



Newsletter No 10 Autumn 2013

Orkney Archaeology Society

Scottish Charity No SC030611 <http://orkneyarchaeologysociety.org.uk>

Editorial

Helen K Woodsford-Dean

The Editor, OAS, PO Box 6213, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1YD

Welcome to your Autumn 2013 newsletter, which I am guest editing. As you read this newsletter you'll realise how busy we're been in the Orkney Archaeology Society during 2013, we've had a full range of talks arranged by Anne Mitchell and Ingrid Mainland (see page 7) with some more coming up (see page 16).

The amazing excavations continue at the Ness of Brodgar (pages 2-3) which Rik Hammond captures in his art (page 13). There have also been some thought-provoking finds from Smerquoy (pages 8-9).

Andrew Appleby continues his fascinating experiments into prehistoric pottery but this time I had a personal interest – he was using my clay! Andrew's findings are described on pages 4-6 and have implications for our understanding of Neolithic pottery in Orkney. Andrew has provided reassurances that no goldfish or pond snails were harmed in this experiment.

The event of the year for OAS was very much our Lucky 13 Lottery (page 8). On behalf of the OAS Committee, I would like to thank Andrew Appleby for all his work on the Lottery – from organising the event, selling tickets, and even donating prizes –

Andrew really led this event.

Anne Mitchell describes some of the OAS funded work to save the Newark cemetery on page 12 and OAS members Merryn and Graham Dineley reveal some findings from their research into Viking brewing sites (pages 10-11).

The Scapa Flow Partnership have released a lovely new book which would make an ideal Christmas present (page 14).

On page 15 we have a caption competition for our members plus a very recent and exciting find from Orphir.

In closing, I would just like to repeat my opening statement: the OAS committee have been incredibly busy during 2013 ... so busy that we would welcome any offers of help from the membership – please see our "advert" on page 6.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.

OAS Grants:

The OAS is able to give small grants to assist the work of Orkney archaeological research. In the past six months confirmed OAS grants totalling £659.14 have been made to:

Daniel Lee for the South Walls Landcsape Project – £300

Siobhan Cooke for expenses to visit 17th Viking Congress in Shetland – £359.14

The Ness of Brodgar 2013—a year of amazing finds

Nick Card

From the word 'go' this year it seemed that this would be the year of spectacular finds and 'art' (of which over 670 examples have now been catalogued from the Ness by Antonia Thomas as part of her PhD!!!). Firstly there was a double pecked design discovered in Structure 12.



A few days later whilst excavating just outside the entrance to Structure 12 a slab with deeply incised 'butterfly' designs was uncovered. Later in the excavation in a very rare moment two decorated slabs that conjoined with this were also found.



It seemed that these finds would not be surpassed however as Structure 10 lived up to its reputation and produced two of the most memorable finds from the excavations.

Firstly there was the large triangular block of stone discovered under the SW corner buttress (part of the later remodelling of Structure 10) with complex deeply incised panels on two of its faces – was this part of the original Structure 10 and then reused as a foundation deposit during its rebuild?



And then there was the long expected carved stone ball that came from under the diagonally opposite buttress in Structure 10.

Although over 400 examples of carved stone balls have been discovered, (including one discovered in the 19th century at the Ness) this is one of only a handful to have been discovered in a secure archaeological context.



Meanwhile the biographies of all the individual structures was being clarified and floor deposits explored – more of this in a future newsletter, but in the meantime here are some superb vertical shots from Hugo Anderson-Whymark's kite:



Structure 12



Structure 14



Structure 1

Presently this ball is being cleaned and conserved in Edinburgh, so watch this space for photos once it is fully revealed in all its glory!

Volcanic Dyke Grooved Ware

Andrew Appleby for OPPRA

In numerous examples of Grooved Ware pottery from Barnhouse, many inclusions of the dyke stone are present (Andrew Jones and Colin Richards). These volcanic additives are prevalent in the Ness of Brodgar Grooved Ware too.

An experiment conducted in July 2013 was designed to look at the effects of local volcanic dyke material, crushed, powdered and added to Orkney clay.

This experiment was to determine whether the addition of crushed dyke, including all the dust, would lower the firing temperature. Orkney clays need a very high temperature to mature, but Grooved Ware appears to be fired at low temperatures, between 600 and 800 and even less. Some examples being barely fired at all! This could be accounted for by fuel deprivation caused by inundations due to global warming in the later Neolithic.

