

Map 3: South Gravity to Westness

Landscape, Built Heritage & Archaeology

This map section extends around the rugged and rocky coast of Dennis Ness and on into Linklet Bay with its sandy beaches, on the eastern coast of the island. The only modern coastal settlement lies on the east coast, but even this is sparse and accounts for no more than three or four houses. The area is served by an extension of the main road, which runs to Bewan, at the tip of the ness.

The skyline in this area is dominated by the tower of Dennis Ness lighthouse (NR31) which lies to the northern tip of the ness and the Old Beacon (NR35), which lies on the southern tip. The beacon, built in 1789 following a large number of shipwrecks in the area, was the first purpose-built light in Scotland. It was found to be unsatisfactory, however, and was replaced in 1806 by Start Point light on Sanday. Later on in 1852 a new lighthouse was built at Dennis Head to complement the Sanday light. The low-lying nature of the land upon which it stands necessitated that the tower had to be tall to be visible from the sea, and, at a height of 42.3m, this structure claims the distinction of being the tallest land-based lighthouse in Britain.

The most numerous site type recorded by survey in this area are settlement mounds. It is unlikely that they all date from the same period and some include remains of more than one period. At Westness (NR25) shell midden and enriched soil deposits are exposed behind a collapsing sea wall. At Garso (NR26) an eroding shelly mound may be associated with a row of derelict 19th C cottages, although a nearby mound recorded previously (NR28) was thought to be of prehistoric date. The abandoned farmstead at Eastings (NR29) is built over an artificial mound, similar in scale and form to the distinctive 'farm mounds' of Sanday. Of concern, is a probable prehistoric settlement at Dennis Loch (NR33). This site, which was previously recorded as a mound, has recently been disturbed. Archaeological deposits are strewn over the area and it is unclear if any of the original structure now survives in-situ. It has been recommended that an assessment survey be carried out.

