

A CONTRIBUTION TO A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF BROCHS

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VOLUME 3 SITE CATALOGUE

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VOLUME THREE

SITE CATALOGUE

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INTRODUCTION

The site catalogue covers the following study areas:

Caithness: East Coast (EC)
Thurso River (TR)
Dunbeath Water/Burn of Houstry (DW)

Sutherland: Strath Naver (SN)
Strath Halladale (SH)
Strath of Kildonan (SK)

Isle of Skye (IS)














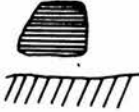

Within each study area every upstanding structure identified as a broch by any authority is included in the site catalogue, plus all former sites of brochs, no matter how tenuous the evidence. A number of other upstanding structures are included where appropriate, either because they have formerly been classed as brochs, or it has been suggested that they are a type of site closely related to brochs, such as, semibrochs.

For each site in the catalogue there is a unique reference number, an eight figure grid reference where available, the NMRS card number, and the current NMRS class. Significant bibliographic references to the site are listed, and the details of any excavation and the location of finds are given. There then follows a detailed description of each site, and a new survey plan, where the remains are capable of measurement. In the field the sites were planned at large scale, generally 1:100, but they are reproduced in the catalogue to fit an A4 format. Any previous plans of the site made by other authorities are included for comparative purposes. In the site description the physical features of each site are given in detail, referring to the new survey plan, any previous plans, and the record of any excavation as appropriate. At a number of sites newly identified features are recorded, and new interpretations of the field information advanced.

The north points included on the site plans are all magnetic north. It should be noted that there are considerable magnetic anomalies throughout the island of Skye. The north points on the Skye plans have

been inserted as correctly as possible, but there may be some variation from north points given in previous plans of sites in Skye. A key to drawing conventions is provided at the start of the catalogue, and a list of sites and a location map may be found at the beginning of each study area.

Key to Drawing Conventions

	Slope		
	Wall face or revetment		Individual facing stones
	Orthostat or upright stone		Batter on face
	Recumbent stone		Stone lying at an angle
	Rubble		Track or road
	Outline of hidden intramural feature or indistinct traces of wall face		Stob and wire fence
	Hidden in-situ lintel		Cliff or precipice edge
	Recent build or reconstruction		
	Rock outcrop or crag edge		

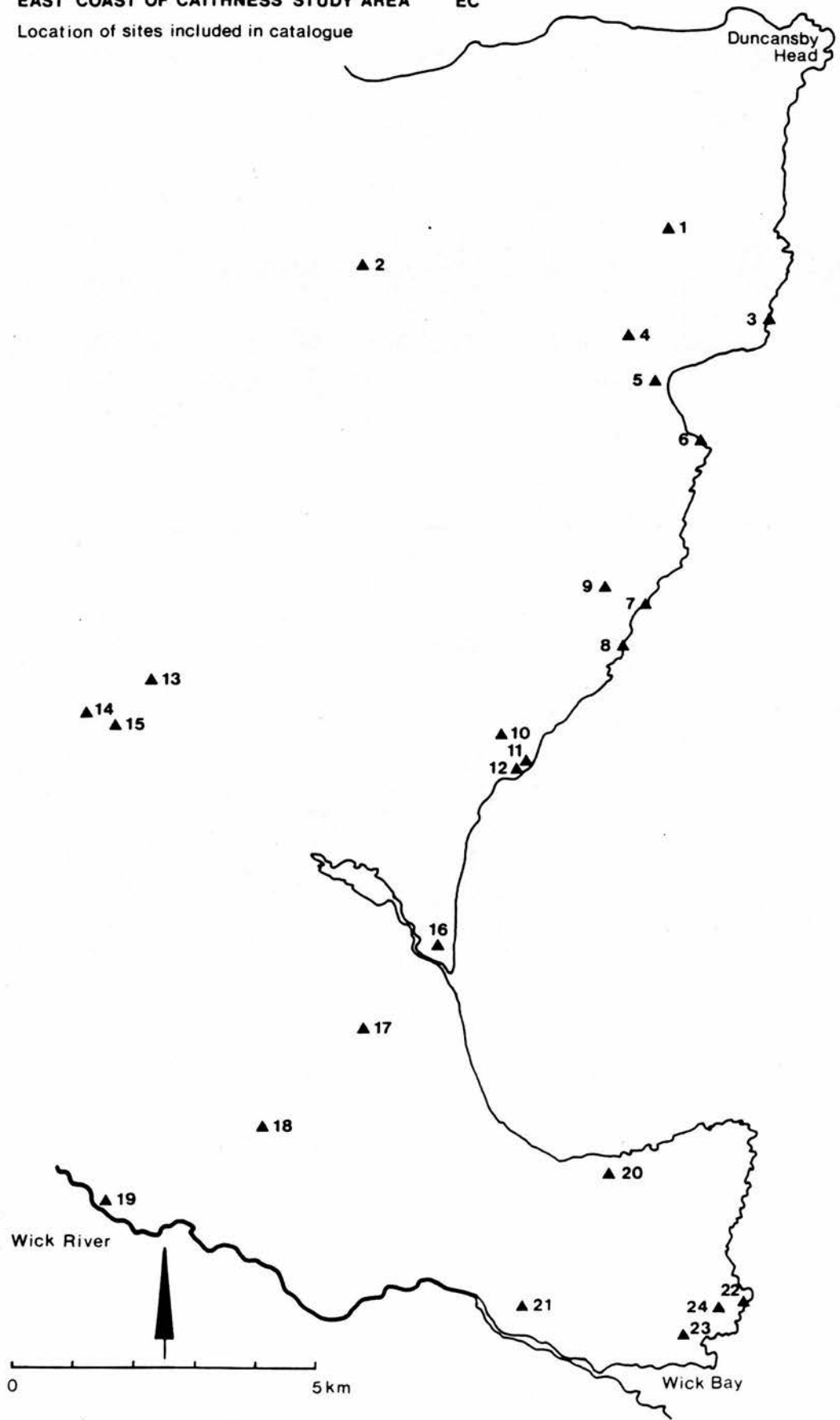
**EAST COAST
OF CAITHNESS**

East Coast of Caithness Study Area

EC 1	Biel of Duncansby	ND 3775 7012
EC 2	Brabstermire	ND 3285 6993
EC 3	Skirza Head	ND 3940 6844
EC 4	Everley	ND 3699 6828
EC 5	Freswick Links	ND 3761 6761
EC 6	Ness	ND 3814 6665
EC 7	Sgarbach	ND 3729 6375
EC 8	Nybster	ND 3702 6314
EC 9	Auckingill	cND 366 641
EC 10	Road, Keiss	ND 3488 6151
EC 11	Whitegate	ND 3541 6120
EC 12	Harbour Mound	ND 3531 6108
EC 13	Hill o'Works	ND 2903 6255
EC 14	Gunn's Hillock	ND 2792 6201
EC 15	Ring of Castlehill	ND 2828 6182
EC 16	Wester	ND 3385 5831
EC 17	Killimster	ND 3234 5655
EC 18	Norwall	ND 3266 5445
EC 19	Bilbster	ND 2817 5381
EC 20	Shorelands 1	ND 3647 5425
	Shorelands 2	ND 3656 5424
EC 21	Kettleburn	ND 3497 5191
EC 22	Cairn of Elsay	ND 3871 5198
EC 23	Hillhead	ND 3762 5140
EC 24	Papigoe	ND 3828 5176

EAST COAST OF CAITHNESS STUDY AREA EC

Location of sites included in catalogue



EC 1

Biel of Duncansby

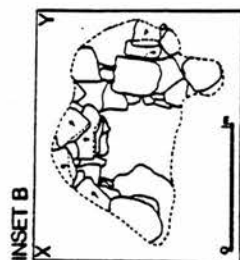
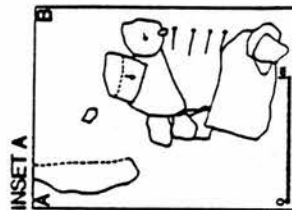
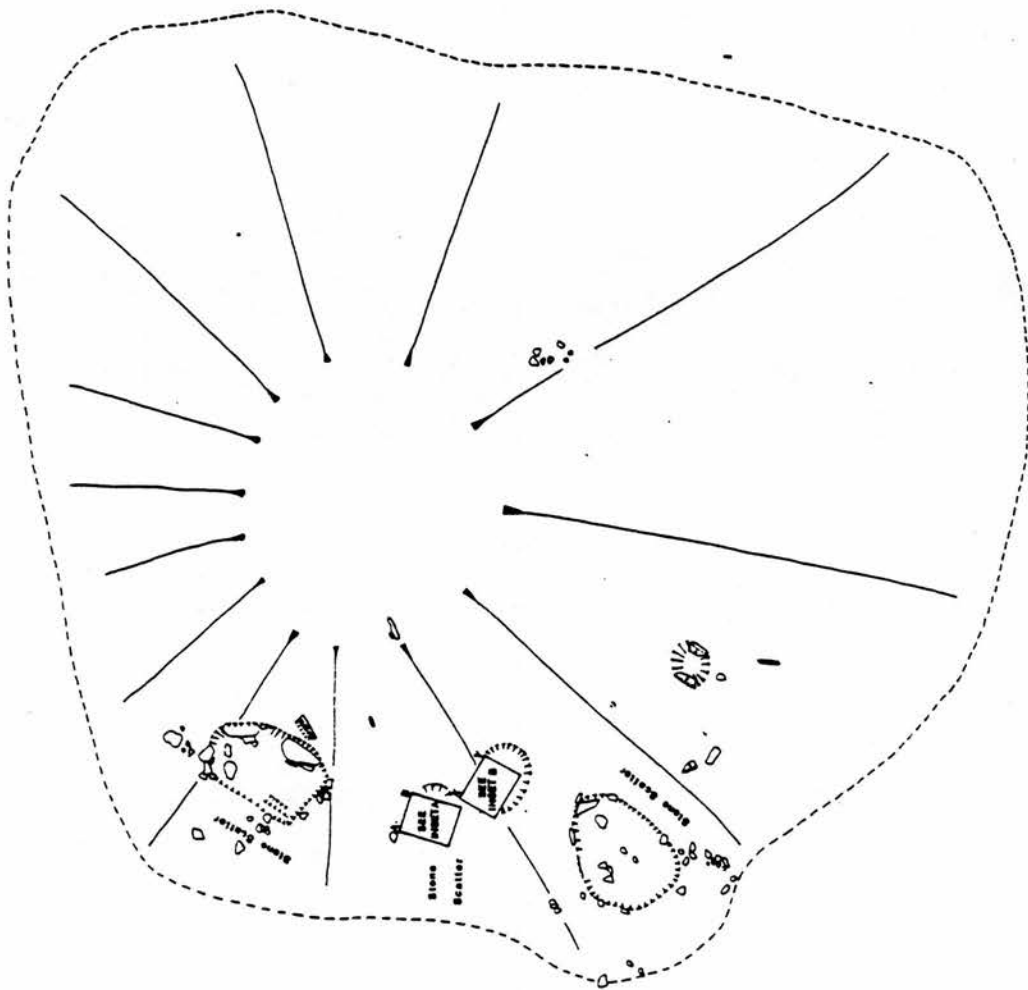
ND 3775 7012

NMRS Class: Mound

NMRS Card: ND 37 SE 24

1 Batey 1984, 59, CAN 044a and fig 22

During the Caithness Coastal Survey 1980-2 (Batey 1984) a very substantial mound was recorded south of Duncansby Head, the precise nature of which remains obscure. Batey noted the following features. It was not located originally during the survey in April 1980, but in the summer of 1982 after vegetational changes, it became much more visible. It is a large mound, 35-40m across, standing between 1 and 2m high, surrounded by peat bog. Slight quarrying at one side has revealed traces of a passage, and further around the mound on the S side are clear signs of a passage with lintel slabs remaining. The stone work is largely restricted to the W side of the mound but some upright slabs are visible nearer the crest of the mound. Its function is unknown but it could conceivably be a badly reduced broch with the intramural passage revealed, or possibly the passage entrance to an earth house. A plan of the mound was made during the Batey survey (see next page).



Source: Batey 1984, fig 22

EC 2

Brabstermire

ND 3285 6993

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 36 NW 1

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 16, no 37

Partially excavated by J Nicolson at an unknown date, probably in the 1890s or 1900s.

A single find from the site donated to the National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 45, 1910-1, 220

This broch is now a low grass covered mound in a field given over to improved pasture. The OS recorded that in 1982 it measured 35m N/S by 21m by 0.9m high and that it had extended W into the next field but was ploughed out. The RCAHMS (1911b) provided the only record of the partial excavation of which there is no plan. They did not give any dimensions for the structure but recorded that the following items were recovered:

a rotary quern;

three water worn stones, probably loom weights, each with a groove cut around at one end, seemingly for attachment of a cord; and

a diminutive cup, or hollowed pebble.

Skirza Head

ND 3940 6844

NMRS Class: Broch and settlement

NMRS Card: ND 36 NE 2

- 1 *Anderson 1900-1, 144-5*
- 2 *RCAHMS 1911b, 15-6, no 35*
- 3 *Young 1961-2, 183, no 11*
- 4 *MacKie in Disc Exc Scot 1971, 15*
- 5 *MacKie in Disc Exc Scot 1972, 16-7*
- 6 *Feachem 1977, 164*
- 7 *Caulfield 1977-8, 132, no 27*
- 8 *Batey 1984, 60, CAN 050, CAN 051*

Excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry in about 1897, reported in Anderson 1900-1

Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 16-7
Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council)
and NMRS

This broch is located on the neck of a narrow coastal promontory with cliffs 30m high on either side. It lies very close to the edge of the promontory on the N, and at least half of the broch wall has fallen over the cliff at this point. There would appear to have been a considerable amount of coastal erosion since the broch was built, a factor also noticeable at the neighbouring brochs of Nybster and Ness.

The promontory is flat topped behind the broch towards the sea, with a dangerous blowhole near its outer end. The rough tufted vegetation of this part of the promontory reveals no trace of any buildings. A mound 6.5 x 4.5m is likely to be a spoil heap from the Tress Barry excavation, as is the revetted trapezoidal shaped stone pile to the S of the broch.

Immediately W of the broch the ground drops away steeply to the floor of a broad bottomed depression described as a ditch by previous authorities. It varies in width from 8m on the S to 17m on the N where the counterscarp curves around in a semicircle. The counterscarp is neither as deep nor as steep as the scarp of the depression. At the top of the counterscarp there are distinct traces of an external bank.

The outlines of the broch were revealed in the Tress Barry excavation. The outer wall face is visible in an arc from the E around to the SW. The line of the face is continued on the W by a trench obviously dug to locate it. The outer face only survives about 0.5m high. The inner face is preserved around the circumference except in the NE where it is obscured by slumped material. It appears to display a markedly asymmetric shape on plan, with a right angled turn in the E about 1m from the entrance. The face is collapsed and overgrown at this point however so that it is possible that the right angle may be a later modification of the line of the inner face. Against the inner face on the N arc there is a revetment or casing varying in thickness from 0.4 to 0.8m described by previous authorities as a scarcement. Its uneven width and the fact that it terminates on the W arc give it more the appearance of being a secondary addition to the wall.

In the SE there is a very well preserved entrance with the passage fully extant on both sides. The S side of the entrance has a slight rebate 1.3m from the inner end but there is no trace of a rebate on the N side. The RCAHMS (1911b) recorded "checks" for a door, implying one on either side, but there is no visible evidence of this now.

In the SW there is a break in the inner wall face leading into a long depression now obscured by vegetation. A large square upright stone is preserved on the SE side of this depression about 1m from the inner face. Beyond it there is a length of wall face about 0.7m long forming the side wall of a passage. At the SE termination of the depression there appears to be either an upright slab or a length of face about 0.5m long lying across the line of the depression but towards the N side. This depression within the wall would appear to be the entry to the stair identified by previous authorities. Only two steps remained when the structure was excavated and there was a small chamber opposite the stairfoot. Anderson (1900-1) recorded that between the stairfoot chamber and the exterior of the main wall there was a large oblong tank-like construction of four slabs set in the floor of "what would otherwise be a passage outwards". This would appear to indicate that there was a second entrance into the broch interior past the stairfoot in the SW, a structural feature recorded at other brochs in the eastern coastal plain of Caithness. These second entrances have

traditionally been regarded as secondary features. The apparent face or slab lying across the passage may be the remains of the oblong tank recorded in the excavation. The function of the large square upright is obscure but it has the appearance of being a door check. There is no evidence now for the continuation of the passage fully through the wall except that the line of the outer face is interrupted at this point.

No features are visible in the vegetation covering the floor of the inner court. To the right of the entrance to the stairs the excavation apparently uncovered a tank-like construction sunk into the floor and covered with slabs, with another adjacent on the N. In the centre of the interior area was a hearth covered with ashes. No indication was given whether any or all of these features related to a primary or subsequent phases of occupation. More than one phase is suggested by the occurrence of the tank-like construction in the floor of the suggested second entrance; by the apparent secondary nature of the casing on the N arc of the inner face; and by a building, partly built on the remains of the broch wall, mentioned in Anderson's record of the Tress Barry excavations.

Outside the broch on the S there is a passage 0.5m wide formed between the outer face of the broch wall on the N and a stone revetment on the S. This revetment has a concave expansion forming a roughly semicircular space of 0.8m radius. On the NE side of the broch there appears to be a right angled recess in the broch wall which opens out into an irregular shaped building. It is not clear whether the wall is in fact recessed or whether the building is on top of the remnants of the outer face. Immediately SW of the SE entrance to the broch there is a cavern cut into the bedrock, 3.5 x 2 x 3.5m deep. It has sheer sides and an apparent built tunnel at the bottom leading off to the W. The bottom of the cavern was dry at the time of survey although the RCAHMS (1911b) noted that it still retained water.

On the opposite side of the geo to the S of the promontory on which the broch is located there is a group of upright stones at the landward end. Batey (1984) noted 8 small stones of 0.3m average height extending over an area 6 x 5.5m with no obvious pattern. The RCAHMS (1911b) noted that some of the stones were square in section and some

oblong and that they appeared to be the remains of four rows set roughly in alignment.

The finds from the site were described by Anderson (1900-1) as being of the usual character, including:

several sockets for door pivots;

two oblong and two rounded stone vessels made of unshaped boulders with cavities roughly hewn in their upper sides;

two quern stones;

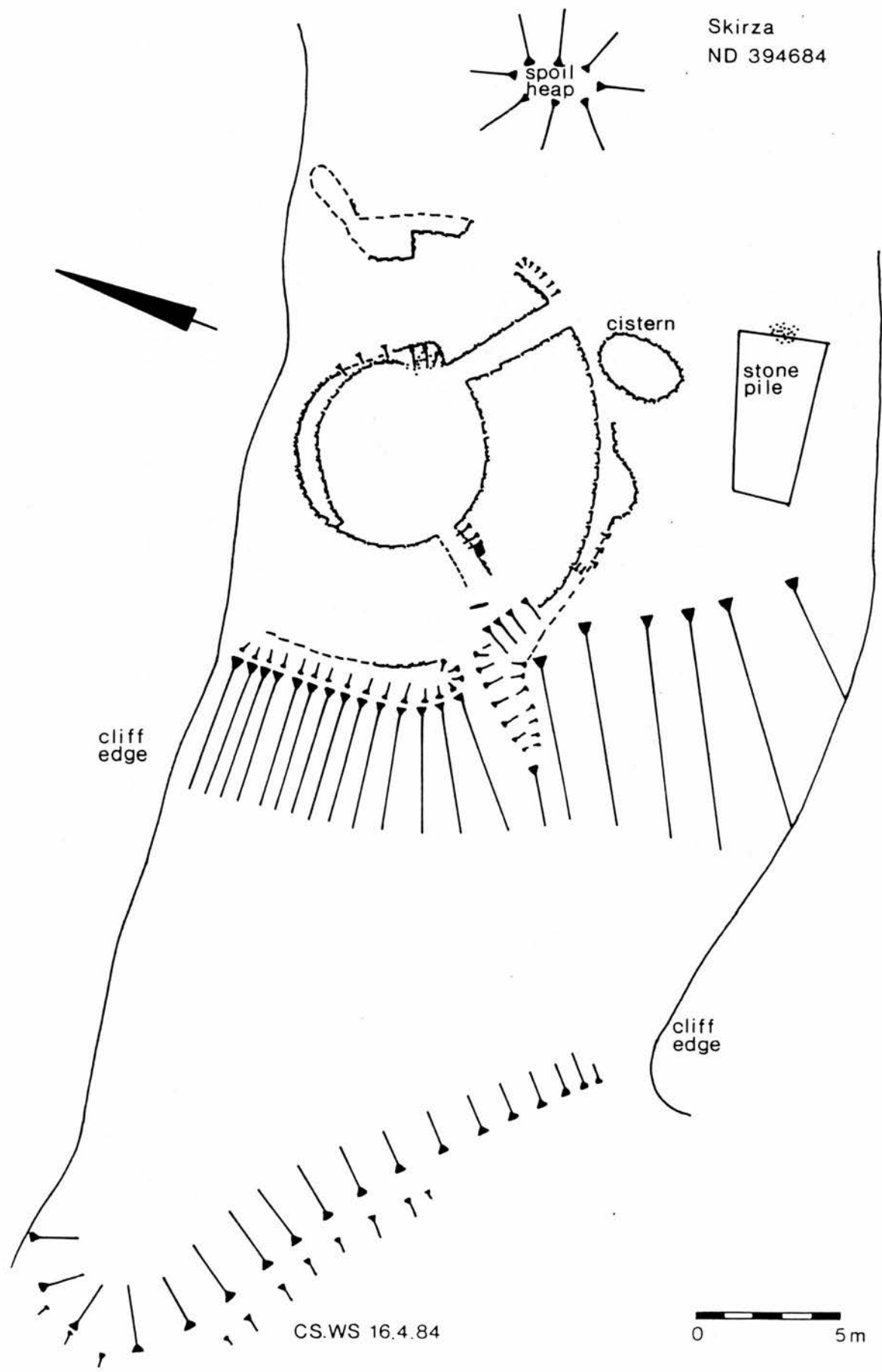
several flat circular discs of slatey stone; and

a number of hammerstones wasted at the end by use.

It was also recorded that a palmated horn of the true elk was found in one of the buildings which was partly built on the remains of the wall on the N side of the broch, possibly the building shown on the plan.

Otherwise the context of the finds was not recorded. A fuller list of finds appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 16-7.

Skirza
ND 394684



EC 4

Everley

ND 3699 6828

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 36 NE 6

- 1 *Anderson 1900-1, 142-3*
- 2 *RCAHMS 1911b, 16, no 36*
- 3 *Curle 1931-2, 393*
- 4 *Young 1961-2, 183-4, no 13*
- 5 *Robertson 1970, 202 and 205*
- 6 *Caulfield 1977-8, 132, no 24*
- 7 *Batey 1984, 61, CAN 057*

Excavated in the 1890s by Sir Francis Tress Barry, reported by Anderson 1900-1

*Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 15
Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council)
and NMRS*

This broch is now a low, roughly rectangular mound in the middle of a long level field given over to improved pasture. It covers a large area 53m E/W x 29m and is at most 2m high in the centre. At the time of inspection by the RCAHMS (1911b) the broch was recorded as already being much quarried into and largely removed. The rectangular appearance is probably the result of past ploughing. No structural features are visible in the mound, but there is a very slight suggestion of a ditch to the E of it.

The excavation of the broch by Tress Barry revealed that the wall was 14ft 6in (4.42m) thick and the internal area was 29ft (8.84m) in diameter. There was no scarcement and no sign of a stair or chambers in the wall which was much broken down. Anderson noted that the entrance faced NW whereas the RCAHMS recorded that it faced WSW but that the passage walls were largely gone. They also noted that the surrounding buildings had not been excavated. It is possible that there may still be remains of buildings under the mound in the W which are worthy of excavation. Secondary flooring was noted in the entrance passage and traces of secondary paving in the internal area.

Some of the finds recorded from the site were (Anderson 1900-1, RCAHMS

1911b):

a stone cup with a handle similar to one at the Road broch;

three or four quern stones;

two grain rubbers;

two rudely formed discs of slatey stone;

several broken stone vessels;

a few hammerstones, or naturally shaped oblong pebbles wasted at the end by use;

a small piece of 1st century Samian ware (Dragendorff, type 29); and a portion of a rim of a Roman glass vessel.

Robertson (1970) noted that the Samian sherds which were found were of both 1st and 2nd century dates, and that the amber glass cup with a hollow rim was of 1st century date. There are no records of the context of the finds and no plan of the site seems to have been made at the time of excavation, although there are some photographs.

A fuller list of finds appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 15.

EC 5

Freswick Links

ND 3761 6761

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 36 NE 5

- 1 *Anderson 1900-1, 143-4*
- 2 *RCAHMS 1911b, 14-5, no 34*
- 3 *Young 1961-2, 183, no 12*
- 4 *Caulfield 1977-8, 132, no 26*
- 5 *Batey 1984, 62, Can 060*
- 6 *Batey 1987, Part i, 59-61*

Excavated in 1888-9 by Sir Francis Tress Barry, reported by Anderson 1900-1

Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 16
Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council)
and NMRS

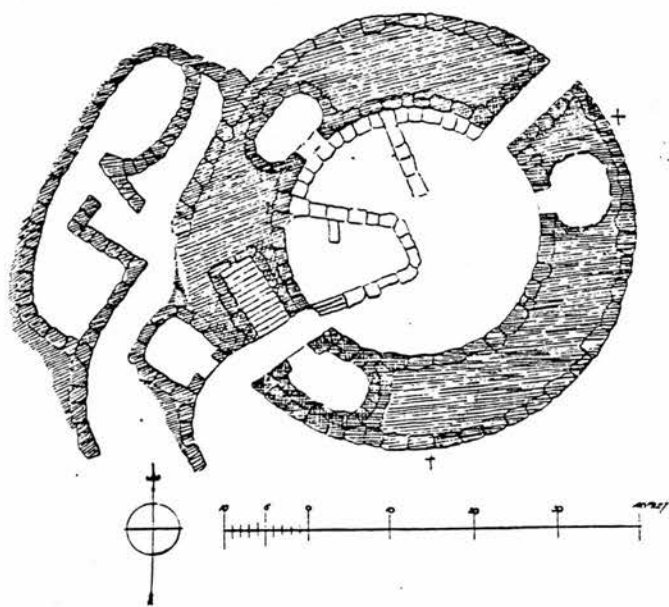
This broch is situated among sand dunes at the edge of Freswick Bay. The traces of the broch are now very vague and it is difficult to locate. Anderson (1900-1) noted that like the Wester broch (EC 16) a few kilometres down the coast its foundations rest on pure sand. The site is now covered in shifting sand and dune grasses and can only be located by virtue of its proximity to the spoil heaps of a 1930s excavation of Viking remains (information from Durham University, Department of Archaeology). Two short lengths of face were all that were visible at the time of survey, an apparent outer face 1.5m in length and one course high on the E, and a presumed inner face c2m long and one course high on the W.

The Tress Barry excavation revealed that the broch wall was 11ft 6in (3.5m) thick with a scarcement 12 to 18in (0.3 to 0.45m) wide on the inside, enclosing an area 32ft 8in (9.9m) in diameter. The wall was for the greater part of its length about 7ft (2.1m) high, but was partly broken down on the W where the original entrance was thought to have been. Another entrance passage was recorded as lying in the NE past the foot of a stair with a chamber opposite. The RCAHMS noted that this entrance was still visible at the time the site was inspected for the inventory of Caithness. Fourteen steps of the stair remained at the time of excavation. (The plan made at the time of the excavation and reproduced in RCAHMS 1911b (see next page) would appear

to have a reversed N point. The entrance past the stairfoot is shown on the plan as being in the SW, whereas the RCAHMS recorded it as being in the NE. The plan also shows the wall as being fully intact, whereas the RCAHMS noted that it was partly broken down in the W (E on the excavation plan).)

Two chambers were recorded within the thickness of the wall, one being 12 x 4 x 7ft high (3.7 x 1.2 x 2.1m), the other being unmeasurable at the time of the RCAHMS visit. Two walls of secondary construction were noted in the broch interior roughly dividing the area into segments. The plan made at the time of the excavation shows buildings outside the broch, which are not mentioned at all in the published reports. The square shaped building outside the entrance past the stairfoot seems to slight the outer face of the broch wall, as if it may have overlain it at this point. The other building seems to be attached to the broch by a short length of walling abutting the outer face in a straight joint. The excavation plan is unfortunately the only plan of the site, and it may be unwise to place too much reliance on any of the details shown on it, as it appears to be rather schematic and is possibly not fully correct.

Anderson (1900-1) recorded the following finds from the site: a cup marked boulder; an oval vessel of sandstone, with a rudely hollowed cavity; several broken stone vessels; and one or two quern stones. A fuller list of finds appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 16.



Source: RCAHMS 1911b, 14

FIG. 6.—Broch, Freswick Links (No. 34); Ground-plan.

EC 6

Ness

ND 3814 6665

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 36 NE 1

- 1 *Anderson 1900-1, 143*
- 2 *RCAHMS 1911b, 13-4, no 33*
- 3 *Young 1961-2, 184, no 14*
- 4 *MacKie in Disc Exc Scot 1971, 15*
- 5 *MacKie in Disc Exc Scot 1972, 16-7*
- 6 *MacKie 1975, 89*
- 7 *Caulfield 1977-8, 132, no 25*
- 8 *Batey 1984, 64, CAN 074*

Excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry in the 1890s, reported by Anderson 1900-1

Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 15-6
Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council)
and NMRS

This broch is situated on a very narrow coastal promontory with cliffs 20m high on either side. The promontory has been seriously eroded since the broch was built and the broch wall on the S has already partly fallen over the cliff. A deep geo cutting into the cliff on the N side of the promontory clearly had not extended so far at the time of the broch occupation. A slab sided tank is located right on the cliff edge on the N side of the geo in a situation now too dangerous for exact measurement. The narrower part of the promontory behind the broch to the seaward side seems to be flat topped and exhibits no trace of buildings towards its outer end, as at Skirza Head (EC 3). There does appear to be a slight suggestion of a bank edging the lip of the precipice in a situation far too dangerous for closer investigation. This may however only be an effect created by updrafts in the rough tufted vegetation of the promontory top. A rectangular monument built of stones from the broch, commemorating Tress Barry the excavator of the site, stands in the middle of the promontory beyond the uncovered remains of the broch and some external buildings.

The outer face of the broch is visible only at the outer end of the entrance in the E for a very short length of 0.8m. The rest of the

face has either gone over the cliff or is obscured. The face survives only at foundation level. The inner face by contrast is reasonably extant in an arc from the NE to the W, surviving only one or two courses high. The outline of the internal court is markedly asymmetrical forming a flattened circle (MacKie 1975). The diameters of the internal area are also relatively small at 7m N/S x 6.5m, similar to the internal measurements at Skirza Head (EC 3), but in marked contrast to neighbouring Freswick Links (EC 5) at 9.9m in diameter.

In the E at a slight angle towards the line of the promontory there is an entrance to the broch, well preserved at both its inner and outer ends. Most of the passage wall on the N is not visible, and there is a curving hollow in the line of the S wall, which may be the location of the long cell or gallery shown on the plan made at the time of the Tress Barry excavation and identified as a guard chamber. (The excavation plan may be found at the end of the site description.) No door checks were found during the excavation, but there was a projecting sill in the passage floor at the outer edge of the possible guard cell. The N outer corner of the passage is also the termination of a concavely curving face roughly where the outer face of the broch should be. The S outer corner of the passage projects about 0.4m beyond the N outer corner. The excavation plan shows the concave face to be part of a curvilinear building overlying both the broch wall and the E entrance, the true N outer corner of the entrance being located about 0.5m further E. No trace of this corner is visible now.

In the SSW there is a break in the inner face 0.6m wide, with a long depression extending from it into the width of the broch wall, almost completely obscured in vegetation. On either side of the NNE end of this depression there is a single slab, 0.3 to 0.4m wide, forming an apparent entry into the wall. The excavation plan shows this feature to be a second entrance to the broch from the landward side. At only 0.6m wide at its inner end it contrasts with the entrance in the E, which is 1.2m wide at its inner end. The excavation plan seems to show however that the SSW entrance may have been narrowed by the addition of a casing on its N side, but no evidence of this is visible at the site now.

Within the wall width on the NE there is the curving end of a chamber or gallery, 3m across at its widest surviving point. No other features are visible in the broch wall and no others are recorded from the excavation. In particular there is no record of a stair.

Within the court there are a number of upright slabs forming a line 2.3m long from immediately inside the E entrance to about the middle of the court. Two further upright slabs are located within the centre of the court, roughly at right angles to the E/W line of slabs, and about 0.5m apart. There are also two uprights set radially to the inner face, one in the N, and the other in the SW, but about 0.8 to 1m towards the centre of the court. In the NW quadrant of the court there is a mound which may be the remains of a spoil heap or an unexcavated area. The excavation plan shows the court divided from E to W by a line of uprights, with the N half of the interior further divided by a line of slabs at right angles to this line. Two sunken tanks are also shown on the excavation plan, one in the NE quadrant and the other in the S half of the interior. There is now no trace of either of these tanks.

Outside the broch to the E before the Tress Barry monument there is an upright slab, two lengths of wall face, and some curving hollows which are the only visible remains of a building, shown on the excavation plan as lying about 0.5 to 1m from the E entrance. It is not clear how this building relates either to the broch or to the nearby building overlying the broch wall. More than one phase of construction at the site would seem to be indicated however.

To the W of the broch about 10m from the line of the inner face, and therefore possibly 5m from the outer face, there is a substantial wall across the neck of the promontory. The intervening area has not been excavated, and shows no trace of features except for an excavation hollow to the S of the broch, possibly dug to locate the outer face of the broch wall. This hollow reveals nothing but three slabs lying at its bottom. It seems unlikely that the Tress Barry excavation did in fact reveal the full outer face of the broch despite its representation on the excavation plan. Apart from the hollow mentioned above where no face was found, there are none of the obvious face seeking trenches common on other sites excavated by Tress Barry. A

substantial stratigraphy may therefore be untouched to the W of the broch.

The two faces of the cross-promontory wall are visible in the S half of its extent. The width of the wall varies from 2 to 3m and is not constant as shown on the excavation plan. There is a break in the face on the promontory side of the wall, at about the point where the excavation plan shows an entrance. This entrance is not visible now even as a linear hollow across the wall width, and indeed the outer face seems to continue across the promontory without a break. The excavation plan appears to show what may be either sill stones or secondary blocking at either end of the entrance. It may be that the impression of a continuous outer face is given by the presence of a sill stone or blocking, the joints and detail being lost in the rough vegetation obscuring the site. There is no sign of the well with steps leading down to it, which is shown on the excavation plan just outside the entrance through the cross-promontory wall.

Outside the cross-promontory wall towards the land there is a partially excavated area which seems to be generally at a lower level than the wall. Anderson (1900-1) in reporting the excavation referred to a depression in front of the wall. It is not clear whether there may have been an external ditch. Some further evidence in connection with a ditch is discussed below. The partial excavation in this area has revealed traces of two buildings, the S building being at a distinctly higher level than that the N building. The excavation plan shows the S curvilinear building clearly, but is less definite about the underlying building, indicating that it may be circular. The only visible feature of the underlying building now is a right angled corner in the SW formed from two massive slabs.

The complex of buildings is clearly continued on the other side of the geo on the N side of the Ness promontory. The slab tank on the very edge of the geo on its N side indicates that the complex had in fact once been continuous, and has been cut in two by the erosion of the geo. The buildings on the N side as revealed by Tress Barry also appear to be at two levels. The lower one in this case is the more substantial, formed of drystone walling with a post and panelled (upright flags and infill walling) recess on its N side. The slab tank

now on the cliff edge seems to be part of the floor area of this building. Another building seems to be revealed at a higher level by a curving length of wall about 3m long within the steep slope down to the floor of the lower building.

The steep slope continues curving away to the N defining a flat area between its bottom and the edge of the cliff. The top of the slope seems to be the modern ground surface of the adjacent fields and also of the promontory on which the broch stands. At the N extremity of the slope where the cliff edge begins to turn to the W, there are slight traces of a bank edging the top of the slope, which may be only a field boundary of indeterminate period.

The whole area to the N of the geo is enigmatic. The steep slope below the level of the modern ground surface has the appearance of being a counterscarp, possibly a continuation of a ditch lying outside the cross-promontory wall and now cut by the geo, but there are remains of buildings at two levels at the base of its slope. In terms of the present cliff edge a ditch on the N side of the geo makes no sense at all, but it is obvious that the geo has been cut inwards by at least 15 to 20m since building took place on the N side of the geo. For a ditch on the N side of the geo to make sense in terms of a focal point of occupation on the present promontory, there would have had to be substantial erosion along much of the cliff edge as well as into the geo. It seems possible that the complex visible now at Ness represents only a part of the original settlement area, coastal erosion having removed the rest. It is certainly clear that the extent and complexity of the settlement has not been fully revealed on either side of the geo or on the promontory in front of the broch. The evidence presently available does not allow interpretation of the possible relationships between the various features in the settlement beyond the fact that more than one phase of building seems to be indicated.

Particular finds from the site reported by Anderson (1900-1) were:
three quern stones;
several stone vessels, circular and oval in shape;
a mould in sandstone for an ingot;
two small slender ingots of bronze;
a bronze pin; and

two links of a slender chain of bronze.

The two ingots of bronze, several moulds for casting ingots, and the two links of the chain were found in the chamber or gallery within the wall to the N of the E entrance.

A fuller list of finds appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 15-16.

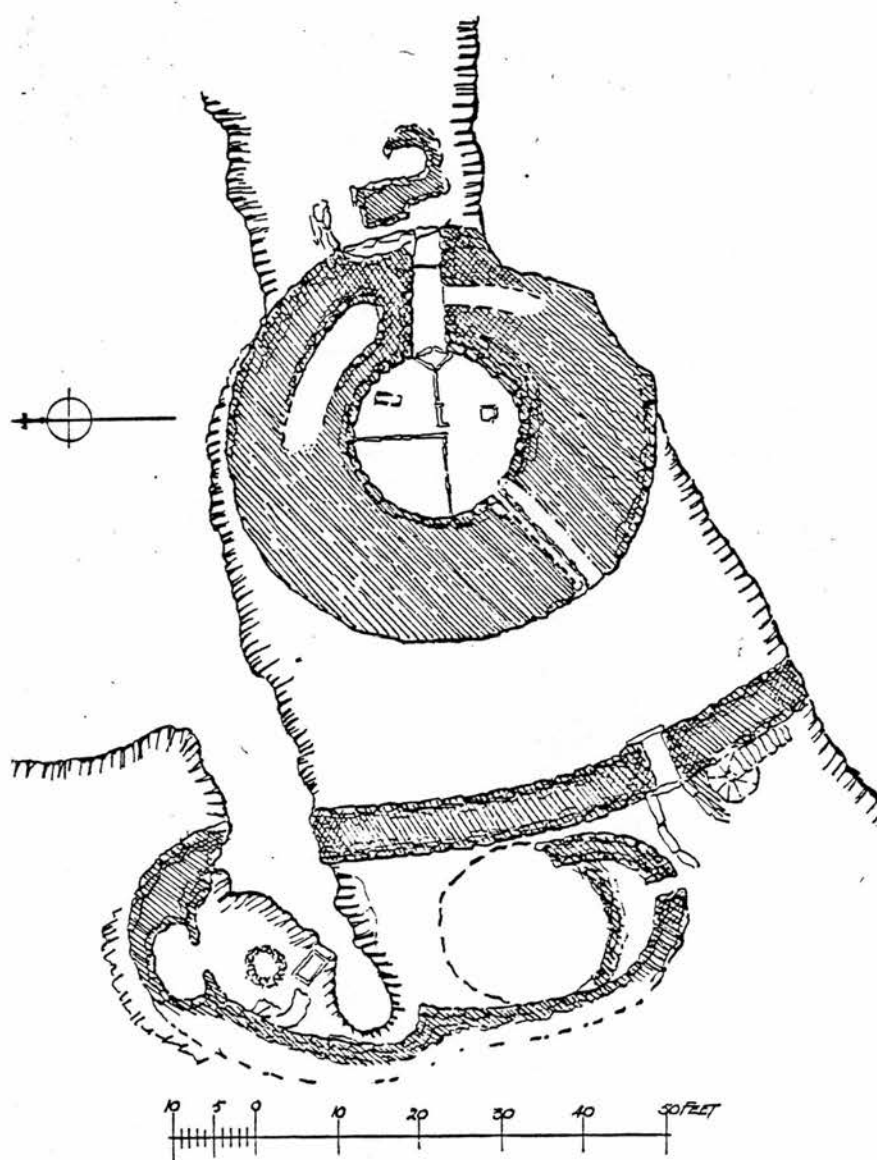
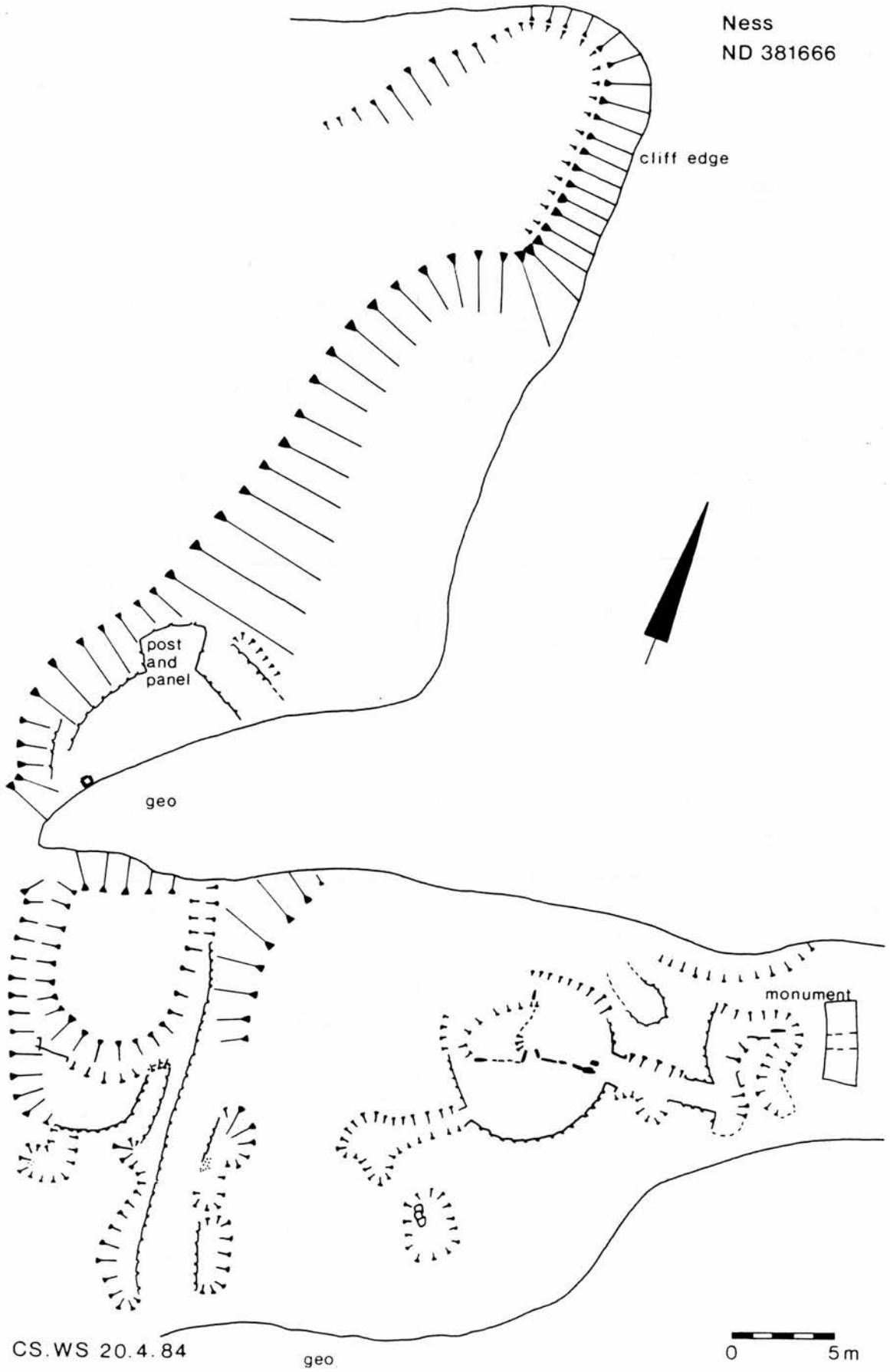


FIG. 5.—Broch, Ness (No. 33); Ground-plan.

Source: RCAHMS 1911b, 13

Ness
ND 381666



EC 7

Sgarbach

ND 3729 6375

NMRS Class: Dun (rems of)

NMRS Card: ND 36 SE 5

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 18, no 45

2 Feachem 1977, 180

3 Lamb 1980, 26, and fig 8

4 Batey 1984, 65, CAN 086

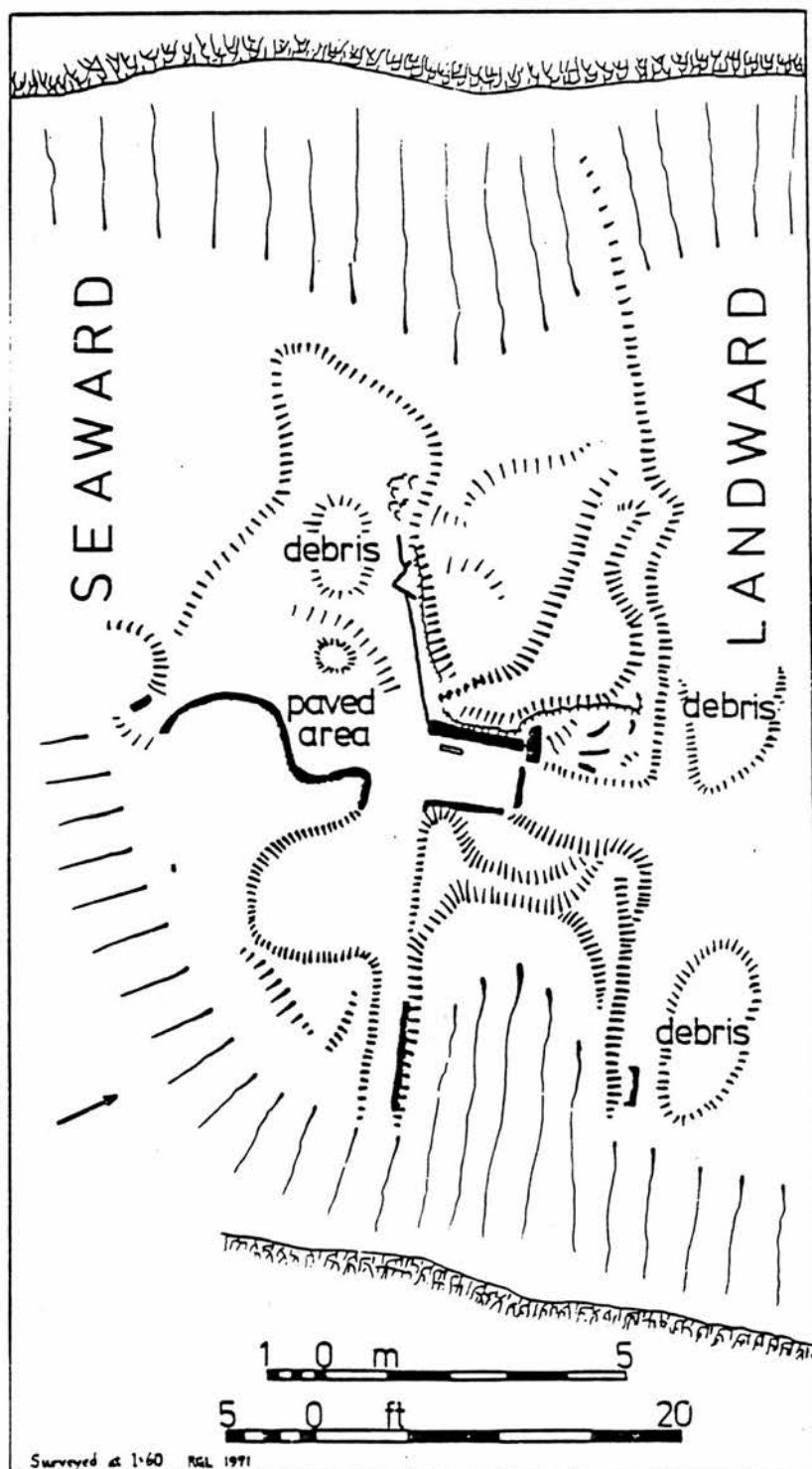
Excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry at an unknown date in the 1890s or 1900s

Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council) and NMRS

This structure classed as a dun by the RCAHMS (1911b), Feachem (1977), and the NMRS, and as a promontory fort by Lamb (1980), consists of a wall crossing the landward end of a high cliff promontory about 700m NE of Nybster broch. The site was excavated by Tress Barry but no plan was made although photographs were taken. The only other record of the excavation findings was provided by the RCAHMS as follows.

When excavated the wall crossing the promontory was found to be some 62ft (18.9m) in length, 12ft 6in (3.8m) in thickness, and near the middle of its course, some 4ft (1.2m) high. It ran from the edge of a deep ravine on one side of the cliff to the other. Somewhat to the E of the centre this wall was pierced by a passage leading directly through it, 3ft 2in (1m) wide at the outer end. At 6ft 8in (2m) inwards on the right (the left side is broken down) there was a rebate for a door faced with a slab set edgewise in the wall, the passage in the rear of it widening to 4ft 9in (1.4m). Across the passage in front of the door checks projected a sill. Behind the rebate a bar hole, 8in (203mm) square passed for a distance of at least 3ft 6in (1.1m) into the wall. At the inner end of the passage, and to the left, some 4ft (1.2m) back from it, was an oval chamber measuring about 10ft by 7ft (3m by 2.1m). In rear of the entrance was found a hearth defined with flags set on end, in which were ashes, food refuse, and fragments of pottery. A drain passed from the interior outwards below the floor of the entrance passage.

The site has deteriorated since it was excavated, and it is now badly damaged by stone removal and collapse (Batey 1984). A plan of the site was made in 1971 (published in Lamb 1980), and may be found below.



Source: Lamb 1980, fig 8

Nybster

ND 3702 6314

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 36 SE 4

- 1 *Anderson 1900-1, 139-142*
- 2 *RCAHMS 1911b, 159-160, no 518*
- 3 *Curle 1931-2, 394*
- 4 *Young 1961-2, 184, no 15*
- 5 *Robertson 1970, 205*
- 6 *Caulfield 1977-8, 132, no 23*
- 7 *Lamb 1980, 20-1*
- 8 *Gourlay in Disc Exc Scot 1981, 18*
- 9 *Batey 1984, 66, WIC 091*

Excavated in 1895-6 by Sir Francis Tress Barry, reported in Anderson 1900-1

*Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 14-5
Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council)
and NMRS*

This broch, like the brochs at Skirza Head (EC 3) and Ness (EC 6) along the coast to the N, is located on a cliff promontory with cliffs 15m high on either side. Erosion of the edge of the cliff has clearly taken place here as at the other two sites. The broch occupying a more or less central position on the promontory is unaffected, but the surrounding buildings extend right to the cliff edge on either side, where their incomplete appearance indicates that walls and floors have fallen over the cliff. At this broch there seems to have been a considerable amount of erosion even since the broch was excavated in the mid-1890s. The excavations appear to extend right to the present cliff edge in situations where it would be impossible to work now because of the danger of either falling over the cliff or of the edge giving way. The plan made at the time of the excavation indicates that there was a good safety margin. (The excavation plan may be found at the end of the site description.) The edge of the cliff on the N side would appear to have been cut back by possibly more than a metre in less than one hundred years.

Behind the complex of buildings which has been revealed by excavation,

the seaward side of the promontory, as at Skirza Head and Ness, shows no trace of buildings under the tufted vegetation on its flat top, although it is possible that they may exist under the turf beyond where the excavation stopped short. The promontory extends further E than the excavation plan shows. Two large mounds beyond the complex of buildings on the promontory are likely to be spoil heaps from the excavation, as is a very long curving mound on the landward side of the complex to the SW. There is a very large, roughly rectangular, tower immediately E of the broch apparently on top of a number of buildings (known as Mervyn's Tower). The tower commemorates Tress Barry and is built of stones from the site. (This tower was being removed and reconstructed to the W of the site in 1987.)

According to Anderson (1900-1) the promontory is cut off from the land by a ditch some 20ft (6.1m) wide drawn in the segment of a circle immediately outside the cross-promontory wall. The RCAHMS (1911b) possibly following Anderson's description also referred to a ditch, as did Batey (1984). This is most strange because there is no suggestion of a ditch whatsoever across the neck of the promontory, the only curving depression being the narrow trench dug by Tress Barry to reveal the outer face of the massive cross-promontory wall. The absence of any ditch was also noted by the OS. The only depression outside the wall is in the extreme SW of the promontory, with the long mound identified as a spoil heap lying to the W of it. It may be that this hollow has been identified as a ditch but it does not curve across the width of the promontory, nor form the segment of a circle as described by Anderson.

The cross-promontory wall is a very substantial structure, 5m thick at its widest extent. Long stretches of its inner and outer faces have been revealed. As presently visible it does not block the width of the promontory, seeming to terminate in roughly square ends about 1.5m from the cliff edge on the N side, and 8m on the S. The excavation plan shows the wall continuing to either cliff edge, but no longer as a solid block of masonry on the N, and as a narrower uneven wall on the S. It has been suggested that there is a gallery in the N part of the wall (Lamb 1980), but the excavation plan is unclear and the appearance of a gallery may be created on the plan by the depiction of

an overlying revetment. The cross-promontory wall is clearly a composite structure, as can be seen both from the excavation plan and the new survey plan, its present appearance being the result of reconstructions and additions. It is impossible to decipher the separate phases by survey alone, but either or both of the two stairs at the rear of the wall may be additions. Only the S stair is now visible. It seems to have been added to the inner face, the stair block returning to the face at an angle, leaving an allowance for a door rebate.

The entrance through the massive cross-promontory wall is almost in the middle of the promontory. It is 5m long, 1m wide at the outer end and 1.7m at the inner. There are two sets of door checks with a sill stone set in the passage floor at the outer set. A very large slab lies on the floor behind the sill. The passage walls are well preserved standing over 1.5m high. On entering through the passage the outer face of the broch is encountered, 2.5m from the inner face of the outer wall on the S, but only 1m on the N where the N stair block is situated. It is notable that the entrance to the broch is not in line with the entrance through the cross-promontory wall. It is in fact in the NE, 150 degrees around from the line of the outer entrance. This seems an unusual arrangement in that the entrances of broch and outer wall might normally be expected to be aligned, as at Ness (EC 6) and Crosskirk. There is no sign of a possible second entrance into the broch aligned with the outer passage, both the inner and outer faces of the broch being complete with no trace of straight joints indicating infill.

The intervening space between the cross-promontory wall and the broch is a maze of upright slabs, wall faces, and overgrown areas representing the remains of a number of buildings. No clear passage around to the broch entrance either to the N or to the S has been revealed by the excavation. To the N a narrow passage a metre wide at the N stair block, narrows to 0.5m in the NW, before widening again to 2.5m in the N. The way around to the broch entrance is then blocked by a number of cross-walls and curvilinear buildings. To the S turf covered mounds, which are possibly unexcavated areas, are encountered in the SW and the way to the broch entrance is blocked by what appear

to be at least two oblong buildings, immediately ESE and SE of the broch wall. The better preserved of these buildings has been added to the outer face of the broch and is therefore a later construction. It is extremely difficult to make a pattern out of the many pieces of walling around the broch, but the new survey plan seems to agree basically with the buildings shown somewhat stylistically on the excavation plan. The most striking feature in the remains of the external buildings is the number of upright slabs encountered. Some are obviously the side slabs of tanks sunk into the ground. Others are panels at the square ends of walls, while yet others seem to be partitions. It is not at all certain that the buildings uncovered are necessarily all of the same period, although some are undoubtedly subsequent to the broch structure. It is unlikely that the natural ground surface was reached by Tress Barry in the area surrounding the broch. There may well therefore be a considerable stratigraphy remaining in the majority of the area.

The broch wall appears as a solid circle of masonry, 5m wide from SE to W, but narrowing to about 4.2m on the rest of its circumference where measurable. The entrance passage in the NE is through this narrower part of the wall. It is 0.6m wide at its outer end, widening to 1.2m behind a single set of door checks, before narrowing again to 0.7m. There are no other features visible in the broch wall, although the RCAHMS noted that at 14ft 6in (4.4m) to the left of the entrance there was a rebuilding with small stones commencing about 2ft (0.6m) above floor level. This was not apparent at the time of survey. The inner face of the broch survives 1.6m high.

The internal area of the broch is 6.2m NE/SW by 6.5m. These diameters are similar to those at the two promontory brochs of Skirza Head (EC 3) and Ness (EC 6). The excavation uncovered two cist-like slab constructions reported as being fireplaces, a small pit or well almost opposite the entrance towards the back with a cover stone in place, and a lintelled drain passing out through the entrance. In addition the excavation plan shows either long uprights or lengths of walling on the floor of the court. In the court now there are visible only some uprights, including one in the SW which is 1m long, and a setting of four slabs in the NE, probably forming a very large slab sided

sunken tank, 1.5m by 0.5m. Otherwise the floor of the broch is featureless.

Particular finds noted from this site (Anderson 1900-1, RCAHMS 1911b) were:

a long handled bone comb;

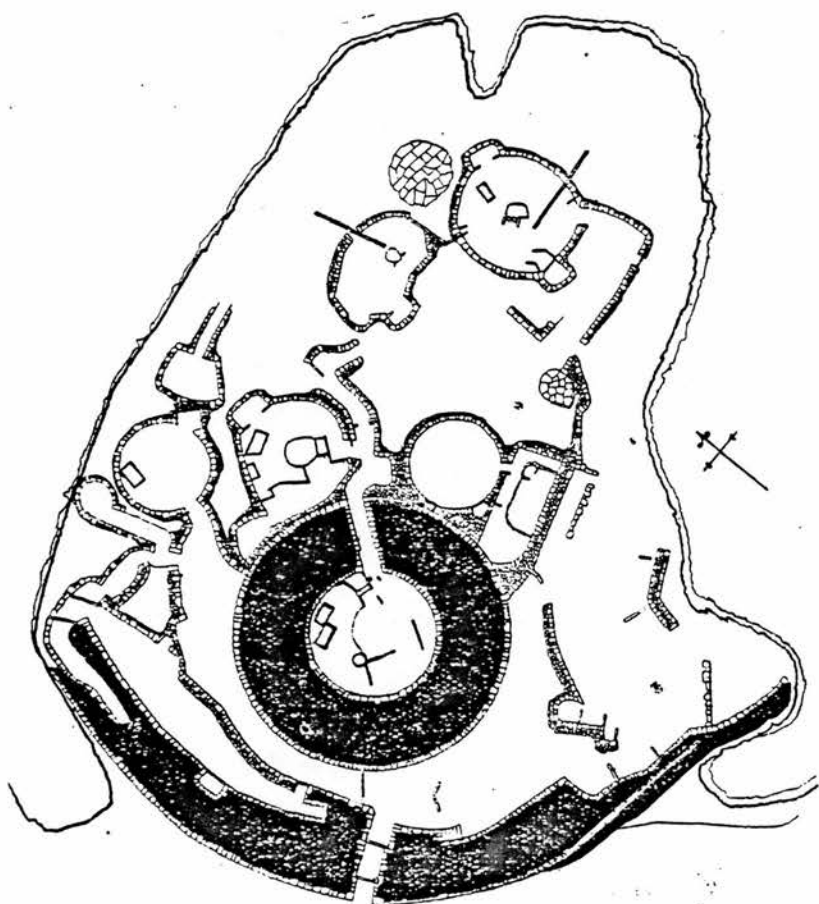
a bronze pin with a fixed annular head set on a short right angled projection from the stalk;

several portions of rotary and saddle querns;

an upper stone of a rotary quern ornamented with radial grooves and flutings, but without a central perforation; and

a large object of cetacean bone, with indications of friction, and having a number of small triangular indentations made with a tool on its surface.

A fuller list of finds appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 14-5.

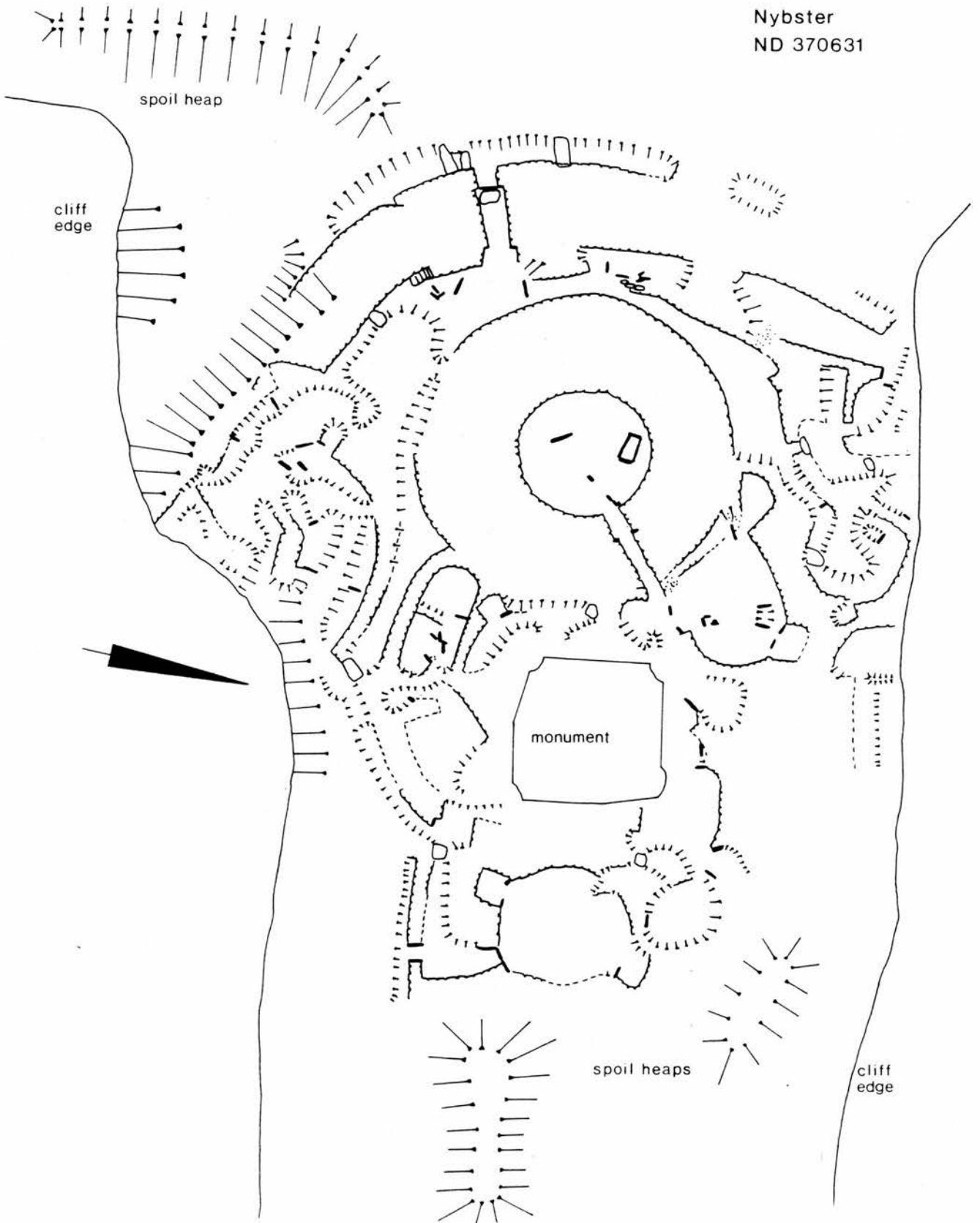


10 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 feet.

FIG. 42. —Broch, Nybster (No. 518); Ground-plan.

Source: RCAHMS 1911b, 159

Nybster
ND 370631



CS. WS 21.4 84

0 5m

EC 9

Auckingill

cND 366 641

NMRS Class: Broch (possible)

NMRS Card: ND 36 SE 7

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 20, no 52

The RCAHMS (1911b) noted the site of a broch about a quarter of a mile (c400m) NNW of Auckingill School which had long been under cultivation and of which no remains are visible. Apart from this reference there is no trace, no local knowledge, and no other record of a broch in the recorded location.

EC 10

Road

ND 3488 6151

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 36 SW 1

- 1 Laing and Huxley 1866, 19-22
- 2 Tress Barry 1897-9
- 3 Anderson 1900-1, 131-9
- 4 RCAHMS 1911b, 157-8, no 517
- 5 Curle 1931-2, 394
- 6 Young 1961-2, 181-2, no 16
- 7 Robertson 1970, 205
- 8 MacKie 1971b
- 9 Caulfield 1977-8, 132, 22
- 10 Blair 1978
- 11 Batey 1984, 68, WIC 108

Partially excavated by Laing in 1864, further excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry in 1893-4, reported by Anderson 1900-1

*Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 12-3
Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council)
and NMRS*

This broch is located on level ground just NW of the village of Keiss. It lies behind the village's war memorial, close to the cemetery and near the road from Keiss to John O'Groats from which it takes its name. The site appears from the road as an uneven hummocky area. The floor of the broch appears to be at a lower level than the grass turf surrounding the war memorial which is rather uneven. It seems possible that the remains of the complex may extend both E under the war memorial plot, and N under a track towards the cemetery. The earliest reference to the site by Laing and Huxley (1866) calls the site the Churchyard Mound and includes a section through the mound immediately adjacent to the road. Laing found that there was a great mass of shells intermixed with animal bones and hammerstones at least 5ft (1.5m) deep. This was overlain by the foundation of a massive building, represented by a pavement or floor of large flat stones, 3 to 4in (76 to 100mm) thick. He identified this building as most likely a broch. But the broch is set well back from the road and, depending

on where Laing was digging, it may have been a later building overlying a midden. The most likely location for the section drawn by Laing is in the area of the war memorial. The existing site area as uncovered by Tress Barry, measuring 47m N/S by 63m, may therefore be only part of the former settlement area.

The excavated complex is enclosed within a stone dyke and consists of the broch, lying almost in the centre, surrounded by a maze of revetments, trenches, hollows, and unexcavated areas. Most of the features on the plan made at the time of the excavation are still visible, although the area enclosed by the dyke is slightly larger, particularly to the E and SE, than that shown on the excavation plan. (The excavation plan may be found at the end of the site description.) The broch and several of the surrounding buildings are still in a good state of preservation, although the site is badly overgrown.

Most of the inner and outer circuits of the broch wall were revealed in the excavation. The broch court is about 10.2m in diameter closely paralleling the size of the court at Freswick Links (EC 5) but greatly in excess of the three promontory brochs of Skirza Head (EC 3), Ness (EC 6) and Nybster (EC 8). The outline of the inner court seems to be distorted from a true circle but there is evidence at several points, for example in the E and NW, that there have been secondary additions to the face. These additions are not represented on the excavation plan. Many of the features on the broch floor uncovered by Tress Barry are still distinguishable, particularly lines of upright slabs, a tank in the SW quadrant, and the opening of an underground well or chamber just NW of centre. Anderson (1900-1) reported that the lines of upright slabs were identified as partitions and were thought to be secondary.

The broch wall survives to a height of about 2m on its inner face. It displays a number of interesting features. In the ESE there is an entrance passage, 3.9m long, extended 0.4m by the addition of a secondary feature to be discussed later. The passage which is 1.4m wide at its inner end and 1m at its outer, is provided with a set of door checks 1.6m from the broch outer face. Within the door checks on the N side of the passage there is an entrance into a corbelled cell the roof of which has partly collapsed. The entrance into the cell is

0.4m wide and has been blocked by infill walling.

Within the wall thickness on the S arc there is a long curving chamber entered from the broch court. The entry has partially collapsed on its W side. The excavation plan identifies this intramural feature as a stair and stairfoot chamber, the stairs rising to the W. The stairs are no longer visible and part of the chamber has been blocked off by infill walling.

Diametrically opposite this stair chamber there is another entrance into the wall from the broch court which is raised above broch floor level. Collapse and vegetation obscure whether the rise is an original feature or a later blocking. The excavation plan shows this entrance in the N to be leading to the outside of the broch past a stair rising to the E with a stairfoot chamber to the W, that is, a second entrance to the broch at about 90 degrees to the one in the ESE.

