

Map 4: Plain of Fidge to Cata Sand

Landscape, Built Heritage & Archaeology

This map section extends around the elongated peninsula of Tres Ness. The peninsula, although itself surrounded by a rocky reef is tenuously joined to the mainland by a narrow sand spit, less than a couple of hundred metres across in places. There is only one modern settlement in the area, Tresness Farm, and the land comprises both improved and unimproved pasture.

Tres Ness is rich in archaeological sites. One of the most impressive sites is located in an elevated position at the tip of the ness. Here a large chambered cairn (SY44) has been damaged by coastal erosion. Recent investigations at the site indicate that the cairn may comprise up to three separate phases of construction. It has been scheduled as an ancient monument but remains at risk from continued sea erosion.

Several other mounds recorded in this area (SY41-43, 48, 49, 52) may also be burial monuments. These mounds extend along the western coast and may be part of a more extensive concentration of burial mounds, similar to Els Ness (Map 6) which lies directly opposite on the other side of the bay and Tofts Ness (Map 16), further north. Of interest, is a mound conjoined with an earthwork (SY42), which shares similarities with examples at Tofts Ness. Another mound (SY48) at Knap of Grindish is partly surrounded by what may either be a bank or a series of smaller mounds; this may have parallels with burial mounds at both Tofts Ness and Els Ness.

The Broch of Wasso forms a massive grassy mound in which very little detail is apparent. The surrounding defences remain visible and there are strong hints of further, extra-broch settlement in the immediate area. Antiquarian investigations in the 19th C were not well recorded, but do not appear to have been extensive or particularly destructive. The broch lies in an area of marshy land, close to a loch and this factor may hold potential for the preservation of materials in waterlogged deposits.

Geology and Geomorphology

This long spit of dune ridge culminates in a promontory of land, Tres Ness. The sand ridge has vegetated dunes some of which are well over ten metres in height.

Erosion

The isthmus of sand dunes joining Tres Ness to Sanday is generally eroding on the sea-facing (east) side but there is also accretion of sand along the lower face of the dunes. Most of the south and east coast of Tres Ness is stable, but there is localised erosion along the western side of the isthmus. The northwestern coast of Plain of Fidge is stable. Two major gullies through the sand ridge isthmus are probably due to both aeolian and marine action.

SY40 HY73NW10
HY7038 3877
Tressness
Farmstead
18-20th C
Fair/poor
Monitor

SY41
HY7048 3857
Tres Ness
Mound
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Fair/poor
Monitor

SY42 HY73NW3
HY7120 3800
Hangie Head, Tres Ness
Mound & earthwork
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Fair/poor
Survey

SY43 HY73NW8
HY7119 3757
Tres Ness
Mound
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Fair/poor
Monitor

SY44 HY73NW4
HY7110 3752
Tres Ness
Chambered cairn
4th-3rd mill BC
Fair/poor
Monitor

SY45 HY73NW9
HY7068 3798
Tres Ness
Kelp Workings
18-20th C
Good/fair
Nil

SY46
HY7090 3785
Tres Ness
Reservoir
18-20th C
Good
Nil

SY47 HY73NW2
HY7092 3794
Broch of Wasso, Tres Ness
Broch
1st mill BC-1st mill AD
Good
Monitor

SY48 HY73NW1
HY7069 3802
Knap of Girndish, Tres Ness
Mound(s)
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Fair
Monitor

SY49
HY7051 3839
Tingly Loup
Mound
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Good
Monitor

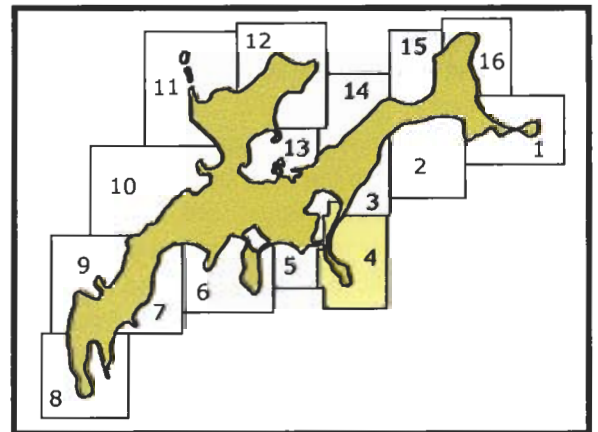
SY50
HY7046 3844
Tingly Loup
Coastal exposure
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Fair
Monitor

SY51 HY73NW11
HY7015 3857
Kirk Taing
Natural feature
Unknown
Not seen
Nil

SY52
HY7022 3868
Tressness
Mound
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Fair
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. Dunes (Newark Bay)

HY 706 398

2 km

Sandy foreshore with discrete areas of cover.