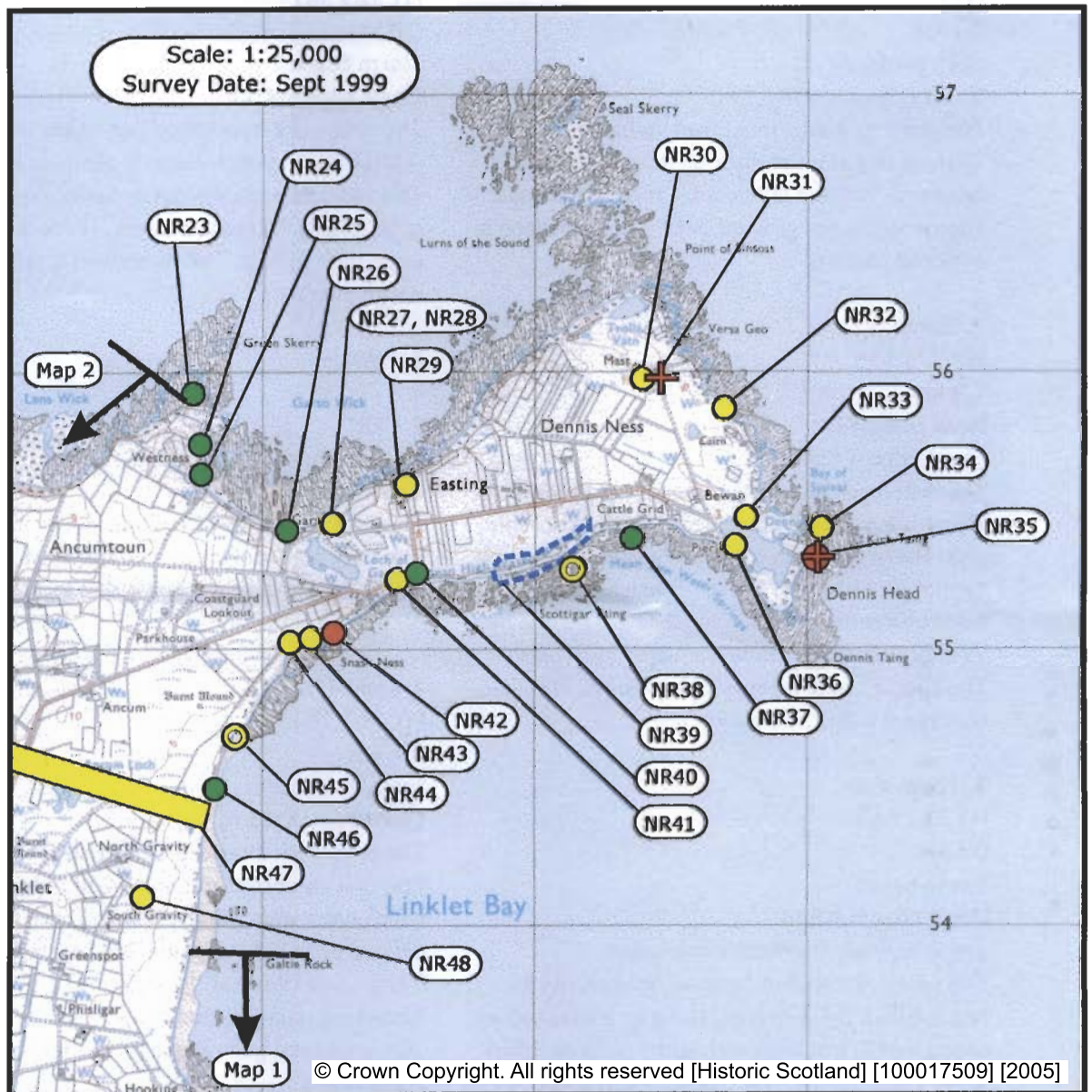
Geology and geomorphology

The most striking features in this landscape are the very large storm beaches at the north end of Dennis Ness and around Dennis Head. The storm beach at the north end of Dennis Ness appears to be advancing landward and is encroaching on Trolla Vatn, a small freshwater loch. The storm beach around Dennis Head, by comparison, appears to be more stable. The hinterland in this section is low-lying and comprises a mixture of small fields and more open grazing land. The sheep dyke comes very close to the coast edge on the north and south sides of Dennis Ness.

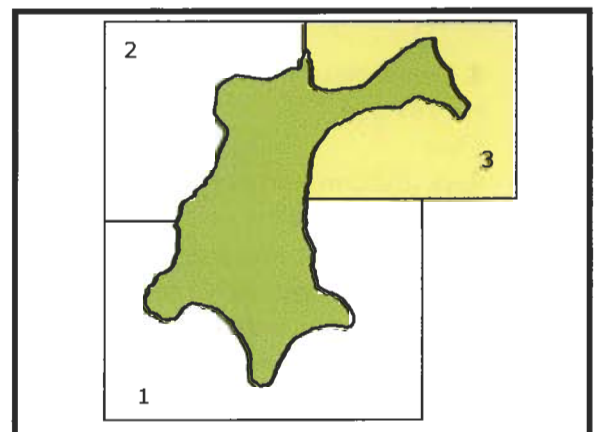
Erosion

The erosion in this section is generally on a small scale and unremarkable. On the north and south sides of Dennis Ness, where the sheep dyke is close to the coast edge, the effects of sheep poaching has exacerbated the erosion problem. A concrete sea wall in front of Westness Farm is badly damaged. Here, it appears that the level of the sandy beach in front of the farm has dropped by at least 1m since the wall was first built. This has had the effect of exposing the foundations and rendering the entire wall unstable.