The clay deposit chosen was from the garden of Helen and Mark Woodsford-Dean on the Harray Road near Wasdale Loch. The clay was excavated and transported to Fursbreck pottery by builder, Karl Flett.



Brody Condon mixed the clay in February 2013 for a sculpting project. Some of this clay was used for the July experiment with Professor Alana Cordy-Collins and ceramics graduate Liz Hafey.

The recipe used was one wheelbarrow of roughly de-stoned clay, being approximately 50 kg, 5 kg finely crushed volcanic dyke, a liberal quantity of cow hair for binding temper, plus 1600 gm goose fat.

It was immediately noticeable how well the clay behaved: its plasticity being considerably increased by the fat. The cow hair helped support the forms well and even large slabs could be rolled out for the composite sculpture.

From the onset a considerable difference was noticed in the stored clay. It became very floppy during the initial wedging; appearing like over-deflocculated clay. It was put on plaster to remove water content to make it workable. This was a most unusual experience.

I am of the opinion that the long storage had allowed deflocculation to occur over the period: but why? It could be that duck and goose fat contains a natural deflocculant to allow it to liquefy within the birds' bodies and enter the bloodstream rapidly as fuel, thus giving the birds more energy faster? If so, this effect seems to work within the clay. This could be an additional benefit of the fat, as pots can be constructed with less water, yet be more malleable. Deflocculation is also extremely useful in making surface slips, which will not shrink quite so much.

Several large and medium vessels were created. These needed to have a series of slip coverings to seal them and tidy up the rough surfaces. I decided to dump some dried demonstration pots from a previous

workshop into water to soak them down for slurry and slip. After a couple of hours I went to stir them up. To my utter surprise they were still solid! They hadn't dissolved at all! We pulled them out of the bucket and all of the water ran off. We immediately realized that it was the duck fat content, which had caused this unexpected effect.

This discovery could throw immense light on the enigmas of Late Neolithic Grooved Ware.

We conducted another experiment: I took an unfired pot, which I had made the February before. This we filled with water and my goldfish, Ezekiel, was placed within, plus some pond snails for company and weed for the fish's security and privacy. Ezekiel swam for six contented hours within his unfired container. After being released from the urn, the vessel appeared to have suffered nought for the experience of being wetted.



Ezekiel in his pot

This discovery has huge implications for Grooved Ware. Firstly, unfired pots will have made excellent storage containers. The strong cow hair would help the pots hold together with the stress of being filled. Perhaps firing them at very low temperature

would consolidate the fats and strengthen them further? Also, outdoor ovens could have been constructed, semi-permanent sculptures made, and possible caulking for the slate roof at The Ness of Brodgar? (As suggested by Christopher Gee).

Other tests were made using minerals available locally. Manganese is a common element in Orkney. So too is iron in the form of haematite. Galena, or lead ore can be found as close as Stromness.

We created slips from the Harray clay using roughly 10% mineral to clay. We used a commercial iron oxide in place of haematite and a commercial manganese powder. We ground pure Galena in a stone trough within water to create a paste safely.

After firing, the manganese remained black, which was expected. The iron-based slip turned reddish, again as expected. However, the lead slip turned bright red too, but the lead 'Balled Up' on the surface. We realised that the lead had fluxed the irons within the clay to cause this effect. Lead was also mixed with commercial white clay. This has yet to be fired, however the slip does glisten prettily even in an unfired state.

The firing was of our normal clamp style kiln, although this time within a midden of OPPRA's own making. The kiln had only one vent. The wood was lit at 4.07 pm and burned to ember, then raked level. A thick layer of bere husks was laid over that. Beef bones were strewn as long-burning fuel. The pots were then piled in, with fuel in the form of short pieces of finely split gash wood. Temperature control rings were placed on the bases of the inverted pots. Waste wood was heaped over the contents for good measure. Finally a clamp of mown grass was heaped over the mound of fuel.

The wood gently smouldered; too gently, in

fact. So we dug a hole into the rear of the clamp to encourage draught. This worked and by evening the kiln was gaining temperature nicely; by 9.14 pm red hot pots were clearly visible, and we allowed the kiln to burn at its own will. This is the fastest firing we have yet done but I expect firings could be achieved even quicker. This will be the subject of further experimentation.

In the morning the pots seemed harder than previous firings. This could well be the effects of the powdered dyke material sintering and fusing at low temperature. Dr. Mark Cassidy (University St. Andrews) has

yet to analyse the results.

