

Discussion

Archaeological Resource

In addition to updating records for previously known sites, the findings of this survey have doubled the number of sites known in the overall area. If the figures are broken down, it will be noted that substantial increases in knowledge about the archaeological resource have been made even in areas which have been the subject of much previous investigation.

The number of known sites on the islands of Westray and Papa Westray have increased by 53% and 40% respectively even though both had been surveyed on a number of previous occasions. Surveys were carried out by RCAHMS in the early part of the century (RCAHMS, 1946) and again in the 1980's (Lamb, 1983), and by the Ordnance Survey on several occasions; in addition, there have been a number of excavations on these islands in recent years.

On Mainland, known sites have been increased by 59%. In view of the fact that this area had not previously received much attention, this figure may not appear surprising. What is noteworthy, however, is that this area is extensively cultivated and archaeological remains are not readily visible in the hinterland.

One explanation for the increase in site numbers is that many of the previous surveys have been more broadly based in scope and tended not to record sites of more recent date or to closely examine the coast edge. While a large number of the new sites recorded by this survey are of 18th-20th C date, many new sites of earlier date have also been recorded. In addition, many sites recorded here as being of indeterminate date may, on examination, turn out to be of early date.

On Mainland, close examination of the coastal zone indicates a level of archaeological potential which is not so readily discerned in the hinterland. In some areas, the coastal zone is one of the few areas not to be ploughed flat and can be likened to a road line in that it offers a window onto the wider area.

This survey was limited in scope, being confined to the coastal zone. This is, therefore, not the place to make detailed comparisons between these results and the archaeological resource of the wider area. Even a summary appraisal of the findings, however, indicates that all of the areas must be considered to be of high archaeological potential. Westray and Papa Westray,

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and their coastal areas in particular, contain an archaeological resource unsurpassed anywhere else in Scotland, in number, quality, and variety. Unfortunately, it is also likely to be unsurpassed in the extent to which sites are vulnerable to destruction.

Site Visibility and Interpretation

Within the survey areas, sites are visible both as topographic features and as deposits in eroding sections. In both cases, the visible component may be only part of a more complex and extensive site. In general, sites in Orkney were frequently used over a considerable duration and the visible component at any site may not be representative of the remains as a whole. Many sites have had complex histories and the archaeological record may preserve information about some or all of the major events which took place. This information can only be gleaned from intensive investigation; it is not readily amenable from survey alone.

Site recognition is also affected by current understanding of the nature of the archaeological resource. It is impossible to interpret the unknown without reference to the known, therefore gaps or weakness in the record will be reflected in the ability to conclusively identify new sites. The absence of sites of certain types or date from the survey record cannot be taken to indicate that no such sites exist in the area; only that they could not be recognised by this type of survey.

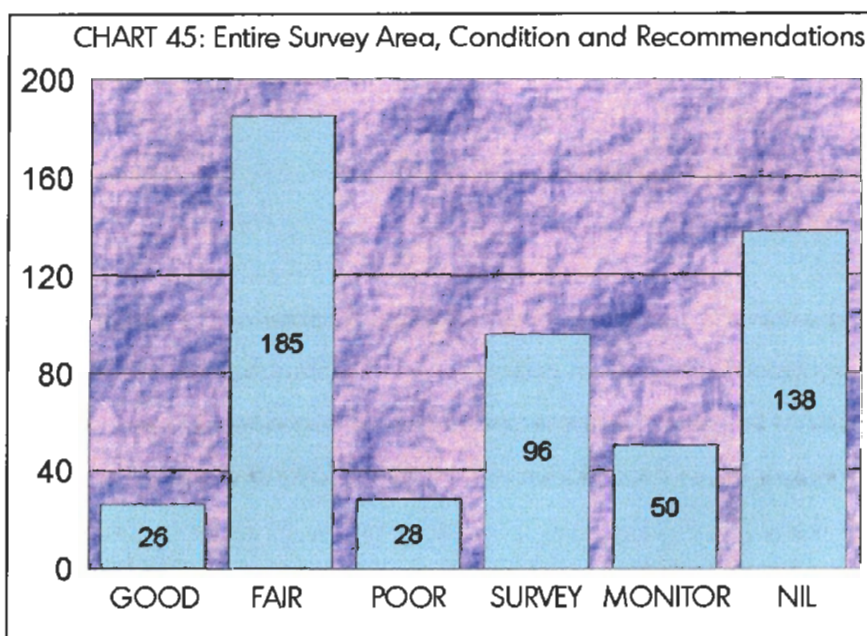
Threat

The major threat faced by the sites within the survey areas comes from coastal erosion. Subaerial erosion and farming practices also impact on the survival of archaeological remains. There is, however, only a very limited threat from developments such as housing, roads or quarrying.

The geology, geomorphology and erosion class element of this survey characterises the nature and condition of the coastline in a general manner. The findings should be used to gain an impression of the current situation, but cannot be used to directly determine vulnerability at site level. Even within stretches of stable coastline there may be localised areas of erosion which may impact upon archaeological remains. By virtue of being atypical among the surrounding deposits, archaeological remains have a tendency to erode at a different, and usually faster, rate. An example of this is where heavy masonry structures, exposed in section, collapse in a catastrophic fashion causing extensive damage to the surrounding archaeological deposits.

Conclusions

The areas investigated by this survey have a rich archaeological resource which is severely threatened, primarily by coastal erosion. Many of the sites located during the survey could not be identified, but of those that could, it is unlikely that their full potential has been recognised.



