
LATER ACTIVITY POST ABANDONMENT

This phase, 9, was used to include all undated and recent structures and covers the period from the abandonment of the site, that is from the 9th century or even earlier through to the 20th. Also included are an unphased burial, 19th and 20th century excavations and plough damage.

A number of important artefacts were recovered from the topsoil or were unstratified within this Phase. These included a carnelian intaglio with an imperial eagle, dated to the mid 2nd century AD and three fine copper-alloy objects: a long zoomorphic pin of the 4th to 5th centuries AD, a decorated brooch, similar to the St Ninian's Isle types, given a mid 9th century, Pictish, attribution and a spiral ring of mid Bronze Age to c 5th century AD.

POST PHASE 8 ABANDONMENT

A continuous sequence of abandonment can be identified in most areas where Phase 8 Stage 11 occupation did not occur. The Stage 12 and the unphased late structures (below) represent discrete breaks in this sequence and indicate occasional use of the mound, rather than actual settlement, with the exception of building H which had a hearth. In the S and W of the mound the abandonment layers consisted of structural collapse of walls onto earth and flag floors. Building outlines were masked, and the pattern was somewhat disturbed by erosion,

robbing of higher level structures and by 19th-century digging. In a few areas abandonment was continuous, or all but so, from the last major broch tower collapse, and a layer of weathered stone fragments built up across the site. The interior of the broch tower remained out of use from Phase 7/8, subject only to wall collapses and filling in by rubble and earth (illus 76). Stone robbing of the tower wall head did take place and the lintels from the entrance were removed after Stage 6, which allowed the passage to be filled with a stony wash.



Illus 76

The top of the broch tower, shown filled with rubble after removal of turf and topsoil. The Phase 7 blocked landing is visible in the lower centre of the picture; scales – 2m; from W.

UNPHASED LATE STRUCTURES (illus 77)

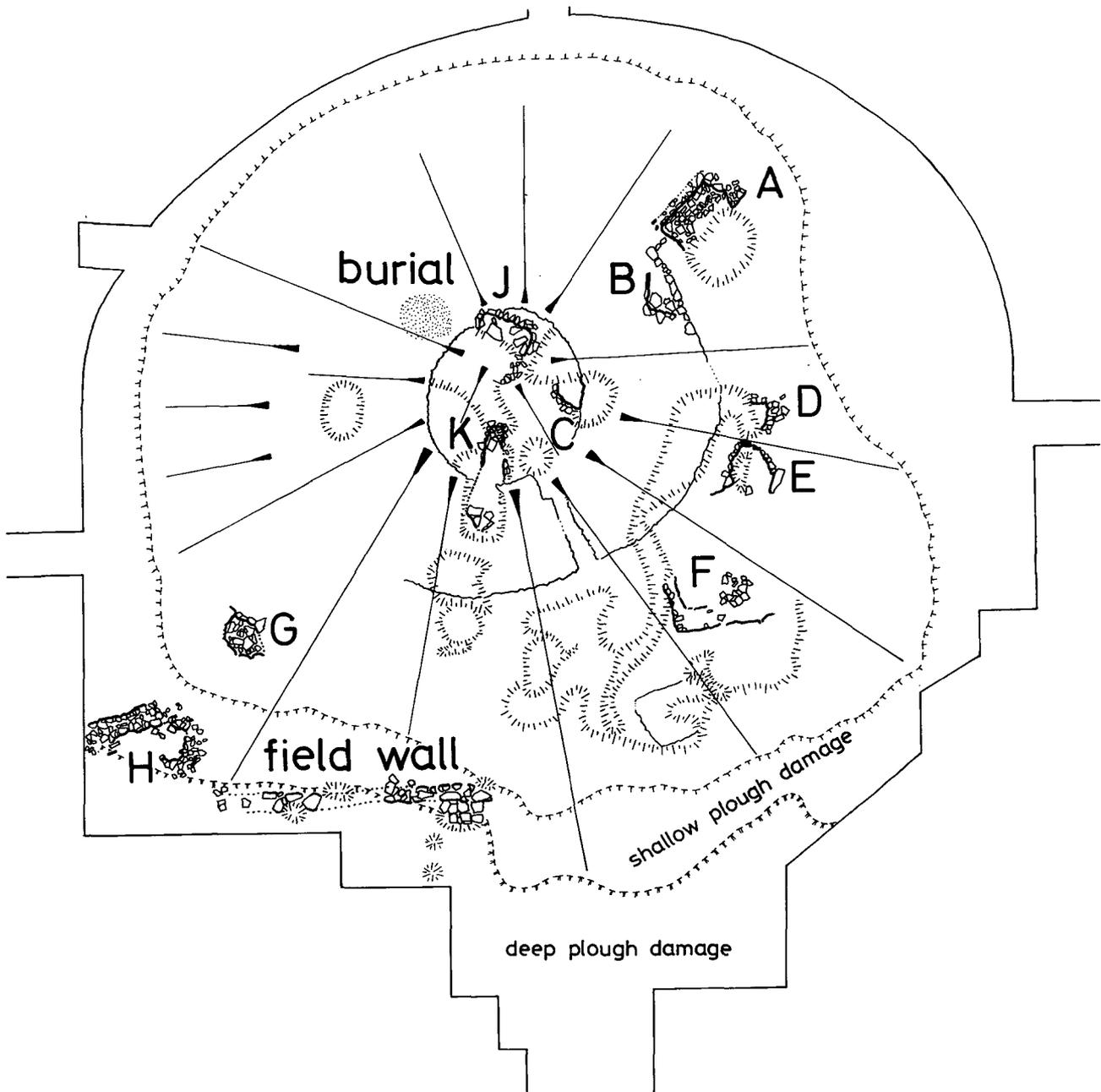
Parts of nine other late structures were present on the site which cannot be assigned to specific phases. These are shown together with three recent structures (18th-century or later), dated by finds, and the limits of recent stone-robbing and early archaeological investigations. Most of these structures merit little comment and are not stratigraphically linked.