Coast edge is generally > 5 m.

The drift/rock interface is not visible.

The east side of this line of sand dunes has a sandy beach with only limited cobble cover. Most of the dunes are well over 5 m and over 10 m further south with two large deflation hollows which cut the ridge to the far coast edge. Cobbles are found within these deflation hollows. The coast edge is not definite as the back shore rises as the sand grades into dunes.

2. Ness Garth

HY 707 384

1.2 km

Sandy foreshore with cobbles grading to storm beach.

Coast edge is < 5 m.

The drift/rock interface is not visible.

The cobble cover grades into a storm beach to the south of this section. The coast edge then forms a lip made up of contemporary and relic storm beach cobbles. The low hinterland has standing water in places. Soils are poorly drained podzol and gleys.

3. Hangie Head

HY 711 375

1.3 km

Rock platform with storm beach.

The coast edge is < 5 m.

The drift/rock interface is visible.

The rock platform has storm beach to the east and west of Tres Ness with up to 70% cobble cover around the head. The drift to rock interface is visible with some till and saprolite evident at Hangie Head. Around Chaldra Rock the coast edge has a scalloped appearance. The till is almost absent from the southern head but up to 1 m is evident at Storehouse Geo. The soils are imperfectly to poorly drained podzol and gleys. Stone walls lie around the fields although most fields are set back 4 - 5 m from the coast edge.

4. Knap of Girndish

HY 703 386

1.3 km

Rock platform with storm beach.

The coast edge is < 5 m.

The drift/rock interface is not visible.

The rock platform is almost covered with cobbles and storm beach. At Gairailly there are two berms to the storm beach. Also at Gairailly there is a small sandy foreshore. At the coast edge there is a buried soil seen in section where 25 cm of dark sandy soil underlies 30 cm of sand and stones. The soil overlies a reddish till. The hinterland is grassed with stone walls to most of the fields. The hinterland around the Broch of Wasso is poorly drained with the rest of the hinterland imperfectly to freely drained podzol.

5. Tresness

HY 705 396

2.2 km

Sandy foreshore with up to 70% cobble cover to south.

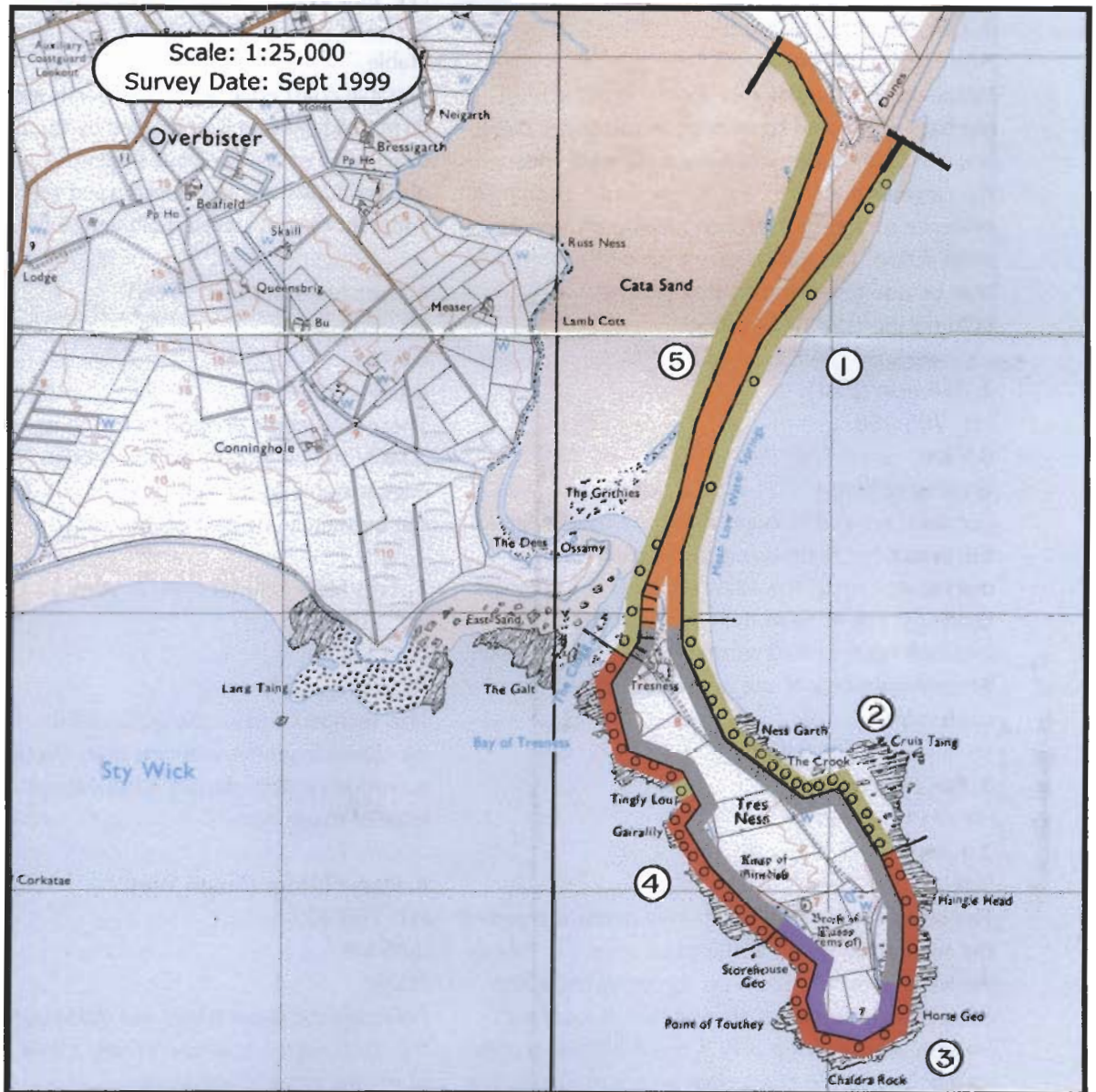
The coast edge is < 5 m.

