huts c 8 m x 4 m. Wall thickness 0.83 m x 1 m.

1909. JOHN GUDON (ED), 19-20 AND 156-7

Another place-name which records an old-world mission station is that of Deerness ... We must remember that the Norse invaders were likely to name the place on account of its appearance from the sea. They may, of course, have noticed a chance herd of deer near the cliffs; but one thing is certain to have caught their eye - the unusual sight of a building of stone on the Brough of Deerness. Some remains of this building, and of a later one on the same site, still exist; and it was long regarded as in some way a sacred place, to which pilgrimages were made. This building was in fact one of those outposts of early Christianity - a Galdee monastery. When the Norse invaders came, they doubtless found it occupied by some of the Galdee clergy - diar, as they would be called by the strangers - and so the headland was named the Priest' Cape, or Deerness.

... the Brough, with its ancient chapel, [Ig] especially interesting. A church existed here before the Norse period, and was doubtless the cause of the name Diar-papp, or the mass of the Galdee priests, being given to the district.

1917. THE REV ARCHIBALD B SCOTT, 342

... certain Sam and Charter references show that in the eighth century the Pictish Communities were distributed not only to the extremity of the Mainland, but throughout the Orkney and Shetland Islands, and beyond, to the Islands 'towards the frozen sea'. Unfortunately, the Vikings left little to us of the settlements of these communities beyond the wreckage, like the eighteen cells within the Ig at Deerness in

Orkney and the skeleton of the Church, or the Round Tower of Egilsbay; or the bare Churchyard with the coffined and buried Celtic bell of Birsay. When the Vikings arrived on the Northern Coasts and Islands, we know, from the place-names which they bestowed, that they found ancient and active Pictish religious communities ... the communities of 'S Cola the bishop' (Cannrarinn) at Hoy and Burness; at Deerness and the adjacent 'Paplay', at Birsay, Egilsbay and Papa Westra, all in Orkney ... In the beginning of the eighth century the Pictish Church had given to the Northern Mainland and Islands a ministry as efficient and as well organised as the Christian ministry in these places today.

1918. J STORER CLOUSTON, 91

... Chapels on very small, sometimes uninhabited, islands or on desolate seaboard promontories ...

With regard to the ... class, Dr Graves, author of the History of the Church in Orkney, gives the valuable opinion that they were of two kinds. (a) Chapels of Pilgrimage, such as the chapels on the Brough of Birsay, the Brough of Deerness, and the Enballow; the oldest religious foundations in the Islands. (b) Votive chapels.

It is certain that neither of these two kinds could have been intended for anything in the nature of public worship. Their isolated position forbids this intention, as also the fact that they had no kirklands or emoluments appertaining to them. Their lonely situation also shows that they were never attached to any private estates or manors. This class of chapel falls outside the scope of these papers.

1921. THE REV J GROMARTY SMITH, 110

... Deerness, in Orkney. The name, as Dr Gunn in his admirable Orkney Book rightly, I think, holds, is traceable to the fact that when the Norsemen came to Orkney, they found on Deerness, an outlying point of the mainland, a Christian

settlement, and called it Diar Ness, that is the priests' mess (The Orkney Book, Dr Gumm p 20). A glance at the ground plan of this typical instance of a Celtic Christian settlement shows with what justice Professor Sayce ... traces the indebtedness of the Celtic monastic arrangements to Egypt. Here, at Deerness, we have a counterpart of the Egyptian Laura, a group of 18 beehive cells surrounding a tiny church, and the whole enclosed by a cashel such as is common in Ireland. The plan of an Egyptian Christian settlement fitted in naturally with the clan life of the Celts. The Abbat was the chief Christian community or clan, and around him his monks clustered, each in his own cell.

The old settlement is on a tiny islet, the flat top of which is 100 feet above sea level, lying close to the cliffs of Deerness. The church is a simple oblong, 24 by 15 feet, having the door in the west and the only window in the east end. Close by the church is the well. The isle was a greatly venerated place of pilgrimage, and around it for many a long year the halo of sanctity lingered. Even after the Reformation, in spite of ecclesiastical ban, people from the neighbouring islands made their pilgrimage to Deerness, and offered their gifts at the ancient shrine.

c.1922. THE NEW G L ACLAID, 71

Brough of Deerness ... is a huge stack of rock-flat at the top - evidently at some remote period detached by the sea from the promontory of Deerness, of which it forms a continuation. The approach to it is by an almost perpendicular descent from the cliffs on to the beach - here dry at low tide - on to the top of the Breck. On this Breck are the remains of buildings enclosed by a wall. They resemble in character and general appearance those of Skellig Michael, but are, probably, not of so early a date. They are much less perfect than the Irish remains, but are in their way equally interesting, and probably even less known. The buildings were originally a small Church, and some half-dozen cells, each probably for its single tenant. They are now very ruinous, but enough remains to determine their general character. They are all dry-built, without mortar or cement of any kind.

1923. HUGH MARWICK, 265

Mr Scott would also regard the name Deerness as derived from the Celtic dair, an oak grove, which he says was used by the Pictish clergy of their churches. Now, although there are plain traces of a church settlement on the Brough of Deerness, that seems the slenderest evidence on which to base the theory that dair was corrupted into the Saga word Dyrnes, from which the present name is descended.

1923. JOHN MOONEY, 76 AND 82-3

The name of no Celtic or other Saint was associated with the Brough of Deerness, Egilsay, Papa Stronsay, the Paplays and Papdale, although those places were unquestionably the scenes of the labours of the earliest Christian missionaries. The name Deerness may be derived from "diar", meaning priests (1) ...

Was a Celtic religious community founded on Eynhallow by those followers of St Kentigern? ... Such institutions, at an early period, were certainly on the Brough of Deerness, and the Brough of Birsay; and the name and associations of Eynhallow proclaim that isle, also, as the home of Celtic monks. We venture the further suggestions (though direct evidence is lacking) that the Monastery on Deerness was founded at the time of the first missionary visit - St Ninian's or the visits of disciples trained by St Ninian; that on the Brough of Birsay by St Cola; and the first Eynhallow Monastery by Kentigern's disciples.

(1) Jakobson regarded Deerness as Dyr-ness (Animal-ness).

1926. JOHN MOCAEY, 25-6

The Brough of Deerness was aptly described by Low as "a large peninsulated rock". The gap or channel between it and the Mainland is not many yards wide at the narrowest part; and over its rocky bed the sea flows at certain states of the tide. The ascent is by a somewhat dangerous path up the side of the cliff. In the sixties of last century Sir Henry Dryden took measurements, which were subsequently verified by Mr James W Cursiter, F.S.A (Scot), for Dr Joseph Anderson's Scotland in Early Christian Times. The surface of the Brough is 400 feet by 240 feet; height above sea level, 90 to 100 feet. There are remains, on the side next to the Mainland, of what Dr Anderson calls "a stone cashel". Its foundations, extending to 86 yards, were traced by Mr Cursiter who found it to be "about 3 feet thick, faced only on the outside, and banked up on the inner side with earth". Sir Henry Dryden prepared a ground-plan of the Brough, and its extremely interesting group of ecclesiastical remains:- The ruins of a chapel, 24 feet 5 inches long, 17 feet 4 inches wide outside measurements, and the foundations of eighteen beehive cells, the largest of which almost equals the chapel in length, but is narrower by about 5 feet. There is a well near the south end of the Brough ... The Brough is covered with grass which affords good pasturage for sheep. The foundations of the cells are still visible, but are covered by turf and long grass. The chapel walls stand a few feet above the surface, but in parts are almost buried under loose stones ... [These] are perhaps the earliest monuments of Christian missionary enterprise in Orkney.

Jo Ben, whose tour in Orkney took place somewhere in the sixteenth century (certainly not before 1529), makes a special reference to the Brough of Deerness. It is the earliest reference we have ... "On it "



he says, "is a chapel called the Bairns of Brough. Hither flock together from various islands men, youth and boys, old people and servants innumerable, in truth coming with naked feet, as formerly related; they ascend praying, where none except one at a time can come to the chapel. Here is a well, pure and sparkling, which is indeed wonderful. Then the people on bended knees and with clasped hands, without confidence in the God that is, supplicate the Bairns of Brough with many incantations, throwing stones and water behind them and walking twice and thrice round the chapel. Having finished their orisons they return home affirming that they have performed their vows". The information here contained throws a gleam of light on the influence the missionary monks of this place must have exerted on the inhabitants of Orkney many centuries before Jo Ben's visit. One point of peculiar interest is the name he applies to the Chapel - the Bairns of Brough - a name still used by Dorness fishermen. Is the word "Bairns" the Norse and Scots for children? (1) Or is it a corruption of an old Celtic word? If the former, it may have been applied to the souls of the holy monks who had laboured there under a missionary leader, and whose virtues were held in such remembrance by the people that they supplicated them on bended kneed ...

Wallace, in his History of Orkney (written before 1689), refers to the Chapel of the Brough as a place of pilgrimage, and he says that even in his day the custom was continued. "Nor to this hour are these pilgrimages omitted by the common people, who still, for the obtaining of some good or deprecating of some evil, do frequent some chapels they have most veneration for." Wallace takes no notice of the monks cells.

