Map 7: Backaskail Bay to Quoy Ness

Landscape, Built Heritage & Archaeology

This map section extends from the centre of the sandy beach at Backaskail Bay, along the progressively more rugged and higher coast below The Wart, which is the highest point on the Island at 65m OD, to arrive at the low promontory of Quoy Ness. There is no modern coast settlement in this area and much of the southern part of this section comprises rough, unenclosed sloping land. Sand hills and large areas of drifting sand, mostly consolidated with turf, extend inland almost to the summit of The Wart. This area is very overgrown and it is difficult to identify any archaeological remains other than those which have been exposed through erosion.

At Backaskail, the large farmstead (SY88) comprises substantial 19th C buildings ranged around a rectangular yard include a Grieve's house, threshing barn and farmhouse. The farm remains in use but many of the buildings are much deteriorated. Exposures in the banks in front of the farmstead reveal archaeological deposits, said to represent a broch (SY89). The site was investigated in the 19th C by Petrie but has been much damaged by both coast erosion and sand extraction since then. Nevertheless, a 3m thick section of wall exposed in the section would seem to concur with this interpretation; a mounded area to the rear of the section may indicate the presence of further remains inland.

A second possible broch site, recorded further along the coast at Croos of Nebister (SY93) is less readily verified. Here, a large overgrown mound lies on the coast edge and is eroding. As it is above moderate cliffs, it was not possible to examine the section face at close range; but no trace was found of the substantial masonry which might be expected at a broch.

Few other sites were identified in this area due to the deep coverage of sand; a treb dyke previously recorded here could not be relocated and has probably been covered over with sand. The outline of rig and furrow cultivation (SY90) was noted on the hillside above Mirky Geo, however and testifies to the fact that what is now unworkable due to sand movement was once cultivated.

Geology and Geomorphology

There is a marked change in topography from the previous units to the east. The hinterland has slopes of moderate gradients with a few becoming steep into the far hinterland. The coast edge is predominantly over five metres in height, except within the sandy bays where there are sand dunes. An extensive area of dunes extends back into the hinterland at the south end of this unit; these extend into the following unit. Again the soils are predominantly podzol with skeletal sands around the dunes.

Erosion

The majority of cliff-faced coast line is stable and there is accretion along the sandy foreshores.

SY88 HY63NW51
HY6417 3927
Backaskaill
Farmstead
18-20th C
Good/poor
Monitor

SY89 HY63NW1
HY6414 3919
Backaskaill
Possible broch
1st mill BC- 1st mill AD
Fair/poor
Monitor

SY90
HY634 383
Mirky Geo
Cultivation remains: rig and furrow
Unknown: ?18-20th C
Fair
Nil

SY91
HY6332 3748
Moo Geo
Mound
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Good/fair
Monitor

SY92 HY63NW43
HY632 371
Nebister
Treb dyke
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Not seen
Monitor

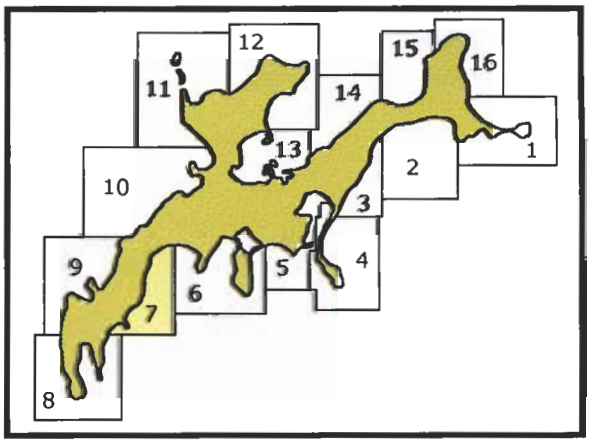
SY93 HY63NW2
HY6316 3701
Croos of Nebister
Broch or settlement
1st mill BC- 1st mill AD
Fair/poor
Monitor

