

Map 9: Loth to Scuthi Head

Landscape, Built Heritage & Archaeology

From Loth, this map section extends along the southwest coast of the Island, over high rugged ground with fine views over to the neighbouring island of Eday. At Braeswick, a small bay marks a lowering in the cliff edge and from here the landscape becomes progressively more gentle, even and green.

Between Boloquoy and Mires, at the end of the section, there are further areas of rough ground, but here the coast edge is low-lying. Modern settlement in this area is concentrated around Braeswick and along the roadside to North Mire; but it is set back from the coast edge. The hinterland is divided in a pattern of regular small fields, most of which support grazing.

A site (SY117) which formed the subject of intensive recent investigations is located to the centre of this section, on the east side of Pool Bay. The extensive multi-period settlement was first noted in a coast exposure; excavation revealed a series of buildings and deposits dating from the Neolithic period to the Norse period. This is the only such 'farm mound' site to have been investigated in depth and thus the results of excavation are eagerly awaited. The site remains visible as a series of substantial organic soil deposits in the eroding coast section.

Further along the coast at North Mire, a probable cairn (SY118) is eroding over rocky cliffs. Part of a small chamber or cist-like structure is visible to the centre of the section and further structural elements can also be identified. The cairn extends inland and may be more substantial than it appears.

At Boloquoy, archaeological deposits revealed in a coast exposure may mark an early settlement (SY119). This exposure has not been recorded before and it may be that this site has only begun to erode. Finds recovered from the section include fragments of struck flint and coarse pot of Neolithic/Bronze Age type. The exposure flanks an overgrown mounded area, which may represent further buried remains. It is very vulnerable to continued erosion.

Early activity in this area is further indicated by a cairn at Boloquoy Farm (SY120). The cairn has been dug into in the past and little of it now remains. A second mound in an adjacent field (SY122) may also be a burial site; this also appears to have been investigated in the past. At Ebb of Seater a grassy mound which lies close to exposed layers of ashy deposits and a patch of burnt, reddened ground surface (SY123) may be comparable to the burials and pyre settings recently identified at Hermisgarth (Map 10).

Geology and Geomorphology

The hinterland slopes become more moderate to the north of this unit. There are two well defined storm beaches within coves in this area and an impressively carved coast edge along North Mire. The coast edge is over five metres at the beginning and end of the unit, but in between these points it is generally lower.

Erosion

The unit contains a number of sections which are eroding. The most significant is the coast edge from North Mire to Swart Hamar, where the softer shale layers of the Eday Sandstone are eroding. Other erosion sections are also due to the exposure of softer Eday Sandstone seams.

SY112

HY6021 3668
Spaney Geo
Boundary bank/treb dyke
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Good
Monitor

SY117 HY63NW17

HY6194 3785
Pool
Monitor
Settlement
Fair
4th mill BC-1st mill AD

SY122 HY63NW29

HY6256 3927
Boloquoy
Mound
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Good
Monitor

SY113

HY6039 3735
Strang Quoy
Kelp pits and ?marl quarry
18-20th C
Fair
Nil

SY118 HY63NW27

HY6205 3799
North Mire
Cairn & coastal exposure
4th-3rd mill BC
Fair/poor
Survey

SY123

HY6249 3931
Ebb of Seater
Mound & coastal exposure
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Fair
Survey

SY114

HY6140 3801
Lamba Ness
Coastal exposure
Unknown: ?prehistoric
Fair/poor
Monitor

SY119

HY6248 3892
Boloquoy
Coastal exposure: ? settlement
mound
4th-3rd mill BC
Fair
Survey

SY124

HY6264 3960
Grunavi Head
Enclosed promontory
Unknown
Fair
Monitor

SY115 HY63NW12

HY6138 3797
Lamba Ness
Mounds: alleged site of chapel
Unknown: ?10-14th
Fair
Monitor