It was in 1774 that Low visited Dorness. He notes that "the rock is fenced

(1) Bairns is pretty certainly a corruption of O N boornig, "prayer-house", or chapel. Cf the P Westray form Binna Kirk (P. O. A. S., Vol. III).  
M [ugh] M [arwick]

with a very strong wall, and within, many foundations of small huts, " remarking that these "plainly demonstrate that this [the islet] has served more purposes than that of religion, which in all probability has been the latest". He thinks "it surely has been a rock fort ... and the huts have been for shelter both to men and goods in time of public disturbance". He notices, of course, the chapel and the visits of pilgrims.

The Old Statistical Account merely repeats what Low says regarding the Brough; and the New Statistical Account is altogether silent with regard to it. With the exception of Dr Joseph Anderson, who gave a description of the Brough and its antiquarian remains, modern writers of books on Orkney have added nothing to what was recorded by Jo Ben, Wallace and Low. Tudor devotes a whole page to it, quoting Anderson's details; but he adds, "At the present day, it is said, no inhabitants of the parish ever visits the chapel without leaving some offering behind". I have visited the place twice - the interval being 30 years - but if the inhabitants who accompanied me left some offerings, they did not wish an outsider to see them doing so.

Dietrichson - no mean authority - says that one of the means by which Celtic churches in Orkney may be distinguished from Norwegian is that the former are dry-built, the latter with mortar. If this is true, the ruined chapel on the Brough of Deerness may be claimed as a building of the Norse period; for Anderson says the walls of the church are lime-built. This is a rather interesting point on which further expert opinion should be obtained. What remains of the walls of the bee-hive cells shows that they were dry-built. May I here express the need for careful and skilful research on that sacred islet rock. In the enclosed area which surrounds the chapel - probably the ancient burial ground of the monks - or under the floor of the chapel, there may be monumental stones which would tell the story of the earliest missionaries to the Orkneys.

1926. THE REV ARCHIBALD B SCOTT, 51-3

"BROUGH" AT LERNESS, ORKNEY

Along with S Colm's, Brough of Birsay, and the grouped casulae at the Church-site on the Kirk Holm of Cojinsay, the Community-site on the Brough of Deer, Orkney, makes a vivid demand on the historical mind to be reconstructed and explained. The site is on an islet over one hundred feet above the sea; and the isle lies under the east cliffs of the peninsula, now called "Deer Ness". The persistence of the name 'brough' suggests that the site had been occupied in pre-Christian times by a broch. Here on the plateau of the islet could have been seen, until last century, undisturbed except by weather and time, the entire buildings of a Brito-Celtic christian community. The site was typical and characteristic of the other Ninianic settlements. The buildings included a church 24 by 14 feet, and surrounding it a group of eighteen casulae of the "beehive" type, the huts of the brethren. All were included within a lis, like other early British Church sites; and the rampart is still visible.

Veneration for the Church and Well continued until times quite recent, but veneration of the founder was either once so general that no one thought it necessary to record his name, or so infrequent that his name gradually dropped out of memory.

... Outsiders assume the "Ness" originally referred to "Hull Head"; but the old pronunciations "niall" and "nule" show that this headland has been "Hull" from Celtic times; and that the Vikings "pulled" this name into the form and meaning of their own word gulj. Obviously "Deer" is a primal spot-name which has been generalised and made explicative of the other local places. To what spot did the Vikings originally apply their name "Ness"? The answer is to the projection at the spot "Deer", as the compound name "Deer Ness" indicates; and the designation "Deer" pertained not to the

islet but to the erections on it, which would inevitably attract the attention of the scouting ships of a Viking fleet, on the lookout for garrisoned brochs.

To what was the name "Deer" due? As it belonged to the settlement on the "Brough" islet, with its "Ness", its origin must be sought in some peculiarity of a religious community of the Brito-Celtic Church. It has already been noted that S Minian and others transported the names of their central Communities ... Seeing that the Aberdeenshire "Deer" had been transported to Caithness, there is every likelihood that it was also transported to Orkney, and given to the settlement of the religious community stationed on the "Brough"...

... The name goes back to the religious rites of the British Celts and their Nature-worship. The deri or dér was the oak grove, any oak grove, but in a religious connection, the Sacred Place where the rites were celebrated. The known policy of the early British Christian missionaries was to occupy the sacred places of the Celtic heathen with their Churches. These Churches were built of timber from the oaks that grew around them; and the House of Prayer, or the Church, was called in Old British Dér-tig, and in early Irish Dertaig or Dertesach, frequently preceded by a saint's name. In this way "deri" or "dér" of the heathen Celts, became part of the Sacred Places of the Christian missionaries; and deri or dér became the institutional name, synonymous with House of Prayer, and transportable, because of its associations, to such British foundations as Deer of Caithness and Deer of Orkney.

The physical features of the "Brough" are such as distinguish all Minianic sites. Minian may first have selected it, but the name "Deer" suggests that it was organised and settled by either Drostan, or Cola, of Old Ross, who carried on his work...

The Kirk Hala of Copinsay is an ecclesiastical dependency of Deer, or Deer Ness. It is about four miles from the Community-site on the "Brough" of Deer.

1928. A W BP/GGER (1929, 55-6)

Johan Meyer is of the opinion that he has discovered in the Orkneys the ruins of probably six churches which must be of Celtic and not Norse origin. The best preserved of these is the ruin at Deerness, but as regards the others there is some doubt ...

It may be doubtful whether these ... ruins can prove the existence of any extensive Celtic Christianity in the islands before the advent of the Norsemen.

1920. A W BP/GGER, 137-8. Translated by Christopher D Morris

It is not appropriate here to go into details about the whole of the archaeological topic of Celtic church ruins. It is enough to point to the conclusion. In Shetland [there] is still not certainly demonstrated a Celtic church ruin from the period before the 11th century. In the Orkneys it is possible that there exists a few, but excavations are not exhaustive enough and are limited to simply one single version of a ground-plan which is considered to tally with the Celtic churches before the development of church building which begins after the 960s - a single rectangular plan without chancel, a door in the west wall and a little window in the east wall. Further importance is attached to the fact that in the older Celtic church building art cement is not used in the masonry.

Two of the church places in the Orkneys which, as we understand it, are typical of Celtic mission's whole character are the church at Deerness and that on Kirk-Hala near Copinsay.

The church at Deerness is in reality more than a church, it is a site of the typical Celtic form, with church, huts, well and wall etc. Mainland's most north-easterly corner projects into the North Sea, and exactly south of the projection a little peninsula sticks out, but often the neck is under water from flood-tide sea. The peninsula is c 30 metres high, and one comes up bit by bit a little difficult path. On that plateau, encircled by the North Sea, still lie ruins of a church and 18 small huts, of which some have beehive form, a well and a wall which has surrounded the whole. The site has never been properly excavated. There exists a survey by SIR HENRY DRYDEN from the 1860s and a spirited and interesting description by JOHN MOONEY from 1925 (P. A. S. IV, 25).

From a description which comes down from the time before the Reformation, this place is told about, which at the time was called Bairns of Brough. H MARWICK has pointed out that bairns is the O N boenus. Hither came a countless number of people at the time in the 1520s in great throngs, tells JO BEN, youth and boys, married and single. They went barefoot up over the cliff towards the church, to the accompaniment of prayer and song they approached, but only one at a time could come into the church. With folded hands and on their knees, they sang hymns at the church, [and] thereafter went two or three times round it, while they cast stone and water behind them. When they finished in this manner with all their prayers, they went home in the sure belief that they had fulfilled their vows.

From the accounts of journeys, right down to the 1660s we know that they have continued with this.

The church ruins which are left standing are built of dark slate in rough masonry. Now DETRICHSON says that this wall is without cement and also older than the 960s, but MOONEY definitely says it is cemented. The church is only 8 x 5.7 metres, and the wall thickness is 0.1 metre. There is a door-opening in the west wall and traces of a window in the east wall.

The hut sites are mostly four-sided, [and] one of them is as large as the church itself.

No saint is known in connection with this site. Although this is perhaps in absolute terms not so old, it is a fully characteristic, essentially Celtic monastic site, similar to those which in the Hebrides are called cashels. As typical can be mentioned the church and surroundings at North Bona, Lewis (Report, Ancient Commission, no 9) ...

The age of Deerness church is not decided by this. Churches of the same form and construction are built in the Hebrides as late as in the 15th-17th centuries (Report, page XLVIII). But the overall character of the construction has an origin in the Celtic pre-Norse period.

1930. R C A H M S. (1946. II, 240-1)

621. CHAPEL WITH HUT FOUNDATIONS, BROUGH OF DEERNESS.

Little more than half a mile S of the Mull Head, on the precipitous E coast of the parish, a rocky storm-swept headland, known as the Mull, projects seawards between the Large and Little Burra Geos. It rises sheer to a height of almost 100 ft above the water on the N and W, but on the E, where most exposed to heavy seas, the vertical cliff-face is not more than 40 ft high, and the rock above rises in a steep slope to the level, turf-covered summit. From the almost perpendicular S side a narrow ridge once ran between the geos, maintaining a connection with the mainland, but erosion has reduced the height of this natural bridge to less than 20 ft, so that, in effect, the headland has long been little more than an island (Fig 433). It was regarded as such by Fordun, who included the "Borch de Darnes" in his list of islands in Orkney.