NR23 HY7670 5591 Westness Platform and pund 18-20th C Poor Monitor	NR30 HY75NE5 HY7840 5599 Dennis Ness Structural remains Unknown Not seen Monitor	NR37 HY7866 5535 Bewan Pier 18-20th C Fair Nil	NR44 HY75NE20 HY7718 5504 Neven Possible settlement Unknown: ?prehistoric Not seen Monitor
NR24 HY7676 5575 Westness Mounds Unknown: ?prehistoric Fair Survey	NR31 75NE24 HY7843 5599 Dennis Head, Versa Breck Lighthouse 18-20th C Good Nil	NR38 HY75NE8001 HY7816 5524 Linklet Bay Shipwreck: Hansi 18-20th C Poor Nil	NR45 HY75SE8003 HY769 546 Linklet Bay Shipwreck: the Eva 18-20th C Not seen Monitor
NR25 HY7674 5565 Westness Farm Coastal exposure Unknown: ?prehistoric Poor Survey	NR32 HY75NE6 HY7868 5580 Dennis Ness Cairn, cist & walls 3rd-1st mill BC Poor Monitor	NR39 HY780 553 Scottigar Coastal exposure Unknown: ?prehistoric Fair/poor Survey	NR46 HY7683 5456 Linklet Bay Wall Unknown Fair/poor Monitor
NR26 HY7708 5543 Garso Mound & shell midden Unknown Fair Survey	NR33 HY75NE13 HY7875 5547 Dennis Loch Mound Unknown: ?prehistoric Poor Survey	NR40 HY7758 5523 Quoybanks Mound & coastal exposure Unknown: ?prehistoric Fair Survey	NR47 HY75SE33 HY7560 5460-7675 5440 Matches Dyke Treb dyke 3rd-1st mill BC Fair Monitor
NR27 HY75NE10 HY7725 5542 Garso Possible cist Unknown: ?prehistoric Not seen Monitor	NR34 HY75NE15 HY790 554 Kirk Taing Alleged site of church Unknown Not seen Nil	NR41 HY75NE11 HY7740 5518 Quoybanks Possible settlement mound Unknown: ?prehistoric Not seen Monitor	NR48 HY75NE26 HY7 5 North Ronaldsay Sheep Dyke 18-20th C Fair Nil
NR28 HY75NE9 HY7724 5547 Garso Coastal exposure & possible mound Unknown: ?prehistoric Not seen Monitor	NR35 HY75NE23 HY7901 5539 Dennis Head, Kirk Taing Old Beacon & keepers cottages 18-20th C Fair/poor Monitor	NR42 HY75NE1 HY7720 5504 Neven Cist & mound Unknown Not seen Monitor	
NR29 HY75NE12 HY7750 5550 Sennes Mound and coastal exposure Unknown: ?prehistoric Fair Survey"	NR36 HY75NE21 HY7878 5541 Dennis Loch Stone rows Unknown Fair Monitor	NR43 HY75NE7 HY7717 5504 Neven Site of cist burial 3rd-1st mill BC Not seen Monitor	



- Built Heritage & Archaeology**
- Protected Ancient Monument or area of Designated Wreck
 - Monument formally proposed by Historic Scotland for scheduling or wreck for designation
 - + Listed Historic Building
 - Undesignated wreck
 - Known ancient monument
 - Site found by this survey
 - Site complex



1. Westness

HY 767 559

0.2 km

Rock platform

Coast edge is < 5 m

The drift/rock interface is not visible

There is an extensive rock platform around this headland. There is little cobble throw, the coast edge is stable and grassed over. The hinterland is enclosed pasture.

2. Garso

HY 776 556

1.8 km

Rock platform

Coast edge is < 5 m

The drift/rock interface is intermittently visible

There is a narrow cobble beach for most of this unit. There is sand in front of Westness farm and further east towards Garso. There are sea walls in front of Westness farm and Easting. The one by Westness has been badly damaged by erosion.

The cobble cover increases to the east. The hinterland is fenced pasture.

3. Trolla Vatn

HY 782 562

0.5 km

Storm beach

Coast edge is < 5 m

The drift/rock interface is not visible

This unit is dominated by an enormous storm beach which is < 6 m high, rising to a level top an average of 2-4 m wide with some sections 10 m wide. There is little vegetation on top and it appears to be moving landwards. The hinterland is unfenced rough grazing.