The stairs in the N arc of the broch wall are no longer visible, and both the outer end of the entrance and the stairfoot chamber are somewhat obscured by collapse and vegetation. The line of the long stairfoot chamber can be traced by what appears to be a line of uprights curving from N to W. It is notable that the stair well and the stairfoot chamber are not directly opposite each other but are offset by about 0.4m. At a similar entrance/stair well/stairfoot chamber arrangement at the Yarrows broch S of Wick the stairwell and chamber are similarly offset (see Figure 29, p108 and Figure 47, p160 in main text of thesis), yet the excavation plans of both Road and Yarrows brochs inaccurately show the stairwell and chamber in line. This has allowed speculation that the stair well and stairfoot chamber may have once been a continuous feature, the back wall of which was breached to provide a second and secondary entrance (Young 1961-2, 180). This theory is no longer tenable where the stair well and stairfoot chamber are shown in fact to be so markedly offset.

MacKie (1971b) discussing the twin entrances at both this broch and the nearby Harbour Mound broch postulated that one entrance must be primary and the other secondary on the assumption that a broch should have only one entrance. In the case of this broch he suggested that the N entrance was primary (he referred to it as the W entrance

following Anderson (1900-1) who had mistaken the position of the N point in describing the excavation findings), because of its massive masonry and door checks found with a stone slab wedged against them. He ignored the equally massive masonry, door checks and corbelled guard cell at the ESE entrance, none of which could conceivably have been secondary introductions into a massive broch wall. There is no reason on the basis of the physical remains uncovered by the excavation to believe that both entrances were other than primary.

The excavation plan shows four niches or recesses in the broch wall, which appear to have been at different levels. Two, in the NW and SE quadrants, are still well preserved, the others being in a state of disrepair. The only other feature visible in the broch wall is the presence of more than one revetment towards the outside, indicating that the original wall which was about 3.3m wide had been cased at some stage. The original outer face is exposed in only three or possibly four places, but the casing seems to be continuous at least around the NW to SE arc. On the NE three revetments are exposed, of which the inner one may be the original face, and the median the face of the casing with a large upright at right angles to it. The outer revetment, incorporating the upright, must then be yet another addition. The purpose of the casing is not clear, though it may have been to buttress the wall.

Outside the ESE entrance to the broch there is a courtyard formed by a revetment which is reasonably complete N and S of the entrance. The area enclosed is egg shaped, 10m N/S by about 8m, although the E side is not complete. The revetment has been added to the outer face of the broch at the entrance, and at one point in the NW it clearly overlies at least two other faces which lie one on top of the other roughly at right angles. Anderson reported that the court had been partially founded on the lower courses of the addition to the thickness of the exterior of the broch (the casing), and partially on an accumulation of debris 2ft 6in (0.8m) high. The court is undoubtedly subsequent to the broch, but it could possibly also be subsequent to a number of buildings around the broch, sufficient to accumulate about 0.8m of debris.

The outer court is crossed by two revetments which turn at right

angles to form an entrance passage 1.6m wide, provided with door checks at 0.8m from the right angled corners. The passage gives entrance to the W half of the court and is roughly aligned with the ESE entrance of the broch. This outer entrance arrangement has the appearance of being an addition to the court at a later stage, as the revetment of the court continues past the cross-wall on the S side. However there is no direct evidence for phasing, as the locations where the joints might be expected are obscured by collapse and vegetation. To the ENE of the court an upright slab and a small robbing hollow are suggestive of a building at a higher level than both the cross-walls and the court. Within the area of the outer court there is evidence in the revealed structures of at least five phases of reconstruction, with the court itself coming somewhere in the middle from a chronological point of view.

Immediately NE of the outer court there is a massive revetment traceable in a curve for about 17m. Tress Barry identified this as the surrounding wall of the broch, and the excavation plan shows it continuing right around the broch. A continuous revetment is no longer visible and there must be some doubt of its actual existence. Just within the circuit of the modern field dyke where the external wall should be, there is a continuous trench which was at first thought to be a relatively modern drainage ditch. It is possibly however the trench dug by Tress Barry to locate the continuation of the massive revetment to the N and W of the broch. There is no sign of a face in the trench which is at the bottom of the slope of the broch mound. Such a location would not necessarily be the correct place to expect to locate a massive surrounding wall or rampart.

The massive revetment is a two phase construction, an outer facing apparently having been added to an inner revetment forming a right angled corner near the S end of the visible walling. E of this massive revetment further lengths of wall face have been revealed towards the field dyke which are not shown on the excavation plan. The face underlying the corner formed by the field dyke in the E seems to confirm that the complex of remains at this site does stretch further E than revealed by Tress Barry.

There is evidence of buildings around the full circuit of the broch

except in the W and SW where the original slope of the mound was not excavated apart from a few irregular holes. The construction technique employed in the buildings is commonly a curving stone face, but two cubicles in the NW have a post and panel construction also noted at a building external to Ness broch (EC 6). Numerous upright slabs occur within the buildings as at the neighbouring site at Nybster (EC 8). SE of the broch there is a rectangular shaft or well the top of which is constructed of drystone walling. It was full of water at the time of survey. It is impossible to relate the confusing series of partly excavated external features around the broch, either to the broch, or to each other. As at Nybster (EC 8) little can be said beyond the fact that several phases of construction have been uncovered. The site as it is now visible, is a composite of time periods.

The finds reported from the site (Anderson 1900-1) were more extensive than those recorded from some of the other Tress Barry excavations.

They included:

- coarse, badly fired, unornamented pottery;
- a portion of an armlet of shale;
- a finely made bone pin with an ornamented head;
- a bone needle;
- a portion of the cylindrical shaft of a wing bone of a large bird, with a hole bored from one side;
- a long handled bone comb with five prongs at one end;
- a small bronze ring;
- a flattish circular disc of sandstone resembling an imperfect whorl, with slightly incised markings;
- several stone whorls and whetstones;
- a stone lamp;
- a stone cup with side handle (there are similar cups from Kintradwell and Kettleburn);
- waterworn stones grooved like sinkers;
- a small rude hollowed stone vessel;
- several rounded stones with roughly made hollows on both sides;
- two oval stone vessels plus several fragments;
- a number of flat circular discs of slatey stone;
- twelve upper and lower stones of rotary querns and two saddle querns plus several fragments of others;

a piece of quern with a mould for ingots hollowed in its flat side;
another mould for ingots;
two socket stones for the pivots of doors;
a small quantity of charred grain, apparently bere.

A piece of second century decorated Samian is also recorded from the site (Robertson 1970, 205).

A fuller list of finds appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 12-3.

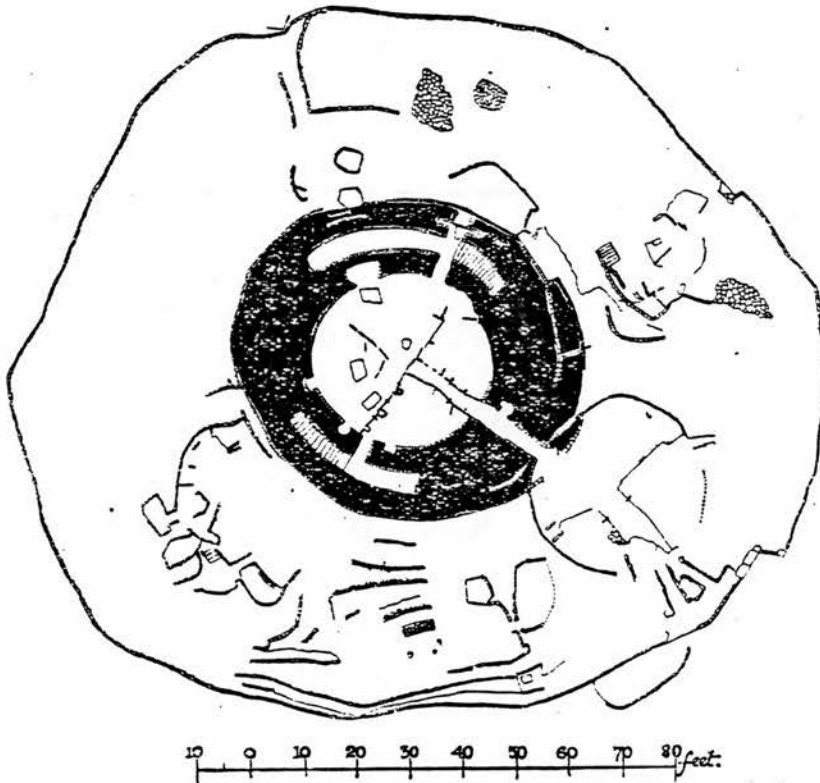
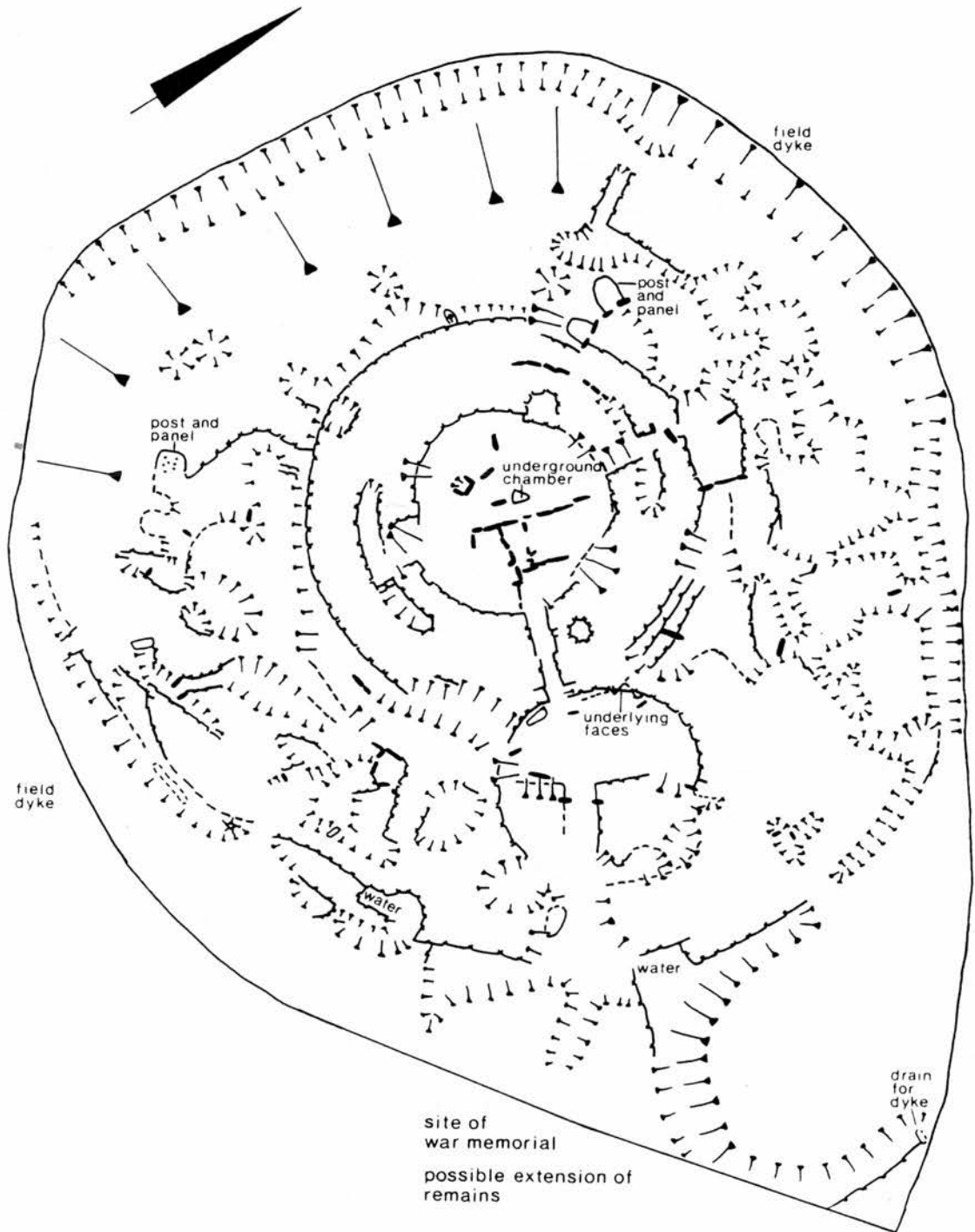


FIG. 41.—“Road Broch,” Keiss (No. 517); Ground-plan.

Source: RCAHMS 1911b, 157



CS. WS 19.4.84

0 10m

EC 11

Whitegate

ND 3541 6120

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 36 SE 3

- 1 Anderson 1900-1, 127-131
- 2 RCAHMS 1911b, 156-7, no 516
- 3 Young 1961-2, 184, no 17
- 4 Caulfield 1977-8, 132, no 21
- 5 Batey 1984, 67, WIC 098-101

Excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry 1892-3, reported by Anderson 1900-1

Finds donated to the National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 13

Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council) and NMRS

This broch is located on a beach terrace about 180m N of the Harbour Mound broch at Keiss. The beach terrace is a level green sward and the broch lies close to the shore. The name Whitegate was taken from a nearby white painted gate into a field. Behind the broch the fields slope smoothly up to the Keiss to John O'Groats road where the Road broch (EC 10) is located, only 600m away. Anderson (1900-1) reported that the field dyke to the NW of the broch lies across the remains of the complex, the part within the field having been levelled for cultivation. There is in fact no trace of any remains within the field.

The site as revealed by Tress Barry is enclosed within field dykes, which are badly ruined on the NE, SE, and SW sides. Much of the inner and outer circuits of the broch are visible, along with some curving walls and passages outside the broch towards the sea in the E and SE. From Anderson's description it is apparent that there may also have been buildings outside the broch in the NW and W.

The broch wall is about 3.8m thick and encloses an area 8m N/S by 7.7m. The single entrance to the broch is from the seaward side and is provided with two sets of door checks formed of upright slabs. The SW side of the passage is not as well built as the NE, the faces of the latter being curved and angled. The inner corner on the SW side also lies about 0.2m further into the court than the equivalent corner on

the NE side.

Immediately opposite the entrance about 0.6m above floor level, a curving recess is set into the inner face of the broch wall. The plan made at the time of the excavation shows this recess as a complete semicircle. (The excavation plan may be found at the end of the site description.) The S part of the recess is now broken down. The only other features visible in the wall are two square sided niches or cupboards about a metre above floor level set into the NE arc of the inner face. Anderson reported that a possible entrance to a stair may have existed about 12ft (3.6m) left of the entrance at a broken down part of the inner face. This is possibly in the S arc of the wall where there is considerable collapse, but no trace of a stairwell is now visible.

In the broch interior there are several very large slabs scattered over the floor in the N half of the court, but there are no earthfast features. The excavation plan shows a line of upright slabs in this area, none of which are now visible. In the S half of the court there is a water filled hollow which could be either a tank or a well. This may be the feature which Anderson reported as four slabs set on edge in the floor forming a cist-like cavity, possibly a hearth. SW of this hollow two rows of upright slabs join at right angles. There are four other upright slabs in the S half of the interior in an arc from S to W at right angles to the inner face, the most westerly ones abutting the face.

The entrance passage is extended by a long passage which has been added to the outside of the broch, straight joints being visible on either side. Immediately beyond the joint on the NE side of the passage extension, a cupboard or recess is set into the wall. The passage extension trends SE before turning sharply NE and then E. The S wall of the extension is traceable over a distance of about 12m, but the N side, after about 3m, appears only as a grassy slope.

On either side of the passage extension there are buildings lying outside the broch. There is no indication in the visible remains that entrance to these buildings was achieved from the passage extension. It is possible that the buildings and the passage extension, as revealed by Tress Barry, may therefore be of different periods. The buildings appear as lengths of wall face with occasional upright slabs

attached. At least three buildings have been partially revealed.

On the green sward between this broch and the Harbour Mound broch there are three elongated stone built features, two of which may be later longhouses. The feature nearest to the broch has been identified as a possible outbuilding of the broch complex (Batey 1984). There is evidence within the excavated part of the site that walling does continue both to the N and to the S, outside the area enclosed by the ruined field dyke. The ground outside the enclosed area to the S and SW, although covered in a smooth turf, has numerous depressions and bumps, which are too vague to plan. It would appear possible that the broch complex may have extended in this area as far as the feature identified by Batey as a possible outbuilding. The broch complex extending into this area and into the neighbouring field would have been of a substantial size, comparable with the extensive area indicated at the neighbouring Road broch (EC 10).

Some of the finds reported from the site by Anderson (1900-1) and the RCAHMS (1911b) were:

fragments of a very large jar of coarse, unglazed pottery, 17in (420mm) high, reported to have been found in a rectangular enclosure of upright slabs against the inner face of the broch;

a few grain rubbers;

portions of rotary querns.

A fuller list of finds appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 13.

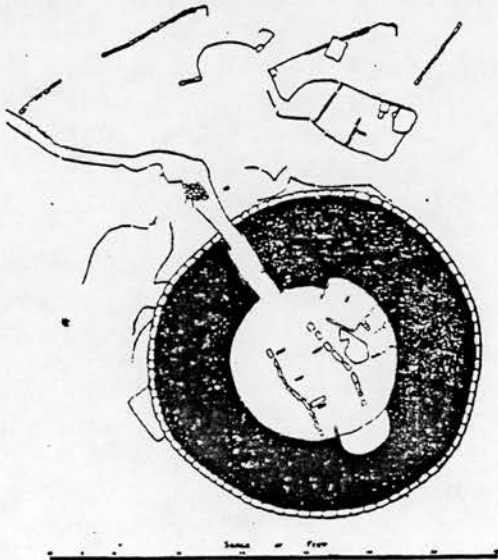
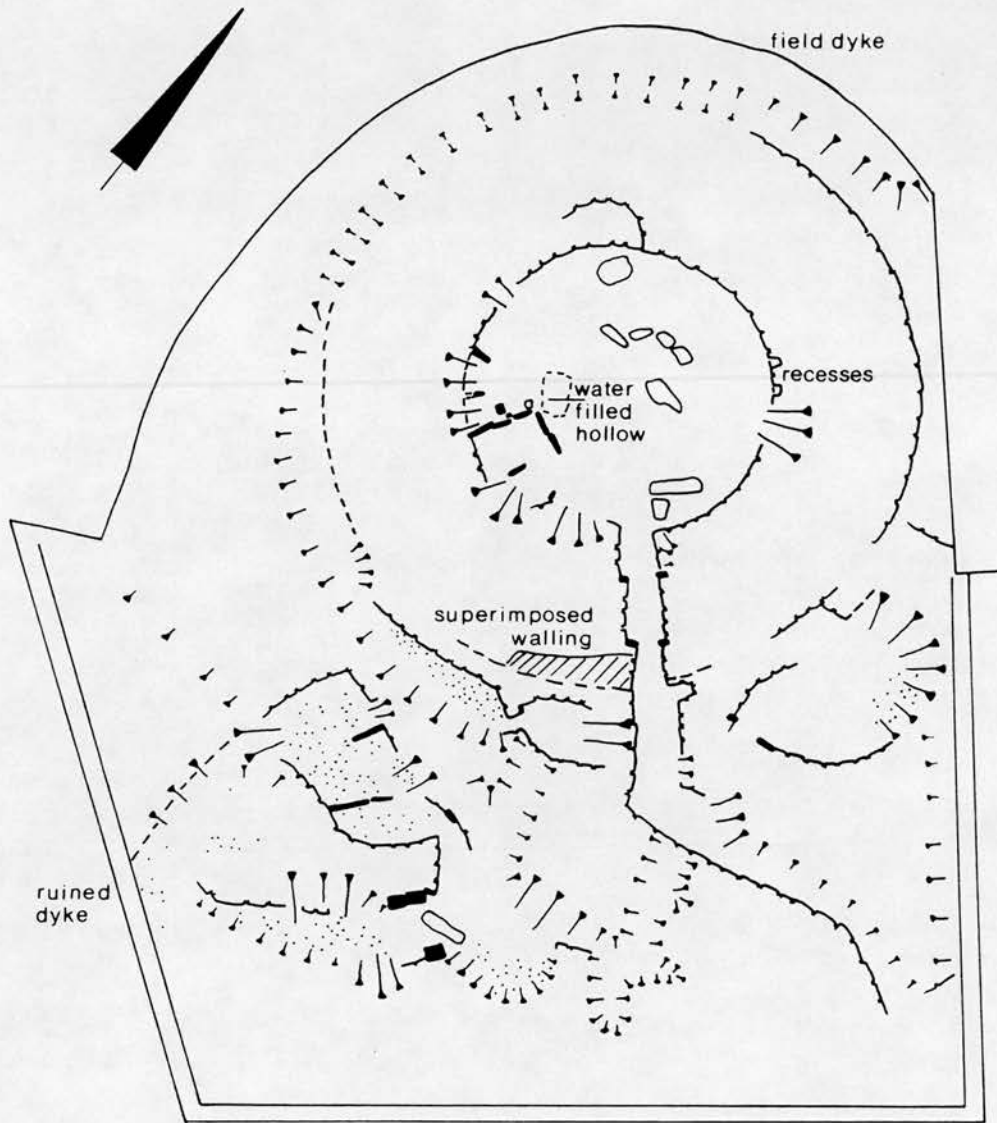


FIG. 40.—“Broch at the White Gate,” Keiss (No. 516); Ground-plan.

Source: RCAHMS 1911b, 156



CS.WS 18.4.84

0 5m

EC 12

Harbour Mound, Keiss

ND 3531 6108

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 36 SE 2

- 1 Laing and Huxley, 1866
- 2 Anderson 1900-1, 122-7
- 3 RCAHMS 1911b, 154-5, no 515
- 4 Curle 1931-2, 393-4
- 5 Young 1961-2, 180-1, no 18
- 6 Robertson 1970, 205
- 7 MacKie 1971b
- 8 Feachem 1977, 164
- 9 Blair 1978
- 10 Caulfield 1977-8, 132, no 20
- 11 Batey 1984, 68, WIC 103

Partially excavated by Laing in 1864, further excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry in 1891-3, reported by Anderson 1900-1
Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 11-2
Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council)
and NMRS

This broch is located on the same beach terrace as the Whitegate broch (EC 11) but it is closer to the harbour at Keiss, hence its name. The broch is badly ruined, the remains appearing as a series of elongated mounds with occasional stretches of revetment interspersed amongst them. The inner circuit of the broch wall is traceable, but little of the outer circuit survives. Some revetments of buildings outside the broch on the N are also traceable, and match those shown on the plan made at the time of the excavation of the site by Tress Barry. (The excavation plan may be found at the end of the site description. The N point on this plan is offset several degrees to the W.) The excavation plan records buildings outside the broch only on the N arc, with two small features noted on the S. There are numerous mounds and trenches in the S area which indicate that there were probably fairly extensive buildings on this side too. It is possible that the broch complex may also have extended even further SW and W. There are a number of depressions and hummocks in the area suggestive of an extension. These

are largely unplannable. Feachem (1977) noted the remains of a possible primary outwork to the NE of the site which was not traced during the survey. The NMRS card for the site also notes that this outwork is not traceable. So ruined is the full site now, that for the purposes of interpretation, reliance must be placed on the dubious accuracy of the little information recorded at the time of the Tress Barry excavation.

Enough of the inner circuit of the broch wall remains to allow an approximate measurement of internal diameter, although the face on the E arc is obviously not the inner face proper, but rather an addition, noted by previous authorities as a scarcement or lining wall. From its trend towards the true inner face on the SW of the court it would appear to be a secondary wall rather than an integral scarcement. Where measurable, the diameter of the area contained by the inner face is 11.5m SW/NE, which is almost twice the size of the promontory brochs of Skirza Head (EC 3), Ness (EC 6) and Nybster (EC 8), and much larger than the adjacent Whitegate broch (EC 11). The internal area compares more favourably with Road broch (EC 10) in diameter, but the Harbour Mound is undoubtedly the largest broch yet uncovered in the area of the east coastal plain of Caithness.

Two entrances to the broch are recorded, one in the NE, and the other in the SE. The NE entrance is still partly visible, with a door check formed from an upright slab in position on the E side of the passage. At 0.4m from the outer end a cross-wall partially blocks the end of the passage. This may be the remnants of secondary blocking noted at this entrance during excavation. The stair rising to the E, and the stairfoot chamber opposite, which are shown on the excavation plan at about the middle of the passage, are no longer visible. The wall seems to have collapsed and is covered with vegetation. Outside the entrance there is a massive triangular lintel built into a wall face, blocking the entrance about a metre from its outer end.

The entrance in the SE is almost completely wrecked by a very large robbing scoop. There is a possible suggestion of the corner of the S wall of the passage and the inner face of the broch. Two long upright slabs lie across the point where the inner end of the passage should be. On the excavation plan the entrance in the SE is shown intact,

passing through the wall unbroken on either side, with a drain following its line. Yet Anderson reported that the walls on both sides of the passage were gone, and that the remains of the floor of a guard chamber had been found during excavation. The SE entrance, as shown on the excavation plan, would appear not to be an actual representation of its appearance on excavation. In particular no guard cell is shown. This point is important because MacKie (1971b), on the basis of the excavation plan, has tried to demonstrate that the NE entrance was primary and the SE entrance secondary (see Chapter 8).

The only other feature noted within the broch wall on the excavation plan is a second stair and stairfoot chamber directly opposite the NE entrance. Anderson reported that the stairfoot chamber had five steps leading down to a waterhole. The area of the stair and stairfoot chamber in the S arc of the broch is collapsed and rubble strewn. There is a suggestion of a curving revetment parallel with a short length of broch outer face lying outside it, which may be the common back wall shared by stair and stairfoot chamber. At right angles to this possible revetment there is a 0.7m length of face, which may be the terminus of the stairfoot chamber.

Within the broch court there are several lines of upright slabs, some of which may be tentatively matched to the features shown on the excavation plan. A sunken tank is still visible in the NE quadrant of the floor. Anderson (1900-1) reported a well in the interior area which cannot now be traced. He does not record the discovery of more than one floor level in the broch interior during the Tress Barry excavation, but Laing (1866) drew particular attention to the existence of three pavement levels within the broch, with three middens or occupation layers above them. The lowest pavement of large flags rested on a layer of flat beach stones laid on the natural rock. Above this pavement there was 5ft (1.5m) of midden made up of shells, bones, ashes etc. Between the second and upper pavement there was a midden layer 1ft 6in (0.5m) deep. The upper pavement was also covered by midden material mixed with a mass of stones fallen in from the building. There was therefore at least 7ft (2.1m) of occupation stratigraphy within the broch interior linked to different phases of occupation. These different phases of occupation are also indicated by

the blocked entrance in the NE, and by a building shown on the excavation plan as slightly overlying the broch wall in the E.

As at the Road broch (EC 10), a more extensive list of finds is recorded from this site than commonly recorded from Tress Barry excavations. Some of these were:

two small pieces of Samian ware;
a few pieces of coarse, unglazed pottery with an impressed chevrony pattern;
some pieces of exceedingly coarse, unornamented pottery;
a small crucible with a portion of melted bronze adhering to the bottom of the interior;
a long handled comb of bone with eight prongs on the toothed end;
several bone pins and pointed implements;
cylindrical handles of bone and deer horn;
a small cylinder of bone perforated longitudinally and with a round hole in the side reaching through to the longitudinal perforation;
an oval oblong waterworn pebble of quartzite with a straight shallow depression, passing obliquely across each of its two flatter faces (also found at Lingrow, Orkney, and Kintradwell, Sutherland);
a stone mould - a narrow cavity with straight sides, widening to a head at one end;
a sandstone lamp;
a sandstone cup;
portions of several large vessels of sandstone with oblong oval cavities rudely hollowed in them;
several grain rubbers or saddle querns;
three upper stones of circular rotary querns;
a large stone mortar similar to those used for husking barley; and
bones of ox, sheep or goat, swine, birds (including the Great Auk), antlers of red deer, quantities of shells, chiefly limpets or periwinkles.

Robertson (1970) noted that both pieces of Samian ware were second century in date, one piece being decorated Samian, the other indeterminate.

A fuller list of finds appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 11-2.

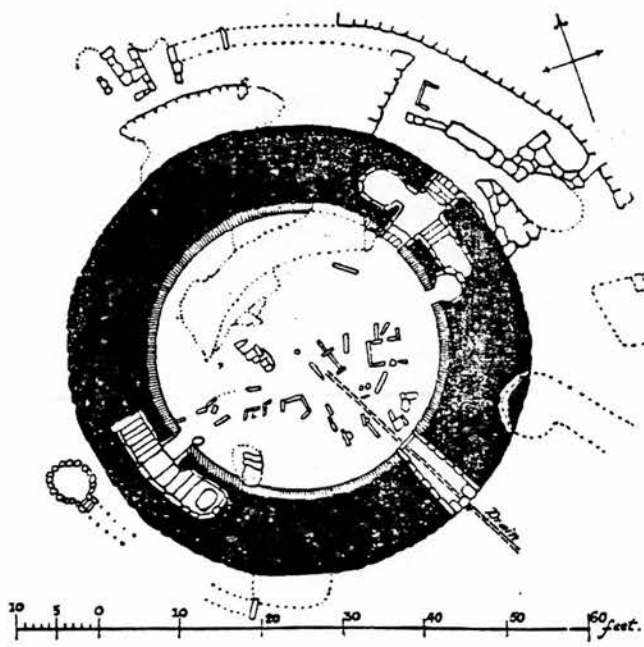
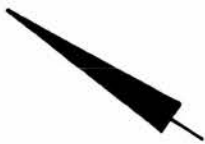
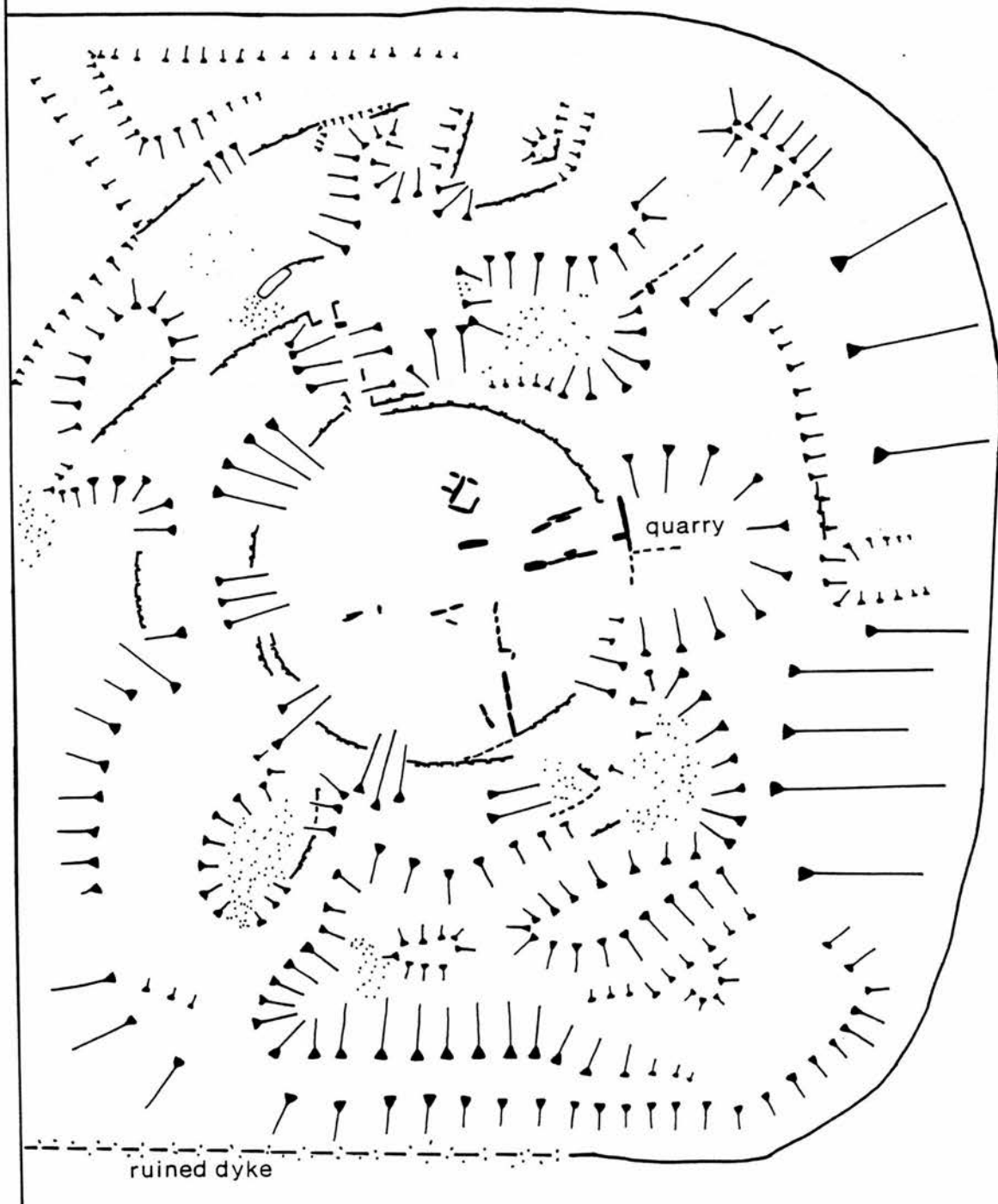


FIG. 39.—“Keias Broch” (No. 515); Ground-plan.

Source: RCAHMS 1911b, 154



field dyke



CS.WS 18.4.84

0 5 m

EC 13

Hill o'Works

ND 2903 6255

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 26 SE 2

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 1-2, no 3

Excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry in about 1900

Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 17

*Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council)
and NMRS*

This broch and its outworks are remarkably well preserved. The site of the broch is massively defended by a deep ditch, 2-3m deep, and 14m wide crest to crest. Outside the ditch there is a stony rampart varying from about 4.4m in width in the SE to only 1.2m in the W. The ditch and rampart survive only around two thirds of the site. In the SW and W they may have been destroyed by ploughing, which has also encroached on the central mound area. In the SE a modern ditch cuts the outer rampart. The mound containing the broch is a roughly circular platform, 38m in diameter, defined by the ditch. The whole site including the ditch and outer rampart has been used for a tree plantation and many of the trees are still standing. The broch within the middle of the central platform was excavated by Tress Barry. The RCAHMS (1911b) provided the only written account of the excavation, and a plan of the broch only was made at the time of excavation. (The excavation plan may be found at the end of the site description.)

The mound containing the broch is relatively flat-topped. On the W side there is a possible indication of a parapet wall around the scarp of the ditch in the form of a short length of bank, 1.6m long. In the N on the side of the central mound there is an excrescence into the ditch. This may possibly be spoil dumped from the excavation of the broch. The broch lies slightly NE of centre of the mound and its excavated floor lies below the level of the mound top. Most of the outer face of the broch and part of the inner face are visible.

The entrance to the broch is from the SW. It is 4.8m long and 0.9m wide at both the inner and outer ends. The side walls of the passage are broken on both sides in the area where the RCAHMS (1911b) noted

door checks at 8ft (2.4m) inwards. Behind one of the door checks, noted as being on the right side of the passage, there was a square edged recess measuring 7in (176mm) by 3in (74mm) which might have contained the jamb of a door.

Where measurable, SW/NE, the interior diameter of the broch is 8.6m. The whole of the E arc of the inner face is covered with vegetation. The excavation plan shows the inner face complete on this side. The only break in the inner face shown on the excavation plan is in the NW where there is an entrance into an oval chamber, which the RCAHMS thought was probably the stair, although no direct evidence of this is recorded anywhere. The chamber now appears as a collapsed area within the wall with rubble at its foot. The S side of the entrance to it is preserved with an upright slab on the same alignment in front of it. A short length of wall face seems to block the entrance. This is shown on the excavation plan, but it is not distinguished as a secondary feature.

The only other feature in the wall shown on the excavation plan is a curious break in the outer face on the SE arc. It has the appearance of being a recess, but by comparison with brochs elsewhere in the east coastal plain of Caithness, it could just possibly indicate the existence of another entrance through the wall. The excavation plan shows no corresponding break in the inner face on this arc. It is not possible to check this feature now by field survey, as the area of the outer face where it occurs is overgrown, and only the line of the wall can be traced.

Within the broch a well was found, reached by steps 2ft 3in (0.7m) below floor level. This appears now as a rubble filled hollow with a short length of face on its NW side. The excavation plan shows two possible slab sided sunken tanks in the S and NE of the broch interior. Neither of these is visible now. It also shows lines of upright slabs and walling extending the entrance into the interior. The extension of the entrance, which is a secondary construction, is still visible appearing as a substantial block of masonry on the SE side.

The excavation plan shows a wall running concentrically around the

exterior of the broch at an irregular distance of 3 to 4ft (0.9 to 1.2m), except on the SW arc where the plan appears to show an additional revetment or buttress against the broch outer face. The line of the concentric wall can still be traced, with one length of face in the E visible. In the S to SW arc however there is no trace of the additional revetment, and instead the concentric wall seems to continue around the broch. Two passages are shown on the excavation plan branching off from the passage formed between the concentric wall and the outer face of the broch. One leads from the broch entrance to the W, the other branches SE. The lines of these two passages are still traceable. Apart from the exposure of these passages, the area around the broch has not been excavated apart from two shallow hollows on the NW side.

The RCAHMS noted the following finds from the site:

a quantity of fragments of coarse hand-made pottery, indicating large and small vessels;

two skeletons lying on the floor of the chamber within the wall;

a large clay jar (reconstructed);

four whorls of sandstone, unornamented; and

a stone cup with a side handle partially perforated, and the outer surface of the side scored with vertical lines.

A fuller list of finds appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 17.

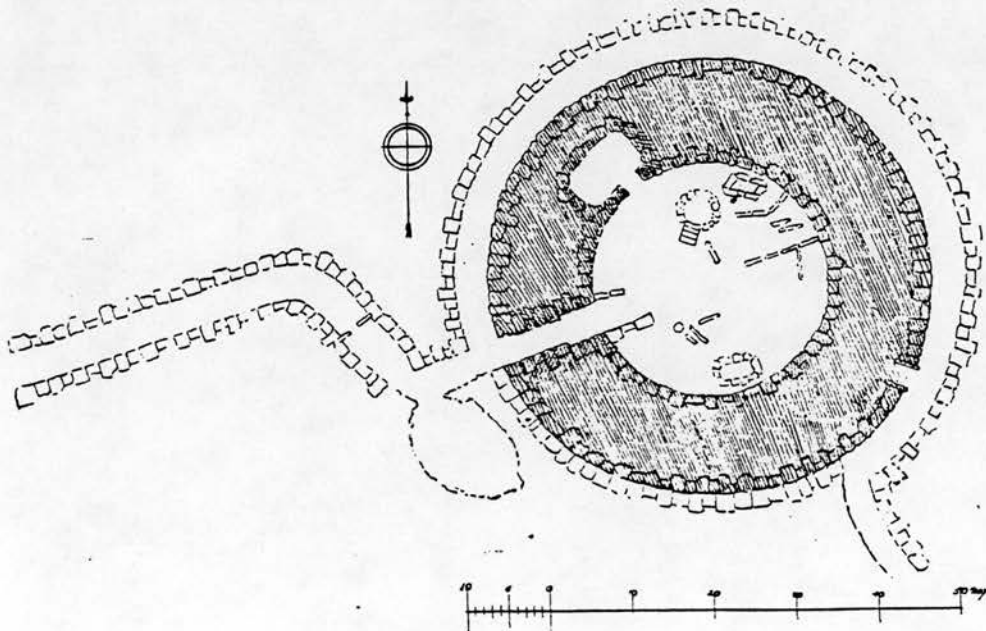
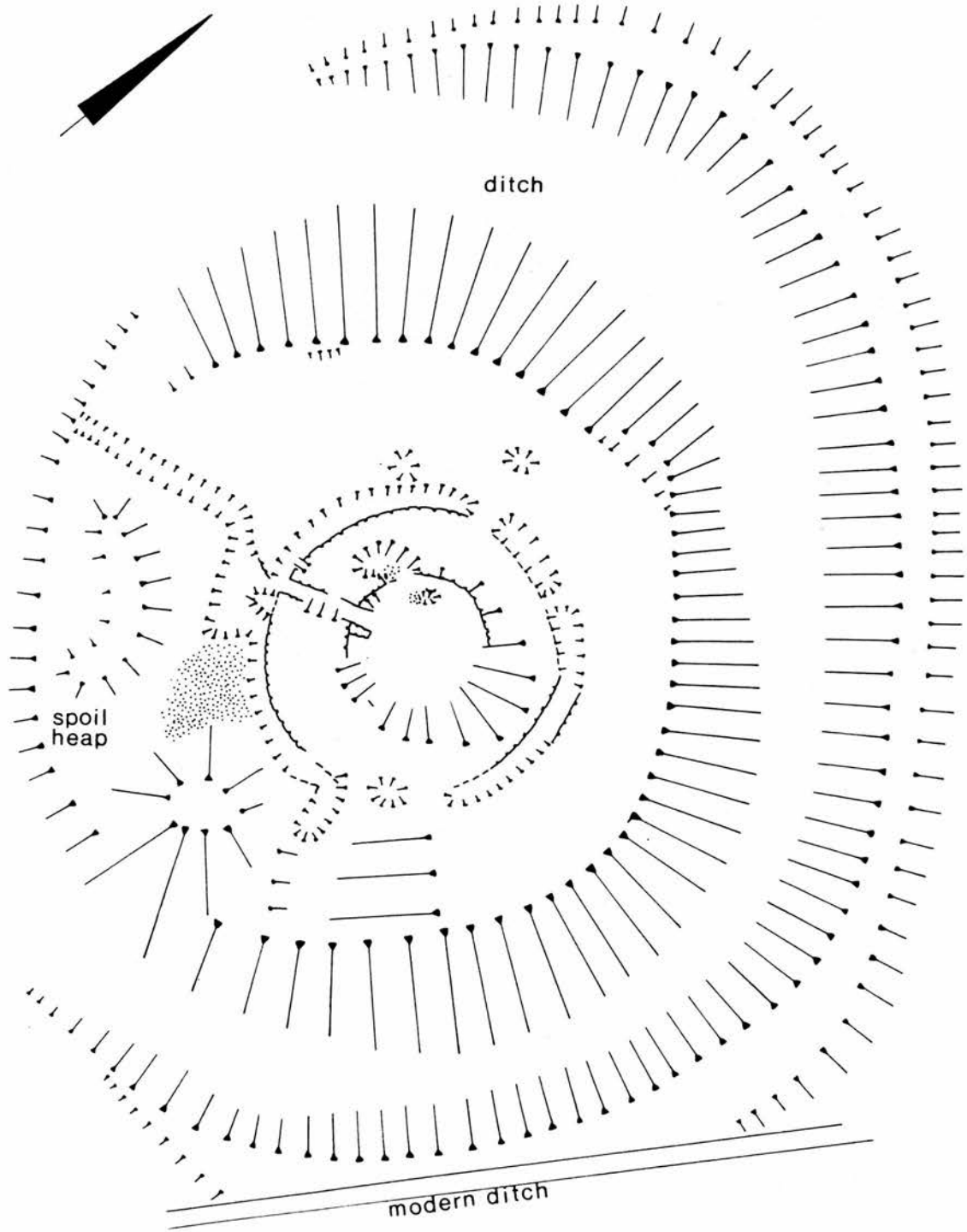


FIG. 1.—Broch, "Hill of Works" (No. 3); Ground-plan.

Source: RCAHMS 1911b, 2



CS.WS 17.4.84

0 10m

EC 14

Gunn's Hillock

ND 2792 6201

NMRS Class: Broch (possible)

NMRS Card: ND 26 SE 1

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 1-2, no 2

This mound identified as a broch by the RCAHMS (1911b) is a smooth, low feature showing no structure to indicate its nature. It has been walled off from the surrounding field but the wall is ruined. The site has been used for a small tree plantation, but the trees are now in very poor condition. The surrounding field is a fine improved sheep pasture. The mound measures about 39m in diameter and is only about 0.5m high. The OS (1982) noted an ill defined elongated mound in the centre of the larger mound measuring about 23.5m E/W by 19.5m. This elongated mound is not particularly obvious at the site.

There is no means of establishing from ground survey that this mound is the remains of a broch, and its identification must remain dubious.

EC 15

Ring of Castlehill

ND 2828 6182

NMRS Class: Medieval Ringwork

NMRS Card: ND 26 SE 3

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 2-3, no 4

2 Talbot 1976-7, 378-9

This site is located in an area of rough grazing 400m SE of Gunn's Hillock (EC 14) and 1km SW of the Hill o'Works (EC 13). The surrounding ground has been boggy and is still fairly wet, despite the modern field drains in the vicinity. One of these drains encroaches slightly on the site in the SW. A modern drainage cut, also in the SW, leads to this field drain from the ditch which forms part of the archaeological site.

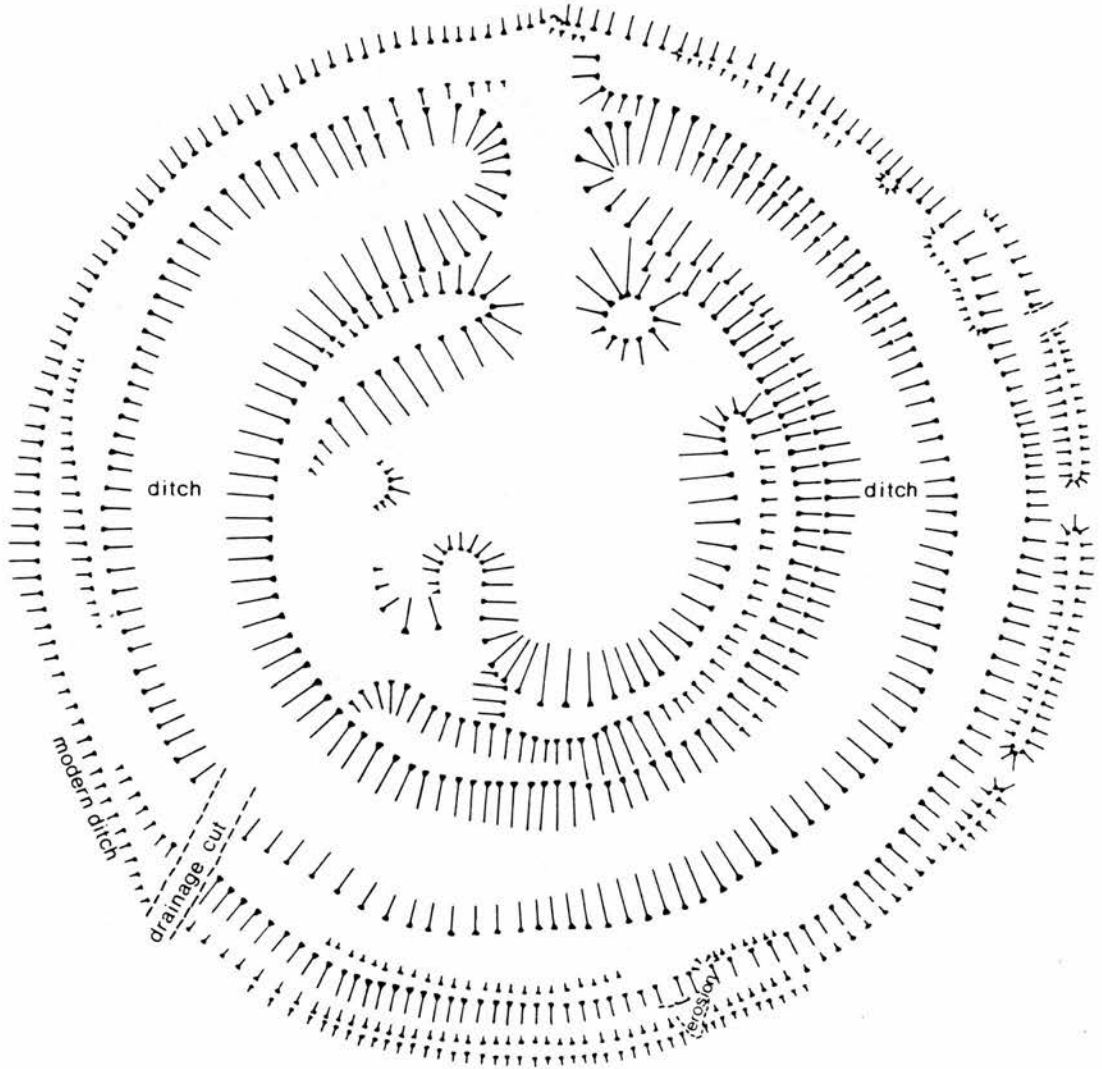
The site is circular, measuring 70m in diameter in overall extent. It consists of a circular platform area, elevated about 2-3m above the surrounding ground surface, and measuring 34-5m in overall diameter. There is a very substantial bank around the margin of the platform, which appears to be the remains of a wall or rampart. The bank is well defined on the NW, S and E, but is not clear on the SW arc. There is a substantial break in the bank in the NE, and another in the NNW. The latter would appear to be the original entry point through the rampart or wall, in line with the causewayed approach to the platform. It is not clear whether the break in the bank in the NE, and the indistinct nature of the remains in the SW, are the result of later modification in these areas, or indicate that the enclosing bank did not fully encircle the area of the platform. The bank is about 4m in overall width, and around the S and E arcs it is set 1-2m back from the rim of the platform.

The central platform is defined by a wide ditch, which would appear to be normally wet, despite modern attempts to drain it. The ditch is over 10m wide crest to crest. In the NW and NE, breaks in the slope of both the scarp and counterscarp may indicate that the ditch has been recut at some time. The causeway across the ditch in the NNW is between 4.4 and 5.4m wide, and is in line with a break in the bank edging the central platform.

Outside the ditch there is a very substantial bank or rampart, probably formed by upcast from the ditch. The top of the rampart varies in width from 3 to 5m. In the N and SW there is slight evidence, in the form of facing stones, that it may have been stone revetted. On the S and NE arcs a narrow bank or breastwork can be traced running along the outer edge of the rampart, whilst on the W arc there is an 18m length of bank, 1.4 to 3.4m wide, overlying its inner edge. On the S, E and NE arcs, there is a narrow bank lying outside the massive rampart. This bank varies in width from 0.4 to 0.8m, and is at most 0.5m high. It would not appear to serve any particular defensive function, but it does follow the outline of the rampart very closely. There are a number of cuts across it, which would appear to be modern attempts to facilitate the drainage of the narrow ditch lying between the outer bank and the rampart. There is no evidence that the outer bank once continued around the full circumference of the site, and it is unlikely that part of it could have been ploughed away in what has obviously always been wet ground. The outer bank would appear to be an original part of the design of the overall site, but its purpose is unclear.

The exact nature of this site is a mystery. The RCAHMS (1911a) described the site as a fort, whilst Talbot (1976-7) tentatively identified the site as a Viking fortification. Broch sites in Caithness with rampart and ditch defences are not unknown, for example, the Hill o'Works (EC 13), only 1km away. There is no evidence at the Ring of Castlehill, that a broch ever existed on the central platform outlined by the ditch. The fact that the site is located in what has been until recent times, a very boggy area, implies that the site was constructed with ease of defence being a prime consideration, but without excavation it is impossible to be certain of its date.

Ring of Castlehill
ND 282618



CS. WS 29.5.86

0 10m

EC 16

Wester

ND 3385 5831

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 35 NW 4

- 1 Laing and Huxley 1866
- 2 Anderson 1900-1, 119-122
- 3 RCAHMS 1911b, 153-4, no 513
- 4 Young 1961-2, 184, no 19
- 5 Caulfield 1977-8, 132, no 19
- 6 Batey 1984, 70, WIC 120

Excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry in about 1891, reported by Anderson 1900-1

*Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 13-4
Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council)
and NMRS*

This broch was reported by Batey (1984) as being mostly sand covered with nothing clearly visible except the outline of a curving wall. The area in the immediate vicinity had been excavated by Kestrel Marine who prepare pipelines for use in connection with North Sea oil production. Available information about the site is therefore wholly contained in the plan drawn at the time of the excavation by Tress Barry, and the description published by Anderson (1900-1) and repeated by the RCAHMS (1911b).

The broch is located on sand dunes known locally as the Birkle Hills near the debouchement of the Water of Wester into Sinclair's Bay. At the time of excavation blown sand had accumulated over the ruins of a broch which had originally been built on a lower eminence also formed of pure sand. The following details of the broch were reported by Anderson.

The entrance to the broch is from the WNW through a passage 13ft (4m) long, 3ft 6in (1.1m) wide at the exterior, and 2ft 7in (0.8m) at the interior. At 9ft (2.7m) from the outer end there are door checks. The interior diameter of the broch is 27ft (8.2m). In the NE part of the wall, at a height of 3ft (0.9m) above floor level is the entrance to a stair rising to the SE. At the foot of the stair there is a chamber

roofed at the end. At 30 to 40ft (9.1 to 12.2m) from the base of the broch are the remains of a wall visible for a considerable distance on the NW and SW sides, which Tress Barry thought continued around the broch. Between this wall and the broch on the entrance side are the foundations of eight or nine small cells or outbuildings. No mention was made of features in the broch interior and the excavation plan shows none. (The excavation plan may be found at the end of the site description.)

Anderson reported that the following objects were found:

a number of thin flat discs of slatey stone of various sizes;
several whetstones;
an upper stone of a quern;
several saddle querns;
a large long handled comb with five prongs;
several handles of bone and deer horn;
fragments of very coarse pottery; and
three quartzite pebbles painted with spots in a blackish or blackish-brown pigment.

A fuller list of finds appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 13-4.

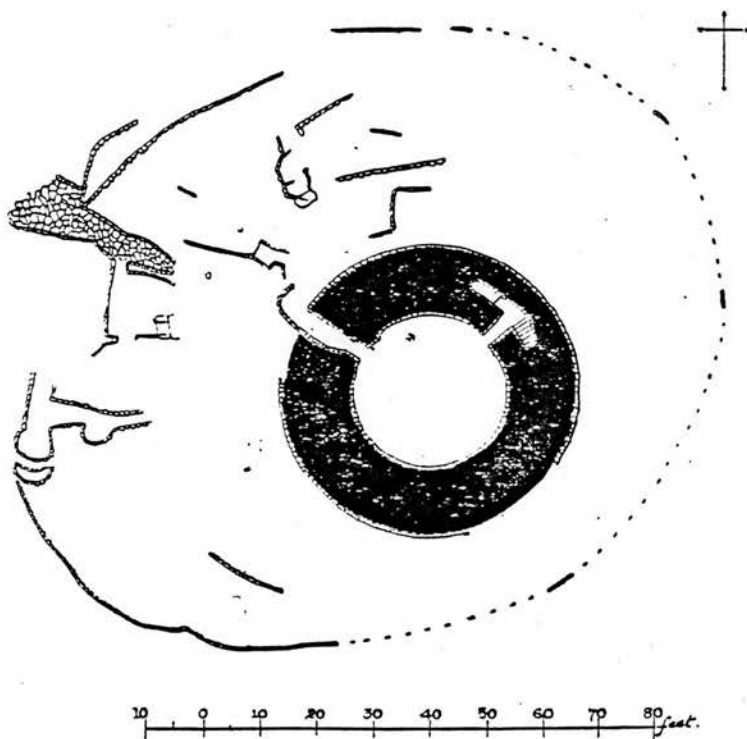


FIG. 38. — "Wester Broch," Keiss (No. 513); Ground-plan.

Source: RCAHMS 1911b, 153

Killimster

ND 3234 5655

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 35 NW 3

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 146-8, no 507

2 Calder 1947-8, 124-145

3 Caulfield 1977-8, 133, no 29

Partly excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry in 1904, further excavated by Calder in 1940 prior to destruction during the building of Skitten aerodrome.

This broch no longer exists having been razed to the ground during levelling for the construction of an aerodrome at Skitten in the Second World War. The site of the broch is close to the 100ft (30.5m) contour in a flattish landscape now largely turned over to improved pasture. Prior to excavation the site had appeared as a grass covered knoll, 150ft (45.1m) in diameter and 9ft (2.7m) high (Calder 1947-8). The W part of the broch had already been exposed by Tress Barry in 1904. A plan of the site was made at the time of this excavation but there was no written record, other than the brief description given by the RCAHMS (1911b). Calder's excavation in 1940 was more comprehensive but had to be carried out in a period of only two to three weeks because the requirement for the airfield was so urgent. The excavation report (Calder 1947-8) is nonetheless reasonably detailed for the period with both plans and sections. (The plans made during the Tress Barry and Calder excavations may be found at the end of the site description.)

Excavation revealed that the complex had consisted of a massive broch encircled eccentrically by a strong defensive rampart with a wide but shallow outer ditch, and that the rampart had subsequently been thickened on the inside by stout additional walling. Only the E half of the rampart and ditch remained, but enough survived to show that the space between it and the broch had widened appreciably on the N so that the courtyard probably attained its maximum width on the N and NW. In this area there were traces of buildings outside the broch. Cultivation was thought to have completely demolished the defences on the W side of the broch.

The broch was 32ft 6in (9.9m) across internally and the wall varied from 14ft 6in to 15ft (4.4 to 4.6m) at its base. There was a strong batter on the outer face and a slight batter on the inner face. Around the exterior a double stepped footing of large stones projected 12 to 19in (0.3 to 0.5m) from the face. The only voids in the wall thickness were the entrance in the W and a guard chamber opening off it to the S. There was a thin facing wall against the outer face of the broch on the NW arc, with a heavy buttress at its N end. There was another buttress on the E with a short length of facing wall continuing S.

The entrance passage in the W arc was provided with two sets of door checks and was 3ft (0.9m) wide at its outer end, and 3ft 4in (1m) at its inner end. There was a bar hole on the N side in the rear of the outer door check about 2ft 2in (0.7m) above the floor. The corresponding masonry opposite was reduced below bar hole level as was the case at the inner doorway. The passage was laid with paving stones which covered a central drain. Kerbs obstructed the pavement at each door. The walls of the guard cell entrance had been largely destroyed but it was judged to have been 2ft (0.6m) wide, not the 5ft (1.5m) shown on the excavation plan of the Tress Barry excavation. Towards the inner end of the chamber the upper courses bore the commencement of an inward beehive batter. In the floor of the chamber an oblong pit testified to the former existence of the slab sided box noted by Tress Barry. The chamber measured about 10ft (3m) long by 5ft 4in (1.6m) wide.

In the interior the main features were paving stones, radial compartments, sunk pits, hearths and the inward continuation of the drain. Many of the features were so incomplete that their purpose could not be determined. Two pavement levels were found in the N half of the interior but only one level in the S. Below the lower paving two sunk boxes and a pit filled with rubbish and peat ash were found. Some irregularities in the pavement levels confused the occupation levels and may have been caused during the Tress Barry excavations. The drain continued into the interior from the entrance passage altering course abruptly to ESE towards a radial chamber. In the centre it was concealed under a fireback which was not an original feature.

Around the inner wall face there was a series of thirteen radial compartments in a more or less continuous ring formed by thin slabbed partitions bedded in the natural clay. Structurally all the compartments were somewhat later than the broch, for example, the side slabs of compartment no 11 seemed to have been inserted into the inner face of the broch which had been broken to admit the insertion, then patched up. There was however no measurable thickness of occupation debris below the floors of the compartments suggesting that their erection had taken place no great time after the building of the broch. All of the compartments were open to the broch interior except no 1, N of the entrance, which was closed by a high standing slab. At 12ft (3.6m) left of the entrance the RCAHMS noted a small square recess in the inner wall face, 3ft 9in (1.1m) above the then ground level. Calder does not mention this recess.

No primary hearth was found, although five hearths of a secondary nature were encountered in the interior including one on either side of the fireback. Below these two hearths in the centre of the interior there was an earlier and original pit containing a black earthy substance, sheep bones and pottery.

A series of six postholes was revealed in the N half of the broch interior (marked X on the plan), the four southernmost in rough alignment from W to E. The W three were found under paving.

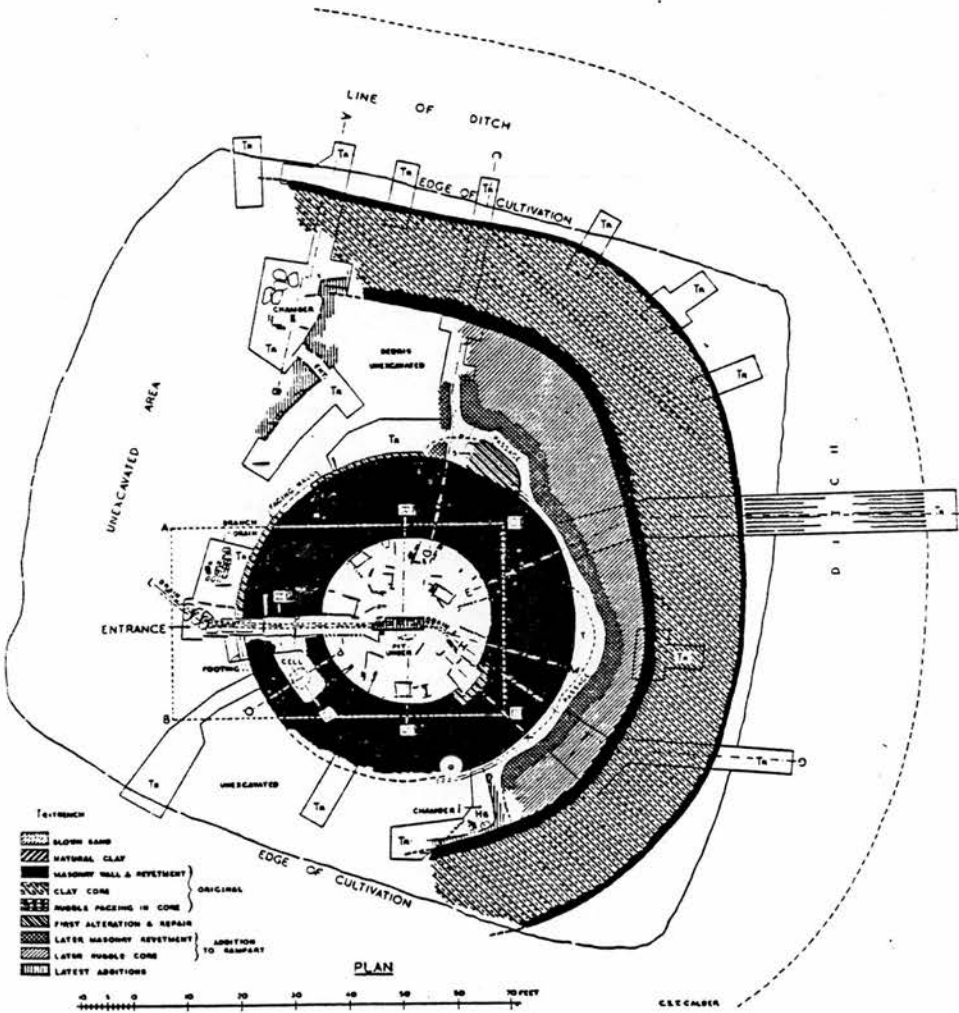
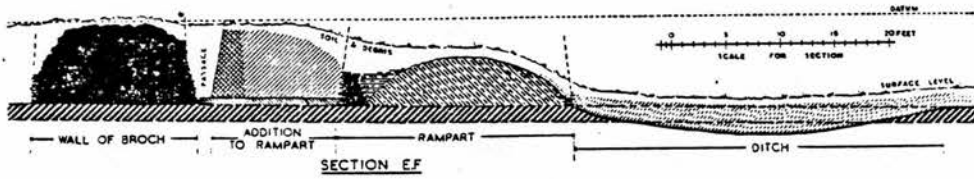
The outer rampart of which 300ft (91m) survived consisted of a clay core confined between well built revetting walls rising with a batter from the natural clay on which it was founded, but in places from a rocky substratum. It was thought that the clay core had existed first with the retaining walls being built later. The ditch outside the rampart was barely traceable on the surface as it was full of blown sand and almost obliterated by ploughing. It was 34ft 6in (10.5m) wide and only 3ft 8in (1.1m) deep. Its shallowness made it appear as a borrow pit rather than a defence. Against the inner face of the original rampart an additional strengthening wall had been erected, varying between 8 and 18ft (2.4 and 5.5m) in thickness, increasing the rampart width to 40ft (12.2m) at its widest. The space between rampart and broch was thereby reduced to a narrow passage skirting the irregular buttresses against the outer face of the broch wall. The

rampart addition, built as a rough core with a retaining wall, was founded on an accumulation of soil and debris, 7 to 9in (178 to 229mm) thick, with paving stones in one or two places.

The remains of only two buildings outside the broch were uncovered in the partial excavation of the complex, one S of the broch, the other to the NW. The floor of the S building which was unpaved was 6 to 9in (152 to 229mm) higher than the floor of the broch, but was 3in (77mm) lower than the base of the strengthening wall lining the outer face at this point. A hearth was found within the building. Peat ash at a depth of 1ft 6in (0.5m) within the infill of the building plus a later row of slabs indicated a later construction on the same site.

The floor of the building or buildings in the NW lay practically on the same level as the general interior of the broch. Slab construction was incorporated in the walling (post and panel construction). Calder thought this construction technique belonged to the latest period of building on this site, as the chambers had encroached into the original rampart when it had become ruinous. Calder thought that both of the external buildings which he had revealed were later than the broch. He also thought that other outer buildings had no doubt existed, but there had been no time for further excavation.

The finds from the site plus the animal remains are described in detail in the excavation report (Calder 1947-8, 138-145). Calder noted that no particularly outstanding relics were recovered, nor were any metal objects found. There were atreifacts of deer horn, many animal bones, broken pottery, and a number of typical broch implements and utensils of stone. Pounders and smoothing tools predominated, and the others included dishes, knocking stones, pivot stones, anvils, tether stones, a saddle quern, several rubbers, circular querns, pot lids, a pestle and a whorl.



Source: Calder 1947-8, 125

EC 18

Norwall

ND 3266 5445

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 35 SW 10

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 148-9, no 508

Partially excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry about 1903

*Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council)
and NMRS*

This broch survives as a low, badly mutilated, grass covered mound at the side of a field which slopes gently from SE to NW. The field is a lush pasture and has been well ploughed and drained in the past. Part of the broch mound runs under a retaining wall and fence into the neighbouring field in the NE. At the time of survey this field had been ploughed and the features of the broch mound are well smoothed out and obscured.

In a smooth arc on the SE side of the mound and slightly upslope, there is a very broad shallow depression which would appear to be a ditch. It is 5m wide at base and 22m crest to crest. Ploughing has made its outline very smooth and shallow. It peters out in the S, but continues into the adjacent field on the N before gradually disappearing. There is no trace of a continuation elsewhere around the mound. The NMRS card notes the depth of the ditch as about a metre.

The broch mound measures 32m N/S by 34m. The slopes to the SE and SW are longer than on the other arcs where the mound has probably been truncated by ploughing. On the SW arc the mound rises in two stages with a break in slope giving a slight mound-on-mound appearance, more noticeable at several other broch mounds in Caithness (see Thurso River Study Area).

The top of the mound has a number of curving hollows which are the only evidence now of the partial excavation carried out by Tress Barry. No structural features are visible except for a single upright slab within a depression in the N of the mound, and a single stone slightly W of the centre of the mound, which may be part of the outer face of the broch. In 1963 the OS noted that a few stones on the S side of the entrance passage in the W were exposed. These are no

longer visible.

The ruins of the broch and some buildings outside it to the N were partially exposed during the Tress Barry excavation. A plan of the structures was made at the time of the excavation, but otherwise the only written record is by the RCAHMS (1911b). (The plan made during the excavation may be found at the end of the site description.) The diameter of the broch interior is given as 26ft (7.9m). The entrance is shown on the plan as being in the NW, and it is described as being 13ft 6in (4.1m) long and 3ft 6in (1.1m) wide at the inner end. At 9ft (2.7m) from the outside there had been checks for a door. The RCAHMS noted the passage had been only partially cleared and was much ruined at the time of their visit.

The RCAHMS also noted that only about half of the interior periphery of the broch had been cleared on either side of the entrance although the excavation plan shows the inner circuit as being complete. The inner wall face stood 3ft 8in (1.1m) high but according to the RCAHMS the base was covered in debris. Within the wall width on the NE the excavation plan shows an entrance into an elongated chamber with stairs apparently rising to the S. The account by the RCAHMS makes no mention of this feature. The plan also shows two upright slabs set radially to the inner face to the E of the entrance, the only details which are recorded in the broch interior. The outer face of the broch is shown on the plan dotted as a complete circuit, but the RCAHMS noted it was only partially exposed and was insignificant in elevation.

A continuation of the broch entrance is shown on the excavation plan curving towards the W. The RCAHMS noted a door check in this passage 3ft 6in (1.1m) from the broch. The passage appears on the plan to have two branches or entrances into buildings. The further branch trends SSW before disappearing into an unexcavated part of the site. The branch nearer to the broch seems to have been an entrance into a large building outside the broch wall. The excavation plan shows a number of upright slabs and lengths of walling within the building which seems to have been only partially exposed. The upright slab still visible in the mound is probably one of the slabs in this building.

From the RCAHMS account, the excavation plan and the new survey, it can be estimated that the broch probably lies in the SE part of the mound with external buildings known to occur on its N and NW sides. At least half of the stratigraphy in the broch interior may still be intact on the side away from the entrance. There are probably the remains of external buildings on the W and SW sides of the broch also, where a break in slope may indicate an outer wall. Apart from two hollows, the excavations do not seem to have extended into this area. It is likely that N and NE of the broch any external buildings will have been truncated by the retaining wall on this side, below which there is a gentle slope into the neighbouring field. The long slope behind the broch in the SE which leads down to the base of the ditch does not seem to have been disturbed during the excavations, except for one hollow on its crest, although ploughing may have caused considerable damage in this area.