It has been recommended that assessment should be carried out on a large number of sites. This is envisaged only as a first step. It is unlikely that more than a small proportion of the sites can ever be protected or excavated and will, therefore, be destroyed. Assessment will not only assist in deciding which sites are most suitable for excavation but for those which are not, will provide a more detailed record than currently exists.

Settlement mounds represent one of the site types which deserve much more investigation. Two broad types of settlement mound have been distinguished: those of prehistoric date which may include elements of Neolithic to Late Iron Age date, and those originating in the Norse period which may be occupied today by modern farmsteads. Such sites, although numerous on Westray and Papa Westray, have not been excavated or even fully assessed. Many have been classified simply as brochs, although the evidence would suggest that they represent settlement of much longer duration.

The record of recent excavation indicates a preference in favour of single period sites, but although the scale of some of these mounds and the costs involved in their excavation may

appear daunting, they cannot continue to be overlooked if we are to advance our knowledge of earlier periods. Settlement mounds offer an unparalleled opportunity to investigate the dynamics of continuity and change.

This work has a limited usefulness and a limited 'shelf life'. Its ultimate value depends on it being integrated within a more comprehensive management framework. To make any progress beyond this point will require that long term strategies are formulated, and implemented. Mechanisms need to be set in place to facilitate the feed back of new information and to regularly reassess priorities.

Recommendations

Every site recorded within this survey has been assessed to determine if further investigative work is required. The conclusions are given in outline form in the site gazetteers and site descriptions which form the body of this report. In those sections recommendations are given as one of three types: Survey, Monitor or Nil, in accordance with Historic Scotland guidelines.

The term 'Survey' has been used as a general term covering all forms of further archaeological investigation or site protection. This may include topographical survey, section recording, trial trenching and open area excavation.

This section expands upon the specific type of work required where survey or monitoring has been recommended. These sites have been divided into four categories:

- **Category 1:** Urgent action required
- **Category 2:** Assessment required
- **Category 3:** Assessment desirable
- **Category 4:** Monitoring required

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The main criteria used to categorise sites were the level of vulnerability to destruction, followed by the degree of archaeological potential.

Category 1 sites are therefore both highly vulnerable and likely to be of high archaeological potential. The sites in this category are listed in order of priority. Within the other categories sites are listed in the order in which they occur on the map sections. **Category 2** sites are vulnerable but either are of lower or unknown archaeological potential. **Category 3** sites may be of low vulnerability/some potential or vulnerable/unknown potential. The monitoring of **Category 4** sites is recommended either to keep a site of known potential under surveillance or to check for new exposures on sites currently considered to be of low or unknown potential.

In a majority of cases, it is difficult to accurately assess archaeological potential from surface examination alone. The most immediate requirement here is for further site assessment. The findings of site assessment can be used to inform future management decisions or may act as a salvage operation if further work is either not possible or desirable. A small proportion of assessed sites may go on to be excavated or protected; the remainder will eventually be destroyed. Assessment in advance of destruction will, at the minimum, provide an enhanced site record with empirical evidence of the nature, date and extent of the remains.

Category 1: Urgent Action Required

Knowe of Skea, Westray (WT53, Map 5)

Description: A large amorphous mound, measuring 26m in diameter, is situated on the extreme tip of Berst Ness. The land on which it is sited is becoming cut off by the sea and is currently joined to the Ness by a low-lying shoulder of sea-washed rock. There are several short exposures to the south side of the mound, caused by coastal erosion. Here, fragments of animal bone, shell, burnt material and pot which may be of Bronze Age date, form inclusions within anthropogenic soil deposits. Occasional protruding stones provide an indication that the mound may cover structural remains. The centre of the mound lies 5m from the coast edge and the site is very vulnerable to further erosion.

Potential: The site appears to be relatively intact at present, although it is highly vulnerable to coastal erosion. The islet on which the site is located is extremely small and the soils are shallow. It is likely, therefore, that the topographical indications are truly representative of the extent of archaeological deposits present. The site cannot be conclusively identified from its visible components alone, but it would appear to be a non-broch settlement, possibly of Bronze Age date.

Threat: Actively eroding and vulnerable to further damage from coastal erosion

Action: The location is not suitable for sea defences or other forms of protective measures. The minimum level of work required will be limited open area excavation orientated to establish the nature, date and extent of the remains. Test trenching is not recommended since it is probable that the horizontal complexity is such that this method of assessment is unlikely to provide results which are either comprehensible or representative.

Peterkirk, Westray (WT125, Map 8)

Description: A large, amorphous mound measures 25m in diameter and stands up to 2m high. The sides of the mound are pitted and structural remains are revealed both in the side of the mound and in a coastal exposure to the seaward side. To the Northwest side of the mound an oval depression appears to form the interior of a structure, measuring 5m wide by 6m long. A short exposure in the seaward side of the mound reveals stony midden deposits with peat ash and inclusions of bone, shell, charcoal and worked whalebone. Two later structures overlie the mound. To the south side, a rectangular structure may be the chapel which stood on this site and from which the placename is derived. It measures 7m by 3.5m and is defined by coursed walling. Inside, there is a central division formed by an upright slab set at 90° to the inner wall face. To the west side of the mound there is a length of substantial walling which is visible for almost 10m and stands to at least 0.3m high.

