



Orkney Archaeology Society

Scottish Charity No SC030611

Newsletter No 03
Summer 2010

Archaeology work going on during the summer

Excavations completed

The Cairns, Windwick, South Ronaldsay –
16/06/10 – 10/07/10 Directed by Martin
Carruthers, Orkney College
Cantick, Hoy – 14/06/10 – 25/06/10 Directed
by Dan Lee, ORCA
North Atlantic Biocultural Organisation
(NABO) field school on Rousay 23/06/10 –
14/07/10

Excavations ongoing

Ness of Brodgar – 19/07/10 – 27/08/10 – Nick
Card, ORCA
Braes of Ha'Breck, Wyre – 30/08/10 –
17/09/10 – Antonia Thomas, ORCA
Links of Noltland, Westray – EASE
Archaeology
Brough of Deerness – Dr James Barrett,
McDonald Institute, Cambridge
British Excavation Volunteers &
Archaeological Research Society (BEVARs)
are planning work at Green, Eday
Birsay-Skaill Landscape Project – Dr David
Griffiths, Oxford

There will also be geophysics work going on
around the World Heritage Area, the new
Stenness & Orphir Uplands Project will be
getting underway and there will be some
geophysics fieldwork undertaken as part of a
project "Investigating Orkney's Medieval
Parliament Sites for Public Benefit".

2010 Lottery

Enclosed you will find 10 tickets for our 2010
fundraising Lottery and a stamped addressed
envelope. We have once again collected
some fine prizes for the Lottery, and the
proceeds will go towards the Daphne Lorimer
Fund from which each year we award the
Daphne Lorimer Bursary to an applicant for
the Masters in Archaeological Practice
(MAAP) course at Orkney College. If you
wish to purchase the enclosed lottery tickets
(or sell them to other people), please return
the ticket stub completed with name and
contact details along with a cheque for the
amount due using the envelope provided, to
arrive by Friday 10th September 2010. This
will enable us to process your payment in time
for the draw on 18th September 2010.

We would be grateful if you would return any
unwanted raffle tickets in the envelope
provided too – this means we can keep the
necessary records up to date and also that we
can sell the tickets to someone else.

If you would like more raffle tickets, please let
us know, and if you mislay the envelope, the
address is:

2010 Lottery
Orkney Archaeology Society
PO Box 6213
Kirkwall
Orkney
KW15 1YD

If you have anything you would like us to put into the next Newsletter, or any comments, please
contact The Newsletter Editor, PO Box 6213, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1YD

Membership Matters

By Andre Artymiuk,
Membership Secretary

Subscription Renewal

Another year has passed and once again subscription renewal time is upon us. Membership rates remain unchanged this year at

Ordinary Member	£15
Concessionary Member (Senior/Unwaged/Student)	£10
Family (in One Household)	£22
Joint Concession (in One Household)	£18

Included with this newsletter is a copy of the OAS membership renewal form for members who renew by cheque or cash. If you already renew your subscription by standing order or if you are a life member no renewal form is included. The society would encourage members to consider renewing by standing order if you do not already do so.

If you are a UK taxpayer, completing the Gift Aid declaration on the renewal form allows the society to reclaim the tax on your subscription.

If at any time you have a query concerning your membership, or wish to update your details (change of Address, Email, change of Membership type, etc.) you can send me an email at oas@orkneycommunities.co.uk or write to me at Orkney Archaeology Society, P.O. Box 6213, Kirkwall, Orkney KW15 1YD.

Information Emails

As Membership secretary I issue emails to members giving notice of forthcoming society events. If you currently do not receive emails from the society, but would like to, please email me at oas@orkneycommunities.co.uk and I will be happy to add you to the list. Equally if you no longer wish to receive emails let me know and I will remove you from the list.