There is no record of any finds from the site.

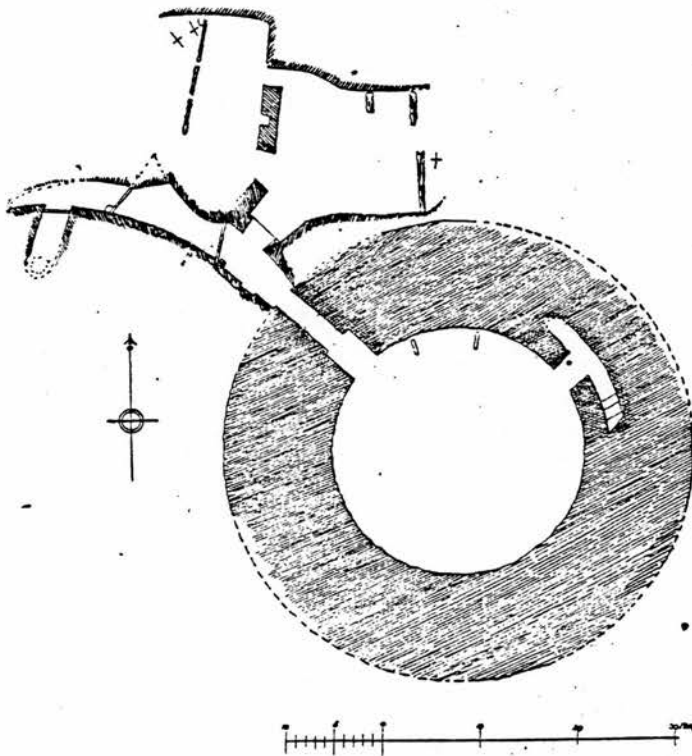
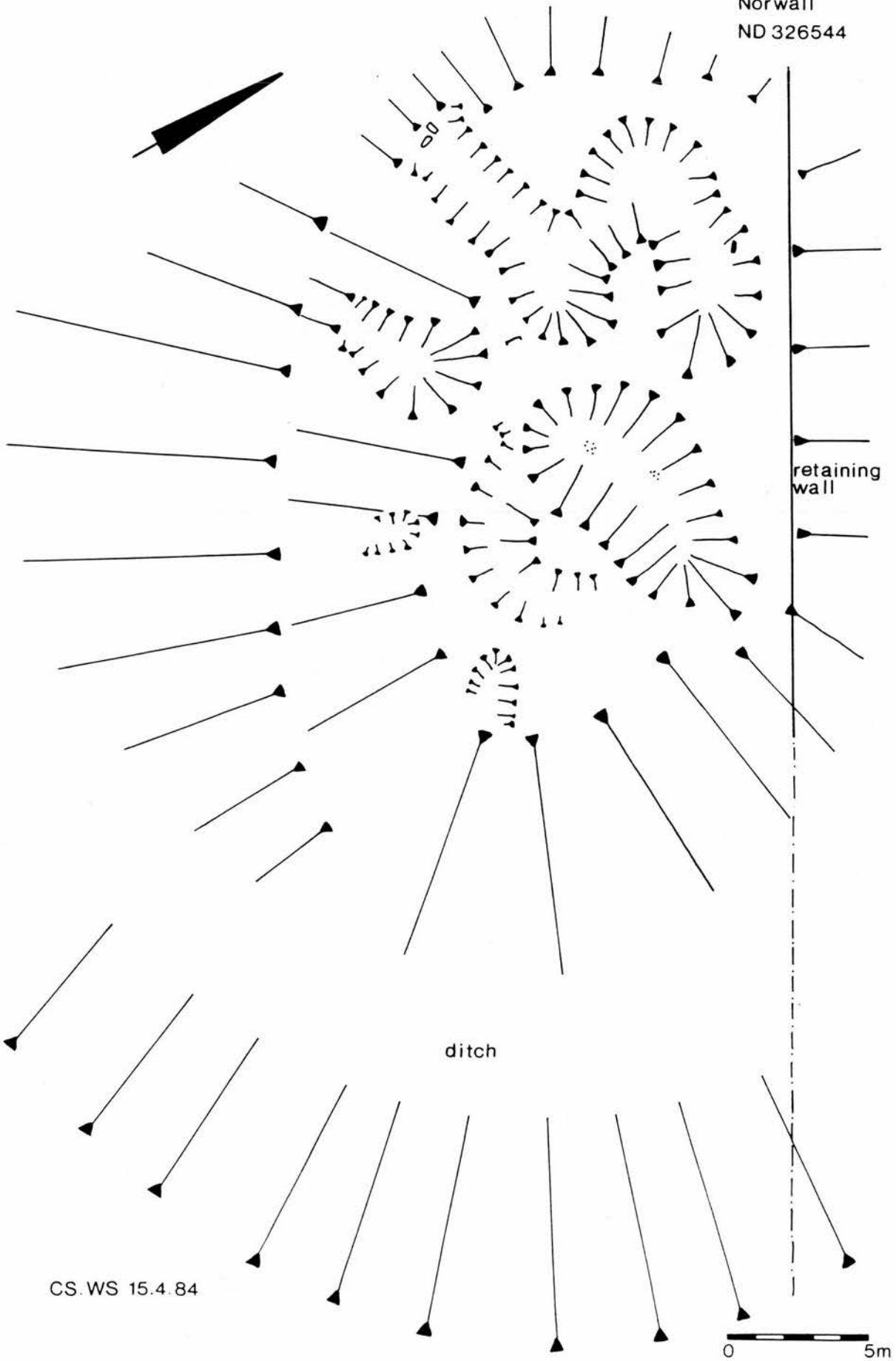


FIG. 36.—“Norwall Broch” (No. 508); Ground-plan.

Source:RCAHMS 1911b, 148

Norwall
ND 326544



CS. WS 15.4.84

EC 19

Bilbster

ND 2817 5381

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 25 SE 14

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 154, no 514

This site is located in a flat field given over to grazing on the N side of the Wick River. It appears as a smooth, turf covered mound, about 26m in overall diameter, and about 1m high. There is a depression in the top of the mound about 10m in diameter and about 0.3m deep. There are no structural features visible to aid in the identification of the site, but the depression in the top of the mound would suggest that it is a broch. It would appear that the site has been very much reduced by past ploughing, and the only means of identifying it with any certainty now would be by excavation.

EC 20

Shorelands

ND 3647 5425

ND 3656 5424

NMRS Class: Mounds (sites of)

NMRS Card: ND 35 SE 19

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 190, no 584

2 Batey 1984, 73, WIC 140

Two mounds are recorded at Shorelands. The OS estimated that the one at ND 3656 5424 was about 70m in diameter and 2m high, whereas the one at ND 3647 5425, nearer the road, was about 45m in diameter and about 1m high. The OS also recorded that the farmer had said that there was much stone in both mounds, and he was convinced that there were the remains of a building in the one nearer the road. He recalled an occasion after ploughing when he had probed a crevice between some stone for a depth of 6ft without touching bottom. Batey found no trace of either mound in 1981, and noted that although the sites had been ploughed, no stones were visible. The field was under crop during survey in 1986, and no trace of the mounds could be seen from the road. It seems possible that either one or both of these mounds could be the sites of brochs.

Kettleburn

ND 3497 5191

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 35 SW 11

- 1 Rhind 1853
- 2 Anderson 1883
- 3 Anderson 1890, 186, Parish of Wick no 1
- 4 RCAHMS 1911b, 191, no 588
- 5 Caulfield 1977-8, 132, no 13

Excavated in 1852 by AH Rhind

Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 1, 1851-4, 263-9

This broch no longer exists having been removed during agricultural operations in 1852. The site of the broch is within a large field given over to improved pasture which slopes gently down to the N bank of the Wick river. In 1982 the OS noted that edging the N exterior of the site there was an even sided curved depression, at its most pronounced 18m long by 1m deep. They suggested that this could have been the course of a defensive ditch. They also noted that the broch had stood on a mound which was now almost completely levelled. It is most unlikely that in the level landscape of this part of Caithness that any mound so closely associated with a broch is natural. The mound referred to by the OS may be part of the remains of the broch mound. A mound-on-mound appearance is a common feature noted at broch sites in Caithness, particularly by the OS (see Thurso River Study Area).

The broch was investigated by AH Rhind at a very early date for broch excavations, prior to its destruction by the local farmer. Rhind described his findings in 1853 along with a plan made at the time of the excavation. (The excavation plan may be found at the end of the site description.) Anderson referred to the site during his Rhind lectures for 1881 (Anderson 1883). The external appearance of the site prior to excavation was described as 120ft (36.6m) in diameter, and 10ft (3m) high. A bounding wall 3ft (0.9m) thick surrounded the site. Within this wall on the W side there were traces of other walls, the intermediate space between the bounding wall and broch presenting an almost chaotic mass of ruin. The space according to Rhind had been

regularly built upon, a fact abundantly proved by the character of the rubbish which filled it, and by the substratum of ashes, intermixed with shells and bones. The broch had two entrances, one in the NNW, and the other at right angles in the ESE. The NNW entrance is shown on the plan to be straight sided, whereas the ESE entrance has two guard cells, one on either side. A chamber is shown within the wall on the S, but no stair is illustrated. A drain and a well with steps down to it was found within the internal area. The well was later used by a number of cottages in the area built of stones from the broch (Anderson 1890). Within the interior Rhind reported that a wall had been built within a wall, presumably a lining wall around the inner face.

The finds recorded from the site were as follows (Rhind 1853; Anderson 1883; RCAHMS 1911b):

a pair of bronze tweezers of late Celtic design;
a piece of iron resembling the point of a weapon;
lumps of iron;
a portion of an iron nail;
a weaving comb;
a horn knife handle;
horn and bone objects;
two smooth, spheroidal bone balls;
a similar ball, smaller, broken with the portion of an iron nail embedded in it;
two whetstones;
seven perforated stone discs of various sizes;
the upper stone of a quern, plus broken portions of three others;
other stone and slate objects;
fragments of exceedingly coarse pottery, unglazed and undecorated, mostly representing globular vessels with everted rims and bulging sides;
smooth stones of various sizes;
human remains; and
bones of *Bos longifrons*, deer, whale, and seal.

Broch of Kettleburn

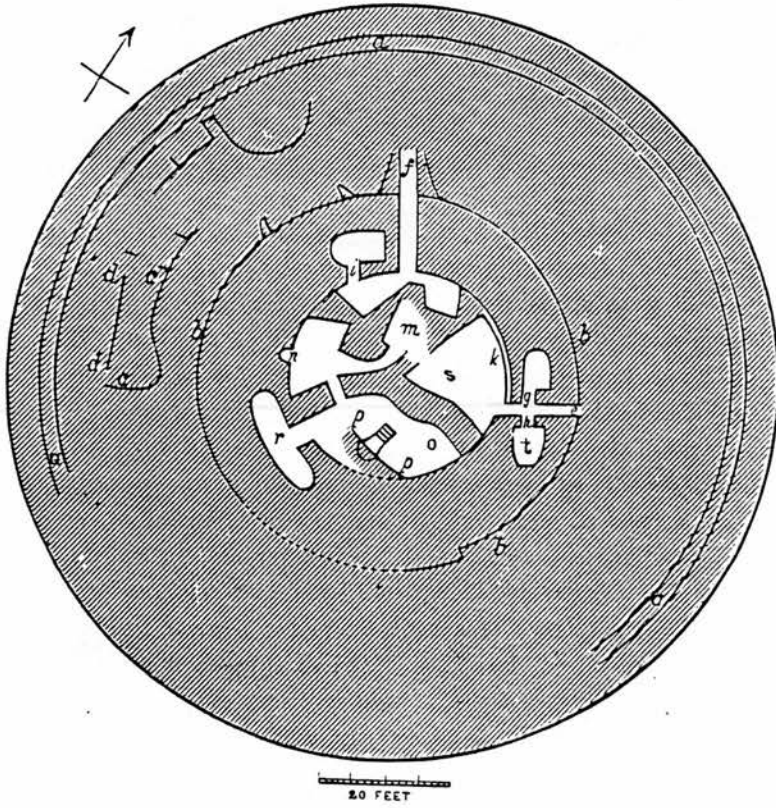


Fig. 135.—Ground plan of Broch of Kettleburn, near Wick, Caithness.
(From a Plan by Mr. A. H. Rhind.)

Source: Anderson 1883, 209

EC 22

Cairn of Elsay

ND 3871 5198

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 35 SE 6

1 Anderson 1890, 186, Parish of Wick no 3

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 162-3, no 521

3 Batey 1984, 75, WIC 152

Excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry in about 1902

Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 17

Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council)

and NMRS

The site appears from a distance as a mound up to 3m high, situated on a low rocky promontory defined by two natural harbours to the NE and SW. On the SW side there is a low cliff leading down to a stony beach and to the natural harbour area. The broch mound is to the landward side of the promontory. There is no trace of an outwork on this side where there is a flat field used for pasture. The broch was excavated by Tress Barry and a plan was made at the time of the excavation. (The excavation plan may be found at the end of the site description.) The only written record of the features exposed during excavation was given by the RCAHMS (1911b).

Tress Barry dug out the centre of the mound. The excavation plan shows the complete circuit of the inner face recorded by the RCAHMS to have stood 9ft (2.7m) high. In the interior only five lengths of inward facing revetment are now visible. The five lengths do not join up into the regular circular enclosure shown on the excavation plan. Either the internal area was markedly irregular, or the surviving lengths of face do not all belong to the inner face of the broch. The excavation plan does not illustrate a lining wall.

The outer face of the broch by contrast is well defined around much of its circuit, except on the SW arc. Outside the outer face in the SE there is another length of outward facing revetment, the remains of the outer casing wall shown dotted on the excavation plan. The RCAHMS thought this wall was no longer visible in 1910. The diameter of the interior of the broch can no longer be measured but the RCAHMS gave it

as 29ft (8.8m).

In the SE there is a well defined entrance, its outer part formed of two straight walls for 3.5m. It is 0.7m wide at the outer end. The inner end of the passage is broken down, but on the W side a face is still visible deviating from the line of the outer part of the passage. This feature is also recorded on the excavation plan, where the passage walls are shown widening into a curve beyond two door checks. Neither of these checks is now visible. The RCAHMS recorded square bar holes behind the checks and a lintel in position above the checks. The passage walls were then 3ft 4in (1m) high but the bottom of the passage was covered in debris.

In the NE the excavation plan shows what appears to be another straight sided entrance through the broch wall. The feature is shown cross-hatched, and it is not clear whether this represents later blocking or whether the feature is at a higher level in the wall. In this area now there is a distinct break in the line of the outer face of the broch otherwise clearly traceable to either side. There is also a deep stone filled hollow within the turf covered broch wall at this point. Outside the break in the face there is a length of revetment at right angles which is also shown dotted on the excavation plan. A long hollow follows the line of the outer face from this right angled revetment towards the SE. This long hollow has the appearance of being a trench dug to locate the outer face, but the excavation plan shows at this point a line of apparent upright slabs curving off towards the SE. These are no longer visible.

The excavation plan shows a stair and a stairfoot chamber within the W arc of the wall, the steps rising to the N. The only possible trace of this feature now is a length of inward facing revetment, 1.6m in length within the wall width on the NW. The excavation plan does not show the stairwell extending this far, but the only possible explanation for this revetment would seem to be that it is the back wall of the stair. The RCAHMS recorded a small circular chamber beneath the position of the foot of the stair, measuring 3ft (0.9m) in diameter with a roof of converging stones. The excavation plan shows the chamber as a dotted outline. It is not clear whether this chamber was underground or whether the entrance to the stair was above ground

level. Opposite the stair in the E arc of the inner face another small oval chamber, noted also as being 3ft (0.9m) in diameter, is shown on the excavation plan. Neither of these features can be traced now.

Within the interior of the broch the excavation plan shows a large area of apparently secondary walling in the SE quadrant. It is not clear from the plan whether this was in fact a solid mass as depicted, or whether an area was left unexcavated between two curving wall faces. This feature now appears as a long mound. The only other feature now visible in the interior is a single upright slab in the NW quadrant. This would appear to be one of a line of such slabs shown on the excavation plan. The alignment on the excavation plan does not match the position of the one surviving upright. This, in addition to the position of the inward facing revetment within the broch wall on the NW which is apparently part of the stairwell, would seem to indicate that the excavation plan does not accurately depict the disposition of features in the W arc of the broch. They may well have been placed too far to the S on the excavation plan.

Outside the broch on the seaward side there seem to be traces of enclosures. Immediately outside the SE entrance there appears to be an extension of the entrance, the E side of which is preserved. A photograph in the Nicolson Museum Collection (photo no 107) shows that there is in fact no such passage extension. The effect of a wall on the E side was created by Tress Barry who cut a section in front of the entrance leaving an unexcavated area to the E. To the W outside the entrance there are two irregular hollows, possibly dug to locate the outer face of the broch. The vertical section of the unexcavated area continues towards the SE for a distance of 12m, appearing as a very steep turf covered slope. It appears to turn S and SW to form an outer enclosed area about 15m by 8m. It is not clear whether there is in fact any enclosure here, or whether the extant feature is merely a hollow created by Tress Barry in his excavation. To the E and S of this feature there is an irregular raised area which may conceal buildings or which may simply be spoil. The RCAHMS noted that any outbuildings which may exist around the broch had not been uncovered.

A list of finds from the site appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 17.

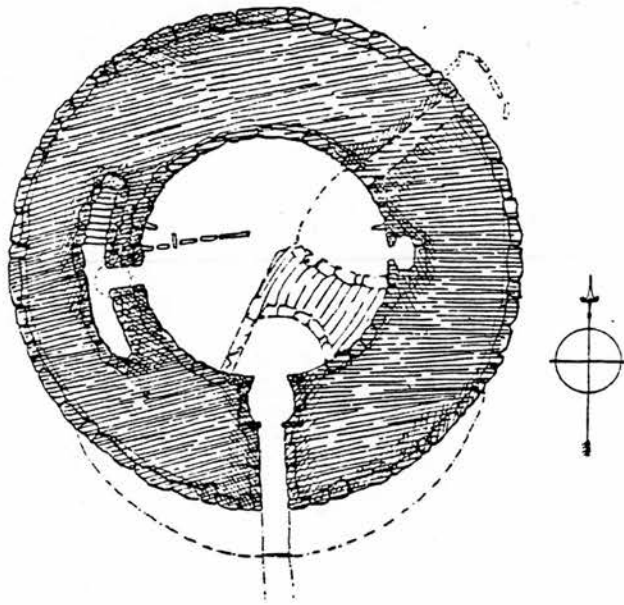
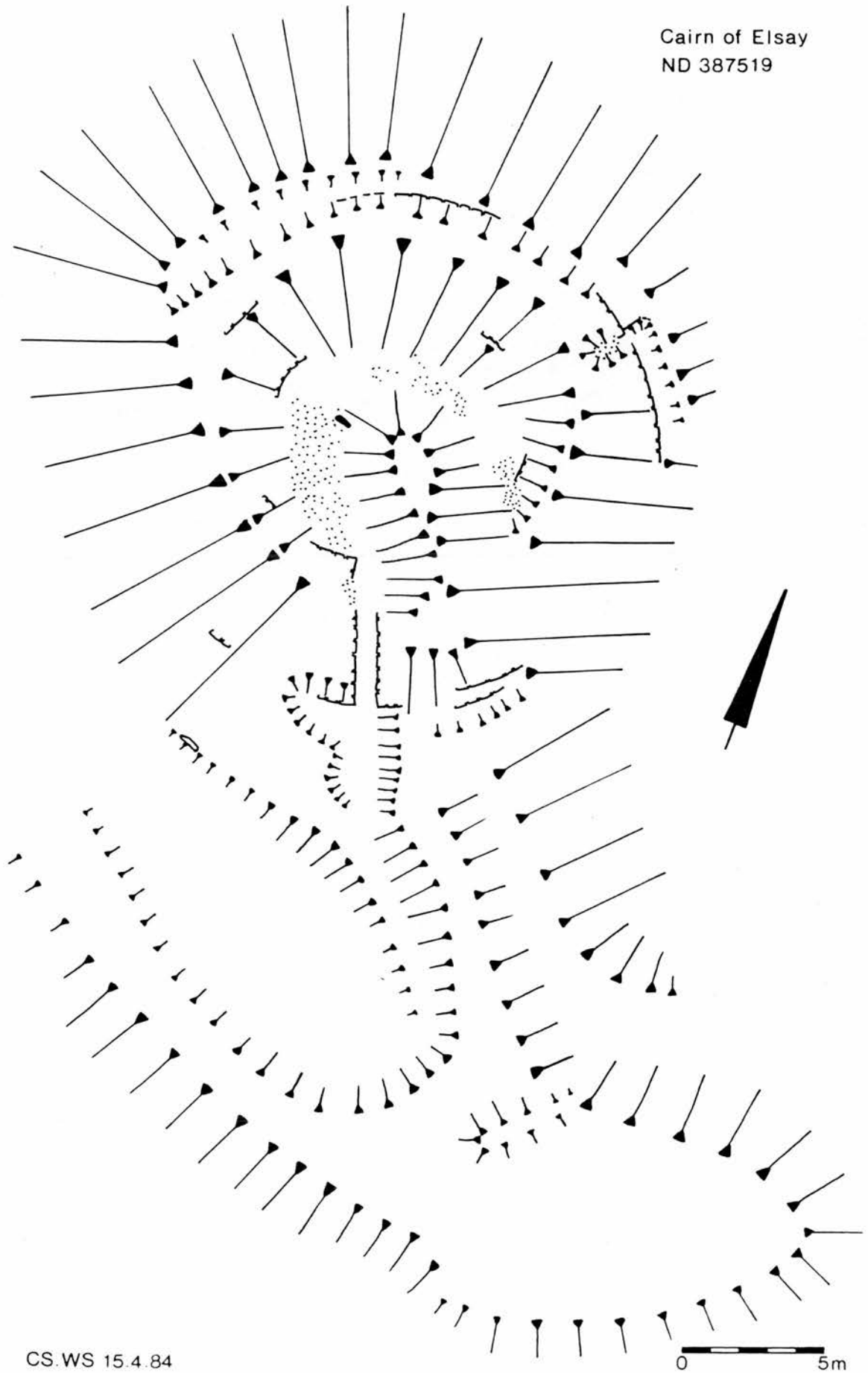


FIG. 44.—Broch, "Cairn of Elsay," Staxigoe (No. 521); Ground-plan.

Source: RCAHMS 1911b, 162

Cairn of Elsay
ND 387519



CS.WS 15.4.84

EC 23

Hillhead

ND 3762 5140

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 35 SE 5

1 Anderson 1890, 186, Parish of Wick no 2

2 Tress Barry c1902, unpublished draft address to Soc Antiq of London

3 RCAHMS 1911b, 160-2, no 520

4 Batey 1984, 76, WIC 161

Excavated by Sir Francis Tress Barry in 1900-1

Finds donated to National Museum, Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 17-18

Photographic archive in Nicolson Museum (Caithness District Council) and NMRS

This broch survives as a badly damaged squarish mound, 16m N/S by 20m, at the side of a well drained, smooth field given over to pasture. The mound has served as a stone quarry and it has been extensively robbed. On the N the mound has been truncated by a modern ditch, the side of which is revetted with stone for a depth of 1.5m. The field beyond the ditch is smooth and featureless.

The only visible feature within the mound is a length of outward facing revetment in the SE about 3m long which may be the outer face of the broch. Three metres outside this revetment there is a single stone possibly from another outward facing revetment. The line of the passageway into the broch may be marked by a linear depression into the mound on the E side. A single stone in line with this depression lies just outside it to the S at its outer end.

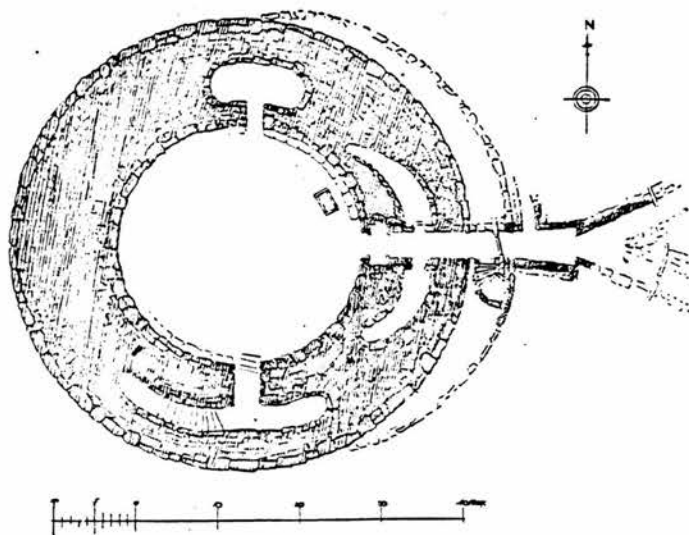
As the remains of the broch mound are in such a badly mutilated state, reliance must be placed on the plan made at the time of the excavation and the record provided by the RCAHMS (1911b), which is the only written record available. (The excavation plan may be found at the end of the site description.) At the time of the RCAHMS visit in 1910 the broch was already filled with debris beneath which the inner wall face was hidden, but on the exterior towards the W the wall was visible to a height of about 2ft (0.6m). The inner face had been about 9ft (2.7m) high at the time of excavation. The diameter of the broch court was 30 ft (9.1m), but it had been reduced by a lining wall in places.

The entrance was in the E with a curving cell or guard chamber roofed

with converging stones on either side. Inward from these cells the passage walls formed a square recess on either side, possibly acting as checks for a door. The passage was 13ft (4m) in length. An extension of the passage led E before splitting into two passages trending NE and SE. Both the extension and each of the branch passages were provided with sets of door checks. The extension passed through an outer casing wall added to the broch on the E side. The length of revetment and the single outlying stone now visible in the mound may be the remains of the outer face and the casing. On the S of the entrance extension, formed within the casing, there was an entrance to a flight of steps leading down to a well 8ft (2.4m) deep. No external buildings were uncovered at the site, and no traces of any can be seen in the field E of the broch mound. The presence of the branching passages must however point to their former existence.

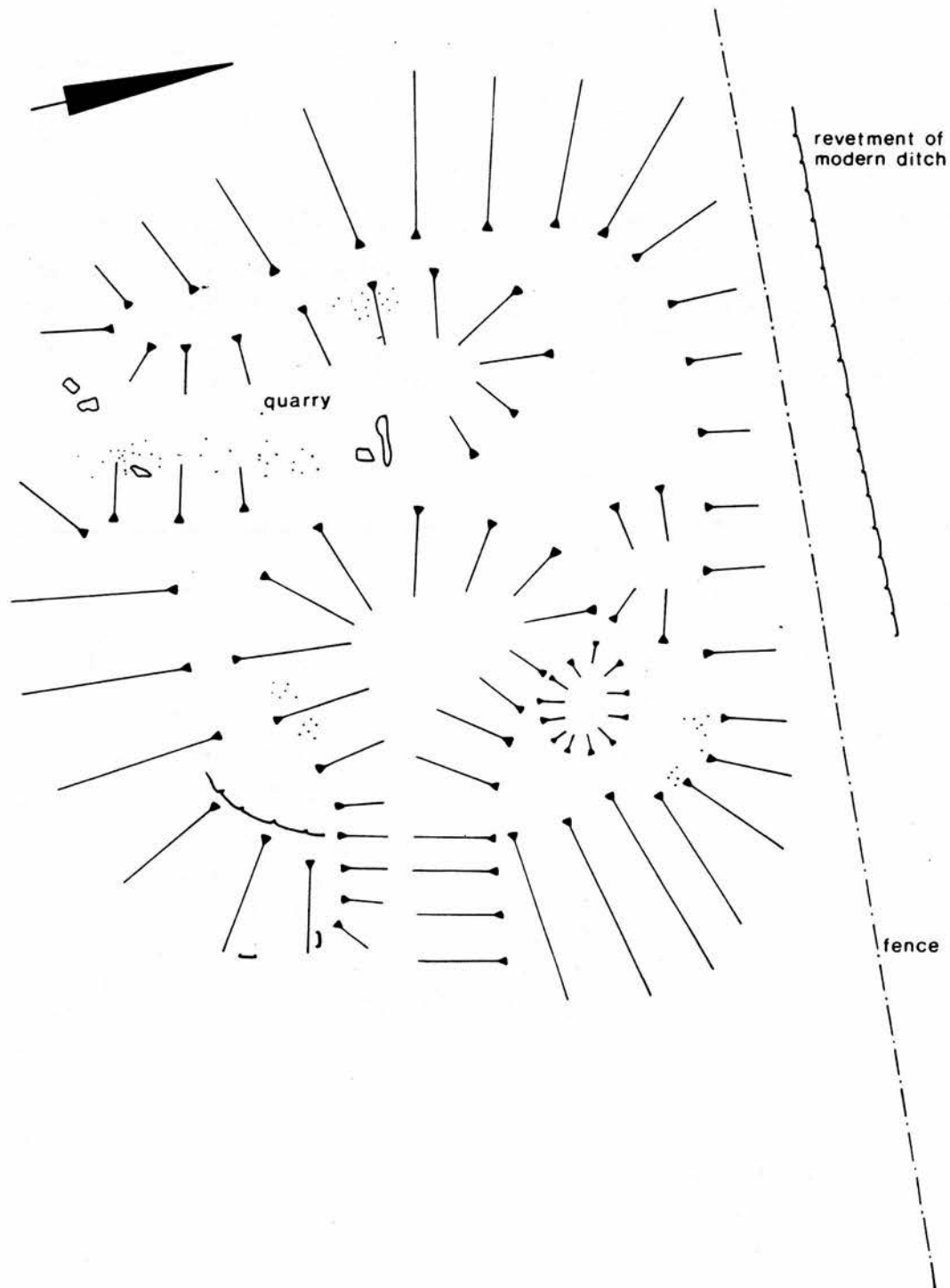
Within the broch wall in the S there was an access to a stair and a stairfoot chamber, the steps rising to the W. The excavation plan seems to show four steps rising from the broch interior into the entrance to the stair and stairfoot chamber. The RCAHMS account does not mention these steps. Directly opposite the entrance to the stair in the N a passage led into a chamber covered at the E end by a roof of converging stones. The RCAHMS record it as being of indefinite length, but the excavation plan shows it as a complete oval. The only feature shown in the broch interior on the excavation plan is a slab sided tank in the NE quadrant.

A list of finds from the site appeared in Proc Soc Antiq Scot 43, 1908-9, 17-18.



Source: RCAHMS 1911b, 161

FIG. 43.—Broch, Hillhead, Broadhaven (No. 520); Ground-plan.



CS.WS 15.4.84

0 5m

EC 24

Papigoe

ND 3828 5176

NMRS Class: Mound (possible) Prob natural NMRS Card: ND 35 SE 7

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 190, no 585

2 Batey 1984, 75, WIC 154

The RCAHMS (1911b) recorded a large mound in the rear of a cottage on the W side of the road towards the N end of Papigoe, which they thought might possibly conceal a broch. It measured 110ft (33.5m) in diameter and 5 to 6ft (1.5 to 1.8m) in height. It was somewhat stony on the surface but a sample of the soil appeared to be of clay suggesting a natural character. Batey (1984) confirmed the measurements and noted that when the mound was ploughed in 1981 no stone was revealed and it was therefore possibly natural.

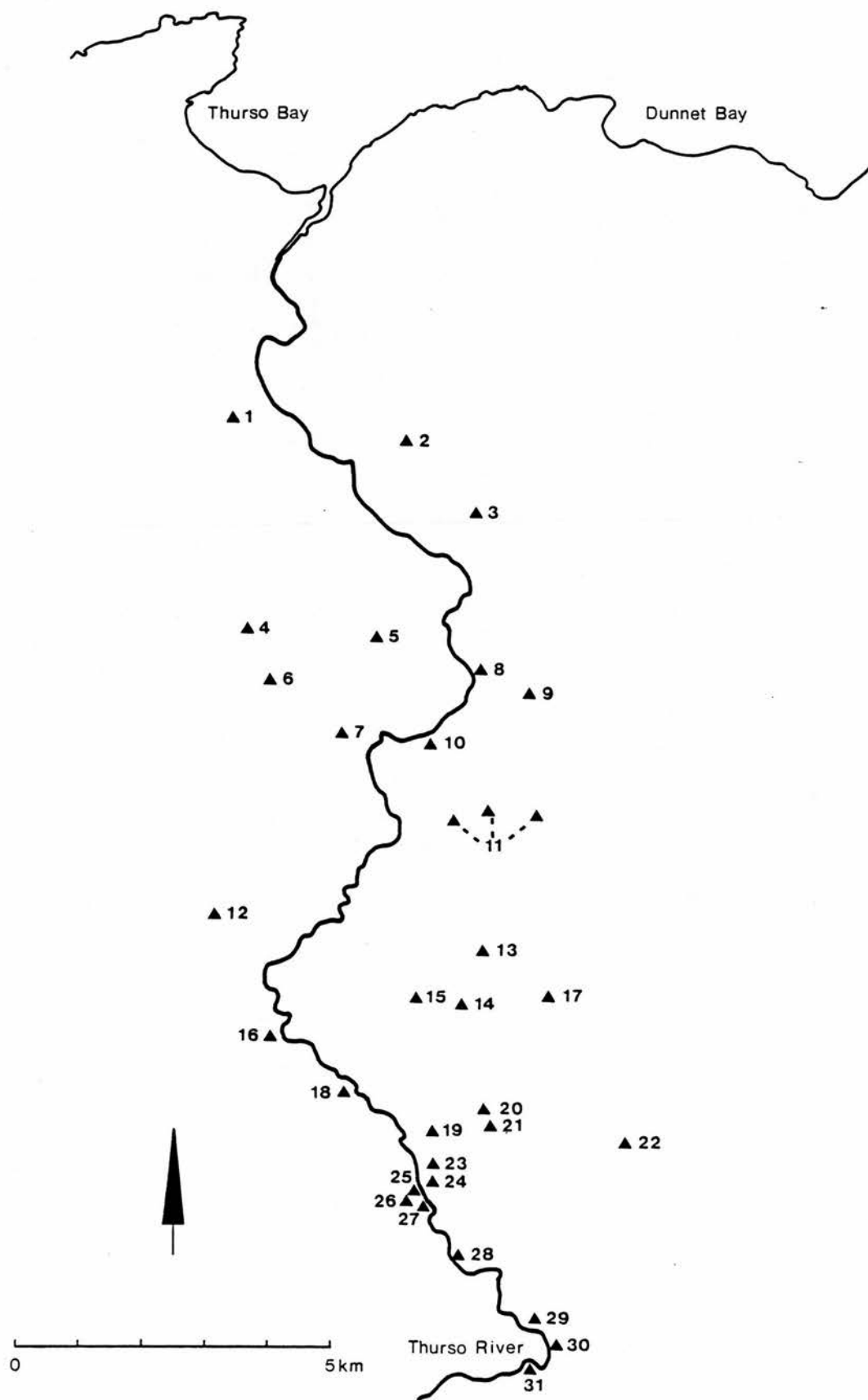
THURSO RIVER

Thurso River Study Area

TR 1	Geise	ND 1036 6480
TR 2	Tulloch of Shalmstry	ND 1316 6443
TR 3	Carsgoe	cND 14 63
TR 4	North Calder	ND 1035 6160
TR 5	Skinnet	ND 1257 6136
TR 6	Upper Sour	ND 1085 6056
TR 7	Gerston (Housle Cairn)	ND 1190 5960
TR 8	Hoy	ND 1416 6062
TR 9	Sibster (Hoy Station)	ND 1499 6011
TR 10	Halkirk	ND 1347 5951
TR 11	Houstry 1	ND 1357 5803
	Houstry 2	ND 1350 5800
	Houstry 3	ND 1404 5801
TR 12	Sidhean Harraig	ND 0964 5686
TR 13	Achies 2	ND 1400 5565
TR 14	Achies 1	ND 1364 5506
TR 15	Harpsdale	ND 1305 5522
TR 16	Achingoul	ND 1047 5463
TR 17	Achanarras	ND 1511 5515
TR 18	Leosag	ND 1162 5384
TR 19	Dale Farm	ND 1320 5304
TR 20	Cnoc Donn	ND 1400 5330
TR 21	Achlochlan Moss	ND 1418 5306
TR 22	Mybster	ND 1619 5280
TR 23	Aisle	cND 130 525
TR 24	Dale House	ND 1297 5227
TR 25	Tulach an Fheurain	ND 1287 5208
TR 26	Tulach Lochan Bhraseil	ND 1282 5203
TR 27	Tulach Buaile a'Chnoic	ND 1299 5186
TR 28	Carn na Mairg	ND 1331 5103
TR 29	Tulach Beag	ND 1459 4980
TR 30	Tulach Mor	ND 1485 4940
TR 31	Little Water	ND 1446 4891

THURSO RIVER STUDY AREA TR

Location of sites included in catalogue



TR 1

Geise

ND 1036 6480

NMRS Class: Broch (possible)

NMRS Card: ND 16 SW 9

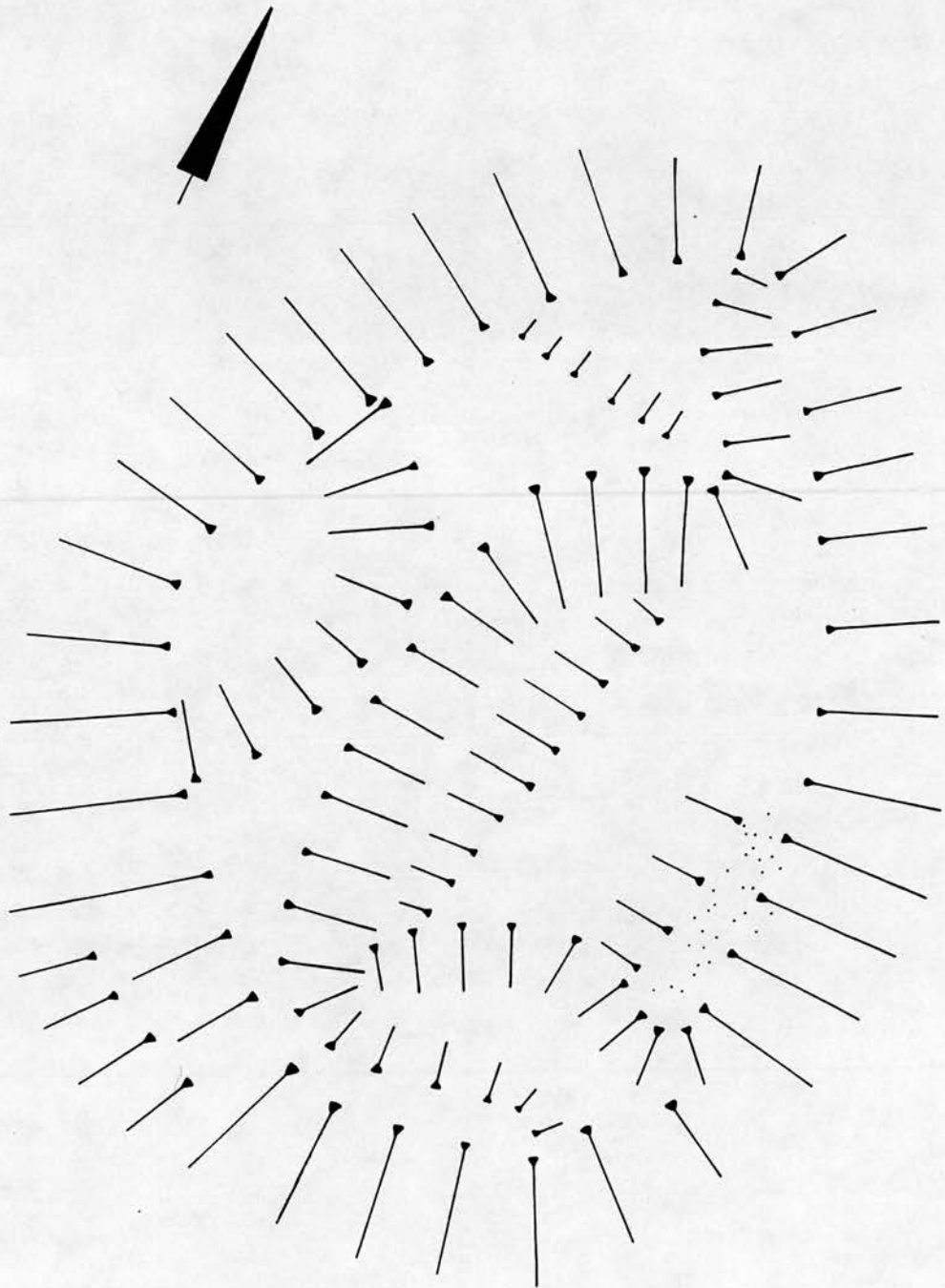
1 Kemp 1887, 133

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 118-9, no 430

This site is a low mound in a field which was under cultivation at the time of survey. It lies a few metres N of the small Geise Burn, a tributary of the Thurso River. The mound measures 32m N/S by 26m and survives about 2.5m high on its W side, although its E side is much lower. The surface of the mound is trenched and hollowed, indicating that it has been severely robbed and mutilated. The RCAHMS (1911b) noted that the site appeared to be a broch, but it had been quarried into at some time and the greater part of the structure removed.

The OS has pointed out that it is impossible to know whether the mound is the remains of a broch or a cairn, but that its topographical position suggests the former. There are no visible features to aid identification, although there is a slight mound-on-mound appearance in the extreme SW of the mound. The RCAHMS noted that this site is possibly the "Pict's House" referred to by Bishop Pococke (Kemp 1887).

Geise
ND 103648



CS. WS 1.6.84

0 5m

TR 2

Tulloch of Shalmstry

ND 1316 6443

NMRS Class: Broch

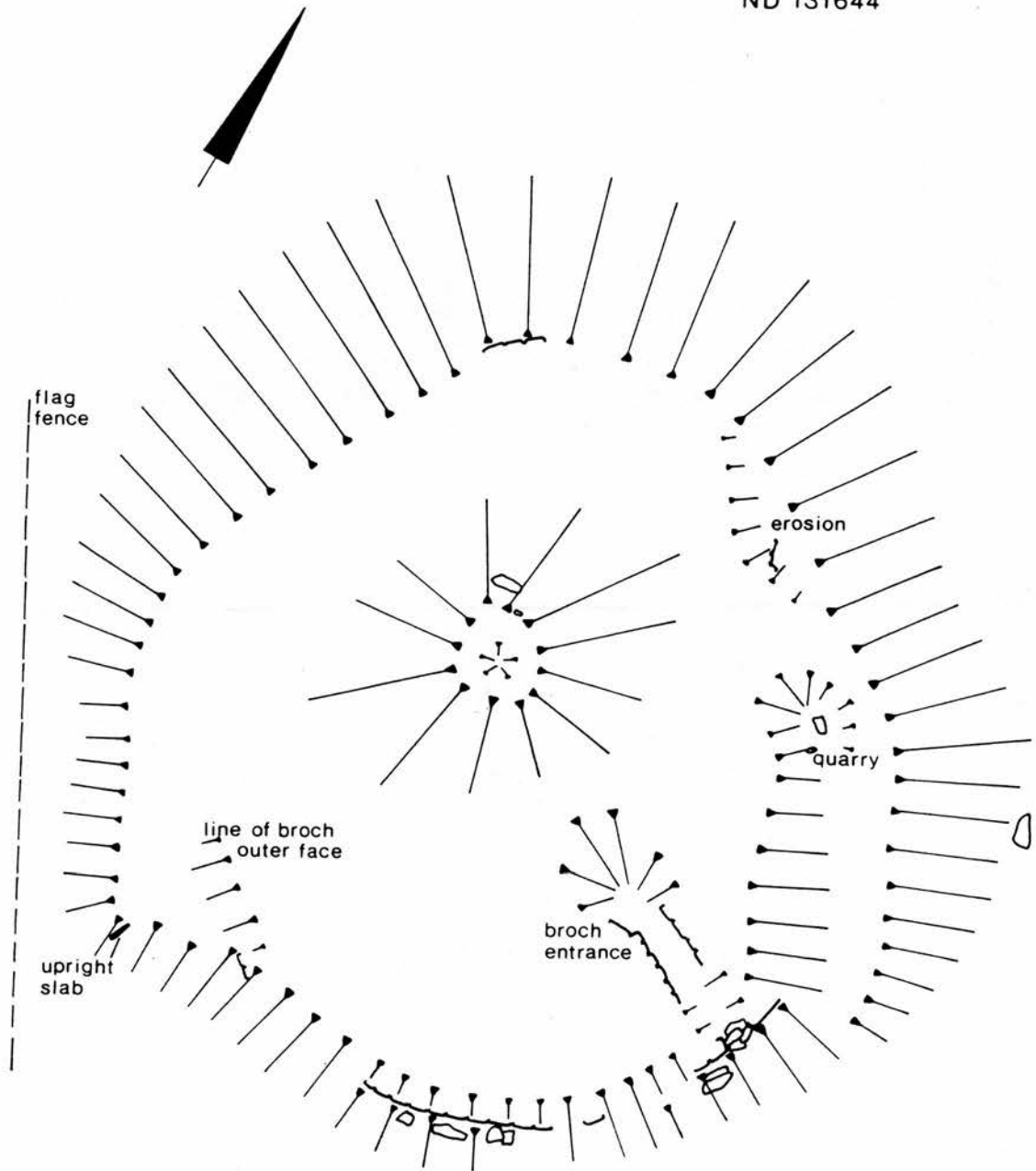
NMRS Card: ND 16 SW 8

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 120, no 437

This broch lies at the edge of a field on the NE side of the main road between Thurso and Wick. It survives as a mound up to 3m high immediately against the flagstone fence edging the road. The mound is shaped like a drum, with a flat top except for a small rise near its centre. It measures about 28m in diameter but is not a regularly shaped circle.

On the SE arc of the mound the outer face of the broch is exposed over a distance of about 15m, surviving only 1 or 2 courses high. The entrance to the broch has been dug out at some time. It lies in the ESE and both sides of the passage are exposed for a length of 4.5m. The misalignment of the outermost part of the S side of the passage with the exposed length further in may indicate the existence of a door check possibly about a metre from the outer end. There may have been inner checks also, evidenced by an apparent deviation in the S side of the passage 4.4m from the outer end. Where measurable the entrance passage is a metre wide.

Only three other structural features are visible. In the WSW there is an upright slab which lies 2.5m outside the line of the outer face, indicated at this point by a short length of face and a continuing break in slope. The presence of this upright, in addition to the continuation of the mound to the W beyond the postulated line of the outer face, points to buildings external to the broch on this side. In the NW there is a length of outward facing revetment 1.7m long which does not appear to be properly on the expected line of the broch outer face. In the N a curving length of face is revealed in an erosion scoop. It is not clear whether it is located within the area of the broch wall, and may therefore be part of a cell. It seems likely that Tulloch of Shalmstry was originally a much larger broch complex, which has been truncated by ploughing on the arcs toward the field, and by road construction to the W.



CS.WS 21.9.84

0 5m

TR 3

Carsgoe

cND 14 63

1 Anderson 1890, 184, Parish of Thurso no 3

Anderson (1890) noted the site of a broch on the farm of Carsgoe on the E side of the Wick to Thurso road (information from Rev Alex Miller). It had been partially destroyed "long ago", and its destruction completed later. (Anderson's list of brochs was first published in 1874, and republished in 1890).

There is no other record of a broch on this farm and its site cannot be identified. The site is also not included in the NMRS as a possible site of a broch. A broch at Carsgoe would not be unreasonable in terms of geographical location. Its nearest neighbour would be Tulloch of Shalmstry (TR 2) 1.5km towards the NW.

TR 4

North Calder

ND 1035 6160

NMRS Class: Broch

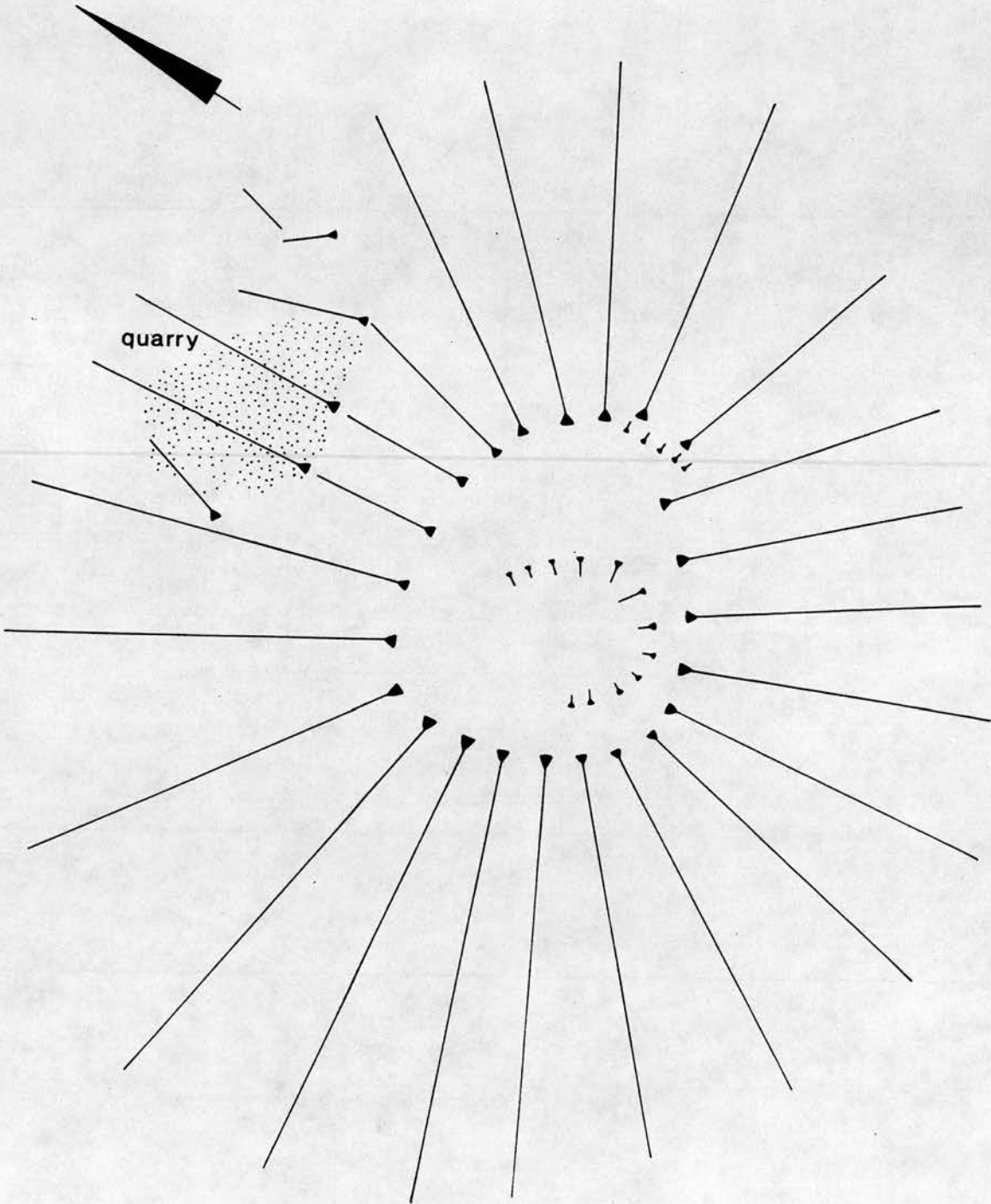
NMRS Card: ND 16 SW 10

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 34, no 110

This mound, identified as a broch by the RCAHMS (1911b) and the NMRS, is oval in shape measuring about 52m NE/SW at its widest extent by 42m. It stands about 4m high and is largely featureless, apart from a quarry scoop on its N slope and a slight depression on top SW of centre. Both the RCAHMS and the OS noted a mound-on-mound appearance which was not obvious at the time of survey, possibly obscured by the luxuriant vegetation growth on the slopes of the mound. The RCAHMS noted that the broch stood on a grassy hillock which seemed to some extent artificial. The OS recorded the uppermost mound as containing the broch and measuring 19m in diameter.

The mound stands within a level cultivated field, which was in use as a sheep pasture at the time of survey. There is no reason to believe from the surrounding topography that the mound is other than wholly artificial. Equally there is no means of certainly identifying the mound as containing the remains of a broch. Its siting is similar to many other brochs in the Thurso River area and it is possible that the identification is correct, in view of the very large size of the mound in both extent and height. If the mound covers a broch, a considerable, largely undisturbed, complex is indicated. There is no indication of any surrounding ditch in the surrounding field, which has been intensively drained and cultivated. The broch mound at Upper Sour (TR 6) is in view, just over 1km away towards the SE.

North Calder
ND 103616



CS.WS 25.9.84

0 10m

TR 5

Skinnet

ND 1257 6136

NMRS Class: Mound

NMRS Card: ND 16 SW 3

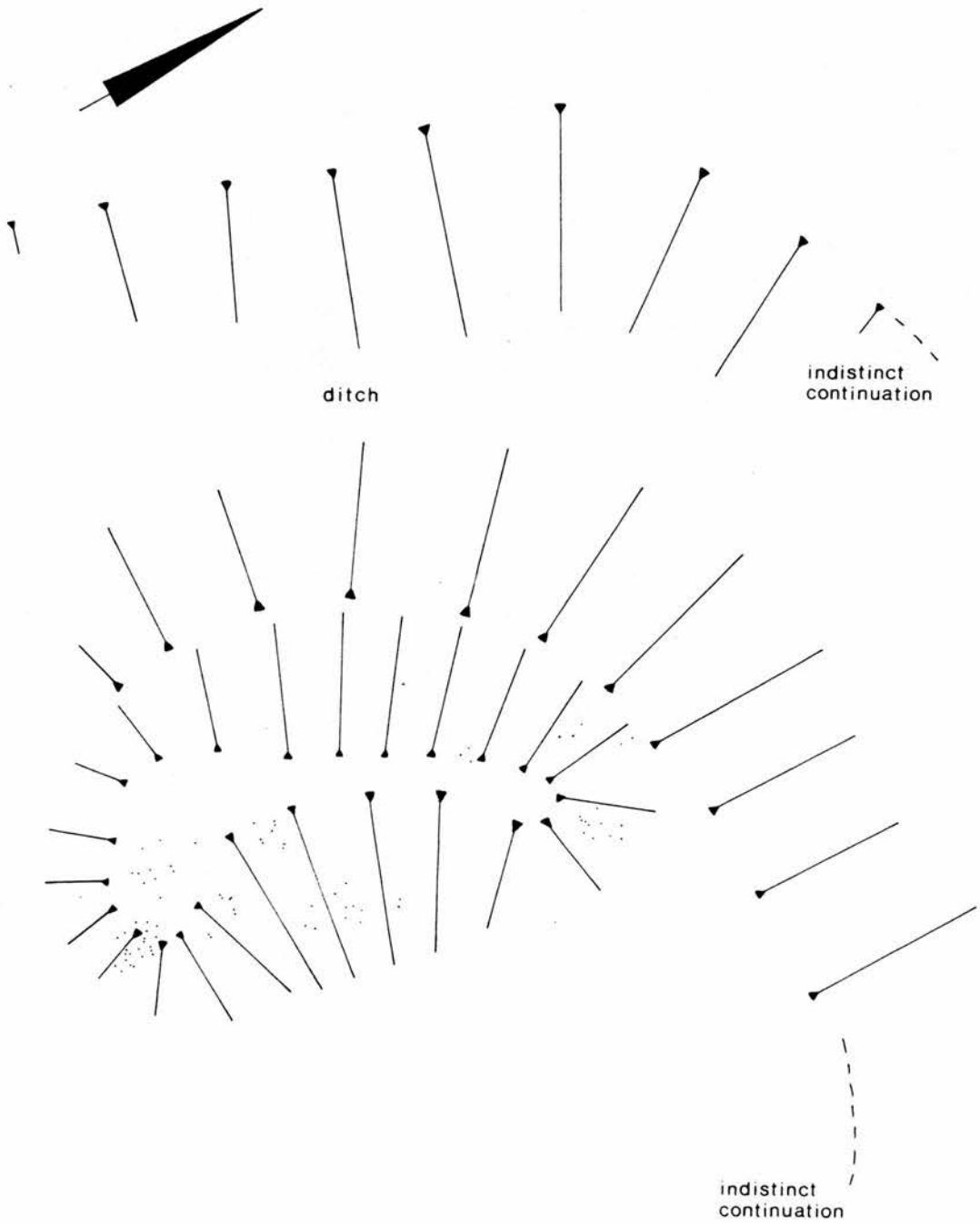
1 *Anderson 1890, 185, Parish of Halkirk, no 1*

2 *RCAHMS 1911b, 35, no 116*

This suggested broch survives only as an elongated mound in the middle of a field W of the road from Thurso to Halkirk. The mound is roughly crescent shaped, measuring 25m N/S by 16m. It is largely covered in rough vegetation with a few loose stones on the surface. Anderson (1890) recorded that the broch had been partially destroyed "about fifty years ago" (that is, about 1824, fifty years before his list of brochs was first published). He reported that two or three human skeletons were found, one near the fireplace, which still retained the strong red colour produced by using peat fuel.

The crescent shaped mound appears to sit on a much less distinct platform, best preserved on the W where the total surviving height is about 2m. The platform is defined by a broad shallow ditch which can be traced towards the E and SE under certain light conditions and when viewed at certain angles. The ditch is about 22m wide crest to crest and is almost ploughed out. The existence of a ditch is not mentioned by any authority other than Anderson who reported a "well dug in the rock inside the building" and a "dry ditch outside, showing clearly that this was a tower of defence". The existence and trend of the ditch indicates that there was formerly a much more extensive complex of remains at the site, presumably largely destroyed by intensive robbing and ploughing. The existence of the ditch, in addition to Anderson's description, seems to confirm that this is indeed the site of a broch.

Skinnet
ND 125613



CS.WS 22.9.84



TR 6

Upper Sour

ND 1085 6056

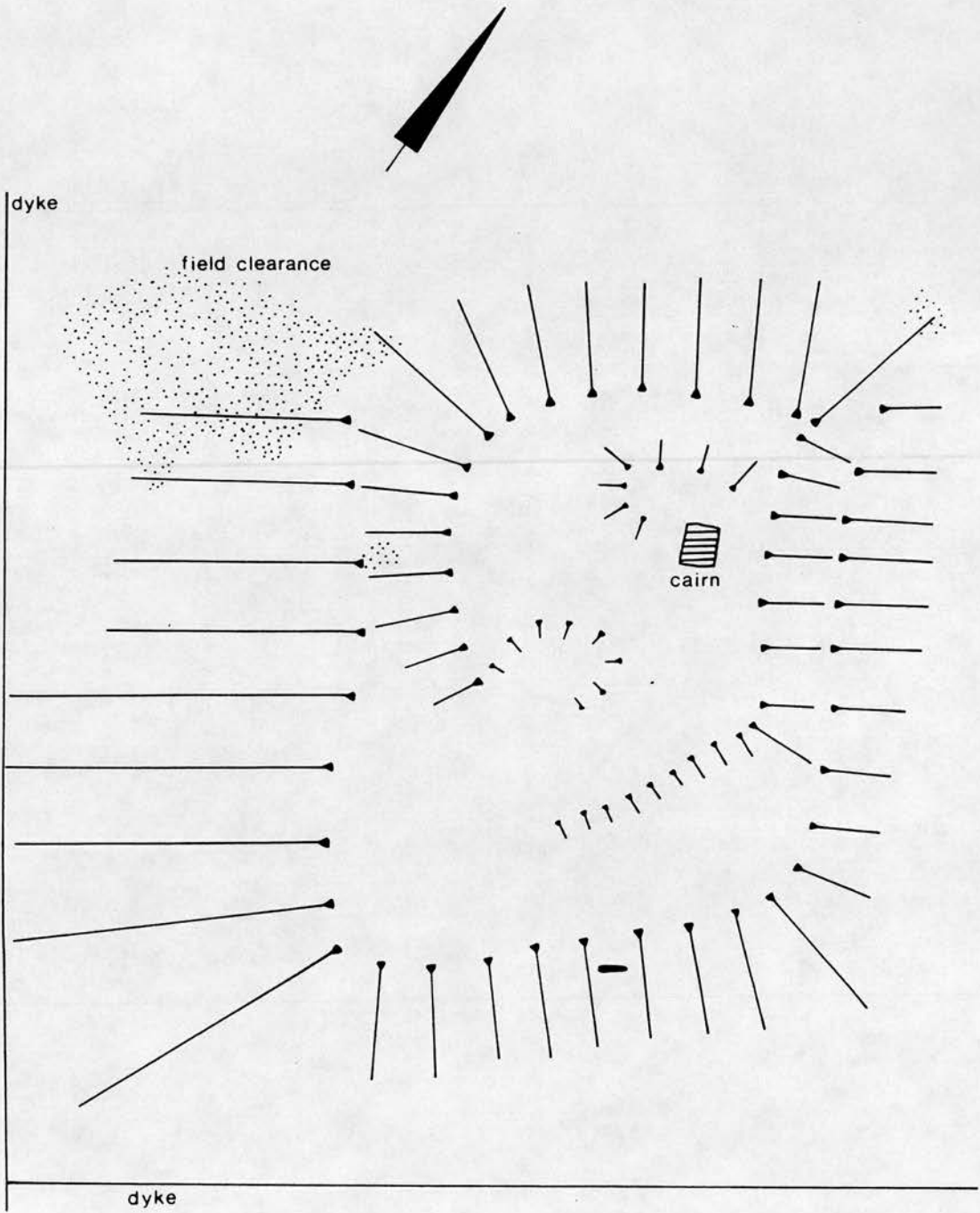
NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 16 SW 4

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 35, no 114

This mound, identified as a broch by the RCAHMS (1911b) and by the NMRS, lies in the corner of a field. It is almost a rectangle, 32m NW/SE by 38m, and is 2-3m high at its highest point in the NE. A modern cairn surmounts the highest part of the mound. Apart from a single slab in the SE which may be an upright slab in situ, there are no structural features visible to aid identification. A large stone pile on the W of the mound near the dyke appears to be modern clearance from the field. The rectangular appearance of the mound is likely to be the result of ploughing. At the time of survey there were bales of straw and stubble in the field.

The mound, in common with several other mounds in the Thurso River area identified as broch mounds, exhibits a distinct mound-on-mound appearance, indicating that the mound may cover the remains of a broch. The size of the mound, its profile, and its location in cultivated land, all seem to indicate that the identification is probably correct. The RCAHMS were in no doubt that the mound contained the ruins of a broch at its N end, although no structural features were exposed at the time of their visit in 1910. They also noted that the mound had been quarried to some extent. The mound at North Calder (TR 4) is in full view to the NW, just over 1km away.



CS. WS 24.9.84



TR 7

Gerston (Housle Cairn)

ND 1190 5960

NMRS Class: Broch

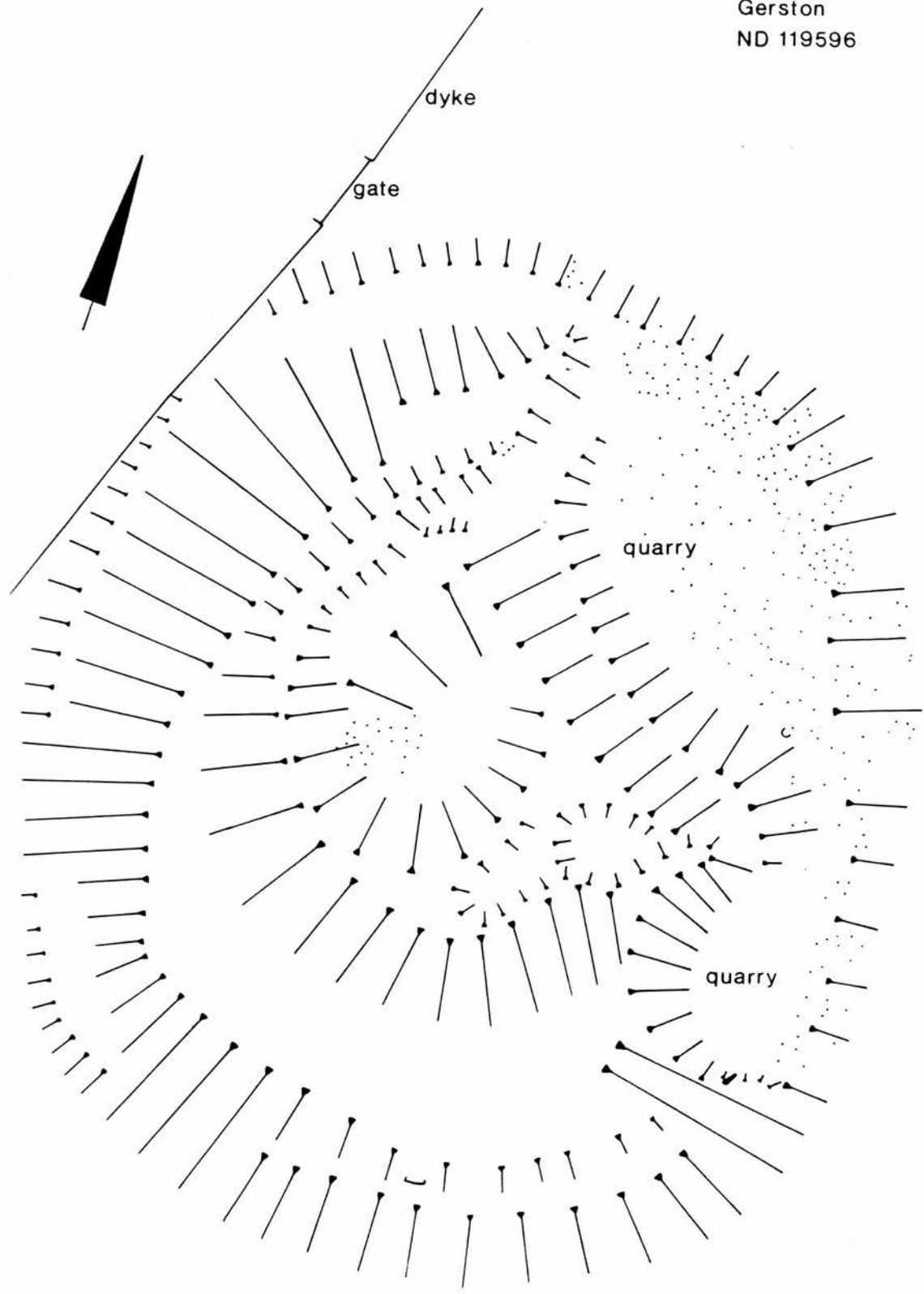
NMRS Card: ND 15 NW 1

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 35, no 115

This site is a very large mound at the edge of an improved and drained field. It measures 48m N/S by 41m and is about 3.5m high at its centre. It exhibits a strong mound-on-mound appearance, particularly in its S and W sections. The E side of the mound has been severely quarried. The OS recorded traces of walling where the mound has been dug into on the NE. This was not visible at the time of survey, but there is a considerable number of scattered large stones in this area. There is a single upright slab at the edge of the quarry in the extreme SE.

The mound has a central higher mound, dished on its summit. The RCAHMS (1911b) identified this central mound as containing the ruins of the broch, which they considered sat on top of a sharply scarped lower mound. The central higher mound is in fact surrounded by a lower, steep edged, platform, which would appear from the evidence of quarrying and a solitary facing stone in the SE, to contain stone ruins. The field around the site reveals no trace of a ditch, but it has been intensively drained and cultivated. The size of the mound and its well preserved nature in the S and W indicate the possibility of considerable remains worthy of excavation, despite the destruction wrought by quarrying on the E. There seems little doubt that the mound covers a complex of broch remains.