Potential: This site comprises multiple components likely to range from the later prehistoric to the early historic period. The mound, which forms the earlier phase of the site, appears to comprise both structural and midden-type deposits, indicative of settlement. The nature of the structure/s represented is unclear and the presence of a broch cannot be confirmed, on present evidence. The probable chapel building is well-defined and internal features appear to be preserved. The site is located on a small headland and the extent of surviving deposits is likely to be restricted to the area of the mound. The soils of the hinterland are shallow and unlikely to preserve extensive remains.

Threat: The site has already been truncated by coastal erosion, it continues to erode and its exposed location renders it vulnerable to further damage.

Action: The site could be protected in the short term by a sea wall built on the rock platform which surrounds the headland. It would be preferable, however, to carry out archaeological investigations by means of open area excavation. While the deposits are restricted in area, they are likely to be of some depth and complexity. Test trenching is, therefore, unlikely to be a suitable method of assessment.

East Surrigarth, Westray (WT104, Map 10)

Description: A mound, measuring 20m long and standing up to 1m high, has been truncated by the sea. The surviving portion measures about 8m wide. The coastal exposure contains structural remains, including several columns of masonry, which have collapsed in-situ, along with edge-set blocks and upright slabs. Towards the centre of this 25m long exposure, there are remnants of coursed walling which stands up to 0.7m high. A large horizontal slab which is located to the south end of the section may be part of a larger feature.

Potential: The remains are tentatively identified as a chambered cairn. An unknown proportion of the site has already been lost to coastal erosion and the extent of the surviving deposits is unclear. Unusually, this site does not appear to have been previously investigated. There is the potential for the recovery of undisturbed remains.

Threat: This site lies on the coast edge and is actively eroding.

Action: An assessment of the surviving deposits is required in the first instance. Assessment should combine the recording of the coastal section with test trenching in the hinterland. Section recording will provide insights on site stratigraphy, over an extended area, while test trenching should determine the inland extent. The location is unlikely to be suitable for the construction of coastal defences.

Kestro, Westray (WT59, Map 5)

- Description:** Fragments of walling and anthropogenic deposits are exposed in an eroding coastal section for over 50m. The topography of the immediate hinterland area indicates the presence of sub-surface deposits. To the west end of the section, deposits of structural stone, probably the remains of walling, are interspersed with highly organic soils. A length of drystone walling, over 0.5m high, extends for 8m. Two fragments of walling extend over an area of some 30m and probably represent parts of a single structure. Both walls are bonded with clay and finished to a high standard. Together, they appear to form two sides of a rectilinear structure, the corner of which has been removed by coastal erosion. Neither wall is uncovered in its entirety. Stratified anthropogenic deposits associated with this walling include peatash, fish, mammal and bird bone.
- Potential:** This site is tentatively identified as a settlement of Viking/Norse date. It lies close to a known Norse period high-status settlement at Tuquoy (WT65, Map 5) and Crosskirk church (WT64, Map 5) which is of contemporary date. Since it was not recorded prior to this survey, the site may not have been eroding for very long. The structures appear to be well preserved, the soil deposits are clearly stratified and materials such as bone and shell survive in good condition.
- Threat:** The site is actively eroding. The presence of concentrations of heavy masonry among the archaeological deposits renders the section inherently unstable; as the stones fall forward they cause the collapse of the soil deposits. The rate of retreat is therefore affected as much by the instability of the remains as it is by the frequency of storms. A vehicle track passes immediately over the coastal exposure and the passage of traffic may contribute to further destabilisation. Moreover, the site lies on a public footpath to the sites at Crosskirk and Tuquoy and the eroding deposits may attract unwelcome attention.
- Action:** There is a requirement for test pitting in order to confirm the date of this site. Work should also record the eroding deposits, as these are likely to give some indication of the complexity of the site. Test pits should also seek to establish the extent of the deposits. This site is unlikely to be suitable for protection due to the nature of the foreshore.

The Cairns, Mainland (ML36, Map 5)

- Description:** The site and the land which immediately surrounds it has not been cultivated and is very overgrown. The remains are sufficiently substantial to be described as an artificial mound or platform with adjoining enclosure. The platform stands up to 3m high, measures 54m by 30m, and is aligned north-south, parallel to the coast. The top of the platform is relatively level but rises slightly to the periphery, possibly indicating the presence of a surrounding bank. Some stone is visible in the sloping sides, suggesting that there may have been a revetment wall. A smaller mound lies to the south east side. To the seaward side, a curvilinear bank encloses an area of at least 50m by 10m. The banks are earthen and although somewhat reduced by cultivation and coastal erosion, have the appearance of defences. Bone pins are said to have been recovered from this area. The site has a direct line of view to Stromness and beyond through Hoy Sound.
- Potential:** This extensive site is classified and scheduled as a group of cairns (HS Index 1248), although it had traditionally been known as the site of a Danish fort. The substantial and defensive nature of the remains and the strategic location strongly suggests that this is a fortification of early historic or medieval date. Such a site would be unusual in an Orcadian context. Although much reduced, the surviving remains are likely to be sufficiently well preserved to provide a representative picture of the whole.
- Threat:** The seaward portion of the site is actively eroding. The likelihood that this site has been wrongly classified increases the possibility that future management decisions will be ill-informed or inappropriate.
- Action:** In the first instance, this sites requires a detailed survey of its upstanding elements. Assessment via trial trenching, possibly in combination with geophysical survey, could be most usefully used to determine the nature, extent and date of the remains. The eroding coastal section could be protected with sea defences. The management of this site could be enhanced by controlling the access of cattle on to the area and by keeping the vegetation in check. If further archaeological investigations confirm the reclassification of this site, it may be suitable for public access.