4. Dennis Ness

HY 787 558

1 km

Rock platform with storm beach

Coast edge is < 5 m

The drift/rock interface is intermittently visible

This unit has some cobble cover along most of the upper foreshore in the form of a low storm beach. Gaps in the rock platform are filled with sand. The hinterland is unenclosed rough grazing.

5. Dennis Head

HY 789 552

0.8 km

Storm beach

Coast edge is < 5 m

The drift/rock interface is not visible

A large storm beach extends around Dennis Head. This extends from the upper foreshore inland for c. 10 m as a flat topped berm. There is some vegetation on top. The hinterland is unenclosed rough grazing.

6. Bewan

HY 776 552

2.1 km

Rock platform

Coast edge is < 5 m

The drift/rock interface is intermittently visible

The rock platform is covered for most of the unit with a cobble beach. A sea wall is located at Snash Ness. The hinterland is fenced pasture.

7. Linklet Bay

HY 767 542

0.9 km

Sandy foreshore

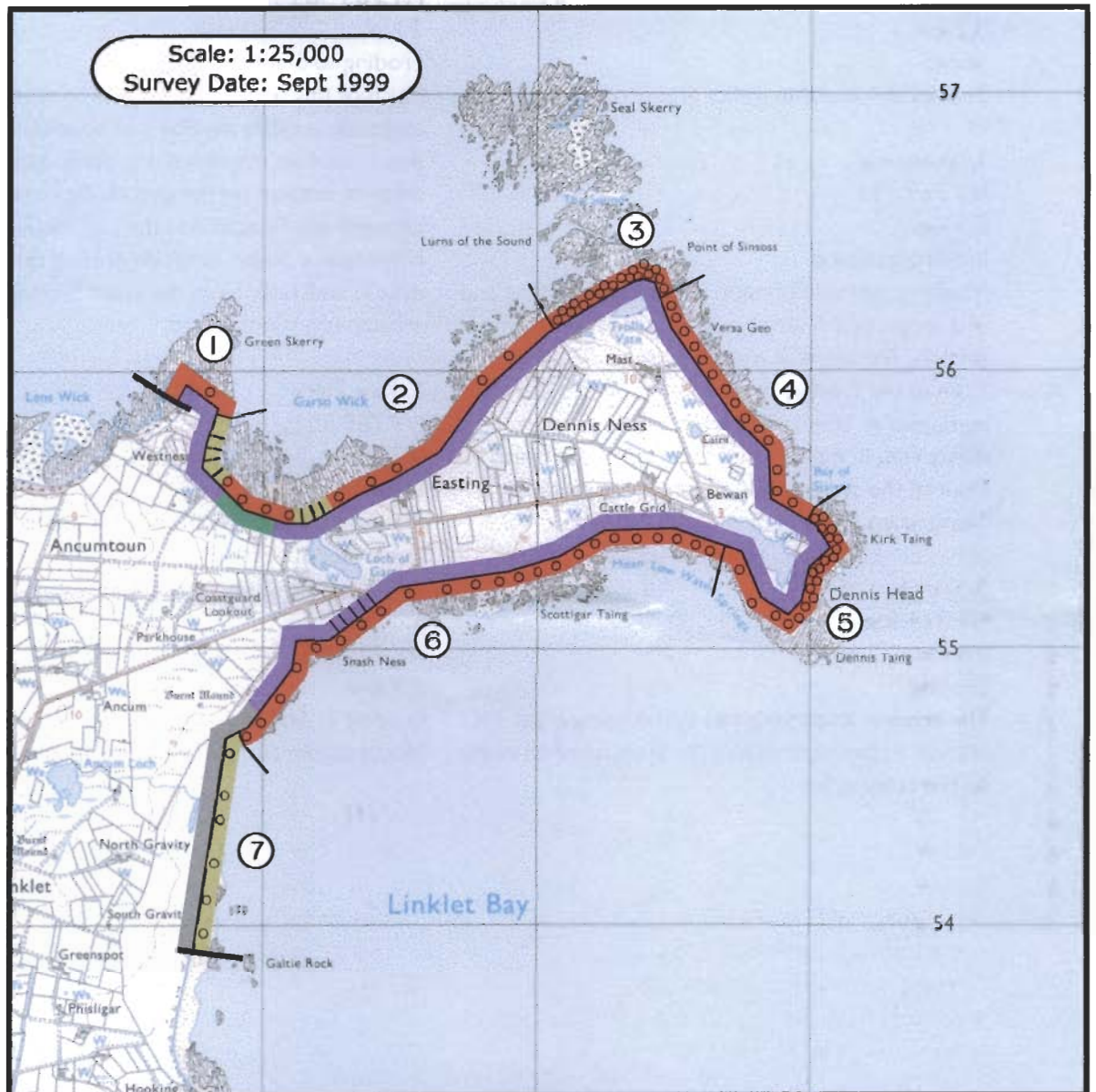
Coast edge is < 5 m

The drift/rock interface is not visible

This unit comprises the north end of Linklet bay, which has a wide, sandy, beach. There is a well defined edge between land and beach formed from a short vertical cliff section c. 1 m high. The hinterland is unenclosed rough grazing, currently also in use as a golf course (green fees available on application).

Hinterland Geology & Coastal Geomorphology

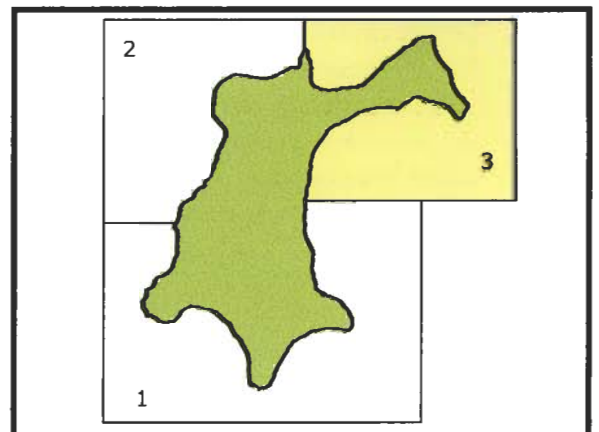
North Ronaldsay Map 3



- Foreshore**
- Rock platform
 - Mainly sand
