Map 12: Scar to Northskaill

Landscape, Built Heritage & Archaeology
From the sandy shore at Quoy Banks, this map section extends around a headland into Whitemill Bay. Here a long sandy beach is bordered by high dunes, which are mostly consolidated with turf cover. Rounding Whitemill Point, this section continues in a southerly direction along the shores of Otters Wick. From Taing Ayre to Ortie and further on to Northskaill, the coast edge is generally low-lying and soft. Over most of this section, the hinterland is dominated by a pattern of large regular fields of pasture, once part of the wealthy Scar estate. For the most part, the fields do not extend to the coast edge, however. There are larger areas of rough, unenclosed ground around Whitemill Point until Helliehow is reached; from here onward, the coast is again bounded by enclosed pasture land. There is no modern settlement in the coastal area, and indeed very little in the hinterland.

One of the most impressive archaeological discoveries of recent times was the discovery of a Viking boat burial at Quoybanks, Scar (SY159). The burial of a man, woman and child with their grave goods in a small wooden boat was found eroding out from the sandy banks. Rescue excavation was carried out just in time, before the winter storms destroyed the remaining part of the site. The site is marked with a small sign, but nothing now remains of the burial. It has been suggested that a large mound which stands close by, at The Crook (SY161), may also be a funerary monument. If this is the case, and there is yet no conclusive evidence, it may more probably be of early prehistoric than Viking date, since none of the known Viking examples in this part of the world have yet been found beneath such a large mound.

Early settlement activity is indicated in this area at Whitemill Point, Helliehow and Northskaill. At Whitemill point, a low grassy mound (SY164) located on the back shore contains two boat shaped hollows. Given its proximity to the Scar boat burial, this site was the cause of some excitement when it was first noted during survey; on reflection, however, it was considered more likely to represent a probable settlement mound into which a pair of boat noosts had been cut at a later stage ! A much larger mound nearby (SY165) lies on the coast edge and is eroding. Protruding stone and anthropogenic soils are indicative of a settlement mound, but the whole is so overgrown that little more can be said about its composition. At Helliehowe (SY167) and Northskaill (SY170) eroding archaeological deposits appear to derive from accumulated settlement debris; in the case of Northskaill, sherds of Bronze Age-type pottery found in the section imply an early commencement to this settlement.

Geology and Geomorphology
The majority of this unit's coast is made up of sand or dunes. The Hinterland is fairly flat with only a few areas of gently sloping ground. The largest storm beaches lie along this coast. The west side is dominated by one long storm beach with another to the north east and smaller area to the south east. Soils are generally freely draining sands.

Erosion
There are no large sections of erosion within this unit which covers the coast line around a flat peninsula. Most of the localised erosion occurs to the north and is as much due to wind erosion as to marine erosion of the sandy hinterland. Most accretion lies along the south eastern shores within Otters Wick. The unit includes one of the largest farm mounds seen on the survey and lies at Northskaw.

SY157
HY6766 4577
Quoy Banks
Mound
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Good
Monitor

SY158
HY6770 4581
Quoy Banks
Coastal exposure
Unknown
Fair/poor
Monitor

SY159 HY64NE7
HY6780 4584
Quoybanks, Scar
Site of boat burial
1st mill BC-1st mill AD
Fair
Monitor

SY160 HY64NE9
HY6790 4592
The Crook Beach
Kelp workings
18-20th C
Fair
Nil

SY161 HY64NE6
HY6800 4595
The Crook
Mound
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Fair
Monitor

SY162 HY64NE11
HY6850 4668
Whitemill Bay
Kelp workings
18-20th C
Fair/poor
Nil

SY163
HY6867 4660
Whitemill Bay
Coastal exposure: wall
Unknown
Poor
Monitor

SY164
HY6990 4637
Whitemill Point
Mound and possible boat noosts
Unknown: ?prehistoric/18-20th
Poor
Monitor

SY165 HY64NE8
HY6997 4633
Whitemill Point
Mound
Unknown: ?prehistoric/18-20th
Fair/poor
Monitor

