

Map 15: Westayre Loch to Tofts Ness

Landscape, Built Heritage & Archaeology

This map section commences at a sharp headland which lies to the north of Westayre Loch. It extends into the Bay of Sandquoy, where the long sandy beach is bordered by dunes and there are quantities of unconsolidated, drifting sand. Along the east side of the bay to Tofts and beyond, the coast becomes progressively more rugged and less sandy. Over most of this area, the hinterland comprises large open areas of pasture land which are prone to sporadic blow-outs and coverage by drifting sand. From How, on the east side of the Bay of Sand Quoy onwards to Tofts, there are smaller more regular fields in the hinterland and bordering North Loch. The little modern settlement present within this section lies to the northeast of the area.

At Taing of Tor Sker, a pool set into the shingle bar in the intertidal area may have been artificially deepened for use as a fish trap (SY188). It lies close to the 19th C farm buildings at Torsker (SY189). This abandoned farmstead is slowly being inundated with drifting sand; stonework visible in a short section on the coast is probably a feature of recent date which has become buried beneath the sand rather than evidence of earlier activity.

Stonework exposed in the coast section at Sandquoy (SY190) may be part of a prehistoric burial mound or house. Old records describe how a structure which was opened and demolished in this area had three compartments and contained human skulls. While it has been classified as a possible souterrain, the description is more suitable to a chambered cairn or burial mound with multiple cists. It is unlikely that much of this site survives.

The most substantial indication of earlier activity in this area is provided by the massive farm mound which underlies the present farmstead at Tofts. This mound, which measures at least 100m in diameter extends to the coast edge and is eroding. The exposed deposits, which include many interleaving layers of peatash and highly organic soil with shell, bone and flint, are up to 2m thick. There were few diagnostic finds among the deposits and of those that were seen, all relate to the latest period of deposition, probably in the 19th C.

Geology and Geomorphology

The unit has the large sandy Bay of Sandquoy to the centre with rock platform and storm beaches at either end. The hinterland has fenced grass fields with sand dunes behind the bay. Much of the soils are poorly drained gleys and water logged sandy soils to the far hinterland behind the dunes. The dune ridge is vegetated overlying freely drained skeletal sands.

Erosion

The Bay of Sandquoy is a generally stable to accreting coastal edge of sand dune ridge. Further north where the rock platform emerges there is a large cobble storm beach. Although much of this is stable there are a few areas where erosion is taking place.

SY188

HY7273 4484
Taing of Tor Sker
Possible fish trap
Unknown
Fair
Survey

SY189

HY7342 4470
Torsker
Farmstead & coastal exposure
18-20th C
Fair/poor
Nil

SY190 HY74NW3

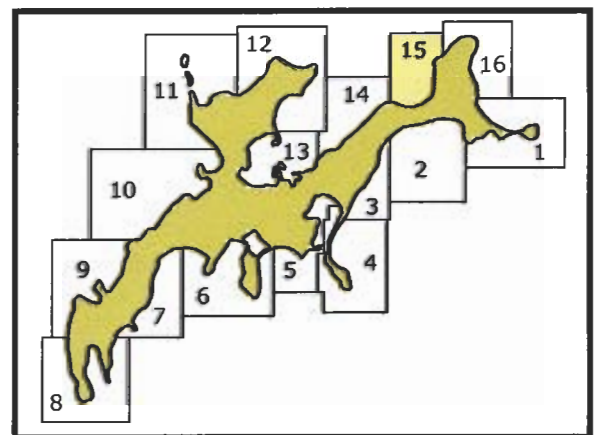
HY7467 4532
Sandquoy
Coastal exposure & alleged souterrain
?3rd-1st mill BC
Poor
Monitor

SY191 HY74NW5

HY7475 4615
Tofts
Mound and coastal exposure
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Good
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. Long Taing

HY 730 448

0.6 km

A rock platform with storm beach.

Coast edge is < 5 m.

The drift/rock interface is not visible.

The rock platform has a cobbled storm beach along the mid to upper foreshore which forms a lip at the coast edge. Soils are poorly to imperfectly drained gleys with fenced grassed fields.

2. Bay of Sandquoy

HY 740 447

1.9 km

Sandy foreshore with areas of cobble.

Coast edge is > 5 m on the west side only.

The drift/rock interface is not visible.