 - Mainly alluvial/marine mud
 - Marsh

- Modifiers**
- Low edge <5m
 - Cliff >5m
 - Man made barrier
 - Shingle/storm bank
 - Human disturbance

- Hinterland**
- Drift
 - Drift on visible rock
 - Raised beach etc.
 - Blown sand
 - Glacial sand/gravel
 - Alluvium



1. Green Skerry

HY 767 559

0.2 km

Stable

This section is stable with a grassy coast edge.

2. Westness

HY 769 555

0.9 km

Eroding to Stable

Mostly stable with erosion noticeable to either end of a storm beach which occupies most of the section. The sea wall which lies immediately in front of the farm at Westness has been badly damaged. A 10m long stretch has been entirely destroyed. It appears that the level of the beach in front of the sea wall has dropped, exposing the foundations.

3. Garso

HY 774 556

0.4 km

Eroding

The erosion is not very bad in this section but it is present in the form of lengths of exposed till visible on the coast edge.

4. Easting

HY 783 563

2 km

Eroding to Stable

Much of this section is occupied by storm beach, especially around the Point of Sinsoss. The storm beach appears vegetated and stable but there are areas of erosion on the east facing coastline between the Beacon and the Lighthouse. The hinterland is in use as rough grazing but the sheep dyke is well back from the coast here and so sheep erosion is not noticeable.

5. Kirk Taing

HY 789 551

0.7 km

Stable

The land around Dennis Head is protected by a stable storm beach.

6. "Pier"

HY 772 550

2.9 km

Eroding to Stable

Mostly stable but with localised areas of erosion.