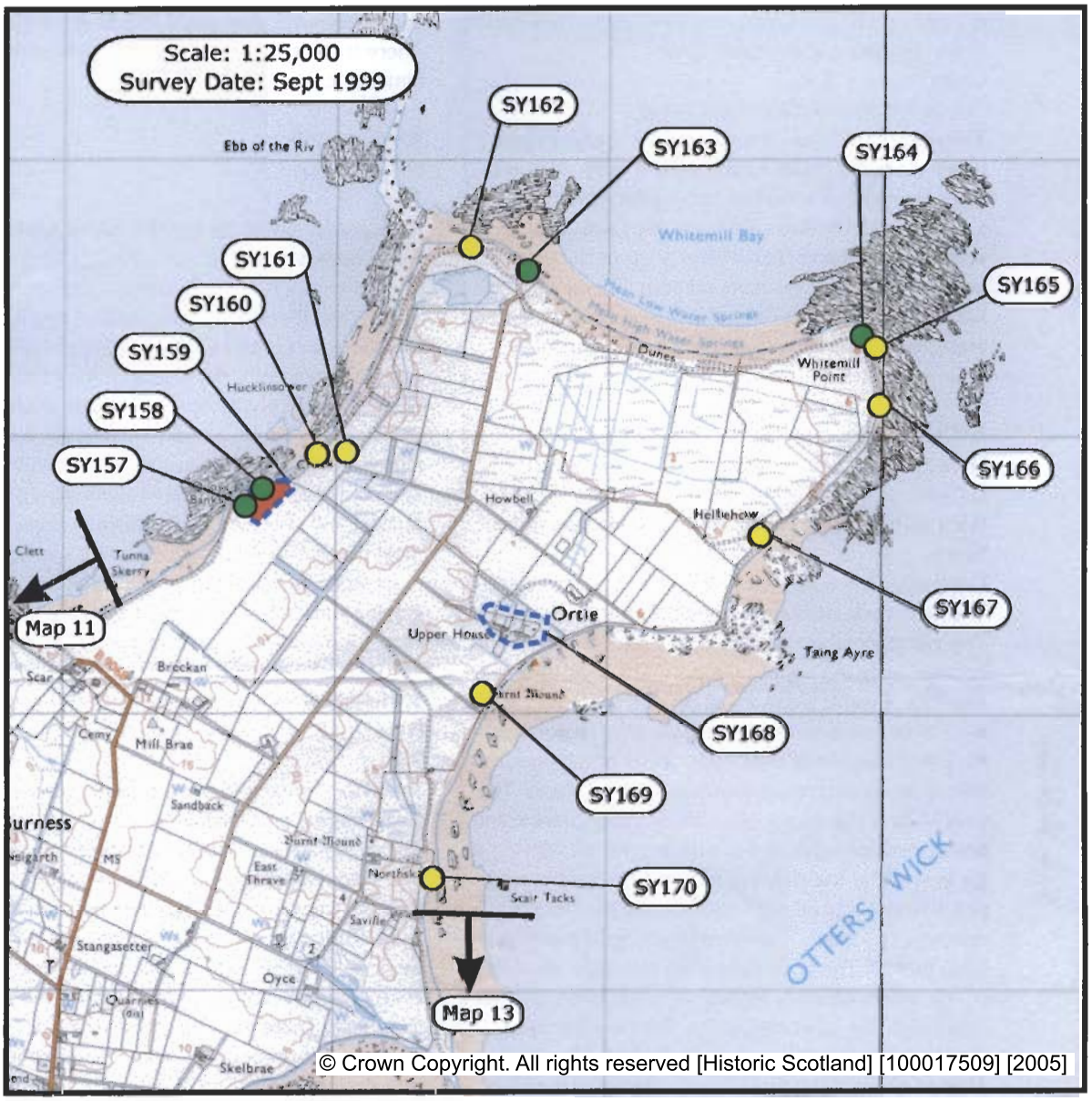
SY166 HY64NE12
HY6999 4612
Whitemill Point
Kelp workings
18-20th C
Fair
Nil

SY167 HY64NE17
HY695 456
Helliehow
Farmstead & coastal exposure
18-20th C
Fair
Monitor