Desolate and unsuitable for habitation as was the Brough, it had the merit of security, for access was possible only on its landward side. There a steep, narrow track still climbs obliquely up the cliff-face to the summit, where the approach was once secured by a breast-work, built of flagstones without mortar, extending all the way across for a total length of about 260 ft. No trace is left of the entrance gate, as the wall is for the most part reduced to its foundation, although near the W end it still rises to a maximum height of 2 ft 6 ins for a length of 7 ft, and is sufficiently well preserved to show that, when entire, it must have been 3 ft thick. It was reinforced with 5 ft of earth banked up inside (1). When seen by Low in 1774, it was still in fair preservation. A heap of flagstones immediately inside it, some set on edge while others are either tilted or propped, covering

(1) Anderson, Scotland in Early Christian Times, p 163, note.



altogether an area of some 50 ft by 8 ft, may be the remains of a shelter constructed later, but is perhaps more likely to be debris from a partial clearance made by Mr James Cursiter over half a century ago.\*

The site thus enclosed by breast-work and cliff measures 142 yds from N to S with an average breadth of 80 yds from E to W. Beneath the turf can be traced a series of domestic buildings grouped round the ruins of an earlier chapel which stands within a rectangular enclosure near the middle of the area. The place was examined by Dryden in 1866. His description which appeared in the Orcadian in the following year, was reprinted by MacGibbon and Ross (2), and was also utilized by Anderson (3).

THE CHAPEL - Oblong on plan and single-chambered, this measures 17 ft 1 in from E to W by 9 ft 9 in from N to S within walls about 4 ft thick, built of flagstones laid in clay and lime-pointed, but now generally dilapidated and not more than 4 ft 9 in high. In the centre of the W gable is the entrance, about 2 ft wide, its remaining jamb showing no provision for a door frame. Dryden saw an incomplete window in the E gable, 6 ft from the ground. This was 1 ft 6 in wide outside, but 2 ft more within. He also measured an aubry at the E end of the N wall, which was 2 ft 4 in in width and height by 2 ft. Although reduced to its foundations, the wall enclosing the chapel is still traceable over its full extent with a thickness of 3 ft.

DOMESTIC BUILDINGS - The two circular huts isolated on the edge of the W cliff and the cluster of twenty-one circular huts at the S E corner, which average 10 ft in diameter and are grouped to N E and E of a large

(2) Eccles Arch Scot., 1, pp 101-5

(3) Op cit., pp 101-4

\* Mr Cursiter states, however, that in his recollection most of the debris was cast over the cliff.

circular depression, probably a catch-pit for water, may perhaps be regarded as vestiges of a primary occupation older than the chapel. A second but smaller catch-pit to the N, which is connected to the S side of the chapel enclosure by a ditch or trench about 11 yds long, may also be related to this larger group. The nineteen rectangular buildings, N, E, and W of the chapel, which vary in size from about 12 ft square to 39 ft in length by 15 ft in width, and are arranged as shown on the plan, are probably to be regarded as contemporary with and later than the chapel, along with the shallow, oblong depression, 9 ft wide and extending 29 ft S of the enclosing wall. But there is nothing to indicate the period or purpose of an incomplete building at the S W corner of the site, now represented by a low crescentic mound.

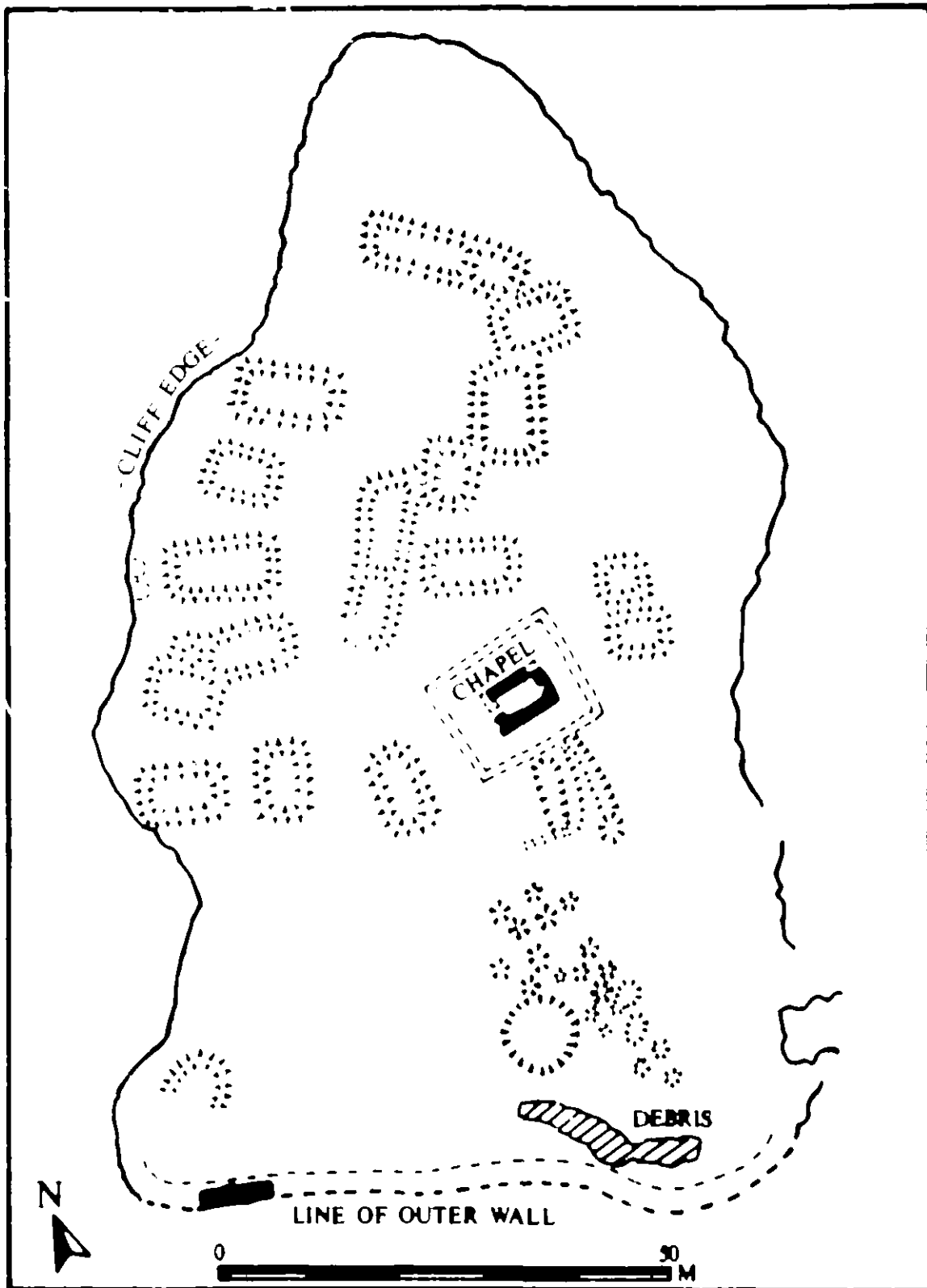
According to "Jo Ben", (4) the place, which he calls "The Bairnes<sup>N</sup> of Brughe", was a famous resort in the 16th century for male pilgrims of all ages, who walked barefoot twice or thrice round the chapel, casting stones and water behind their backs, while uttering invocations. And he also speaks of a "well of water, pure and sparkling", possibly one of the catch-pits. Even so late as the end of the 17th century the chapels of the Broughs of Deerness and of Birsay were the two most favoured pilgrim-resorts in Orkney (5).

(4) Macfarlane's Geographical Collections (S H S), 111, p 318. On "Jo Ben" see also P S A S, lxx (1935-6), pp 230 ff.

(5) Wallace, An Account of the Islands of Orkney (1700), p 69. Cf also P O A S, lv, pp 25 ff, 51 ff.

ox ("Brough and Chapel"). 2 June 1930.

<sup>N</sup> Almost certainly a corruption of the O boephus, chapel.



ILLUS 67 ROYAL COMMISSION SURVEY-PLAN OF 1930  
 (Re-drawn after REARDS 1946, II, Fig 433)

1932. JOHN GUNN, 96-98 AND 240

... an excellent example of another cliff feature - the Brough of Deerness. This projection is joined to the land at its base, and the sea does not flow between, but the junction affords a very precarious and rather dangerous approach. On the Brough itself are the remains of a very ancient chapel and of primitive huts or cells, marking this as one of the sites occupied by the early Pictish monks or hermits. Like many others in Orkney, this chapel was held in veneration till within a couple of centuries ago and even later, and secret pilgrimages and votive offerings were with difficulty abolished by the ministers.

