

The Rising Tide: Submerged Landscape of Orkney

Quarterly Report: Winter 2010



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Project Work

Fieldwork

Bay of Firth

Two days of snorkle exploration were undertaken in the Bay of Firth in order to discount the possibility that modern material might have resulted in geophysical anomalies recorded in June 09.



Hoy



Mill Bay was visited to ascertain the tidal range and look for potential archaeological features recorded by in a photograph taken by RCAHMS in September. This will be taken forward as part of SLFP.

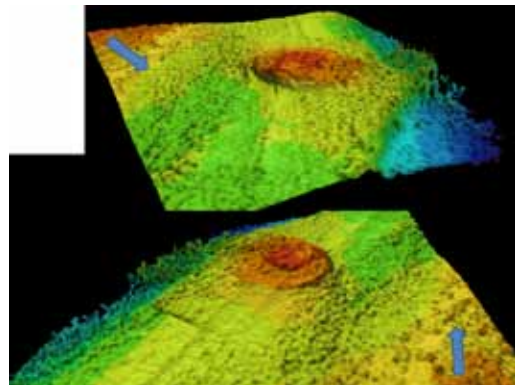


Analysis

Survey Results

Analysis of side-scan survey readings taken in the Bay of Firth in June 09 has revealed some promising structural-type remains.

Corrected remote survey image from Bay of Firth



Diving

Initial examination of the structural remains found off the north coast of Damsay suggest that they may relate to the chapel site of St Mary's and this will be explored further with future fieldwork.



Eroding remains of the chapel of St Mary's, Damsay, and submerged stonework

Sediments

Analysis of sediments from previous core sites is being finalised.

Dates from Seatter should be forthcoming soon, and further dating material will be selected as appropriate.

Further Work 2009-10

Scapa Flow Landscape Partnership

Work for the Scapa Flow Landscape Partnership is underway. In 2010 this will include sediment sampling and analysis.



Skerries leading out to the island of Damsay, Bay of Firth

Bay of Firth

Funds for brief exploratory dives in the Bay of Firth have been obtained from the Russell Trust and Historic Scotland. This work will take place in March 2010 in order to produce a preliminary assessment of the anomalies recorded in June 2009 and a management plan for future work and funding. An application for further funding for a longer season of work in March 2011 is being processed by The Crown Estate.

Report writing

- Preparation of a paper on sediment analysis to date to be prepared for publication by end March 2010
- Consideration will be given to a further brief report after fieldwork in March 2010.
- A paper on sea level change for archaeologists is in preparation.
- Report for SFLP to be prepared by May 2011.

Developments and Liaison

Personnel

Dr Richard Bates, Scottish Oceans Institute, University of St Andrews, has joined the project. Dr Martin Bates – palaeo-environmental studies and Nigel Nayling – archaeological diver, from the University of Lampeter, will be joining the project.

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.

Outreach

Lectures

- CWJ seminar at Oceanlab in Aberdeen, November 2009
- SD & CWJ seminar at the St Andrews Archaeological Society, Fife, November 2009
- CWJ working with Orkney Writer-in-Residence Nalini Paul on a writing workshop focused around the project, March 2010.
- SD & CWJ to present a seminar on the project at the Centre for Maritime Archaeology, University of Ulster, 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).
- Peer-reviewed paper on sediment analysis of core material from the Lochs of Stenness, Harray and Echna loch in preparation for publication by end March 2010.
- Consideration will be given to a brief publication after fieldwork in March 2010.
- A general paper on sea level change for archaeologists is in preparation.

Media coverage

- December 2009 – brief coverage on Radio Scotland and BBC Scotland
- Press release prepared for release in advance of fieldwork in March 2010

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-jones>

Funding 2009-10

- Historic Scotland - sediment analysis, 2009-10.
- NGS/Waite Grant – initial work in the Bay of Firth, June 2009.
- Heritage Lottery Fund - SFLP funding for work on Hoy and South Ronaldsay, 2009-12.
- Historic Scotland – exploratory work on large mound, March 2010.
- The Russell Trust – exploratory work on large mound, March 2010.

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