It seems that the duck fat and cow hair will have burned off, so the next step was to seal the pots with molten beef fat. When this fat has seeped in to the porous wares, not only should it waterproof them but it should strengthen them greatly as well.

The work continues. OPPRA presents the thoughts and conclusions of the unfired wares at The British Museum in November. We intend to build an outdoor oven soon and see how it stands up to Orkney weather.

The



still needs you!

Orkney Archaeology Society


The Orkney Archaeology Society is **still** seeking a volunteer to join the OAS committee and take over the vital role of **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**. Andre Artymiuk did a brilliant job of this for the past 5 years but sadly the OAS constitution required him to retire at the 2013 AGM in June.

The job needs very basic computer skills (word processing and spreadsheets) for which a laptop will be provided, you will also be required to attend monthly OAS committee meetings, and it would be an advantage if you enjoyed communicating with society members and the public.

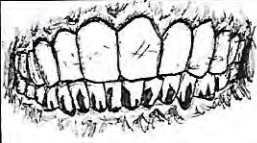
Andre has promised a full and comprehensive handover—so, come on, be brave and volunteer, we're a lovely bunch on the OAS committee!

The OAS always welcomes offers of assistance from members, whether you wish to serve on the committee or stuff envelopes, it all helps ... Please contact us by email on enquiries @orkneyarchaeologysociety.org.uk


The OAS committee looks forward to hearing from lots of members soon.




A talk by Hugo Anderson-Whymark on
Rock Art and the Prehistory of Kilmartin
8pm Tuesday 6 August 2013, St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall
Entry by donation. All welcome
Visit Hugo & his work at www.fintwork.co.uk



New ways to track old habits, dental calculus and what's inside it.
A look inside Neolithic mouths from the Near East to Orkney & what dental plaque says about the diet of Early Farmers.
Karen Hardy, Research Professor at the Catalan Research Institute, Barcelona & an Honorary Research Associate, York University
7.30 pm, Wed 29 May at the St Magnus Centre
Entry by donation



Snatched from the Sea
Excavations at Swandro—the Story so Far
Steve Dockrill & Julie Bond of Bradford University
on the recent excavations at www.brad.ac.uk on www.brad.ac.uk
8 pm Thursday 1 August 2013
St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall




From Kansas to Orkney:
A Journey with Jim Richardson, National Geographic photographer
8pm Tuesday 20 August 2013 St Magnus Centre Kirkwall
Entry by donation. All welcome
Visit Jim's work at www.jimrichardsonphotography.com


Review of talks, lectures and events in 2013

Anne Mitchell and Ingrid Mainland

There has been a huge diversity and quality of speakers and subjects over the last 6 months. In addition there has often been a tremendous turn-out to OAS talks, particularly during the summer season of June, July & August. Over 150 people attended Nick Card's lecture and Jim Richardson's talk for example.



Wednesday 19 June 2013, Kirkwall Town Hall
The Ness of Brodgar: Unravelling a Prehistoric Enigma
Nick Card, Ness Director, with a full update on the work at Orkney's world famous Neolithic temple complex
OAS AGM 7.30 pm; Nick Card 8.00pm
Entry by donation

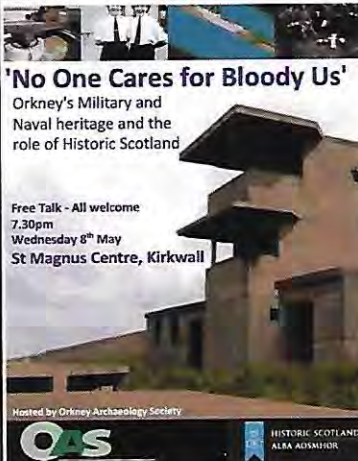


2 short talks. 8pm Tuesday 13 August 2013, St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall
Owain Mason on Orkney's Bronze Age Recession: A Ceramic View
Nela Schloma Mason on Norse Settlers and Prehistoric Monuments: Making Sense of the Landscape


Rather than listing all the talks, here are all the posters for the year.

OAS would like to extend major thanks to Cecily Webster of ORCA for her fantastic work on the poster illustrations and her very successful colouring book sold at OAS's shop at the Ness of Brodgar this summer. If you would like to order one of these colouring books, perhaps in time for Christmas, you can do so via the OAS website.