... though the primitive forms of Celtic church worship were later swept away, the sanctity of the Celtic church foundations was so great that down to the close of the eighteenth century the common people in the Islands were in the habit of making pilgrimage thither and performing their vows with quaint and superstitious ritual. The old chapel on the Brough of Deerness, and that of St Tredwell in Papa Westray, were two of the most famous shrines; others, however, were hardly less revered, such as that of St Cola on the Brough of Birsay, later superseded by a Romanesque building, with nave, choir, and tiny semicircular apse, dedicated to St Peter. Such veneration is never recorded in connection with any of the later churches or chapels erected by the Norsemen themselves; so deep was the impression left by those first evangelists of the North.

1940. C L CURIE, 71

There are remains of a monastic settlement on the Brough of Deerness. These have not yet been excavated, but they appear from surface indications, to follow in plan the smaller Irish monasteries. (2)

1946. R C A H M S, I, 41, 42

Remains of another ecclesiastical establishment (No 621), the origin of which perhaps goes back to Celtic times, are to be seen on the Brough of Deerness, a small peninsula on the south-east of the Orkney mainland. Here again the church and the rectangular buildings are almost certainly of mediaeval date, but the round huts may well be older. The site, it may be added, is not unlike that of Birsey (1), and pilgrimages were made to both places in the Middle Ages and later (2). Possibly the remains of small buildings on the Corn Hols of Copinsey (No 672) are to be similarly explained.

A few of the churches are perhaps to be regarded as survivals, though only in the sense that they probably occupy the sites of more Celtic oratories ... The rather larger church [than Aukerry] on the Brough of Deerness (No 621), measuring 25 feet by 17 feet 6 inches, over walls 3 feet thick, is similar in plan; the entrance, only 2 feet 6 inches wide, can still be traced in the west gable, but a window in the east gable, part of which still existed in 1867, has been completely demolished.

(2) [reference given to R C A H M S in 1946, then "forthcoming"]

(1) Anderson, Scotland in Early Christian Times, 1st ser, p 169.

(2) Ceremonies said to have been performed at the Brough of Deerness in the 16th century suggest pre-Christian beliefs (Macfarlane, Orkney Islands Collections, S H S, iii, p 318).

1951. HUGH MARWICK, 107, 111-112

Early Celtic Church Sites

On the Brough<sup>n</sup> of Deerness and on the Brough of Birsay on opposite sides of the Orkney Mainland are to be found ecclesiastical remains that undoubtedly date from the pre-Norse Celtic period also. The former site is a peninsula at the eastern extremity of the Mainland, about two acres in extent, encircled by high cliffs and connected with the mainland of Deerness by a few feet of isthmus rising only slightly above sea-level. On the grassy top of this peninsula are to be seen remains of a primitive chapel, now, alas, a mere heap of stones, near which are a series of foundations of early monastic huts. Though in the most lamentable state of decay and neglect, this is one of the most venerable sites in Orkney.

The impression that these early Christian missions were blotted out later by pagan Norsemen can no longer be seriously entertained, for had it been so the sanctity attaching to the old Celtic church sites would be quite inexplicable ... the unknown author "Jo Ben", writing towards the end of the sixteenth century, describes something of the ritual in connection with pilgrimages to the church on the Brough of Deerness, which he states was known as "The Bairns of Brough". There can hardly be any doubt that in writing Bairns he was misinterpreting the local pronunciation of an Old Norse word boen-hus, i.e. prayer-house or chapel. To that chapel, he says, flocked old and young from the various isles. Barefooted, and on hands and knees, they climbed one at a time up the steep ascent to the top of the Brough, where there was a spring of pure clear water. Then uttering many incantations they went two or three times around the chapel, with hands

<sup>n</sup> "Broch" and "Brough", pronounced alike and each representing the same word, O N borg, a fortified place, place of defence (etymologically place of safety), are by convention gradually acquiring restricted application. The term was applied in Orkney and Shetland (a) to the remains of "Pictish" towers, and (b) to rocks or islets so difficult of access that they might be regarded as natural forts. "Broch" is now used as a technical term for the towers only, "brough" being used in all other cases, including names of farms on which broch towers have once stood.

clasped and banded knees - casting stones and water behind them (post tegora) meanwhile. That done, they returned home again, saying that they had completed their devotions.

Pilgrimages to that site continued right down into the latter half of the eighteenth century. We have already noted the pilgrimages to St Tredrell's chapel in Papa Westray; other greatly frequented sites were the Brough of Birsay and the chapel of Cleat in Rauday. The quite extraordinary degree of veneration entertained for those hallowed sites in the minds of local people affords the clearest possible proof that there can have been no violent break in tradition, and thus no general extirpation of Celtic clergy by heathen Norsemen.

On the contrary, all the available evidence would seem to point the other way.

1952. HUGH MARWICK (1952b,31-2)

Of ... early Celtic missionaries, in Orkney tangible traces are now rare. They are still commemorated in a few place-names - Papa Westray, Papa Stronsay, Papdale and Papley, and several old chapel sites throughout the isles have dedications to Celtic saints. But only two or three sites can be regarded with any confidence as having been actual monastic settlements of those early missionaries to the north.

Their preference for settling on isolated or semi-inaccessible spots is well known, and the Orkney sites referred to are certainly of that nature. One is the Brough of Deerness, a high, semi-detached, rocky headland at the eastern tip of Mainland. To reach that site one has to climb a difficult path up to the face of a cliff, at the summit of which may still be seen remains of an ancient 'cachel' wall. Inside that wall, on the grassy top of the headland, are the remains of a primitive chapel, now alas, a mere heap of stones, together with a

a number of small mounds marking where the huts of the community once stood. The site was held in such veneration throughout Orkney that people from various isles used to go on pilgrimage thither as late as the eighteenth century. Today this venerable site is utterly neglected and its ancient structures barely recognisable.

1959. G A RALPH RALFORD, 3

A Celtic monastery consisted of an enclosure and a group of buildings within. The latter would include one or more small churches, buildings for common purposes, such as a school, a library and a scriptorium for the copying of manuscripts, or a guesthouse, and dwellings or cells for the monks, together with the barns and workshops needed by a community that was largely self-supporting. Such monasteries became centres of pilgrimage; they always included a cemetery, burial in which was a privilege much sought after.

The headland known as the Brough of Deerness on the east side of Mainland still retains the layout of an extensive Celtic monastery with a wall facing the landward edge of the cliff and forming the monastic enclosure.

1961. G A RALPH RALFORD (1962a,9)

The layout of Tintagel is largely determined by topographical considerations, and the scattered grouping of the huts may not be typical. But the lack of an ordered plan occurs on the unexcavated site at Deerness on the Mainland of Orkney (24), where remoteness has preserved the setting of all the buildings. An early date for this site is assured by the fact that two of the buildings are overlaid by the rectangular garth of a little Norse church of a

(24) R G A N N S: Orkney and Shetland, no 621



form typical of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. The presence of this intrusive element shows that the main settlement must date before c AD 850 when the pagan Norse invaders occupied the islands. Kingarth on Bute (25) has a similar sequence ...

1962. C A RALEGH RADFORD (1962b, 166-7 AND 180)

On the Brough of Deerness, on the east coast of the mainland of Orkney, there is an excellent example of a Celtic monastery (Fig 30)(2). The site lies on a projecting headland, separated from the main plateau by a deep cleft or geo. The only approach is by a steep path up the landward side of the headland, where the slope is crowned with a ruined wall, which isolates the flat top. This wall forms the vallum monasterii, so often recorded in the texts; it served not only to enclose the monastic city, but as a symbolic barrier, excluding the world.

The Brough of Deerness has not been excavated, but the main sequence is clear. Near the centre of the flat top of the headland is a small rectangular oratory (measuring internally 17 feet by 9 feet 9 inches), with a door near the centre of the west wall and formerly retaining the base of the east window. The masonry is of stones bedded in clay with the surface of the wall pointed in lime mortar. This is an archaic technique, which appears in the early Christian oratory at Whithorn (1) and on other sites like St Ninian's Chapel in Bute (2b); on Irish analogies it cannot be much later than the eighth century and might well date before 700 (3). The chapel is set among a group of rectangular buildings, irregularly placed and of different sizes.

(25) Unpublished. Plans are available in the Museum at Rothesay.

(2) R C A H M S xii, No 621.  $\sqrt{\text{Fig 30}}$  is a reproduction of the R C A H M S survey plan.

(1) C A R Radford (1949), 106-19.

(2b) W G Aitkin (1955), 64-76.

(3) H G Leask (1955), 1,2.

The largest measures about 40 feet by 24 feet overall. These buildings and the general layout may be compared with the Celtic monastery at Tintagel, Cornwall, which is known to have been in use between the fifth and eighth centuries (4). Many of the buildings were the cells of the monks; some of the larger ones would have served the whole community - among them would be the library, the guesthouse and other buildings mentioned in the texts, including such domestic structures as the kiln for drying corn. The headland at Deerness also has two groups of circular huts; most are small, with an average diameter of about 10 feet, but they range up to 25 feet across. The evidence from the hermitage on St Helen's, Isles of Scilly (5), and elsewhere shows that these huts were occasionally used in early Christian times, but those on the Brough of Deerness may well be survivals from an earlier age. Tintagel, the Cornish site to which reference has already been made, also lies on a headland, with a massive piled stone bank and ditch cutting off the monastic site (6); both in position and in layout it forms a very close parallel to the Brough of Deerness.

