
4 AREA III : ISOLATED HOUSE SITES W OF AREA I

Work on this part of the site (III 3) was started in July 1938 and carried on during the season of 1939 under the direction of Dr Richardson and Mr William Henderson, but was abruptly halted on the imminent outbreak of war when little more than a rough survey of the individual buildings and a superficial internal examination of each had been carried out. There has been no publication referring to this work and the only source for the excavation and the finds was Mr Henderson's notes together with plans of the buildings prepared by the then Ministry of Works. In 1956 Dr Radford made a detailed examination of a pair of adjacent buildings referred to as House Site C. He distinguished four periods of construction, the earliest being a Norse farmhouse of the 9th century. A brief account of this excavation with a plan is published in the official Guidebook (Radford 1959).

In 1974 Mr Christopher Morris began further work in Area III to elucidate the relationships of some of these buildings and to examine the confused series of structures, work which has continued over a number of years and has extended to sites on the Brough outside the Guardianship area. The finds from these excavations will be published when work on the Brough is completed. In 1975 Dr John Hunter began excavations on a series of buildings at the N end of the Guardianship site. I am grateful to them both for giving me brief summaries of the individual house-sites to which the pre-war finds, included in this survey, belong. These finds cover, with few exceptions, the same time-span as do those from Area II and both complement and supplement the latter; where an individual find clearly belongs to a type found in Area II it has already been described with that group. The full description of each of the listed finds is in the Catalogue.

HOUSE SITE B

A small rectangular building, 33ft by 20ft (10 × 6 m) which appeared to overlie an earlier construction, is situated to the N of the cemetery buildings. A drain appears to have run between it and the building assumed by Dr Richardson to be the kitchen of the monastery; the majority of the finds were found in the immediate vicinity of the drain.

Catalogued Finds

423, 448, 460, 543, 586, 632, 657.

Uncatalogued Finds

A small fragment of bone comb (not identified).

HOUSE SITE C

House Site C was excavated by Dr Radford in 1956 (Radford 1959, 22-3, fig 2), this complex contains the two largest of the scattered buildings and is situated to the S of the group. Radford distinguished four occupation levels, going back to a Norse farmhouse of the 9th century.

Catalogued Finds

6, 72, 140, 215, 229, 265, 424, 500b, 529, 533, 552, 578, 605, 613.

HOUSE SITE D

House Site D includes a complex series of structures of various dates stretching to the W, with another long building at right angles across the lower end.

Catalogued Finds

17, 347, 456a, 582.

Uncatalogued Finds

Fragment of bone pin.

Two nail heads and fragments of iron (unidentified).

Small clay mould fragments.

Fragment of a whetstone.

Several fragments of steatite.

HOUSE SITE E

Work on this site in 1938 and 1939 distinguished a small building and three annexes to the E. Further excavations undertaken by Mr Morris between 1976 and 1980, revealed a number of building phases and clearance phases predating these buildings. An 11th-century Anglo-Saxon coin in the wall-fill of one annexe gave a terminus post quem for the latest phase. Radiocarbon determinations centering in the 7th century AD date early phases. A bronze mount with cross design and interlace and an ogham stone are notable non-Scandinavian finds which will be discussed in Mr Morris' publication of the site.

The only finds from the 1938-39 excavation of the site are two small bone pins.

Catalogued Finds

65, 67.

HOUSE SITE F

This site was examined by Dr Hunter.

Catalogued Finds

564, 600.

Uncatalogued Finds

Several unidentifiable fragments of iron.

HOUSE SITE K

House Site K was a rectangular building 32ft by 19ft (9.8 × 5.8 m) with round corners, comprising two rooms.

Catalogued Finds

563, 651.

Uncatalogued Finds

An iron bolt (lost).

Samples of hazel were scattered over NW corner, possibly matting or a creel since rotted away (identified by Donaldson).

HOUSE SITE L

House Site L was examined fully by Mr Morris in 1975 and found to be a dwelling, which has had one major rebuilding phase which reduced the length of the building by some 2 m and added an entrance in the E wall, itself blocked in the latest phase. Walls were of earth/turf and were faced with stone. New finds were few, offering no clear dating evidence.

Catalogued Finds

394.

Uncatalogued Finds

Iron nail and an iron bolt (lost).

HOUSE SITE M

House Site M was a rectangular building with rounded corners.

Catalogued Finds

518, 557.

Uncatalogued Finds

Unidentified iron fragment.

HOUSE SITE N

House Site N was investigated by Mr Morris in 1975. The building measured 10.75 m by 6.5 m externally, with identical wall construction to House Site L. Recent excavations have shown earlier structures with gulleys around them. Finds are few but carbonised material below the N wall gave a radiocarbon dating around the 8th century AD. The only pre-war find was an uncatalogued piece of iron.

HOUSE SITES P AND R

No finds survive from the pre-war excavations at House Sites P and R; both sites have been re-excavated by Dr John Hunter.