The OAS Benefactor Program

The OAS Benefactor Program was introduced last year. A Benefactor subscription is ideal as a unique and unusual gift, or as a way to make a special and personal contribution to archaeology in Orkney. A benefactor receives an annual OAS membership plus the following additional benefits for the year of the donation:

IRON – for a donation of £100 or more

- Donation acknowledged in the Newsletter
- Individual handcrafted OAS Lapel pin by Andrew Appleby

BRONZE – for a donation of £500 or more

- Benefits as for Iron Benefactor, plus
- Priority tour of an archaeology site in Orkney
- Copies of excavation site reports
- Free Entry to OAS events

GOLD – for a donation of £1,000 or more

- Benefits as for a Bronze Benefactor, plus
- Acknowledgement in appropriate publications and at excavation sites
- Individual Tour of an Orkney site with a professional Archaeologist

The Society is pleased to acknowledge the contribution of the following benefactors:

Membership Year 2009-10

Mrs Dorothy O'Hanlon	Iron Benefactor
Mr Finlay McIntosh	Iron Benefactor
Mr Godfrey Hill	Iron Benefactor

Membership Year 2010-11

Mr Peter Brigham	Gold Benefactor
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Call for Volunteers

The OAS maintains a database of members who are willing to volunteer to assist either on a dig or in a 'back office' capacity. Each year several dig directors approach the OAS looking for volunteers. If you would like to add your name to the volunteers list please contact me by email or at the society P.O. Box address above and I will send you the registration forms.

This year in particular the society is looking for volunteers who can give a few hours of their time to help man the OAS shop at the Ness of Brodgar excavation. The shop was a great success last year, and this year we will be offering a wider range of stock including Orkney Crafts, Ness of Brodgar Postcards

and small gifts for children during the public days at the Ness excavation between 19th July and 27th August. This is a great opportunity to make a practical contribution and be a part of the 2010 Ness Excavation team.

If you feel you can spare a little of your time please let me know.

Finally I would like to thank the OAS members who volunteered their time during the 2009-10 membership year as diggers, in the shop and in processing the finds (a vital task that lasts all year long, not just during the excavation!). You know who you are and can be proud of the contribution you make to Archaeology in Orkney.

An Archaeological experience in Orkney

A visit by a group of Dutch archaeology enthusiasts.

The Archeologische Werkgroep Nederland (AWN) is a national Dutch archaeological society for volunteers, which is divided into local and regional groups. We, the group from the region Twente in the east of the Netherlands, are an active group of people always looking for archaeological activities. All year round we visit interesting exhibitions, help processing finds and if possible participate in excavations with some of the professional archaeologists who are among us. Last year, as a larger excursion, we went to London to visit the British Museum. This year, we decided to make a trip to one of the areas with great archaeological significance: Orkney. Since all of us, besides having a general interest in archaeology, have our personal interests in terms of periods, material and so on, Orkney seemed to be an interesting choice.

In the Netherlands, generally speaking, archaeology is rescue archaeology. Since our small country has a very dense population, excavations usually take part at building sites and are covered by buildings



The nine visitors with Andre
(Front row l. to r.: Ben, Jos, Kasper, Evelyn.
Back row from l. to r.: Nelleke, Nannie, Daniël,
Angela, Suzan, Andre.)

afterwards. From what we had read, we suspected that the situation in Orkney would be very different, and from what we now have heard and seen, this seems to be true.

The six days we spent in Orkney were full of visits to interesting sites. After four nights in Edinburgh, one of which was spent in a stuck elevator, we arrived on Mainland. Here, after checking in to our 'barracks' as we called our Kirkwall Hostel, the archaeological experience

began. Previous to our trip we had been in contact with Andre Artymiuk, OAS Membership Secretary, who was so kind as to help us with our planning. This way, we were able to make a full programme for our time in Orkney. On the first day we decided to explore the eastern part of Mainland, starting with a visit to Mine Howe. It had an intriguing visitor centre, we thought, intriguing both by the information presented and by the state of the centre. Nevertheless, it was quite an experience to go down into the Howe. It sure provided material for conversation and discussion, for what is it exactly for? The question 'what is it for?' was to be asked many more times during our trip, and seems to inhere in Orkney archaeology to us.