BUILDINGS A-H

Building **A** was rectilinear and lay in the upper fill of the area between the broch tower wall and the rampart revetment in the

NE. Three sides of a single-faced building survived, which cut into the abandonment rubble. The longest side, the NW, measured 2.8m, but the building was disturbed by a 19th-century excavation and only a 2m length of it survived. The walls survived to three courses in height and partly stood on stone and earth levelling. Onto the levelling was placed the flag floor of the building.

Building **B** was a tiny triangular fragment which cut the outer face of the broch tower wall at a level 1m above building **A**, and lay to the SW of it. Its wall was of upright stones and some flag flooring remained.



Illus 77
Phase 9 features.

Building **C** was built against the inside wall of the broch tower and consisted of an arc of single-faced wall, dug into rubble. The wall survived to a height of 0.5m but was cut to the N and E by 19th-century trenches. Some flag flooring was present.

Building **D** lay to the E and consisted of a semi-circular arc of coursed stone which was cut by an arm of a Victorian trench.

Immediately below it was another semi-circular hut, Building **E**, open to the S with walls built of upright stones, and a stone chip floor.

Further S, to the E of the old broch entrance, was Building **F**, an L-shaped, 2m wide freestanding wall. It survived to only one course and lay on top of the abandonment surface. It is assumed that the flag surface to the NE belonged with the wall, but the building was cut by a 19th-century trench in the NW.

Another small fragment of a building, **G**, was located in the W within a Phase 7 rampart cell of the NW building. It was partly closed off to the N by a short length of single-faced wall and had a flag floor, c 2.0 × 1.4m.

In the SW, Building **H** overlay the upper fills of the ditch and cut the silting over the rampart. A freestanding wall, 1m wide, lay at right angles to the rampart, and a curved single-faced wall backed by rubble joined them together in the N. They enclosed an area

c 1.5m square which had an earth and rubble floor. To the S of the freestanding wall was an earth floor within which lay a hearth consisting of a fragmented base slab and an upright. Unlike other freestanding walls in Phase 8 this construction had squared blocks forming the faces with an earth infill.

FIELD WALL

Towards the SW corner of the site, a fragmentary, but solidly constructed, field wall, aligned E-W, possibly derived from the 19th century. In the middle, and immediately S of it, three cows were buried in pits and three calf burials were also found in the vicinity. Modern glass found in the pit of the former attests to its recent date.

LATE UNPHASED BURIAL

On the eroded broch tower wall-head, in a 2.0 × 1.5m area disturbed in the 19th and 20th centuries, was a concentration of human bones (SF 68). No datable finds were associated with the bones, but it is possible that the glass linen smoother from 19th century excavations came from this locality. If so, the suggested Norse date for the artefact (Marwick 1927, 121) could be applied. The bones were intermixed with others from the 1978 season by Hurricane Flossie, but were subsequently separated by identification.

MODERN FEATURES AND DISTURBANCE

The top of the broch contained another feature, J, which was one end of a rectangular structure dug into the interior rubble on the W side. It had a large flag floor and was mainly destroyed by a recent trench. It is dated by glass and pottery to the late 18th–early 19th centuries. Two late stone robbing trenches may also date from this time.

It is recorded (Marwick 1927) that the site was ‘excavated’ in the 1860’s and, considering the techniques of the age, a deep trench cutting through the broch wall is a good candidate for this event. The trench consisted of a 1.2m deep hole which extended from inside the tower out into the centre of the wall, and a similar trench on the same line which cut the outer broch wall face, with a narrow trench between. The former hole was dug deep enough to reveal the clay core of the Neolithic mound and the latter, the outer faces of Brochs 1 and 2. The inner trench was used soon afterwards as the site of a long narrow structure, described above, which is best interpreted as a short-lived cold store, **K**. This structure was already abandoned when two large holes were dug into the top of the broch. These ‘excavations’ revealed long stretches of the broch wall face and were filled with 20th-century rubbish. They did, however, avoid the navigation cairn sited on the top of the mound, which may aid the dating of them.

Related to these holes was a long sinuous trench which located the broch wall outer face on the E and progressed S another 10m. It cut through several stages of Phase 8 buildings and created two piles of

debris at its S end. On either side of the terminus of this trench, three other holes were dug and corresponding piles of rubble formed. Two other recent holes disturbed the unphased buildings **A** and **C** in the NE and in the interior of the broch tower.

PLOUGH DAMAGE

From the plan it can be seen that much of the S part of the site suffered both from shallow and deep plough damage. Here the slope of the mound was shallow and allowed the plough to make incursions higher up onto the site. Evidence was found into Phase 7 levels of stratigraphy which had been ploughed away since the site had been abandoned. Evidence of the clay-cored rampart E of the entrance was missing, together with parts of buildings built over the defences in later Phase 7, and the destruction of parts of buildings during Phase 8 was much in evidence. S of the defences, beyond the settlement entrance, only scant remains were found of activities during later Phase 7, as this area was subject to regular ploughing. The survival to a higher level of the defences on the E prevented much serious damage on this side. To both the N and W, the severe slopes of the mound discouraged ploughing and again damage was minimised.

It must be left to the imagination to speculate on the extent of settlement beyond the defences which has been lost to the plough.