Bronze Age Peat Bog Cutting in the Highlands
A talk by Scott Timpany, Environmental Archaeologist, ORCA Marine
Thursday 18 April 2013 at 7.30pm
Lecture Theatre, Orkney College
Members £2.00, non-members £3.00
All welcome



'No One Cares for Bloody Us'
Orkney's Military and Naval heritage and the role of Historic Scotland
Free Talk - All welcome
7.30pm
Wednesday 8th May
St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall
Hosted by Orkney Archaeology Society
OAS HISTORIC SCOTLAND ALBA ADMHOR



A talk by Alana Cordy-Collins, Dept of Anthropology
University of San Diego
Who were the Moche Giants of Ancient Peru?
8pm Tuesday 27 August 2013, St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall
Entry by donation. All welcome



A Career in Ruins...
The work of Historic Scotland's Scheduling team in Orkney
Free Talk - All welcome
7.30pm
Wednesday 15th May
St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall
Hosted by Orkney Archaeology Society
OAS HISTORIC SCOTLAND ALBA ADMHOR

Lucky 13—OAS Lottery*Andrew Appleby*

It is with much pleasure that I wish to announce the sum raised by The Orkney Archaeology Society's "Lucky Thirteen" Lottery. The draw was held at Kirkwall Town Hall on Friday the 13th of September 2013. 13 magnificent prizes were drawn, commencing at 8.13 pm. The evening opened with a splendid talk from Christopher Gee on his exceptional work with Colin Richards at Smerquoy in Firth (refer Christopher's article to the right).

The draw was ably assisted by "troglodytes" Billy Jolly and Andy Cant, who dressed very suitably for the occasion. Thora Bain's dinner gong came into play along with a City Pipe Band drum. These instruments banged and rang out at each tense dip into Caz's ticket barrel. When the lunch for six at Balfour Castle was drawn, the tension and high blood pressures in the Hall had to be calmed. This was done by Halina and Aidan, who played some beautiful pieces on fiddle and guitar. Willie Beedies' garden shed was a sought after prize, along with a Sheila Fleet necklet, then hampers from Dounby Butchers and Jolly's. Accommodation and pampering at some of Orkney's best venues were won and finally the Mystery Prize was drawn! In keeping with the theme of our regular raffles at lectures, a grand ceramic pineapple emerged! Within was a pottery lemon, which in turn contained a fine piece of jewellery from Malcolm Appleby.

The final count up was £3,230 making a net profit of £2,559! This sum will go towards the annual bursary that the OAS provides to a Master's student at Orkney College. A bursary now costs something over £4,000. So, if anyone out there has deep pockets and would like to help fund the Post-Graduate Bursary in Archaeology, please contact me on 01856 771419 or email fursbreck@btinternet.com Congratulations to everyone who won, thanks to the committee and, of course, all the ticket buyers.

Smerquoy, St Ola, or Luck in Archaeology*Christopher Gee*

The excavations at Smerquoy this year revealed, amongst other things, the remains of an early Neolithic house thought to date to c3000 BC. The site of Smerquoy is by the Bay of Firth at the foot of Wideford Hill. Previously ploughing and fieldwalking had recovered large stones, hammer stones, saddle quern rubbers, pottery, flints, burnt bone, midden material, worked stone, Skail knives and an Iron Age glass bead. A magnetometer survey had been carried out in 2011.

It was decided to further investigate Smerquoy as part of the Cuween – Wideford study that has been led by Prof. Colin Richards over the past decade or so.

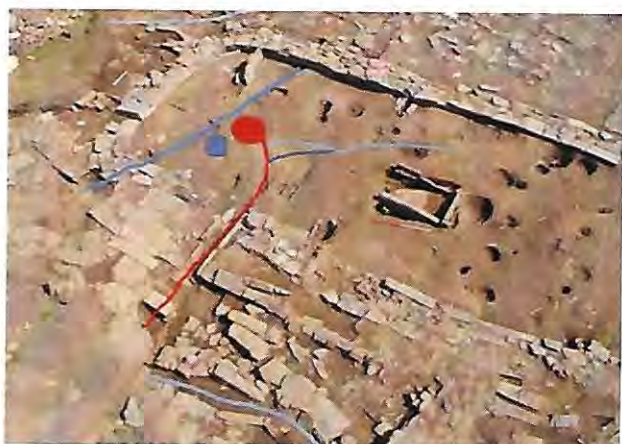


Two trenches were opened in May 2013, their positions based on distribution of previous fieldwalking finds and geophysics results. Colin, through some sixth sense, was able to direct the JCB over a specific area in trench 1 exposing, directly under the ploughsoil, two gently curving walls. By the end of day one we had the plan of what looked like an early Neolithic house similar to the larger building at Knap O'Howar.