Built Heritage & Archaeology

Sanday
Map 7

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



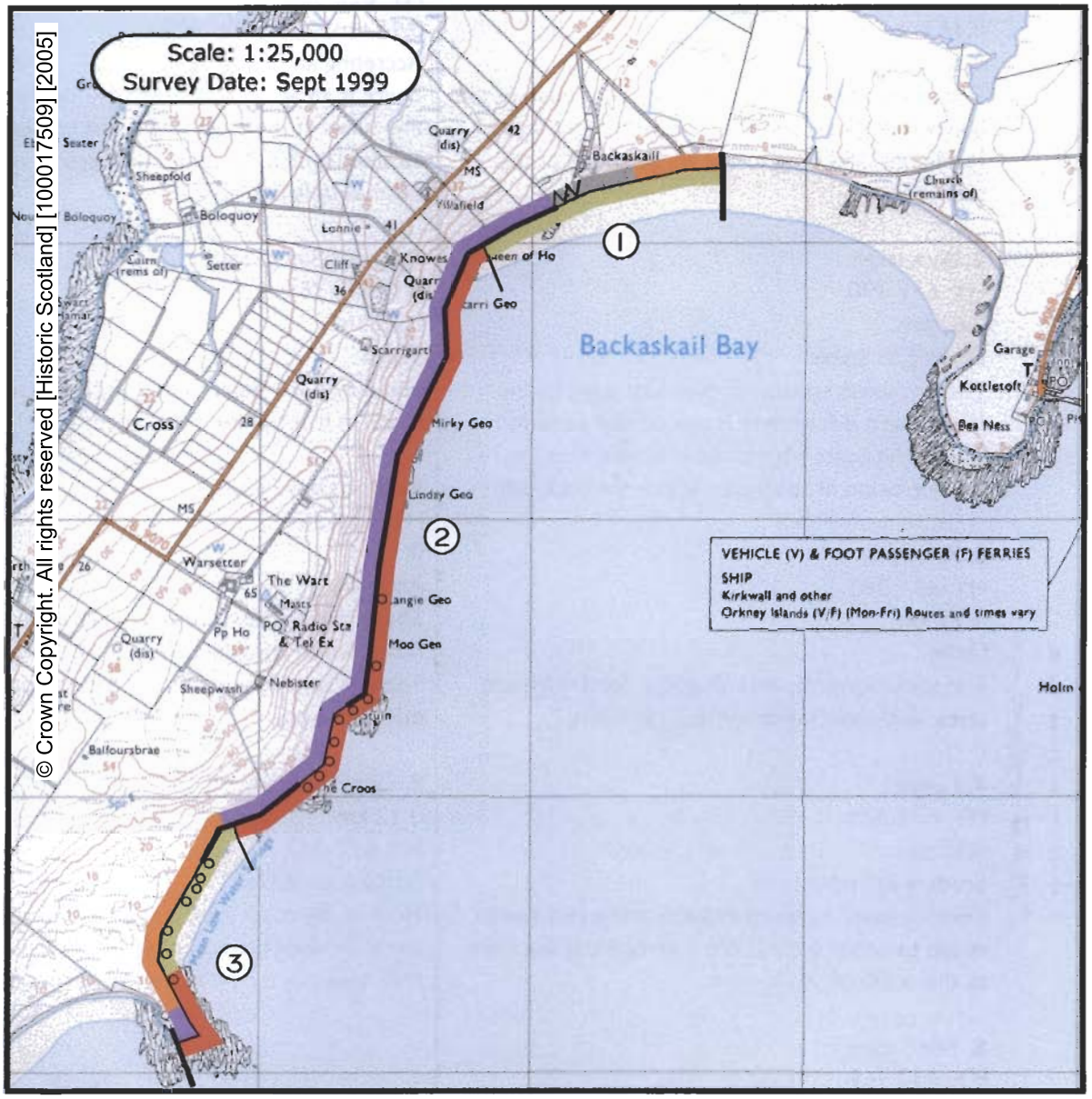
1. Backaskail Bay
HY 642 392
1 km
Sandy foreshore.
Coast edge is < 5 m, then > 5 m to the west.
The drift/rock interface is only visible to the west.
The sandy foreshore continues through to the end of this section although the sand dunes are replaced with a rock cliff face over 5 m. Between the two hinterland areas of dune and cliff is a farm with disturbance and farm waste at the coast edge. The sands are freely draining to the east of the farm with imperfectly drained podzol above the cliffs. A buried soil, 15 cm thick, is also evident in a soil section above the cliff face and overlies till. A fine stone wall has been built up between a gully of the cliff face at one point. Fields are fenced and down to grass on a moderate slope which steepens further into the hinterland.