Next was a visit to the Brough of Deerness, where we were welcomed by Dr. James Barrett and his team at the Viking Age excavation, after we had made the beautiful walk alongside the cliffs. We were lucky enough to get a tour around the brough and hear about the current and previous excavation. Again, an interesting place – especially for the ones among us with an interest in the Viking Age – with still many questions left unanswered. As this year's excavations only started when we arrived, four of us decided to take the opportunity and return as a volunteer two days later, while the rest of the group had a day of rest. On that occasion, we also visited Martin Carruthers' Iron Age excavation at the Cairns, which was in its final week. Here, we were given a great tour of the site and were shown some of the most significant finds.

The Tomb of the Eagles and its lovely visitor centre were the last stops for this day. The ladies of the visitor centre were good storytellers, and again we were pointed at the fact that the actual purpose of the present structures still is open for interpretation. Even though some of us were tired and cold because of the Orkney wind by the end of this day, we all enjoyed the Tomb and its beautiful location. Some especially enjoyed the rolling board with which you can enter the tomb.

The next day, we met up with Andre, who was to give us a tour of the world heritage site. To

get a good impression of the nature of the cairn structures, we first paid a visit to Cuween cairn, which provided us with a great view over the island of Damsay. Subsequently, we did the Maes Howe tour, again with a very enthusiastic guide. Maes Howe, being a world famous monument, is one of the first things to come across when reading about Orkney archaeology. Hence, we had all read about it and were excited to see it with our own eyes. We had close looks at the walls and the runic inscriptions, even so close that we discovered some unknown modern graffiti in the form of some initials. A shame of course, even though we do really enjoy the 12th century graffiti. Nevertheless, it did strike us that there seems to be little modern graffiti and vandalism on Orkney monuments, especially because they all are easily accessible. Perhaps this is a sign of the way Orcadians treat their heritage: with respect. After Maes Howe, we took our time to visit the Ring of Brodgar, the Ness of Brodgar and the standing stones of Stenness. Here, the myth of becoming pregnant by walking the circle the wrong way was dismissed once and for all.

The other side of the island was investigated on another occasion. As we arrived at Skara Brae, we were lucky enough to be the first visitors and get a good look at the structures. It's situated at such a beautiful location, that it made us wonder how it would have looked like in past times. What would the sea level have been like, for instance? As we read more about both Skara Brae and Skaill house, we discovered that the place had even more archaeology besides Skara Brae and the famous Viking finds, namely the Pictish cemetery. It was not the first time we heard about all these different cultures at one site. The accumulation of occupation phases and remains started to strike us as 'typical Orkney'. It is interesting that this particular place has been inhabited in all these periods, and yet is not so much inhabited today.

On our way to Birsay, we decided to enjoy the Orkney coastline. The nature and landscape of Orkney are very different from the flat Netherlands, and therefore spectacular to us. We took a walk alongside the cliffs of Marwick

Head to be entertained by the puffins and seagulls. In Birsay, we met up with Andre and OAS Secretary Sue Barnard for a nice cup of tea and a walk to the Brough of Birsay at the end of the afternoon. We sure could imagine why the Vikings picked this site to build their structures: a great overview of the coastline and the sea. It was interesting to see that they had a sauna-like structure at the site. What the Vikings, however, didn't have, but we did, was tea with a range of fantastic local home baking at Sue's lovely house. Orkney hospitality proved itself once again. With renewed strength after the tea break, it was time for one last monument: the Broch of Gurness. With no other visitors around because of the hour, we had all the freedom to look around. Whilst we did, the seals kept an eye on us, as if they were guarding the broch. Theories about the original appearance of the broch and the purpose of it were the main subject of conversation. And, as we had heard say many times this week, your own opinion is just as valuable as anybody else's, which made it fun to speculate.

On the whole, we were most intrigued by the density of archaeological remains and by the way the inhabitants of Orkney seem to care for their heritage. The fact that you can get to all the monuments and experience them, that local guides speak with enthusiasm about the

monuments and the fact that there is room for each and every one's interpretation, together with the stunning landscape and the hospitality of the people, made our trip a very special and pleasant archaeological Orkney experience. We would very much like to thank the OAS, Dr. Barrett and Dr. Carruthers, and especially Andre and Sue for making this trip unforgettable.