The rectangular enclosure of the churchyard at Birsay shows that Norse type of cemetery. A rectilinear layout is foreign to the earlier Celtic church, and on this site the sequence has been demonstrated by the excavation. At Deerness the same sequence is indicated by the plan (Fig 30). The chapel, Celtic in origin and lying among the buildings of a Celtic monastery, is enclosed with a rectangular wall, which on one side impinges on one of the earlier monastic cells (1).

(4) C A R Radford (1935), 401-19; (1942b), 25-41; (1956a), 59-70.

(5) Excavated by the late B H St J O'Neil and Mrs O'Neil. Report forthcoming.

(6) Discovered in the latest excavation and not yet published.

(1) RCAMS xii, No 621.

1962. FREDERICK T WAINWRIGHT, 113 AND 115

The physical features of the Celtic church in Orkney are at last coming clearly into view with Palegh Radford's excavations on the Brough of Birsay ... Here are the remains of a Celtic monastery, with its chapel, and with a graveyard which has produced the fine symbol stone ... A similar site is to be seen on the Brough of Doorness (4); it has not yet been excavated, but the layout of the visible remains seems to be that of a Celtic monastic establishment on which, as at Birsay, a later church has been built.

... it may be noted here that there is no evidence that the Picts were a vanishing race and no evidence that they or their churches were destroyed ... It is probable that churches and holy places also survived: the Papa names show that the Scandinavians recognized the haunts of priest and hermits; and the continuity of Christian traditions at places like Birsay, Doorness, Papa Westray and St Ninian's Isle strongly suggests that the Scandinavians did not obliterate the sacred associations which had grown up around them.

1964. ORDNANCE SURVEY, HY 50 NE 14

The site is generally as described ..., but only the grass-covered footings of 17 circular depressions could be found. The two circular huts on the edge of the west cliff and the wall around the church could not be traced. Surveyed at 1/25000. F.1 R.D.20.8.64

1965 W DOUGLAS SIMPSON (1968, 109)

... to see the best preserved example of a Celtic monastery in Scotland we must journey ... to the Orkneys. Here, on the storm-beaten promontory known as the Brough of Doorness, towering to a height of a hundred feet above the restless waves, survive the complete installations of a large

(4) RCANS xii, No 621.

monastic community, including a small chapel and the foundations of at least a score of huts, in appearance strikingly resembling those uncovered by excavation at the Anglian monastery of Whitby in Yorkshire. There is also a wall, or perhaps rather a cistern. The root of the promontory, by which alone can be approached, is protected by a strong cashel wall. No early Christian site in all Scotland would better repay excavation than the Brough of Deerness. As late as the seventeenth century, in spite of all that Puritanism could do, the place continued to be a resort of pilgrims, from every isle of the Orkneys. "Barefooted, on hands and knees, they climbed with difficulty to the top by a path that only admitted one at a time to ascend. Once at the top, with bent knees and hands clasped, they proceeded three times round the chapel appealing to the 'Bairnes of Brough', and every now and then throwing stones and water behind their backs." (1)

1965. ERIC LINKLATER (1971, 105)

Of ancient buildings in Deerness the most famous - though little now remains of it - was a chapel not far from the Mull; a place of pilgrimage until the end of the seventeenth century. A mysterious sixteenth century writer, known only as "Jo Ben", says that in his time it was a famous resort for male pilgrims of all ages, who would walk barefoot round the chapel, throwing stones and water behind them and uttering invocations. In this curious exercise there may be Christian symbolism, or the degenerate memory of some pagan ritual.

1966. HAROLD L MCONEY, 8-9

... on one infertile headland called the Brough of Deerness there is the site of an ancient Celtic monastery. To approach this from the landward

(1) J R Tudor, The Orkneys and Shetlands, p 278. Who were the "Bairnes of Brough", and what was the legend connected with them, seems to have been forgott

side one descends to the stony beach of a geo(1) and then climbs by a narrow path up the side of the peninsula called the Brough. The ruins of a small chapel are visible. Under the turf there lie the foundations of about sixteen rectangular buildings, mostly the cells of the monks. It is probable that this monastery was founded as early as the eighth century; it may even date from before 700.

1968. A CHARLES THOMAS (1971, 34-5)

... promontory-forts (if on high coasts, usually called 'cliff-castles') ... are strongholds where an effective defence can be made by cutting a bank and ditch across the landward neck, and so obvious and economic a mode of fortification was widely current in Atlantic Britain, and Ireland, throughout the Iron Age. Tintagel ... is an excellent representative of this class ... In North Britain, Deerness in Orkney (the original name, and partron, of which are not known) may stem from seventh - or eighth - century Irish missions in the northern isles(2) the vallun bank, as at Iona, seems to have an outer facing of stone.

1971. PATRICK BAILEY, 64-5

Celtic Christianity was an affair of monasteries which were used as bases for evangelising the surrounding countryside, of preaching places marked first by crosses and later by tiny chapels, and of cells in remote places suitable for solitary contemplation. In Orkney there are two sites with Celtic remains of some substance, located at the north-western and extreme eastern tips of Mainland.

The westerly site stands on the Brough of Birsay ...

(1) A narrow inlet on the beach

(2) SCANS Orkney and Shetland 1946, II, 240, Fig 32B

The eastern site is on the Brough of Deerness, a small and precipitous fragment of the Deerness peninsula, from which it is separated by a narrow chasm. The Brough is a remote place, made more so in recent times by depopulation of the adjacent farms. Various walls are to be seen and the ground is obviously very full of fallen stone. There is a persistent tradition that here once stood a Celtic Christian monastery, but no systematic excavation has yet been attempted.

A visit to either of these sites will convey some impression of the remoteness and seclusion favoured by the papas of the Celtic church, but the visitor should not be disappointed to see almost nothing in the way of identifiable remains dating from this early period.

1970-1. RONALD G GANT (1975, 8 AND 36)

By the seventh century ... Christianity of a broadly 'Celtic' form extended over most of Scotland with active centres in both the northern island groups. (15)

In accordance with the practice of the Celtic churches these early centres of Christian activity in Shetland would consist of a few small monasteries - groups of huts with an oratory or chapel enclosed by a protective wall - and a number of isolated 'hermitages', with all of which Christian burial-grounds would come to be associated. (16)

- (15) The so-called 'Celtic Church' was highly localized, on the basis of the quintir or missionary-monastery, but its component elements tended towards a Pictish, Scottish, or Northumbrian association, varying with the relative vitality of these peoples and the monastic centres within them. According to C Thomas (St Minian's Isle, 32), 'Shetland in the eighth century was looking to Pictland, and beyond Pictland to Northumbria, for artistic, and we may suppose ecclesiastical ideas'.
- (16) A particularly good Oradian example of a Celtic monastic settlement may be seen on the Brough of Deerness (RCAMS, 11, No 621 and Northern Isles, 166-7)

1971. RAYMOND G LAMB (1973)

If there are any examples of guard chambers in the North they should take the form of huts behind the gates of the larger promontory forts. The only possible example is at the Brough of Deerness where there is a vague horseshoe shaped foundation (well apart from the monastic buildings) just within the wide and impressive gateway. There is as yet no proof that this gateway and rampart are in fact Iron Age rather than Early Christian. (p 92)

At the Brough of Deerness however, and more so at Strandibrough, there are longhouses with cross walls dividing them into two equal or unequal compartments. (p 146)

Brough of Deerness also has complex and cross wall buildings which put it in the Norse class. (p 166)

... both the Papa Stour sites and the Brough of Deerness have also simpler, shorter buildings which could be of the British class, but which might equally well be Norse since at Jarleshof such buildings are found in association with larger ones. There therefore is the possibility, which cannot be checked except by excavation, that these buildings may represent a previous Early Christian occupation of the sites. But where the simpler buildings occur as the sole type, as they do on the majority of sites, the inference is that these settlements are Early Christian and do not have Norse occupation. (p 166)

... the only one to have become known as a Celtic monastery is Brough of Deerness (eg Radford 1962, 66; Thomas 1971, 34) and unfortunately this one is less certainly Celtic than could be wished. The cross wall buildings, nos 1 and 11 and the complex one 8, are to be related to Strandibrough and are most likely Norse; and with these Norse buildings, there is the possibility that all the others are associated, and are also Norse. The

stone oratory in its rectangular enclosure is also most likely of this later period. To add to the confusion there is the decided possibility of the even earlier occupation of the headland as an Iron Age fort. (p 172)