The primary floor was revealed within a few days. The walls stood to a height of 0.4m at the north end but were truncated to floor level at the south end. There are two main compartments divided from each other by

orthostats where the walls curve in at the pinches. During the life of the building, larger orthostats were replaced by smaller ones. There was a doorway in the north end and one on the west framed with stone jambs which may have led over a paved passage through to a second building as at Knap o Howar. Within this doorway was one of the many pits and other negative features in the floor of the house. It is exciting to speculate what may have been in some of these pits – objects of organic material or maybe heirlooms? In one of the pits I found two small “finger stones”.

The majority of the pits were in the south compartment along with the hearth and an area of burning on the floor, south of the hearth; whereas the northern compartment seemed to house a system of water channels. The orthostats, then, seemed to separate the house into a compartment of fire and another of water. One main channel entered the house at the east side and exited near the north-west corner. There were two large basins cut into the clay floor by the fresh water channel and in one I found a number of heat affected rocks. An overflow from this pit led out a separate outflow from the fresh water. It seems that the stones were heated up in the fire in order to heat the water in the pit.



A primary scoop hearth was sealed underneath redeposited clay to the north of the square stone set hearth. The stone set hearth had been realigned with fragments of older hearth stones used to prop up the extant ones, creating a link and continuity

with the past.

A great surprise was the discovery of the Smerquoy decorated stone. The sunlight was just at the right angle as Colin was recording other features nearby. It was situated in the wall at floor level on the west side of the northern entrance. When we removed the stone we discovered a second horned spiral on the end. The discovery is the first recorded example of a decorated stone from an apparently early Neolithic context. Several examples of the “horned spiral” design are known from Orkney including one built into Structure 12 at the Ness of Brodgar.



This year's excavations at Smerquoy are due for publication next year. There is also a site diary at Orkneyjar.com/archaeology.

Gee, C., Richards, C., Robertson, M. Forthcoming, *Excavations at Smerquoy, St Ola, Mainland, Orkney*

Coles, D., Miles, M., Walking, T. 2010, “A Pecked Stone from a Neolithic Settlement Site at Green, Isle of Eday, Orkney”, *PAST*, July 2010, Prehistoric Society.

Richards, C. no date, *Excavation of the Early Neolithic Settlement at Wideford Hill, Mainland, Orkney – Structures Report for Historic Scotland*, University of Manchester.

Ritchie, A, 1983, “Excavation of a Neolithic Farmstead at Knap of Howar, Papa Westray, Orkney”, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 113, 40-121.

Where did the Vikings make their ale?

Merryn and Graham Dineley

There is no doubt that the Vikings drank ale: it's mentioned in the Sagas. We know that the ale was made from malt. In the 9th Century, King Haakon Haroldsson decreed that, at Yule, every farmstead must brew two batches of ale from malt, one for the family and another for visitors. So, we wondered, where was the ale made? We began to investigate a few years ago and we think that we have identified the brew houses. They are right beside the feasting hall and have so far been interpreted variously as saunas, bath houses, dairies, barns for sheep or goats, or even as latrines.

Making the Yule ale is a longstanding tradition. There is an account, written by William Scott, of making the malt and brewing the Yule ale on North Ronaldsay (Scott 1967). Vikings made their ale using the same techniques, by malting the grain, mashing, sparging and fermenting. They did not use hops to flavour and preserve, instead using local plants, such as bog myrtle, yarrow, angelica, meadowsweet, juniper and others.



Medieval brewer using a mash oven.*

The products and by products of making ale are biodegradable, leaving minimal traces in the archaeological record. The ale is

drunk, the spent grain is fed to animals, residues are washed down the drains. All that is left for the archaeologist are the equipment and installations. To make ale from malt you need large containers as mash tuns, fermentation and storage vessels. These must be kept clean, or the ale will spoil. Typically, a brewer uses five to ten times more water in washing the equipment than is used in brewing ale. Substantial drains are essential.



The strike: crushed malt is added to hot water in the mash tun. Hot rocks are also used to maintain a good mash temperature.