On behalf of the members of AWN-Twente,
Nelleke IJssennagger



A tour around the Ness of Brodgar site

Editor's Note: The Society would like to thank AWN-Twente for their generous and very much appreciated donation to OAS funds.

A Note from Tricia Edwards, 2009 **Daphne Lorimer Bursary student**

As recipient of the Orkney Archaeology Society MAAP bursary I have had a fantastic opportunity to continue my studies in archaeology and get first hand experience of archaeology in Orkney. Without the support of the society I would not have been able to come to Orkney and complete the MAAP course.

My course started with several months of academic work, focusing on current archaeological theory, professional practice and how to research and communicate. I also had the opportunity to study a module

on Viking archaeology. This was fantastic as Viking archaeology is one of my areas of interest and I was keen to continue my studies of this subject.

Later module choices included geophysics and survey modules. I had a pre-existing interest in these subjects but never had the opportunity to study them.

Following what seemed like many months of studying inside the weather changed and so did my modules. From June onwards the excavation season started and I was able to help on many sites in various

locations around Orkney. I started my digging season with 'The Cairns' site on South Ronaldsay run by Martin Carruthers. Unfortunately I was unable to excavate every day at this site but any free days I had I volunteered. Following this excavation I moved to the Brough of Deerness which was being run by James Barrett from Cambridge University. I then headed to the Ness of Brodgar with Nick Card as the site director. Finally my last site that I excavated at was the Links of Noltland on Westray run by EASE Archaeology. I was able to work for EASE until mid October which gave me a fantastic end to my digging season and a good deal of sand in my hair! I feel extremely lucky that I was able to help on so many fantastic excavations. I learnt an incredible amount about the practicalities of excavating Orcadian archaeology.

Following several months in the field it was time to start my dissertation. I thoroughly enjoy practical archaeology and knew that I would like to combine new skills I learnt throughout the Masters course with some pre-existing ones. I decided to survey an area in South Ronaldsay focused around 'The Cairns' site at Windwick. I proposed an integrated survey of field walking, geophysics and hand augering. I had some

interesting results and feel that my work created some useful discussion of survey methodologies for Orkney. I had an incredible amount of support from the Archaeology Department in Orkney College and Orkney College Geophysics Unit. I enjoyed my dissertation and was very pleased that I was given the opportunity to complete a practical dissertation.

Now that I have completed my Masters I am now currently temporarily employed by the Orkney College Geophysics Unit. I have already worked on Iona and Shetland. I have been incredibly fortunate to receive this position and am learning many new skills and techniques.

I would like to thank everyone in the Society for giving me the opportunity to come and study in Orkney. The bursary has provided me with the jump start I needed to continue my studies in archaeology. I really appreciate the funding and would encourage everyone to continue supporting it. I know first hand it has been entirely instrumental in allowing me to follow a new career path in archaeology and for that I am truly grateful.



Tricia hard at work on her dissertation fieldwork in South Ronaldsay during the autumn of 2009

Orkney Archaeology Society Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Venue	Time
Sunday 1 st August 2010	Guided walk in partnership with: Orkney Defence Interest Network (ODIN): St Mary's Circular and Holm Battery led by Gavin Lindsay of ODIN	Details on OAS and ODIN websites (addresses below) or from Nan 01856 850889	
Thursday 12 th August 2010	Stand at Dounby Show	Dounby Show Park	All day
Sunday 15 th August 2010	Ness of Brodgar Open Day	Ness of Brodgar excavation	OAS Members tour 10.30 am
Sunday 29 th August 2010	In partnership with ODIN, Guided Tours of HMS Tern by Birsay Heritage Trust and ODIN	Details on OAS and ODIN websites (addresses below) or from Nan 01856 850889	
Saturday 18 th September 2010	Braes of Ha'Breck excavation Open Day	Braes of Ha'Breck excavation, Wyre	Details from Nan 01856 850889
	Town Hall Reception & Lecture from our Patron, Professor Lord Colin Renfrew, to include draw of 2010 Lottery	Town Hall, Kirkwall	Details to be finalised, check website and local press
Friday 1 st October to Friday 22 nd October 2010	Exhibition "The Visual Language of Ancient Scotland" by James Thomson	Tankerness House Museum, Kirkwall	Opening reception on 1 st October