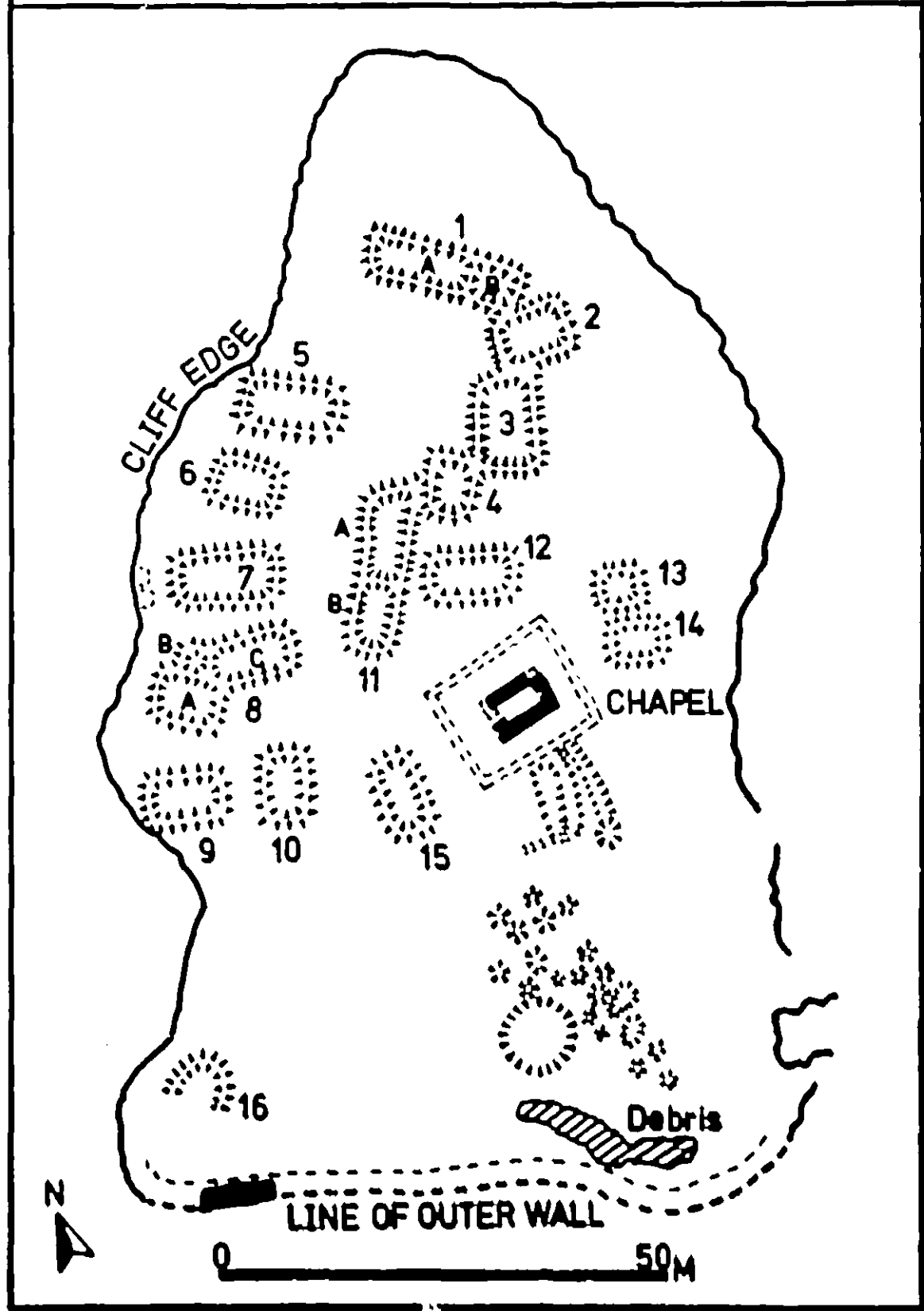
Moustag ... may be a desert retreat associated with the Brough of Deerness, which very likely has early Christian as well as Norse occupation. (p 190)

The Brough of Deerness is a complex site where many of the buildings eg 6,9,10,13,14 resemble those on Kame of Isbister or even Birrior of West Sandwick; but they occur together with 1 and 11 with cross-walls, and the complex 3, which looks decidedly Norse. The chapel too probably is late. The rectangular enclosure around it is a characteristic Norse feature; such enclosures are common in Greenland and Orkney churchyards are rectangular to this day ... The Brough oratory as it is now seems to be dry built, but according to Radford (1962, 167) the stones had been set in clay mortar, and pointed with lime. Clay mortar occurs in buildings in Greenland where Fousell (1941, 120) believed it to be a feature distinctive of the land, and unknown in Orkney. In walls exposed to weather, clay mortar very quickly crumbles away, leaving the impression of a dry wall. Probably it was not all that uncommon ... The cement pointing on the oratory is no longer visible; it was probably a relic of later medieval repairs, the Brough having remained a place of pilgrimage long after the Reformation. (p 233-4).

Deerness is a difficult site where the oratory and some or most of the buildings surely are Norse, but there is the strong possibility of a Celtic monastery preceding. (p 238)



BROUGH OF DEERNESS, ORKNEY.  
BUILDINGS NUMBERED BY LAMB



GAZETTEER, No 41, p 300-301. One must rely heavily on Calder's Royal Commission plan for details of this site, for since that plan was made the Brough has ceased to be grazed, and is now covered in waist high grass. The oratory has evidently deteriorated, its walls, except for the north wall, being mere heaps of rubble, and the rectangular enclosure around it being quite invisible. The circular depressions (except for the large one, which is a well) in the lower right of plan, are shell holes dating from the first war.

Not shown on the plan of the Royal Commission, although indicated on the recent O S one, is the gateway near the west end of the wall which runs along the landward end of the rock. The gateway is directly opposite the long spur of cliff which runs out from the mainland towards the promontory being separated therefrom by a narrow chasm; this originally must have been spanned by a rock bridge. Immediately behind the gateway is a feature recorded on the Royal Commission plan as a horseshoe shape.

Both Jo Ben in 16th century and Low in 1774 record that the Brough was a goal of pilgrimage long after the Reformation. Visited June 1971.

1973. CHARLES THOMAS, 9

The elaborate site on the Brough of Birsay, and on the east coast that of the Brough of Deerness, appear to be monasteries. (1)

1973. ORDNANCE SURVEY, HY 50 NE 14

The wall barring the approach averages 3.5 m thick and may be earlier than the monastery (ie the outer face well down the slope is of typical I A architecture indicating a defensive structure rather than a "vallum monasterii").

(1) C A R Radford pp 166-9 in Wainwright 1962.

No inner face is evident and there is too much turf to confirm Anderson's observation of "5' of earth backing the outer face."

The chapel and monastic settlement were mainly as described and planned by the R C A H M, but several other buildings can be identified.

The plan of the enigmatic building in the SW is not clear but there are indications of other walls in its vicinity and it may form part of a gatehouse immediately behind the entrance through the main wall (now collapsed and visible as a hollow).

The two "huts" on the N cliff could not be located. F.2. I.S.S. 21.5.73

1973. RAYMOND G LAMB (1974a, 92-6)

This headland remained a place of pilgrimage long after the Reformation; it has a stone chapel, and foundations of buildings ascribed to a Celtic monastery. The oratory in its rectangular enclosure is without doubt Norse, probably of this same twelfth to thirteenth century period. Of the same date surely are the longhouses with cross-walls, and the remaining rectangular buildings are nearly all longer than those of the pre-Norse sites. The diagram, Fig 5 (Appendix) in fact places Deerness squarely among the Norse monasteries. The site probably is complex; there may well have been Early Christian occupation preceding the Norse, and the massive 'vallun monasterii' with its impressive gateway (the last not shown on the Commission's plan) is most likely a relic of an Iron Age fort. The circular depressions on the south-east side (except for the large one, which surrounds a well or sump), look suspiciously like shell-holes - the Brough was used for target practice by the Navy during the first war. Thus although Early Christian occupation is likely, there is nothing at present visible which is not better explained as either Iron Age, or later medieval, or modern.

### Appendix

The diagram (Fig 5) compares the range of sizes of buildings on those sites for which reasonably accurate measurements are available ...

... the table would ... bring out the essential distinction between the Celtic and the Norse monasteries. The earlier ones are based on the repetition of a uniformly small building unit. The Norse ones have a wider range of building sizes and an emphasis at the larger end of the scale, suggesting a variety of specialised buildings ... and emphasising the settlement itself as the basic unit.

1974. RAYMOND G LAMB, (1974b, 203 AND 204)

The Brough of Birsay in fact is not unique. There is another major site in Orkney, the Brough of Deerness, which duplicates three of Birsay's essential features - the rocky islet situation, the chapel, and the longhouses. An equally large but much less well known site in Shetland, Strandibrough in Fetlar, duplicates the situation and the longhouses, but lacks an obvious church (it is likely, however, that it had a timber one). It is never easy to compare an excavated site with a surface-surveyed one, and in this case our judgement has been clouded by the long-held belief that Deerness was an Early Christian, that is a pre-Norse, monastic settlement. Recent analysis, however, has shown that Deerness differs significantly from Scelig Whichil and from other Early Christian eremitic religious settlements in Orkney and Shetland; the structure of the Deerness settlement is Norse, and, along with Strandibrough and another Shetland site (Maiden Stack and Eri Holm), Deerness is proposed as a Norse monastery (Lamb 1973, 88-9).

