

## III.

## NOTES ON SOME DUNS IN ISLAY.

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Of the twenty-seven forts and duns marked on the 6-inch O.S. Map I visited sixteen on May 23-25, 1934.

(a) *East Coast.*

(1) Dun Bhoraraic *broch*, on a summit 550 feet above O.D. and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from shore commanding a superb view up the Sound of Islay to Colonsay and Mull, across the island to Loch Indall, the Rhinns and Ireland and down the Sound to Kintyre. The entrance on the south-east is well preserved, the passage being 13 feet long and 2 feet 4 inches wide at each end, but widening out at centre. To the left is a cell, entered from the door-passage. The corbelling of the roof is visible though the capstones have fallen in and the floor is choked with stones; dimensions above these 8 feet by 4 feet 6 inches. The court is choked with fallen stones and exact diameter is uncertain. The outer face of the tower wall on the south-west has fallen down the precipice, but elsewhere its base at least is well preserved. In the thickness of the wall on the left (south-west) side are traces of the stair. A little further round a passage leads to a cell, the corbelled inner wall of which is exposed by the collapse of the outer wall. A signal station with concrete piles has been built over the broch wall on the south (left). There are no certain traces of outworks.

(2-6) Five duns in  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles of coast between the east spur of Beinn Bheigeir and the south-east corner of the island form a group.

(2) Dun on Carraig Mor below Maol Ardtalla. A promontory, 100 feet long by 50 feet wide, rising sheer about 25 feet from water's edge with narrow coves or crevices on either side, is cut off by two well-built stone walls, 43 feet apart—traces of an intermediate wall. Above the neck the land rises quite steeply to the 200-foot contour.

(3) Dun at Rudha Bhuidhe (north of Claggain Bay), 1.1 mile, south of (2), but not visible therefrom. A triangular promontory, rising 10 feet or so from the water and about 45 feet long, with a cove on the south side and a sandy bay to north, cut off by a double stone wall, quite unmeasurable. Behind, the ground rises steeply to the 50-foot contour.

(4) Dun, *vitriified fort*, Trudernish Point, just under 1 mile, south of No. (3) and visible therefrom. The rocky promontory, about 30 feet above the water's edge, is cut off by a strong wall now a mass of rubble in which several of the stones are partially fused and some form typical vitrified agglomerations. Outside this are two massive walls, double-faced with traces of good masonry in castle style. They are not strictly parallel to the vitrified rampart and may have been built on to it.

(5) Dun, Mulloch Ban. The highest of several isolated rock peaks midway between Aros Bay and Port Mor and less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from shore, is girt with a massive stone wall, the over-all area being about 100 feet by 83 feet. Doubtful traces of a fosse and outer rampart on the slope at the north-east end.

(6) Dun, Ardmor. From the flat ground at the head of the rock-girt bay of Port na Cille a mass of rock rises vertically about 12 feet on the landward side and 18 feet from the water. A massive stone wall encircles its summit with an over-all area of 66 feet by 30 feet, clefts in the rock being carefully blocked by well-preserved walls. At the north-east end a built stair leads from the land through a cleft into the interior.

(7) Dun Fhinn, on wild moors above Kintour river, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the shore at Aros or Claggain Bay and over 200 feet above O.D., was not visited.

(8) An Dun, in the grounds of Kildalton House. An isolated rock about 50 feet above O.D. and 25 yards from the shore of Loch a Chruic, has been girt with a well-built massive wall. The interior has been made into a garden look-out and the walls have been as a result too much disturbed for measurement.

(b) *South Coast.*

(9) An inland "site," over 200 feet above O.D. and nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from shore at Ard Beg, was not visited.

(10) Borraniebill Mor, just a mile from the shore at Port Ellen. A bare rocky summit, 450 feet above O.D., is protected on the south and east by a massive double-faced wall, very well preserved and 8 feet thick, and on the other sides by precipitous cliffs. There is a small gate on the south-east certainly not more than 6 feet wide (only one face of the passage was exposed). The interior, very uneven and broken by tall rock outcrops, could not be measured, but probably comprises 1 to 3 acres.

(11) Dun, Mull of Oa, cliff fort, not visited.

