



NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGY

VOLUMES 5 and 6, 1984-1985.



THE BULLETIN OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP.

ISSN 0144-4999

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGY
VOLUMES 5 & 6, 1984-1985

Editors:
Colin Burgess
Margaret Maddison
Paul Sellers

Department of Adult Education
The University
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 7RU

EDITORIAL

We knew that Ann MacSween's *Brochs, Duns and Enclosures of Skye* was going to be much longer than our average offering, and had planned, therefore, to publish it as a two-part complete volume of *Northern Archaeology*. At a late stage we realised that it was going to be not twice but four times as long as our usual issues, and more than twice as long as our one previous double issue. Accordingly, *Brochs, Duns and Enclosures of Skye* has become two whole volumes: the equivalent of four parts. This has the further advantage of bringing *Northern Archaeology* up to date. Those who have had the pleasure of visiting some of the monuments Ann MacSween describes in these pages, surely among the most spectacular, and spectacularly sited, field monuments to be found anywhere, are going to be indebted to her for providing such a handy corpus of plans and descriptions between one set of covers. We also applaud her succinct summary of views on the development and chronology of these enigmatic monuments. If you have not been to look at the Skye sites, reader, then we urge you to start planning now. A tour of the sites catalogued here is one of the world's great archaeological experiences.

Now that *Northern Archaeology* is up to date we shall make every effort to keep it that way. Material for the next issue is already in hand, and we plan that it will be with you by next May. We have also embarked on a publicity campaign intended to attract a more steady flow of contributions. We have not forgotten the promised reviews and Topping cartoons. They are coming.

Colin Burgess
Margaret Maddison
Paul Sellers

THE BROCHS, DUNS AND ENCLOSURES OF SKYE

ANN MACSWEEN

© Ann MacSween, 1985

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to Mr John Dunbar, Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh, for permission to publish the RCAHMS plans and the Ordnance Survey plans, Dr Roger Martlew, Leicester University, for allowing me to include his unpublished plan of the Flodigarry broch, and Mick Sharp for allowing me to publish his photographs.

There are many people who have helped me out with this project over the past four years, and whom I thank most sincerely -

The study began as my undergraduate thesis for the University of Edinburgh, under the supervision of Professor Denis Harding of the Archaeology Department.

The initial programme of fieldwalking took place with the help of my parents, Dr and Mrs John MacSween, and my brother Ian, who were a willing team, visiting over eighty sites with me.

Jean Williamson and Mick Sharp visited many of the sites on the second round of fieldwork earlier this year.

Dr Euan Mackie, Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, kindly commented on my thesis, and Mr Jim Killgore, Mr Mike Heyworth, University of Bradford and Mr Stratford Halliday, RCAHMS, Edinburgh, read draft versions of the text for Northern Archaeology.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr Colin Burgess, University of Newcastle, for all his advice, and for being a patient and constructive editor.

CONTENTS

	Acknowledgements	iv
	Contents	v
	List of Maps and Figures	vi
	List of Plates	viii
I	Introduction	1
II	The Study of Brochs and Duns	2
III	Classification of the Skye Iron Age Structures	9
IV	Brochs	11
V	Duns	15
VI	Enclosures	17
VII	Promontory Enclosures	19
VIII	Distribution Maps	21
IX	Possible Functions of the Skye Brochs, Enclosures and Duns	23
X	Economic and Social Implications	28
XI	Conclusions	34
	Bibliography	35
	Catalogue	41
	Appendices	54
	Maps and Figures	
	Plates	
	Index of Sites	

LIST OF MAPS AND FIGURES

All site plans are drawn to the same scale, 1:400. Those plans marked RCAHMS are after the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Ninth Report with Inventory of Monuments and Constructions in the Outer Hebrides, Skye and the Small Isles (1928), with minor additions made either during later work by the Ordnance Survey, or during the present study. Plans marked 'OS' are based on Ordnance Survey records, held at the National Monuments Record for Scotland, Edinburgh. Both the Royal Commission's plans and the Ordnance Survey's plans are published courtesy of the Royal Commission. Unmarked plans are sketch plans made during the present study.