MONASTIC SETTLEMENT											
Floor area of buildings (sq. ft.)		UP TO 99	100 149	150 199	200 249	250 299	300 349	350 399	400 +	NO. OF BUILDINGS	Source
Sceilig Mhichil	A	•••	•	•						8	DE PAOR 1955 PLAN
	B	••									
Aodann mhor		••••		•						8	FIELD SURVEY
Corn holm		••••	•••							13	FIELD SURVEY
Birrier of Sandwick		••••	•••	•						13	O.S. PLAN
Kame of Isbister		••••	••	•••	••	•				18	O.S. PLAN
Blue Mull		•	—	•						7	O.S. CARD
Kirkholm									••••	8 9	RCAMS
Brough of Deerness	C		•	••	•	•	•••		•••	16	RCAMS PLAN
Maiden Stack Brel Holm				•	—	—	—	—	•	9	RCAMS O.S. CARD
Strandibrough	III	••••	••	•	•	•	•	•	•	18	FIELD SURVEY, O.S. PLAN
	IV					•			••		
	V	••		•		•		•			
Eynhallow Domestic range Church									•	2	RCAMS PLAN
Hraunþúfu- klausur			•		•	•	••		••	7	BRUN 1928 PLAN

A - Cells    B - Oratories    C - Rectangular buildings including oratory

LAMB 1974a, APPENDIX: DIAGRAM

Of Norse-period religious houses in Orkney, other than Birsay and Deerness, we have significant indications but few solid facts ... A feature shared by the Broughs of Birsay and Deerness was an enduring post-Reformation tradition of pilgrimage.

1974. LLOYD R LAING, 151-3, 161 AND 227

Monasticism (FIG 50)<sup>\*</sup>

The form of early Christian monasteries was quite different from the complexes that are associated with the term from acquaintance with medieval abbeys. In the early Christian period there was no careful layout of buildings round a cloister, instead, a scatter of buildings within an earthen rampart - the vallun monasterii - which, in contrast to the graveyards of the period, was usually rectangular or square. This concept of a rectangular enclosure was new to Britain, and originated in the East, where the earliest permanent monastic establishments are to be found. These were usually enclosed by a stone wall, often of considerable height, as they frequently had to serve, especially in the desert, as fortresses against hostile tribes. While in Britain and Ireland there is no known case of an early Christian monastery being garrisoned against attack, many are sited within earlier forts, possibly because the land on which they were built was a gift from a local chieftain. Islands too were popular. The monastic complex on Birsay in Orkney and on Papil in West Burra in Shetland are comparable examples, both with rectilinear enclosures.

Alongside the large, rectilinear monasteries were smaller foundations, often, like the graveyards, enclosed by circular or oval walls. A third class was the small eremitic monastery located in remote places. These were no more than communal hermitages, where up to a dozen monks under the authority of an abbot lived in isolation. While the major monasteries had in some cases several

\* [Fig 50 is drawn after the R O A H M B survey-plan.]

chapels, many living cells and workshops, the smaller ones might consist simply of a chapel with a few small rectangular living cells or, very occasionally, circular 'beehive' cells.

Smaller Monasteries. Apart from Birsay and Papil there are a number of smaller monasteries in the Northern Isles. The most famous of these is the Brough of Deerness, on the east Mainland of Orkney (Pl IIa). The monastery stands on an inaccessible headland. The complex is enclosed by a stone wall on the south (landward) side, with the other sides demarcated by the steep cliffs. The site was much damaged during World War II, but the complex consists of a rectangular oratory measuring internally 17 ft by 9 3/4 ft, with walls bedded in clay, surrounded by a complex of rectangular buildings, the largest of which is about 40 ft by 27 ft externally. There are also a few circular huts. It is reminiscent of Tintagel, but is probably later, possibly belonging to the eighth century.

#### Gargeteer

... A footpath leads along the cliff (where there is an army range) past the impressive Gloup. The Brough of Deerness on which the site stands can be approached by the intrepid with a rock climb, the old land bridge is not now negotiable.

... A classic example of an early Christian monastic community, now much disturbed as a result of being used for target practice. The remains comprise a small rectangular oratory and a series of rectangular cells on a headland cut off by a stone-built vallus.

1975. LLOYD LAING, 88

In Orkney, traces of the vallum of the important monastery on the Brough of Birsay along with associated burials were found on excavation predating the later Norse graveyard, while at Deerness in Orkney, at Birsay, Yell, and Northravine, Kase of Isbister, there are good examples of small eremitic monasteries on isolated stacks, once joined to the mainland by land-bridges.

1975. JUAN W. BARKER, 242

There is an Early Christian monastic site, at Deerness<sup>M</sup> at the east tip of Orkney mainland ... The buildings stand on a cliff promontory up to 30 m high, known as the Brough of Deerness, with only a narrow, steep track connecting it with the land. Traces of the stone-faced rampart which defended the site are apparent; near the west end there is a 2 m stretch which still stands 0.76 m high. The area enclosed by this rampart and the cliff measures some 129 m north-south by 73 m on average from east-west.

Nineteen rectangular buildings can be seen under the turf grouped around a stone chapel near the centre. The chapel has walls 1.2 m thick which enclose an area 5.2 m by 3 m and they have been pointed with lime mortar. A series of circular hut foundations on the south-east part of the site may be older than the monastic settlement.

It is possible that the Brough of Deerness is one of the foundations established by the 7th- and 8th-century missions from the Irish Church to Orkney. There is a famous passage in the Historia Norvegiae which describes the Orkneys as being originally inhabited by 'Peti et Papas', i.e. Picts and monks (Irish-Scottish priests); it is further explained that the latter were so called because they wore white robes. This then was the impression of the

<sup>M</sup> indicates that the site is under the guardianship of the Department of the Environment.



Orkney people received by the first Scandinavian visitors in the 8th century and doubtless there were white-robed 'Papae' at Deerness until they were driven out or destroyed by the Scandinavians.

1975. ISABEL HENDERSON, 12

In addition traces of monastic enclosures have been found at Birsay and Deerness in Orkney, and at Applecross in Wester Ross and Abercorn, south of the Forth estuary.

1975. ERNEST W MARWICK, 148

... there is an old tradition that the Brough of Deerness, a projecting cliff on which Celtic monks built a chapel and monastery, was once joined to the shore by a bridge of lead.

1976. RAYMOND G LANE, 146-7 AND 149

... buildings ... of the simple, not over-long form [are] ... associated with the early period of monastic settlement. Some similarly-sited settlements, such as Strandibrough (Fetlar), Maiden Stack and Brei Holm (Papa Stour) and the Broughs of Birsay and Deerness (Orkney) carry longhouse-type buildings of Norse form. The essential structural difference between the two types of settlement can be emphasized by plotting the floor areas of the buildings on a graph. The sites with Norse longhouses are identified as monastic houses of the 12th or 13th centuries (Lamb 1973); both in their extravagant siting and in their tendency to form pairs, they show an interesting similarity to the earlier variety ... the term 'oblong buildings' is reserved for those of the earlier type, and the Norse sites will be referred to as 'longhouse-settlements'...

Most small stack-sites are inaccessible and all that is known is that there were structures of some kind upon them ... In Orkney there are three stack-sites on a short length of cliff-coast of Stronsay-Tana Castle, Malmo, and Brough of Burgh Head - and Koustag in Deerness ... The importance of the Burri Stacks of Culswick is that they provide a close association between one of those small stack-sites and a settlement of oblong buildings.

Similar pairings between stack-settlements are observed in a surprising number of cases ... [eg] a longhouse settlement and a small stack (Brough of Deerness and Koustag) ... The relationship between the two sites in a pair is of historical importance - are we dealing with contemporary occupations of the stacks, or with a sequence, when for some reason the occupation shifts from one stack to another?

Dr W Douglas Simpson has suggested one possible relationship that of a large monastery to a small hermitage used as an occasional retreat by any monk who wanted a spell of solitary meditation ...

Simpson was using this suggestion to explain the enigmatic structure on Dinnacair, a stack in the bay S of Stonehaven, and to relate this stack to the promontory site of Dinnottar ... [on Dinnacair] it is possible to see one, and possibly two, circular raised features, which might be very large hut circles or small enclosures. The structure on Koustag (ICAS 1946, II, 243, no 628) looks very similar.

Koustag lies 1/2 mile S of Brough of Deerness; it is an isolated rock in the middle of a small cliff bound bay. A long narrow ridge projects into the bay, but stops short of the stack; it is not clear whether a rock-bridge existed at the time of occupation. The ridge is a promontory fort, its land end being closed by a massive barrier, which probably is a structure of

blockhouse type. If the structure on the stack is not related to the fort, it may be a dependent hermitage of Brough of Deerness, which is a longhouse-settlement. There is a good possibility of an earlier monastic occupation of the Brough, but all the buildings now visible are readily ascribable to the late Norse period.

The historical context of the longhouse-settlements can hardly be other than the 12th or 13th centuries. This late date is first of all suggested by the complex plan of some of the buildings on Strandibrough, Brough of Deerness, and Brough of Birsay; these complex building-plans resemble the monastic buildings on Fynhallow and have good parallels among the Norse farmsteads in Greenland. The layout of the church and immediately associated buildings on the Brough of Birsay has a well-known parallel in Gardar, the episcopal seat of mediaeval Greenland.