Gerston
ND 119596



CS.WS 31.5.84



TR 8

Hoy

ND 1416 6062

NMRS Class: Broch

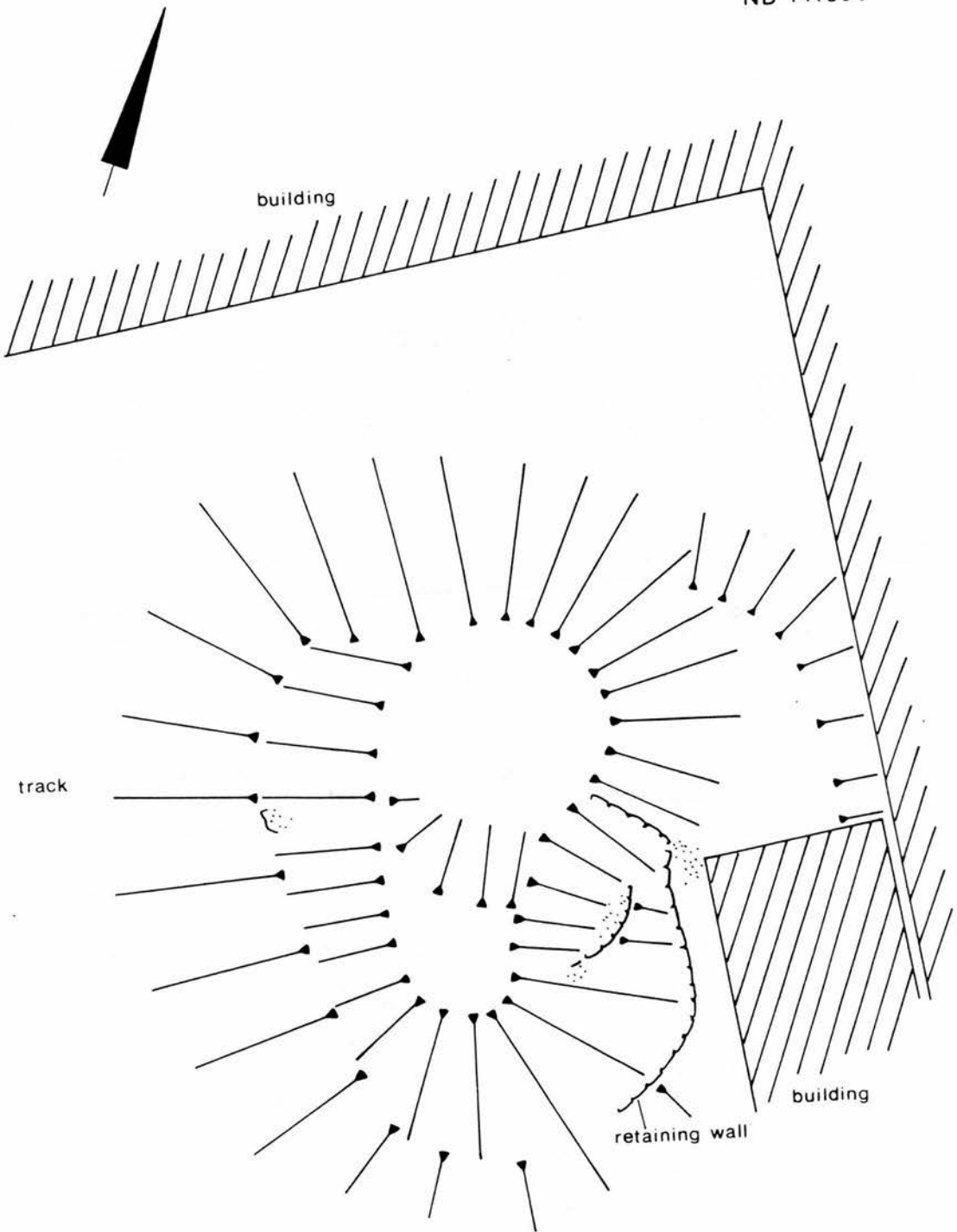
NMRS Card: ND 16 SW 6

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 120, no 435

This broch survives as a very high, grass covered mound in the stackyard of Hoy farm, the highest surviving broch mound in the Thurso River area. It is over 5m high (OS recorded it as being 5.4m high), and measures about 23m in diameter. Farm buildings encroach on its E side and a portion of the mound appears to have been removed to accommodate a single storey cottage. The RCAHMS (1911b) noted that the close proximity of the farmhouse had "necessitated the demolition of the tower on one side". A drystone retaining wall built along the SE side of the mound provides a narrow access to the cottage door. This retaining wall is now beginning to collapse.

At its N end the retaining wall seems to abut onto a length of wall face which extends NW back into the mound for a distance of 3m, surviving to 4 or 5 courses high over its exposed height. The exact junction of this face with the retaining wall is obscured by collapse. This face extending into the mound has been identified by the OS as an original feature, possibly the outer face of the broch. The OS also recorded further portions of broch walling on the SW slope of the mound. There are indications of a wall face in this section evidenced by a small length of possible face, a distinct break in slope, and many large stones protruding from the mound.

The whole mound exhibits a distinct mound-on-mound appearance in three levels, pointing to a broch complex rather than a single broch structure. The original complex was probably more extensive than its present measurable size, having been severely truncated along its whole E arc by later farm developments. The height of the mound may point to the preservation of a considerable stratigraphy in the surviving part of the complex.



CS.WS 24.9.84

0 5m

TR 9

Sibster

ND 1499 6011

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card : ND 16 SW 7

1 ONB 4 1872, 54

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 47, no 179

The RCAHMS (1911b) noted that the OS map indicated the site of a broch at Sibster (Hoy Station). No other information was provided. The NMRS card notes that the broch had been removed in 1841, and the OS recorded that the only indication of the former existence of a broch at the site is a scatter of small stones on the ground surface and a slight rise in ground level.

TR 10

Halkirk

ND 1347 5951

NMRS Class: Cairn (possible)

NMRS Card : ND 15 NW 10

1 ONB 4 1872, 80

According to the ONB a Pictish House is reputed to have stood at the E end of Sinclair Street, Halkirk, but was destroyed a number of years before 1872 by the tenant of the croft on which it was situated. There is no trace of a broch or any structure at the location now.

TR 11

Houstry

ND 1357 5803

ND 1350 5800

ND 1404 5801

NMRS Class: Cairns, Mound (possible)

NMRS Cards: ND 15 NW 8

ND 15 NW 9

1 ONB 4 1872, 101

The ONB referred to the site of an ancient "tulloch" (mound) or Pict's House in the vicinity of Houstry. Subsequently three possible locations have been identified as possible sites, but proposed as likely cairns or mounds rather than the site of a broch. The OS found no trace of any feature at ND 1357 5803 (Houstry 1), the reputed site of the Pict's House in the ONB. At ND 1350 5800 (Houstry 2) and ND 1404 5801 (Houstry 3) however there are two mounds, the former measuring 28m E/W by 20m and c2m high, the latter 27m in diameter and 1.5m high. During field survey these mounds were inspected and judged to be natural features. They both have a very smooth profile covered in short grass. No large stones are visible, and in patches of erosion only soil and small shattered stones are revealed.

It is possible that there may have been a broch somewhere in the vicinity of Houstry which has been removed, hence the apparent tradition of a Pict's House in the area, but no site of a broch can be firmly identified.

TR 12

Sidhean Harraig

ND 0964 5686

NMRS Class: Cairn

NMRS Card: ND 05 NE 30

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 35, no 113

This site was classed as a broch by the RCAHMS (1911b) and is now classed as a cairn in the NMRS. The RCAHMS recorded it as a mound covering the ruins of a broch, quarried into to some extent on the S side, and measuring overall 76ft (23.2m) with an elevation of 8ft (2.4m). No measurable part of the structure was exposed in 1910 when the RCAHMS inspected the site. The site is as described by the RCAHMS, but it is so deeply cloaked in heather that it is impossible to classify the mound with any certainty. Its location in a level area about 2km W of the Thurso River is not dissimilar to the location of many identified brochs, but the surrounding land is not part of the arable ground in Caithness, being rather part of a very large extent of rough grazing which extends for miles to the S and W, and which has not been drained and improved. This fact, coupled with the different vegetation cover of the mound possibly indicating a different composition of archaeological remains within it, may indicate that the identification of the site as a cairn rather than a broch is correct.

TR 13

Achie 2

ND 1400 5565

NMRS Class: Broch

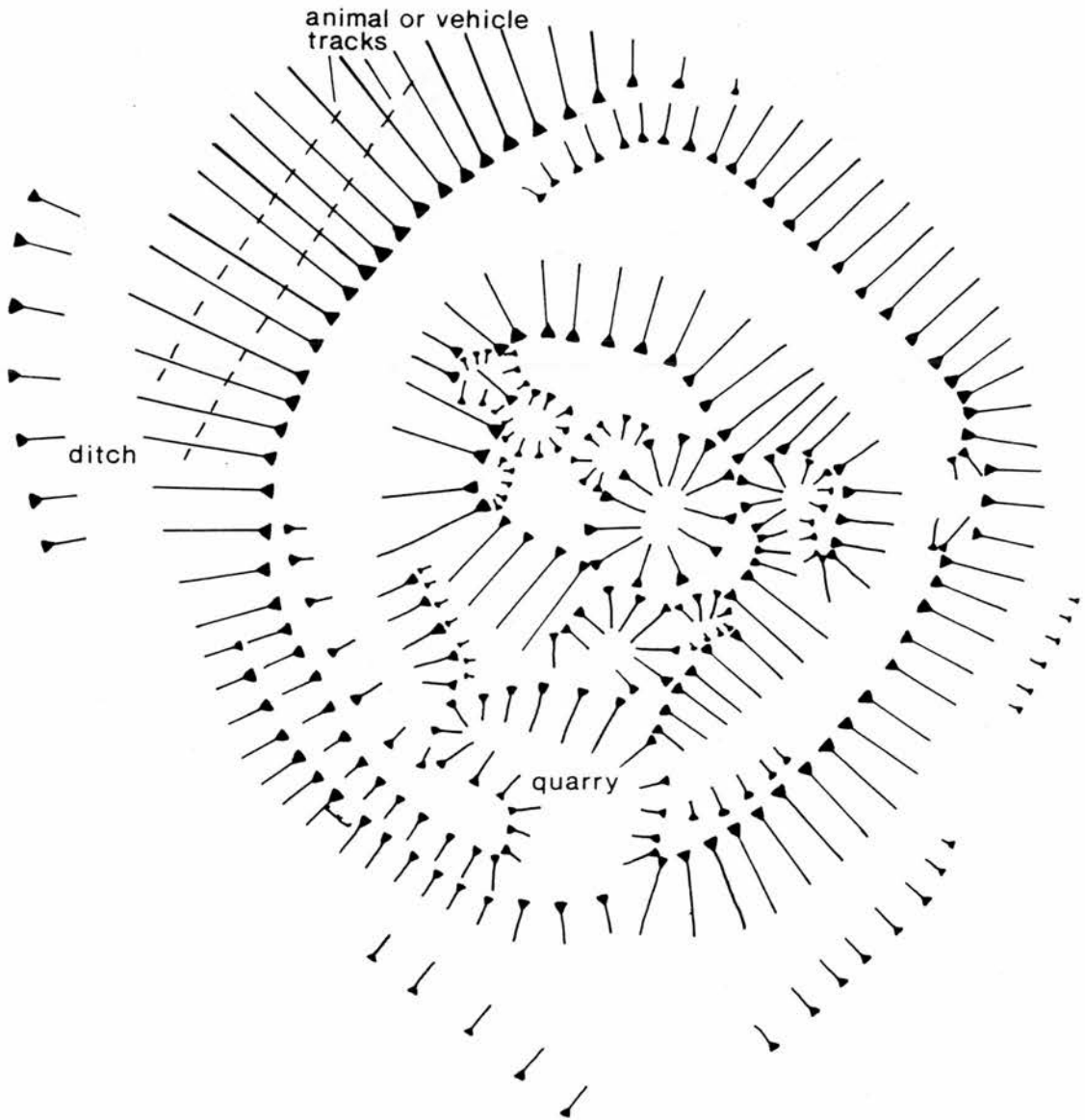
NMRS Card: ND 15 NW 13

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 31, no 98

This is a very large mound measuring 48m N/S by 53m. It exhibits a strong mound-on-mound profile. The lower platform shows traces of a marginal rampart on the SE and S, interrupted by a large quarry. In the middle of this platform there is a further raised area measuring 23m N/S by 27m. This central mound is dished on its E side and there are a number of robbing scoops on its summit and sides. The only structural feature visible in the full mound is two stones of an outer face on the extreme SSE edge of the lower mound or platform, possibly the outer face of a surrounding wall. On the SW, S and E sides of the mound there are indistinct traces of a ditch. The surrounding field has been intensively cultivated and is well drained, and ploughing has shaped the mound somewhat on the NW. Any ditch in this sector would have been removed by ploughing, and the remaining traces of the ditch are well ploughed down.

There seems little doubt that this mound contains the remains of a broch complex, consisting probably of a broch under the central mound, surrounding buildings in the lower platform, with an encircling wall or rampart, and an outer ditch. This arrangement is paralleled at other broch sites in the Thurso River area, such as Cnoc Donn (TR 20) and Carn na Mairg (TR 28).

The mound at Achie 1 (TR 14), also a possible broch, is in full view 700m to the SW.



CS.WS 1.6.84

0 10m

TR 14

Achies 1

ND 1364 5506

NMRS Class: Broch (possible)

NMRS Card: ND 15 NW 15

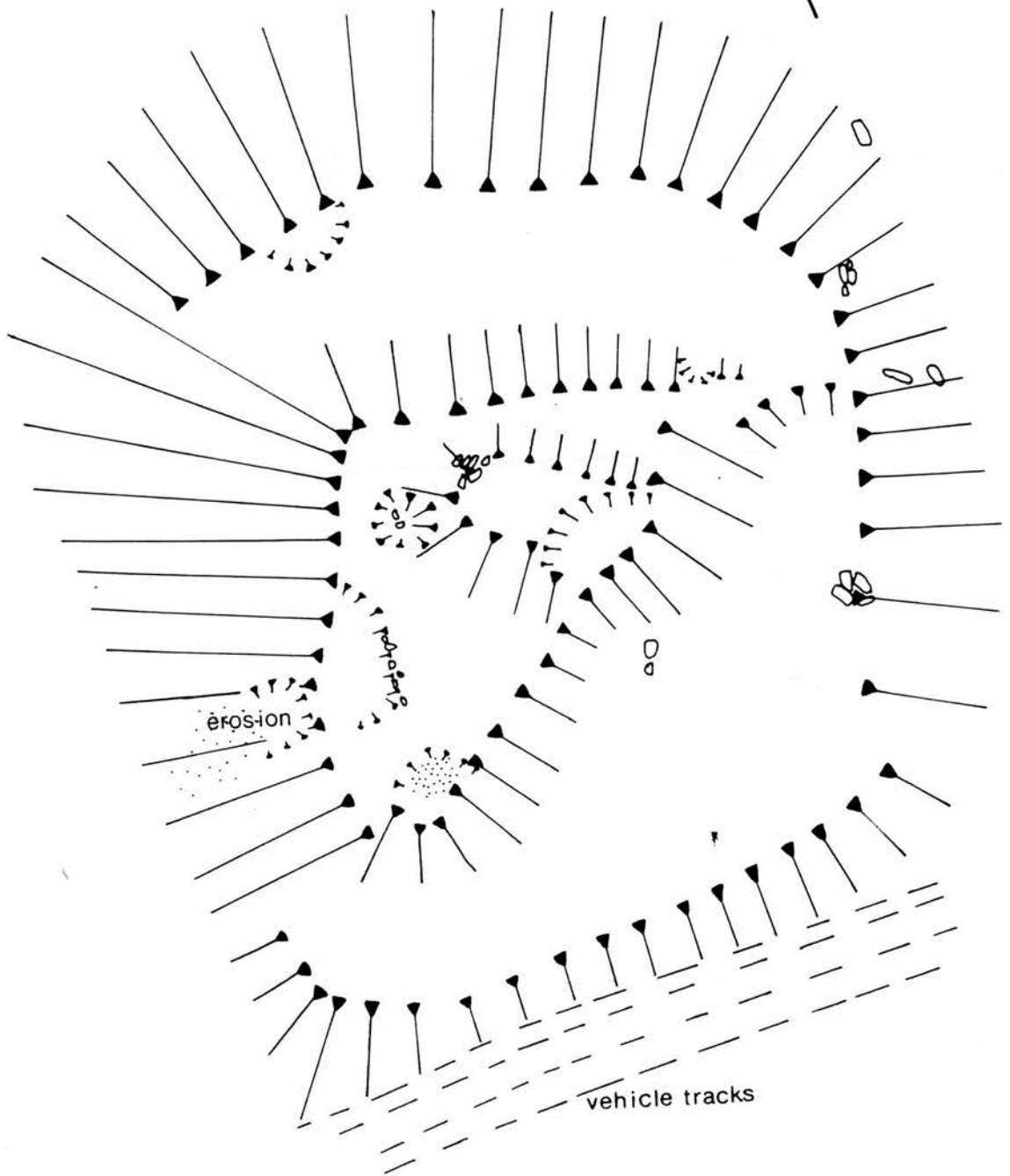
1 RCAHMS 1911b, 31, no 97

This site, identified as a broch by the RCAHMS (1911b), appears as a grass covered mound within a field which has been drained and well cultivated. The mound is severely mutilated, a considerable part seemingly removed from its S arc. The mound is also truncated on the S by a set of vehicle tracks.

The full extent of the mound measures about 32m N/S by 28m, with an irregular higher central mound, measuring about 12m N/S by 16m. The mound is highest on its W side where it survives to about 2 or 3m. The existence of a smaller central mound on a broad lower mound gives the site a distinct mound-on-mound appearance. There are no structural features exposed to aid in the identification of the mound.

The large mound at Achies 2 (TR 13) is in full view 700m towards the NE.

Achies 1
ND 136550



CS.WS 21.9.84

0 5m

TR 15

Harpsdale

ND 1305 5522

NMRS Class: Broch (possible)

NMRS Card: ND 15 NW 16

1 ONB 4 1872, 124

2 Anderson 1890, 185, Parish of Halkirk, no 2

3 RCAHMS 1911b, 47, no 180

According to the OS, except for a very slight rise in the ground, there is now no trace of a broch or any other structure at this site. Anderson (1890) reported that the broch had been destroyed in 1841 and that it had a well of beautifully clear water in it.

TR 16

Achingoul

ND 1047 5463

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 15 SW 1

This site lies within a ploughed and improved field on a very gradual E facing slope. From a distance it appears as a low mound but it is in fact a broad ring with an outer bank to the W. The site is much reduced, although the farmer said at the time of the field survey that the vicinity was not ploughed as it was too full of stone. It may have been robbed for building stone in the past, although there are no buildings in the immediate neighbourhood.

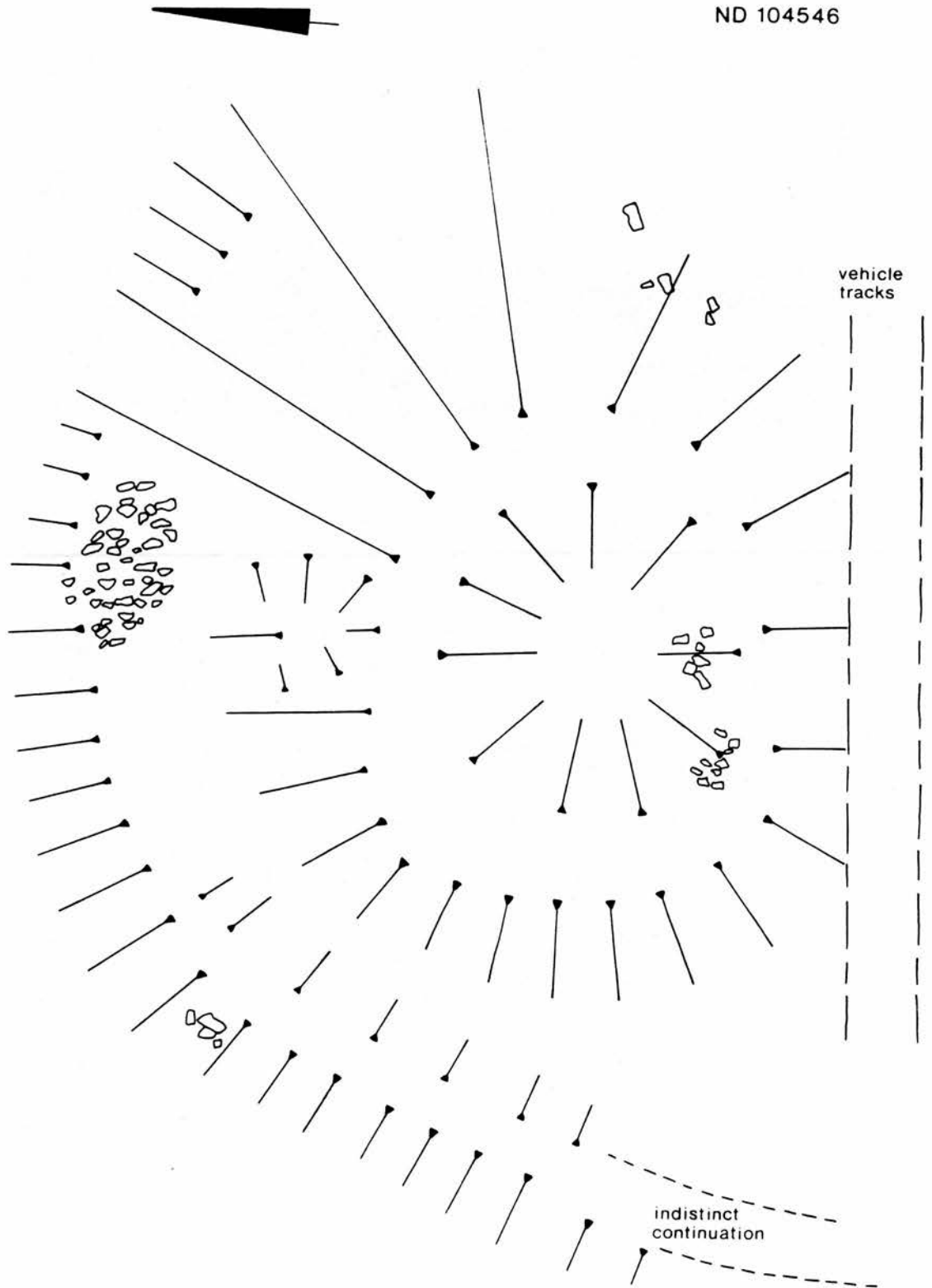
The inner ring is 20m N/S by 29m at its outer edge. It has however clearly been truncated on the S by vehicle tracks. The central depression of the ring is 9.4m N/S by 10.4m from crest to crest. The outer edge of the ring has been quarried on the N.

The outer bank to the W, the upslope side, is distinct for a distance of about 15m. There are vague traces of a continuation to the S, and the bank also curves E and SE, but continues here as a terrace only, with no trace of the inner slope of the bank. There are some very large stones lying on the surface of this terrace and also in places on the inner ring. There are no structural features visible to aid identification. The farmer indicated that the site had always been believed to be an old graveyard.

This site, which is identified as a broch by the NMRS, is unusual in terms of other broch mounds in the Thurso River area. It resembles only one other site, that of Achlochlan Moss (TR 21), also identified as a broch, which appears as a ring only with no outer bank.

Two mounds in the vicinity of the site appear to be fluvio-glacial features. The farmer confirmed that they were composed of shingle.

Achingoul
ND 104546



CS. WS 31.5.84

0 5m

TR 17

Achanarras

ND 1511 5515

NMRS Class: Broch (possible)

NMRS Card: ND 15 NE 2

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 32, no 99

This site, identified as a broch by the RCAHMS (1911b) and the NMRS, appears no longer to exist. It was recently cleared away or buried during the construction of a new road and yard at Achanarras farm (information from owner). The RCAHMS recorded the site as being to the N of the farm steading, bounding the midden. It appeared as a grassy mound, some 25ft (7.6m) in diameter and 4ft (1.2m) in elevation. The OS recorded it as being in the stackyard and appearing as the W slope of a 1m high mound, 19m across. Within this mound there was a semicircular stony bank, slightly set into the ground, 9m along the chord and 4.5m transversely, which was identified as the possible line of the SW half of a broch court.

TR 18

Leosag

ND 1162 5384

NMRS Class: Cairn

NMRS Card: ND 15 SW 4

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 34, no 109

This mound was identified as the remains of a broch by the RCAHMS (1911b), but is identified as a cairn in the NMRS. At the time it was seen by the RCAHMS in 1910 it was already much destroyed. It measured 95ft (29m) overall by 6ft (1.8m) at its greatest elevation. It had long been under cultivation and the RCAHMS described the remains as much spread out.

The mound is situated in the angle formed by the confluence of the Olgrimbeg burn with the Thurso River. The location is not out of keeping with what might be expected for a broch in the Thurso River area. The site lies 1.4km SE of the possible broch identified at Achingoul and 2.4km NW of the several possible broch mounds in the vicinity of Westerdale Bridge. There is no other site identified as a broch in this gap on the W side of the river between Achingoul and Westerdale.

TR 19

Dale Farm

ND 1320 5304

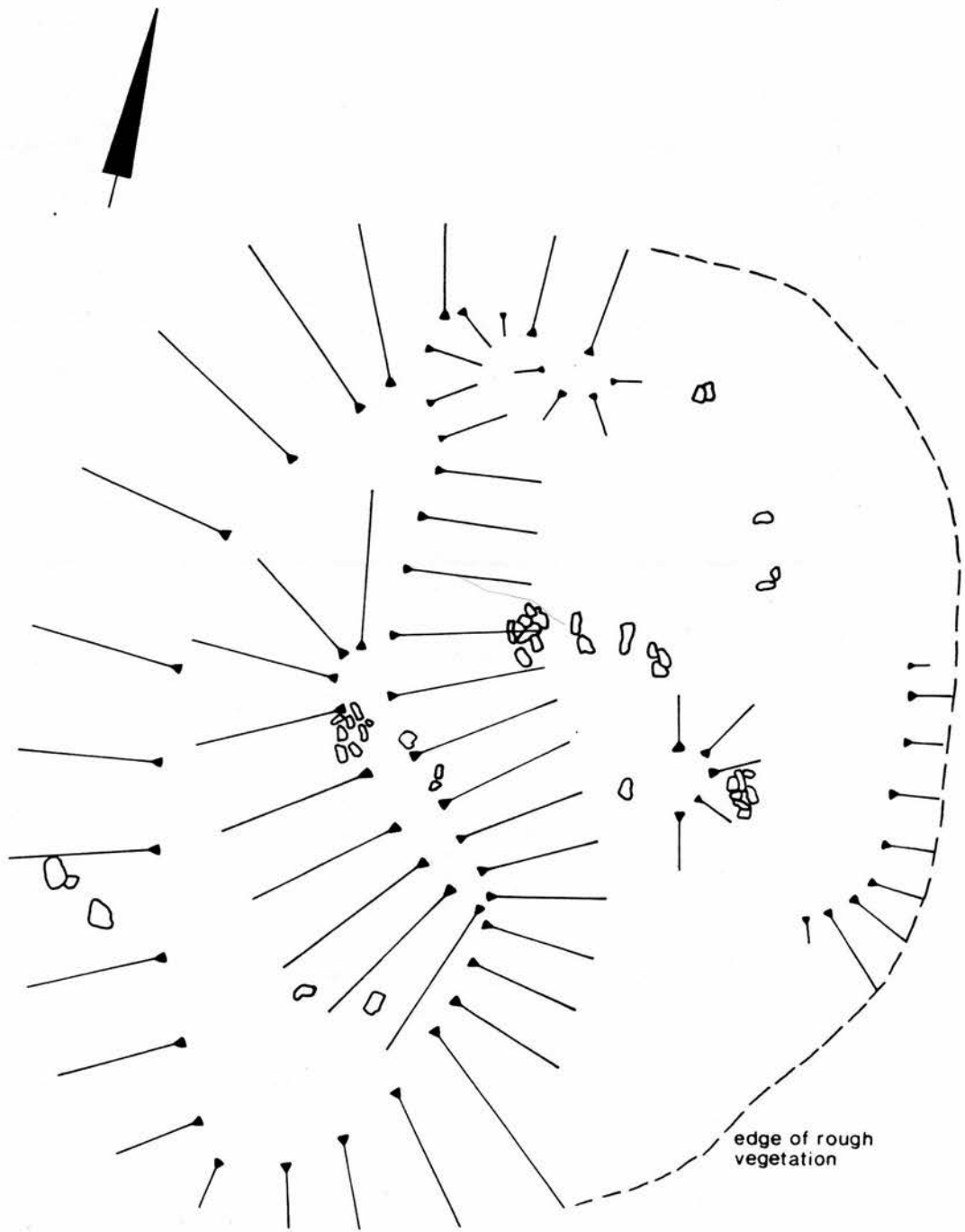
NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 15 SW 7

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 33, no 104

The mound at Dale Farm has measured 42m N/S by 37m, but almost half of the mound has been removed by quarrying on its E side. The former full extent of the mound is marked by a change in vegetation to rough grass and nettles in contrast to the cultivated field within which the broch lies. There are some very large stones on the surface of the quarried area.

The remaining part of the mound exhibits a slight mound-on-mound appearance on its W side, where it survives to about 2-3m in height. There is no trace of any surrounding ditch in the field and no structural features are visible in the mound to aid identification. The location and former size of the mound, in addition to the slight mound-on-mound appearance, are suggestive of a broch.



CS. WS 22.9.84

0 10m

TR 20

Cnoc Donn

ND 1400 5330

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 15 SW 5

1 Anderson 1890, 185, Parish of Halkirk, no 5

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 32, no 103

This is a very large and complex site which is badly mutilated and eroded. A ditch can be traced all around the site except on the W arc. It varies in width, being at the bottom as little as 2m wide in the N, 3m in the S, and 8m in the E where it is widest. On the E arc there is a massive rampart up to 8m wide outside the ditch. It is separated from the counterscarp lip of the ditch by a berm 2m wide.

The ditch encloses a mound or platform which is edged with a rampart or bank on the N, E and S arcs. In the W there is a separate mound which has an arc of walling on its E side. The walling may be part of the original complex or it may be a more modern construction. This arc of walling, plus two stones of an outer face at the N end of the separate mound, are the only structural features visible in the whole site. There is an occasional upright slab visible in the central platform, but these would appear to be packing stones for the posts of a fence which has crossed the site at one time.

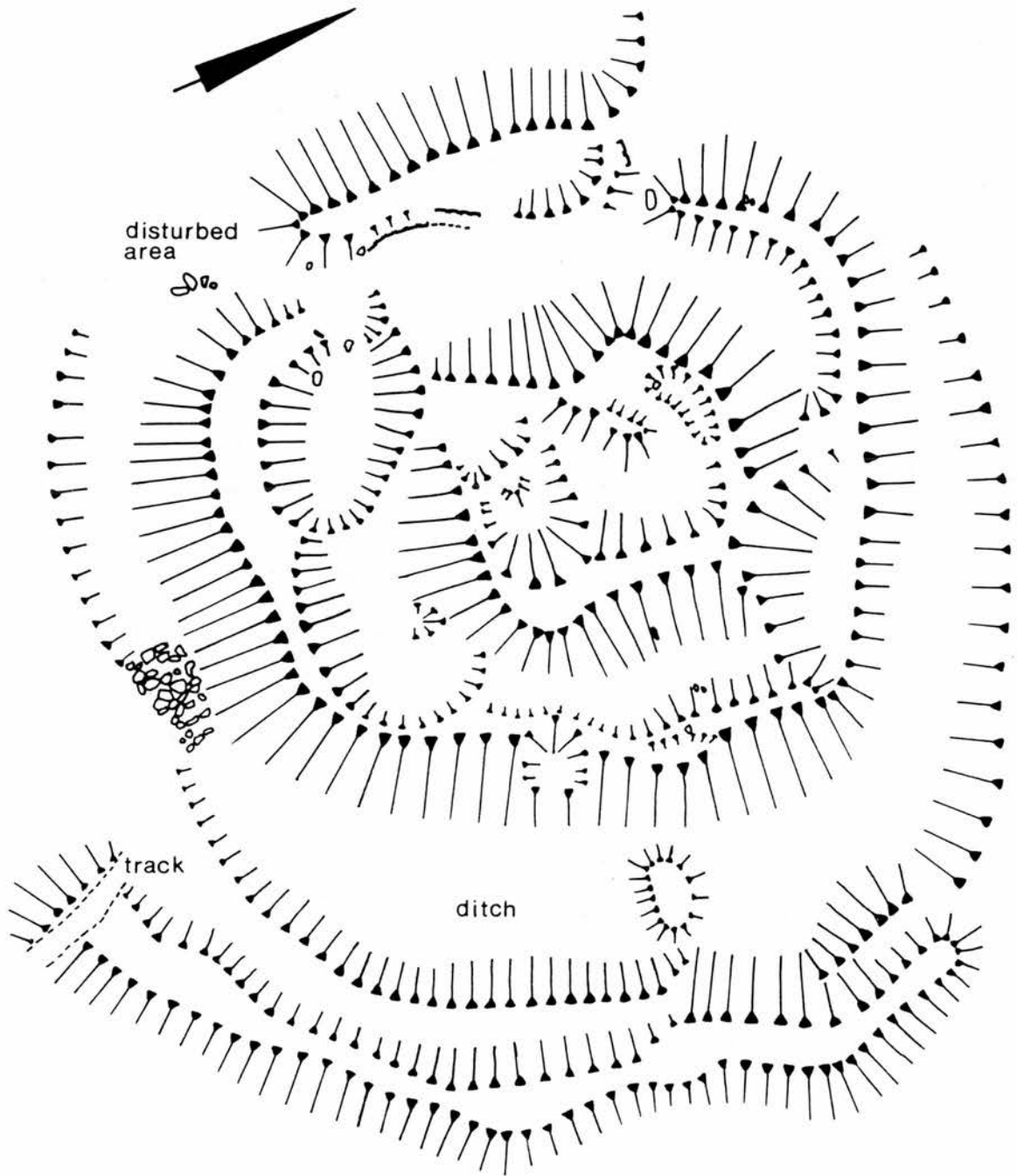
Within the platform there is a raised area measuring 25m N/S by 22m. This mound is covered in robbing scoops in common with most of the central platform area. It is possible that a linear depression in the N of the mound, measuring 3m in length, could indicate the collapsed gallery of a broch, but identification is uncertain because of the mutilated state of the remains.

The size and general appearance of the site is reminiscent of the Hill o'Works in the East Coast Study Area (EC 13). The main features of the site, that is the ditch, the central platform edged with a rampart, and the raised mound in the middle of the platform, can also be paralleled at other sites in the Thurso River area, which exhibit all or some of the features, such as, Achies 2 (TR 13), Carn na Mairg (TR 28), and Gerston (TR 7).

The ground around the site is now improved grazing which has been

extensively drained. The surrounding area still bears the name Achlochlan Moss (moss means peat bog in the Caithness dialect). The RCAHMS (1911b) noted that in 1910 the surrounding ground was still marshy in places with numerous sheep drains. The site is on ground which rises slightly towards the E. The site of Achlochlan Moss (TR 21) also identified as a broch, is in clear view 240m to the SE.

Cnoc Donn
ND 140533



CS.WS 30.5.84

0 10m

TR 21

Achlochlan Moss

ND 1418 5306

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 15 SW 6

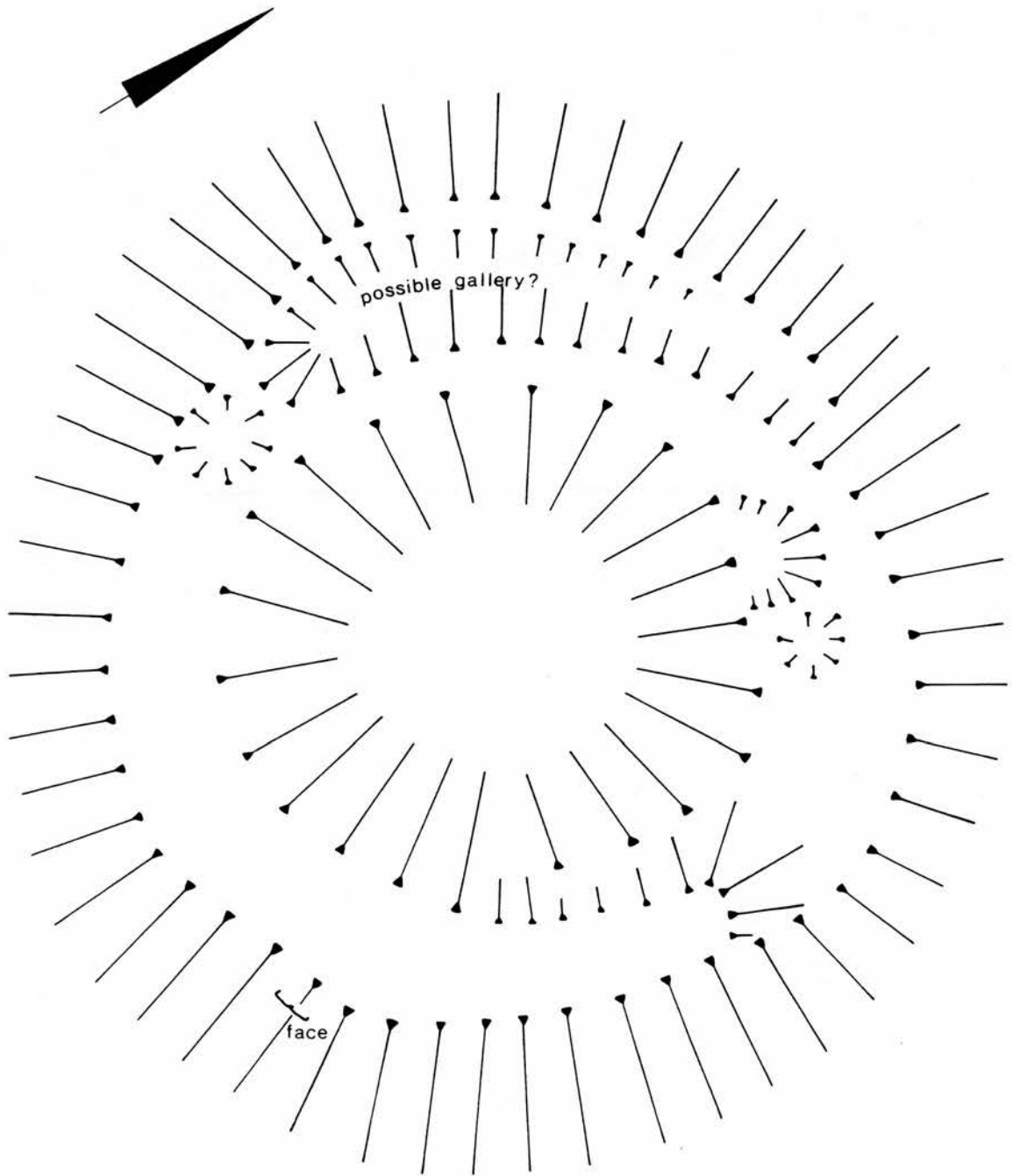
1 Anderson 1890, 185, Parish of Halkirk, no 4

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 32, no 102

This site appears as a simple grass covered ring, a striking contrast to its large complex neighbour, Cnoc Donn (TR 20), 240m to the NW. The ring is 21m N/S by 23m measured across its full diameters, and is about 2m high. The inner court area defined by the ring is about 11m in diameter measured at the top of the slope. The measurements of this ring compare well with the similar site of Achingoul (TR 16) where the inner diameters are 9.4m N/S by 10.4m crest to crest.

The ring shows an occasional quarry scoop in the W and N but otherwise appears little damaged with no debris visible on its smooth surface. A linear depression curving in the NW sector of the ring possibly indicates a collapsed gallery. The only structural feature visible is a short length of possible face high in the outer slope of the ring in the S. There are no strong reasons for identifying the site as a broch, particularly when it is contrasted with several other sites classed as brochs in the near vicinity, such as Cnoc Donn (TR 20) and Mybster (TR 22). Along with the similar site of Achingoul it should perhaps be separated out as a different kind of site from Cnoc Donn and many other broch sites in both the Thurso River Study Area and the East Coast Study Area.

Achlochlan Moss
ND 141530



CS.WS 30.5.84

0 5m

TR 22

Mybster

ND 1619 5280

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 15 SE 8

1 *Anderson 1890, 185, Parish of Halkirk, no 3*

2 *RCAHMS 1911b, 31, no 96*

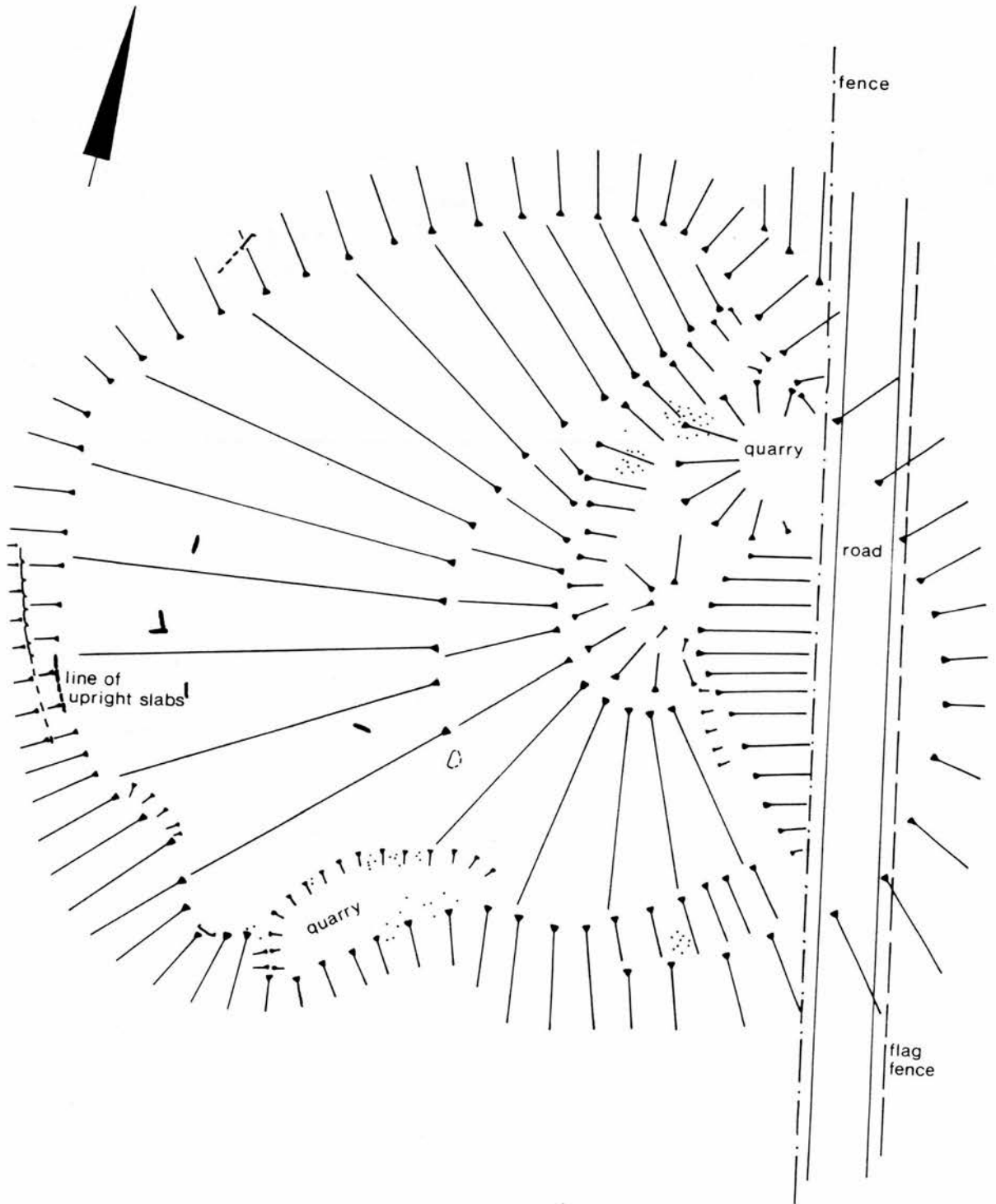
This broch survives as a very large mound at the side of a field on the farm of Mybster. The E side of the mound has been cut by the road leading to the farm. The outline of the mound can be traced for about 4m into the field on the other side of the road.

The mound measures about 40m N/S by about 44m. It has been quarried in the NE and E immediately adjacent to the road and also to a certain extent on its S side. It is otherwise well preserved, surviving to a height of about 4-5m in the centre. There are very distinct breaks in slope on the W arc giving a mound-on-mound appearance.

Some structural features are visible on the well preserved W arc in the form of upright slabs and revetments. The uprights appear on the surface of the mound, 6 to 16m from the outer margin. Two slabs set at right angles to each other are reminiscent of the sunken slab tanks, common at excavated brochs in the East Coast Study Area. The position of these uprights on the surface, high up the W slope of the mound, indicates that they are part of a late phase of settlement, with 2-4m of earlier remains beneath them.

In the SW there are two revetments close to the bottom of the slope. The outer one is a single course high and can be traced for about 9m. The OS have suggested that it may be the face of an outer wall around the complex. The inner revetment is a line of five upright slabs and may be part of a wall or the partition of a building. Numerous upright slabs are a common feature in the surrounding buildings at the excavated brochs in the East Coast Study Area, such as, Ness (EC 6) and Road (EC 10).

Judging from the size of the mound, its position in a flat arable field, and the visible structural remains, there seems little reason to doubt that the mound contains the remains of a broch complex. The surviving height of the mound, plus the visible structural features on the W arc, point to a considerable depth of well preserved stratigraphy.



CS. WS 24.9.84



TR 23

Aisle

cND 130 525

1 Anderson 1890, 185, Parish of Halkirk no 10

Anderson (1890) recorded the site of a broch a short distance E from an old burying place called "the Aisle". He reported that the broch was partially removed about "fifty years ago", that is about 1824 (his list was first published in 1890), and finally cleared away "sixteen years ago", that is about 1858, at which time half a stone dish was found (information from Rev Alex Miller). There is no other record of this site.

TR 24

Dale House

ND 1297 5227

NMRS Class: Broch (possible)

NMRS Card: ND 15 SW 16

1 Anderson 1890, Parish of Halkirk no 9

Anderson (1890) recorded that the present Dale House occupies the site of a broch (information from Rev Alex Miller). A red sandstone quern was found when the house was built. There is no trace of a broch at the location and no further information on it.

TR 25

Tulach an Fheurain

ND 1287 5208

NMRS Class: Cairn (possible)

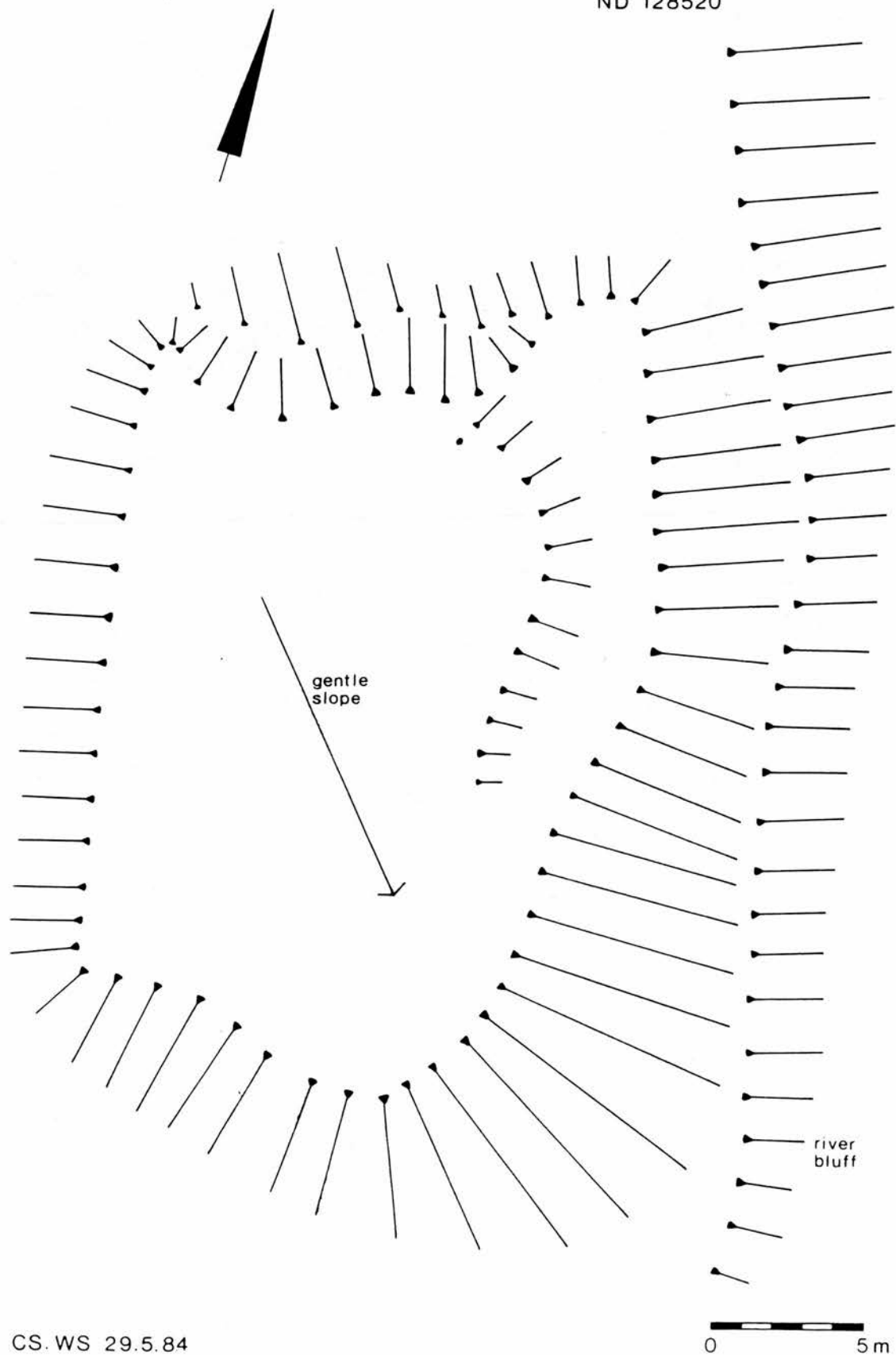
NMRS Card: ND 15 SW 18

1 Anderson 1890, 185, Parish of Halkirk no 7

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 41, no 144

This mound lies on a river bluff forming the W bank of the Thurso River 300m below Westerdale Bridge. The mound is roughly rectangular in appearance probably as a result of ploughing and has been slightly quarried in the N. The RCAHMS (1911b) recorded that a portion of the mound had also been removed in the W during the formation of a road. The mound measures 33m N/S by 24m. It is at most 2m high, and is flat topped, sloping gently from NW to SE. There is a slight suggestion of a mound-on-mound appearance in the NE. The OS recorded the outline of what may be part of a wall on top of the mound. This was not visible at the time of survey, unless it is taken to refer to the slight mound-on-mound appearance. There is nothing to indicate whether this mound does in fact contain the remains of a broch.

Tulach an Fheurain
ND 128520



CS. WS 29.5.84

TR 26

Tulach Lochan Bhraseil

ND 1282 5203

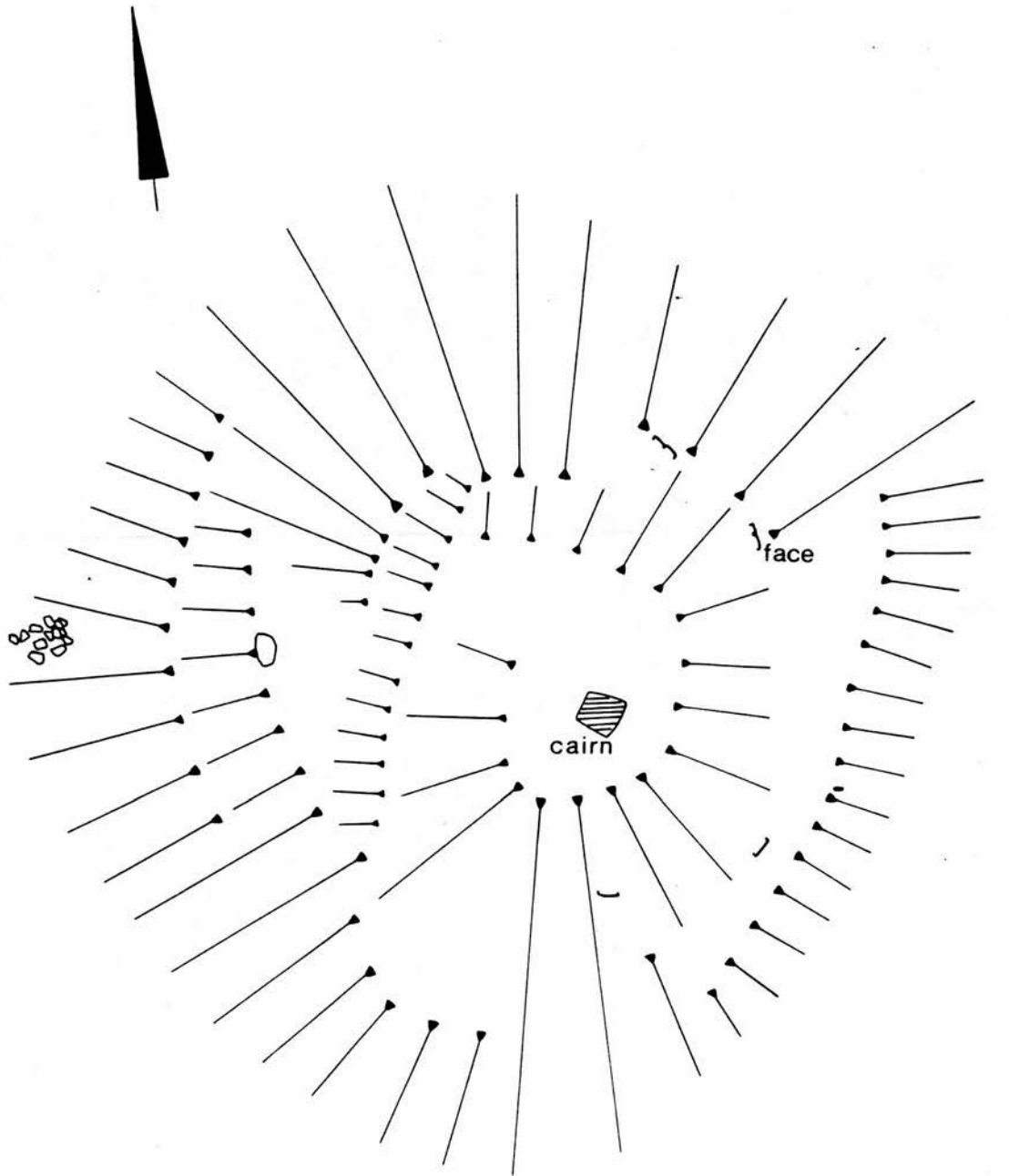
NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 15 SW 19

1 Anderson 1890, 185, Parish of Halkirk no 8

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 41, no 143

This mound lies 80m SW of the mound known as Tulach an Fheurain (TR 25) within a field which has been improved and subjected to regular ploughing. It measures 41m N/S by 38m and attains a maximum height of 2.5m in the SE, where it is surmounted by a modern cairn. The mound exhibits a mound-on-mound appearance particularly in the NE and E, where three sections of outer wall face, one course high and forming a curve, are visible at the break in slope. There is a further possible stone of this face in the S where the line of slope is uninterrupted. The presence of this curving face and the height of the mound make it likely that the mound covers a broch surviving to a substantial height. There are a number of large, loose stones on the surface of the mound.



CS.WS 29.5.84

0 10m

TR 27

Tulach Buaile a'Chnoic

ND 1299 5186

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 15 SW 20

1 Anderson 1890, 185, Parish of Halkirk no 6

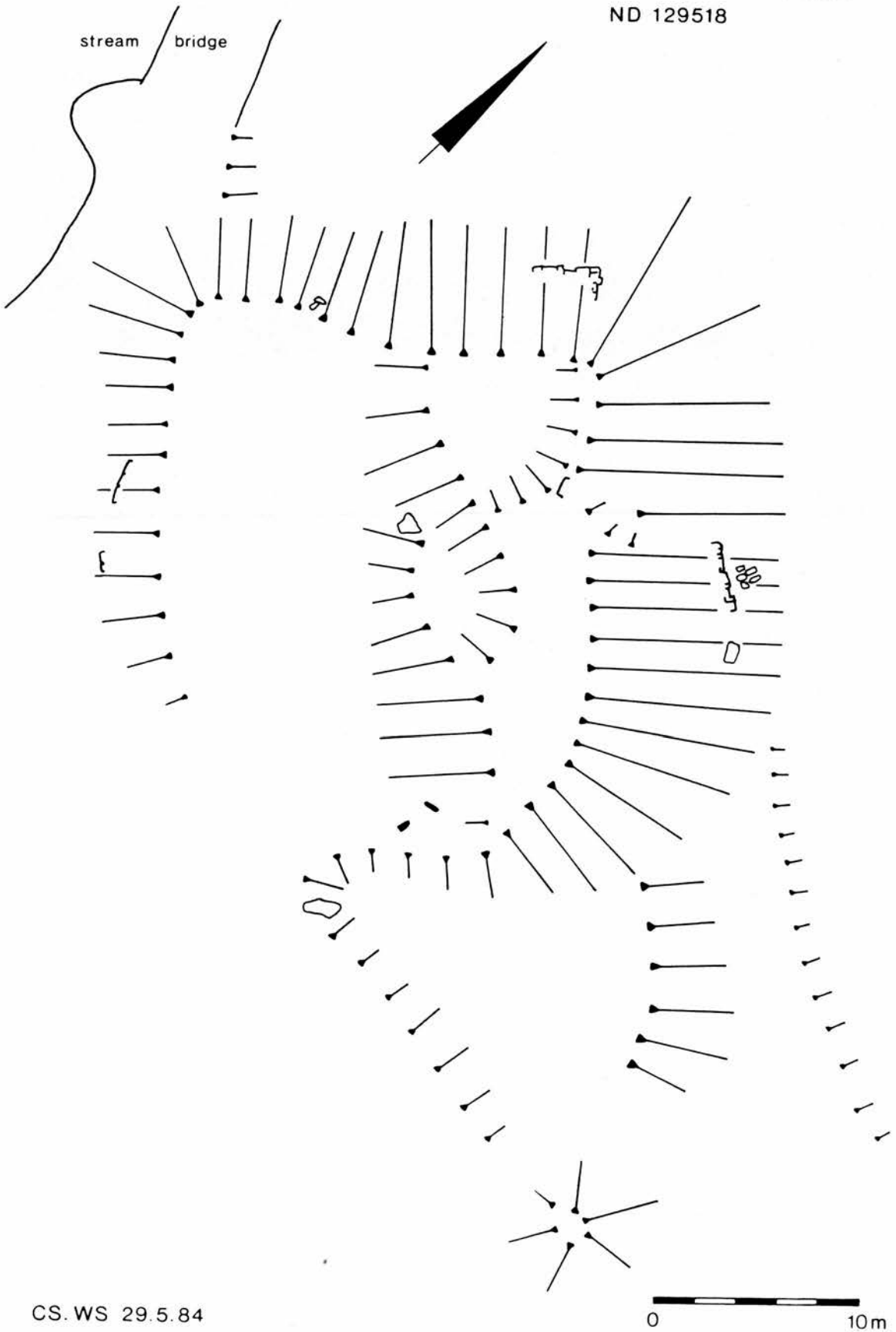
2 RCAHMS 1911b, 33, no 106

The mound known as Tulach Buaile a'Chnoic is situated on the W bank of the Thurso River directly below Westerdale Bridge. The mound lies between the river and a branching stream which may follow a natural course, but has been contained to form a mill lade driving a mill wheel on the W bank. There is also another mill directly opposite on the E bank of the river. The mound is shapeless and seems to have been much quarried on its W side, probably for stone for the many buildings in the vicinity. The mound appears to overlie a rocky, but low, river bluff giving it increased height towards the river.

The mound consists of a low, almost rectangular platform, 32m NW/SE by 33m, with a higher mound lying to the E side of the platform. This profile is likely to be largely the result of quarrying on the W side of the mound. To the SE of the mound there is a trench-like depression which the OS identified as a possible ditch. SE of this depression there is a low mound of debris or clearance. It is possible that the depression or trench may be the result of more recent quarrying.

The only visible structural features are two upright slabs in the S of the mound and two lengths of outer face, one course high, on the W slope of the lower platform, indicating that this slope may hide the ruins of a substantial wall. There are indications in patches of erosion that there is a considerable amount of stone in the mound. The very few structural features which are visible, coupled with the areal extent of the mound, seem to indicate that it is likely that the mound covers the remains of a broch, but it is difficult to be wholly certain of this.

Tulach Buaile a'Chnoic
ND 129518



CS.WS 29.5.84

TR 28

Carn na Mairg

ND 1331 5103

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 15 SW 22

1 Anderson 1890, 186, Parish of Halkirk no 12

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 33, no 105

Partially excavated in the 1950s by Mr Mark Murray Threipland, no record of the excavation published.

This broch lies on the E bank of the Thurso River 800m above the Westerdale Bridge. The lade of the Westerdale mill (on the E bank of the river) comes off the river 120m N of the broch. Unlike Tulach Mor (TR 30) and Tulach Buaile a'Chnoic (TR 27), Carn na Mairg is not sited to take advantage of an existing river bluff to give added height towards the river. It lies within flat terrain on the river bank which is low at this point, and must frequently be breached by the river when in flood. From a distance the mound exhibits a strong mound-on-mound profile. It is smooth and grass covered, revealing structural features only where it has been cut by excavation on the NE and at the entrance in the SE. The mound is surrounded by a ditch which is damp with irises growing in it, and which is drained by modern ditches to the river. The ditch may have filled with water when the river was in flood, but there is little evidence that it was constantly water filled as its bottom is well above river level. However there is likely to have been considerable silting in the ditch since it was cut.

The ditch is best preserved on the N side of the broch where it varies in width at bottom from 1.8m to 4m, and from 8.5m to 10m crest to crest. There is no trace of an outer bank above the counterscarp. The ditch continues around the broch to the E where it is crossed by two stone built causeways. These appear to be modern and were probably inserted to facilitate the excavation by Mr Murray Threipland, the then landowner (information from the present owner, Mr Innes Miller, Dale Farm). The ditch is less clear on the SE side of the mound but there is a suggestion of an original causeway at this point, 9m wide at its outer end and 5.4m wide at its inner end. The outline of the causeway is not very pronounced. Two mounds lying outside the causeway

to E and W may be spoil heaps from the excavation as is the mound beside the dyke in the N.

The ditch defines a substantial mound or lower platform which measures 34m N/S by 31m from lip to lip. This platform is edged by a bank on its N, E and S arcs. The bank varies in width being most substantial on the S. It is broken in two places, by the excavation in the NE, and in the SE, where as it is in line with the possible original causeway and the broch entrance, the break would appear to be an original gap. Lengths of outer wall face in the outer slope of the platform in the E and SW indicate that the bank conceals the ruins of a substantial stone wall around the broch complex.

Within the platform a number of upright slabs protrude through the turf in the N, E and SW. From the evidence available at excavated sites in the East Coast Study Area these uprights may be taken to be indicative of buildings surrounding the broch structure. The 1950s excavation cut through this area of buildings in the NE, revealing the strongly battered outer face of the broch with a short length of platform or outer casing outside it. The wide excavation trench is about 1m deep at its outer end and about 2m deep at its inner end where it approaches the broch face. The trench may not have bottomed the stratigraphy at the broch face, as very little of the casing wall has been revealed. A very substantial depth of stratigraphy in the platform around the broch is indicated, with the uprights protruding through the surface turf representing the latest level of occupation. Within the excavation trench the only structures remaining in situ are two upright slabs. A substantial wall at the E end of the trench seems to be part of the archaeological remains, but could also partially be a retaining wall built during the excavation.

Immediately W of the revealed, strongly battered outer face of the broch a length of gallery in the broch wall is exposed. It varies in width from 0.4m to 0.8m and seems to have been deliberately blocked at either end, probably in recent times to prevent the gallery being used by foxes and vermin. W of the gallery on the summit of the broch mound there is a modern, poorly built, low shelter.

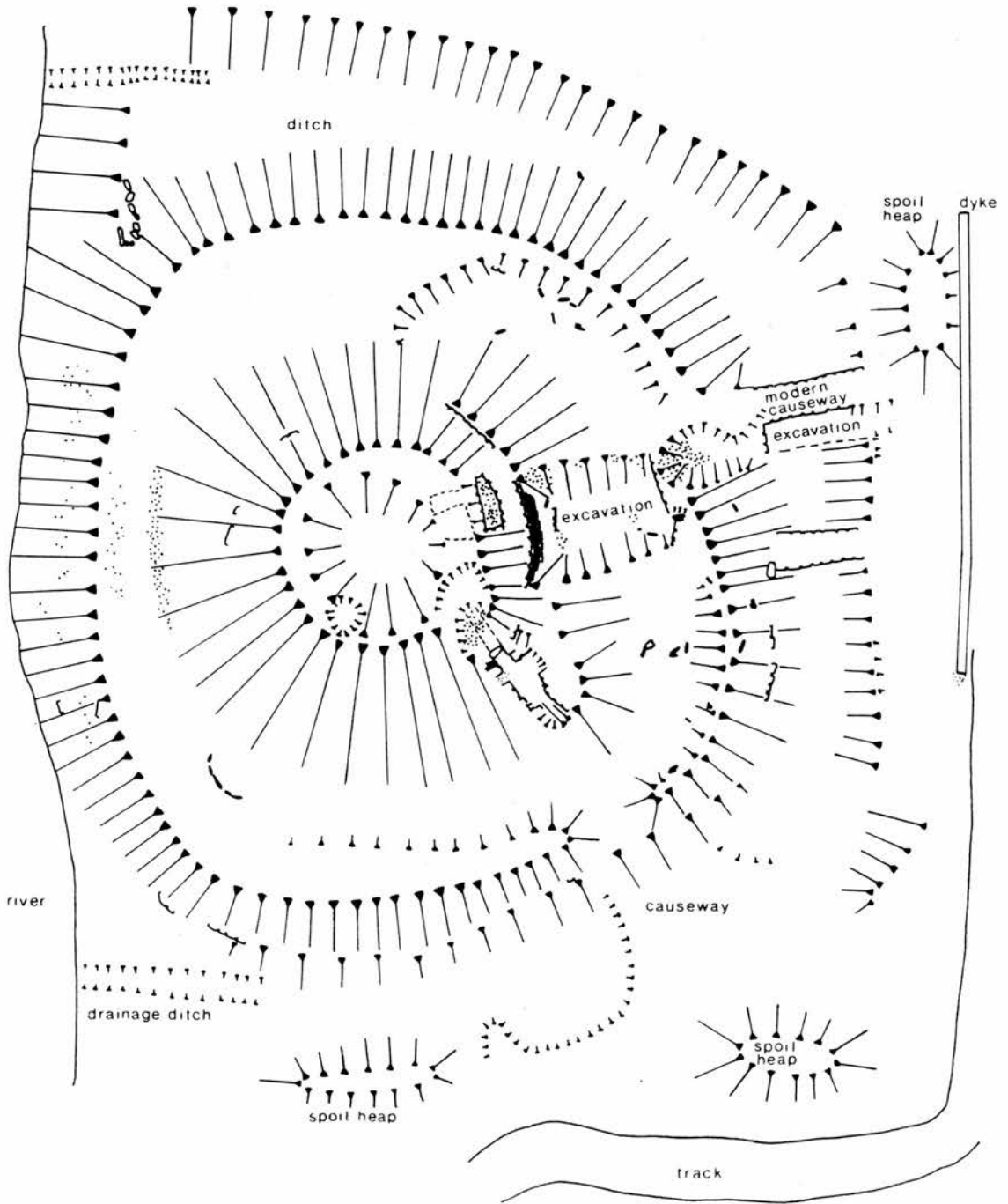
The entrance to the broch has been exposed in the SE as a lintelled

passage about 3m long over its revealed length and 0.9m wide. The strongly battered outer face of the broch is also slightly exposed to the W of the entrance. Against the face an extension to the entrance has been built in the form of a casing to the outer face. Outside this there are two collapsed and rubble strewn recesses which may be cells or entries to a passage around the broch wall. Beyond the recesses the extension of the entrance continues, narrowing at two slab door checks. By contrast no door checks are visible in the exposed length of the broch entrance.

Other than the exposed outer face and gallery in the NE, and the entrance in the SE, the broch structure has not been revealed. It survives as a high central mound within the wider platform defined by the ditch. The outer face of the broch can also be traced in the NW and W. The strong batter revealed in the NE indicates that these exposed lengths of face represent the outer face of the broch wall towards the top of its surviving batter. The top of the mound has a saucer shaped depression over the area of the broch court.

Although this mound has been partially excavated, it has suffered very little from quarrying. There is likely to be a very substantial undisturbed stratigraphy remaining over the greater part of the area of the broch complex.