Crushed malt and water are heated to make a sweet mash, from which liquid sugars, the wort, is sparged or rinsed out with hot water. How the mash tun is heated is dictated by what it is made of. A metal cauldron can be heated over a long hearth or oven, whilst the contents of a wooden mash tun can be heated with hot rocks. Fire cracked rocks are found at many Viking sites. At Jarlshof, Shetland, there are hundreds of them, in heaps, around the drinking hall. There are also drains. Fire cracked rocks are so commonplace, being found at sites dating from Neolithic to Viking times, that they are usually interpreted as domestic debris, pot boilers, or as evidence for a bath house or sauna. They are, however, also good indicators for a facility that was used for brewing ale.

Ale was kept in large vats, close by the drinking hall, or skail. Chapter 60 of the *Orkneyinga Saga* tells how Svein

Breastrope was ambushed and killed by Svein Asleiferson, who had hidden behind a large upright stone slab beside the ale vats in the entrance of the drinking hall at Orphir. Vats are large, with open tops, usually covered with a wooden lid. They are not easily moved. This means that the ale was brewed close by, probably within bucket carrying distance.

There is a fine example of a mash oven at Cubbie Roo's Castle, Wyre, the oldest castle in Scotland, built around 1145 by the powerful Norse chieftain, Kolbein Hruqa. The stone built mash oven is in a room close by the feasting hall. The room is equipped with drains and a substantial stone shelf, eminently suitable for the ale fermentation and storage vats. At other sites, the archaeological evidence is less spectacular but no less convincing.



The mash oven and shelf at Cubbie Roo's castle.

At the Brough of Birsay, where Sigurd the Stout and Thorfinn the Mighty entertained their guests, there are the remains of a large Norse settlement. The feasting hall has been destroyed by erosion, but the footings of buildings that stood beside it remain on each side of the causeway. One is described as a sauna or bath house, being equipped with a stone shelf, huge drains and a large hearth, partly eroded. However, a sauna does not require huge drains whereas these are suitable facilities for a brew house. The other building has upright slabs to support benches round the walls and is described as a sauna, because of the hundred pebbles found there. We interpret this as an ale store. These buildings could have been impressive

brewing facilities, supplying ale for feasts.



Drains at Brough of Birsay.

These are the grand brew houses, belonging to wealthy and powerful Norse Earls. However, reading the excavation reports of small farmsteads, it seems that brewing facilities existed at most of them too. On Orkney, two excavations caught our eye. At Skail, Deerness, a building 11.6m x 4m, had patches of paving and clay, and a "heating duct" was identified. It was interpreted as either a large bathhouse or a grain storage room. At Westness, on Rousay, Orkney, there was a building, 5m x 5m, with a paved floor enabling good run off for "waste products". It would appear that even the small farmsteads had malt and ale making facilities. If fire cracked rocks, drains and large vats are interpreted as relevant to ale brewing, then the facilities for ale making may also be able to be identified.

Scott, M. 1967 *Island Saga: the story of North Ronaldsay*. Alex P Reid, Aberdeen.

*Trum, M. 2002 *Historical depictions, guild signs and symbols of the brewing and malting handcraft*. Translated 2006 by Matthias Trum. Final Thesis at Technical University, Munich.

<http://www.schlenkerla.de/biergeschichte/brauerstern/html/brauerdarstellungene.html>

This research was originally presented January 2013 as a poster for the 7th Experimental Archaeology Conference at Cardiff University. The peer reviewed paper was published in June 2013 in the journal EXARC.

The Newark Medieval Cemetery Erosion Project

Anne Mitchell

This project is attempting to slow down the rapid destruction of the cemetery and built archaeology of the site at Newark, Deerness. It is an incredibly important site from which remains have been removed dated to the 6th Century through to the 14th Century. The site was partially excavated by Dr D Brothwell between 1968 and 1974 (see <http://www.hopkinsweb.org.uk/orkney/>) and sadly remains unpublished.

Since then archaeology has continued to leach from the banks of Newark, pounded by south-easterly gales ripping into the exposed face, and by human interference, picking and poking and furthering the process of erosion by the removal of material from the site face.



Recent gale damage

That removal is made worse by the fact that few visitors make themselves known to the landowner, (Isobel Gardner, in the older of the 2 properties at Newark, telephone 01856 741307) nor is what is removed and where it goes reported to Isobel, or to either Julie Gibson County Archaeologist at Orkney College 01856 569000 or the curators at Orkney Museum, 01856 873535 – all in all a sorry loss to archaeological knowledge and a sad and careless lack of respect for the remains themselves.