Clestrain, Mainland (ML29, Map 4)

- Description:** A subterranean passage, aligned at 90° to the coast edge, is exposed in the coastal section. It lies beneath 0.2m of topsoil and turf and a further 0.2m of colluvium. The drystone walls, which stand up to 1.1m or 16 courses high, are revetted against bedrock. The passage, therefore, is either partially cut into the rock or has utilised a natural chasm. It is 1.05m wide and can be followed into the section face for a distance of about 2.2m. Beyond this point the passage is filled with refuse which has been washed in by the sea.
- Potential:** This structure may be part of a souterrain, or alternatively may be a noost or boat shed of some antiquity which has been buried. If it represents part of a souterrain, the possibility exists that it extends inland and is associated with a larger settlement. The hinterland in this area has been rendered featureless by cultivation. Remains, such as these, which are visible outwith the cultivated fields may provide the only opportunity to locate archaeological sites in this landscape.
- Threat:** This site is open to the sea and is vulnerable to destruction. The hinterland is under arable crop and any surviving archaeological remains may be disturbed by cultivation.
- Action:** An assessment will be required to determine the nature, date and extent of these remains. The methods likely to be most suitable for this purpose will be trial trenching, possibly carried out in combination with geophysical survey. The question as to whether the 'passage' extends further inland could be rapidly addressed with limited trial trenching. Field walking may provide further indications of archaeological remains in the wider area.

Bay of Skail, Westray (WT1, Map 1)

- Description:** Structural remains and shell midden deposits are exposed in a sand-cliff to the fore of a ridge of dunes. These remains are visible over a distance of some 60m and are up to 3m thick. They are situated in the upper portion of the dunes, some 4m above the level of the beach. The remains are covered by deposits of wind blown sand and topsoil. At least two separate structural levels are represented in the section. They are separated by an anthropogenic soil that contains shell and fragments of bone. A drystone wall protrudes end-on to the section face towards the southern end of the exposure. It stands up to 0.3m high and appears to be curved. It is known locally as 'The Pict's House'. It was opened at some time before 1928, revealing a circular chamber and a long passage. It has been eroding since at least 1928, when RCAHMS surveyors noted the presence of midden, a pot sherd and a fragment of bronze.
- Potential:** The site cannot be fully characterised by the deposits currently visible or from previous records. It would appear, however, that it represents prehistoric settlement.
- Threat:** The site is being eroded by the sea and the wind and has been further damaged by rabbits and nesting fulmars.
- Action:** The level of the threat is such that any further work, whether assessment or salvage excavation, should be carried out without delay. The initial work should determine the nature, extent and date of the site. This could be addressed by means of trial trenching and section recording.

Biggings, Westray (WT20, Map 1)

Description: A slight mound lies inland from a coastal exposure containing archaeological deposits. The mound is amorphous and has no distinguishing features. The exposure extends for 13m and stands up to 1.2m high. The visible archaeological deposits chiefly comprise loose stonework, apparently representing a wall aligned parallel to the modern shoreline. This is covered by soil deposits containing inclusions of peat ash and charcoal and latterly by shell midden. There are further deposits of peat ash beneath the wall. The coastal section has slumped to either side of the visible deposits and thus their full extent could not be determined.

Potential: It is probable that these remains are part of a more extensive prehistoric settlement, although further assessment will be required to determine this.

Threat: The visible deposits lie above a soft till which is being washed out by the sea. The undermined section is thus threatened with further collapse.

Action: Assessment via trial trenching and section recording is required to determine the nature, extent and date of this site.

Queena Howe, Westray (WT30, Map 2)

Description: This site is comprised of at least two distinct sets of remains: a mound and extensive structural remains which are visible in the coastal section. These remains are located in close proximity but may not be associated. The structure(s) revealed in the section is associated with anthropogenic soils and midden deposits and would appear to represent a settlement. The mound has a well-defined form which appears more designed than the result of post-abandonment build-up.

Potential: The site is scheduled as a broch although it is probable that the remains represent activity over a considerable duration. The overburden of deposits covering the site has had a benign influence on its survival. The structural remains in section appear well preserved and both artefacts and ecofactual materials survive in good condition. The area in which the site is situated appears to be a sand-trap and there may be a considerable depth of sand covering any archaeological deposits which survive in the wider locality.

Threat: An extensive area of structural deposits is currently exposed in the eroding coastal section. A vehicle track runs immediately above this exposure and appears to have truncated the seaward edge of the mound. Traffic on this track is likely to cause more damage to the already vulnerable remains.

Action: The various elements of this site need to be more conclusively identified and the extent of the remains should be determined. The deposits in the eroding section face should be recorded as a matter of urgency, in order to clarify what is represented and to provide a detailed record for the future, should no further work be carried out. These aims could be met through a programme of section recording and trial trenching; geophysics may not be suitable in this context since there is a deep overburden of sand. The coastal section could be protected, at least in the short term, by coastal defences. The remains could be further protected by the re-routing of the vehicle track.