SY168 HY64NE16
HY6868 4528
New Ortie
Village
18-20th C
Fair
Nil

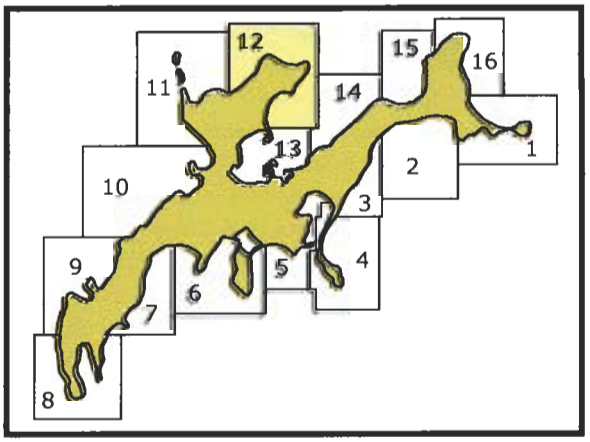
SY169 HY64NE2
HY6853 4505
Ortie
Burnt mound
3rd-1st mill BC
Fair
Nil

SY170 HY64SE12
HY6836 4442
Northskaill
Mound & coastal exposure
?3rd-1st mill BC
Fair
Survey



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. Scar
HY 674 455
0.5 km
Sandy foreshore with cobble cover.
Coast edge is < 5 m.
The drift/rock interface is not visible
The sandy foreshore continues with a cobble storm beach along the upper foreshore and coast edge with some dumping of scrap just behind the dune ridge. Some deflation hollows are being filled with cobbles and sand by natural accretion. A few areas of buried soil can be seen in some of the dune sections. The hinterland has a sandy topsoil beyond the dune ridge with fenced grass fields. Soils are either sandy skeletal or freely drained podzol.

2. Quoy Banks
HY 679 459
0.7 km
Rock platform with cobble cover grading into storm beach.
Coast edge is < 5 m.
The drift/rock interface is not visible
The sandy foreshore grades onto a rock platform with cobbles along the upper foreshore.The rock to drift interface is visible along a well defined coast edge to the west of this section only. The coast edge section has <1.2 m of reddish till over rock. Some of this rock is turning to an incoherent saprolite in a few places. The rock to drift interface is covered by a large cobble and boulder storm beach to the east. An old sea wall lies to the east of the site which grades into the cobble storm beach where a small amount of cobble has been removed by loader. The hinterland is fenced with grass fields behind. The coast edge rises forming a small ridge of relic storm beach to the north so the hinterland lies a little below the coast edge ridge. Soils are thin over skeletal sands for the most part although a freely drained podzol is evident in section close to the Scar viking site.

3. Hucklinsower
HY 688 465
2.1 km
Sandy foreshore with some storm beach.
Coast edge is < 5 m.
The drift/rock interface is not visible.
The sandy foreshore has a large storm beach on the western shore continuing from theprevious section. Round the head the cobbles lessen and finally grade out along the northern shore. The coast edge is raised slightly with an accompanying low hinterland. The edge itself shows at least one buried soil lens at the point. A little further to the east from the point the dune ridges begin and continue to Whitemill Point. There are a series of deflation hollows to the rear of the dunes exposing in some cases a well built stone wall which presumably runs along the coastline beneath the sand dunes for some way. The hinterland is lower than the coast edge with very sandy soils beyond the dune ridge. There is some fencing of grassed fields to the far hinterland.

4.Whitemill Point
HY 700 460
1 km
Rock platform with up to 80% cobble cover.
Coast edge is < 5 m.
The drift/rock interface is not visible.
The rock platform has some sand on the middle foreshore and cobbles along the upper foreshore. The cobbles represent a storm beach along most of the coast but most notably on the eastern shore where some of the cobbles extend 40 m back into the hinterland. The cobbles are overgrown with vegetation. The coast edge is well defined although is only 1 m high at most and very little in the way of a ridge and for the most part is flat. A relic storm beach can be seen in most sections. The hinterland is flat and down to rough grazing with only a few fences. Soils are freely drained sands, some showing signs of podzolisation.