2. Queen of Hoe
HY 634 380
2.1 km
Rock platform.
Coast edge is > 5 m.
The drift/rock interface is visible.
The rock platform has negligible cover to the north with cobble cover grading into a storm beach south of Moo Geo. The coast edge is generally over 5 m with the rock to drift interface visible for the most part. The storm beach lies in the small bight between Moo Geo and Croes. It is also here that the coast edge drops to under 5 m. A number of small stacks are developing along the coastline between Milky Geo and Moo Geo. The hinterland is moderately to steeply sloping with fenced, grassed fields. Soils are imperfectly drained podzols to the north becoming increasingly sandy more freely draining to the south.

3. Croes
HY 627 365
0.9 km
Sandy foreshore.
Coast edge is predominantly < 5 m.
The drift/rock interface is not generally visible.
Between the rock platforms of Croes and Quoy Ness there is a large beach with sandy foreshore. The cliff face abruptly comes to a finish and is replaced with sand dunes. Incidentally, at the point where this occurs there is a large accumulation of cemented sand down part of the cliff face similar to aeolianite although probably laid down by seeping water and cemented by calcite. The dunes decrease in size towards the south. There is slight cobble cover of the upper foreshore to the centre of the bay which appears to have been a storm beach to the south and is now covered with sand. The cliff face emerges to the south of the bay and is coincidental with the emergence of the rock platform. The coast edge is under 5 m at this end of the bay and a buff coloured till is prominent. The soils are skeletal sands which run far back into the hinterland. The area is down to rough grazing with some fencing.

Hinterland Geology & Coastal Geomorphology

Sanday
Map 7



Foreshore

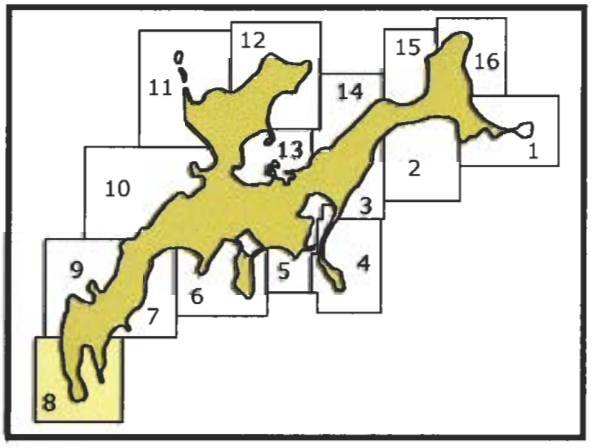
- Rock platform
- Mainly sand
- Mainly alluvial/marine mud
- Marsh

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. Backaskail Bay (West)
HY 644 392
0.36 km
Accreting to Stable
The sands on the back shore and coast edge of the dunes to the east are accreting with more stable conditions prevailing to the western side of this section.

2. Backaskail
HY 639 390
0.62 km
Eroding to Stable
There is some erosion of the coast edge by the farm where disturbance is caused due to farm work. The coast edge is stable before there is more erosion of sediments above the rock cliff.

3. Knowes
HY 635 383
1.25 km
Stable
The rock platform and cliff at the coast edge are stable with only minor localised erosion.

4. Langie
HY 633 373
0.55 km
Eroding to Stable
There is more localised erosion as the coast edge drops to under 5 m. There is an eroding sea stack to the north of this section.

5. The Croos
HY 630 369
0.36 km
Stable
As the coast edge rises over 5 m the coast line becomes stable. Within the corner of the next bay the cliff runs into sand dunes. The cliff face at this point is also coated in cemented sand, a type of aeolianite.

6. Croos Bay (North)
HY 628 368
0.15 km
Accreting and Eroding
There is an accumulation of new sand in front of the dunes at the coast edge. The erosion is localised within the dunes themselves in the form of small deflation hollows.