With the support, advice and help of the Friends of St Ninian's, Julie Gibson, SEPA, Glen Miller of Orkney Recycling Services, Meridian Salmon, St Andrews & Deerness Community Council, Brian Eunson, Stuart Wylie, Keith Foubister and others, we are trying to protect the site and, long-term, to deflect the impact of the sea. Discussions are on-going with various parties as to how best to do this with maximum utility and with minimum archaeological, visual and marine impact. And, of course, with minimum funding.

OAS, and St Andrews & Deerness Community Council, have generously given us grants towards the purchase of sand bags and the accompanying photo(s) show work in hand, filling bags to help mitigate the depredations of gales which hammered into Newark this September. The autumn and winter lie ahead and we can only hope that we can make headway in our plans and get some protection in place sooner rather than later.

If you would like to help at Newark, please email Anne.Mitchell@uhi.ac.uk. We'd like, at the very least, to get a stock of filled sandbags on hand for the coming months.



Sandbagging



Rik Hammond at the Ness of Brodgar

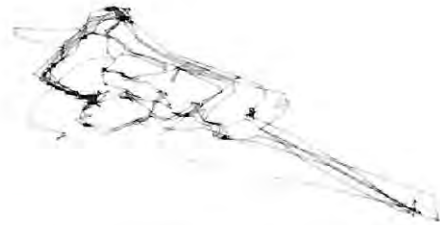
Between August 2011 and March 2012 Rik Hammond was the Orkney World Heritage Site Artist-in-Residence and could be found working alongside Nick and the excavation team for a few weeks, as part of the *Symbols in a Landscape* art and archaeology project – a collaboration between the Pier Arts Centre in Stromness, the Archaeology Department of Orkney College UHI and Historic Scotland, supported by the Scotland's Islands initiative.

The aim of the residency was to provide further layers of interpretation of, and engagement with, The Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site – plus the excavations at the Ness – by considering ways in which Orkney's landscape, culture and heritage could be interpreted through the combined lens of archaeological study and contemporary art. Rik's residency culminated in a solo exhibition, entitled 'Being and Remembering' at the Pier Arts Centre, in Stromness in 2012.

This year, Rik – who is based in Orkney and continues to explore the parallel disciplines of art and archaeology within his work – returned to the Ness of Brodgar once again to develop some new work following his time as formal artist-in-residence in 2011/12. He has been working predominately with drawing, GPS and video – researching ways to visualise the cultural landscape.

You can find out more about the residency Rik undertook in 2011 at www.facebook.com/symbolsinalandscape – and further information about his current work at www.facebook.com/rikhammond.artist or www.rikhammond.com.

Some of Rik's work undertaken at the Ness of Brodgar this year can also be seen in his current exhibition 'Notes from a dark island' at The Loft Gallery in St Margaret's Hope, until Tuesday 5th November.



THREE POINT FIVE HOURS
Nick Card • Ness of Brodgar • Orkney

Three Point Five Hours (Ness of Brodgar, Orkney)

Time-based event, GPS data, digital print
GPS track drawing of Nick Card's movement around site

Rik Hammond & Nick Card – July 2013



Ness of Brodgar Field Drawing

Pencil on paper
Rik Hammond – July 2013

Landscapes of Scapa Flow

Tom Muir

When I was approached by Anne Bignall of the Scapa Flow Landscape Partnership Scheme to write the text for a book of photos that showed all the aspects of that famous natural harbour I didn't take much persuading. The idea was to cover its wartime and peacetime history, as well as the rocks, plants and animals that live around its shores and under its waters. Natural history is not my field of expertise, but I knew enough to feel confident at having a go. As Anne and Julian Branscombe were naturalists I knew that they would keep me on the right lines.

Like all new book projects you have to have a clear idea of what it is that you want to achieve. I could be lazy and just write long captions to accompany the photographs, stating what the average Orkney reader would already know, like the scuttling of the German High Seas Fleet in 1919 or the loss of HMS Royal Oak in 1939. But what would that achieve? I decided that this book should tell the story of the people involved, giving it a human dimension. I used first-hand accounts where possible, like the scuttling as seen through the eyes of a ten year old child on Cava and the wonderful description of an air-raid on Scapa Flow as witnessed by a Graemsay crofter. It also meant that information that had been in my head for years could at last be told, like the stories of salvaging from the blockships and the illegal theft of the name plate of the Royal Oak and its subsequent return to Orkney. The fishing heritage and the creation and expansion of villages, like St Mary's and St Margaret's Hope, formed another piece of the story, as did the development of a Lifeboat Service and the tragic loss of the Longhope Lifeboat T.G.B. in 1969. The strange history of the Barrel of Butter skerry and its now forgotten but sinister past brings in the realm of folklore, which no book about Orkney should be without.