The drift/rock interface is not visible.

The sandy foreshore has up to 70% cobble cover around Tresness much of which makes up a hard surface for the upper foreshore. The sands to the north within Cata Sand are flat and fairly firm. The coast edge has two small sea walls to the south, one to the north of Tresness and a further one within the dunes a little further north. The sea wall may have been larger as remnants now stand three to four metres on the upper foreshore. The dune ridge rises to over 10 m in places with the two same breached areas from the east side obvious on this Cata Sand side. The dunes fade out to sandy soil in the north with some fencing. Dunes and soils are freely drained.

Hinterland Geology & Coastal Geomorphology

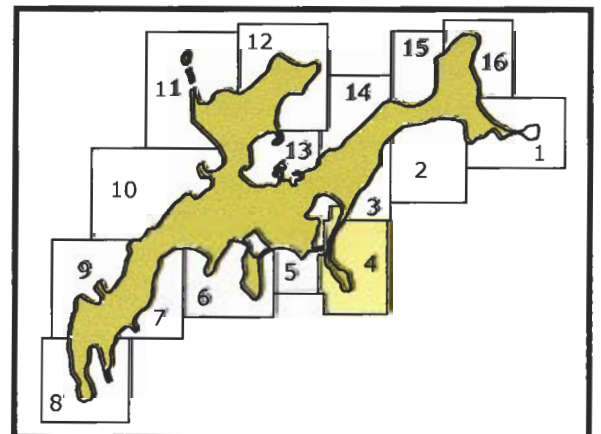
Sanday Map 4



- 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. Tres Ness Isthmus (East)

HY 707 399

1.7 km

Accreting and Eroding

While there is evidence of accretion along both the back shore and coast edge of the dunes there are two large gullies which have cut right through the ridge to the north and to the south. Both have evidence of accretion and continuing erosion by wind action. The gullies have a base of cobbles and may be due to wave throw or relative accumulation during deflation.

2. Tresness (East)

HY 705 388

0.9 km

Eroding to Stable

Localised erosion is found along the coast edge as the sand ridge flattens out to the south with marine erosion of the coast edge east of Tresness buildings. The erosion then becomes more localised again further south where a storm beach becomes prominent and protects some of the coast edge.

3. Ness Garth

HY 711 375

2.2 km

Stable

The coast edge is stable with only minor erosion of the relic storm beach at the coast edge. Further to the south west of Tres Ness the small cliff at the coast edge is vaguely scalloped due to localised erosion. At one point only is there definite erosion taking place at the coast edge where marine action is cutting into a till at Storehouse Geo.

4. Knap of Girndish

HY 703 384

1.04 km

Eroding to Stable

Marine action has brought about localised erosion of the coast edge with definite erosion at Gairalily where a buried soil lies within the section and to the west of Tresness farm. Here up to 3 m of coast edge has disappeared as an old sea wall now lies on the upper foreshore. The erosion is continuing.

5. Tresness (West)

HY 703 390

0.25 km

Stable

A stable coast edge lies to the north west of the farm buildings and is protected by the eroding coast edge of the previous section. A discontinuous sea wall is intact and vegetated with a foreshore that can support vehicles.