Hodgalee, Westray (WT70, Map 6)

Description: Part of a large overgrown mound, which probably originally measured up to 50m by 30m, stands up to 5m high. The seaward side of the mound has been truncated by coastal erosion. There are traces of stone structural remains visible in the side and at the top of the mound. The coastal section in front of the mound is overgrown and disturbed, and although structural remains are visible, it is difficult to discern their nature. To the Southeast side of the mound, there are extensive structural and midden deposits visible in section for almost 100m. The walls of a circular or sub-circular structure, some 12m in diameter, are exposed. The walls are up to 1.75m wide and protrude from the section at an oblique angle. The structure is filled with and covered by shell-rich deposits; an ard tip was also noted within these deposits.

Potential: The scale and nature of this mound suggests that it covers a substantial building such as a broch. The relationship between the broch and the house exposed in the section cannot be easily determined without recourse to excavation but the two should not be assumed to be of contemporary date. The extent of remains in this area indicates that it was a focus of activity and occupation over a long duration. The evidence of the coastal exposure indicates that the surviving remains are well preserved and that the site stratigraphy is well defined.

Threat: Coastal erosion has caused further, serious damage at this site since it was last examined in 1990 and continues to pose the greatest threat to the remains. The section contains heavy masonry which is liable to slumping and collapse.

Action: The extent and range of remains at this site need to be more fully characterised and elements of the site other than the probable broch need investigation. Due to the scale and likely complexity of the remains, limited open area excavation is likely to be the only method which provides an adequate level of information. Site extent could be investigated through a complementary programme of test trenching. Section recording would add information on depth and stratigraphy, however given the great length of the eroding section this should be limited to specific areas of interest.

Mound of Skelwick, Westray (WT105, Map 10)

Description: An extensive settlement mound, measuring at least 40m in diameter, lies adjacent to the coast edge. A modern road cuts through the centre of the mound, while the seaward side is protected, to some degree, by a sea wall. The initial construction of the road revealed traces of stone structures and anthropogenic deposits containing quantities of horn. In more recent years, the construction of a new passing place has exposed further archaeological deposits. These deposits include both structural elements and anthropogenic deposits containing large amounts of fish bone. This exposure measures up to 30m in length and stands to 1m high.

Potential: This site appears to be a multi-period settlement of some duration. The deposits exposed in the new exposure have not been recorded and may provide insights into the composition and possibly the date of the mound.

Threat: The major part of this site is not threatened and requires no further work at this time. The newly exposed section lies beneath a drystone dyke and is now very undermined and unstable. This may cause the collapse of a larger part of the mound. It must also be a concern that any consolidation of the section by the roads authority is likely to cause further damage to the archaeological remains.

Action: An assessment of the exposed remains is now urgently required, after which the section will require consolidation. It is recommended that the consolidation works be supervised by an archaeologist.

Cott, Papa Westray (PWT26, Map 1)

Description: Structural remains and anthropogenic soil deposits are visible in a coastal exposure that extends for over 100m. The section stands up to 3.5m high; in most places the basal archaeological deposits are obscured by a storm beach. The densest concentration of structural remains occurs towards the centre of the section. Here several walls are visible, forming at least two major structural phases. Wall ends protrude at 90° to the section and measure up to 0.6m wide by 1.3m or more in height. A cursory inspection suggests that at least four structures are present, none of which appear particularly substantial or defensive. Some of the structures appear to have been revetted into midden. The midden deposits contain inclusions of shell, bird, mammal and fish bone, peat ash, charcoal and burnt stone; some of the bone is unburnt and articulated. The latest structural phase lies beneath a very substantial farm mound. This, in turn, lies beneath a farmstead of 18th-20th C date. Further structural remains survive in front of the section also, but here they have been partially covered by the storm beach and are not readily identifiable.

Potential: The extensive archaeological remains in this area apparently represent a settlement of some duration. Of the several parts of buildings currently visible, none is obviously of Iron Age type and it is possible that they predate this period. The occupation and midden deposits appear to be well preserved, to the extent that articulated bone is readily visible in the section. The overburden of farm mound material has helped, no doubt, to preserve the site and may have assisted in the preservation of organic materials. The presence of farm buildings in the immediate hinterland places restrictions on the area available for archaeological investigation. These buildings, and in particular, a silage pit, may have damaged or erased a proportion of the archaeological remains.

Threat: This site is very vulnerable to further losses as a result of coastal erosion.

Action: Assessment to determine, at the minimum, the nature, extent and date of the remains is required. These aims may be achieved by means of section recording in combination with limited trial trenching. The presence of modern buildings in the area makes it unlikely that open area excavation could be attempted.

Kings Craig, Papa Westray (PWT59, Map 2)

Description: Substantial archaeological deposits and structural remains are exposed in the coastal section around the headland at Whitehowe. The cliff stands up to 4m high and, of this, up to 2m is comprised of archaeological deposits. The exposure extends for about 30m. At the base of the section, glacial till is covered by a cultivation soil, which in turn is covered by a layer of blown sand. The earliest structural remains visible in the section are built over this layer of sand. They comprise a flagged surface, associated with up to three separate structures and a series of stone-lined drains. The walls of the structures vary in construction; one is double faced with a hollow core, others appear to be revetted. The impression gained is that the structures are conjoined or closely associated. Layers of anthropogenic soils and midden-type deposits surround and fill into the structures, and there is some indication of a secondary phase of construction. Further deposits of shell midden and agricultural soils fill into the uppermost structures and render the area level.