Carn na Mairg
ND 133510



CS.WS 28.5.84

0 5m

TR 29

Tulach Beag

ND 1459 4980

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 14 NW 1

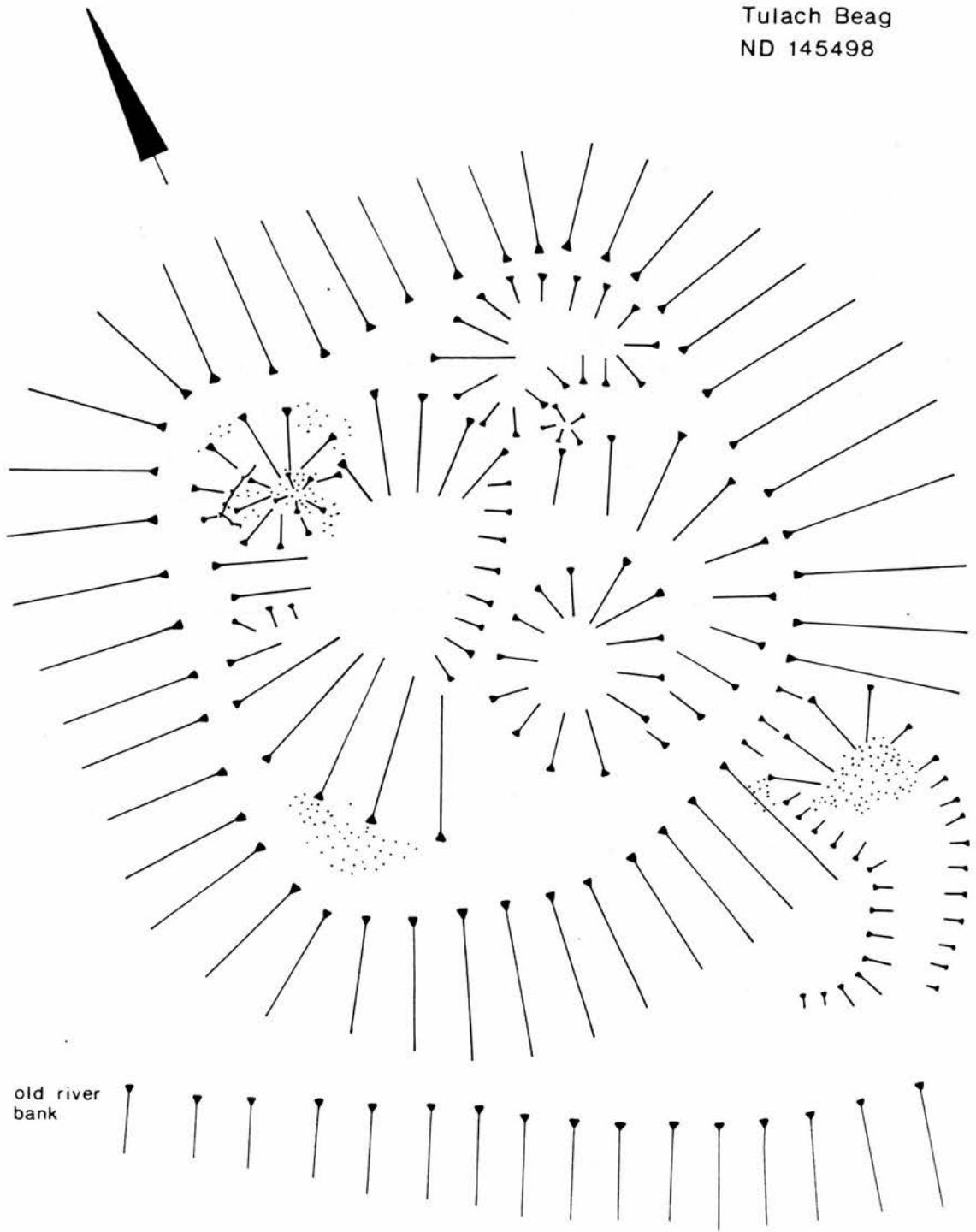
1 Anderson 1890, 186, Parish of Halkirk no 13

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 33-4, no 107

This site appears as a low mound when viewed from Tulach Mor (TR 30) which lies 500m SE of it, further up the Thurso River. The mound measures 35m in diameter and 1.5m high. There are obvious signs of stone robbing. The mound lies on the edge of a low bank which was probably once the bank of the river, now shifted a few metres to the S at this point in its meandering course. The mound appears as a ring with the irregular dishing in its centre largely the result of quarrying. In the NW of the mound a curving face is revealed which seems to be the wall of a chamber. This is the only structural indication that the mound may contain the remains of a broch.

In contrast to its nearest neighbours on the Thurso River, Tulach Mor (TR 30) and Carn na Mairg (TR 28), Tulach Beag as its name suggests is small. The mound does not appear to consist of the complex of structures apparent at the other two sites. Its simple mound appearance is best compared with the sites of Achingoul (TR 16) and Achlochlan Moss (TR 21).

Tulach Beag
ND 145498



CS. WS 31.5.84

0 5m

TR 30

Tulach Mor

ND 1485 4940

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 14 NW 2

1 Anderson 1890, 186, Parish of Halkirk no 14

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 34, no 108

This site is the furthest inland broch on the Thurso River. It is situated on the E bank of the river 400m NW of its confluence with its tributary, the Little Water, and 500m SE of the mound of Tulach Beag (TR 29) also identified as a broch. The broch is located immediately beside the river taking advantage of a rocky river bluff to add height on its SW side. The land around the broch is rough grazing, whereas opposite the broch on the other side of the river the land has been improved and is laid out in square, drained fields. There is a substantial, but now abandoned, farmhouse on the opposite bank, and several ruined longhouses and a sheepfold in the vicinity of the broch.

The site consists of a substantial mound containing the broch structure built next to the river. This mound measures 18m N/S by 16m. It is surrounded on the three sides away from the river by a lower mound or platform which extends the overall size of the broch complex to 25m N/S by 22m. The lower mound is substantially quarried in its NW sector with a very large pile of debris covering its outer slope in this area.

Very few structural features are exposed in the broch mound. An outer face, presumably of the broch wall, is visible in the S and WSW. The top of the mound containing the broch structure has a saucer shaped depression similar to that visible at Carn na Mairg (TR 28) and indicating the position of the broch court. In the S of the summit there is a curious lintelled passage which curves E to S in a dog-leg shape. This has been identified as a chamber in the broch wall by previous authorities (RCAHMS 1911b), but it does not respect the assumed line of the broch wall, and is open at both ends. It is a well built feature and is not likely to be a modern shelter. It would appear to be part of the latest use of the broch site and its function and relation to the broch could only be identified by excavation. The

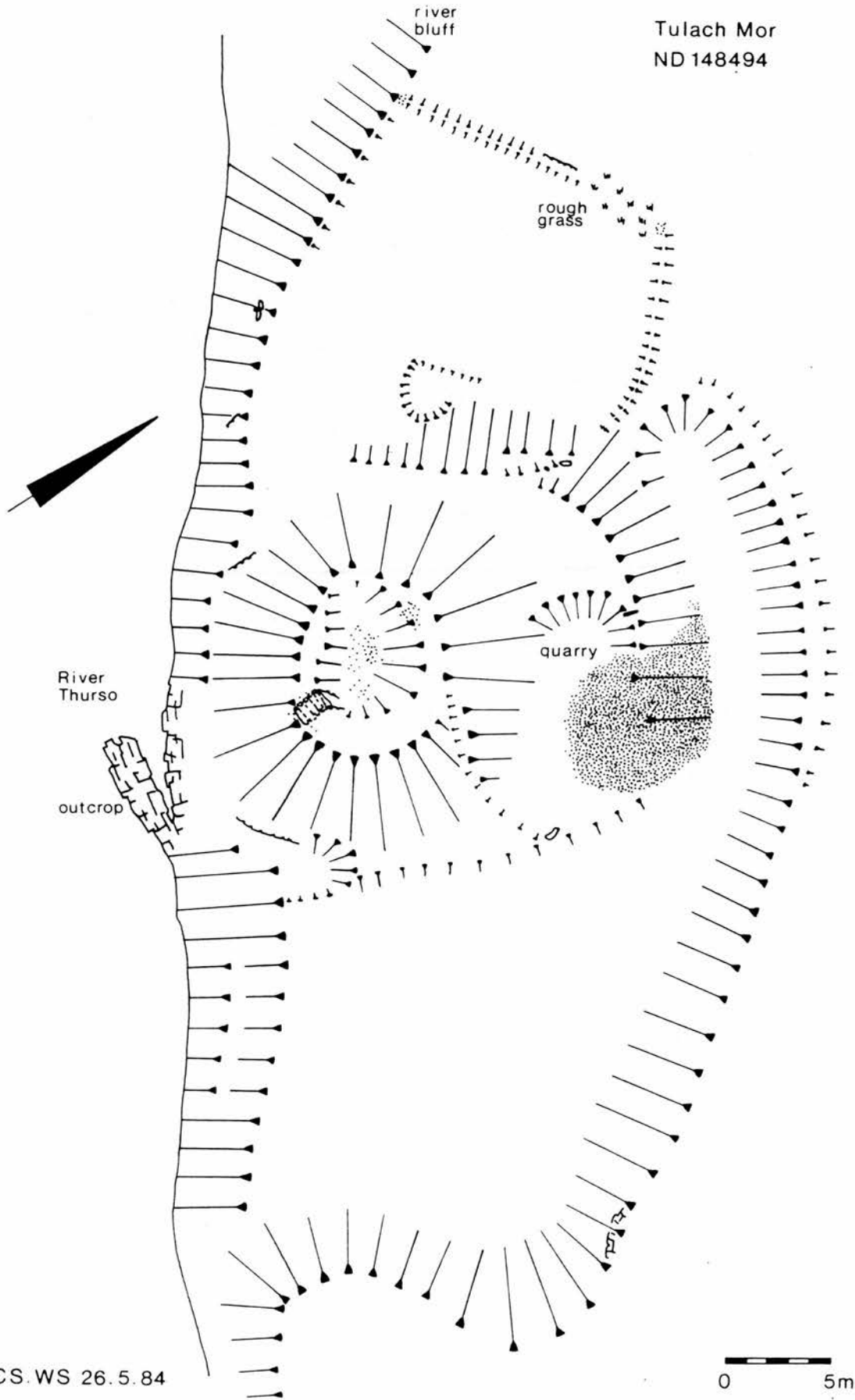
only other structural features visible are a possible short length of face in the W in the slope leading down to the river, and an upright slab in the N of the platform at the edge of the quarried area.

The broch mound is enclosed on the N, E and S by a deep and wide depression which has been identified as a ditch by previous authorities (RCAHMS 1911b, OS). In the N the counterscarp of this depression is edged by a bank which does not extend along the full length of the trench. Although the bank may be part of the broch complex, it is not clear whether the depression is entirely artificial. It may be partly or wholly natural.

To the NW of the broch mound there is a rectilinear enclosure, 12m NW/SE by 17m . It is formed by a low bank, 1.5m wide, which has originally been a stone wall, but is now collapsed. Part of the outer face of the wall is visible in the NW for a length of 2m. There is no means of identifying whether this enclosure is a later feature or part of the broch complex.

Despite the substantial quarrying in the NE part of the site, the mound is otherwise relatively well preserved and probably has a considerable stratigraphy which would repay excavation.

Tulach Mor
ND 148494



CS.WS 26.5.84

TR 31

Little Water

ND 1446 4891

NMRS Class: Burnt Mound

NMRS Card: ND 14 NW 3

1 Anderson 1890, 186, Parish of Halkirk no 15

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 43, no 153

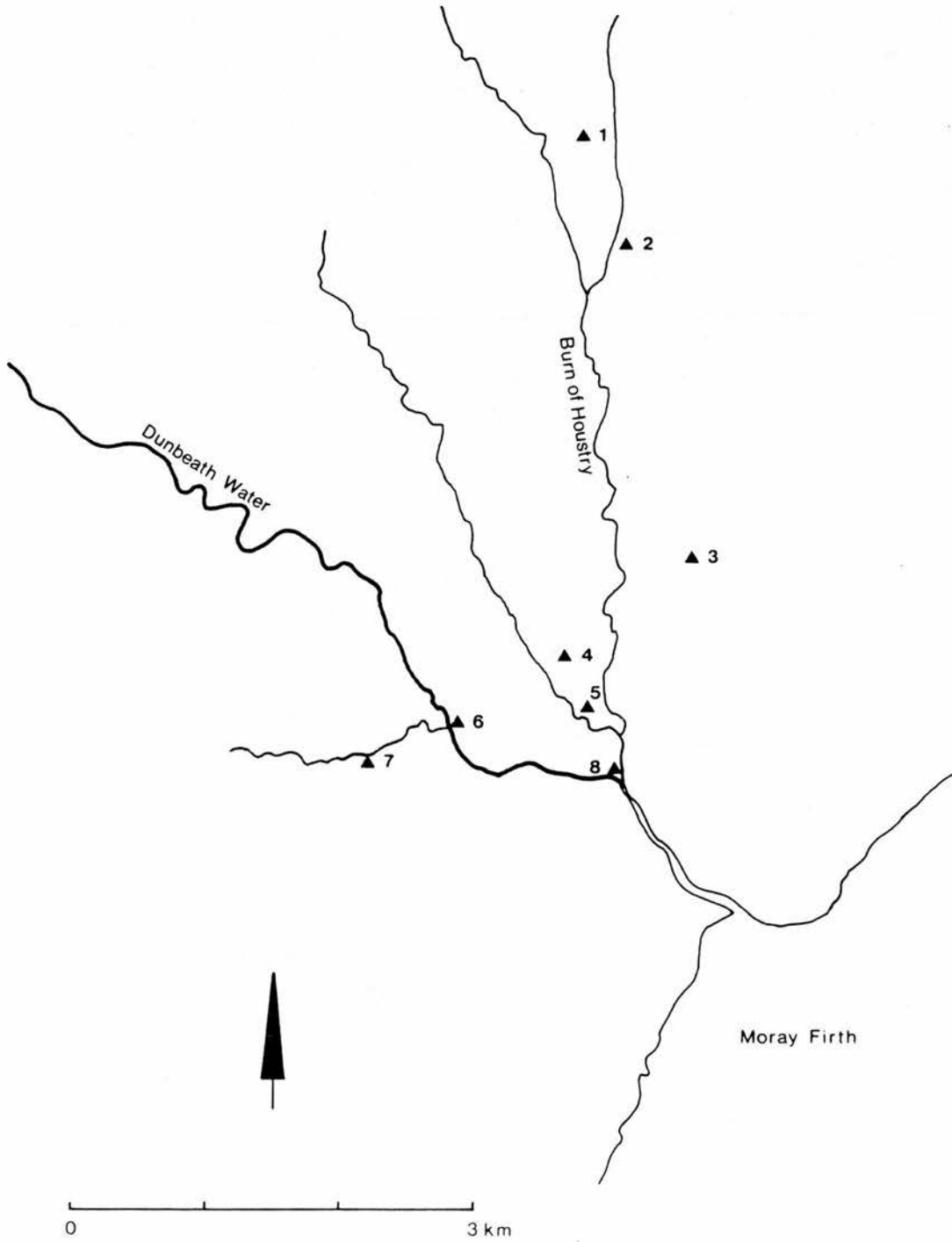
This site is included in the catalogue because it was recorded as the site of a broch by Anderson (1890) and appeared on OS maps until the 1930s marked as a "brough". The RCAHMS (1911b) classed it as a setting of slabs, describing the site as a grassy mound which appeared to be natural, but from the base of which at one side three large upright slabs protruded. In 1963 the OS identified the mound as being entirely natural, measuring 10.8m N/S by 14.3m by 1.1m high. The three stones were noted as being 2m from the S, but the mound was thought too small to contain a broch. In 1982 it was classed as a burnt mound by the OS. The site was inspected during survey and was judged to be a natural feature. As this site is not a broch, Tulach Mor (TR 30) is the furthest inland site on the Thurso River.

DUNBEATH WATER/
BURN OF HOUSTRY

Dunbeath Water/Burn of Houstry Study Area

DW 1	Tiantulloch	ND 1524 3522
DW 2	Minera	ND 1558 3461
DW 3	Achnagoul	ND 1627 3233
DW 4	Ballentink	ND 1508 3135
DW 5	Rhemullen	ND 1532 3098
DW 6	Balantrath	ND 1439 3072
DW 7	Achorn	ND 1369 3050
DW 8	Dunbeath	ND 1553 3044

DUNBEATH WATER/BURN OF HOUSTRY STUDY AREA DW
Location of sites included in catalogue



DW 1

Tiantulloch

ND 1524 3522

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 13 NE 2

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 52, no 196

This broch appears as a grass covered mound, 3-4m high at centre, surrounded by a modern field dyke on the S, E and N sides, and a longhouse settlement on the W. The surrounding fields are now improved pasture, but the land has been under cultivation at some time. The broch mound has obviously been completely cleared away on the S and E, probably for stone to build the later longhouse settlement. The presence of rhubarb plants within the dyke in the S of the enclosed area, indicates that the enclosure has served as a kailyard for the houses at some stage. The clearing of the mound on the S and E has revealed substantial curving faces, which would seem to be part of the original broch complex.

The arc of face in the SE of the site appears to be the outer face of the broch wall and has been identified as such by previous authorities (RCAHMS 1911b). It is visible for a length of about 18m and can be seen to continue into the mound at the extremities of its exposed length. It stands about a metre high in the E in 4-5 courses, exhibiting a batter. In the SE the face appears to have been partially rebuilt in its upper courses, possibly to serve as a retaining wall, and the batter is not evident at this point. In the SSE there is a curved cell or niche built into the face with some slight evidence of corbelling at the top of its surviving wall height. The cell is 1.6m across and 1.3m to the back wall. It is clearly an original part of the face and is not a later insertion. The purpose of such a cell is not obvious, unless it is seen as related to buildings external to the broch, now completely cleared away on this side. A large slab, possibly a lintel, lies in the tumbled stones within the cell.

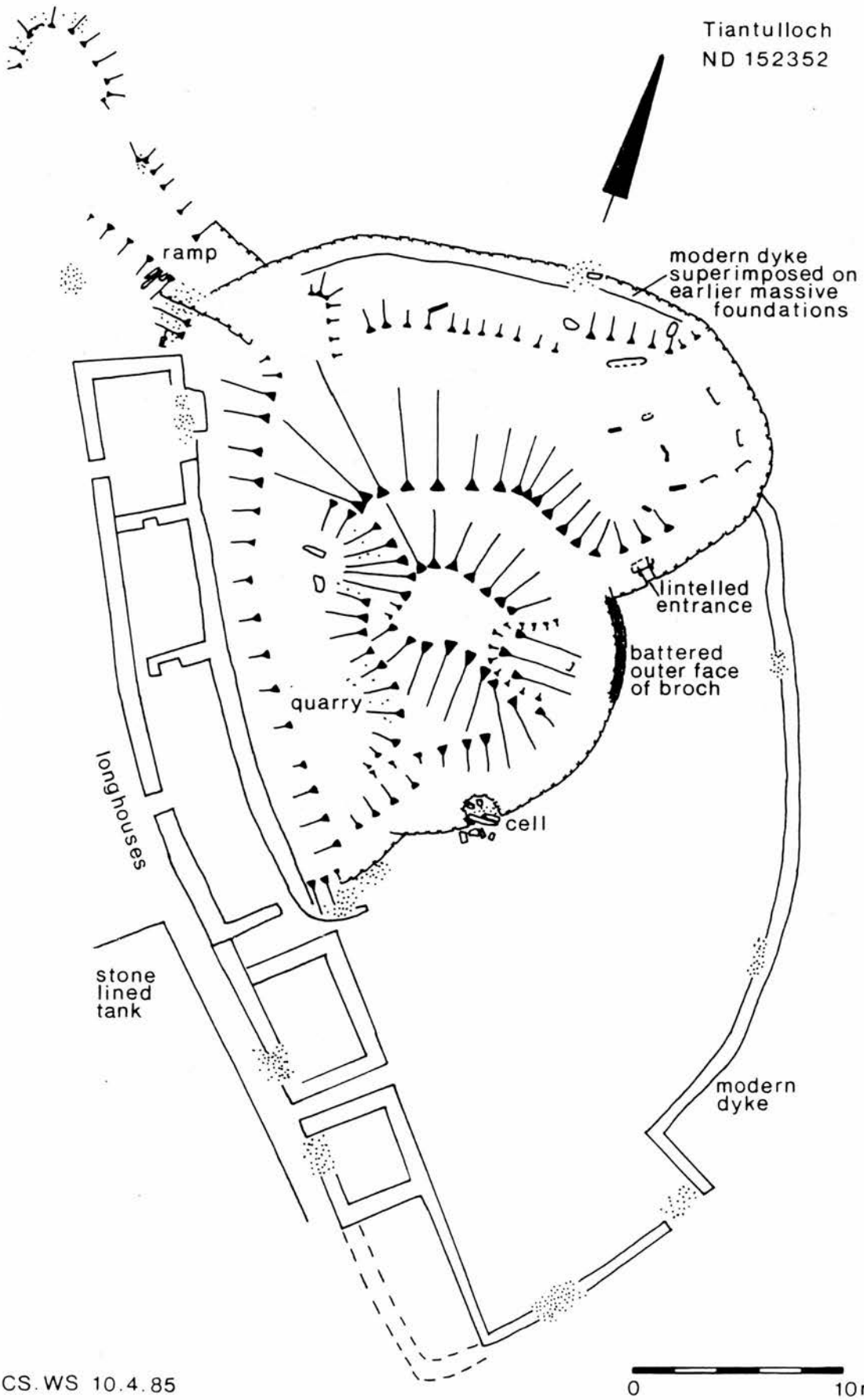
Substantial revetments abut the outer face of the broch wall in the E and SW. The masonry of these revetments is similar to the broch, being composed of large blocks of stone. They survive to about a metre in height retaining the broch mound on their inner sides. The face in the SW survives only for a length of about 4m before it is truncated by

the later longhouse development which has encroached on the SW arc of the broch mound. The face in the E curves towards the NW defining an area outside the broch. A later field dyke has been built on the N arc of the site, clearly on top of the massive earlier wall. The presence of the dyke obscures the original revetment so that it is not certain how far it actually extends in this area. It would appear to extend almost as far as the NW end of the longhouse settlement. In this area a ramp has been built at some time presumably to aid the quarrying of stone from the broch mound. Not much quarrying of the mound on the N and W sides seems to have been taken place however, as only two small robbing holes are evident behind the longhouses in the W.

The area outside the broch in the N and NW defined by the outer wall appears to contain buildings. There is an entrance into this area in the SE through the outer wall, 1.7m from the wall of the broch. The entrance leads into a lintelled area filled almost to the roof with debris. To the NE of this entrance there are a number of upright slabs protruding through the turf which, on the evidence of sites in the East Coast Study Area and the Thurso River Study Area, may be taken to indicate the presence of buildings external to the broch. These features, coupled with the cell in the outer face of the broch in the SSE, indicate that there has been a complex of buildings around the broch. These have been completely removed on the S and E, but an untouched stratigraphy 1-1.5m in depth is indicated in the N arc of the site.

The remainder of the broch complex is a grass covered mound, with its highest point apparently over the broch interior. The broch structure would appear to have been quarried to some extent in the W and SW, but the area of the broch interior seems to be largely untouched except for a shallow quarry on its E side.

Tiantulloch
ND 152352



CS. WS 10.4.85

DW 2

Minera

ND 1558 3461

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 13 SE 19

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 52-3, no 197

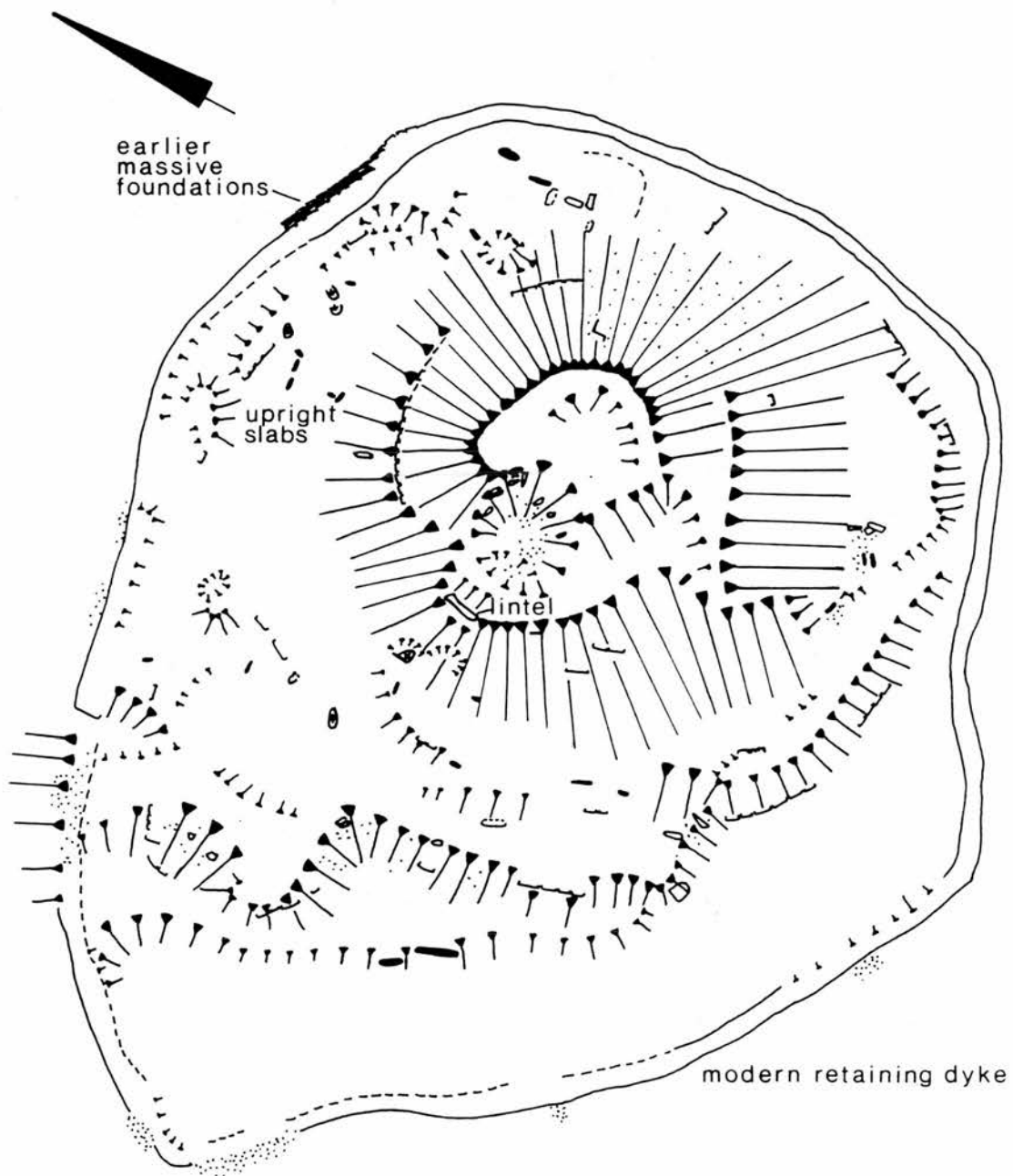
This broch appears as a very large, grass covered mound, with numerous stones protruding through the turf, located in a field now given over to improved pasture. The mound measures 55m E/W by 45m overall. It is surrounded by an irregular stone dyke which acts as a retaining wall on the S, W and N arcs. In the N the dyke appears to be founded on a battered face of massive slabs, which may be an original feature of the site.

The extensive mound contains a complex of remains. Towards the E a higher mound within the mound survives about 3-4m above the rest of the complex and about 5m above the ground surface. It appears to cover the broch structure. The outer face of the broch wall can be traced on the N arc of this higher mound for a distance of about 11m, in two separate arcs of walling exposed one to two courses high. The face is located about half way up the very steep, grass covered and rubble strewn slopes obscuring the remainder of the broch structure. The entrance to the broch would appear to be in the W where a large lintel is exposed behind which there is a robbing hole. Apart from this robbing the mound over the broch has been only slightly quarried, indicating a substantial undisturbed stratigraphy. The inner face of the broch wall can be expected to have survived within the mound to a height of 4-5m. On the E of the higher mound containing the broch, about 1.5m below the summit and opposite the presumed site of the entrance, an apparent coursed setting of stones at right angles to the line of the outer face may indicate an intramural feature such as a gallery or stairwell. The feature is too indistinct to be certain of its identification.

Surrounding the higher mound containing the broch structure there is a large lower mound lying mainly to the NW, W and SW. It exhibits numerous upright slabs and isolated lengths of wall face which make no distinct patterns, but which indicate the presence of buildings outside the broch, as at Tiantulloch (DW 1) and other sites in the

Caithness Plain. An outer wall bounding the surrounding buildings is suggested by two particular features - the massive foundations under the modern dyke in the N of the site; and the break of slope containing occasional lengths of exposed face in the SE, S and W of the site. There has been some quarrying of the line of this face in the W, but otherwise the complex around the broch seems to be largely untouched, preserved to a height of 1-1.5m above the surrounding field surface. Outside the suggested line of an outer wall in the SW another break of slope and two upright slabs indicate further remains extending for another 10m to the modern retaining dyke.

The remains of the Minera complex must rank as one of the best preserved broch mounds in Caithness, containing substantial structural remains and a largely untouched stratigraphy.



CS.WS 11.4.85

0 10m

DW 3

Achnagoul

ND 1627 3233

NMRS Class: Broch (remains of)

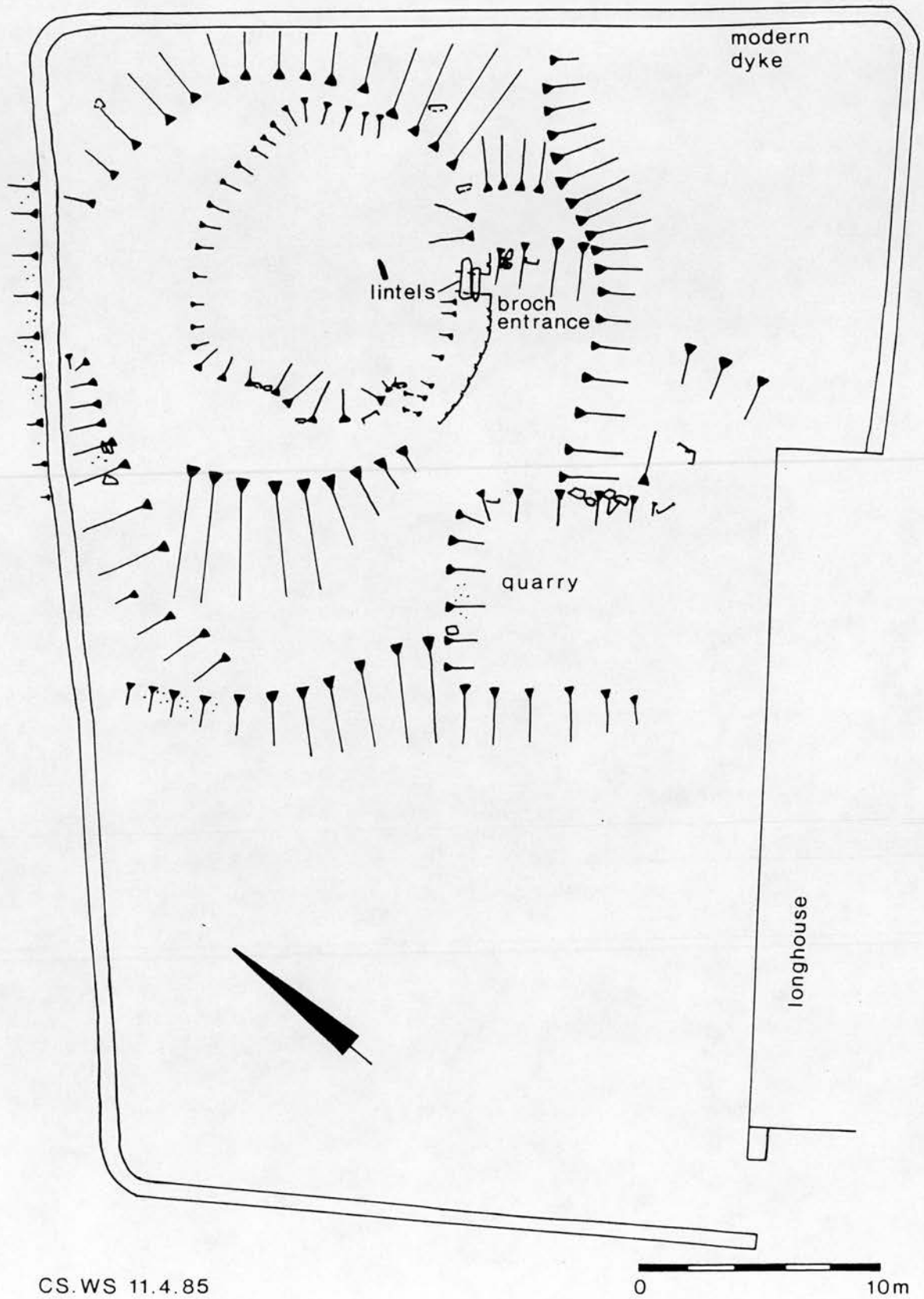
NMRS Card: ND 13 SE 14

This broch, which was not identified by the RCAHMS in the inventory of Caithness (1911b), appears as a smooth, grass covered mound within an enclosure formed by a stone dyke and the back wall of a group of longhouses to the S. The mound lies in the N of the enclosure and measures 33m N/S by 34m overall. The stone dyke appears to cross over the mound in the NW as there is a slight rubble covered slope in the field on the other side of the dyke. It is possible that the mound may have been more extensive to the N and E but has been removed by the heavy ploughing and substantial improvements evident in the neighbouring field.

The mound is steepest and highest on its SW arc where there is a strong mound-on-mound appearance. The outer break in slope in the SW was at one time identified by the OS as an outer defence. There seems little doubt that the break in slope does indicate a wall under the turf lying 8m to the SW of the broch structure. There is no structural evidence of any buildings between this outer wall and the broch in the form of upright slabs or exposed faces. The only slight evidence for buildings external to the broch occurs immediately outside the broch in the SE, where there appears to be a single facing stone lying at right angles to the outer face of the broch wall. The stone may however be a fortuitous arrangement as a result of robbing which has undoubtedly taken place exposing the outer face of the broch wall.

The outer face of the broch wall in the SE is two courses high, and is exposed over a length of about 8m, which contains the broch entrance. Two lintels are in place over the entrance about 0.4m above the present ground level, but no other features are visible. The line of the outer face of the broch wall can be seen continuing under the turf around the SW and NW arcs. The external diameter of the broch would appear to be about 17m. The internal area of the broch is dished over two thirds of its area, possibly as a result of robbing. No inner facing stones are visible, but there is an upright slab in the interior about 4.5m in from the outer end of the entrance.

Achnagoul
ND 162323



CS.WS 11.4.85

0 10m

DW 4

Ballentink

ND 1508 3135

NMRS Class: Broch (remains of)

NMRS Card: ND 13 SE 12

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 71, no 261

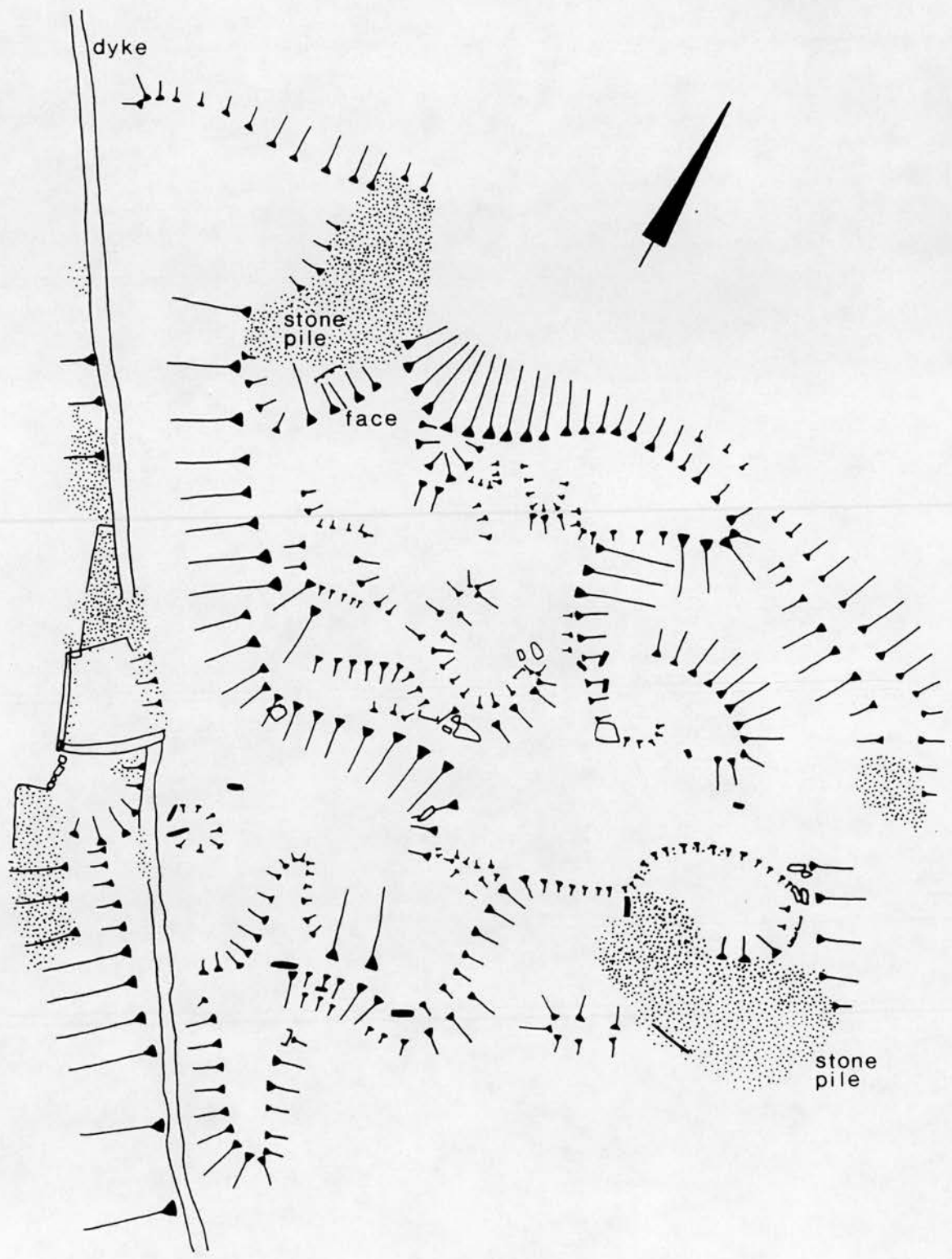
This site appears as a large quarried mound, 51m NW/SE by 42m in total extent. A stone dyke crosses the W side of the mound against which there are small enclosures and piles of stones. There are also large stone piles in the N and SE of the site and several ruined houses nearby. The indications are that the site has been systematically quarried for building stone at some time. It is so badly quarried that it is difficult to identify the remains positively.

The overall size of the mound and its surviving height, which is 2-3m in the N, indicate that this may have been the site of a broch. It has been so identified in the NMRS. The RCAHMS (1911b) thought that the site might have been a galleried dwelling, their term for sites more commonly known as wags. The mound would appear to have been difficult to identify as early as 1910. The RCAHMS thought that a small portion of wall about 4ft (1.2m) high, exposed in the W edge of the mound, might indicate a broch. There is a short length of outer face visible in the NW of the mound near the dyke, 1.4m long, but only one course high. It is not certain that this is the wall to which the RCAHMS refer.

The only other structural features visible within the site are a number of upright slabs chiefly in the S half of the mound. In the centre of the mound there is a U-shaped, turf covered building foundation which is probably later in date.

This site cannot be definitely identified as a broch, especially as there are other settlement types in the Dunbeath Water/Burn of Houstry area, for example, Cor Tulloch (ND 151 355; RCAHMS 1911b, no 262), identified as a wag type of structure by the RCAHMS and the OS. The siting of Ballentink however, on top of a gently sloping ridge between the Burn of Houstry and the Allt an Learanaich in a field given over to improved pasture, is not dissimilar to that of the broch of Rhemullen (DW 5), only 440m to the SE.

Ballentink
ND 150313



CS.WS 9.4.85

0 10m

DW 5

Rhemullen

ND 1532 3098

NMRS Class: Broch (remains of)

NMRS Card: ND 13 SE 11

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 84, no 304

This broch survives as a very large mound, roughly rectangular in shape, turf covered, and surrounded by an irregular field dyke. The mound measures 45m NW/SE by 43m, and it is at least 3m high in the centre. It has been quarried to some extent on the S and SW, and there is an enormous stone pile against the dyke in the SW.

There is no doubt that the mound contains a broch located in the N half of the site. The outer face and lintelled entrance passage of such a structure have been exposed, apparently by excavation or robbing. The entrance to the broch is from the SE, through a passage 0.8m wide at its outer end. The passage walls are visible under the lintels for a length of 1.8m. The OS recorded the presence of a door check and barhole at the entrance, but these features were not noted during field survey in 1985. The length of outer face exposed is 4m. Immediately outside the entrance there is an excavation hollow containing loose rubble. On the SE side of this hollow there is walling with an entrance through it, 0.6m wide. This entrance is not aligned with that of the broch. It is not clear whether this walling relates to the broch or is a later feature. On the WNW of the excavated hollow there is a length of face 0.9m long abutting the broch face at right angles.

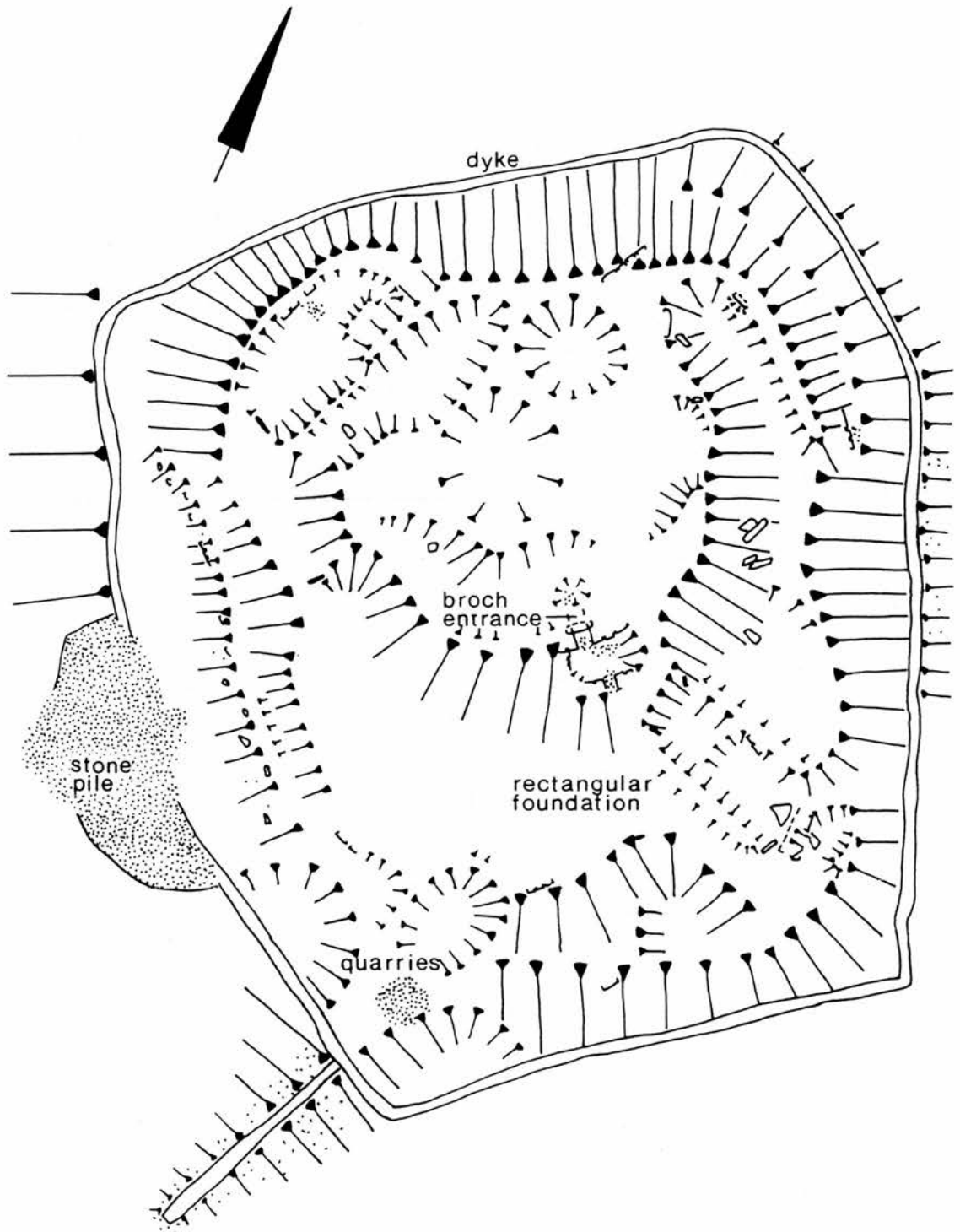
On the N and W arcs of the mound a steep scarp points to the presence of a substantial outer wall or rampart around the broch. There is a length of face, 2.2m long, exposed near the base of the scarp in the NE. Another length of face, 3m long, crosses somewhat eccentrically the line of the top of the scarp in the N. In the NNE further evidence of the outer wall or rampart is given by a bank about 10m long with a single slab exposed on its inner side, which may possibly belong to the inner face of the wall.

To the SE and SW of the broch occasional upright slabs and facing slabs are visible. These, in addition to the walling outside the broch

entrance and the evidence for an outer wall, point to a complex of remains around the broch. Further interpretation is made difficult by the turf covered foundations of two rectangular structures in the SE and WNW, which would appear to be longhouses of later date.

The surviving height of the mound indicates that there is a considerable depth of remains at the site, at least 3m in the centre. Yet the broch structure appears to be reduced to the level of the lintels of the entrance passage. Therefore either the broch is sited on a rock outcrop or minor knoll hidden from view within the mound, or it is founded on the debris of earlier remains. This factor, in addition to the extent of the site and the evidence for later settlement on the mound, may indicate a substantial and interesting stratigraphy worth excavating.

The field containing the broch mound has several other groups of archaeological remains. There are the turf covered foundations of a number of longhouses to the S and W of the broch, which may be related chronologically to the later structures on the broch mound. About 100m NW of the broch mound there is another mound which is completely unidentifiable. It would appear to be the low mound 120 yards to the W, identified by the RCAHMS (1911b, no 260) as a galleried dwelling (or wag). They judged that it was such a structure from "the upright pillars remaining". There are no longer any upright slabs visible at this site.



CS.WS 8.4.85

0 10m

DW 6

Balantrath

ND 1439 3072

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 13 SW 6

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 58, no 213

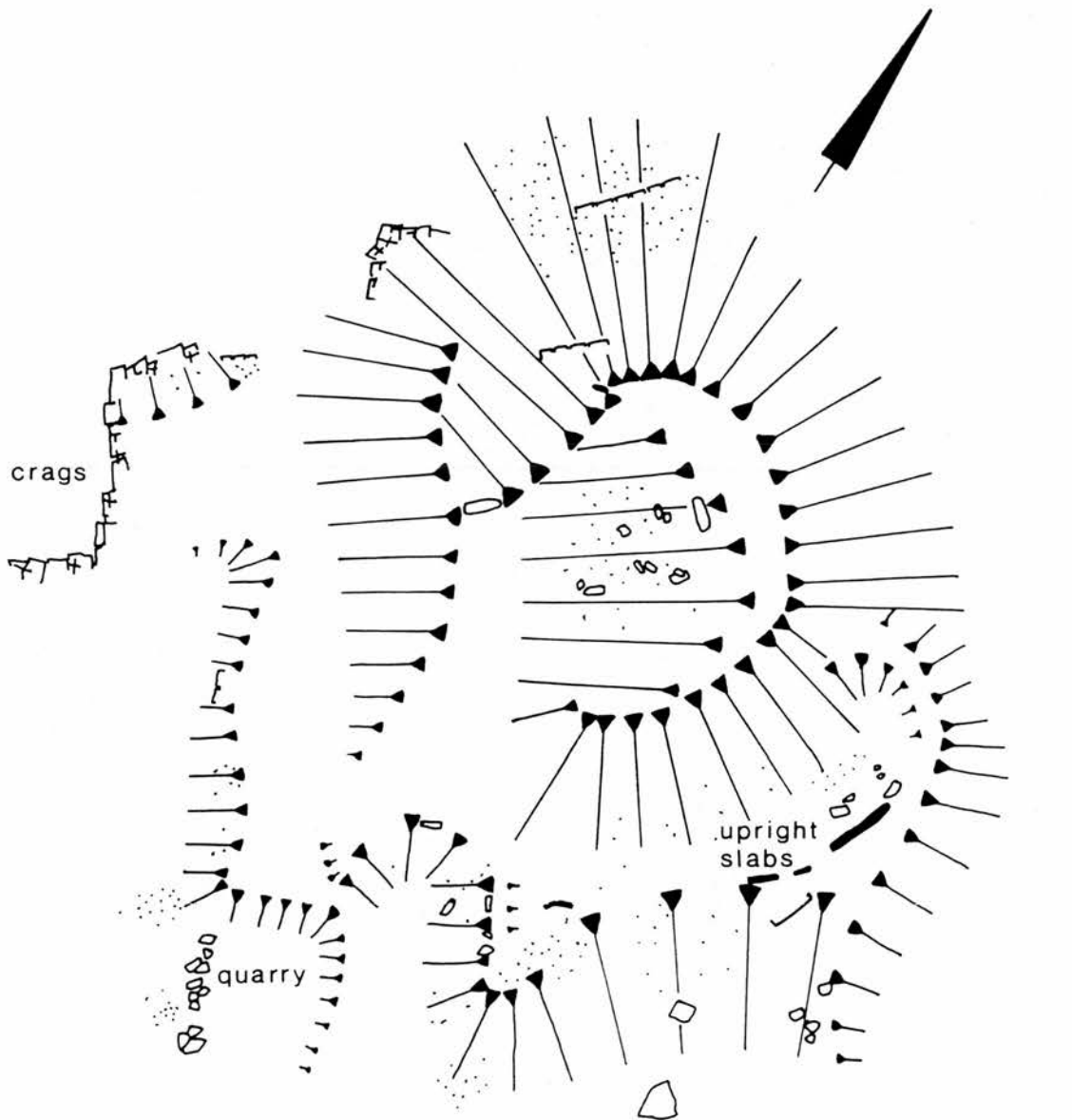
This broch appears as a quarried mound of stones and earth, set on an elevation on the E bank of the Dunbeath Water. It is the only broch located in the Dunbeath Strath, apart from Dunbeath broch (DW 8) which is at the mouth of the strath on a promontory formed by the confluence of the Dunbeath Water and the Burn of Houstry. At Balantrath there are craggy outcrops of rock towards the river, but to the S the ground slopes gently, whilst the site is overlooked from the E by the high steep bank of the river gorge. To the NW and S of the site there are haughlands along the river's edge. The site is in a sheltered setting, the Dunbeath Water being deeply cut at this point. The broch mound appears to have been quarried probably for a nearby stone dyke and for the piers of a footbridge.

The broch mound measures about 33m NW/SE by 26m. There is a distinct mound-on-mound appearance in the S arc of the site with the higher portion being towards the N. The higher portion has been substantially quarried on its SW side so that it appears as an reversed C-shape. There has also been substantial quarrying in the S and E of the broch mound.

Some structural features are visible within the mound. In the steep NW slope of the higher portion of the mound, there is a 2.4m length of outer face, one course high, exposed about 2m below the summit. It is possible that this may be the outer face of the broch which can be expected to be located under the higher part of the mound. Outside the line of this face there are two lengths of another face, one in the NW and the other in the WSW near the craggy outcrop overlooking the river. These would seem to indicate an outer wall. In the SW of the mound another length of face and a break in slope may indicate a continuation of the outer wall. On the E of the mound a number of large uprights are revealed in a quarry. They would seem to belong to the wall or partition of a building apparently external to the broch. Despite the destruction which has been wrought by quarrying, there is

sufficient evidence remaining to indicate the presence at this site of a complex which includes a broch, outer wall and surrounding buildings.

Previous authorities have identified a ditch between the mound and the slope of the river gorge to the E, isolating the rock on which the broch stands from the ground behind (RCAHMS 1911b, OS). There is no evidence of such a feature. The broch mound is about 3m high at its highest point on the E of the mound and appears to be wholly artificial on its E and NE arcs. It would seem that previous authorities may have mistaken part or all of the slope of the remains on this side as natural ground with the slope being formed by the cutting of a ditch. Indeed there seems little logic in having a ditch as a defensive measure on the E side, as the site could easily be attacked from the high slopes overlooking it from the E.



CS. WS 7.5.85

0 10m

DW 7

Achorn

ND 1369 3050

NMRS Class: Broch (remains of)

NMRS Card: ND 13 SW 3

1 RCAHMS 1911b, 58, no 214

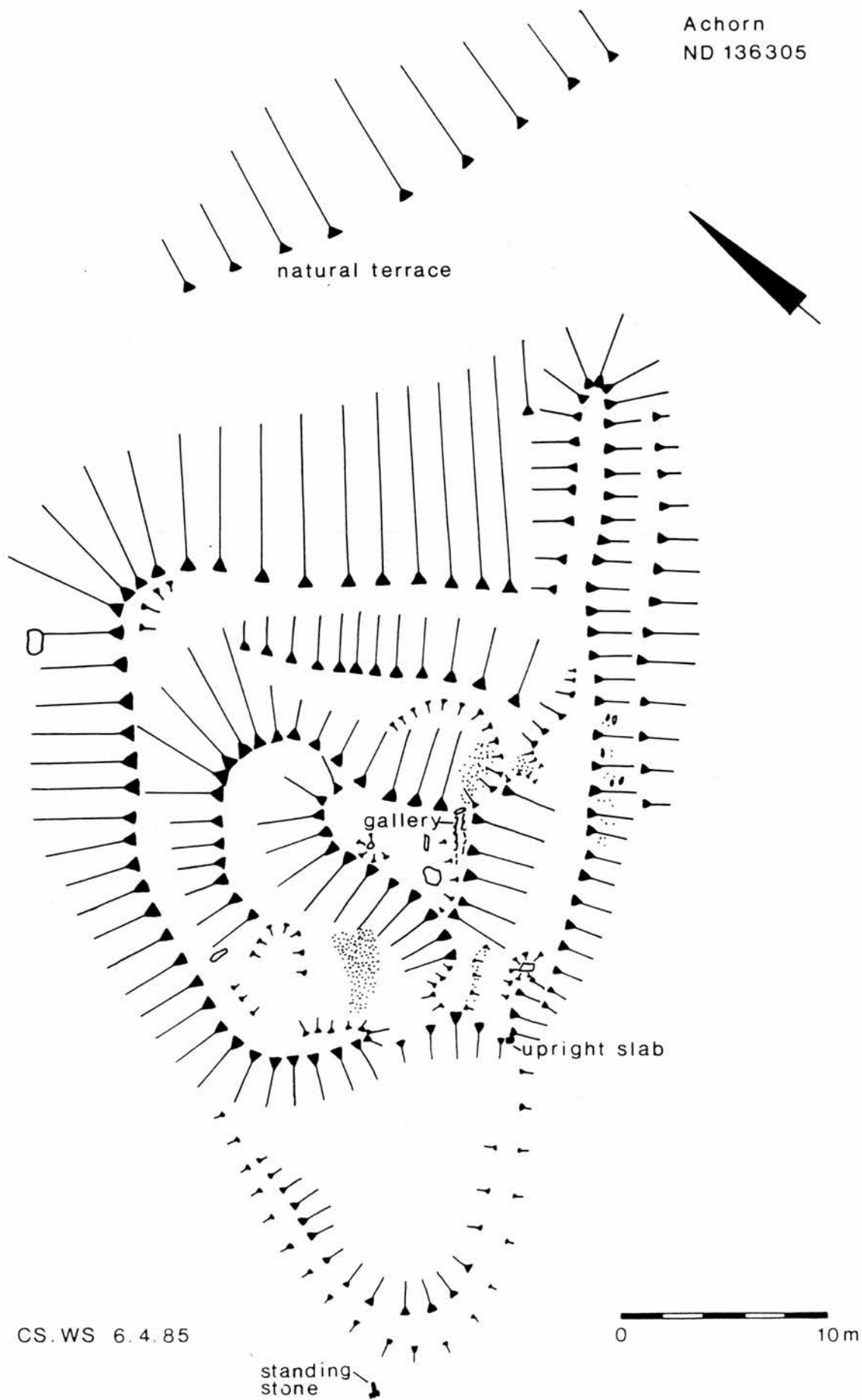
This broch lies within a field which has been well cultivated in the past and is now an improved sheep pasture. Cultivation rigs run downslope through the field towards the Achorn Burn and there are also rigs visible in the neighbouring field to the SW. The broch sits on a gentle NE facing slope, some 80m from the edge of the burn which flows in a deeply incised gorge at this point.

The broch appears as a rectangular mound truncated by ploughing on its NW and SE sides. The mound measures about 36m NE/SW by 33m, and is 3-4m high in the centre. In the SW there is a U-shaped enclosure formed by a shallow bank abutting the mound. The enclosure is about 15m across at its widest extent NE/SW, with the bank spread to as much as 4m in the extreme SW. The bank is more distinct on its inner edge than on its outer. Outside the enclosure in the SW there is a standing stone supported at the base by a number of broken flagstones. It is possible that this stone is a cattle rubbing post erected relatively recently. To the NE of the broch mound, some 8-12m distant from its edge, the ground surface falls away to form a terrace. This terrace appears to be natural, rather than a feature of the site.

The broch mound has been severely quarried, probably for the stone dykes and the large farm steading in the vicinity. Only two structural features are visible within the mound, a single small upright slab near the edge of the mound in the S, and a feature S of the centre of the mound which has been described as a gallery by the OS. The NW side of the feature is well preserved for a length of 1.5m, 5-6 courses high. The SE side of the feature is preserved at its NE end only for a length of about a metre, the remainder being less distinct and partly collapsed. The gap between the faces is 0.4m wide. A fallen slab at the NE end of the feature may be a collapsed lintel. The feature appears to continue into the mound in the SW with what appears to be lintels in place. It is possible that the feature is an intramural gallery of the broch as identified by the OS.

The overall size of the mound indicates that there is more than a broch on the site. There is a distinct mound-on-mound appearance on the W, N and E sides. There are also indications of an outer wall or rampart around the complex, of which only two short lengths remain in the SW and N. On the E of the mound running downslope towards the NE, there is a broad bank up to 5m wide. It is not clear how this feature relates to the remainder of the site in terms of function and chronology.

Achorn
ND 136305



DW 8

Dunbeath

ND 1553 3044

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: ND 13 SE 17

1 Anderson 1890, 144-6

2 RCAHMS 1911b, 58-9, no 215

*Excavated by Mr Thomson Sinclair, younger of Dunbeath in 1866,
reported by Anderson 1890*

This broch is located on a narrow promontory ridge to the S side of the angle formed by the confluence of the Dunbeath Water and the Burn of Houstry. The valley of the Dunbeath Water is deeply cut at this point and the broch is built on the edge of the precipitous drop to the river. The broch, which was excavated in 1866, is surrounded by a modern dyke and is planted with trees. The field within which the broch lies is now improved pasture for cattle, but has been cultivated at some time. Opposite the broch to the S, on the other side of the Dunbeath Water, is the old Dunbeath coaching inn beside the old road across the Dunbeath Strath.

The broch has been completely exposed inside and out, all debris having been removed from the site. A considerable amount of stone has obviously gone into the building of the substantial dyke now around the broch. It is very noticeable that the broch stands in isolation. Any features which may have existed around it have been tidily cleared away within the modern dyke. From the evidence of other brochs in the Dunbeath Water/Burn of Houstry Study Area, remains around the Dunbeath broch could reasonably have been expected. There is no mention of any such remains in the scant record provided by Anderson (1890). Outside the modern dyke in the SE there is some evidence of a wall on either side of the promontory on which the broch sits. The wall on the S side of the promontory, the river side, survives as a substantial footing 0.7m wide. It may well be more recent than the broch, possibly the remains of a field wall to prevent stock straying over the precipitous river bluff. The wall on the N side of the promontory appears as two lengths of an outer face, 2.3 and 4.2m long, at the top of the steep natural slope down into the field which forms the remainder of the triangular piece of land between the two water courses. It is possible

that this wall may be contemporary with the broch, but there is no means of establishing this by field survey.

The outer face of the broch wall survives completely intact except in the S where its line would appear to be close to, or under, the modern dyke. On the N arc it is preserved 2.5-3m high. The inner face is also intact except in the N where a collapse has taken place probably as a result of visitors climbing onto the wall. The inner face survives up to 4m high in the NW. On the E and W arcs of the inner face there is a very irregular scarcement about 0.4m wide and roughly 0.9m above the present floor level within the broch. The stones forming the scarcement are very broken up. It is unclear whether the unevenness of the scarcement is due to weathering, or to a certain amount of rebuilding after the broch was excavated. It is clear that there has been some rebuilding. Above the entrance to the cell in the NNW, where the scarcement seems to widen to 0.6m, there has been reconstruction, which is obvious from within the cell. The walling above the entrance can be seen to be of a different character, with daylight showing between the stones.

The entrance to the broch is from the SE. There have been two sets of door checks, both of which are preserved on the S side of the entrance passage. The N side of the passage has largely collapsed except for 1.1m at its outer end. To the N of the entrance there is a curving cell within the broch wall, 3.5m long, with some corbelling in place at its inner end. Within the broch wall in the NNW there is a lintelled entrance into a cell which has square corners and slightly curved walls. It is intact with a fully corbelled roof. However as mentioned above it seems to have been at least partially reconstructed on its SE side. It measures 2.5m by 1.7m and has an aumbry in each wall about a metre above the floor. There is a flag shelf below the E aumbry, 0.4m wide, running the length of the E wall. There are no other features within the broch wall except for a very possible suggestion of the inner wall of a gallery on top of the wall in the W, but it may simply be a fortuitous arrangement of stones. There is no indication of a stair or a possible entrance to it, and there is no record of one from the excavation.

The interior of the broch is now featureless apart from loose rubble,

but it is recorded that during the excavation a pit-like structure resembling a well, 4-5ft (1.2-1.5m) in diameter was found in the S of the interior.

The finds recovered at the site are recorded by Anderson (1890) as follows:

deer horns;

a section of antler ground at both ends;

bones of ox, large dog or wolf, sheep and swine;

fish bones;

shells of buckies and limpets;

a piece of freestone covered with indentations possibly produced by rubbing or grinding some metal instrument edgeways upon it;

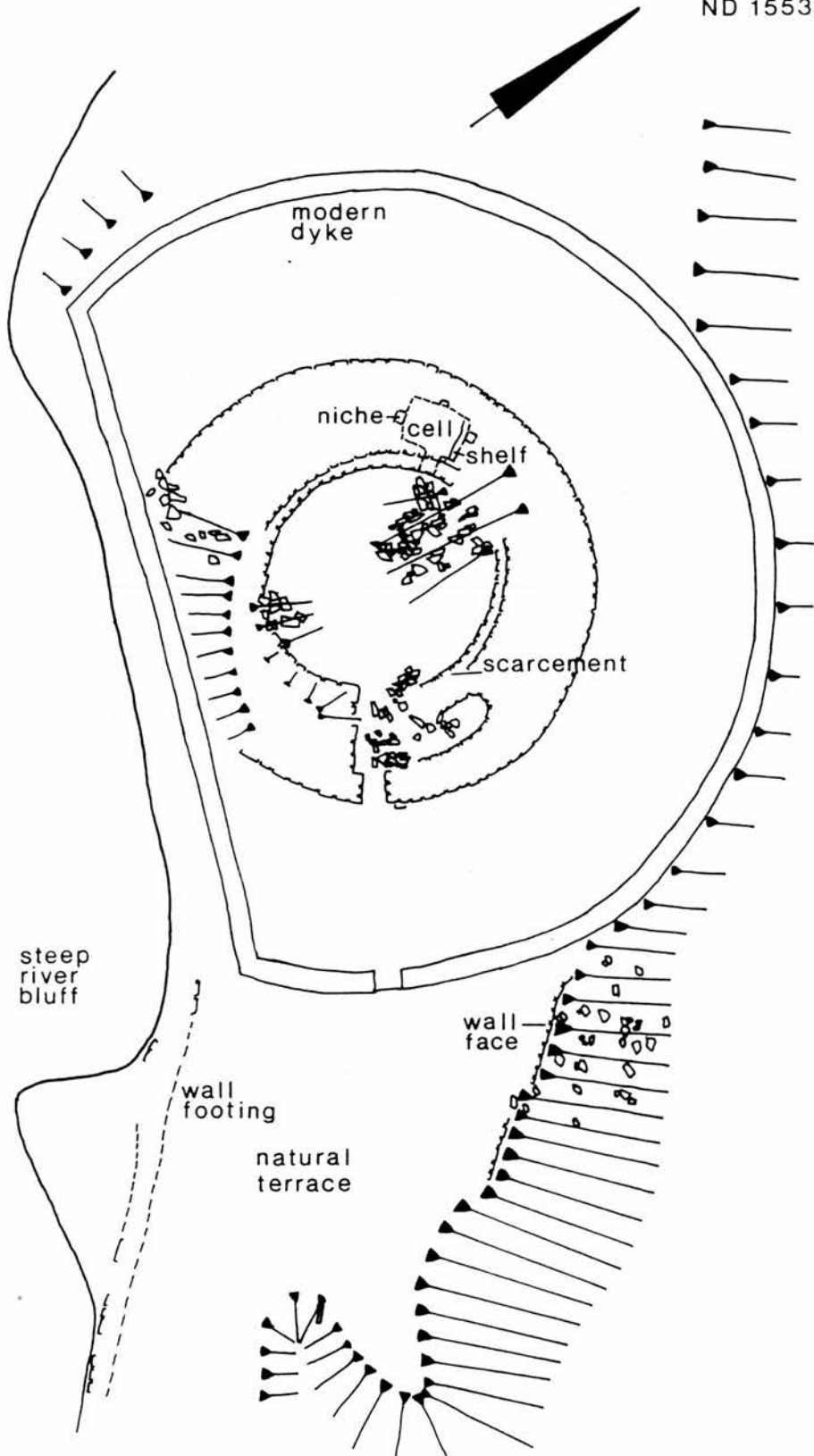
several nodules of iron ore mixed with animal remains;

an iron spear head; and

a quantity of burnt grain, bere and oats.

Apart from the burnt grain which is recorded as being found close to the wall and on the clay bottom, no contexts for the finds are recorded. Mr Sinclair noted during the excavation that the effect of intense heat was discernible on the interior walls.

Dunbeath
ND 155304



CS.WS 7.4.85

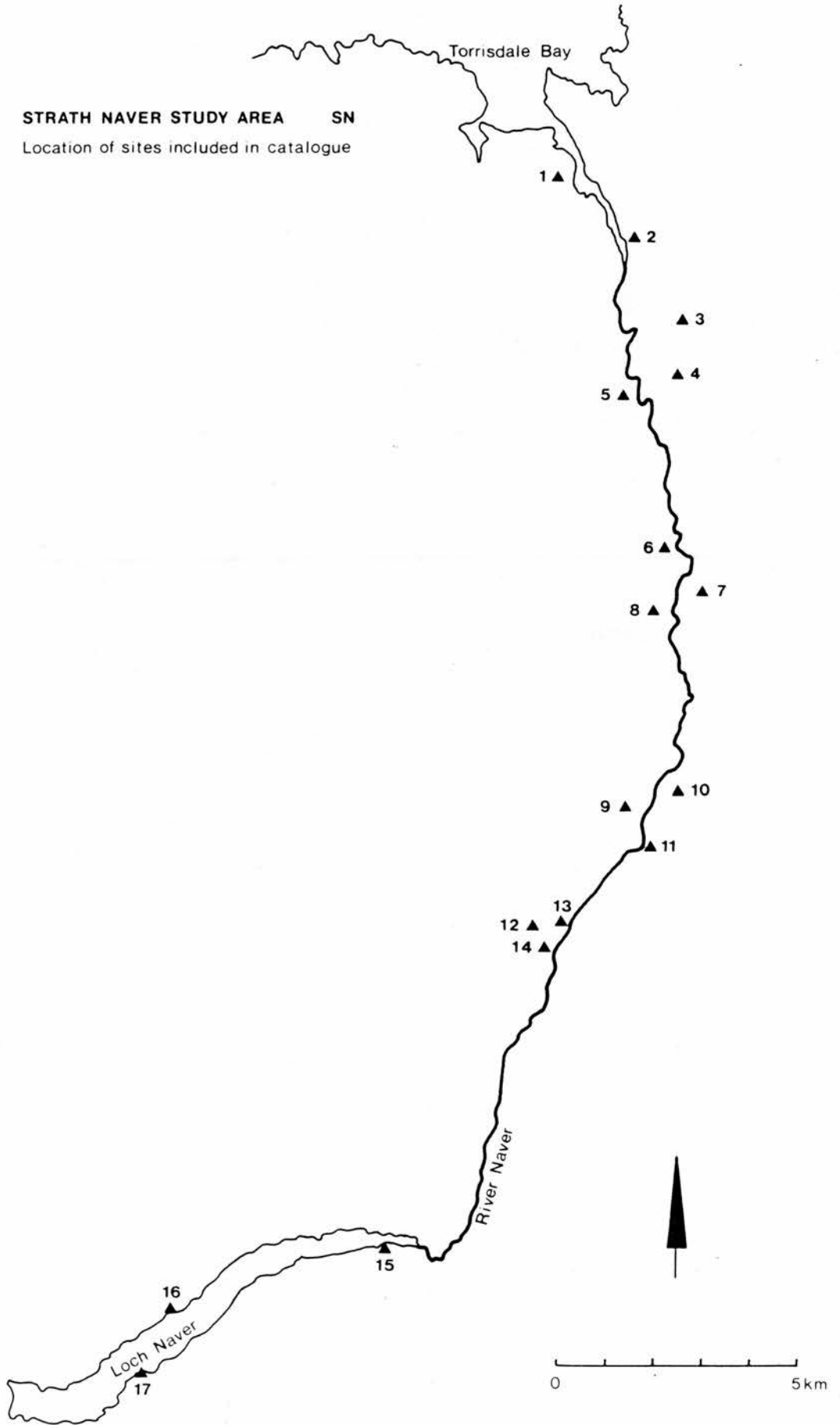
0 5m

STRATH NAVER

Strath Naver Study Area

SN 1	The Sandy Dun	NC 6973 6097
SN 2	Achcoillenaborgie	NC 7139 5942
SN 3	Allt a'Chasteil	NC 7235 5752
SN 4	Skelpick	NC 7239 5548
SN 5	Cnoc Dalveghouse	NC 7168 5539
SN 6	Dun Carnachaidh	NC 7213 5269
SN 7	Dun Viden	NC 7265 5188
SN 8	Dun Chealamy	NC 7199 5140
SN 9	Skaill	NC 7135 4744
SN 10	Eilean Garbh	NC 7201 4732
SN 11	Inshlampie	NC 7159 4657
SN 12	Langdale Burn	NC 6926 4496
SN 13	The Tulloch	NC 6972 4494
SN 14	Langdale Dun	NC 6948 4467
SN 15	Coill' Ach a'Chuil	NC 6585 3815
SN 16	Grummore	NC 6107 3669
SN 17	Dun Creagach	NC 6046 3558

STRATH NAVER STUDY AREA SN
Location of sites included in catalogue



SN 1

The Sandy Dun

NC 6973 6097

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 66 SE 2

1 Anderson 1890, 191, Parish of Farr, no 3

2 Mackay 1905-6, 132

3 RCAHMS 1911a, 61, no 184

4 Young 1961-2, 188-9, no 23

5 Mercer 1981, 20-1, and 107, no 7

This broch is located at about 75m OD on a rocky spur forming part of a terrace overlooking the mouth of the River Naver from the W. There are precipitous natural slopes all around the site except in the W, where the approach to the site is more gradual. Below the broch to the E on the Invernaver raised beach, there is an extensive settlement formed of enclosures, hut circles, and cairns.

