

The Rising Tide: Submerged Landscape of Orkney

Quarterly Report: Spring 2010

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Project Work

Fieldwork

Bay of Firth

One week of fieldwork included diving work to ground truth anomalies recorded in June 09, coastal reconnaissance, and preliminary probing in local peat bogs for related sediments. Diving work carried out with the assistance of Chris Stuart, Bobby Forbes and SULA Diving.

Diver examining stone on the mound at target
TM1



Analysis

Diving

Twenty-seven potential targets were identified and fourteen dives undertaken. While some of the targets could be recorded as natural most require more detailed work in order to categorize them, and all are of interest with regard to the construction of the natural history of the bay.



Stone at Target ST1



Chain at target WS1

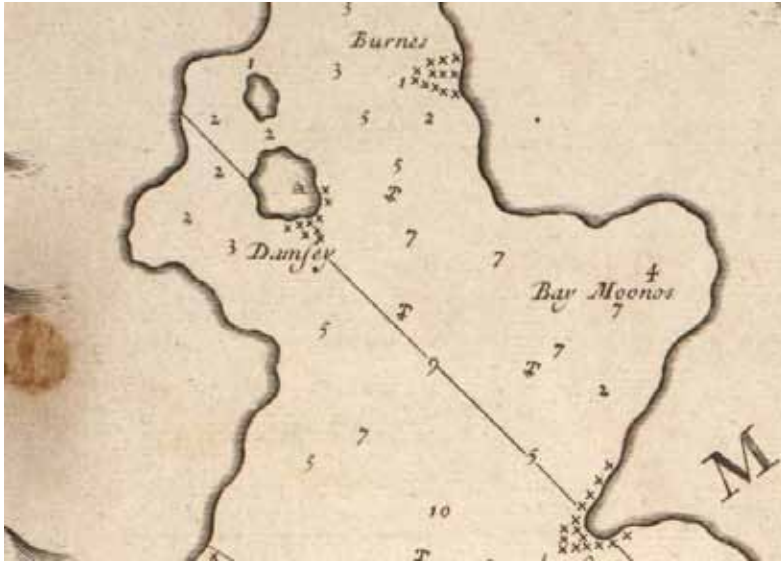
Sediments

Analysis of sediments from previous core sites is being finalized and a draft report has been prepared.

Dates from Seatter are awaited, and further dating material will be selected as appropriate.

Ethnoarchaeology

Sara-Jane Gibbon, Sue Whitworth, Sigurd Towrie, and Willie Thompson have all assisted with information relating to oral tradition and the changing sea-levels of the Bay of Firth.



Damsay extract from Greenville.
1669-1698 The Chief Harbours in
the Islands of Orkney

Further Work 2010

Fieldwork: Scapa Flow Landscape Partnership

Work for the Scapa Flow Landscape Partnership in 2010 will include sediment sampling in Mill Bay, Hoy, and Dam of Hoxa, South Ronaldsay.



Using the probe at Dam of Hoxa

Fieldwork: Bay of Firth

Funds for further work in the Bay of Firth have been obtained from The Crown Estate. This work is being planned for June 2010.

Analysis

Sediment analysis on SFLP cores will be started

Report writing

- Draft report on sediment analysis to date in preparation.
- Preliminary report on March fieldwork in preparation.
- Paper on sea level change for archaeologists in preparation.
- A paper on methodology will be prepared.
- Report for SFLP to be prepared by May 2011.

Developments and Liaison

Personnel

Dr Martin Bates – palaeo-environmental studies and Nigel Nayling – archaeological diver, from the University of Lampeter, have joined the project.



Setting out to dive, March 2010

British Geological Survey

Discussions continue with BGS relating to their offer to carry out a high-resolution multibeam survey of the southern entrance to Scapa Flow.

Submerged Landscapes Archaeological Network

A recent visit to Coleraine, home of SLAN, was very productive and may result in future collaboration.

MSP

A meeting was held with local MSP Liam McArthur who has acted as a referee and holds an interest in the project in relation to his work with regard to environmental and marine legislation and management.

Orkney College UHI

A meeting was held with members of the Archaeology Department at Orkney College, UHI to discuss the project and developments in marine archaeology within UHI. Also attended by Kate Thompson from SNH.



Working conditions in March were chilly!

Outreach

Lectures

- SD & CWJ seminar on the project at the Centre for Maritime Archaeology, University of Ulster, March 2010.
- CWJ working with Orkney Writer-in-Residence Nalini Paul on a writing workshop focused around the project, March 2010.
- CWJ seminar in Dublin April 2010
- CWJ & SD forthcoming lecture on *The Rising Tide* to Orkney Science Festival in September 2010.
- Paper to be submitted for MESO 2010 in Santander Sept 2010.
- CWJ contribution on project to Project Deukalion, Rhodes, Oct 2010.
- CWJ lecture to Costa SWRI in Nov 2010

Publications

- A preliminary paper on work in the Bay of Firth has been submitted for publication in a collected volume of work on submerged archaeology (editors J Benjamin & C Bonsall). Results of peer-review awaited.
- Paper on sediment analysis of core material from the Lochs of Stenness, Harray and Echna loch currently being finalized for submission for peer-reviewed publication.
- A general paper on sea level change for archaeologists is in preparation.

Media coverage

- Contacted by SCOTS Magazine in Australia about possibility of a piece
- Brief coverage in Living Orkney March 2010, written by local enthusiast
- News item in Current Archaeology, March 2010
- General coverage in The Times, Press and Journal, The Orcadian Feb 26th.

Website

Previous reports relating to the project are available from the Department of Archaeology website at the University of Aberdeen.

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/archaeology/staff/staff.php?id=c.wickham-iones>

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Sigurd Towrie

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The Obsession and her crew.