Potential: The earliest remains appear to relate to cultivation while later remains suggest a substantial settlement, occupied over a long duration. The later structures visible in section are reminiscent of Viking or Norse buildings, but this cannot be conclusively demonstrated with the available evidence. At the abandonment of the settlement, the area appears to have been farmed once again. The farmstead which now occupies part of the site is of 18th-20th C date.

Threat: The remains have already been affected by coastal erosion and are very vulnerable to further losses.

Action: This site is so extensive that it is unlikely to be suitable for protection with coastal defences. An assessment to ascertain the extent, date and nature of the remains is required. The most appropriate methods may be selective section recording in combination with trial trenching. The presence of modern buildings in the hinterland area makes it unlikely that open area excavation can be carried out and therefore assessment should aim to provide a representative record of the remains.

Orphir Bay, Mainland (ML17, Map 2)

Description: The footings of a rectangular structure, measuring 8m by 3m, are located on the foreshore and exposed in the coastal section. The building is aligned east-west. Previous recorders (Batey, 1980) have noted the presence of a cross-wall, but this is no longer clearly visible. Further, more ill-defined structural remains survive nearby to the south.

Potential: This site lies close to the extensive complex of Norse period remains at the Earl's Bu and the possibility that it may be of similar date needs to be addressed.

Threat: This site is has already been reduced by coastal erosion and is very vulnerable to complete destruction.

Action: A limited programme of trial trenching should quickly establish the nature date and extent of this site.

Cummi Ness, Mainland (ML39 & 55, Map 5)

Description: Two sites in urgent need of assessment lie close together at the head of the Bay of Ireland. Part of a curving wall exposed in the coastal section appears to belong to an oval or sub-circular structure (ML39), measuring some 10m in diameter. The wall stands up to 3 courses or 0.45m high and is associated with deposits of burnt bone, charcoal and peatash lenses. Nearby, two rectangular structures (ML55) are visible from aerial photographs. The buildings are aligned east-west and parallel to one another. The southernmost structure is the larger of the two buildings.

Potential: Site ML39 appears to be an undefended settlement of the later prehistoric period. Site ML55 may represent a house and a barn, possibly of Norse or Medieval date.

Threat: Both sites have already suffered losses from coastal erosion. They are located on a narrow spit of land within an estuarine environment which is subject to inundation.

Action: Assessment by means of test pitting would be an appropriate initial response at both sites. Limited section recording at ML39 may provide additional information about site stratigraphy

Bu of Cairston, Mainland (ML40, Map 5)

Description: A coastal exposure, over 50m long, contains structural remains, but is so overgrown, that these are not clearly identifiable. The section face stands up to 3m in height and along with series of upright slabs there are anthropogenic soil deposits which contain inclusions of bone and shell. The site has been eroding for many years and collections of artefacts and unworked bone have been collected and deposited at Tankerness House Museum.

Potential: Previous recorders have interpreted the site as a broch and associated settlement. The site has never been thoroughly assessed, however, and it may be that significant remains of both earlier and later periods are also present.

Threat: The site is being removed by coastal erosion.

Action: Assessment should investigate the nature date and extent of this site by means of limited section recording in combination with test trenching.

Category 2: Assessment required

Hahouse, Westray (WT25, Map 1)

An eroding mound and earthwork requires assessment to characterise the nature, date and extent of the deposits.

Trenabie, Westray (WT15, Map 1)

This site is scheduled as a standing stone but now appears as an amorphous, eroding mound. An assessment is required to determine the nature, date and extent of the site. The classification under which this site is scheduled may need to be changed.

Quoygrew, Westray (WT16 & WT17, Map 1)

Shell midden and structural deposits exposed in section have been subjected to limited investigations recently. Further assessment may be necessary to determine the nature and extent of the deposits.

Narr Ness, Westray (WT28, Map 1)

Two mounds at risk from coastal erosion require assessment to characterise their nature and date.

Hourness, Westray (WT32, Map 2)

Settlement remains exposed in section may relate to a substantial prehistoric house or broch. The site cannot be characterised from the visible deposits alone. An assessment of the remains is now required.

Our Ness, Westray (WT33, Map 2)

An earthwork which may be a prehistoric land boundary is eroding at its seaward end. Assessment is required to investigate the nature, date and extent of this site.

Noup, Westray (WT34, Map 2)

Three eroding mounds, of possible prehistoric date, require assessment to characterise their nature and date.

Knowe of Burristae, Westray (WT50, Map 5)

The footings of a building, set back from the coast edge, have been previously identified as a prehistoric settlement but may represent a chapel. Assessment is required to characterise the nature, date and extent of the remains and to investigate the remains of a field system which appears to be associated with it.

Knowe of Burristae, Westray (WT51, Map 5)

The remains of a substantial house or broch exposed in section. At present, there is no detailed record of this site and it is unlikely to survive for much longer. A programme of rapid section recording in combination with salvage excavation is urgently required.

Berst Ness, Westray (WT54, Map 5)

Four structures of probable prehistoric date are spread over a small promontory. They have been variously interpreted as either houses or cairns. A detailed topographic survey of the area is required and could be combined with assessment via trial trenching.

Mae Sand, Westray (WT56, Map 5)

This is an extensive area of deflating dunes in which sand quarrying is also being carried out. There are slight indications of possible early prehistoric activity and further assessment is required. The most suitable methods will be a controlled walk-over survey, possibly combined with trial trenching or surface cleaning.