The broch is badly ruined and has suffered a major reconstruction. The loose tumble has been largely cleared from the interior, and used to build up the inner face of the broch, obscuring the scarcement and other features in the wall. The date of the reconstruction is not known, but it has not been noted in the past by any authority. The stones used in the reconstruction look very fresh and unweathered, and in places they can be seen to be placed on top of the turf layer which had been growing on the previously exposed scarcement. It is therefore relatively simple to distinguish the area of reconstruction, which is shown on the survey plan. The reconstruction may have been intended to provide an animal enclosure or shelter, but the job has been very thorough. In the E half of the broch interior slabs have been arranged around a small stone filled depression, possibly to serve as a picnic spot with a fireplace.

The reconstruction has largely taken place on the inner part of the broch wall. It is possible to distinguish the scarcement because of its turf cover, and the original inner face because of the different appearance of some of its stones. The original inner face of the broch is fully traceable except on the NW arc, where the modern reconstruction veers sharply away from the expected line of the face. The interior area of the broch measures 8.2m N/S by 8m. The scarcement

was recorded by the RCAHMS in 1911 as being 10 inches (0.3m) wide, and appearing as a projecting ledge. The projecting stones can still be traced on the SW and S arcs under the reconstruction. During survey a small section of the reconstructed walling was cleared to measure the depth of the scarcement in the S. It proved to be 0.5m, slightly more than the measurement given by the RCAHMS.

The outer face of the broch is only intermittently traceable, but a strong batter is visible in the S, and the face survives 6 courses high in the SE. The wall has been up to 4.3m thick in the S. There has been an entrance into the broch in the NW, the direction of easiest approach to the site. The position of the entrance is shown by a gap in the wall debris, and the break in the reconstruction lies close to it. An in situ lintel, apparently the outermost, is just visible and is in use as a step up onto the present wall top. The passage walls and the inner end of the entrance are not visible. The presence of the in situ lintel, largely buried in debris, indicates the probability that the passage is intact under the debris. To the N of the line of the entrance passage, and partly lying across it, there are a number of slabs in line, which may constitute the outer wall of a gallery crossing above the entrance passage. The structural features are too ruined in this area to be certain of this identification however.

In the SE, directly opposite the entrance, there is another entry into the wall. It is now completely filled as part of the reconstruction, but its presence can be detected by one particular slab sitting vertically in the blocking. Along the line of this entry, at about the middle point of the broch wall, a flat slab can be seen standing on end near the edge of the reconstructed area. This may be a fallen lintel. Neither the walls of the entry, nor its outer terminus are traceable. It is therefore not clear whether the feature is a second entrance to the broch, giving access to and from the terrace outside, or whether it is an entry to an intramural feature such as a stair or cell. Curving to the N of the line of the entry, on the present wall top, there is an indistinct trace of what may be the inner wall of an intramural gallery or stairwell.

Outside the broch to the W, S and SE there are small terrace areas between the broch and the edge of the very steep natural slopes. The W

terrace, which measures 7.5m by 4m, has been edged with a wall, which probably abutted the very large rock outcrop at the S end of the terrace. The foundation of the wall, which seems to have been very wide, can be traced some 2.5m downslope from the edge of the terrace. In the W a 1.5m length of the outer face of this wall, exhibits a very strong batter, probably accentuated by gradual slippage on the steep slope. There is no clear evidence of walling around the margin of the terrace to the S of the broch, but the amount and distribution of tumble in the area suggests that there has been a wall. The precipitous slopes to the S and E would seem to make a marginal wall imperative, if the terrace was to be used safely for any purpose.



CS.WS 1.6.85

0 5m

SN 2

Achcoillenaborgie

NC 7139 5942

NMRS Class: Broch (remains)

NMRS Card: NC 75 NW 2

1 RCAHMS 1911a, 61, no 183

The site of the broch of Achcoillenaborgie lies just to the E of the road from Bettyhill to Skelpick on the E side of Strath Naver. Unlike most of the other brochs in the strath, Achcoillenaborgie is not located to take particular advantage of natural defence. It sits at the wide N end of a natural ridge at only 15m OD, just above the flood plain of the river, which is only about 100m away to the W. There are natural slopes to the W, N and E of the site, but the broch could not be said to have strong natural defence. In view of its location it is perhaps not surprising that the broch is badly ruined. There are traces of later settlement in and around the site, and nearby there is relatively modern settlement.

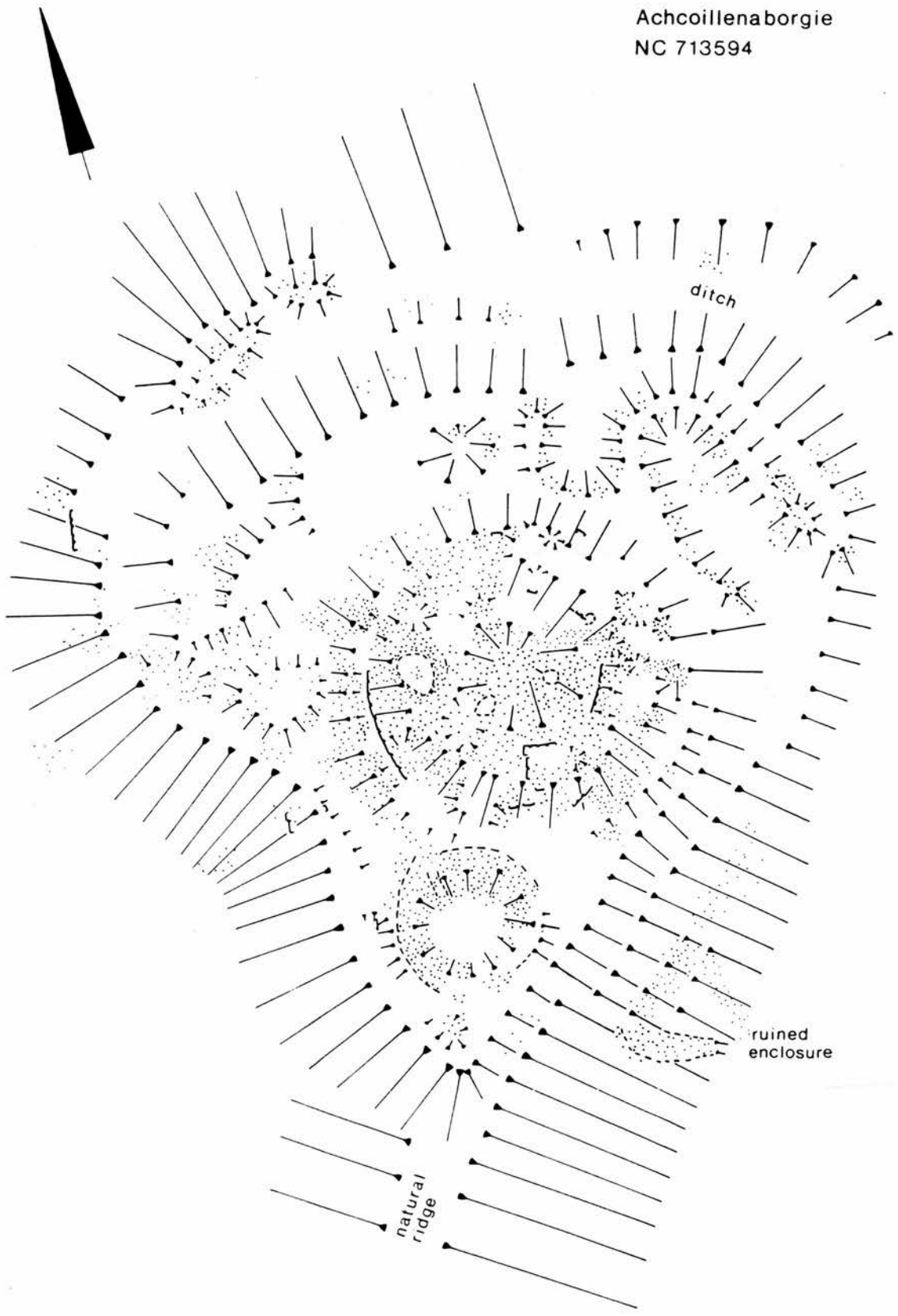
The inner face of the broch wall is traceable intermittently in the NE, E and S, and is sufficiently preserved to allow measurement of the diameter of the broch, which is 8.4m N/S. The outer face of the broch wall is traceable only in the SW, where it has been revealed by an excavation trench for a length of 6.8m, surviving 2 courses high. There are some intermittent outer facing stones on the NE arc, which indicate that the wall may have been 4.2m wide at base at this point. In the S there appears to have been an entry into the broch wall, indicated by a length of revetment at right angles to the inner face. It may represent the E wall of an entry to an intramural feature. The RCAHMS (1911) recorded that the entrance to the broch was in the N, with a chamber in the wall about 8 feet (2.4m) to the W of it. There is no trace of the entrance or chamber, although there is a depression in the tumble at the possible site of the chamber. The N arc is the logical place for the broch entrance, in line with the easiest approach to the site.

There are various structures around the broch which the RCAHMS identified as outbuildings. It is not clear that any of them are in fact contemporary with the broch. On the contrary they would appear to be later. To the SSW of the broch on a small promontory with natural

slopes to W and E, there is a badly ruined, roughly circular enclosure about 8m in external diameter, appearing as a ring of loose stones. No obvious entrance into it is visible, although there is a slight hollow in its N arc. To the W of the broch there is a terrace covered in loose stone and irregular breaks of slope, which may indicate the presence of buildings under the turf cover. No coherent pattern can be made out. There may have been a wall edging the W terrace, indicated by the remains at two points of an outward facing revetment at 1.5-2.5m below the terrace margin.

The easiest approaches to the broch are from the N and E, and the site seems to have had artificial external defences on these arcs. In the NW there are the remains of a slight ditch with a ragged rampart outside of it, apparently created to oversteepen the natural slope at this point. In the NE there appears to be a ditch with an external rampart and a second ditch outside of it. The line of the inner ditch is obscured by later rectangular enclosures. The E enclosure seems to be built in the ditch and its NE side partly overlies the rampart. There is another ruined enclosure built on the natural slope SE of the broch, and a further enclosure lies off the site to the N.

Achcoillenaborgie
NC 713594



CS. WS 30.5.85



SN 3

Allt a'Chasteil

NC 7235 5752

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 75 NW 6

1 Anderson 1890, 191, Parish of Farr, no 4

2 RCAHMS 1911a, 60-1, no 182

3 Young 1961-2, 185, no 24

This broch is located at about 75m OD on a steep sided knoll projecting from the E side of Strath Naver. The site commands a fine view across the valley, and is exactly opposite a natural pass through the W side of the strath, providing a routeway to the W. The modern road to Tongue runs through this pass. By contrast, the view from the knoll along the strath is restricted, the visibility to the N and S being impeded by projecting spurs.

The slopes of the knoll on which the broch is located, drop very steeply to the valley floor in the W and S. In the N the knoll slopes away less steeply to a lochan, and in the E to a natural col behind the knoll. The broch sits towards the S side of the knoll, with a small terrace in front of it to the W, and a similar terrace behind it to the E.

The broch is well preserved. The inner and outer faces of the wall survive virtually intact, the outer face standing to 7 courses in the NW with a strong batter. The wall width varies from 4.8m at base in the E, to 6m at base in the SE, where the wall may be bulging downslope because of pressure from the tumbled stones. In the S the outer face seems to be displaced about 0.4m downslope. It is not clear whether this is as a result of pressure, whether it indicates the existence of a buttress, or whether the wall may originally have deviated for some reason.

The entrance to the broch is in the W, and is almost fully preserved. A door check is in place on the S side of the passage, consisting of an upright slab, about 1.3m from the outer end. There are no lintels in place over the passage, but two large stones lying outside on the tumble seem to be fallen lintels. The outer one is a massive triangular block and must have been the outermost lintel, similar to

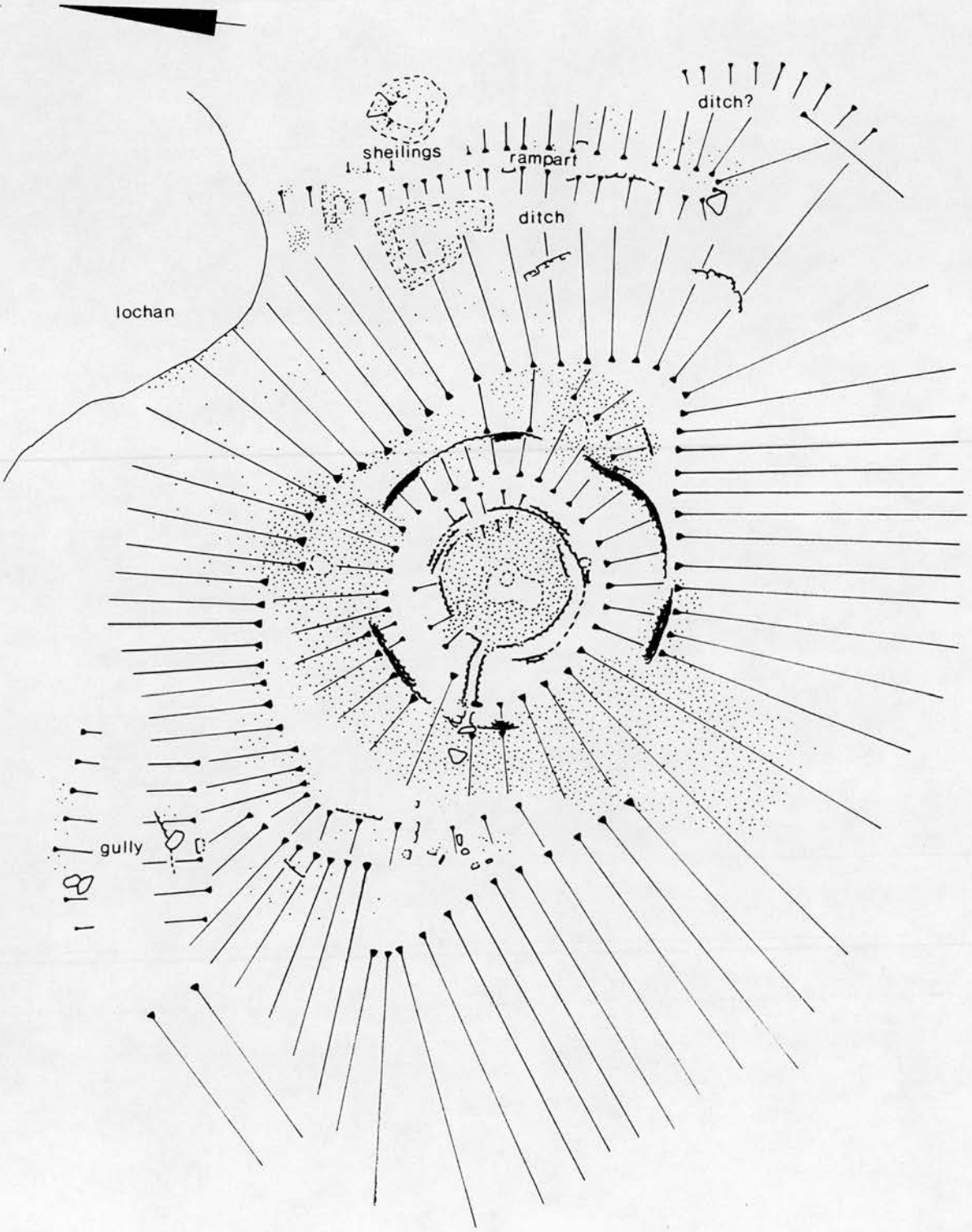
the one still in place at Dun Dornadilla in Sutherland (NC 456450). The N side of the entrance passage is 5.4m long, and curves markedly inwards at its inner end. The passage seems to have been extended when a secondary lining wall was built around the broch interior. The original length of the passage was probably about 4.4m, which is the surviving length of the S side. There is no sign of a joint on the extended N side, and it may be that the passage wall on this side was completely rebuilt. Indeed the masonry appears much fresher than that on the S side.

In the broch interior three inward facing revetments are visible above the rubble, one behind the other at increasingly higher levels. They are particularly evident in the N and S. The innermost face is that of an irregular lining wall, which has reduced the interior diameter to 8m N/S. The median face is the lower part of the original inner face of the broch. The original diameter at floor level would appear to have been about 10m. The third face at the highest level is formed by an intake in the broch wall to form a scarcement, which varies in width from 0.3m in the SE to 0.5m in the N. No galleries or cells are visible in the heather covered wall top, nor any possible entrances to such intramural features.

On the terrace outside the broch in the W there are indistinct traces of some structure. It is reduced to a few stones at foundation level, and it is not clear whether it was contemporary with the broch, possibly forming some additional protection for the entrance. An occasional length of outward facing revetment and some scattered rubble may indicate that the W terrace was protected by a wall or walls. In what appears to be a natural gully to the NW of the broch, there is the footing of a substantial wall. It is not clear how this feature relates to the broch. Behind the broch on the E terrace there is also a trace of an insubstantial structure. This may simply be the remains of a later structure such as a sheiling. Access to the terrace behind the broch, when the broch was in occupation, could only have been achieved around the N circuit of the broch wall.

The easiest approaches to the broch are from the N and E, but even here the slopes of the knoll are very steep. The lochan to the N of the knoll, which was probably there in Iron Age times, provides some

additional protection on that side. To the E, at the base of the knoll, a shallow ditch and rampart cross the level ground between the lochan in the N and the very steep slopes in the S. Some later enclosures, probably sheilings, obscure the ditch and rampart near the lochan. Outside the S end of the rampart there appears to have been a second ditch, but as it continues down the steep slope, it may only be a natural gully.



CS.WS 31.5.85



SN 4

Skelpick

NC 7239 5548

NMRS Class: Not an Antiquity

NMRS Card: NC 75 NW 12

1 Stuart 1866-8, 296

2 Anderson 1890, 191, Parish of Farr, no 5

Based on Stuart (1866-8) Anderson recorded a broch at Skelpick about a mile above the broch of Rhinovie, that is, Allt a'Chasteil (SN 3). The broch was recorded as being near the house of Skelpig (Skelpick) and on the shoulder of the opposite hill. The OS noted several mounds in the area, none of which were thought to be antiquities. There is a horned cairn on the ridge to the E of Skelpick Lodge (which may be the house of Skelpig), whereas Cnoc Dalveghouse (SN 5) is located to the SW of Skelpick Lodge on the other side of the strath. Stuart's description could refer to either of these. In any event there would not in fact appear to be a broch in the vicinity of Skelpick, although it would not have been unreasonable to have expected one at this location in terms of general broch distribution within the strath.

SN 5

Cnoc Dalvegghouse

NC 7168 5539

NMRS Class: Defended Enclosure/Homestead NMRS Card: NC 75 NW 14

The site of Cnoc Dalvegghouse, previously classed by the OS as a broch, then a dun, and now identified as a defended enclosure/homestead in the NMRS, is located on the W side of Strath Naver on a terrace at about 40m OD, overlooking the river, but also overlooked from the valley side to the W. To the E of the site there is a steep natural slope down to the valley floor. To the SE the ground slopes away more gradually. To the W and N the terrace stretches away evenly to join the valley side, and the site is most easily approached from these directions.

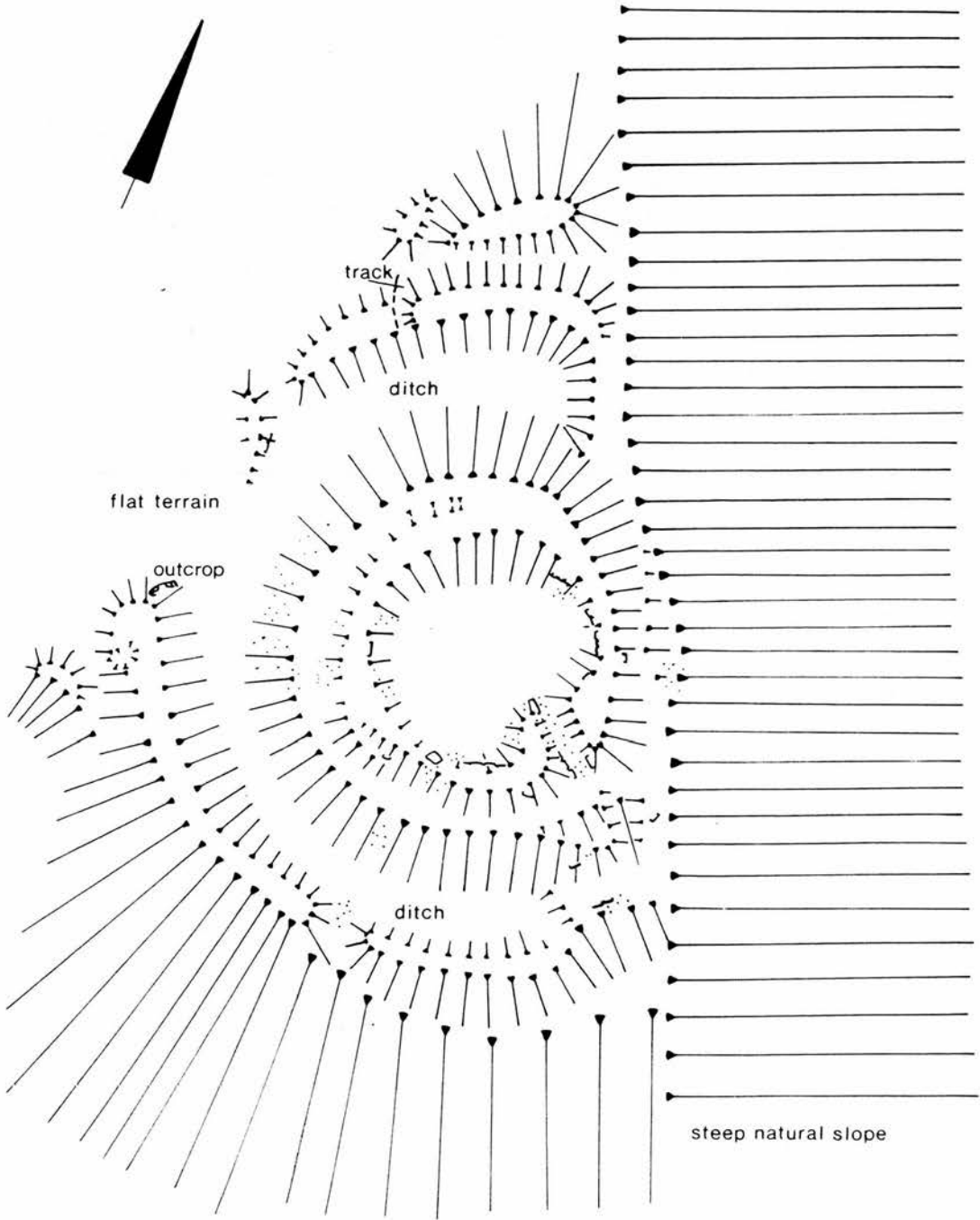
The site is located on the edge of the terrace to take advantage of the steep natural slope to the E. On its other sides the site is defended by a rampart and ditch complex except on the W arc, where there is a substantial break. As the W arc is the line of easiest approach, and there does not appear to be an entrance into the main structure at this point, an intended break in the defences here seems unaccountable. There may have been some destruction of the defences on the W arc, but it does appear that the break is original. The complex of artificial defences consists of a ditch and external rampart to the S and SW, and a ditch and two external ramparts to the N. There is a narrow break in the external rampart in the S.

The structure enclosed by the natural and artificial defences is obscured by turf and bracken. It consists of a relatively thin walled, roughly circular enclosure, with the wall thickened at an obvious entrance passage in the SE. This enclosure seems to be built onto, and partially dug into, a larger platform area defined by the enclosing ditch. The top of the platform is substantially raised above the natural ground surface. The platform is about 20.8m WNW/ESE by 20.2m, roughly circular, and composed of rubble, which protrudes here and there through the turf on the W. It is possible that there may be more than one phase of construction in the platform area, with the thin walled structure overlying earlier remains.

The thin walled enclosure has recently been identified by the OS as a

Kilphedir Hut II type house. The wall of the enclosure is 1.8m thick in the NE, where the presence of both inner and outer facing stones allows it to be measured. At the entrance to the enclosure in the SE, the wall is 5.3m thick, and the passage is 1.1m wide at its outer end. The enclosure is 18.6m in diameter overall WNW/ESE. Only occasional facing slabs of the wall are visible through the thick vegetation cover.

The approach to the enclosure entrance was via a sloping gully from the SE, cut into the side of the platform. This entrance gully seems to have had some protection from flanking walls placed at right angles to it, of which occasional facing stones are visible. The ditch curving round the S arc of the site terminates about 6m from the edge of the steep natural slope to the E, providing a causeway approach to the enclosure entrance. It is not clear whether this was the original terminus of the ditch, or whether it may have been filled at this point to provide access to a second phase construction on the central platform.



CS.WS 27.9.85

0 10m

SN 6

Dun Carnachaidh

NC 7213 5269

NMRS Class: Broch with Outworks

NMRS Card: NC 75 SW 8

1 Mackay 1905-6, 132

2 Anderson 1890, 191, Parish of Farr, no 6

3 RCAHMS, 1911a, 60, no 180

This broch is located at about 45m OD on a terrace on the W side of Strath Naver. The terrace slopes away steeply to the E, down to the flood plain of the River Naver. The broch sits at the top of the steep E slope, but the approach to the site from all other directions is over flat terrain. The site is overlooked from the side of the river valley to the W.

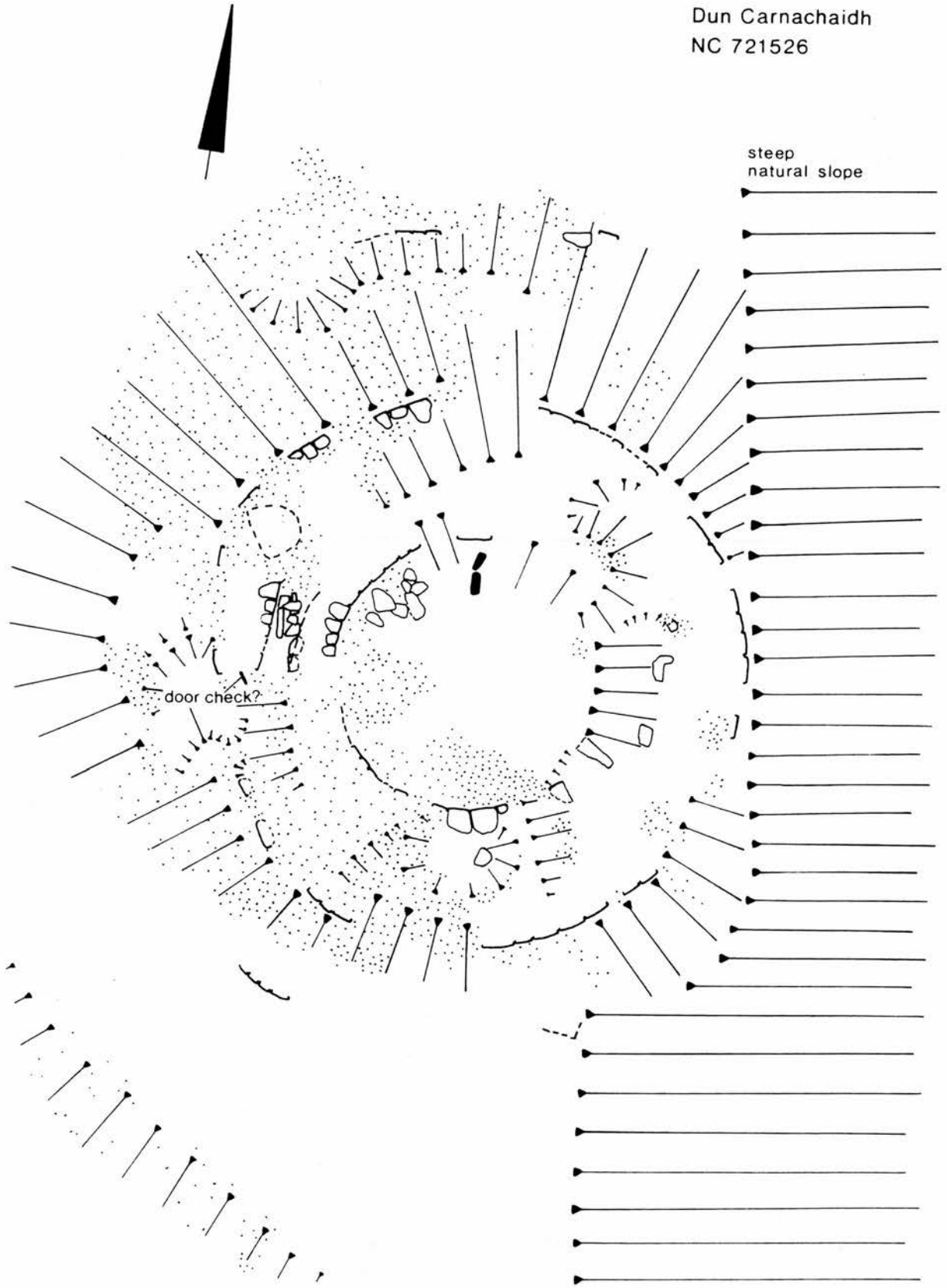
The broch appears as a mound of tumbled stone, which has been severely robbed, probably to build a nearby dyke. Much of the outer face of the wall is traceable, as a line of massive boulders with 2 courses visible in the SE. The inner face is less well preserved, but can be traced in the W and S. Where measurable, the wall varies from 4.8m in the S to 5m in the NW. The internal area of the broch is 9.2m N/S. In the W arc of the wall there are the remains of a gallery or cell. It is preserved on both faces, although the inner or E face is hidden by stones which have slipped forward. The preserved length of gallery or cell is 3m, and it is 1m wide at its S end, and 1.3m at its N end.

There is no obvious trace of the entrance to the broch. The OS presumed that it was in the N of the structure, and was hidden in debris. It may in fact have been located in the W arc of the broch wall, passing the S end of the intramural gallery or cell. To the SW of the end of this feature there is an earthfast upright slab, from around which stones have been cleared. It is possible that the slab may be a door check on the N side of an entrance passage, but the remainder of the wall in this area is too badly quarried to be certain.

There would appear to have been an outer wall, protecting the broch at least on its easily approachable N and SW arcs. The presence of such a wall is indicated by a spread of rubble N and NW of the broch, within

which a 2.5m length of outer face can be seen. To the SSW of the broch there is an isolated curve of outward facing revetment, one course high, and 6m beyond it there is an isolated, rubble covered, gentle break of slope. It is not clear which of these latter features may represent the line of an outer wall, but some form of outwork is indicated. There is no evidence, as suggested by the OS, that the outer wall fully encircled the broch, although it is logical to expect such a wall to have done so. Given the external defences obvious at many of the other broch sites in the strath, and the vulnerability of Dun Carnachaidh from the N, W, and S, the site is unusual in not having more artificial defences to complement and augment the strong natural defence of its E flank.

Dun Carnachaidh
NC 721526



CS.WS 22.5.85

0 5m

SN 7

Dun Viden

NC 7265 5188

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 75 SW 11

1 *Anderson 1890, 191, Parish of Farr, no 7*

2 *Mackay 1905-6, 132*

3 *RCAHMS 1911a, 60, no 181*

4 *Young 1961-2, 189, no 25*

This broch is located on the E side of Strath Naver at about 30m OD on the edge of a precipitous drop down to the haughlands of the river. The broch sits on a knoll which slopes steeply in all directions, but is steepest towards the river. On the sides away from the river the knoll appears to be stepped, and it is not clear whether this is fully natural or the result of sculpting to oversteepen the natural slopes.

The broch is badly ruined and has probably been robbed for the pre-clearance settlement below it to the E and SE. It appears as a mound of rubble, dished in the centre, and partially overgrown with heather on its S half. The outer face of the wall is traceable intermittently around much of the circuit, surviving as 1-2 courses of massive boulders. The inner face is traceable only on the E arc, and survives for a length of 2m in the NE. The wall width in the NE is about 4.8m and the overall diameter of the structure is 19m W/E, although the remnants of the outer face do not describe a perfect circle.

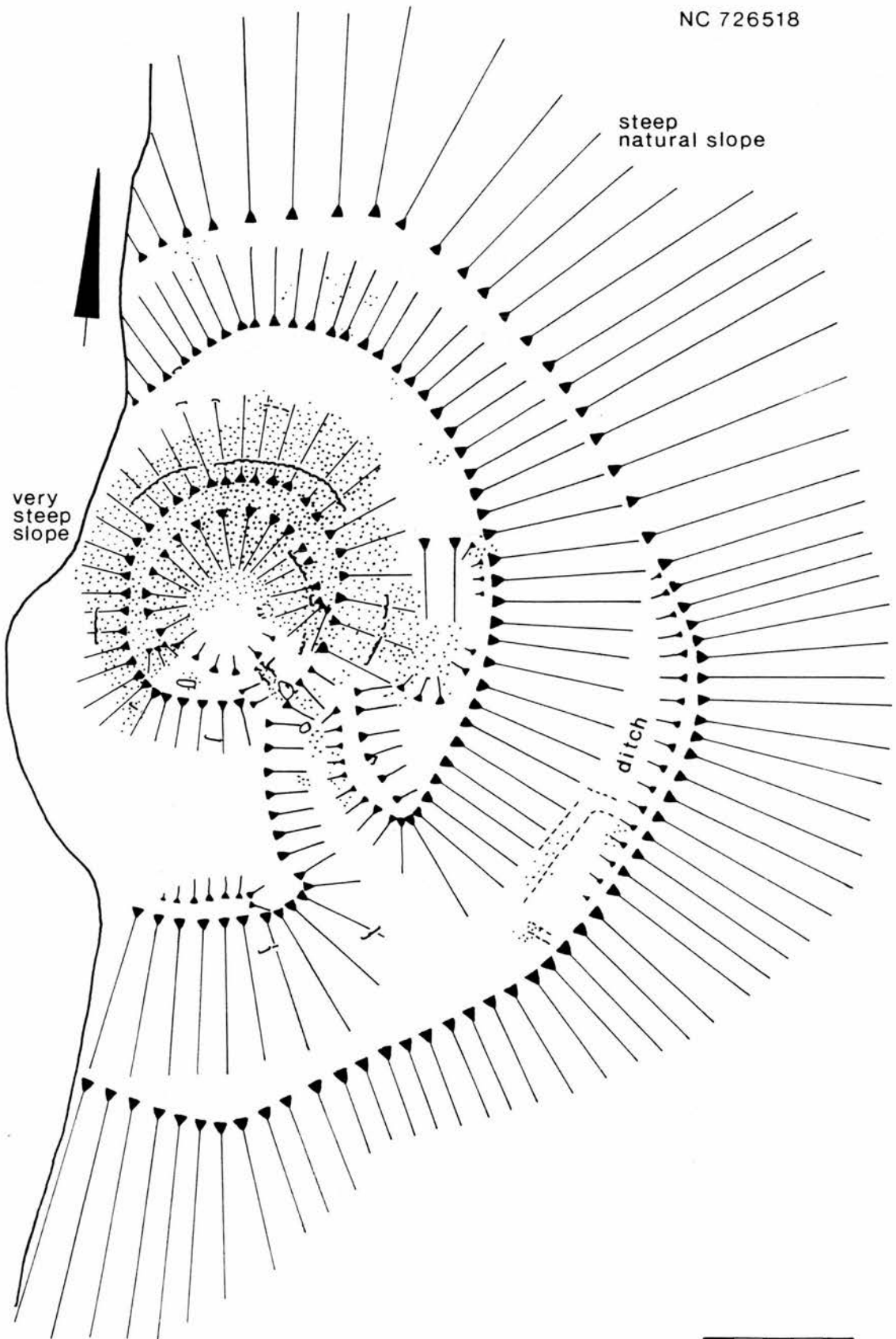
The entrance to the broch has been in the SE, where the inner end of the passage is visible. It is about 0.8m wide and appears to narrow towards the interior, where it is obscured by rubble. The outer end of the passage is ruined. To the NE of the entrance there is a slight trace of an outward facing revetment in the wall debris, which may be the inner wall of a cell or gallery. The feature may however simply be a fortuitous arrangement of stones, as it trends eccentrically to the entrance, and is close to the projected line of the inner face of the broch.

Leading to the broch entrance there is a hollow way, flanked by a rampart to the E. Traces of rubble and a single facing stone on the E

side of the rampart indicate that it may have been stone revetted. Outside the broch to the S, E and N, there are terraces. The S terrace has the remains of a rampart or wall on its rim. Two lengths of outward facing revetment, down the steep side of the knoll below the S terrace, are further evidence for the existence of a marginal wall. There are also traces of a marginal wall edging the terrace to the E of the broch.

The knoll top containing the broch and its adjacent terraces falls away steeply to a second terrace area, which may be artificial. It is certainly accentuated to the E of the broch by ditching. The ditch was presumably intended to steepen the approach to the broch from the E by the throwing out of material from the ditch onto the slope below. The terrace may have been similarly created by excavation and the throwing out of material onto the downslope. At the S end of the ditch there are the vague footings of a later rectangular structure.

Dun Viden
NC 726518



CS.WS 24.5.85

0 10m

SN 8

Dun Chealamy

NC 7199 5140

NMRS Class: Broch with Outworks

NMRS Card: NC 75 SW 9

1 Anderson 1890, 191, Parish of Farr, no 8

2 Mackay 1905-6, 132

3 RCAHMS 1911a, 60, no 179

4 Young 1961-2, 189, no 26

The broch of Dun Chealamy is sited on the S edge of the ravine containing the Carnachaidh Burn, which flows E to join the River Naver. The broch is located at about 45m OD, and there is a precipitous drop of about 15m down to the burn. To the E of the broch there is another steep natural slope down to the floor of Strath Naver. The easiest approach to the broch is from the W and S, and a complex of ramparts and ditches has been drawn across this area. There is however an inexplicable gap between the end of these defences and the top of the steep slope to the E. There is a similar, but narrower gap between the defences and the edge of the ravine in the NW.

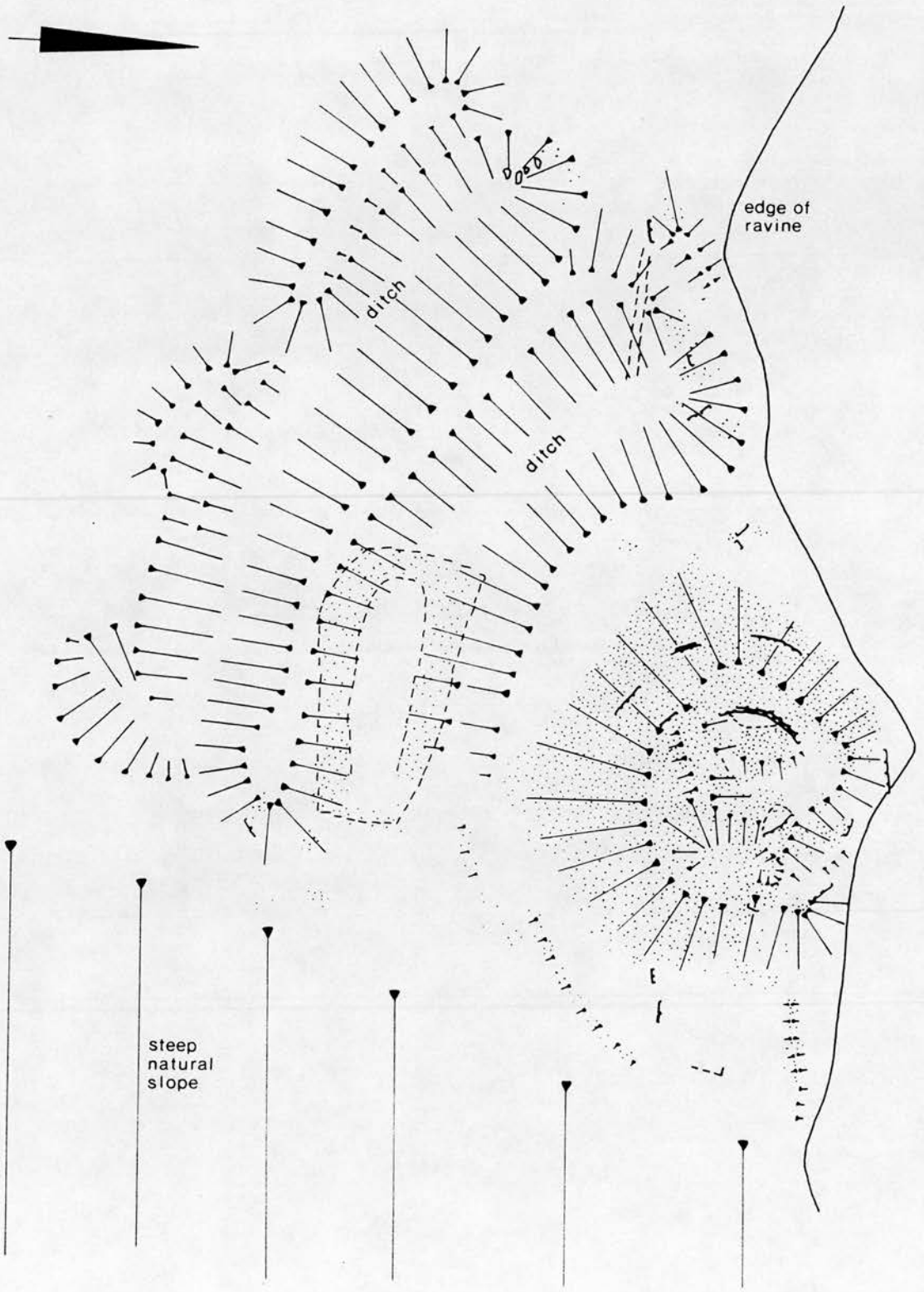
The broch is badly ruined. Mackay (1905-6) recorded that it had been pillaged in about 1903 for stone to build a bridge and a house. The outer face of the broch wall is traceable on the SW, W, N and NE arcs. In the N it projects over the edge of the ravine and must have been founded on a very steep slope at this point. The outer face generally survives only 1-2 courses high. The inner face of the broch wall is traceable only in the W and NE, giving a wall width of 3.8m in the W, and an internal diameter for the broch of 6.8m WSW/ENE. In the W arc of the wall an excavation in the tumble has revealed a scarcement, which is 0.3m wide. In the SW a length of outward facing revetment within the wall width, about 1m long, seems to be the inner wall of an intramural gallery. There is no trace of the entrance to the broch, although it does not appear to have been on the W arc. There seems little doubt that the ruins are those of a broch.

The external defences consist of a ditch, the edge of which is about 7-9m from the outer face of the broch, with a substantial rampart, a second ditch, and a second rampart outside of it. The ditches are about 10m wide, and the OS recorded that they were about 2m deep. The

outer ditch is in fact the deeper of the two. The inner ditch appears to have been stone revetted at its NW terminus, a point also noted by Young (1961-2). The first rampart may have been stone revetted, judging from a trace of a revetment appearing at its E end. The second rampart is set slightly back from the outer edge of the second ditch. It does not span the full length of the defences and is divided in two. It is not clear whether the breach is original, or a later cut to aid drainage in the area outside the defences to the S. The access between the ravine and the NW end of the defences has been flanked by a bank on the ravine side. A short length of revetment is visible at the base of this flanking mound. A later rectangular enclosure lies across the E end of the inner ditch.

The site of Dun Chealamy has commanding views along the strath in both directions. The broch of Dun Viden (SN 7) is in view on the opposite side of the strath.

Dun Chealamy
NC 719514



CS.WS 25.5.85

0 10m

SN 9

Skaill

NC 7135 4744

NMRS Class: Defensive Enclosure

NMRS Card: NC 74 NW 20

(possible broch remains)

This site is located on the W side of Strath Naver on the summit of a knoll at about 50m OD. The knoll is connected to the valley side on the W by a narrow ridge. There is very little to be seen at the site. From the road below the knoll to the E, there is an appearance of an artificial platform on top of the knoll, indicating the presence of some remains, but these are turf covered and obscured. The knoll top is sub-oval in shape and measures 20m E/W by 15m. On the W side of the knoll there is a slight rubbly counterscarp which may indicate the former existence of a wall around the summit. On the SW arc of the summit there is a shallow gully which may be the location of an entrance. A natural, narrow, upward curving ridge gives easy access to this point. No facing stones are visible anywhere on the summit.

Outside the knoll to the W, crossing the narrow ridge which connects the knoll to the valley side, there is a deep ditch cutting off an easy approach to the site. To the NE where the sides of the knoll slope steeply down to the valley floor, a shallow rampart seems to have been thrown out to steepen the slope even more.

Apart from the few features described above, there are no further indications of the function or nature of the site. There is no means of distinguishing the site as a broch, although the ditch is similar to that occurring at several broch sites in the strath. Such ditches also occur at sites in the strath which have been classed as defended homesteads by other authorities. The site has probably been thoroughly robbed for the nearby dykes and houses.

SN 10

Eilean Garbh

NC 7201 4732

NMRS Class: Broch (remains) with Outworks NMRS Card: NC 74 NW 3

This site was only recently discovered by the OS in the course of fieldwork. It is located on the E side of Strath Naver at about 75m OD on a precipitous rocky escarpment overlooking the river. Its N and W arcs are defended by sheer cliffs and very steep slopes.

At about 7m from the cliff edge, at the highest point of the site, there are the extremely denuded remains of a roughly circular building. The outer face of the structure is traceable in the NW and W, but less certainly elsewhere. The inner face of the structure is suggested by a very slight curve of bank on the W arc, and intermittent traces of face on the N and E arcs. A wall width is difficult to estimate, but appears to have been 3m or less on the N arc, but about 4.2m on the W arc. The overall diameter of the structure is about 15.7m, with an oval shaped internal area, measuring 9.6m N/S by 8.8m. The entrance to the structure is not discernible, but may be presumed to have lain in the SE arc opposite the causeway through the outer defences.

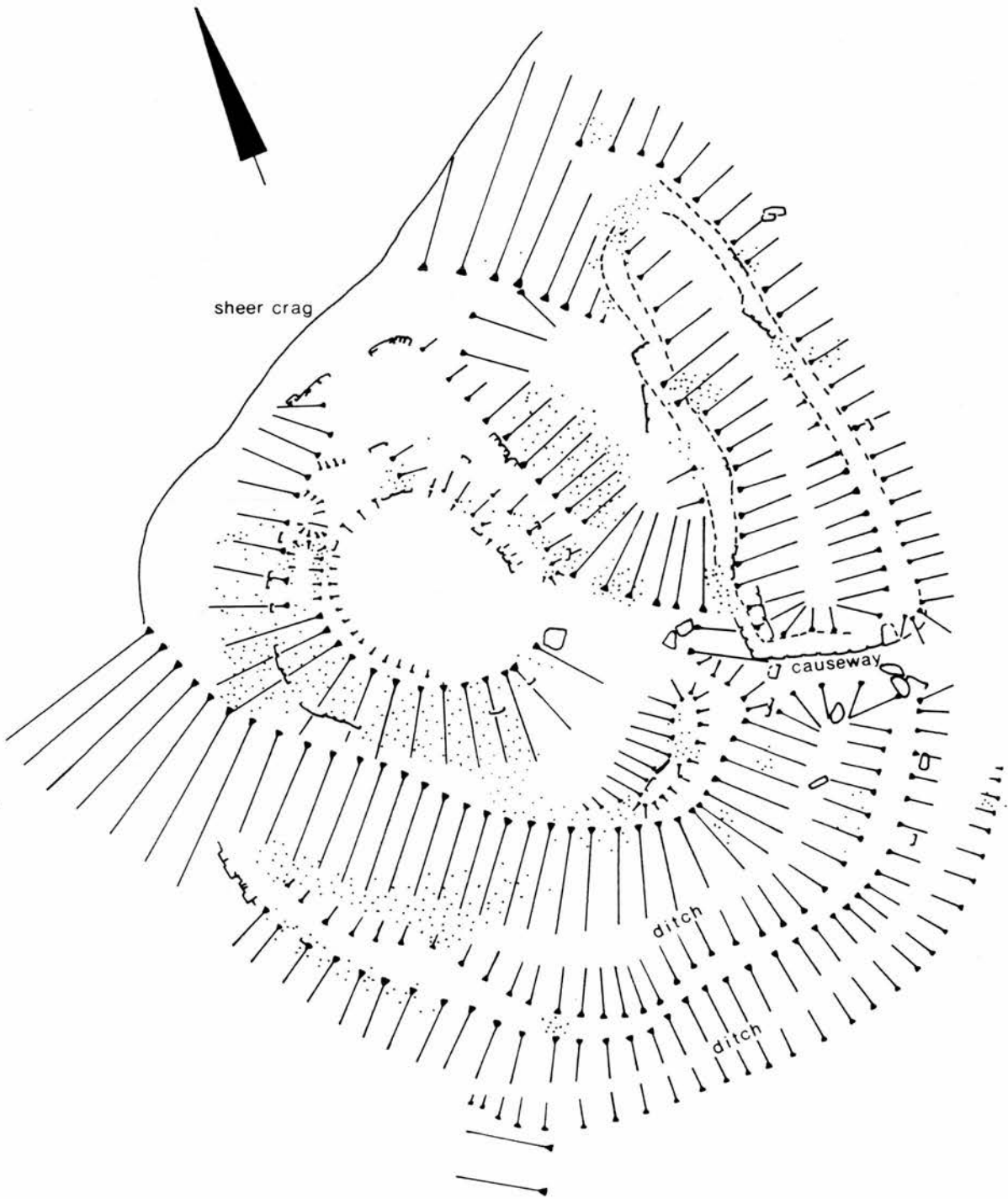
Outside the structure, crossing the lines of easiest approach to the site from the E and S, there is an impressive series of ramparts and ditches running from cliff edge to cliff edge. To the SE of the main structure there is a remnant of an inner rampart with a trace of stone facing on its inner side. A trail of small rubble indicates that this revetting probably continued to the W, edging the small terrace to the S of the main structure. The inner rampart terminates towards the NE at the causeway through the defences giving access to the main structure. It is not clear that the inner rampart continued after the break for the causeway, as the defences are overlain at this point by a very large, sub-rectangular enclosure. There is a suggestion of a continuation of the rampart in a slight backslope from the W wall of the enclosure, and some massive footings to the E of the W enclosure wall, located on the slope down into the enclosure interior. These footings would seem to be a base for a stone revetment unconnected with the enclosure wall.

Outside the inner rampart in the SE there is a ditch about 3m deep, which is continuous from the steep slopes SW of the broch to the causeway. The ditch continues N of the causeway, but at this point it has become the interior of the later enclosure. The causeway across the ditches is overlain by the S wall of the sub-rectangular enclosure. It appears that the causeway may originally have had flanking walls, of which only some massive slabs remain at the outer end on both sides.

Outside the ditch there is a second rampart which also fully encloses the site, except for a break at the causeway. To the N of the causeway the rampart serves as a base for the E wall of the sub-rectangular enclosure. Occasional facing slabs of a revetment are visible on the outer side of this second rampart. There is a second ditch, 1.2m deep, outside the second rampart, but on the S arc of the site only.

Eilean Garbh is an extremely strongly defended site. It is not clear that it should be classed as a broch. The main structure is too ruined for identification, but the wall would appear to be thinner and more irregular than might be expected. The style of the outer defences is similar to that at many of the broch sites in the strath, but Eilean Garbh seems to be particularly strongly defended even when compared with these. Its classification must remain ambiguous.

Eilean Garbh
NC 720473



CS.WS 23.5.85

0 10m

SN 11

Inshlampie

NC 7159 4657

NMRS Class: Broch (remains of)

NMRS Card: NC 74 NW 5

1 *Anderson 1890, 191, Parish of Farr, no 9*

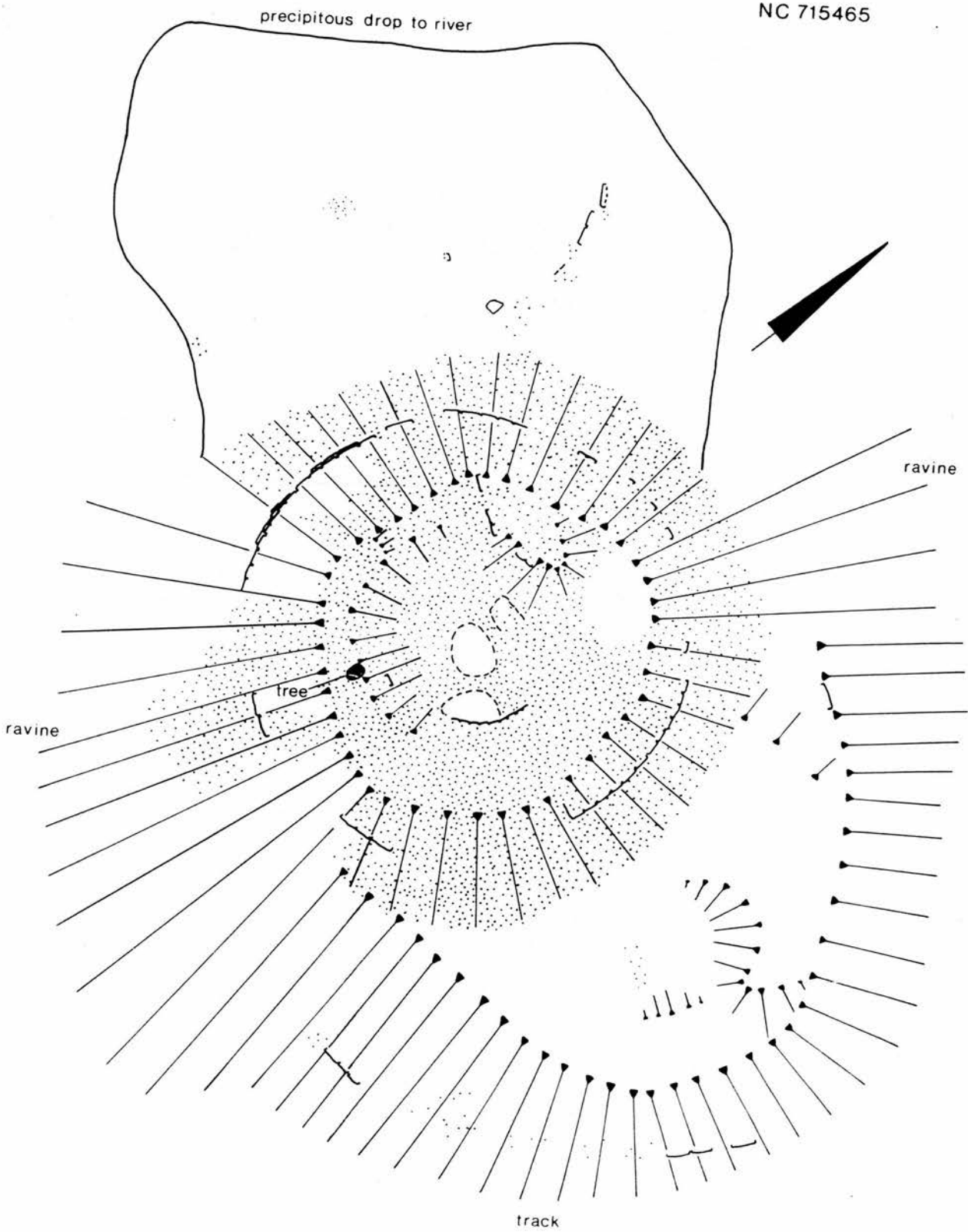
2 *RCAHMS 1911a, 60, no 178*

The broch of Inshlampie is located on the E side of Strath Naver at about 50m OD, about 14m back from the edge of a precipitous drop down to the River Naver. The broch sits on a promontory of land formed by deep ravines to the N and S. The N ravine may have been artificially deepened at its shallow E end to form a ditch. About 13m E of the broch there is a cut across the promontory through which a rough track runs. It is not clear whether the cut is natural or is artificial, a curving extension of the possible ditch at the end of the N ravine.

The broch appears as a partly heather covered mound of rubble, with a tree growing in its S arc. Much of the outer face of the wall is traceable, surviving 3 courses high in the SW with a distinct batter. The face is composed of very large, rough boulders. The overall diameter of the structure is about 15m. The inner face is not certainly traceable except in the SE, where an arc of the face has been exposed for about 2.5m, and is 4-5 courses high. The wall width in the E, the only point where it is measurable, is 4.1m. There is no definite trace of the entrance, although there is a suggestion of a face at right angles to the outer face in the wall debris in the WNW. The expected location of an entrance would be in the E arc of the broch.

There are two terraces outside the broch on the promontory, to the W between the broch and the precipitous drop to the river, and to the E between the broch and the possible ditch across the promontory. There is a suggestion of some structures on the W terrace, in the form of rubble under the vegetation cover. There is also a trace of a curving wall to the N side of the terrace. The chronological relationship of these structures to the broch is not clear. The E terrace has been revetted with stone on its outer edge. Massive foundations of a wall are visible near the bottom of the terrace slope in the S and ESE. There is also some loose rubble over the slope, and a suggestion of a broad bank on the rim of the terrace in the ESE. A massive outer wall might have been expected on the most vulnerable E flank.

Inshlampie
NC 715465



CS.WS 23.5.85

SN 12

Langdale Burn

NC 6926 4496

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 64 SE 1

1 Anderson 1890, 191, Parish of Farr, no 10

2 RCAHMS 1911a, 59-60, no 177

This broch is located at about 75m OD on a very steep sided knoll on the N bank of the Langdale Burn, a tributary of the River Naver flowing into it from the W. The burn is deeply incised in its lower reaches. The position of the broch is a commanding one, with a very good outlook in all directions.

The broch occupies the full summit of the knoll. A thick coating of rubble has slid down the very steep slopes to N and S. The broch is fairly badly ruined, but most of the circuit of the inner face of the wall is traceable, giving an internal diameter of 9.4m N/S. In the E the inner face stands 3 courses high above the rubble in the broch interior. The courses appear to be battered, but this may be caused by the face sliding back into the wall core. The outer face of the broch wall is visible, 1-2 courses high, on the NW and W arcs, with two other isolated lengths visible in the tumble in the S and SE, about 3m down the steep drop to the burn. The wall width is 4.9m in the SE, and 4.7m at the broch entrance in the W arc.

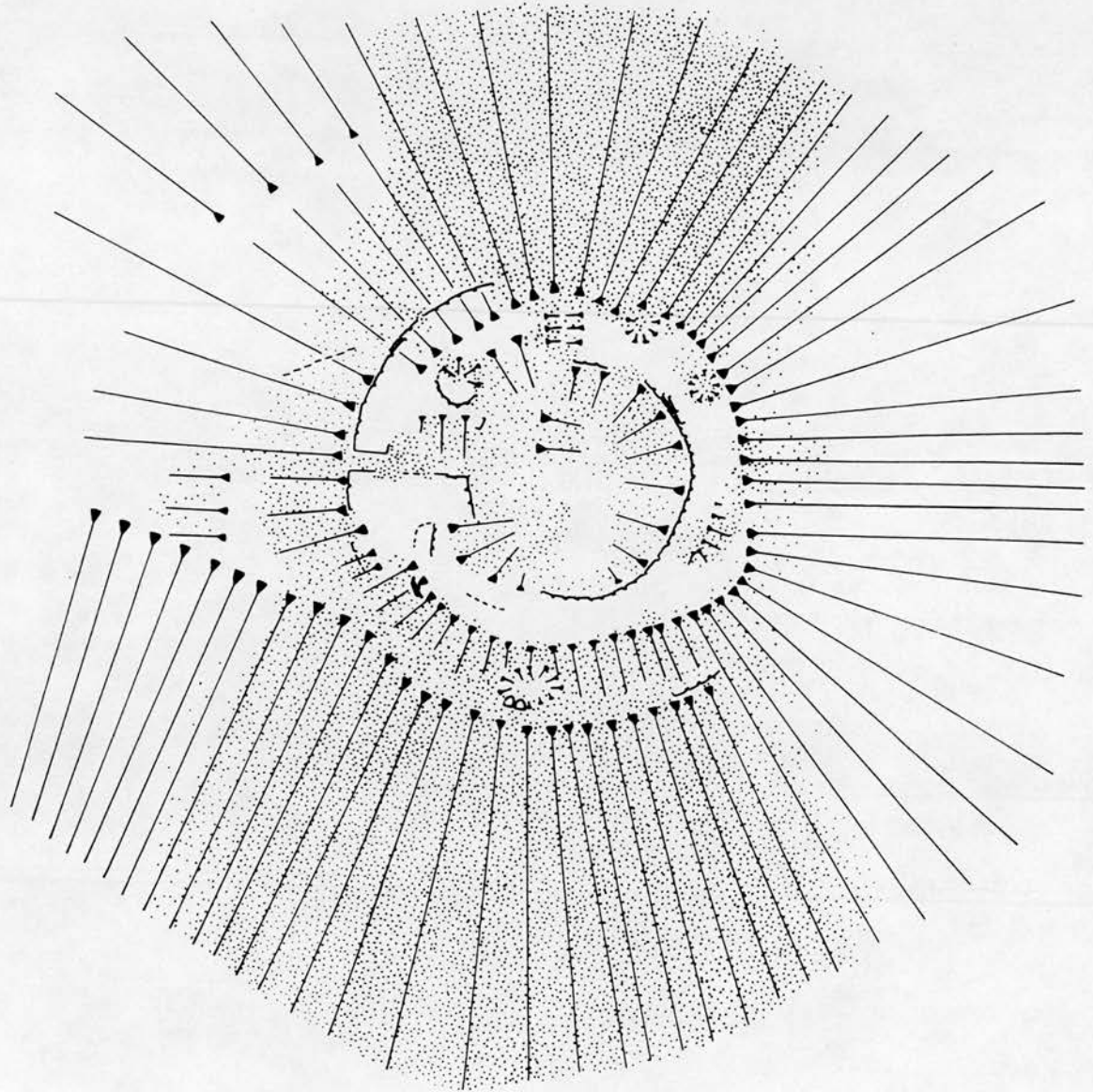
The S side of the entrance passage is relatively well preserved, with a rebate for a door visible at 0.8m from the inner face. The N side of the passage is badly ruined, but at 1.3m from the outer face there is another possible rebate for a door. The entrance may therefore have had two sets of door checks, but it is possible that the apparent check on the N side of the passage has resulted from stone robbing. The passage is 1.8m wide at its outer end.

Within the wall to the S of the entrance passage, there is a 1.9m length of outward facing revetment, trending eccentrically to the inner face of the broch. The face forms one side of an elongated hollow in the wall debris. It is not clear whether this is a remnant of an intramural gallery or cell, or a later construction in the rubble to form a shelter. To the SE of this elongated hollow there is

another possible length of outward facing revetment, 1.8m long and 2 courses high, slightly battered, which may be the inner face of a gallery. To the N of the entrance there is a hollow in the tumble with a length of curving face on its S arc. The face exhibits corbelling in the S and W, and would appear to be the remains of a cell in the wall.

Outside the entrance in the W there is a gentle, rubble covered slope, the easiest approach to the broch. To the NW of the entrance there is a suggestion of a possible wall face trending at an angle to the broch wall. This feature, plus a gentle break of slope WSW of the entrance covered in loose stone, may point to the presence of an outer wall serving as a protection for the entrance. No additional defences were necessary, or indeed possible, on the steep slopes all around the broch on every other arc.

Langdale Burn
NC 692449



CS.WS 22.5.85

0 5m

SN 13

The Tulloch

NC 6972 4494

NMRS Class: Earthwork

NMRS card: NC 64 SE 30

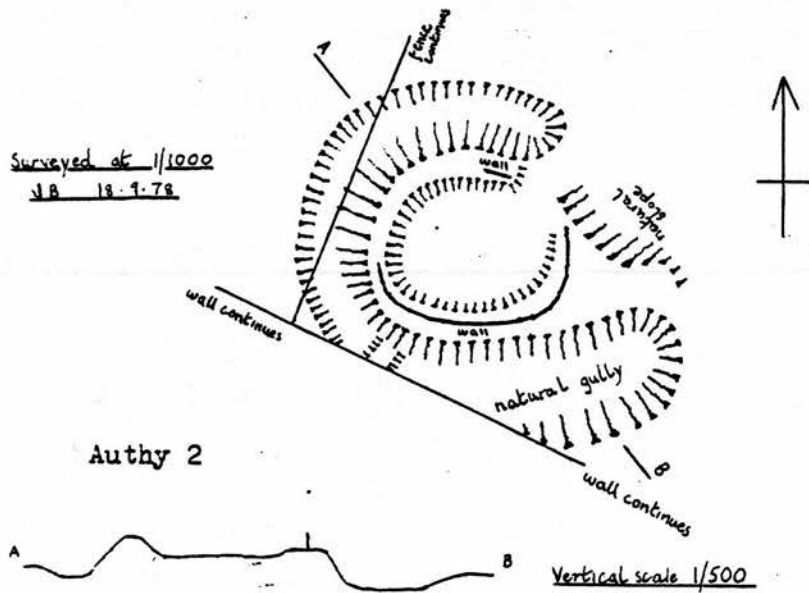
1 Pennant 1774, 345

2 RCAHMS 1911a, 64, no 194

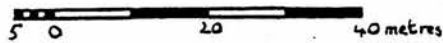
The RCAHMS (1911a) recorded a fortified enclosure at Syre, known locally as "General Leslie's Fort". The enclosure is located at 45m OD to the E of the B871 which runs through the strath, and at the edge of the alluvial flat of the valley floor. The enclosure is circular, defended by a ditch, almost 11m wide and about 1m deep. Inside the ditch there is a bank or rampart, about 3m high, surmounted by a drystone wall about 4.5m thick. The enclosure is about 16m in diameter internally. The ditch and rampart have been destroyed on the E arc of the enclosure, and the RCAHMS recorded that the interior of the enclosure was being cultivated in 1909. Access to the enclosure is by causeways in the S and NE.

Pennant (1774) noted the enclosure as being the remains of a druidical temple, a circle of 100ft diameter, surrounded with a trench, so that the earth formed a bank, with a stone erected in the midst of it like a pillar. He also noted that the site was under cultivation.

The name "General Leslie's Fort" might have implied a much later fortification, possibly associated with the Jacobite rebellions in the Highlands, were it not that Pennant's account, indicates a site of some antiquity by the time of his tour in 1769. This enclosure should perhaps be seen as being medieval in date, possibly akin to the Ring of Castlehill (EC 15) in the East Coast Study area in Caithness. Its location on the strath floor separates it very distinctly from the other defended sites in the strath, mainly brochs, which are located well above its level, on kame terraces on the strath sides.