OAS website – www.orkneycommunities.co.uk

ODIN website – www.odin.uk.com

Usual admission prices for regular walks & talks are:

£2 for OAS members

£3 for non-members

Everyone is welcome at all our events. After talks, we usually have tea & coffee and a chance to chat.

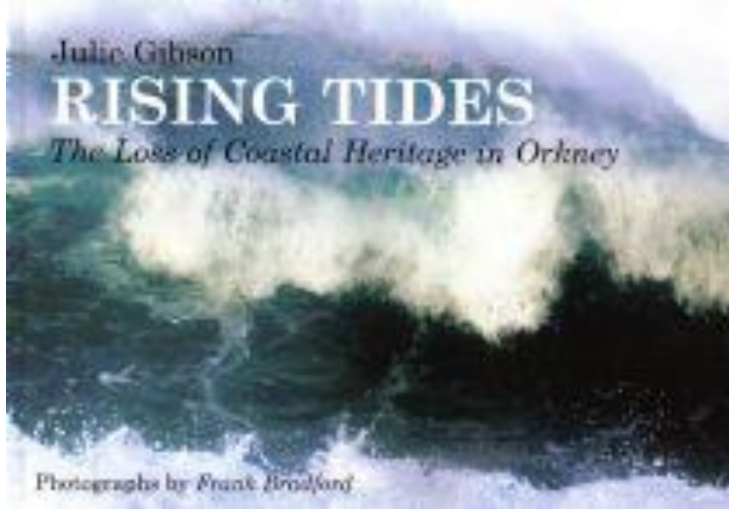
We email details of events to those of you for whom we have email addresses. If you do not currently receive email notification of events and would like to, please email oas@orkneycommunities.co.uk and we will add you to the list.

All events will be advertised in local press and on the website – look out for further details.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Orkney Archaeology Society Publications Available

Rising Tides: The Loss of Coastal Heritage in Orkney



This book is a wonderful collaboration by Julie Gibson, County Archaeologist, and expert photographer Frank Bradford, with over 100 full colour illustrations. Julie describes the fast eroding sites, and also how you can get to them and enjoy this aspect of Orkney's past, while it lasts. 'Rising Tides' had local and international sponsorship, and there are limited copies left - proceeds go to Orkney Archaeology Society, who will ensure that they are ploughed straight back into Orkney's archaeology.

Dedicated to the memory of Judith Robertson

Published by Northings Publications.

£12 plus £2.75 postage & packing.

Mine Howe: Fieldwork and excavation 2000-2005



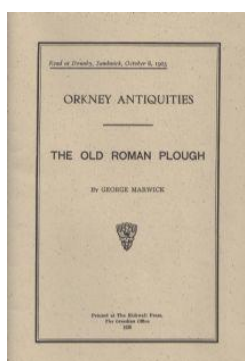
FOAT Occasional Publication 1, December 2005, compiled by Dr Stephen Harrison

This publication covers the investigation of Mine Howe from the original discovery in 1946 through the rediscovery in 1999 and the subsequent archaeological work, providing a comprehensive summary of the work so far. Also included is a dig diary from one of the participants and a further reading list.

Published by The Friends of Orkney Archaeological Trust, now called Orkney Archaeology Society.

£5.95, postage free to Orkney Archaeology Society members, £1 for non-members

The Old Roman Plough



A facsimile reproduction of a lecture given by George Marwick in October 1903 on the traditional ploughs used in Orkney.

Published by Orkney Archaeological Trust.

£2.50, postage free to Orkney Archaeology Society members, £1 for non-members

The order form for these publications is available on

**the website or contact us to
ask for one.**