5. Helliehow
HY 688 452
2.2 km
Sandy foreshore with some cobble cover.
Coast edge is predominantly < 5 m.
The drift/rock interface is not visible.
The sandy foreshore has cobbles along the upper foreshore and constitute a storm beach around Taing Ayre. The coast edge becomes less well defined around by Ortie where a ridge of sand dunes lies up against the coast edge with some vegetation along the sandy upper foreshore. There has been some extraction of sand from the dunes south of Ortie. The coast edge rises to c 5 m at Northskaw. The hinterland is fairly flat apart from the dunes south of Ortie with fenced grass fields. Soils are freely drained skeletal sands and sandy podzol with a small areas of imperfectly drained gley to the far hinterland.

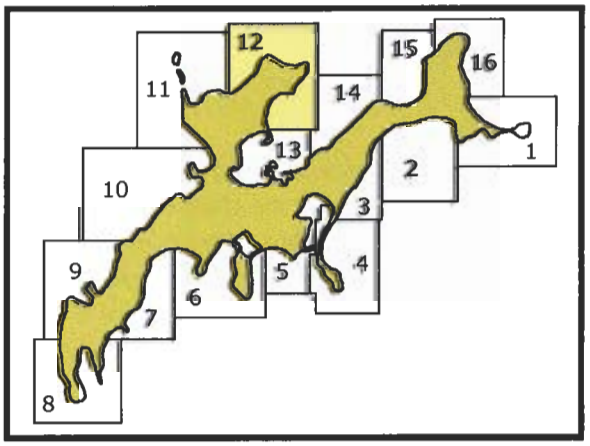
Hinterland Geology & Coastal Geomorphology

Sanday
Map 12

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. Scar
HY 675 455
0.55 km
Accreting to Stable
Although there is some localised erosion of the dune ridge to the west most of this section has sand accretion along the upper foreshore and coast edge. There is also an accretion of cobbles to the north east in the form of a long storm beach on the upper foreshore.

2. Scar Site
HY 677 458
0.2 km
Eroding to Stable
There is a buried soil seen in the sandy section to the west. The section ends as the coast edge becomes stable at the scar monument.

3. Crook
HY 682 462
1.1 km
Stable
A large storm beach runs along the mid and upper foreshore with a stable coast edge and hinterland. There is some evidence that small amounts of cobble have been removed from the storm beach.

4. Whitemill Bay
HY 690 464
1.53 km
Eroding to Stable
There is erosion of the coast edge in some areas and also parts of the sandy coast ridge have been eroded by wind leaving deflation hollows and revealing a buried wall, more to the centre and east of the bay. The sand has accreted to < 1 m in depth over parts of the wall but there is very little evidence that any substantial accretion is taking place at the present time.

5. Whitemill Point
HY 699 459
1.3 km
Stable
Apart from a solitary dune or hillock at the Whitemill Point the coast edge has only a small lip and no dune ridge. There is evidence of a past storm beach accretion but both coast edge and hinterland are now stable. There is very localised erosion of a farm mound at Helliehow.

6. Taing of Ayre
HY 694 453
0.35 km
Accreting
There is accretion of sand along the upper foreshore and coast edge along this section with more shingle on the upper foreshore at the point itself.

7. Ortie
HY 689 452
0.4 km
Accreting to Stable
There is less accretion towards Ortie yet it still persists to a lesser degree than the previous section.