O.S. 495



Source: NMRS Card

SN 14

Langdale Dun

NC 6948 4467

NMRS Class: Possible Homestead (Dun)

NMRS Card: NC 64 SE 4

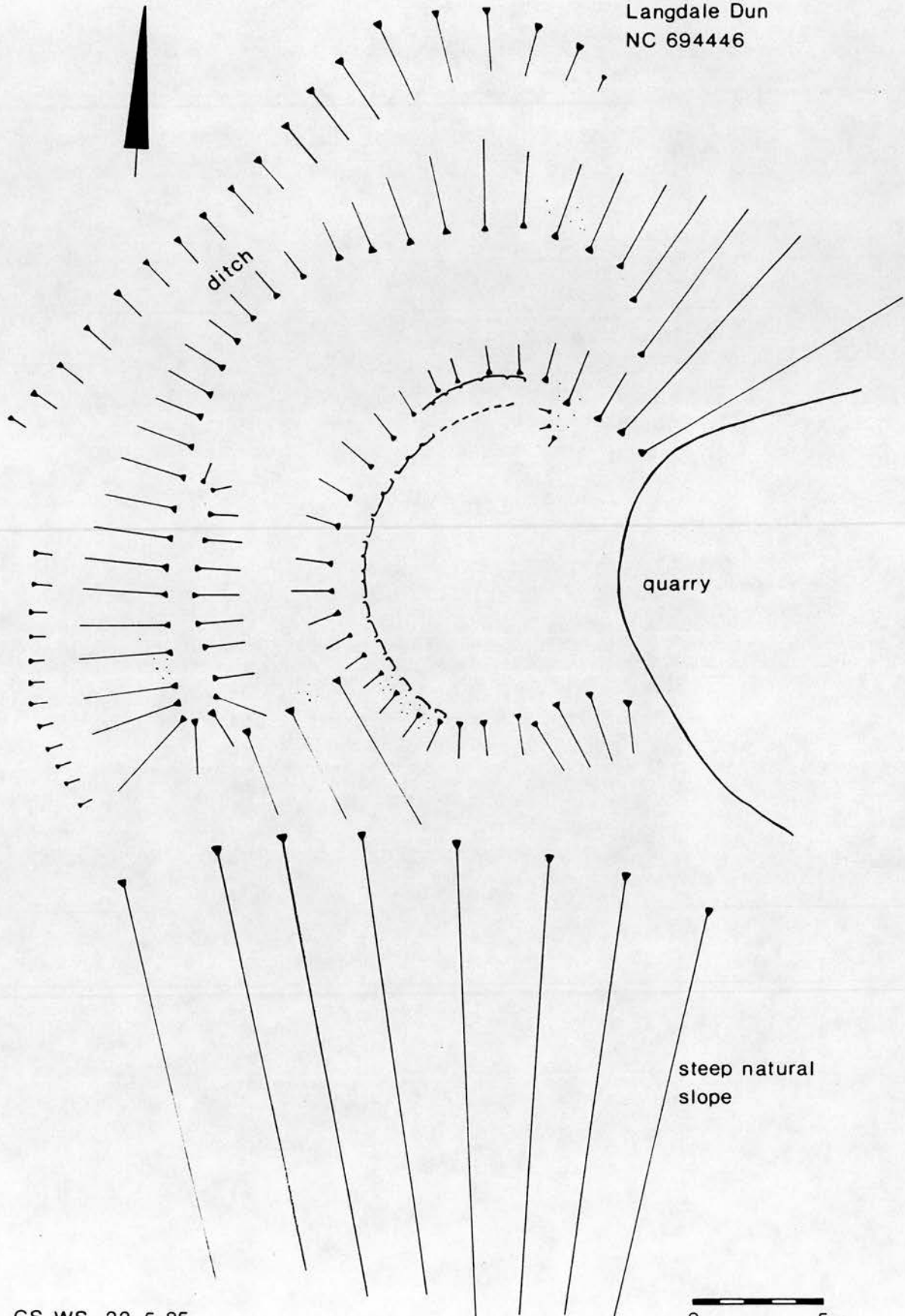
This site, identified as a possible homestead or dun in the NMRS, is located S of the Langdale Burn at a height of about 50m OD, above the road on the W side of Strath Naver. The site has been cut by a deep roadside quarry to the E, but most of it survives intact.

It consists of a semicircular arc of walling, which appears mainly as a grassy bank but with clear facing stones on most of its inner edge. There are also a number of outer facing stones visible in the N. The wall width between the faces is only 1.2m, whereas the full width of the grassy bank is 2.4m.

Outside the crescentic remains of the enclosure, there is a platform area to the N and W, formed by a ditch which varies in width from 4.4m to 9m and is very wet in the NW. The platform is surmounted by a rampart in the SW. In addition, some loose rubble on the NE rim of the platform indicates that a wall may once have extended around the full margin.

There seems to be no reason to disagree with the classification of the site as a homestead. Labelling the site as a dun seems inappropriate and misleading. The site shares the feature of a rampart and ditch defence with many of the broch sites in Strath Naver, but the defences at Langdale Dun are not nearly as strong.

Langdale Dun
NC 694446



CS.WS 22.5.85

0 5m

SN 15

Coill'Ach a'Chuil

NC 6585 3815

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 63 NE 2

1 RCAHMS 1911a, 59, no 176

This broch appears as a mound of stones located on a small promontory jutting into the S side of Loch Naver. The broch has been heavily robbed, probably for the township of Ach a'Chuil lying upslope to the S. The area between the broch and the sloping ground to the S is marshy, but there is no evidence that the promontory on which the broch sits, was ever an islet cut off from the loch shore. There is a suggestion of a linear feature SSE of the broch which was described as a causeway by the RCAHMS (1911a). It now appears as a stony, grass covered bank about 2m wide, which becomes indeterminate at its extreme S end. It may well have been inserted at a later date to aid in the robbing of stone from the broch.

On the S or landward side of the broch there has been an outer wall, indicated by a slope with stones scattered over it. No facing stones are visible. The feature fades out towards the E, and it is not clear whether it may have curved back to the broch, or advanced straight to the loch edge. The trend of the stony scatter suggests the former. In the W the tumble of the outer wall is much thicker, that is, the side furthest from the easiest approach for stone robbing. On this side there is a possible single length of outward facing revetment, about 1m long, which with the suggestive trend of the tumbled stones, points to the outer wall having joined the broch wall in the W. Within the line of the putative face of the outer wall there is another curving length of outward facing revetment, 2 courses high, which appears to be bonded into the face of the broch wall. The significance and purpose of this length of face is not clear.

The outer circuit of the broch wall is largely intact at foundation level, although there are in fact 3 courses visible at the entrance in the SSE. The line of the outer face seems to be slightly distorted in the W and NE, possibly as a result of pressure from the wall core, or displacement during robbing. The entrance passage in the SSE is largely preserved on its E side. A 3.7m length of the wall of the

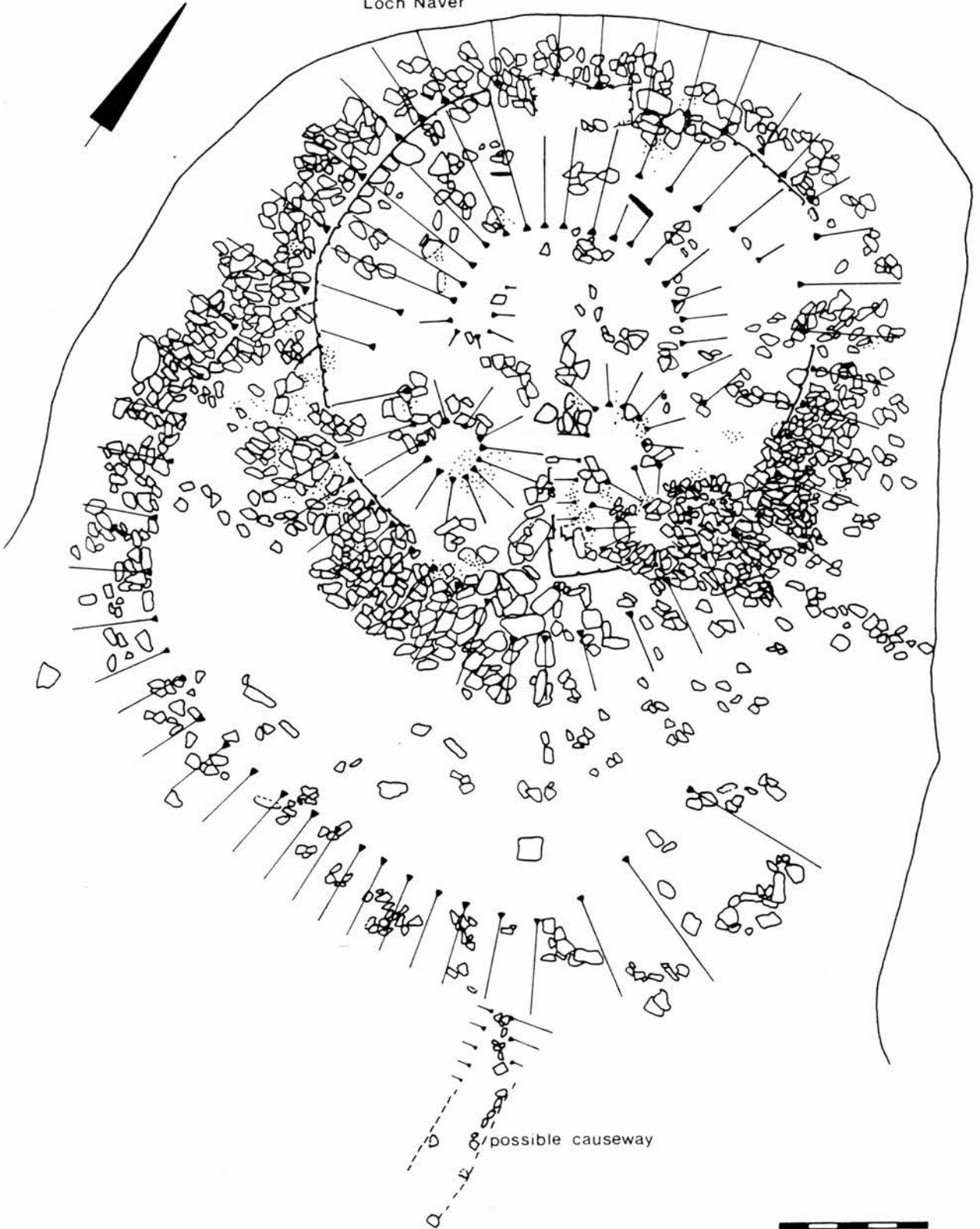
passage is visible, with a narrow door rebate at 1.3m from the outside. The other side of the passage is destroyed and a number of large slabs within and immediately outside the entrance are probably lintels, too heavy to carry away during robbing. Behind the visible passage wall, in line with the door rebate, there is a narrow gallery or entry, 0.4m wide. It appears to be partially covered with a lintel at the E end of its visible length. About 3m E of this gallery or entry there is a substantial hollow in the tumble, with another to the NE of it. It is possible that one or both of these indicates the presence of a cell or other intramural feature, rather than simply stone robbing.

The remainder of the broch is a turf covered rubble mound. The interior of the broch is raised about 1.5m above the level of the visible outer face, indicating the presence of some stratigraphy in the centre of the broch, despite the stone robbing. There is a thick spread of tumble lying outside the outer face, composed of very large stones, presumably pushed or fallen from the face. In the NW there is a substantial outcrop of rock which must have been incorporated in the wall, and over which the outer face must have risen.

About 350m W of the broch there is a small islet lying about 100m offshore which seems to be composed of small stones. It has the appearance of being a crannog. The water between it and the shore is just over 1m deep, and there is local information of a causeway (pers. comm. from the proprietor of the Altnaharra Hotel which has fishing rights on the loch). No such causeway was visible at the time of survey.

Coill' Ach a' Chuil
NC 658381

Loch Naver



CS.WS 20.5.85

0 5m

SN 16

Grummore

NC 6107 3669

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 63 NW 2

1 Joass 1862-4, 358

2 Anderson 1890, 191, Parish of Farr, no 11

3 RCAHMS 1911a, 58-9, no 174

This broch appears as a large mound of tumbled stones on the N shore of Loch Naver. The site lies just E of the caravan site at Grummore, and S of the road. The mound is over 3m high, and the broch is apparently well preserved, protected by its own debris. The indications are that there is an untouched stratigraphy in the broch interior, disturbed only by the roots of three trees growing in the mound.

The outer face of the broch wall is largely hidden, or has fallen outwards, except on the N arc, where it stands 8 courses high above the tumble, exhibiting a batter, and in the S, E and W, where it is visible for short lengths. By contrast the inner face of the broch wall is visible for over three-quarters of its circuit, being obscured by rubble only on the NW arc. In the S the inner face is preserved about 1.5m high above the rubble in the broch interior. On the E and S arcs of the inner face there is a scarcement about 0.3-0.4m wide, formed by an intake in the face about 1m above the present floor level in the broch. In the SE four stones of the scarcement project beyond the wall face below them. The internal area of the broch is about 9.2m in diameter at base, and the rubble in the broch interior slopes strongly from the W and N towards the middle. In the SE quadrant of the interior there is a roughly built, L-shaped enclosure, obviously of later date.

The entrance to the broch is in the W. There are 3 lintels in place over the passage, which is about 0.7m wide. There is no door check visible now, although one was recorded by the RCAHMS (1911a). There has been a void above the entrance, now evidenced by a single in situ lintel. The void seems to continue to the outer face, but this effect must have been brought about by robbing above the level of the lintels of the passage. The outer end of the passage is hidden, and is likely

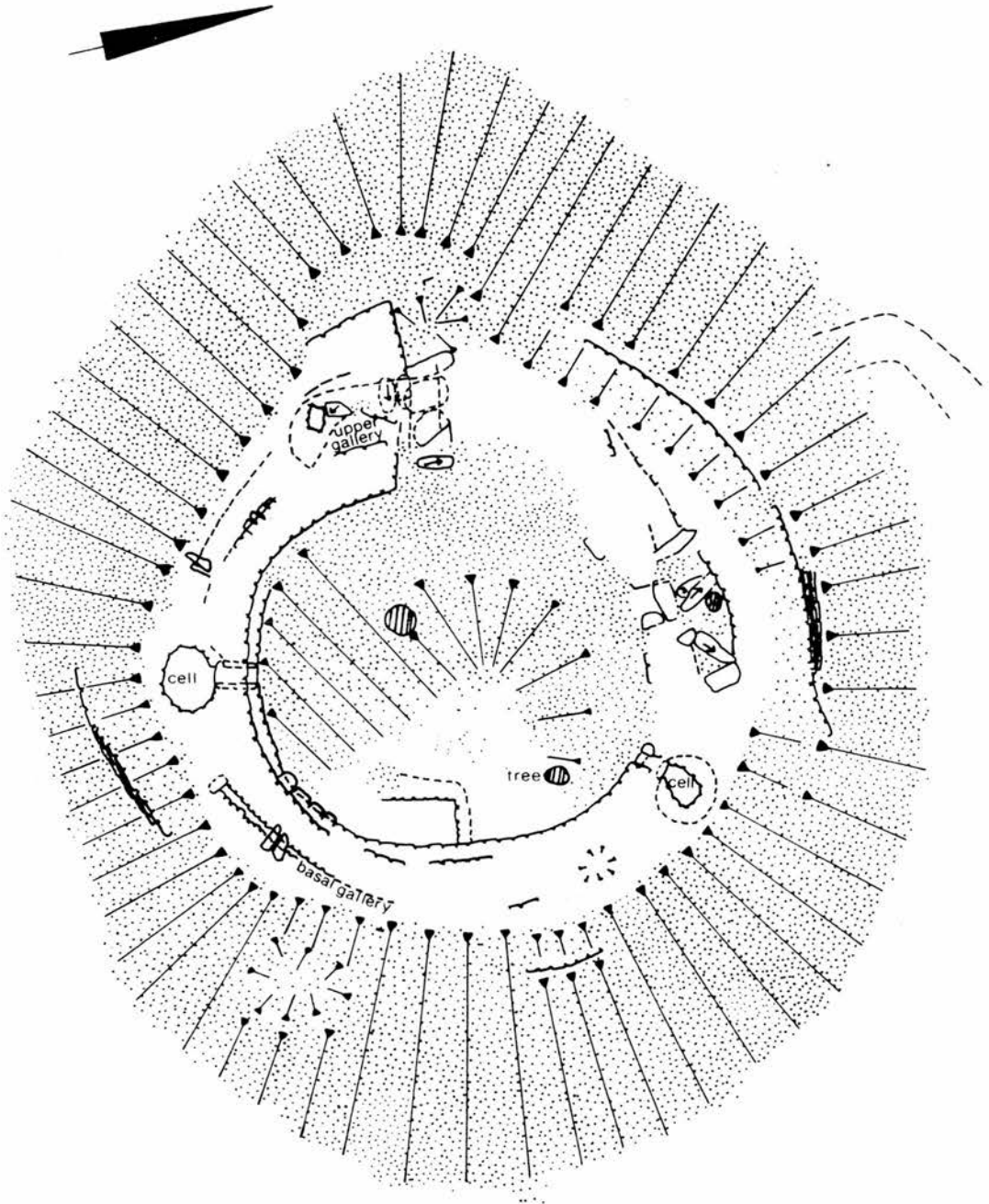
to be preserved under fallen stones. Leading S of the passage there is a lintelled entry into a guard cell, which is irregularly shaped and curves towards the SE. The roof of the cell is completely corbelled, standing 1.8m above the floor in the cell interior. The top slab of the corbelling has been removed, allowing a sight of the interior. The slab lies N of the rectangular opening in the cell roof. Because of the presence of an intact roof, the cell is very difficult to measure accurately.

There are two other cells in the broch wall. The one in the NE is also only visible through a hole in its corbelled roof. It appears to be circular, and is entered by a lintelled passage from the broch interior below scarcement level. The third cell lies in the S arc of the wall, and appears also to have been circular, although it is ruined on its S side. It is entered from a lintelled passage below the scarcement, of which all the lintels and the side walls are intact. The outermost lintel forms part of the scarcement.

Apart from the cells, there are traces of galleries around the circuit of the wall. In the SE the gallery is at basal level. It is only 0.2m wide and its faces are very uneven. In the N an upper gallery above scarcement level is entered by a passage from the interior with a single lintel in place over it. There are also some lintels in place over the gallery, but other detail is obscured by a tree and collapsed stones. The gallery is about 1m wide close to the entry, but narrows to about 0.25m to the W, where its line is eccentric to the curve of the wall. This length of gallery has been identified as a possible stairwell by other authorities, although there is no sign of steps. There is also an upper gallery in the SW arc of the broch, varying in width from 0.6-0.7m with 2 lintels in place over it. The inner wall of the gallery appears to be corbelling as it rises, possibly to support roofing lintels. This length of gallery can also be traced immediately S of the entrance at the level of the void. It narrows at this point from 0.8 to 0.5m. It should be noted that the basal gallery in the SE is very narrow, when compared with the wide upper galleries in the N and SW. The basal gallery is probably a structural device, not designed to be entered. The cells in the base of the wall in the NE and S provide further support for this view, as the basal gallery must

terminate before the walls of these cells. The upper gallery in the N by contrast has an entry point above scarcement level, and was obviously designed to be entered, possibly for access to a stair.

There is no evidence of any contemporary structures around the broch, but a caravan site has been developed immediately W of the site, and the road, which used to run close by the site, has been moved and improved. There is a slight suggestion of a rubbly, almost linear, feature outside the broch to the W, trending W to E, but it is too indistinct to plan. Joass (1865) reported a paved pathway leading out into the loch when the water level was low, but there is no sign of this on the dry loch foreshore S of the broch. There is a later, rough shelter built against the base of the debris mound in the N.



CS. WS 21.5.85



SN 17

Dun Creagach

NC 6046 3558

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 63 NW 11

1 *Anderson 1890, 191, Parish of Farr, no 12*

2 *RCAHMS 1911a, 59, no 175*

This broch is located on an islet about 25m off the S shore of Loch Naver. The islet is connected to the shore by a causeway built of large boulders. The causeway extends 18m inland, indicating either that the water level was higher or that the shore was marshy when it was built. Alternatively the causeway was designed simply to accommodate the winter level of the loch, which can be higher than the summer level. According to local information the causeway is frequently under water in the winter (pers. comm. from the proprietor of the Altnaharra Hotel which has fishing rights on the loch). It is apparent from the uneven rubbly state of the causeway that a substantial surface has probably been eroded by the steep waves which can build up on the loch in a high wind. The causeway has had a built edge which is visible now only on the shore, and on the E side of its terminus on the islet. It varies in width from 2 to 4m, but the stones on the edge have clearly been shifted and eroded.

The broch occupies the S end of the islet. On the arc towards the causeway there is a substantial outer wall. It seems to have 2 outer faces in the SE and E. It is not clear whether this is a device for stability, or the results of modification. There is an entrance through the outer wall roughly aligned with the causeway. The entrance is largely ruined, but its outer end is intact and is about 2m wide. There are 3 large lintels collapsed in the passage at this point. Behind them there are 2 slab door checks in situ. Another upright slab behind the E check may be a lintel fallen on its end.

The broch is located about 4-5m behind the outer wall and may be sitting on a slight knoll. The outer circuit of the broch wall is almost completely intact, standing about 3m high in the S. The entrance to the broch is in the E at right angles to the entrance through the outer wall. The outer end of the entrance has been revealed by a small excavation, but the passage at basal level is

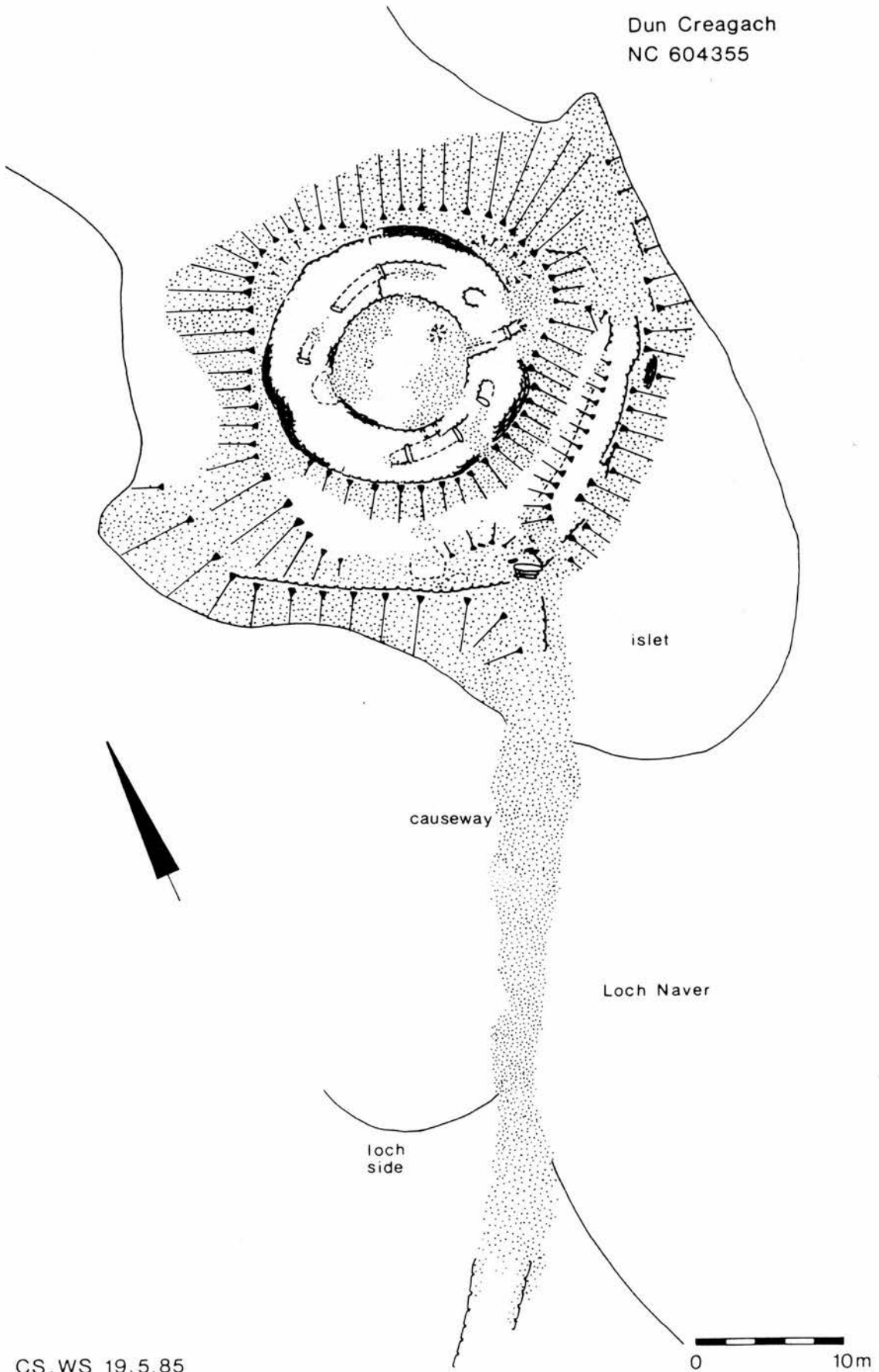
largely hidden. The line of the entrance can be traced by a face which appears to be the S side of a void above the entrance passage. To the N of the entrance a roughly circular cell can be traced within the wall.

The inner face of the broch wall is largely intact, preserved 7-14 courses high above the rubble choking the broch interior. It has a slight batter on the W, but this may be caused by backward collapse into the core. In the S there is a lintelled entry or void leading into an intramural gallery which is about 1m wide. The entry or void is obviously at a high level within the wall. The gallery the entry leads into is in fact the uppermost gallery of a tier of three, all of which are visible in the ruin of the outer part of the wall. A length of 4-5m of the uppermost gallery is exposed. A gallery is also visible in the N arc of the broch. It is about 0.8m wide and is the upper gallery of a tier of two visible in the wall. There may well be another gallery below them, hidden from view.

The outer face of the broch is very irregular with many cracks, probably resulting from pressure. A strong batter is evident in the W, NE and S, but not elsewhere, the wall rising practically straight. In the NNE the wall rises straight above the battered section, which may have been added as a buttress.

There do not appear to be any remains on the islet behind the broch.

Dun Creagach
NC 604355



CS.WS 19.5.85

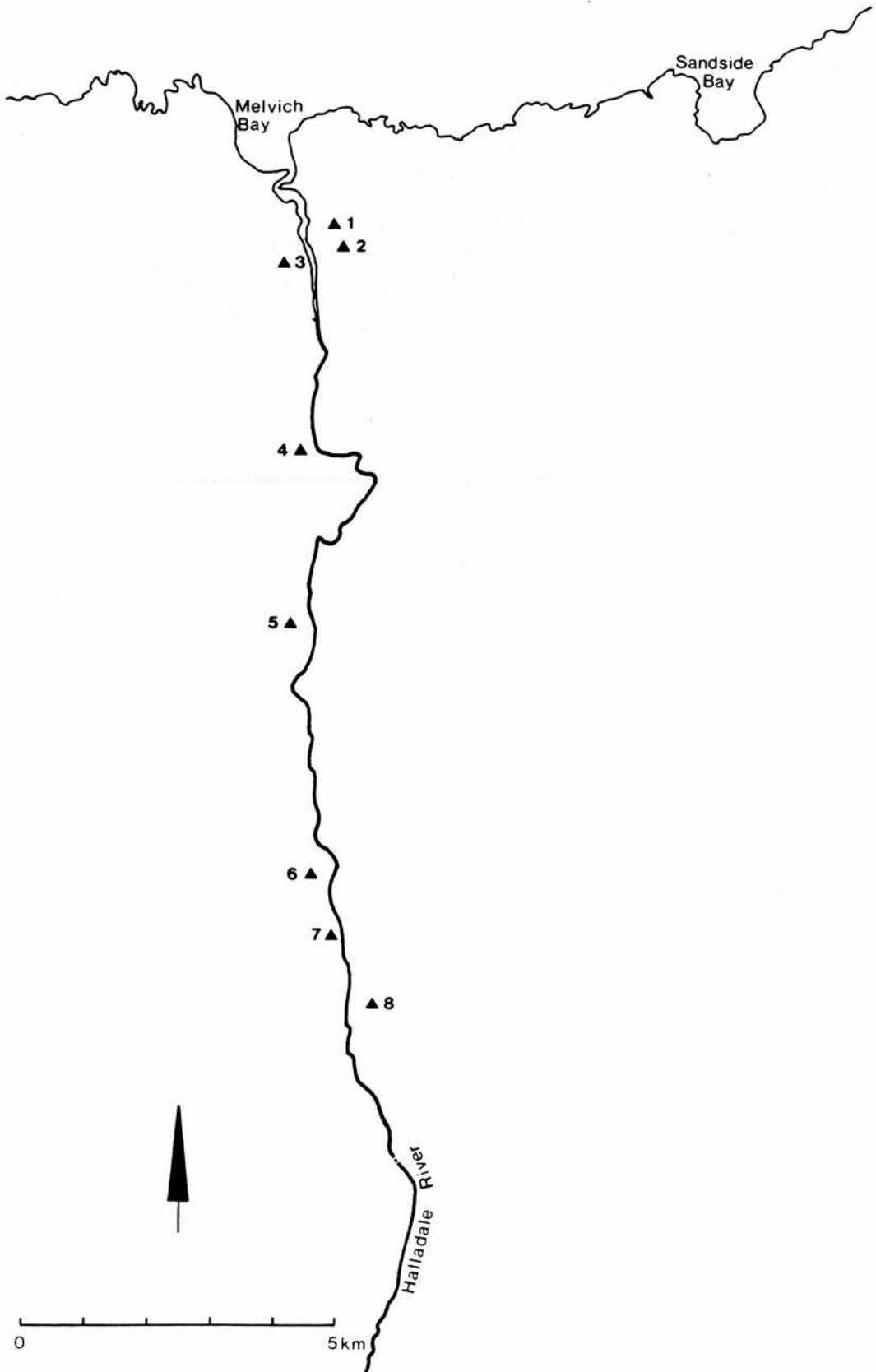
STRATH HALLADALE

Strath Halladale Study Area

SH 1	Lower Bighouse 1	NC 8984 6387
SH 2	Lower Bighouse 2	NC 8995 6353
SH 3	Loch Mor	NC 8889 6344
SH 4	Loch a'Bhealaich	NC 8911 6033
SH 5	Upper Bighouse	NC 8896 5752
SH 6	Trantlemore	NC 8918 5338
SH 7	Carn Liath, Bunahoun	NC 8940 5233
SH 8	The Borg	NC 8993 5095

STRATH HALLADALE STUDY AREA SH

Location of sites included in catalogue



SH 1

Lower Bighouse 1

NC 8984 6387

NMRS Class: Cairn

NMRS Card: NC 86 SE 7

1 Mercer 1980, 60, fig 30, and 145, mon BIG 27

This site, identified cautiously as a broch by Mercer, appears from the road as a raised, heather covered area with some loose stones visible. Mercer reported a grass cover, and the grid reference he gave for the site is slightly wrong. There would not appear however to be any other site in the vicinity which matches his description. The site is a large mound, about 29m N/S by 25.5m. There is a small modern cairn on its W edge, and some loose stones on its S margin. In the N near the edge of the mound there are some loose stones and an upright slab at right angles to the edge of the mound. The mound is heather covered, with some grass growing on its S margin. It stands at most 1.5-2m high in the centre.

There are no structural grounds for identifying this site as a broch. It could as easily be a round cairn, and it is in fact identified as a cairn in the NMRS. The location of the site in the strath could be suggestive of a broch, as there is an apparent gap in distribution at this point, but its identification must remain extremely doubtful.

SH 2

Lower Bighouse 2

NC 8995 6353

NMRS Class: Hut Circle

NMRS Card: NC 86 SE 3

1 RCAHMS 1911a, 76-7, no 226

2 Mercer 1980, 60, fig 30, and 144, mon BIG 17

This site is located amongst a number of other enclosures which would appear to be hut circles, to the N of the road from Halladale Bridge to Thurso. (Mercer's 1979 plan of the various sites at Lower Bighouse may be found on the next page). Mercer provisionally identified a larger sub-circular enclosure set on a prominent knoll with enclosures attached as a dun. The enclosure measures about 18m by 20m, within a stone wall about 2m thick of which both faces are visible. The OS in 1981 did not think that the enclosure resembled a dun, drawing attention to its non-defensive location, and the fact that the wall is not of massive proportions. They conceded that the enclosure was different from surrounding hut circles, and also from hut circles elsewhere in the Highlands, but still thought that it was probably a round house of prehistoric date.

It does not seem reasonable to term this site as a dun, thereby distinguishing it in a particular way from the many hut circles/enclosures which surround it. It is not sited in a defensive location, and there seems no reason to disagree with its interpretation as a hut circle, its classification in the NMRS.

SH 3

Loch Mor

NC 8889 6344

NMRS Class: Broch (amorphous remains)

NMRS Card: NC 86 SE 2

1 ONB 20, 1873, 102

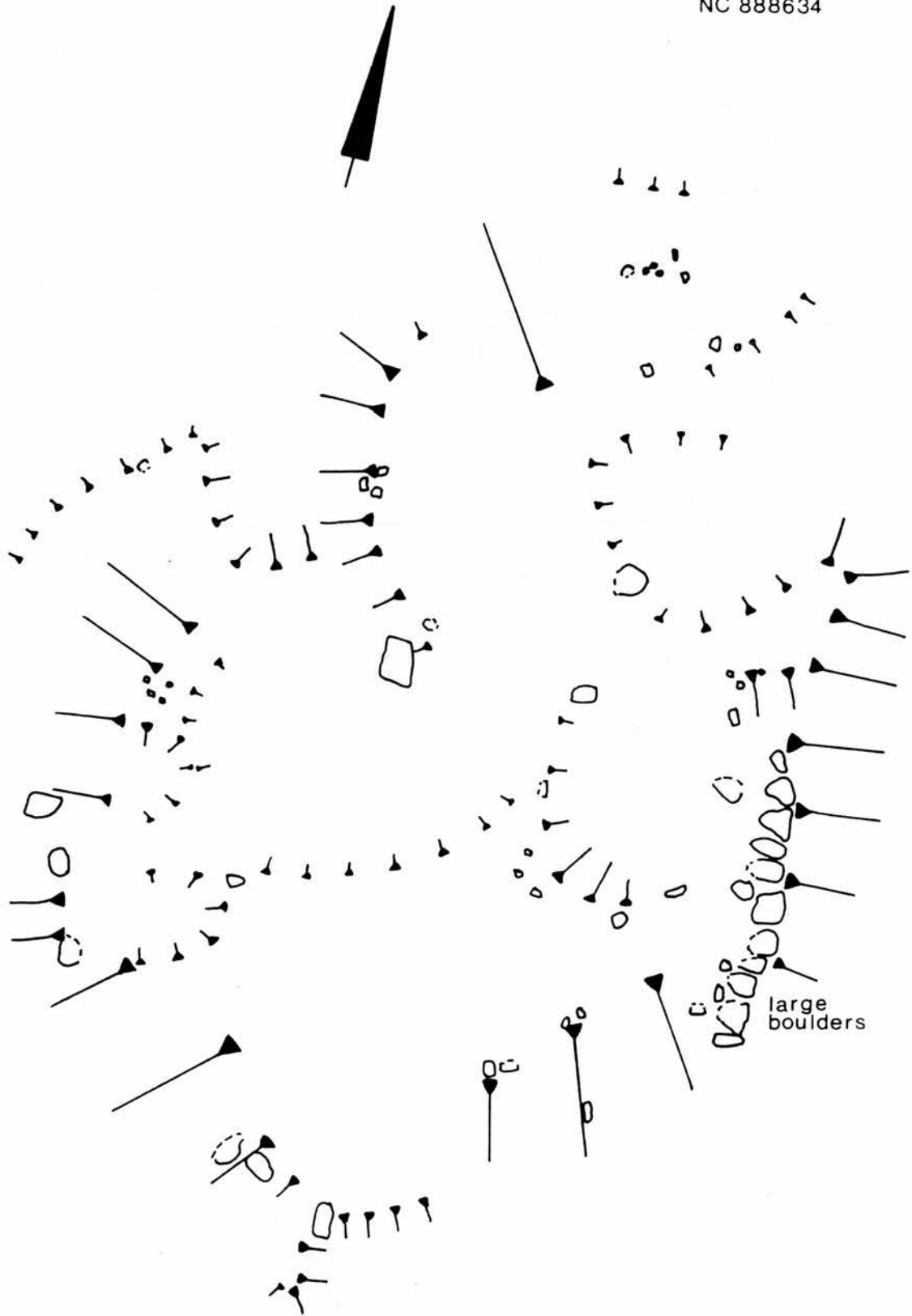
2 RCAHMS 1911a, 62-3, no 189

This site has been variously identified in the past as a broch, cairn or enclosure. In 1873 (ONB 20) it was said to have been the remains of a broch, similar to others in Strath Halladale, and was described as a circular wall of very large stones. It was depicted on the OS first edition map as an open enclosure void of stones. The RCAHMS (1911a) also classed the site as a broch, of which only a few foundation stones remained. Since then the OS changed its classification more than once, finally returning to the conclusion that it is the amorphous remains of a broch, its present classification in the NMRS.

The site is so badly ruined and robbed that there is no means of effecting a positive identification from the structural remains alone. From a distance it appears as a low mound about 0.5m high on a wide flat land surface projecting into Loch Mor. The OS thought that the water surface of the loch may have been higher at one time. There is clear evidence of this in the form of a relict shoreline visible around much of the loch. The site may therefore have been on a narrow promontory jutting into the loch. This geographical evidence points to the possibility that this site may have been a broch, its location on a promontory in a loch paralleled in Strath Naver at Dun Creagach (SN 17) on Loch Naver, and in Caithness at Loch Rangag (NC 179417).

The slight mound, which is all that now remains of the site, is composed of large stones, some of which are visible over its surface. It measures about 25m N/S by 23m. In the E there is a line of large boulders 7m long, which may be the foundation stones of a revetment. Apart from these boulders no other structural features are visible.

Loch Mor
NC 888634



CS.WS 26.9.84

0 5 m

SH 4

Loch a'Bhealaich

NC 8911 6033

NMRS Class: Fort and Minor Field System

NMRS Card: NC 86 SE 14

This structure, identified as a fort in the NMRS, surmounts a rocky knoll at 60m OD about 300m from the River Halladale to the NW of Loch a'Bhealaich. It is pear-shaped, measuring 38m NE/SW by 18m at its broader SW end, within a ruined wall much of which has tumbled downslope. Occasional facing stones of the wall are visible. The wall is about 3m thick at an entrance in the NE end of the structure, and about 5m at another entrance in the S. There is a large spread of debris within the enclosure which may be the rubble from internal structures, although no detail is visible. Below the knoll to the E there are several stone clearance heaps, possibly from a contemporary field system.

This structure has been included in the site catalogue because its classification in the NMRS could be taken to suggest a site roughly contemporary with brochs. It is impossible to date the structure, and it would seem to be fairly unusual, in that there are few structures in the Sutherland straths which are classed as forts, hut circles and brochs being much more common. The exact function of the structure, and its relationships to the brochs in Strath Halladale, are unclear.

SH 5

Upper Bighouse

NC 8896 5752

NMRS Class: Broch with Outworks

NMRS Card: NC 85 NE 1

1 Anderson 1890, 190, Parish of Reay no 1

2 Mercer 1980, 149, HAL 39

This site, identified as a broch by Anderson (1890), Mercer (1980) and the NMRS, is sited on an elongated fluvio-glacial ridge at a height of about 23m OD, immediately in front of a kame terrace on the W side of Strath Halladale. The ridge appears to have been artificially breached by a ditch on the S to create the steep sided knoll on which the structure sits. At the time of survey the remains were overgrown with bracken and it would appear that very little in the way of structural features is normally visible at the site.

The structure which is identified as a broch is composed of a curving stony bank interrupted by gaps on the W and E. In the N the bank is fully 7m wide, but in the S it is only about 5m. In the SE three stones exposed in the outer slope of the bank may be the footings of the outer face of a wall, but the evidence is tenuous. The E break in the encircling bank is full of large stones and rubble. The W break is wider with little stone visible and is lined with an external causeway.

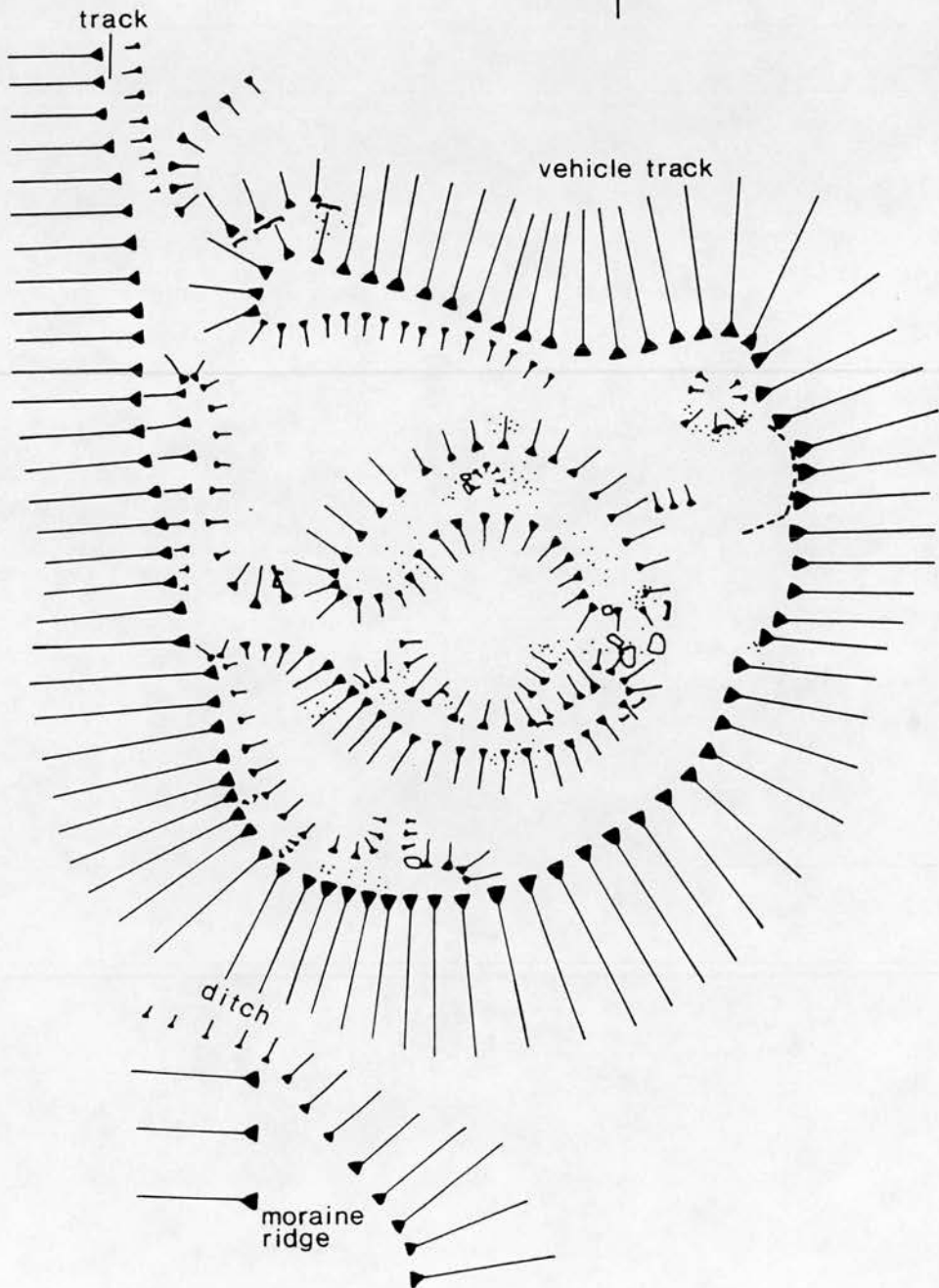
On the W arc of the knoll the structure has been enclosed by an outer bank which, at a patch of erosion in the SW, is shown to be made of earth and small rounded stones. It seems possible that the outer bank is composed of material thrown up from an excavation between it and the inner structure, forming a shallow ditch which the causeway in the W crosses. The outer bank does not appear to continue around the E arc of the knoll, although there is some rubble at the top of the steep E slope. In the ENE there is an indistinct feature which the OS thought was a later construction. N of this there is a substantial robbing hole.

Entrance through the outer bank seems to have been achieved from the NW where there is a large break in the bank towards which a narrow track leads. On the outer slope of the bank in the NW there is an alignment of very large boulders which may be the foundation of a

revetment.

There must be some doubt about the positive identification of this site as a broch. No indicative structural features are visible. The geographical location is somewhat similar to that of two other sites identified as brochs on the W side of the Strath, Trantlemore (SH 6) and Carn Liath (SH 7), but Upper Bighouse is more strongly defended both naturally and artificially than either of these sites. It may be more appropriate to compare this site with some of the substantial defended homesteads now being increasingly recognised in Sutherland, such as, Suisgill Lodge (SK 11) and Cnoc Dalveghouse (SN 5).

Upper Bighouse
NC 889575



CS.WS 26.9.84



SH 6

Trantlemore

NC 8918 5338

NMRS Class: Broch (remains of)

NMRS Card: NC 85 SE 2

1 RCAHMS 1911a, 62, no 188

2 Mercer 1980, 146, HAL 2

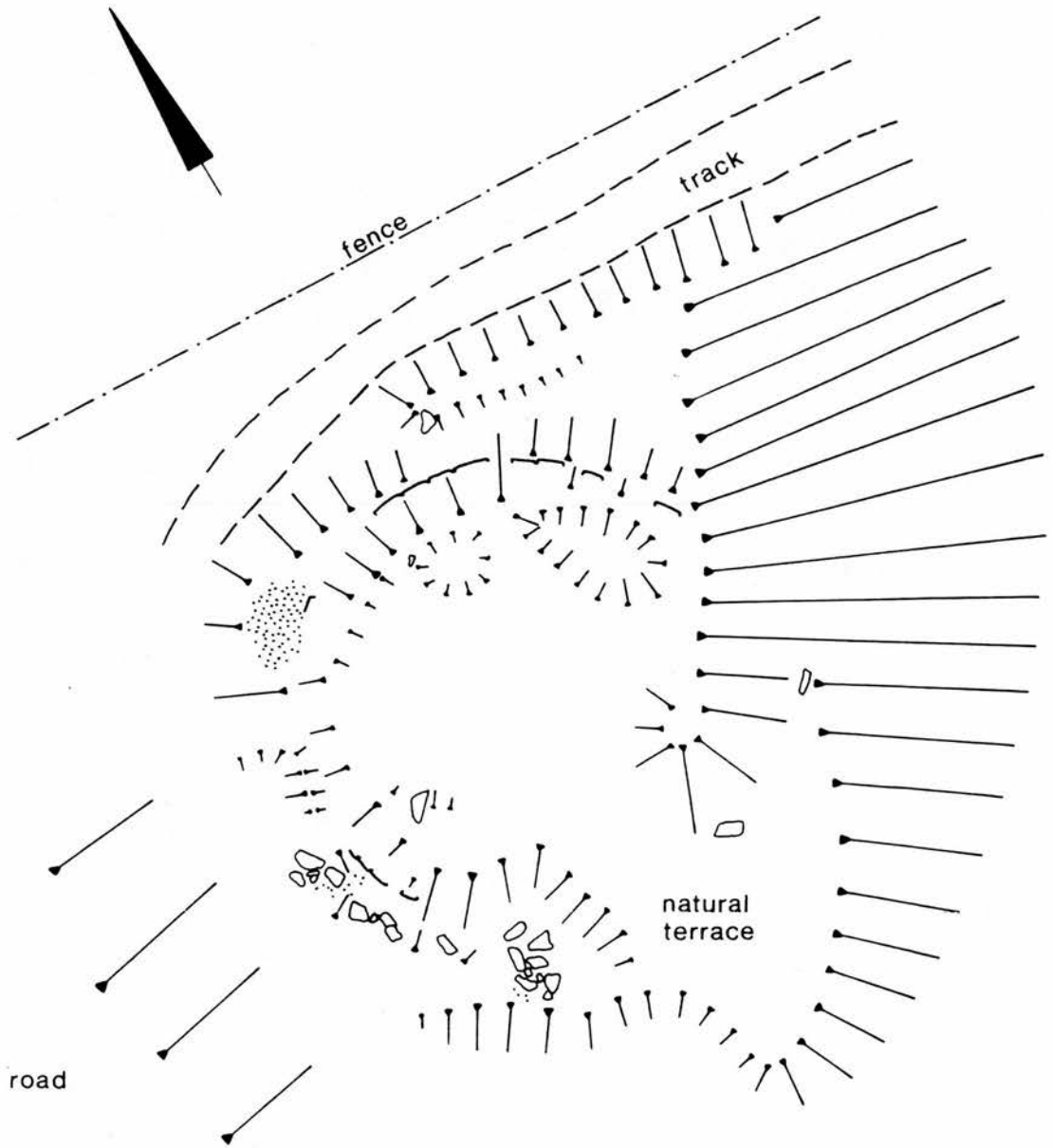
This broch is located on a terrace on the W side of Strath Halladale at a height of about 46m OD, just to the E of the minor road on this side of the valley. It lies within a field given over to pasture and a track leads down N of the broch to a stone built shed.

The broch appears as a low grass covered mound about a metre high, which has robbing holes within it and some very large stones lying outside it. It has obviously been extensively used as a stone quarry, probably for the road and several buildings in the vicinity. The only structural feature visible is an outer revetment surviving one course high on the N, NE and SW arcs. The external diameter of the broch NE/SW is 17.8m. The RCAHMS (1911a) noted that in 1909 the entrance appeared to be from the N. There is no trace of the entrance now.

Outside the broch on the NE there is a bank, 3m wide and about 15m long. The bank is composed of grass covered rubble and skirts the edge of the vehicle track leading down the slope of the terrace. Its position in relation to the track would seem to indicate that it may be a modern feature connected with the track, rather than an outwork related to the broch. Apart from the steep slope down to the flood plain of the river in the E, the site appears to have no other natural or artificial protection. In addition the site is overlooked from steeply sloping high ground to the W on the other side of the road.

The presence of the footings of a massive stone revetment, partially outlining a circular structure, would appear to indicate that the identification of this structure as a broch is reasonable. There is little other evidence to confirm this supposition beyond the similarity of location to that of the site of Carn Liath (SH 7), also identified as a broch, lying about one kilometre to the S.

Trantlemore
NC 891533



CS. WS 26.9.84

0 10m

SH 7

Carn Liath, Bunahoun

NC 8940 5233

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 85 SE 3

1 RCAHMS 1911a, 62, no 187

2 Mercer 1980, 146, HAL 1

This broch is located at a height of 46m OD on a broad fluvio-glacial ridge which slopes relatively steeply to E and W. The location is not particularly strong and there is another fluvio-glacial mound to the S which could have served equally well as a site for the structure.

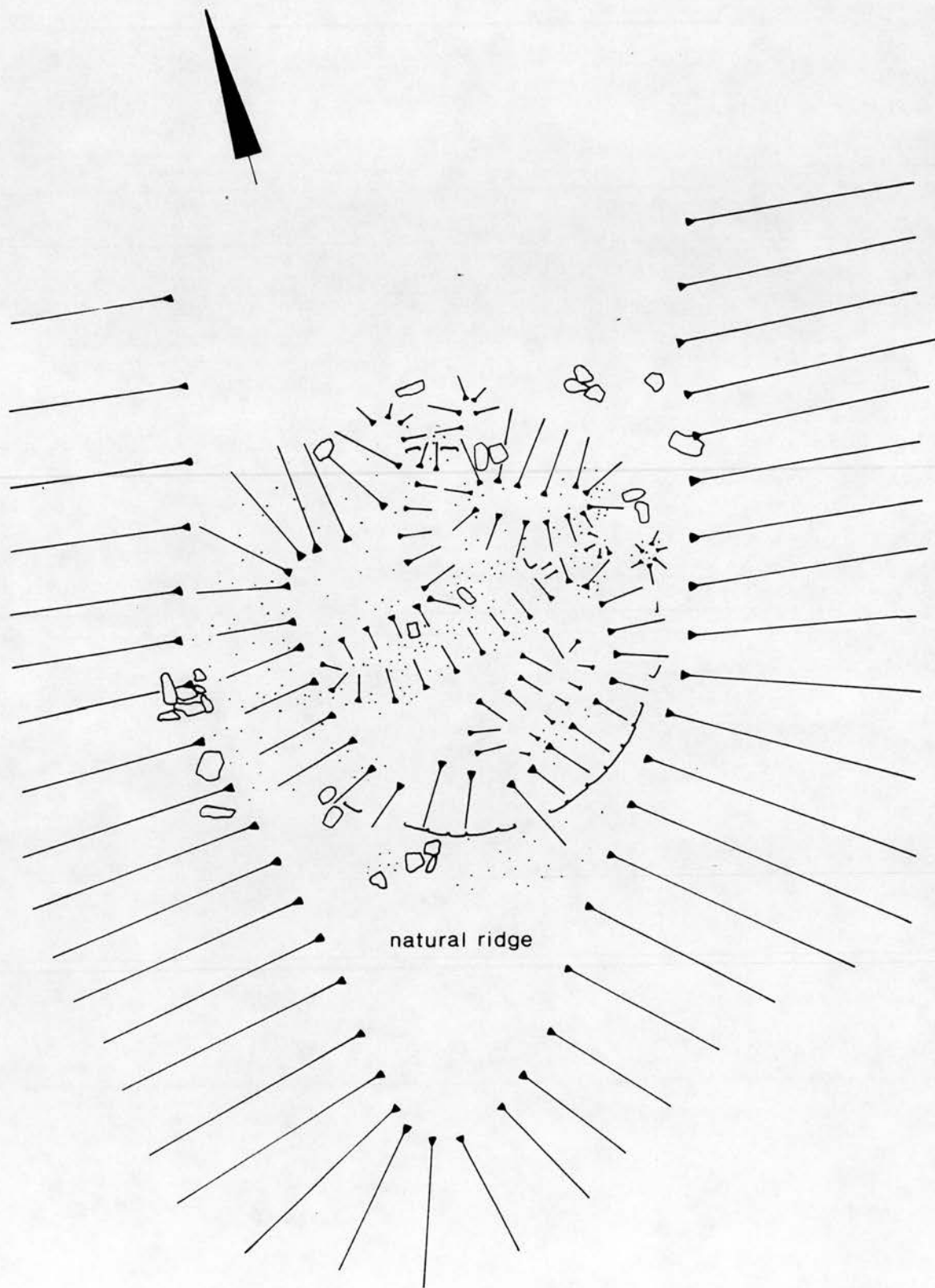
The broch survives only as a robbed and reduced heap of small stones with several large stones scattered around its periphery. It has probably served as a stone quarry for the nearby road, cemetery wall, and houses.

The only visible structural evidence is a substantial arc of grounders on the S of the robbed mound, which appears to be the remains of the outer face of the wall of a circular structure. In this respect the site compares well with its neighbour, Trantlemore (SH 6), just over a kilometre to the N, which has a similar arc of grounders on its N side.

The RCAHMS (1911a) identified an entrance in the E in 1909, through a passage 14ft (4.3m) long and 2ft 3in (0.7m) wide at its inner end. There is a linear depression in the mound at this point but no clear structural features are visible. At the inner end of the depression on the S side there is possibly the remains of the passage wall which appears to curve, and on the N side there is a possible inner corner. There is another linear depression in the mound in the NNE. At its outer end there are two stones lying to either side which may be part of the outer face of the broch.

On the evidence of the arc of grounders and the vague details of the entrance passage noted by the RCAHMS, it may be reasonable to accept the identification of this structure as a broch. In its location, apparent lack of outworks, and visible features, it compares favourably with its near neighbour, Trantlemore, but contrasts strongly with Upper Bighouse (SH 5) where artificial defensive measures have strengthened natural defence, and with The Borg (SH 8) which has very strong natural defence.

Carn Liath
NC 894523



CS. WS 27.9.84

0 10m

SH 8

The Borg

NC 8993 5095

NMRS Class: Broch (?)with Outworks

NMRS Card: NC 85 SE 1

1 Anderson 1890, 190, Parish of Reay no 2

2 RCAHMS 1911a, 62, no 186

3 Young 1961-2, 185, no 28

4 Mercer 1980, 24-6, fig 12, and 103, FON 41

This structure identified as a broch, is situated on a steep sided knoll on the E side of Strath Halladale in an area of moorland now largely ploughed for forestry. It lies at a height of about 84m OD overlooking a narrow part of the strath and the road to Forsinard. The structure is visible over a considerable distance, for example, from the broch of Carn Liath (SH 7), 1.5km to the NW. It is the furthest inland broch identified in Strath Halladale.

The structure is well preserved, surviving 9 courses high on its outer face in the NW. It is built of massive granite blocks which are not particularly shaped, nor infilled with smaller blocks. It is doubtful whether such rough masonry could have been built to any great height.

The wall of the structure survives largely intact on the W, S and E. Only in the N and NE has it collapsed into a massive amount of rubble obscuring structural details. The outer face of the wall has been built with a considerable batter, 0.5m in 3.5m of height on the NW. The inner face where it has been revealed by small excavations in the W and SW, also appears to have been battered, but not so strongly over the 7 courses revealed in one of the pits.

The wall varies in thickness and the shape of the structure appears to have been more oval than circular. In the W the wall is 5m thick at base and 4m at its surviving top. In the S the wall is 4m thick and is reduced to one course visible above the rubble. In the E at the entrance it is 5.5m wide on the N side and 5.7m on the S side. In the NE a length of inner face is visible with a possible outer face lying 6m outside it in the rubble, trending eccentrically to the expected line of that face. It may be that eccentricities in the line and thickness of the wall are reflections of constructional difficulties

on top of the steep sided knoll. The original area enclosed by the wall where measurable is about 8.6m NW/SE by 10.2m. The internal area has been reduced at some time by the addition of a casing on the E and NE.

The entrance to the interior is in the ESE. It is fully preserved and is still roofed with 7 lintels. On the N side of the passage at 3.6m from the outer end there appears to be a lintel over an entry giving access into the wall. Behind this apparent lintel there is a depression in the ruin of the wall identified by previous authorities as a guard chamber (RCAHMS 1911a, OS). No walling of such a chamber is visible. The entrance passage is extended into the interior by additional walling for a distance of about 1.8m. This additional walling may be linked to the suggestion of an inner casing wall in the NE, the face of which is about 1.8m in from the original inner face of the structure.

In the SSW in a substantial depression in the rubble there is an entry into the wall 1.5m wide, which has at some time been converted into a small shelter by the addition of walling across its width. The surviving length of this entrance into the wall is 2.6m. In 1909 the RCAHMS noted that its length was 10 to 11ft, that is over 3m, at a point where the wall width is only 4m. The function of this entry into the wall is not clear. No gallery in the wall is traceable and the outer face of the wall appears to continue across the line of the entry. Previous authorities have tended to regard the entry as a secondary feature (RCAHMS 1911a, OS). There is however no evidence that the passage is secondary, although it has undoubtedly been modified for secondary use. It is conceivable that this feature may be a second entrance into the interior. Given the ruination of the wall at this point the apparent continuation of the outer face need not necessarily be a problem for this interpretation. For instance there could have been a step up to the entrance as at Dun Ardteck in Skye (IS 27), or a sill stone, so that an appearance of a continuous face is given at foundation level. The extreme length of the passage is otherwise difficult to explain in view of the absence of any apparent related features within the wall at this point.

There is a substantial breach in the rubble of the wall in the NNE

which shows no signs of any structural features within it. The inner face of the structure seems to continue across the inner end of the breach. The breach may represent a gap caused by robbing, although the steep slope outside it would seem to make this unlikely. Outside the breach there is a curious grass covered platform formed of rubble. It may be that this has been formed from the wall material, causing the gap. The purpose of such a platform is unknown.

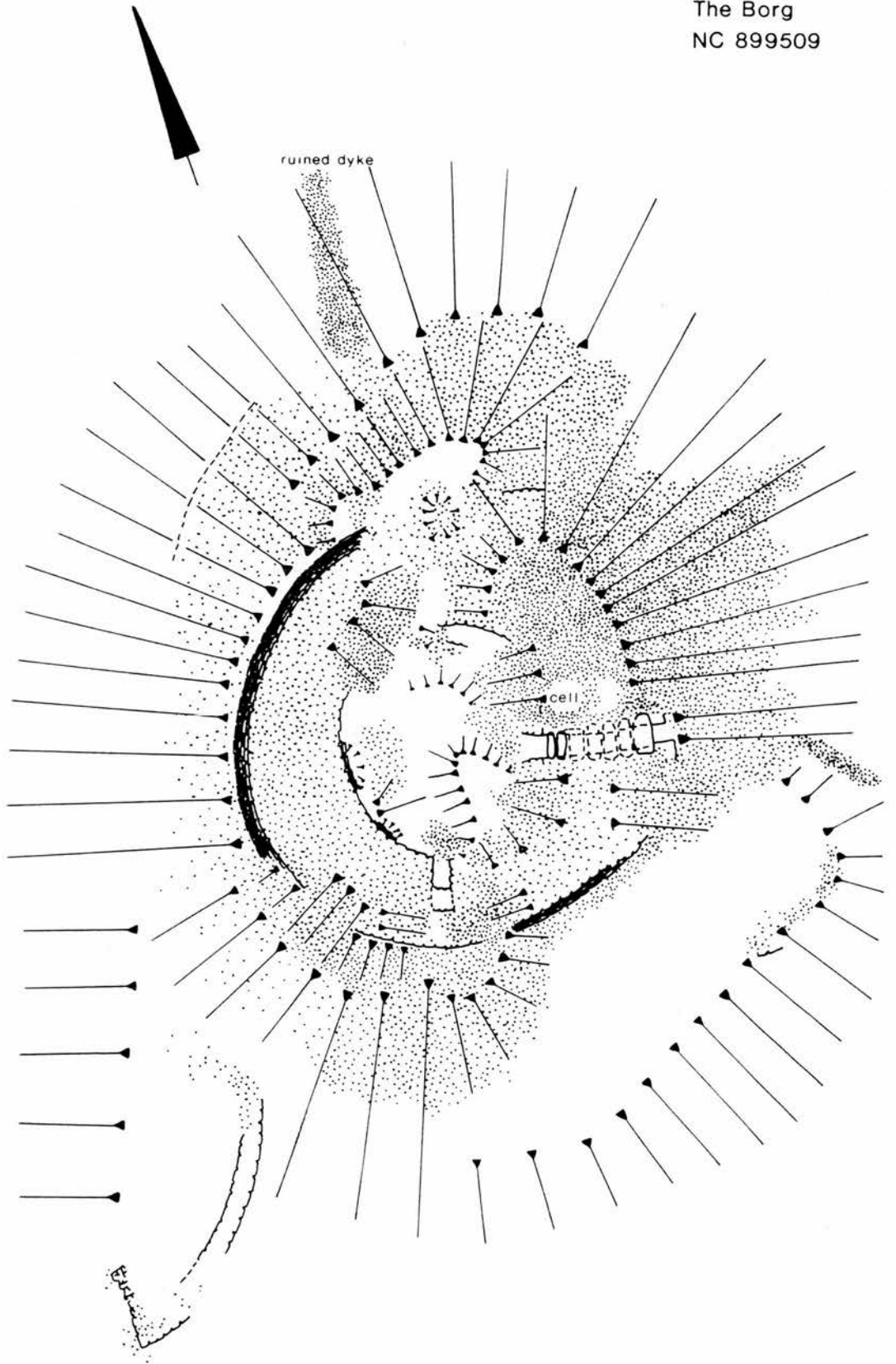
Outside the broch on the S and SE there is a level area or terrace before the ground falls away. There is a slight suggestion in the SE that this area may have been walled, but the evidence is fragmentary. The OS thought that a shallow ditch lay beyond the terrace on the SE arc. There is undoubtedly a gully in this area, but it is doubtful whether it is an artificial feature.

A number of ruined and spread walls approach the structure. Mercer (1980, fig 12) planned the enclosures formed by these. He considered that the walls emerged from under the rubble of the structure. The walls are so ruined that this is not clear. They certainly do not sit visibly on top of the rubble as at the enclosures around Dun Borrafiach in Skye (IS 13). The extreme ruination of the walls gives the impression of some antiquity.

To the SW of the broch a more substantial and less ruined wall exists, abutting onto a natural outcrop. This may be the ruin of a more recent structure although a complete outline is not traceable.

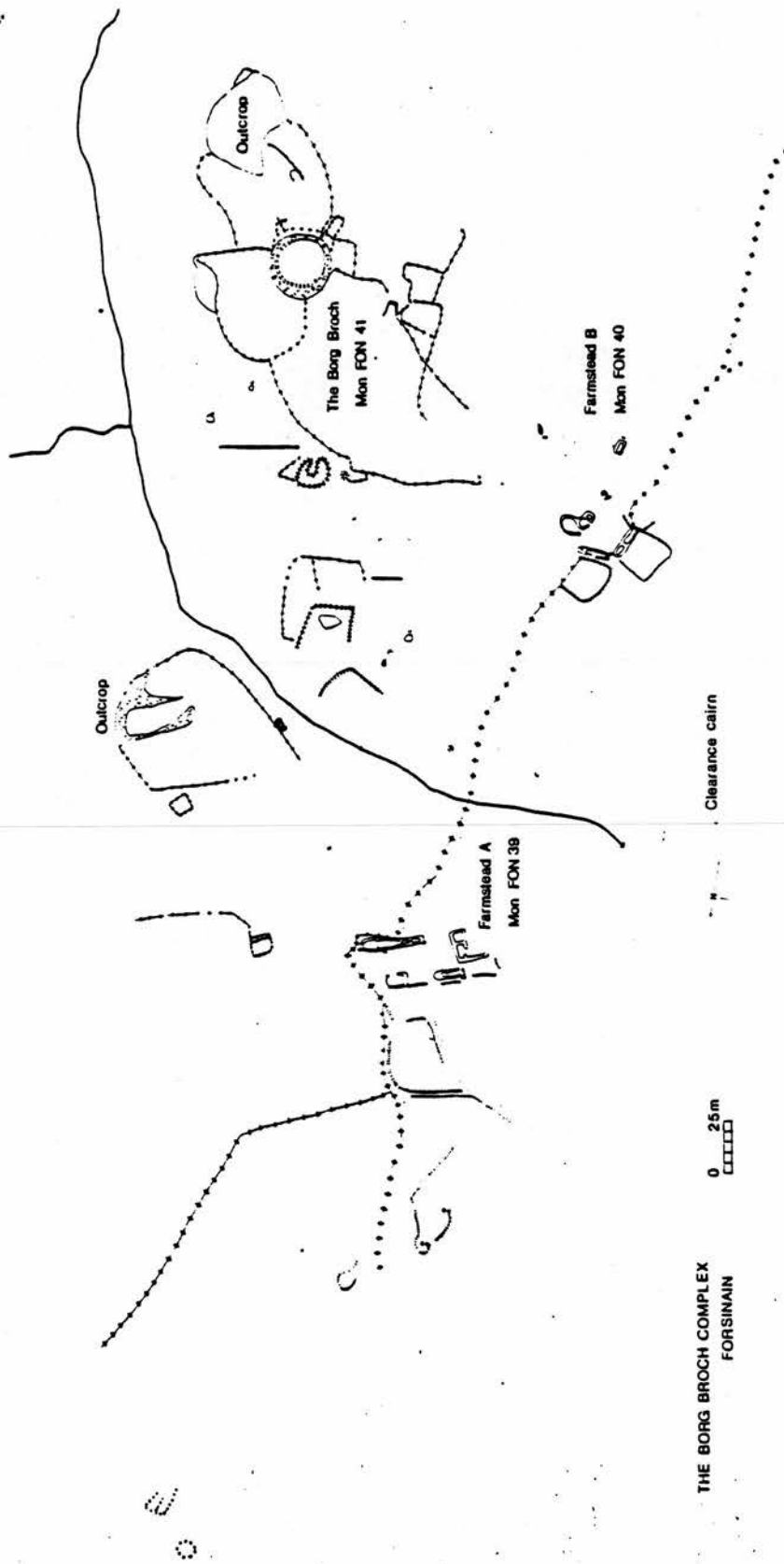
The thickness of the wall at the Borg may justify calling the structure a broch, but its uneven shape and rugged masonry bears little resemblance to some of the other structures labelled broch in the N, for example, in Caithness. As noted above, its eccentricities of shape may be due to the exigencies of its siting on top of a knoll. Of all the structures classed as brochs in Strath Halladale, The Borg is certainly the most readily identifiable, but at the same time it is the most unusual and enigmatic.