This sweeping bay is dominated by the large expanse of sandy foreshore. There are small areas of cobble cover along the upper foreshore. This cover extends 100 m from the west side before grading out and reappears briefly towards the centre then again to the east of centre where a 40% cover of the upper foreshore grades into a storm beach with one berm which finally grades into cobble cover before the east side of this section. The coast edge is > 5 m along the west side due to the height of the sand dunes. There is some deflation of the dunes especially to the centre where the coast edge drops to < 5 m. The dunes form a ridge with a level hinterland beyond. Some of the dune ridge is fenced and incorporated into the fields beyond. Soils are freely drained sands with some gleys and waterlogged soils to the far hinterland. A small mound lies close to Sandquoy and then a stone wall lies around the house.

3. Sandquoy

HY 747 460

1.2 km

Rock platform with storm beach.

Coast edge is < 5 m.

The drift/rock interface is not visible.

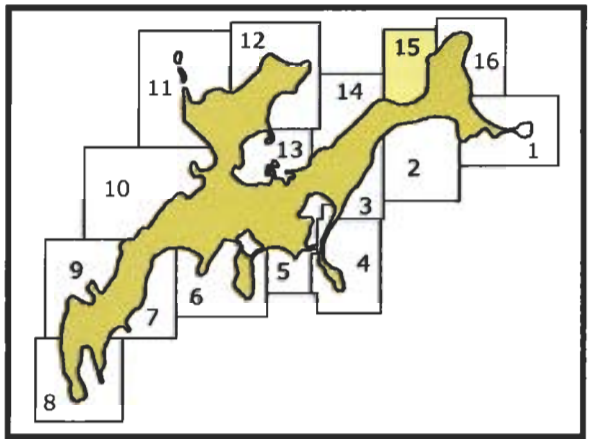
The rock platform has a large storm beach which lies the length of this section. A berm is more evident past the farm at Tofts. The coast edge has a road running along side from Sandquoy to Tofts. Some of the cobble of the storm beach lies up against the road in places. At Tofts there is some tipping of farm waste used as sea defence. Fields are grassed and generally have stone walls to the coast side. Soils are freely drained sandy podzol.



- 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. Long Taing

HY 729 449

0.4 km

Accreting to Stable

As the sands begin to cover the rock there is a storm beach which appears to be accreting at the coastal edge.

2. Taing of Tor Sker

HY 732 448

0.41km

Eroding to Stable

Where the dunes begin there is some erosion of the coastal edge. The dune ridge is stable.

3. Torsker

HY 736 446

0.54 km

Accreting to Stable

Sand is accumulating along the coastal edge making a rather indistinct coastal edge.

4. Hogsha

HY 740 47

0.2 km

Eroding and Accreting

There is an accretion of sand along the upper foreshore and coastal edge making up an apron of sand and covering older vegetation. The apron is capped with cobbles. There is also some erosion of the coast line above the apron of sand which cuts into the dune making up a definite coastal edge. Due to wave action the cobbles are probably undercutting the sand dune edge.

5. Bay of Sandquoy (West)

HY 742 447

0.2 km

Eroding to Stable

There is some erosion of the coastal edge as described in the previous section although most erosion is due to deflation of the dunes just beyond the coastal edge on the hinterland side of the dune ridge.

6. Bay of Sandquoy (Centre)

HY 744 449

0.23 km

Stable

The coastal edge and hinterland are stable with a berm of cobbles along the upper foreshore which does not contribute to coastal edge erosion.

7. Bay of Sandquoy (East)

HY 745 450

0.2 km

Accreting to Stable

Towards the end of the bay there is accretion of sand along the upper foreshore and coastal edge with some shingle along the upper foreshore to the north east.

8. How

HY 747 454

0.75 km

Stable

The majority of the coastal edge is stable, much of which is protected by the road running alongside the edge and a bank of thrown cobbles and boulders. There is one point where erosion stands out. This is a small knoll just south of How that lies against the coastal edge where some erosion is taking place.

9. New Geo

HY 747 459

0.16 km

Eroding to Stable

There is localised erosion of the coastal edge by the side of the road.

10. Noust of Tofts

HY 747 461

0.15 km

Eroding

A small portion of coastal edge is eroding in front of the farm. Farm waste and rubble has been added to the edge as a form of defence.

11. Tofts

HY 747 463

0.4 km

Eroding to Stable

The coastal edge is stable to the south with increasing erosion of the coastal edge to the north and around Crow Taing.