As I have already mentioned the natural history text was added to by Julian and Anne, as well as being passed around other experts for comment. The historical sections were also passed around and given the thumbs up before publication. The book is filled with many beautiful photographs, both historic and contemporary, by a good number of Orkney photographers. The natural history section is particularly stunning.

The Scapa Flow Landscape Partnership Scheme supported many worthwhile causes, from the consolidation of the historically important Ness Battery to tagging skate, restoring 'Happy Valley', building flatties, and creating a community mural in Flotta. They also worked with ORCA to run summer schools in archaeology, assisting excavations at Cantick Head, South Walls and the Cairns, South Ronaldsay. I was involved with many projects, including the idea for the design of the stone Viking bench at South Walls to commemorate Jarl Sigurd the Stout's forced acceptance of Christianity at the point of King Olaf Trygvesson's sword in 995AD. Anne Bignall did the wonderful artwork while cathedral stonemason, Colin Watson, shaped and carved the stone. This book, like the bench, was a team effort and I hope that it will be enjoyed by those who open its pages.



Caption Competition

The Ness of Brodgar excavation was visited by Time Team this summer. Here is a photo of (left to right) Francis Prior, Nick Card and Tony Robinson. We invite suitable captions! The winning caption will be posted a signed (by Nick Card) copy of the British Archaeology magazine featuring articles on the Ness of Brodgar! Email your suggestions to the editor via the OAS website please, marked 'Caption Competition' in the Subject. The editor's decision is final. Closing date 31 December 2013.



Runestone found at Naversdale, Orphir

Sarah Jane Gibbon

Donnie Grieve from Harray made a fantastic discovery on the 26th September whilst looking for suitable building stone at his daughter's farm in Orphir. 'I recognised it right away as being runes,' said Mr Grieve. The inscription, in corrupted Latin, reads, according to Terje Spurtland of Oslo University, '...who art in Heaven, hallowed.'

Mr Grieve's daughter, Dr Sarah Jane Gibbon, is an OAS member and an expert in the medieval church in Orkney. 'I am delighted that Dad made this find on my farm and I am looking forward to finding out more about the context of the stone and what it can tell us about Christianity in medieval Orkney.'





Photograph courtesy of Frank Bradford (fbpix@btinternet.com)

Orkney Archaeology Society Upcoming Events

For the latest updates on OAS events visit the OAS website:
orkneyarchaeologysociety.org.uk


| Date | Event | Venue | Time |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---------|
| 21st November 2013 | "Art and Architecture at the Ness of Brodgar" a talk by Antonia Thomas of UHI Archaeology Department, Orkney College. | Lecture Theatre, Orkney College | 7:30 pm |
| 5 th December 2013 | "Making the Stones Speak: Orkney & Shetland Archaeology in the Fiction of Naoli Mitchison and Margaret Elphinstone" by Dr Simon Hall, Saltire Society 1st prize winner in 2010 for his book <i>The History of Orkney Literature</i> , will talk about archaeology and the work of Naomi Mitchison and Margaret Elphinstone. This is a major piece of work for the Society by Dr Hall, principal teacher of English at Kirkwall Grammar School, and will be the Society's Christmas event for 2013. After the talk there will be the opportunity to purchase signed copies of <i>The History of Orkney Literature</i> and share a glass of wine. | St. Magnus Centre, Palace Road, Kirkwall | 7:30 pm |


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**Art and Architecture at
The Ness of Brodgar**
 A Talk by Antonia Thomas of UHI
 Archaeology Dept, Orkney College
 Lecture Theatre, Orkney College
 7.30pm Thursday 21 November 2013

All welcome
Entry by donation


 OAS
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OAS Christmas Event 2013
 Dr Simon Hall
 Saltire Scottish First Book of the Year 2010 winner



Making The Stones Speak:
 Orkney & Shetland Archaeology in the Fiction of
Naomi Mitchison and Margaret Elphinstone
 7.30pm Thursday 5 December 2013
 St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall
 Entry by donation. All welcome
 Followed by refreshments and the opportunity to purchase
 signed copies of Dr Hall's *The History of Orkney Literature*