6. Tres Ness Isthmus (West)

HY 704 395

0.64 km

Eroding to Stable

There is localised erosion of the coast edge which is fairly steeply sloping on this section. The coast edge is stable to the centre and a sea defence wall can be seen along part of the coast.

7. Tres Ness Isthmus (North West)

HY 706 401

0.64 km

Accreting and Eroding

This section contains the gullies which cut through the dunes from the seaward side. There is also an accretion of sand along the back shore and coast edge of the dunes.

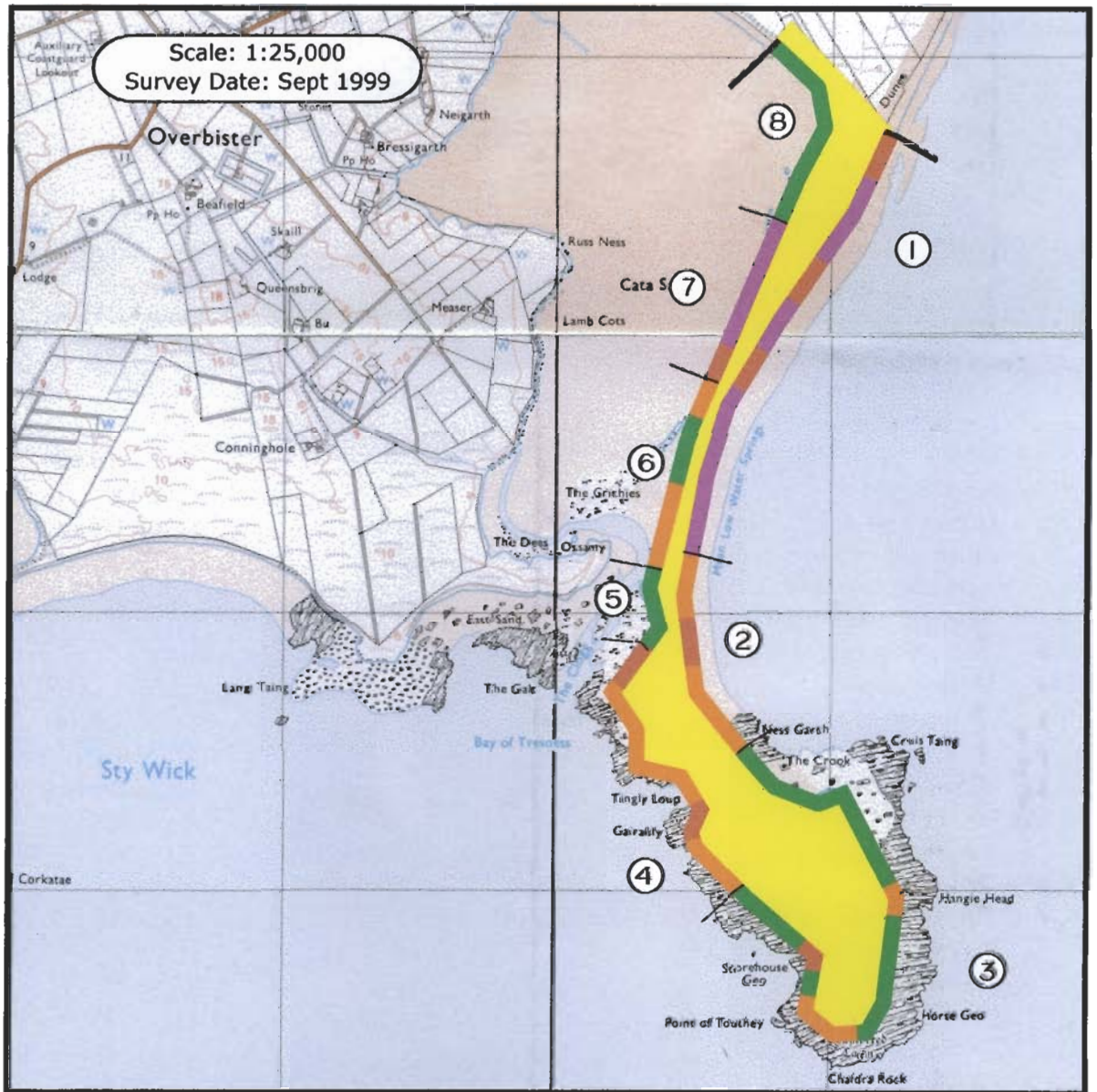
8. Plain of Fidge (South West)

HY 709 407

0.65 km

Stable

Although the coast is low and made up of soft drift the coast edge is stable with only minor elements of marine erosion apparent.



- Erosion Class
- Definitely Accreting
 - Accreting or Stable
 - Stable
 - Eroding or Stable
 - Definitely Eroding
 - Accreting and Eroding
 - Land below 10m
 - No access