SY120 HY63NW4

HY6260 3896
Boloquoy
Cairn
3rd-1st mill BC
Fair/poor
Monitor

SY125 HY63NW40

HY6295 3957
Mires
Banks
Unknown
Fair
Monitor

SY116

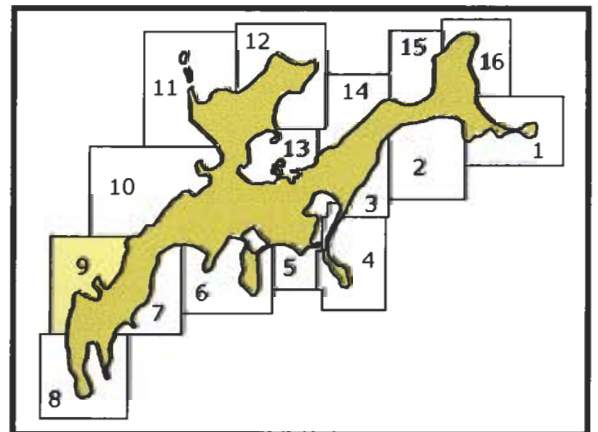
HY618 378
Pool
Possible fish trap or basin
Unknown
Fair
Nil

SY121 HY63NW38

HY6257 3906
Boloquoy
Mill
18-20th C
Good
Nil



- 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. Spaney Geo HY 604 373 1.7 km

Rock platform with intermittent cover. Coast edge is generally > 5 m. The drift/rock interface is visible to the N. Cobbles and small boulders grade out to the N with some more cobble cover beginning to the E of Strang Quoy. The drift to rock interface becomes visible at Lyre Cliff. The till thins to < 1 m by Heggli Bar. Here there is a small quay like platform with steps cut into a conglomerate rock. There is also some tipping on the hinterland. At the point of Strang Quoy there is a large exposed section of saprolite in the form of a yellow marl bed > 5 m thick which appears to be an excellent source of pottery clay. The harder sandstones which overlie this bed are collapsing. The hinterland is moderately sloping with fenced grass fields. The area around the clay exposure is rather hummocky, perhaps due to erosion of the soft marl bed or past quarrying of this resource. Soils are imperfectly drained gleys at Spaney Geo becoming freely drained podzol towards the N.

2. Braes Wick HY 614 372 0.8 km

Sandy foreshore with up to 100% cover. Coast edge is predominantly < 5 m. The drift/rock interface is not generally visible. The sandy/shale foreshore is almost covered by a storm beach made up of cobbles and boulders. These lie below the cliff at Braeswick but form a lip of relic storm beach where the coast edge drops to < 5 m. The storm beach grades out to rock platform on the NW of Braes Wick. The hinterland has grassed fields with a more water-logged area around the centre of the cove with iris and reeds. On the N side there are fenced fields down to grass although there is a headland of perhaps 5 to 7 m which has vegetated relic storm beach. Soils are freely drained podzols with a poorly drained peaty alluvium to the centre.

3. Laminess HY 613 380 1 km

Rock platform with varying cover. Coast edge is generally < 5 m. The drift/rock interface is visible. There are small areas of cobbles almost making up small storm beaches in two areas on the west of this promontory. There is a more typical storm beach, of cobbles and small boulders, along the N shore. The coast edge is well defined by small cliffs with a drift to rock interface showing up to 1.5 m of buff till to the S and a more reddish brown till to the N. The hinterland

is gently sloping with grassed fields lying on a freely drained podzol.

4. Pool Bay HY 618 376 0.4 km

Sandy foreshore. Coast edge is < 5 m. The drift/rock interface is not visible. The sandy foreshore has some shingle and a few cobbles to the edges with the remnants of a vegetated storm beach at the coast edge. Gabions lie along the coast edge next to a sea wall on the S of the section. Two buried soils are also evident below the relic storm beach. Under top soil lies 40 cm of relic storm beach, over 30 cm of dark loam, over 2-5 cm of sand, over 30-40 cm of black peaty soil. The hinterland is gently sloping/level with a poorly drained to waterlogged area of peaty gley.

5. North Mire HY 624 386 1.5 km

Rock platform with discrete areas of cobbles. Coast edge is predominantly < 5 m. The drift/rock interface is generally visible. There is boulder and cobble cover around Tarristy with up to 60% cobble cover further N and a large storm beach made up of cobbles and boulders at Noust of Boloquoy. Just N of Swart Hamar there is an unusually clear black buried soil, perhaps only 5 cm thick and up to 50 cm below the soil. It truncates the subsoil in a very horizontal fashion with sharp horizon boundaries and is likely to be a cultivation layer. A further two buried soil horizons lie closer to the storm beach, each 10 cm thick separated by a thin stone layer. Further into the Noust of Bolonquoy the storm beach runs over the coast edge. The cobbles grade out as the coast edge rises to the N. Soils are freely drained brown soils running to podzols with poorly drained gley behind Noust of Bolonquoy.