MOONEY ARCHIVE D21/3/4

Notes on Coins found at Deerness : compiled by Ernest W Marwick.

Notes 1974.

During the year 1974 a native of Deerness - a very intelligent man who wanted to remain anonymous - informed me that earlier that year 6 half-pennies had been found among the ruins of the chapel on the Brough of Deerness. He said that these dated from 1740 to 90. In addition, he said, two other halfpennies had been found, but their dates were indecipherable. These coins had been found by visitors from the parish of Deerness who had dislodged stones in the chapel walls. He further said that there was an old tradition in Deerness that there is an underground passage at the Brough. Speaking of the chapel, he went on, "There is good plaster on the chapel walls at one corner", and gave me to understand that some part at least of the walls had been built with mortar. This is interesting in view of the scholar Dietrichson that one of the means by which Celtic Churches in Orkney may be distinguished from Norwegian is that the former are dry-built, the latter with mortar. Anderson said (quoted by Mooney - H. O. A. S. IV, 26) that "the walls of the church are lime built".

Notes 1976.

I was informed by a Deerness informant on 16th January 1976 that in recent years there had been various finders of coins, and that he knew personally of the following finds :

Finder no 1 (7 coins) 1 Irish halfpenny 1751 - George II.  
1 Queen Victoria halfpenny, 1860.  
Finder no 2 (8 coins?) 2 coins worn. 1 unreadable.  
1 King George II 174(?) halfpenny.  
1 Edinburgh trade token 178(?) - equivalent of halfpenny.  
1 Foreign coin. copper. unrecognised.  
2(?) King George III halfpennies.

Finder no 3 4 similar coins - same types, but examined by my informant.

Apart from any of the coins noted, "other odd coins," he says, "and I think always halfpennies, have been found from time to time". As far as my informant has had personal knowledge of these finds he says the coin was always sandwiched between two thin stones.

I gather from the minister of Deerness that no coin earlier than the reign of Charles II has been found. but this information ... is subject to further checking.

## SURVEY 1977 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

At the outset, it should be emphasized that a survey such as this can only record clear surface indications and cliff-edges, whose recognition, even so, is not a wholly objective exercise. Indeed, legitimate doubts might be raised over individual points of the survey, whose resolution might only be capable of verification by excavation. At several points across the site, it became clear that there might well be other, earlier, features below those recorded here; this was particularly true of the central area where the sheep had cropped the grass much more closely than elsewhere. Where, at other points on the Brough, the vegetation was not so cropped, it was sometimes difficult to make out building-lines, or to record them accurately, and earlier features, even if present, could not be noted. It should also be borne in mind that it is very difficult to indicate superimposition, and impossible to distinguish different phases where there is not superimposition. A plan such as that presented here (illus. 10) may, therefore, be an amalgam or composite covering a considerable length of time.

On the landward side to the south, a bank or "breast-work" (as the Royal Commission described it) is clearly visible, stretching across the width of the "island" and broken only at one point. It is here that the entrance seems to have been; Bryden did not plan it (illus. 5<sup>ii</sup>) and the Commission (illus. 9<sup>i</sup>) could not distinguish it, but the Ordnance Surveyors and Dr Lamb (microfiche 2. F10, 13-14) did, and indeed remnants of walling to either side still remain. To the west of the entrance, which was at least 4 m wide, the walling could be traced for a length of c 10 m, while at the east, although there was little visible walling, the bank was found to extend for approximately 60 m, with the indication of a possible turn towards the north. Although the land-bridge has now collapsed, the stump of it leads directly to this point.

To the north of the bank and wall, in the south-east corner of the Brough were mounds, of a building of a wine-glass shape in plan, and a depression close by, which may have been another structure. The former is probably the Commission's "incomplete building" (No 1 on plan) which, therefore, appears to have had annexes to the north. Lamb mentioned the possibility that it may be explained in terms of a "guard-chamber" behind the entrance (microfiche 20: F10), and this was accepted by the Ordnance Survey in 1973 (microfiche 20: F14). As well as No 1, two structures appearing as low, grass-covered mounds in the south-western part of the site (Nos 3 and 4) were newly noted in 1977.

Dryden located 18 rectangular buildings in 1866, mainly at the north and west of the church in addition to two at the east and three at the south. In 1930 the Royal Commission identified 19, and noted that some had cross-walls. With the cropping of some of the vegetation, it was possible in 1977 to identify 30 possible buildings, of which around seven appeared to have more than one room.

Inside the western cliff-edge of the "island", a series of rectangular buildings, three of which appear to be divided by partition walls or to have annexes (Nos 16, 21 and 22), were notable; most were previously recorded. Although two circular depressions recorded by the Commission on the western cliff-edge did not appear to be visible, two other circular depressions have been noted towards the northern end of the site (immediately north of No 22), along with stone-walling in a further depression (to the west of No 30). Aerial photographs, both vertical and oblique, taken after the survey was completed, suggest that buildings may have existed along the whole western edge (Illus 5 and 7), although with gaps apparent between them. This group of buildings is aligned mainly in a roughly east-west direction.

Perhaps the part of this site in which most change in the plan is evident is in the northern area. Five new rectangular buildings have become clear (Nos 14, 21, 26, 27, 18), together with some annexes to, or internal divisions of, two further buildings (Nos 22 and 20). In overall terms, this has produced a more ordered layout than the earlier plan, and the aerial photographs emphasise this too. The proximity of buildings one to another, on either side of a long space, almost suggests two rows of buildings along a "street" line reminiscent of deserted mediaeval villages. The contrast of orientation between Nos 14, 18 and 19 and the rest is striking. The majority of buildings cluster in a band north and north-eastward from the chapel. At the northern end of the grouping, the buildings are aligned north-west to south-east, while the buildings at the southern end are aligned north-east to south-west. This latter group extended down in front of the west end to the enclosure, with a building of possibly two rooms (7/7A). The apparent gaps between the buildings along the western cliff-edge seem to be born out by the aerial photographs.

However, the area around the chapel displays less order. Some additions and modifications to the Royal Commission plan have been made (for example Nos 7A, B, 9A and 10), but the general impression in this area is that, if there is any particular order, it lies in the existence of a discrete group of buildings surrounding the enclosure to north, east, west and south. No small buildings were noted east of the enclosure, with the depression of a possible third structure (10, 11, 12). Their chronological relationship to the other buildings mentioned above, cannot of course be determined in a survey, but it is a major point of interest for any future work here.

Roughly at the centre of the eastern side of the Brough lies the small chapel within its enclosure. The Rev J B Craven, who visited the chapel before 1901, said of it that "It required a great deal of faith

to believe that what lay before us was any more than some sheep shelters" (microfiche 3: D7). After his visit, further collapse of the structure occurred when it was used as a practice target (see above). This, and other effects, resulted in the corners of the building being damaged, and the walls collapsing both internally and externally. Rubble spread into the enclosure and was partially grassed over, as were the remains of the enclosure wall.

Immediately south of the enclosure was a sunken area close to a building with an apparently curved north and east wall (9/9A), near the exterior south-west corner of the yard. This building may have had a second, western room, with a smaller internal feature in its south-east corner (8). It may be that this was the structure which Dr Radford suggested had been overlain by the "rectangular vault" (microfiche 3: E4 & E5). In 1977, with only low grass covering the mounds in this area, it did not appear as though the wall had in fact cut the building. A slight gap existed between the two - perhaps a narrow passageway to the small enclosure entrance - and if anything, clearance of this area during excavation might suggest there was no direct relationship between the buildings and the enclosure wall (illus 85, Microfiche 3: E5).

To the south of the chapel and enclosure, the picture remains essentially as before. The Commission recorded a large depression or "catch-pit", which is clearly a stone-lined well containing water. Scattered around the north and east side of the well, are a number of depressions. 21 were identified by the Royal Commission in 1930, as circular huts, possibly of a primary occupation earlier than the church (microfiche 3: s 10-11). In 1977 the depressions were identified and another seven were located around the well, particularly to the north. Odd depressions were also found sparsely spread across the plateau, with three clearly visible at



the north end of the west side of the Brough. The main group near the well, however, Lamb has suggested may be shell craters from target practice during the war (microfiche 1 F13-14) and certainly the dimensions of some indicate that they may well be the result of erratic Army target-practice. Although they were examined closely, none revealed clear evidence of stone construction, except for the "well", which is surrounded by an outer concentric depression. Dryden recorded no circular depressions in his description, or in his plan of 1866 (illus. 10). In fact, he shows a basic rectangular outline representing a building close to the wall, and 15 m from the chapel. It may be that a depression was taken to be the remains of a building and stylised by the use of a simple rectangle on the plan, but Dryden did not indicate any other depressions. No rectangular building was identified in that area in 1977.

An elongated mound containing rubble is visible close to the inner face of the bank, at the eastern end. This does not appear to have been rubbish from Currier's excavation, as most of the debris was thrown over the cliff (microfiche 10-11), although, as noted above, the Commission appeared to favour that explanation. Equally the suggestion of a shelter seems implausible as it is amorphous in form.