- Map 1. The Isle of Skye
- Map 2. The Parishes of Skye
- Map 3. The Distribution of Iron Age Sites on Skye
- Map 4. The Distribution of Brochs on Skye
- Fig 1. Dun Sleadale (OS NG32 NW1)
- 2. Dun Ard an t'Sabhail (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 200)
- 3. Dun Garsin (OS NG33 NE1)
- 4. Dun Beag, Struan (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 201)
- 5. Dun Arkaig
- 6. Broch, Glen Heysdale
- 7. Dun Boreraig, Dunvegan (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 222)
- 8. Dun Colbost (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 223)
- 9. Dun Osdale (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 224)
- 10. Dun Fiadhairt (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 225)
- 11. Dun Hallin (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 226)
- 12. Dun Borrafiach (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 230)
- 13. Dun Gearymore (OS NG26 SW1)
- 14. Dun Edinbain (OS NG35 SE4)
- 15. Dun Flashader (OS NG35 SE3)
- 16. Dun Suledale (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 281)
- 17. Broch, Kingsburgh (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 282)
- 18. Dun Flodigarra (Martlew, pers com)
- 19. Dun Greanan (OS NG56 NW1)
- 20. Dun Raisaburgh (OS NG56 SW1)
- 21. Dun Borve, Snizort (OS NG44 NE2)
- Map 5. The Distribution of Duns on Skye
- Fig 22. Liath, Elgol (OS NG51 SW2)
- 23. Dun Diarmaid
- 24. Dun, Abhuinn Bhaile Mheadhonaich
- 25. Dun Feorlig (OS NG24 SE8)
- 26. Dun Uiginish
- 27. Dun Borve, Edinbain (OS NG35 NE6)
- 28. Dun Tayinloan (OS NG35 SE8)
- 29. Dun à Cheitechin (OS NG44 NW8)
- 30. Dun Bornaskitaig (OS NG37 SE4)
- 31. Dun, Loch Baravaig (OS NG60 NE5)
- 32. Dunan Choinnich (OS NG60 NE6)
- 33. Dun a'Chleirich (OS NG60 SW2)
- 34. Dun Boreraig, Strath (OS NG61 NW2)
- 35. Dun Kraiknish (OS NG32 SE2)
- 36. Dun Merkadale (OS NG33 SE1)
- 37. Dun Neill (OS NG24 SE5)
- 38. Dun Ringill (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 293)
- 39. Dun Totaig (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 231)

- Map 6. The Distribution of Enclosures on Skye
- Fig 40. Dun Mor, Torrin (OS NG52 SE4)
41. Dun Mor, Struan (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 208)
42. Dun Cnoc a' Sga (OS NG24 SE1)
43. Dun Adhamh (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 285)
44. Dun Creag nam Meann (OS NG45 NW1)
45. Dun Maraig (OS NG35 NE5)
46. Dun Borve, Cuidrach (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 286)
47. Dun Beag, Staffin (OS NG46 NE3)
48. Dun Connavern (OS NG56 SW3)
49. Dun Kearstach (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 292)
50. Dunan an Aisilidh (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 256)
51. Dun Cruinn (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 283)
52. Dun Skudiburgh (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 243)
- Map 7. The Distribution of Promontory Enclosures on Skye
- Fig 53. Dun Pharuig
54. Dun Ila
55. Dun Carn Breac (OS NG60 SW1)
56. Dun Ban (OS NG60 SW3)
57. Dun Beag, Torrin
58. Dun Drinan
59. Dun Grugaig (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 294)
60. Dun Rudh an Dunain (OS NG31 NE1)
61. Dun Taimh (OS NG33 NE3)
62. Dun Ullinish (OS NG33 NW6)
63. Dun Chaich (OS NG24 NW8)
64. Dun na h-Airde (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 232)
65. Dun Meall an Duna (OS NG35 SW1)
66. Dun Eyre (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 284)
67. Dun Santavaig (OS NG35 NE11)
68. Dun Peinduin (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 287)
69. Dun Tom na h-Uraich
70. Dun Vallerain (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 249)
71. Dun Mor, Staffin (OS NG45)
72. Dun Dearg (OS NG56 SW2)
73. Dun Gerashader (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 260)
74. Dun Torvaig (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 261)
75. Dun Vlarvaig (OS NG53 NW9)
76. Dun Ardtreck (after Mackie, 1975b, fig 2)
77. Dun Liath, Kilvaxter (RCAHMS, 1928, fig 242)
- Map 8. The Topography of Skye
9. Climatic Zones
10. Simplified Geology
11. Land Utilization on Skye in 1929
12. The Distribution of Hut Circles and Earth Houses on Skye
13. Plan of Field Systems adjoining Dun Borrafiach
14. Plan of Field Banks adjoining Dun Mor
15. The Vaternish Brochs
16. Glen Hinnisdale
17. Sleat
- Table % wallbase against number of brochs

LIST OF PLATES

All plates except those marked *, which are by the author, were taken by Mick Sharp, Eithinog, Waun, Penisarwaun, Caernarfon, Gwynedd (Copyright reserved).

1. Dun Ard an t-Sabhail, from SW
2. Dun Beag, Struan, from SW *
3. Dun Beag, Struan, entrance *
4. Dun Boreraig, Dunvegan, from S
5. Dun Osdale, from SE
6. Dun Fiadhairt, from E
7. Dun Fiadhairt, detail of gallery
8. Dun Borrafiach, from S
9. Dun Neill, from SE
10. Dun Ringill, from S
11. Dunan an Aisilidh, from SE *
12. Dun Cruinn, detail of rampart *
13. Dun Grugaig, from SW
14. Dun Rudh an Dunain, from NE
15. Dun Rudh an Dunain, scarcement *
16. Dun na h-Airde, from W *
17. Dun Santavaig, from E
18. Dun Ardtreck, from NE
19. Dun Liath, Kilvaxter, NE stretch of rampart