6. Ebb of Seater HY 628 396 1.2 km

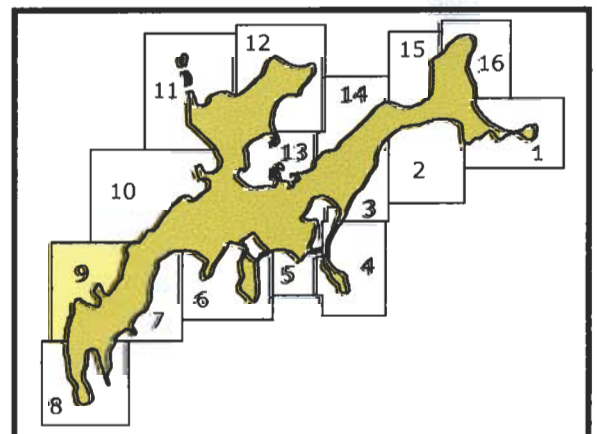
Rock platform with varying cover. Coast edge is > 5 m. The drift/rock interface is visible. There are a few small areas of cobbles along the rock platform with a storm beach made up of boulders and cobbles at Grunavi Head. The cliff edge is over 5 m high with > 1 m of till at Grunavi Head, otherwise the dark red till thickness ranges from 30 cm to negligible amounts. The hinterland is gently to moderately sloping with fenced fields underlain by freely drained podzol to the S and imperfectly drained gley and podzol to the N.



- 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. Spanney Geo**
HY 601 362
0.2 km
Eroding to Stable
Localised erosion of the coast edge due to marine action on the softer exposed till. There is also minor sub-aerial erosion by water run off.
- 2. Lyre Cliff**
HY 603 368
0.93 km
Stable
Much of the coast edge is over 5 m, and has less till exposed to the sea. There is a slight change in the rock layers with some conglomerate bands appearing.
- 3. Strang Quoy**
HY 604 373
0.13 km
Eroding
The softer laminations of the Eday Beds are evident with a thick, soft yellow clay or marl lying beneath a harder sandstone. Where this is exposed the coast edge is eroding.
- 4. Strangquoy Taing**
HY 607 373
0.58 km
Eroding to Stable
Although the clay layer is not exposed in this section the overlying sandstones are soft and easily eroded. There is localised erosion along this cliff edge.
- 5. Braeswick**
HY 611 372
0.14 km
Eroding
As the cliff face drops to under five metres so the upper soft sediments are more prone to erosion by marine action. This is also enhanced by cobbles undercutting parts of the coast edge.
- 6. Breas Wick**
HY 614 373
0.51 km
Stable
The boulder and cobble storm beach give protection to the coast edge and hinterland around this section of the bay.
- 7. Lamba Ness**
HY 612 379
0.59 km
Eroding
Although there are stable areas to the north and south of this section the majority of the coast edge has some active erosion due to marine action alone. The storm beach to the south may be migrating landwards.
- 8. Pool Bay**
HY 615 377
0.7 km
Stable
The majority of this section is stable. There is localised erosion on each side of a sea wall and gabions close to the road.
- 9. North Mire**
HY 622 383
0.91 km
Eroding
Most all of this section is being actively eroded at the present time. Much of the rock strata of sandstone is overlying soft laminations of shales with the result that large pieces of rock are undercut and break off from the coast edge as small areas of land slip.
- 10. Swart Hamar**
HY 624 387
0.33 km
Stable
A short length of coastline is stable as there are no soft shales exposed in section. There is only minor localised erosion of the top sediments.
- 11. Noust of Boloquoy**
HY 625 395
1.56 km
Eroding to Stable
The coast edge is being eroded in localised areas throughout the section. A large storm beach within the first bay is definitely migrating on the north side. Overall there is an impression of less erosion to the north because of the higher cliffs. However there is substantial erosion at Grunavi Head on the two north facing points. At Belfour's Geo, and running to Scuthi Head in the next unit, the softer beds of shale run closer to the surface and dip to the west. This has caused some landslip and soil creep with large gullies running coastward. Most of the gullies are vegetated but further north they are being eroded by sub-aerial action mainly due to stream action.



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