(c) *Central Islay.*

(12) Dun Nosebridge ? *vitriified fort*, Mulindry, overlooking upper Laggan valley. An isolated eminence rising above the cultivated lands, is crowned by a rectangular citadel (with rounded corners) 96 feet by 55 feet from crest to crest of the well-marked rampart. The entrance is in the middle of the north end. The rock falls away sheer on the east, but the slopes elsewhere are defended by two ditches with counterscarp banks, and at the south-west corner by four. The stone ramparts are entirely grass-grown and no traces either of vitrification or of building were exposed, but the form of the citadel recalls Dunagoil, Carradale, etc.

(13) Dun Ghuaidre, Kilmeny. An isolated eminence rising to just over 300 feet above O.D. from cultivated fields, is entirely encircled by a massive-built stone wall enclosing an oval or subrectangular area 110 feet by 54 feet. In the centre is a square stone foundation about 10 feet square. On the south the rock falls away sheer. On the other sides there are two ditches cut in the rock defending the slope. The entrance is at the south-east corner where a narrow causeway has been left between the cliff and the ends of the ditches.

(14) Dun Cheapasaidh Mor, Ballygrant, over 300 feet O.D., 1 mile north of No. 13 and visible therefrom, apparently a "hill-top town" like No. 10, not visited.

(15) Dun Bheinicheltun, not visited.

(16) Site on Borichill Mor, not visited.

(d) On the moors between Loch Indall and Machair Bay (west coast) are five duns, of which a group of three near Loch Gearach were alone visited.

(17) Dun Glas an Loin Ghuirm. One of several small rocky eminences rising from a marsh, with its summit girt by a well-built but ruinous wall enclosing an over-all area 50 feet across. Vague suggestions of outworks at the foot.

(18) Dun Mideir,  $\frac{2}{5}$  mile north of No. 17, a rocky peak 300 feet O.D. of about the same dimensions as No. 17 and girt with a similar wall, but with traces of a cross wall dividing it and with later walls running up to the cliff's base.

(19) Dun Bhar-a-chlaom,  $\frac{4}{5}$  mile north-north-west of No. 18. An isolated rock above a swamp with high ground behind it, girt on top with well-built stone wall. Over-all area less than 35 feet across.

(e) *West Coast.*

(20) Dun an Nighean, not visited. Apparently a cliff fort.

(21) Dun Chroisprig, perched on a spur about half-way down a 200-foot precipice, and about 50 yards from sandy shore. Most of the stone wall has fallen down the precipice.

(22) Dun Bhoraraig, Rudha na Faoileige, north of Lossit Bay. The headland that rises precipitously 150 feet above the sea and 10 to 20 feet above the swampy hinterland is cut off by a massive-built stone wall. In the cliffs on the south side is a narrow cove accessible down a steep slope through a cleft outside the ramparts.

(23) An Dun, Rhinns Point, evidently a cliff fort, not visited.

(f) *West Shore of Loch Indall.*

(24) An Dun, Octafad, a rock girt with well-built stone wall, with over-all width of about 30 feet, rising sheer some 40 feet from water's edge. Coves in rock clefts on either side. Behind, the ground rises steeply to 200 feet O.D.

(25) Rudh an Duin, Port Charlotte. The lighthouse stands on the site of a cliff fort.

NOTES.

Only Nos. 10 and perhaps 14 approach in size or situation a hill-top town as I define such. The masonry of No. 10 is perhaps rather coarser than in most of the "castles."

Nos. 12 and 13 are closely allied in structure and situation. Both stand close to good agricultural land.

The other forts visited can only be classed as "castles," but in No. 4 the vitrified wall may be older than the typical castle masonry. No. 1 is the only broch yet recorded on Islay. It is worthy of preservation both for its beautiful situation and its comparatively good condition. None of the remaining castles stand on land now thought fit for cultivation, but there are old crofts between Nos. 17 and 18. Nos. 2, 3, 6, 8, 22, 24, 25 are admirably suited to be pirates' strongholds, with coves hidden in chasms of the rock where coracles might shelter. It is noteworthy that Nos. 2, 3, 21, 24 are overlooked by high ground immediately in their rear.