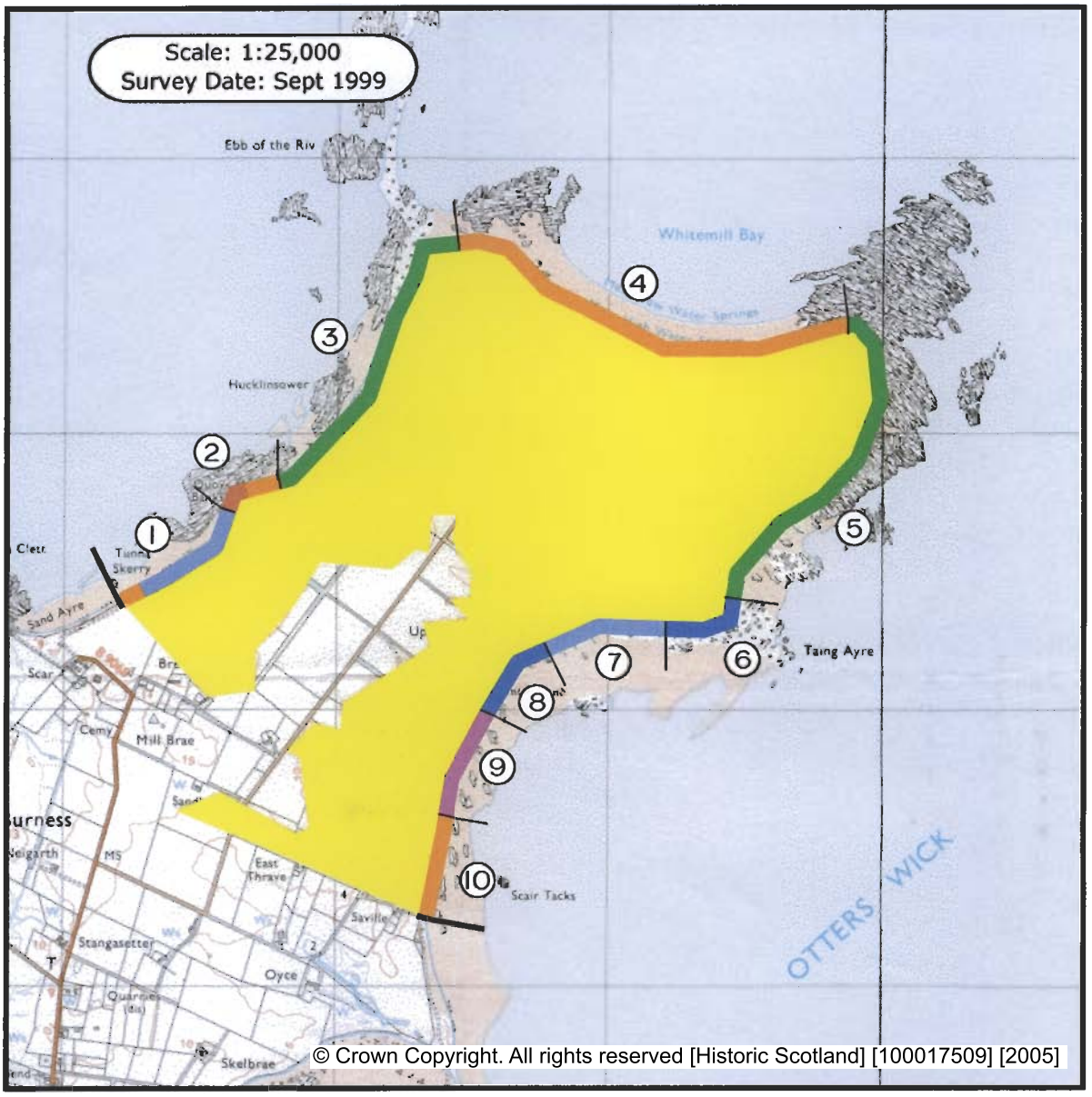
8. Upper House
HY 686 451
0.25 km
Accreting
The accretion of sand increases again to the west of Ortie. Much of the sand is being trapped in the dune ridge. There has been some extraction of sand within the ridge yet much of this is now being in filled with wind blown sand.

9. Burial Mound
HY 684 448
0.4 km
Accreting and Eroding
There are some deflation hollows gouged out at and behind the coast edge with accretion of sands in a few areas. The accretion becomes less obvious to the south of the section.

10. Northskaw
HY 683 444
0.45 km
Eroding to Stable
Most erosion is due to marine action.

Erosion Class

Sanday
Map 12



Erosion Class

- Definitely Accreting
- Accreting or Stable
- Stable
- Eroding or Stable
- Definitely Eroding
- Accreting and Eroding

- No access
- Land below 10m