Ness of Tuquoy, Westray (WT67, Map 6)

Settlement remains of probable prehistoric date are eroding from a coastal section. An assessment is required to determine the nature, date and extent of this site. The most appropriate method of assessment will be trial trenching or limited open area excavation.

Links of Garth, Westray (WT71, Map 6)

An eroding mound requires assessment via trial trenching to determine its nature and date.

Tafts, Westray (WT130, Map 7)

A large mound, which may represent prehistoric settlement over a long duration, is eroding on the coast edge. Assessment by means of limited open area excavation, supplemented by trial trenching should examine the nature, extent and date of the remains.

Whitelet, Westray (WT114, Map 8)

Structural remains seen in section appear to be associated with a slight mound in the hinterland. The site cannot be characterised from the visible remains alone and assessment is required. Trial trenching should determine the nature and date of the remains as well as their inland extent.

Weather Ness, Westray (WT138, Map 8)

An amorphous mound may either represent the structural remains of a prehistoric house, or a burial place. The remains are vulnerable but not actively eroding. Assessment, via trial trenching, is necessary in order to determine nature date and extent of the remains.

Castle of Burrian, Westray (WT142, Map 9)

Structures of an unknown character have been observed on this stack. The location is vulnerable, however assessment is required to determine nature and date. This site is most likely to be suitable for field survey and trial trenching.

Swartmill, Westray (WT111 & WT112, Map 10)

Two sites are visible as eroding deposits in the coastal section. Site WT111 appears to represent structural remains, while WT112 may be industrial debris. The date, extent and nature of these remains requires to be assessed: limited section recording in combination with trial trenching are likely to be the most suitable methods.

Cleat, Westray (WT159, Map 11)

Midden deposits eroding from the coastal section have been the subject of limited assessment in recent times. Further assessment via a more extensive programme of trial trenching may be required to characterise the remains more fully.

Mayback, Papa Westray (PWT30, Map 1)

A large eroding mound, which may be a farm mound, requires assessment to characterise its nature, date and extent. This may be achieved via a programme of limited open area excavation in combination with trial trenching.

Claybraes, Papa Westray (PWT66, Map 2)

A mound which lies on the coast edge and is vulnerable to erosion requires assessment to characterise its nature and date. Trial trenching is likely to be the most appropriate method of assessment.

Holland, Papa Westray (PWT53, Map 2)

Midden deposits, exposed in the coastal section, lie in close proximity to the excavated Neolithic houses at Knap of Howar. These deposits should be assessed to determine their nature, extent and date. The most appropriate assessment method is likely to be either limited open area excavation or trial trenching.

Toy Ness, Mainland (ML13, Map 1)

A group of mounds, some of which are eroding, may represent prehistoric burial monuments. Assessment is required to determine their nature and date and can best be achieved by trial trenching.

Head of Banks, Mainland (ML18, Map 2)

An eroding mound may contain structural remains. Assessment, via trial trenching, is required to characterise the remains more fully.

Bay of Myre, Mainland (ML19, Map 3)

A mound, which is alleged to be the site of a chapel, is being damaged by cattle poaching and is vulnerable to coastal erosion. Assessment is required to determine the nature, date and extent of the remains. The most appropriate assessment method will be limited open area excavation or trial trenching.

Buxa, Mainland (ML26, Map 4)

Archaeological deposits, of a possibly structural nature, are eroding from the coastal section. Assessment, via trial trenching, is required to determine the nature, extent and date of these remains.

Clestrain, Mainland (ML32, Map 4)

Deposits of stone seen in the coastal section may represent part of a structure. The remains cannot be more fully characterised without recourse to assessment. The most appropriate method of assessment at this site will be trial trenching.

Corn Hillock, Mainland (ML37, Map 5)

A large mound, which may represent a multi-period settlement, lies close to the coast edge. Assessment via limited open area excavation or trial trenching will be required to more fully characterise the deposits.

Category 3: Assessment Desirable

Hahouse, Westray (WT23, Map 1): traditional farmstead suitable for buildings survey

Bay of Skail, Westray (WT26, Map 1): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Aiker Ness, Westray (WT5, Map 1): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

The Ouse, Westray (WT24, Map 1): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Aiker Ness, Westray (WT8 & WT9, Map 1): Kelp workings

Vaval, Westray (WT11, Map 1): eroding mound, indeterminate type & date

Heugh, Westray (WT13, Map 1): earthwork and mound, indeterminate type & date

Narr Ness, Westray (WT27, Map 1): kelp workings

Clemmar, Westray (WT36, Map 2): earthworks, indeterminate date

Noup Head, Westray (WT172, Map 3): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Bisgeos, Westray (WT43, Map 3): two stable mounds, indeterminate type & date

Kestro, Westray (WT58, Map 5): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Tuquoy, Westray (WT69, Map 6): disturbed mound, indeterminate type & date

Garth, Westray (WT74, Map 6): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Branstone Hill, Westray (WT90, Map 6): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Hamar, Westray (WT95, Map 7): eroding mound, indeterminate type & date

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Taftend Farm, Westray (WT98, Map 7): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Stancro, Westray (WT126, Map 7): Indeterminate remains, associated with cairns ?