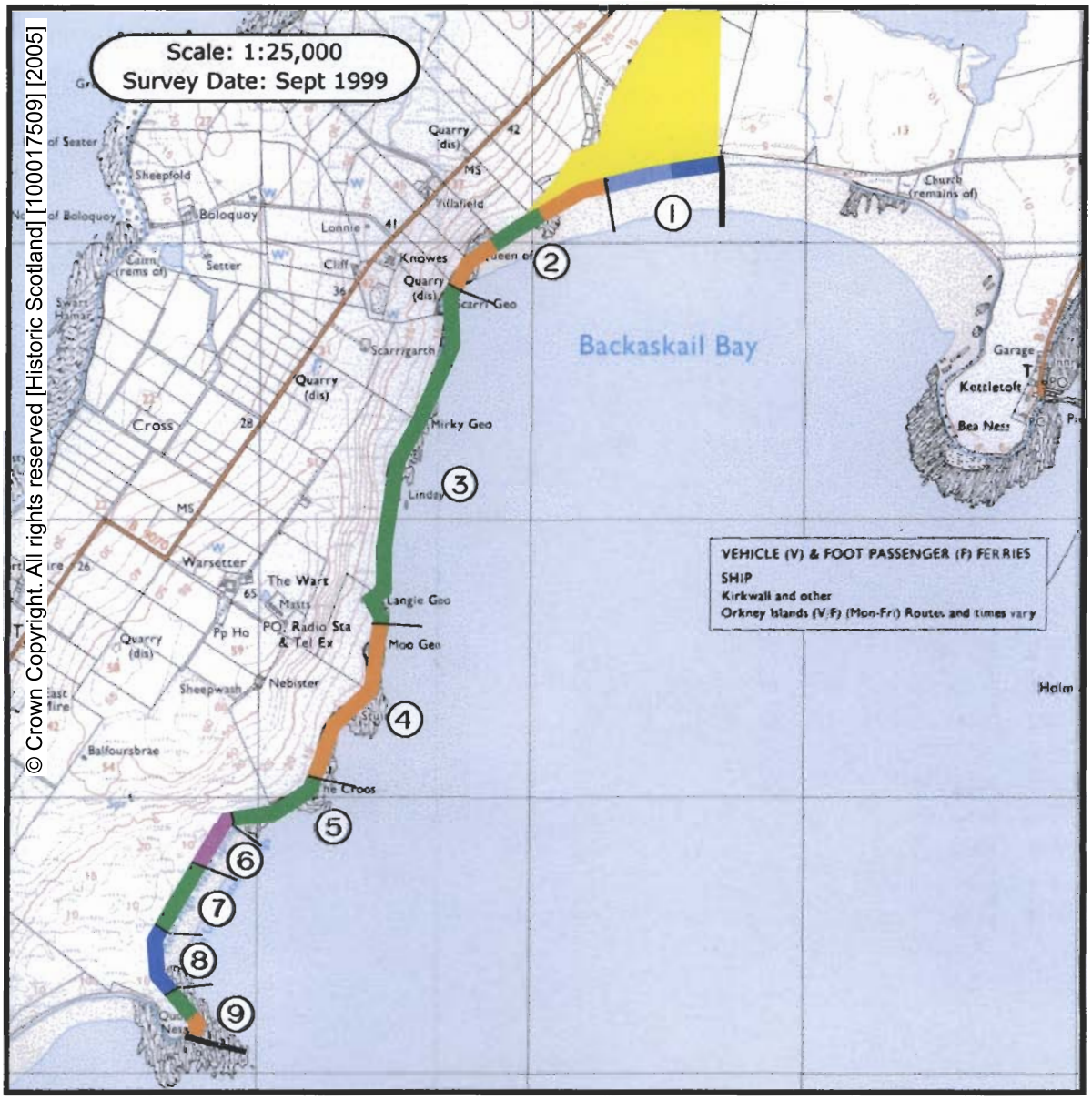
7. Croos Bay (Centre)
HY 627 366
0.25 km
Stable
The dunes are stable with a small ribbon of storm beach in front of the coast edge.

8. Croos Bay (South)
HY 626 364
0.1 km
Accreting
The accreting sands now lie over the small storm beach which continues from the previous section. There is very little erosion within the dunes on this side of the bay.

9. Quoy Ness (North)
0.32 km
HY 627 362
Eroding to Stable
Most of the coast edge is stable although there is some localised erosion of sediments lying over the rock towards the point on the north side.

Erosion Class

Sanday
Map 7



Erosion Class

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

- No access
- Land below 10m