West Sous, Westray (WT122, Map 8): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Rapness, Westray (WT119, Map 8): disturbed mound, indeterminate type & date

Crow Tuo, Westray (WT116, Map 8): disturbed mound, indeterminate type & date

Sand Geo, Westray (WT135, Map 8): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Weather Ness, Westray (WT136 & WT137, Map 8): field system, indeterminate date

The Ship, Westray (WT139, Map 8): indeterminate remains, possible burial site

Bight of Stanger Head, Westray (WT141, Map 9): stable mound, indeterminate

Sheepright Geo, Westray (WT101, Map 9): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Cleat, Westray (WT145, Map 11): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Leckquoy, Westray (WT151, Map 11): traditional farmstead suitable for survey

Bay of Brough, Westray (WT156, Map 11): well, located on foreshore

Sandquoy, Westray (WT153, Map 11): workers cottages suitable for buildings survey

Comhouse, Westray (WT155, Map 11): store buildings suitable for buildings survey

Newbigging, Papa Westray (PWT9, Map 1): Stable burnt mounds

Weelies Taing, Papa Westray (PWT17, Map 1): Structures, indeterminate type & date

Nth & Sth Via, Papa Westray (PWT24, Map 1): stable mound, indeterminate

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Cuppin, Papa Westray (PWT42, Map 2): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Bay of Burland, Papa Westray (PWT44, Map 2): stable mound, indeterminate

East Cott, Papa Westray (PWT61, Map 2): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Rattlie Geo, Papa Westray (PWT3, Map 2): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Geo of Clyar, Papa Westray (PWT4, Map 2): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Holm of Papa Westray (HPW5, Map 2): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Holm of Papa Westray (HPW6, Map 2): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Holm of Papa Westray (HPW8, Map 2): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Point, Mainland (ML4, Map 1): Earthworks of indeterminate date and type

Hillock of Breakna, Mainland (ML8, Map 1): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Orphir Bay, Mainland (ML50, Map 2): stable mound, indeterminate type & date

Houton Head, Mainland (ML22, Map 3): possible chapel site

Category 4: Monitoring required

Vere Point, Westray (WT22, Map 1): chambered cairn, enclosure and mounds

Evertaft, Westray (WT2, Map 1): eroding deposits, indeterminate

Aiker Ness, Westray (WT6, Map 1): eroding deposits, indeterminate

Aiker Ness, Westray (WT7, Map 1): eroding deposits, indeterminate

Holm of Aikerness, Westray (WT84, Map 1): site of chapel

Trenabie, Westray (WT14, Map 1): mound, indeterminate

Biggings, Westray (WT19, Map 1): eroding deposits, indeterminate

Links of Noltland, Westray (WT29, Map 2): extensive, vulnerable settlement remains

Lean, Westray (WT31, Map 2): eroding deposits, indeterminate

Flag Ber/Andrew Seatter's Breast, Westray (WT45, Map 4): cairn, possibly modern

Langskaill, Westray (WT82, Map 5): mound, indeterminate

Tuquoy, Westray (WT65, Map 5): eroding Norse settlement remains

Crosskirk, Westray (WT64, Map 5): chapel ruins and burial ground

Grinaby, Westray (WT92, Map 7): eroding deposits, indeterminate

Sands of Woo, Westray (WT133, Map 8): site of mound

Stavers Geo, Westray (WT134, Map 8): eroding mound, possibly modern

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Rackwick Mill, Westray (WT143, Map 9): 18th C mill

Height of the World, Westray (WT149, Map 11): possible settlement or farm mound

Cleat, Westray (WT147, Map 11): site of settlement and burial ground

Nether Brough, Westray (WT154, Map 11): eroding deposits, indeterminate

Pierowall, Westray (WT77, Map 11): site of findspot

Ladykirk, Westray (WT75, Map 11): church grounds & wider area, ?Norse remains

Knoll of Skulzie, Westray (WT81, Map 11): site of mound, indeterminate

Gill Pier, Westray (WT76, Map 11): eroding burnt mound

St. Boniface/Munker Hoose, Papa Westray (PWT6 &7, Map 1): settlement & chapel

Newbigging, Papa Westray (PWT8, Map 1): mound, indeterminate

Nouster, Papa Westray (PWT35, Map 2): eroding deposits, indeterminate

Hookin, Papa Westray (PWT39, Map 2): settlement remains and farm mound

Cunnam Gairsty, Papa Westray (PWT43, Map 2): treb dyke

East Comy Quoy, Papa Westray (PWT48, Map 2): possible settlement mound

Bay of Moclett, Papa Westray (PWT51, Map 2): buried soils

Bight of Quoyolie, Papa Westray (PWT66, Map 2): eroding deposits, indeterminate

Backaskaill, Papa Westray (PWT58, Map 2): eroding deposits, indeterminate

Holland, Papa Westray (PWT54, Map 2): eroding deposits, indeterminate

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Knap of Howar, Papa Westray (PWT1, Map 2): Neolithic houses

Holm of Papa Westray (HPW2, Map 2): possible site of mariner's graves

Holm of Papa Westray (HPW7, Map 2): eroding deposits, indeterminate

Holm of Papa Westray (HPW4, Map 2): chambered cairn

Earl's Bu, Mainland (ML56, Map 2): extensive Norse period remains

Houton Head, Mainland (ML23, Map 3): WWII coastal battery

Sower, Mainland (ML27, Map 4): mound, indeterminate

Salthouse Bay, Mainland (ML51, Map 4): buried soils

Hall of Ireland, Mainland (ML34, Map 5): site of chapel and burial ground

Cummi Howe, Mainland (ML38, Map 5): eroding settlement remains