The Borg
NC 899509



CS. WS 27.9.84

0 5m



Source: Mercer 1980, fig 12

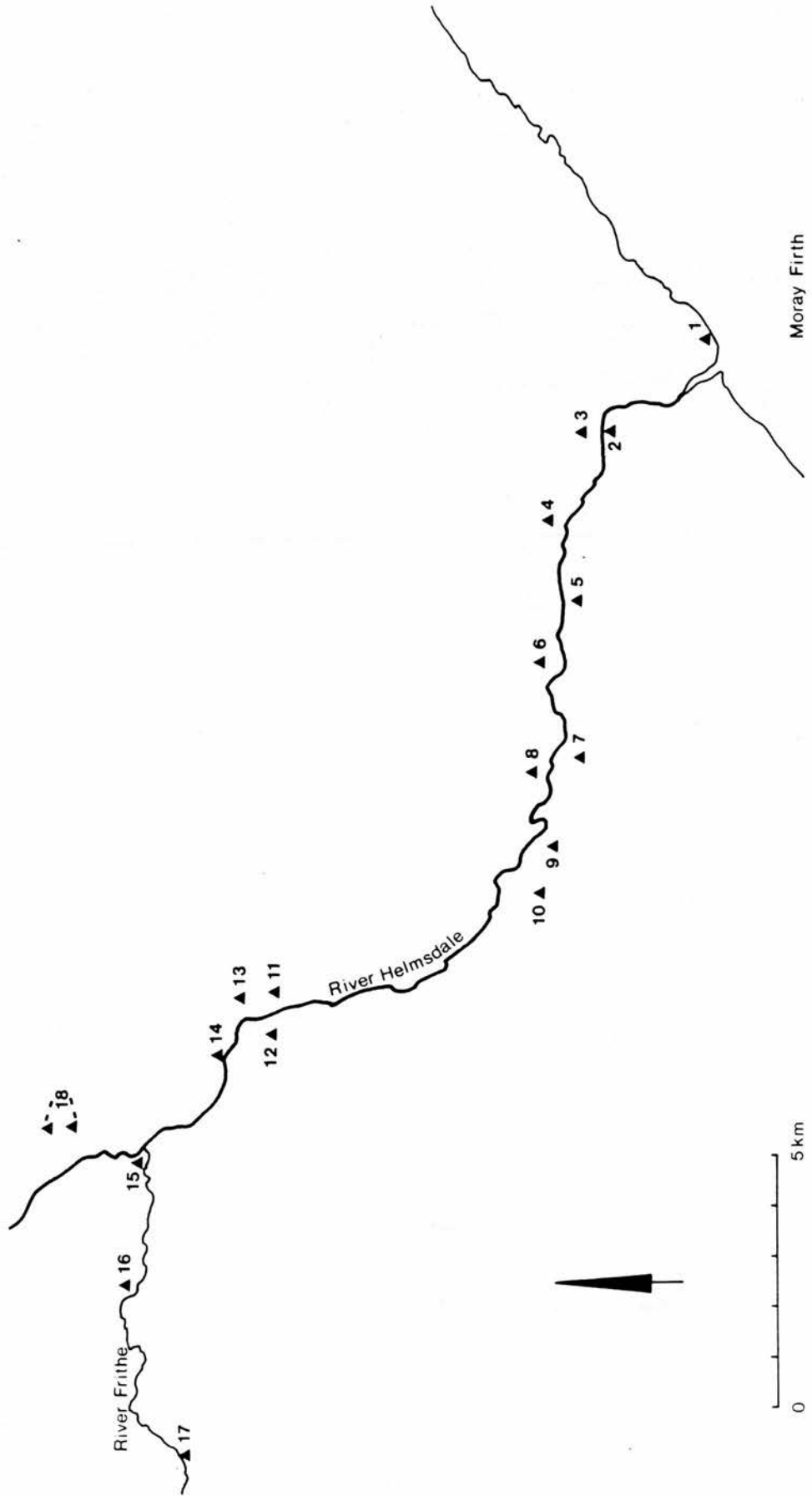
**STRATH OF
KILDONAN**

Strath of Kildonan Study Area

SK 1	Cnoc Chaisteal	ND 0310 1525
SK 2	Craig Marril	ND 01 17
SK 3	Caen Burn	?
SK 4	Kilphedir	NC 9943 1891
SK 5	Eldrable	NC 9833 1816
SK 6	Torrish Burn	?
SK 7	Gylable	NC 9487 1823
SK 8	Balvalaich	NC 9452 1898
SK 9	Kilournan	NC 9293 1882
SK 10	Allt a'Choire Mhoire	NC 9216 1887
SK 11	Suisgill Lodge	NC 9020 2396
SK 12	Learable	NC 8949 2403
SK 13	Upper Suisgill	NC 8989 2498
SK 14	Suisgill	NC 8875 2530
SK 15	Dalcharn	NC 8702 2690
SK 16	Feranach	NC 8441 2730
SK 17	Allt an Duin	NC 8097 2605
SK 18	Kinbrace Burn 1	?
	Kinbrace Burn 2	?

STRATH OF KILDONAN STUDY AREA SK

Location of sites included in catalogue



SK 1

Cnoc Chaisteal

ND 0310 1525

NMRS Class: ?Broch (site of)

NMRS Card: ND 01 NW 24

1 RCAHMS 1911a, 134, no 386

The RCAHMS (1911a) recorded the site of a broch due N of the end of the harbour at Helmsdale. A villa bearing the name Cnoc Chaisteal had been built on the site of the broch about 1880. In digging the foundations of the house there were found a steatitic cup with a handle, a stone lamp, a saddle quern of granite, portions of one or more rotary querns and a thick heavy stone whorl. A quantity of shells of edible molluscs exposed in a small piece of adjoining garden ground was thought to indicate probably the site of the kitchen midden. There is now no trace of the broch and the whereabouts of the finds is unknown.

SK 2

Craig Marril

ND 01 17

NMRS Class: ?Broch (site of)

NMRS Card: ND 01 NW 34

1 Anderson 1890, 188, Kildonan Parish no 1

Anderson (1890) reported that there had been a broch on the S side of the Helmsdale valley below Craig Marril about a mile and a half from the sea. Its ruins had been covered by the Caithness Railway and a steatite cup was found (information from Rev JM Joass). The railway was constructed about 1870. The OS found no trace of the broch but recorded the following finds in Dunrobin Museum:

a shale ring (acc. no 1870.10) "found in a broch opposite Caen Burn, Strath of Kildonan" (approx. ND 015 174); and
a steatite cup or lamp from "Marrel near Helmsdale" (acc. no 1969.4) which may be the cup referred to by Joass.

This fragmentary evidence seems to point to the former existence of a broch near Craig Marril, a location which might be expected in terms of overall broch distribution in the strath, particularly on the S side of the valley. The exact location of the broch cannot be pinpointed.

SK 3

Caen Burn

?

NMRS Class: ?Broch

NMRS Card: ND 01 NW 38

1 Anderson 1890, 188, Kildonan Parish no 2

Anderson (1890) reported a broch above the junction of the burn of Alt Chaen with the Helmsdale Water. There were many tumuli near it and a hut circle from which an eirde-house was entered from a trap in the surrounding wall (information from Rev JM Joass).

The OS found no suitable site in the field, but thought that the reference by Joass might be to the northernmost of a group of enclosures c500m NW of Caen on the W side of the burn at ND 0110 1865 (NMRS Card: ND 01 NW 29), which they identified as a very strong hut circle.

With reference to the overall distribution of brochs in the Strath of Kildonan, the mouth of the Caen Burn appears as a notable gap on the N side, as there are extensive remains of both earlier and later periods in the area of the burn. It is one of several gaps in broch distribution on the N side.

SK 4

Kilphedir

NC 9943 1891

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 91 NE 27

1 *Anderson 1890, 188, Parish of Kildonan no 3*

2 *RCAHMS 1911a, 104-5, no 307*

3 *Young, 1961-2, 186, no 29*

The broch of Kilphedir is located at 145m OD on the N side of the Strath of Kildonan. It has a clear view E and W along the strath. The site has both strong natural and artificial defences. The broch is located in the centre of an elongated natural hillock, which falls away steeply to the SW, S and SE. Only from the N and E is there a relatively gentler approach to the site, although even in these directions the sides of the hillock still slope substantially. The hillock has been modified all round to steepen and strengthen the already strong natural defence.

Around the base of the hillock which is over 75m long by 55m wide, a ditch has been created with a rampart on its outer edge. In the SW and S this rampart merges on its outer side into the strong natural slope. The effect of the narrow ditch on all sides is to steepen further the sides of the knoll. To the N where the approach to the knoll is easiest a further ditch has been dug, also with a rampart lying outside of it. There is an upcast mound outside the W extremity of this ditch. The approach to the site through the outer defences has been via a moderate slope from the NW flanked by the external rampart which curves in on either side of the approach. Access up onto the knoll is then via a broad ramp which may have had a stone wall on its W edge, as evidenced by a short length of wall footing below the summit of the W slope of the ramp approach. To the NE of the ramp approach there rises a terrace or platform outside the broch. At the NW end of this terrace there is a slight bank which may indicate that it had a marginal wall. The already steep slope of the terrace to the NE and E has been made steeper by the digging of a shallow ditch about half way down the slope with the upcast thrown out to make an outer bank. To the SE of the broch there is another terrace or platform, the remainder of the knoll not occupied by the broch. It would appear that

this terrace was edged by a stone wall of which footings are visible on the SW margin and for a short length in the E. There is also loose stone along other parts of the terrace margin, well hidden in the dense heather cover which cloaks most of the site apart from the broch and its tumble. Outside the site in the W but apparently incorporated in the outer slope of the outer rampart there is a U-shaped enclosure measuring 5m by 3.5m. Any further details of this enclosure are hidden in the heather cover.

The broch sits in the centre of the sculpted knoll with its entrance in the NW in line with the ramp up through the defences. The broch is fairly well preserved, but there are large spreads of tumbled stones down the slopes of the knoll to W and E. The entrance is largely intact with five lintels in place over the passage. The passage is 0.6m wide at its outer end with a door check on the W side at 3.2m from the outside and 1.1m from the inner end. There is no sign of a door check on the E side of the passage, as this side of the passage is not fully preserved. There is also no indication of a guard cell off the passage or any entrance to one. The inner face of the broch wall is almost completely intact giving a N/S diameter of 9.6m. There is only one opening into the wall width which occurs directly opposite the entrance to the broch. The opening is 0.6m wide widening to 1m with two lintels in place over it. It gives access to a gallery about 0.7m wide. To the N there is only a short length of gallery before the curving terminus is met, with some slight corbelling still in place over it. To the S and W however the gallery curves around for a distance of about 9m, with three lintels in place over its length and one fallen into the passage. A short length of the inner face of the gallery is visible in the NW with two further possible lengths at an upper level on the far side of the broch in the ENE. Both the RCAHMS (1911a) and Young (1961-2) refer to this gallery as containing a stair but no steps are visible (as was also noted by the RCAHMS). The outer face of the broch wall is traceable intermittently around the circuit except on the E arc where most of it has fallen outwards down the steep slope. The wall width where measurable is consistently about 4.3m with a slight batter to the outer face visible in the N and S. There is also a very slight batter on the inner face in the SW where it has been revealed by a small excavation.

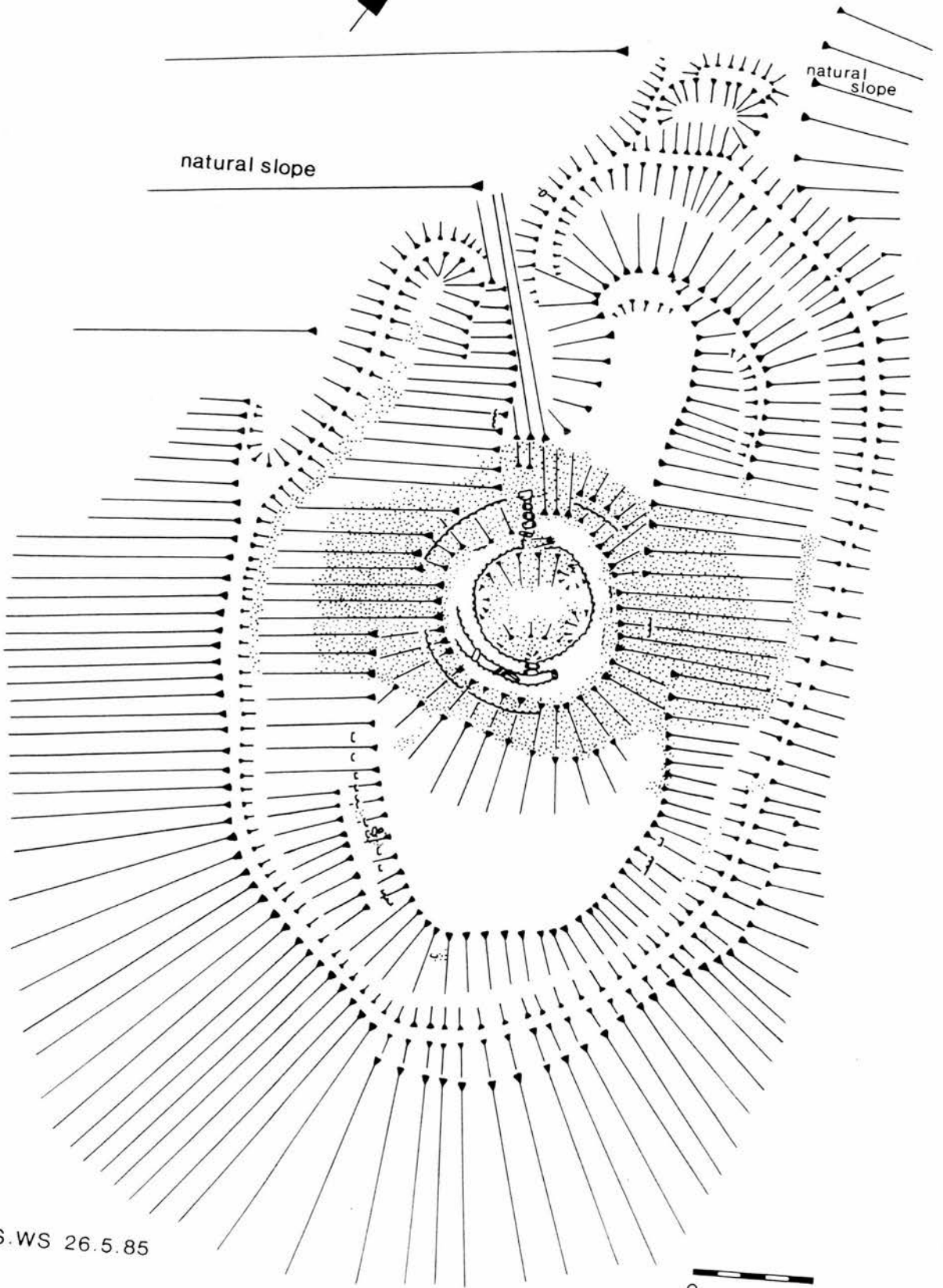
There would appear to have been no means of access to the large terrace behind the broch in the SE from within the broch itself. Access could only have been achieved around either side of the broch at the top of the very steep slopes to W and E where there is little room for passage. This seems an unusual arrangement if the terrace was in such use that a wall edging its margin was required, and must raise some questions about whether the broch is fully contemporary with all of the other archaeological features at the site.



FIG. 35.—Broch, Kilphedir (No. 307).

Source: RCAHMS 1911a, 104

Kilphedir
NC 994189



CS.WS 26.5.85

0 10m

SK 5

Eldrable

NC 9833 1816

NMRS Class: Broch with Outworks

NMRS Card: NC 91 NE 20

1 *Anderson 1890, 188, no 4*

2 *RCAHMS 1911a, 106, no 309*

This broch is located on the W side of a small tributary which enters the Helmsdale River from the S. It sits on a small crag at 68m OD and is on the N facing side of the strath. The E and W slopes of the crag are steep, but there are small natural terraces on either side of the broch in the N and S. The N terrace falls away sharply at its edge but the S terrace slopes more gently down.

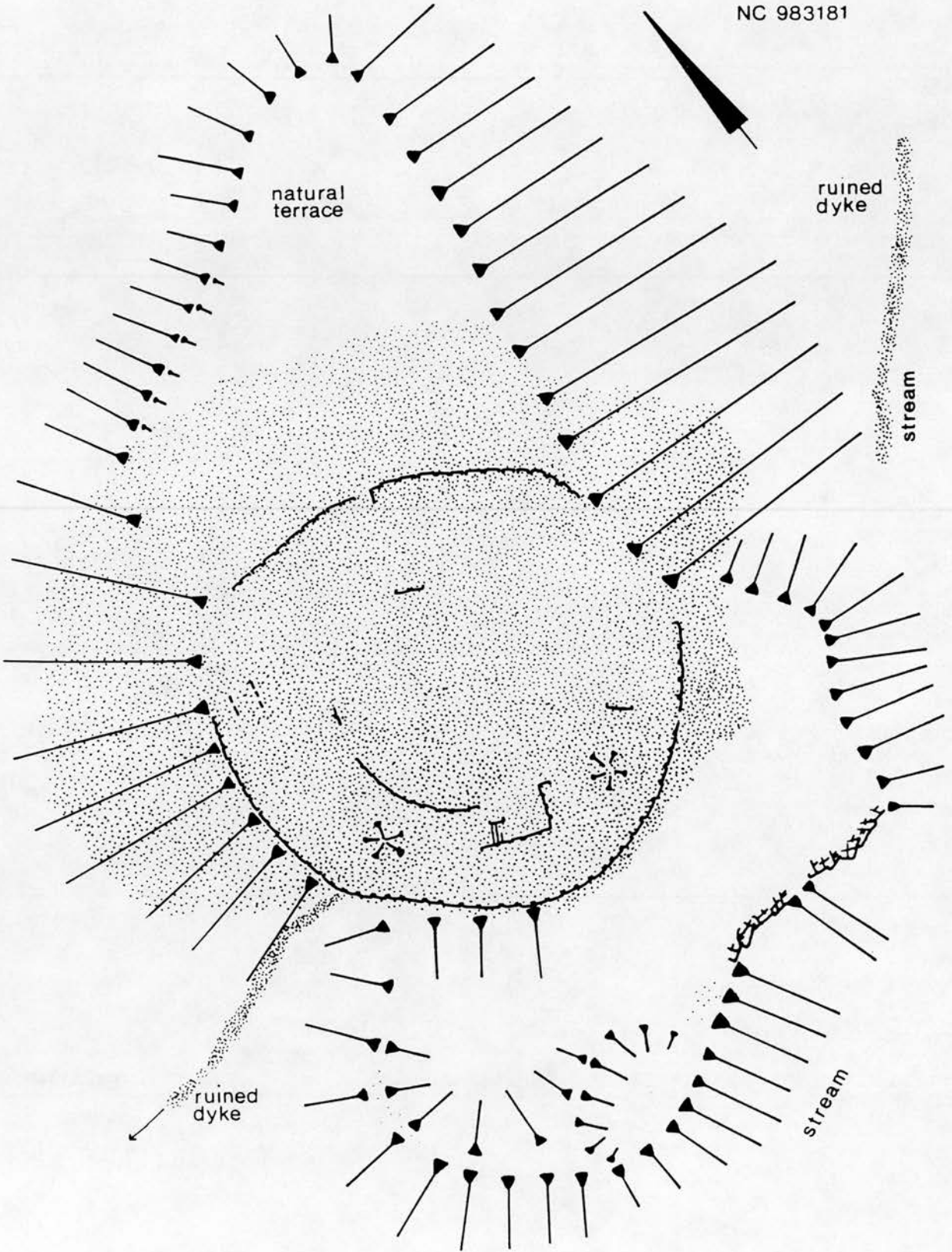
Almost the complete circuit of the outer face of the broch wall is preserved surviving 6 courses high in the N. The outer face does not describe a circle but is slightly irregularly shaped, possibly because of the exigencies of its location on the rocky crag. The inner face of the broch wall survives only in the N, W and SW, the rest of the interior being strewn with rubble. The wall varies in width and is 3.2-4m wide where measurable. The area enclosed is 7.7m NE/SW. A stairwell lies within the wall in the SW and three steps of the stair are still visible. There is a suggestion of a gallery 0.9m wide in the NW and there are two hollows in the rubble in the WSW and S which may only be robbing scoops. The entrance to the broch is not preserved. The RCAHMS (1911a) noted that it had been from the ENE opposite the burn and had been 4ft (1.2m) wide near the exterior, but was not measurable elsewhere. There is a large gap in the outer face in this area above a steep drop down to the stream. Apart from the features noted above, the broch is so badly ruined it appears largely as an extensive mound of rubble.

The natural terraces are covered in a deep growth of heather which obscures any features outside the broch. There is a slight indication in the heather that the two terraces may have been edged with walling. The OS recorded that a stony scarp, partially overlaid by tumble from the broch, enclosed the summit area of the crag and was probably the remains of an outer defensive wall. They also recorded further defensive works at the base of the crag in the N and W, which formed

no cohesive pattern and appeared to be where natural defences were strongest. These works appeared to comprise a ditch in the natural gully in the W, fading to a terraced effect as it continued in a NE direction. The pattern of the works was obscured by a later track extending from a collapsed stone bridge, which crosses the stream NE of the broch. The natural gully in the W and the collapsed bridge were noted at the time of survey, but not the other works referred to by the OS. Such works would appear to be unnecessary, as the OS noted, because of the steep natural slopes on this side of the crag.

Two field walls of more recent date approach the crag on which the broch sits and the pre-clearance farming township of Eldrable lies to the NE of the broch closer to the Helmsdale River.

Eldrable
NC 983181



CS WS 27.6 83

0 5m

SK 6

Torrish Burn

?

1 Anderson 1890, 188, Parish of Kildonan no 5

Anderson (1890) recorded a broch on the west side of the Torrish Burn near its junction with the Helmsdale River about a mile above the broch of Eldrable (SK 5) on the S side of the strath. There is no further record of a broch in the vicinity of the Torrish Burn, and the site is not included in the NMRS. In terms of the general distribution characteristics of brochs in the strath, a broch might have been expected near the Torrish Burn.

SK 7

Gylable

NC 9487 1823

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 91 NW 9

1 RCAHMS 1911a, 106, no 311

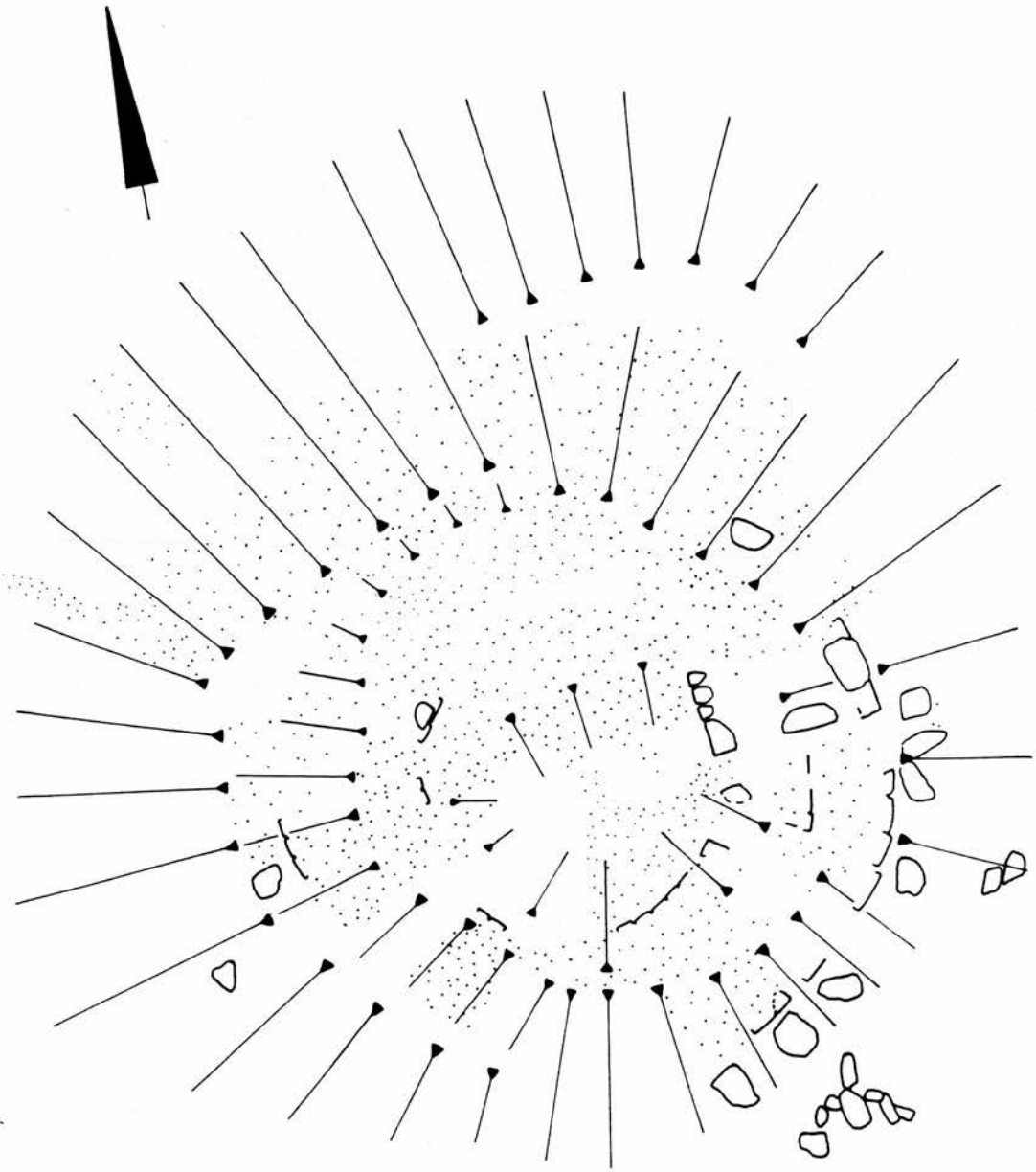
2 Haggarty 1983

This broch is located on the N facing side of the Strath of Kildonan at 61m OD about 60m E of the Gylable burn. Its elevation and its location near a burn on the S side of the strath is similar to that of the brochs of Eldrable (SK 5) and Kilournan (SK 9). The broch now appears as a mound of stones close to a new plantation of conifers, a little to the N of the railway line which runs on this side of the strath. The approach to the broch is gentle on all sides except from the N, where there is a relatively steep slope. The mound of stones is partially covered in heather.

The broch is badly ruined but some structural details are visible. The inner face is preserved in lengths on the E, S, and W, giving an internal diameter of 7.8m E/W and 8.3m. The outer face is also traceable around the E arc of the broch and for a short length in the W. The entrance appears to have been in the E with the N side of the passage partially preserved. The S side of the passage is completely ruined. To the S of the entrance passage a length of outward facing revetment within the wall width, 1.2m in length, possibly indicates either a gallery or cell. A remarkable feature of the broch are the enormous slabs in the foundation course of the outer face. Some very large slabs of stone lie outside the line of the face in the SE. These are either grounders pulled from the face, or they may be large stones toppled from higher in the wall during robbing of the site.

The site could not be described as having strong natural defence, and it has no artificial external defence. A field wall approaches the broch from the WNW, and there is a semi-circular sheep shelter to the SW. Below the broch on the other side of the railway several animal enclosures indicate where the stones from the broch have gone. The pre-clearance township of Gylable once existed below the broch on either side of the Gylable Burn. Its remains seem to have been severed by the railway. The slopes behind the broch up to the 200m contour have a number of hut circles, burnt mounds, and cairns (Haggarty 1983).

Gylable
NC 948182



CS.WS 28.5.85

0 5m

SK 8

Balvalaich

NC 9452 1898

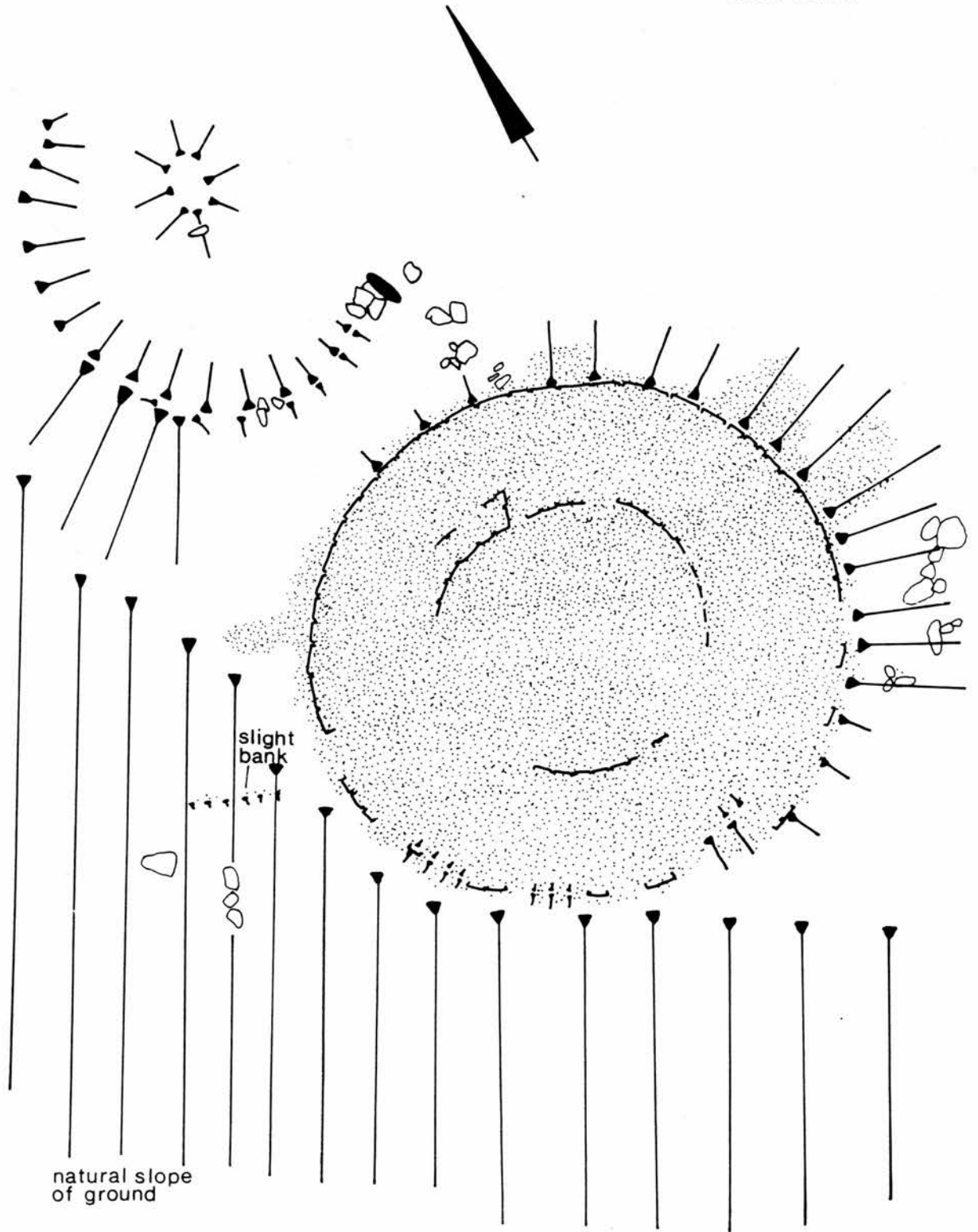
NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 91 NW 14

This broch is sited on the open, sloping N side of the Strath of Kildonan at a height of 61m OD, a short distance above the road which runs through the valley. The structure is not on a raised knoll or terrace and there is no definite stream nearby, although water appears to have eroded a shallow gully around the N and E sides of the broch. The broch is ruined to foundation level and the OS recorded that it had been used as a quarry during road building.

Despite its ruined state much of the inner and outer faces of the broch wall can be traced. Unlike Eldrable (SK 5) the outer face defines a fairly regular circle. The wall width varies from 4 to 4.4m and encloses an area 8.7m wide N/S. There is no trace of the entrance, but it may possibly have been in the W where there may be the outer corner of a passage. The only feature in the ruin of the wall is an outward facing revetment in the NW. This appears to be the inner side of an intramural gallery or stairwell. The W side of a possible entrance into this gallery is preserved.

Outside the broch to the NW there is a curious C-shaped enclosure with a mound partially blocking its open side. The OS described this feature as a "horn work" in the form of a mutilated turf and stone wall. They suggested that it was either the remains of a causeway or an enclosure, but water erosion had so mutilated the feature as to make identification uncertain. The enclosure measures 10m NW/SE by 5m. Running from the enclosure around the NE and E of the broch there is a ditch or a dried up stream bed (the water erosion noted by the OS). This ditch or gully is so slight that it is unlikely to be an attempt to provide additional protection for the broch in the NE where the land slopes gently down towards the structure. It may have been an attempt to divert drainage which would otherwise have seeped downslope into the broch.



CS.WS 26.3.83

0 5m

SK 9

Kilournan

NC 9293 1882

NMRS Class: Broch (remains of)

NMRS Card: NC 91 NW 8

1 RCAHMS 1911a, 106, no 310

This broch is located on the N facing slope of the Strath of Kildonan at a height of 61m OD. It lies on the E side of the Kilournan (alternatively spelt Kilearnan) Burn, but unlike Eldrable (SK 5) it is not built on the edge of the stream, rather on a small knoll a few metres away from it. The structure is almost completely destroyed, surviving only as a C-shaped stony bank, composed of small stones and turf, about 18m in diameter across the chord. When visited by the RCAHMS in 1909 (1911a) it was described as being already entirely demolished with only a few structureless heaps of small stones remaining. There is no indication of any outworks around the ruin of the structure. The extensive township of Kilournan lies downslope, the broch no doubt having been quarried for its construction.

The site itself provides no evidence to justify its classification as a broch. Its location however beside a stream and at 61m OD matches that of two neighbouring brochs on the S side of the Strath, Eldrable (SK 5) and Gylable (SK 7).

SK 10

Allt a'Choire Mhoire

NC 9216 1887

NMRS Class: Broch (remains)

NMRS Card: NC 91 NW 2

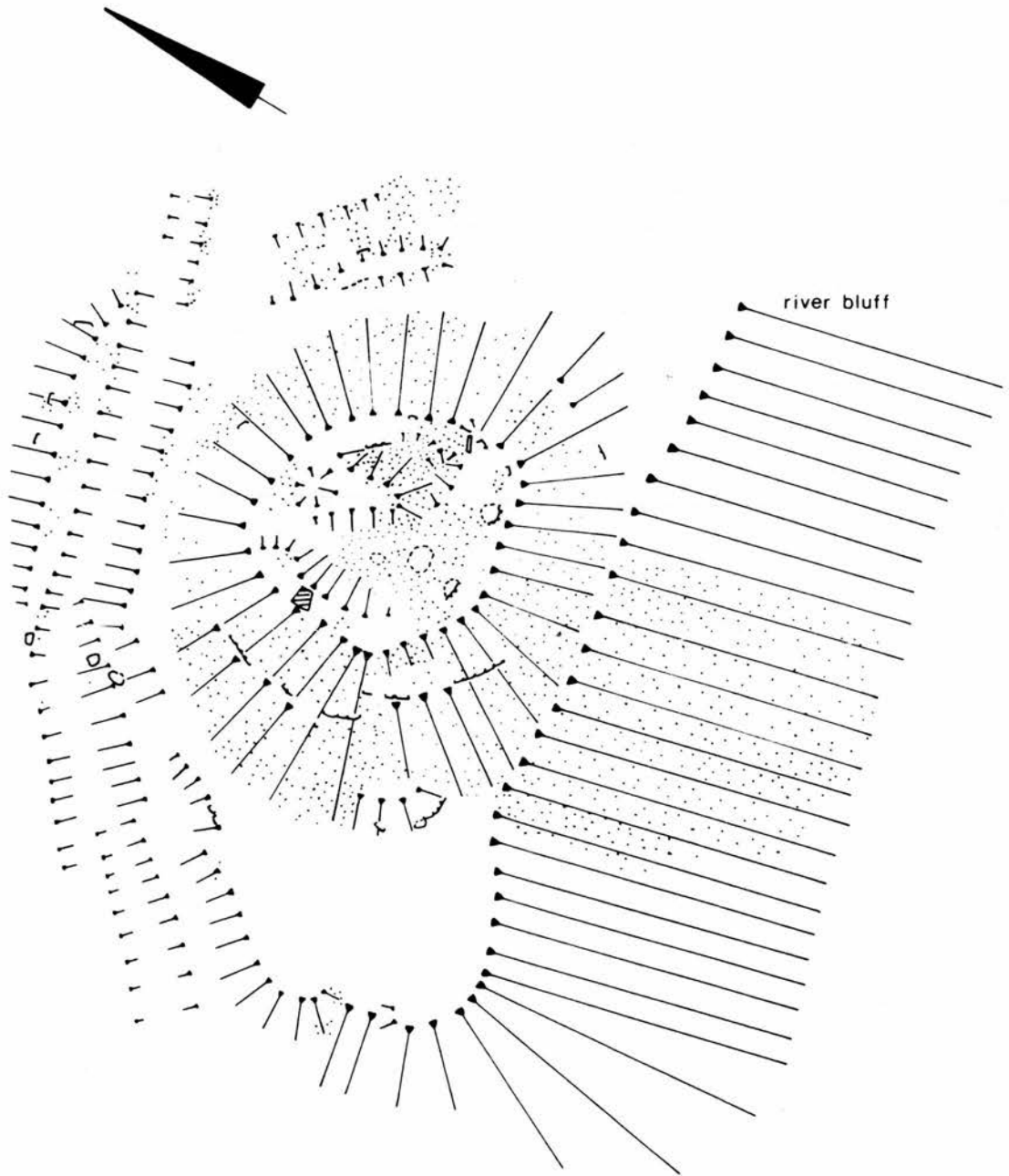
1 *Anderson 1890, 188, Parish of Kildonan no 6*

2 *RCAHMS 1911a, 106, no 312*

This site is located at 99m OD on the edge of the steep N slope of the Allt a'Choire Mhoire burn. The burn is a tributary of the Helmsdale River joining it from the S. The site is not visible from the Strath of Kildonan. The structure is badly ruined and appears at a distance as a mound of turf covered stones. Very little structure is visible to enable the site to be identified as a broch. In the top of the mound two lengths of an apparent inner face are revealed in the NE and S, with the possible curving wall of a cell in the SE. An outer face is preserved, one course high, in the SW, giving a wall width at the only point measurable of 4.8m. Outside the line of the outer face in the SW there appears to be another outward facing revetment which can be traced disjointedly and irregularly around the W arc of the mound. In the E on the edge of the summit area three individual stones may belong to the inner face of an intramural gallery, but they may simply be tumbled stones in a fortuitous arrangement. The shape and size of the mound and the apparent wall width in the SW would seem to indicate that the site is in fact a broch.

Outside the broch mound to the W there is a terrace which may have been edged with a wall. The thick heather cover obscures the detail, but there are a few loose stones on the W edge of the terrace and two apparent stones of an outward facing revetment on its N edge. The NW arc of the broch mound, which is approached over level ground, appears to have been protected by a shallow ditch with an external rampart. The ditch appears to have been extended to the SW by a modern drainage ditch. There is some evidence of stone revetting on the outer side of the rampart. The broch appears to have had no additional defence on its E side where the approach is also over level ground. There are the slight remains of a later rectangular enclosure in this area. A very short length of outward facing revetment at the base of the broch mound in the SE, close to the top of the slope down to the burn, along with a break of slope, may indicate the presence of an outer wall close to the broch on this side, of which there is no other trace.

Allt a'Choire Mhoire
NC 921188



CS.WS 28.5.85

0 10m

SK 11

Suisgill Lodge

NC 9020 2396

NMRS Class: Homestead

NMRS Card: NC 92 SW 13

This site is located on level open ground, possibly a kame terrace, at a height of 120m OD. It is very overgrown with heather so that little detail of the structure is visible. It consists of a roughly circular bank, which may have been a stone wall, with a ditch on its inner side. The area enclosed by the bank is approximately 31m N/S by 32m. Within the bank and ditch there is a large circular structure appearing as a bank deeply covered in heather, measuring approximately 25m N/S by 24m overall. The bank is about 4m wide across its broad crest in the NE, where there is a linear depression reminiscent of a sunken gallery under the heather cover. The bank is broken in the W where a smaller circular structure is contiguous with the larger circle. This structure is also formed by a heather covered bank and measures 13m N/S by 10.5m overall. There does not appear to be an obvious entrance point to either circle from the outside.

The OS interpreted the remains as a primary hut circle, with a contiguous, possibly secondary hut circle at a slightly lower level, both on a natural platform formed by an enclosing ditch with an outer bank. They considered that the primary hut circle was set into the sloping top of the platform, the interior being 1.3m below its wall on the E side. The second possible hut circle was also thought to be set into the slope to a depth of 1.2m.

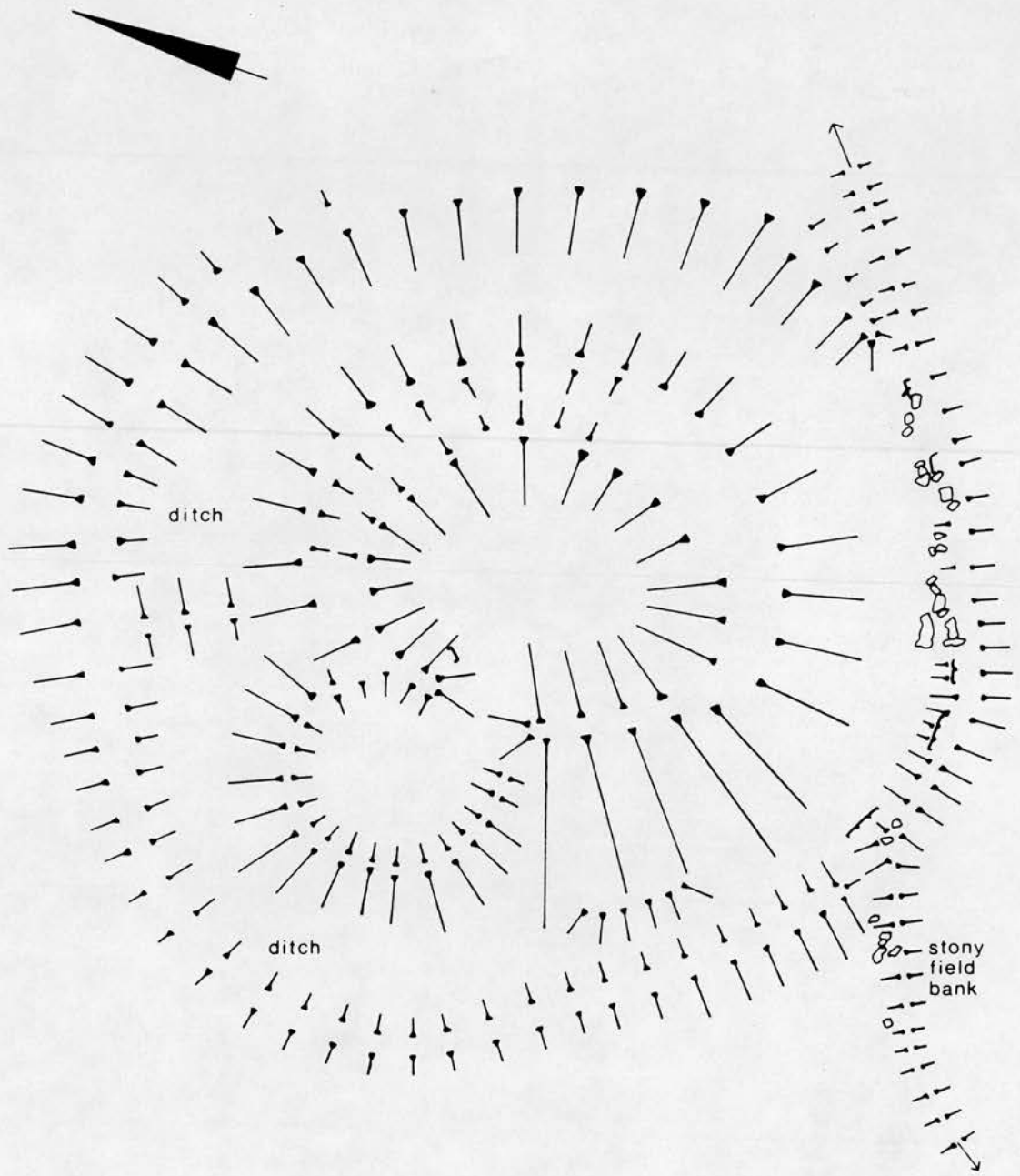
The ditch is shallower on the W side which the OS thought might be the result of silting, as ground level on this side is slightly lower than on the E side. In the NW there appears to be a causeway across the ditch. The OS noted that this corresponded with the entrance into the primary hut circle, but no such clearly defined entrance was noted during survey in 1983. A field wall running from W to E seems to have been built on top of the outer bank of the complex in the S.

There are many archaeological features in the vicinity of the site, including the remains of a township to which the field bank may belong. Near the site towards the N there are two very large circular enclosures formed by wide high banks, and some very large mounds. The

OS identified the enclosures as hut circles.

This site has at one stage been classed by the OS as a broch, then as a dun, and has very recently (1981) been reassessed as a homestead of unknown chronological period. There is no reason to disagree with the latest assessment of the site. This type of homestead is being increasingly recognised in the straths of Sutherland, for example, Cnoc Dalveghouse in Strath Naver (SN 5), also previously classed as a broch or dun.

Suisgill Lodge
NC 902239



CS. WS 28.6.83

0 10m

SK 12

Learable

NC 8949 2403

NMRS Class: Enclosure (alleged broch)

NMRS Card: NC 82 SE 3

1 RCAHMS 1911a, 107-8, no 315

The RCAHMS (1911a) noted the site of a supposed broch at Learable. They described the site as a circular enclosure, 78ft in diameter overall, which was very dilapidated. The wall seemed to be about 19ft thick, and the entrance was from the SE. The RCAHMS noted that the structure had been so pillaged and was so overgrown, that its true character was indefinite.

In the 1976 the OS recorded the structure as being about 15.2m in diameter, formed of an earth and stone bank about 6m wide. They also recorded a small hut in its interior, measuring about 8m by 6.5m, joining the enclosure on either side of its entrance, with a mutilated scooped area on the W. The site seemed to have been quarried for the nearby township of Learable.

From the foregoing descriptions it seems very doubtful whether this site can reasonably be taken to be a badly ruined broch, although a broch in this location would not be out of keeping with the general distribution of brochs in the strath. The site was not visited during field survey of the study area.

SK 13

Upper Suisgill

NC 8989 2498

NMRS Class: Probable Homestead

NMRS Card: NC 82 SE 11

1 Anderson 1890, 188, Kildonan Parish no 7

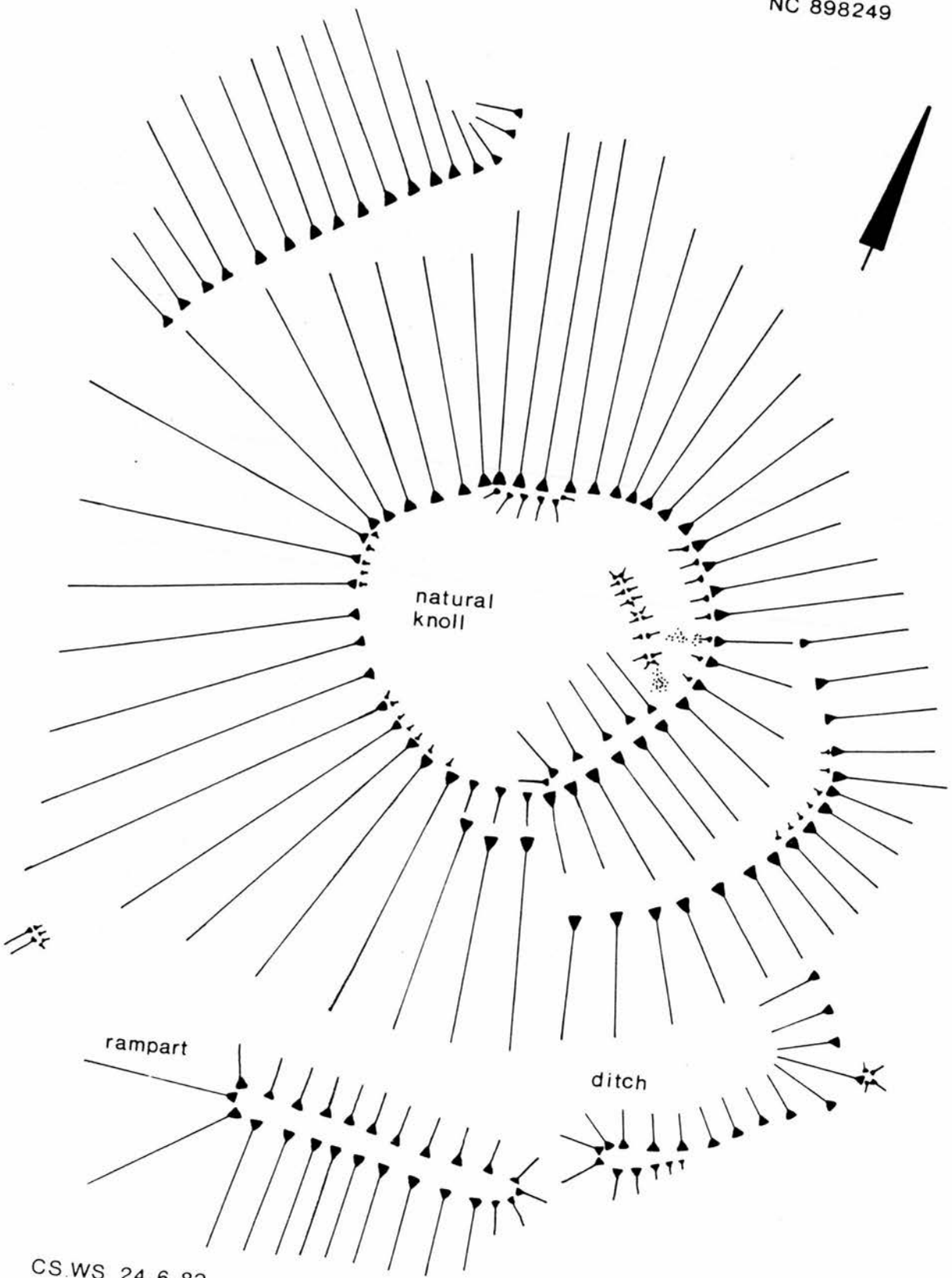
This structure occupies the summit of a prominent knoll close to the road at a height of 100m OD. The structure is almost completely destroyed and only a discontinuous bank edging the summit of the knoll is now visible. Both the summit and sides of the knoll are cloaked in a deep heather cover.

The summit of the knoll measures 12m N/S by 15m, sloping down to terraces on the NW and SE which fall away sharply. The OS considered that the knoll had been scarped all round to provide an outer defence. The knoll has definitely been shaped in the S where a ditch has been dug to steepen the slope on this side. Outside the ditch a rampart has been thrown up with a gap through it. The two terraces in the NW and SE may be natural rather than an artificial shaping of the knoll. The SE terrace appears to have been edged by a wall or rampart of which only a slight trace is now visible.

The OS considered that the summit of the knoll had been occupied by a circular stone walled fortification, which had been comprehensively robbed. They noted the probable footings of an outer face around the perimeter, none of which are now visible. They originally classed the structure as a broch because of its size, shape, and position on a reasonably defensive site overlooking cultivable land. In 1981 they thought that the classification of the site as a broch was uncertain due to the very limited nature of the remains and its similarity to a number of ditched homesteads recently recognised in Sutherland, such as Suisgill Lodge (SK 11).

The identification of this site must remain doubtful because it is so badly destroyed. A comparison of the plan of the site with that of Suisgill Lodge shows that there is little to justify grouping them together as similar sites. The limited nature of the remains at Upper Suisgill is no indication that the site is not a broch. For example, Kilournan (SK 9), identified as a broch, is almost as badly mutilated, yet its identification has not been brought into question by other authorities.

Upper Suisgill
NC 898249



CS.WS 24.6.83

SK 14

Suisgill

NC 8875 2530

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 82 NE 12

1 Anderson 1890, 188, Kildonan Parish no 8

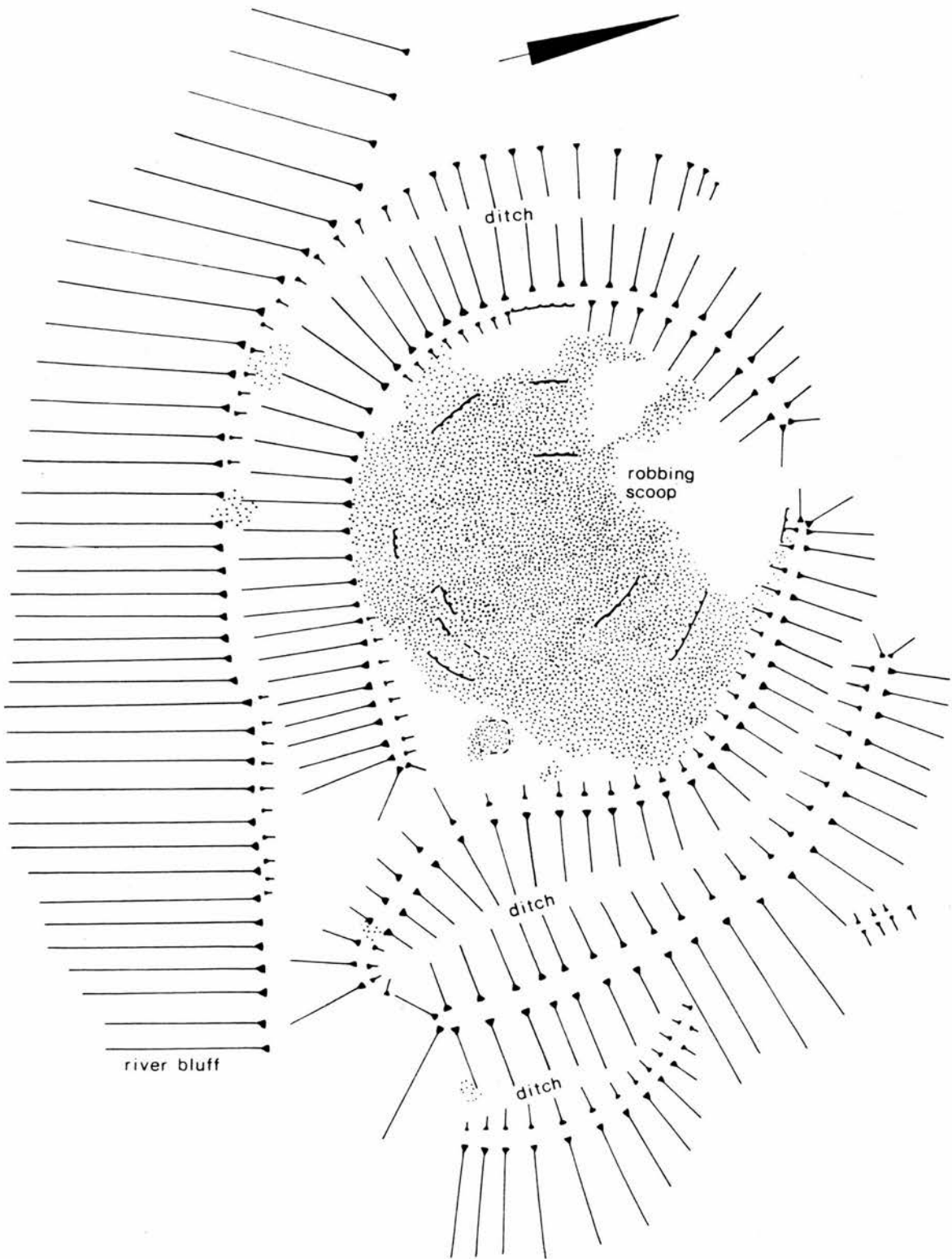
2 RCAHMS 1911a, 105, no 308

This broch is located on the N side of the Helmsdale River on the edge of a terrace which drops steeply to the water below. On all other sides the approach to the broch is over level ground.

The broch is badly ruined, a large robbing scoop having taken away much of the N arc. Sections of the outer and inner faces of the wall can be traced and it has been about 5m thick where measurable. In the SE there is a trace of a 0.9m wide gallery in the width of the wall. Just outside the rubble of the ruined broch in the ESE there is the ruin of a small structure. It is not clear whether this is part of the broch complex or a later structure built of rubble from the broch.

The most striking feature of the site is the massive rampart and ditch defences outside the broch across the level approaches from the W, N, and E. There is also a rampart across the steep drop down to the river which is slighter than the others. This system of defences is paralleled within the Strath of Kildonan at only one other broch site, Kilphedir (SK 4), although it occurs outside the valley at other sites in Sutherland.

The rampart and ditch system is most complex to the E of the broch where there are three ramparts with two deep ditches between them. To the W of the broch there is a single rampart with an external ditch. To the N there is a rampart only with a gap through it in the NE. From the position of this gap in relation to the robbing scoop in the broch rubble, it is possible to suggest that the gap is not an original feature but may have been created to allow removal of the stone. The original entrance through the defences has been in the SE between the steep drop to the river and the complex artificial defences in the E. Apart from this approach, the broch has been completely surrounded by the innermost rampart which has been revetted with stone at least on its inner face, as evidenced by lengths of face in the W and NE. Heather growth obscures any other evidence for the constructional features of the ramparts.



CS.WS 26.6.83

0 10m

SK 15

Dalcharn

NC 8702 2690

NMRS Class: Possible Cairn (remains of)

NMRS Card: NC 82 NE 13

This site is located on a low knoll on the rim of the river flood plain. It is an amorphous semicircular arc of turf covered stones to which field clearance has been added. The arc is approximately 12-13m across and 0.9m high. The structure appears to have been cut by the construction of the railway. In 1977 the OS were not certain that the site was in fact an antiquity and not simply field clearance. There is a strong local tradition however that it is a "Pictish Tower", a common description of a broch in the N, particularly in Caithness. The OS thought the placename (Dalcharn) might point to the site being a cairn, and noted that there is a steatite lamp in Dunrobin Museum which is noted as being from a Pictish Cairn at Dalcharre (acc. no 1853.1). Such steatite lamps have been recovered from sites thought to be that of brochs in the strath, such as, Craig Marril (SK 2) and Cnoc Chaisteal (SK 1).

A broch at the junction of the Frithe River with the Helmsdale River would not be out of keeping with the general distribution of brochs in the Strath of Kildonan. There are two brochs in the valley of the Frithe to the W of this possible cairn or broch (SK 16 and SK 17).

Feranach

NC 8441 2730

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NC 82 NW 1

1 Anderson 1890, 188, Kildonan Parish no 9

2 RCAHMS 1911a, 106-7, no 314

This broch is located on the N side of Strath na Frithe, a major tributary of the Helmsdale River flowing into it from the W. The broch lies about 3km from the Helmsdale at 155m OD, overlooking a part of the valley of the Frithe which is narrow and fairly deeply cut. The broch is very well preserved largely because of its isolation and the difficulty of access to it. Immediately to the S of the broch there is a large drystone, sub-rectangular enclosure with a roofless longhouse at its N end. It is likely that these later structures were built with stone from the broch.

There are no traces of outworks or structures around the broch. It stands alone in a pile of rubble. The rubble within the interior has been heaped and stacked. It is obvious that in building the later enclosure much sorting and robbing of stone from the broch has taken place. These actions may have removed any surrounding structures but it seems unlikely that later builders would have been so thorough, or would have even bothered, with so much tumble from the walls being readily available.

The entrance to the broch is in the W and the side walls of the passage are fully intact. There are five lintels in place over the passage. The innermost one has cracked under the weight of tumbled stone above it. Outside the entrance a long stone on the strewn tumble would appear to be the fallen outermost lintel. At 1.5m inwards from the outer end of the passage there is a set of door checks. The passage is 0.6m wide at its outer end, widening to 1.3m at the door checks and narrowing slightly to 1.1m at its inner end. To the S of the passage there is an oval cell with a partly corbelled roof. The RCAHMS (1911a) in their plan of the site showed this cell as a guard cell connected to the entrance via a passage opening behind the S door check. (The RCAHMS 1911a plan may be found at the end of the site description.) There is no obvious evidence of such a passage now either within the cell or at the broch entrance. There is however a

long slab at the present floor level in the entrance passage which has a slight gap under it. This may well be the lintel over the entry into the cell, but the passage to the cell would appear to be well hidden below the present ground level both within the cell and the broch entrance.

In the S arc of the broch wall there are three further cells which are an elongated oval- or a sausage-shape. The cell in the W is fully intact but roofless, with some corbelling visible at either end. The entrance to the cell, presumably from the interior, is not visible. The cell in the SSE is only partially preserved and is also roofless. Some corbelling is visible at its W end. Two lintels in the N wall of this cell, one above the other, reveal that entry to the cell was from the broch interior, with a lintelled void in the inner face of the broch wall above the entry. In the ESE the third cell is also partially intact but showing no visible trace of the entrance to it. A hollow in the tumble across the line of the inner face probably indicates where the entrance to the cell has collapsed.

In the NE arc of the wall there is evidence of two galleries, one above the other, the upper one offset towards the broch interior by 0.4m. The lower gallery has three lintels in place over it in the E, with two collapsed lintels adjacent. This lower gallery appears to terminate in the NW at a curving wall forming one side of the lintelled entry to the gallery from the broch interior. The end of this entry at the broch inner face is completely buried in debris. The other end of the lower gallery must terminate short of the cell in the ESE which is founded at ground level. The termination is not visible. The upper gallery is entered from the broch interior at two points, by a void or entry above the entry to the lower gallery, and by a second void or entry in the ENE. Both of these entries are presumably above scarcement level. Only the inner face of the upper gallery survives. Two large slabs lying against this face appear to be lintels fallen from the gallery roof. The RCAHMS (1911a) identified the length of gallery in the NE arc as containing a stair, but no steps are visible. It is clear that if this was the site of the stair, it could have only begun to rise from the upper gallery level, that is, above scarcement level, as the lower gallery must terminate at the ESE cell, and the roofs of the corbelled cells in the S arc of the wall would have been

in the way of a stair rising from the ground level gallery.

In the NW arc of the broch there is a fourth elongated oval- or sausage-shaped cell, accessed by a lintelled entry from the broch interior. Two lintels are in fact visible, one above the other, pointing to a ground level entry with a void above it. The lower lintel projects 0.5m forward of the visible inner face of the broch and points to the presence of a scarcement. A scarcement is also indicated at the broch entrance where the innermost cracked lintel and the inner corners of the passage walls project beyond the visible line of the broch inner face, again by 0.5m. The scarcement would appear to exist at the level of the lintels over the basal entries into the broch wall. Elsewhere around the broch interior the inner face of the broch is so hidden in tumble that the scarcement is not visible, but it is likely to be intact beneath the debris.

Most of the outer face of the broch is intact except on the NE arc. It exhibits a strong batter. The line of the face is slightly distorted in the E possibly because of outward pressure from the collapsing wall core. The wall width at the entrance at the visible base is 4.6m. The interior diameter of the broch above scarcement level is about 11m E/W.

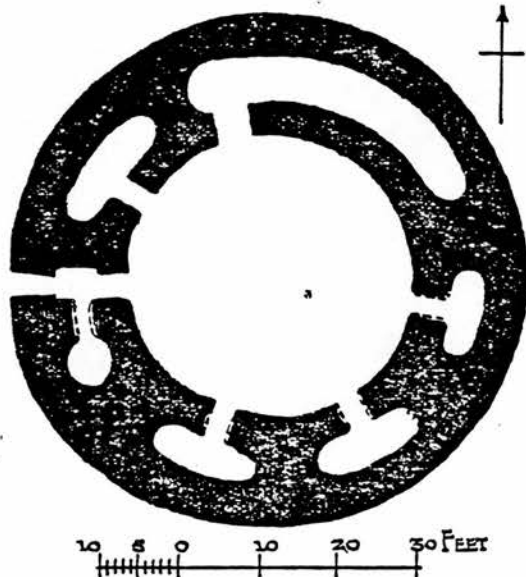
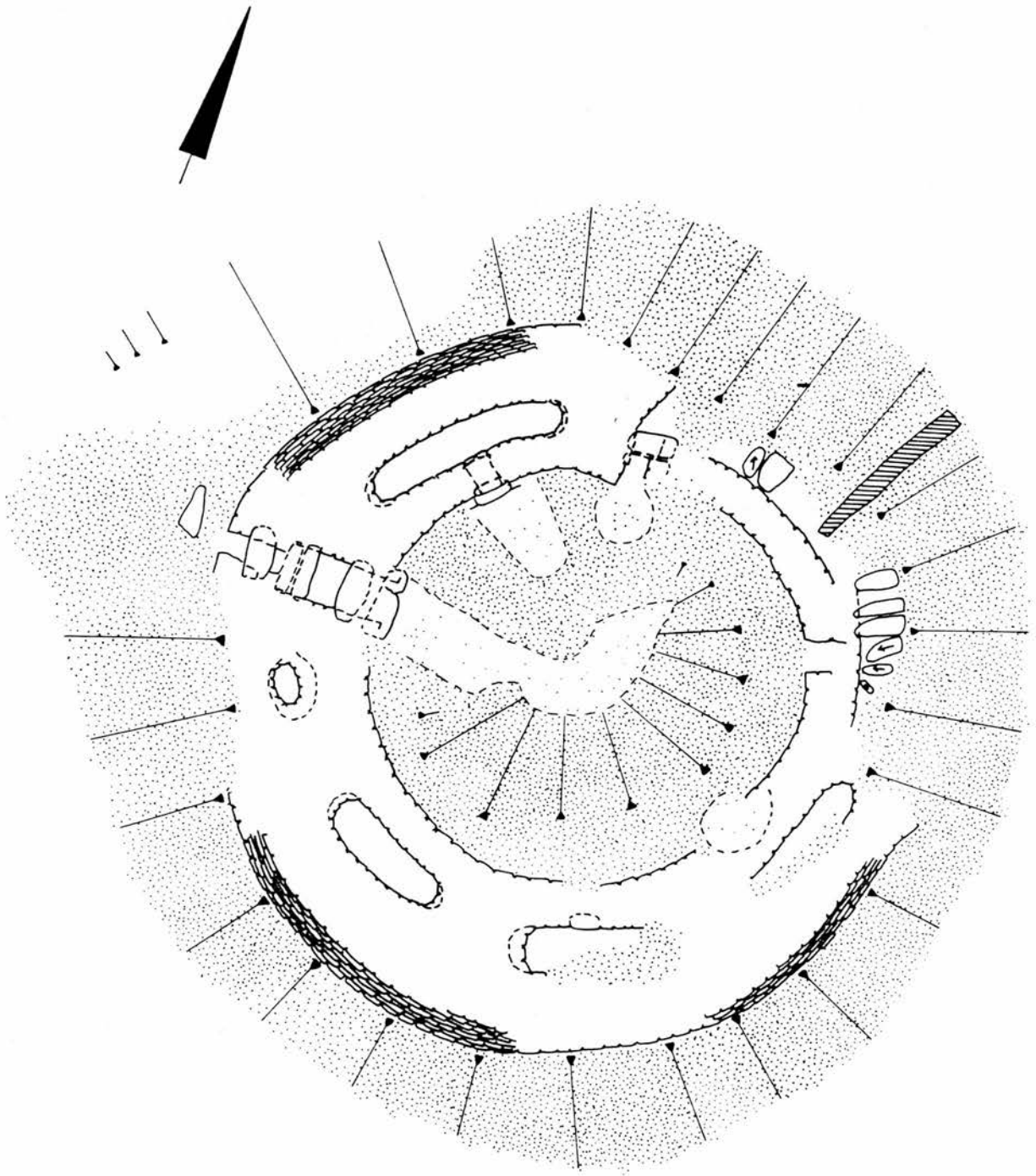


FIG. 36.—Broch, Feranach (No. 314).

Source: RCAHMS 1911a, 107

Feranach
NC 844273



CS. WS 27.5.85

0 5m

SK 17

Allt an Duin

NC 8097 2605

NMRS Class: Broch (remains)

NMRS Card: NC 82 NW 4

1 *Anderson 1890, 189, Parish of Kildonan no 10*

2 *RCAHMS 1911a, 106, no 313*

This site is located on the edge of a terrace at 160m OD on the S side of Strath na Frithe, a major tributary of the Helmsdale River, flowing into it from the W. The site is about 7km from the confluence of the Frithe and the Helmsdale, and about 4km W of the broch of Feranach (SK 16), also located in the valley of the Frithe. The site lies within the triangular piece of land formed by the confluence of the burn Allt an Duin and the Frithe, but is about 100m distant from either stream. The valley of the Frithe is relatively narrow at this point but opens out at about 300m downstream into level ground used now as good sheep pasture. This level pasture continues for about 2.5km to the E before the valley of the Frithe narrows again about 0.5km W of the broch of Feranach.

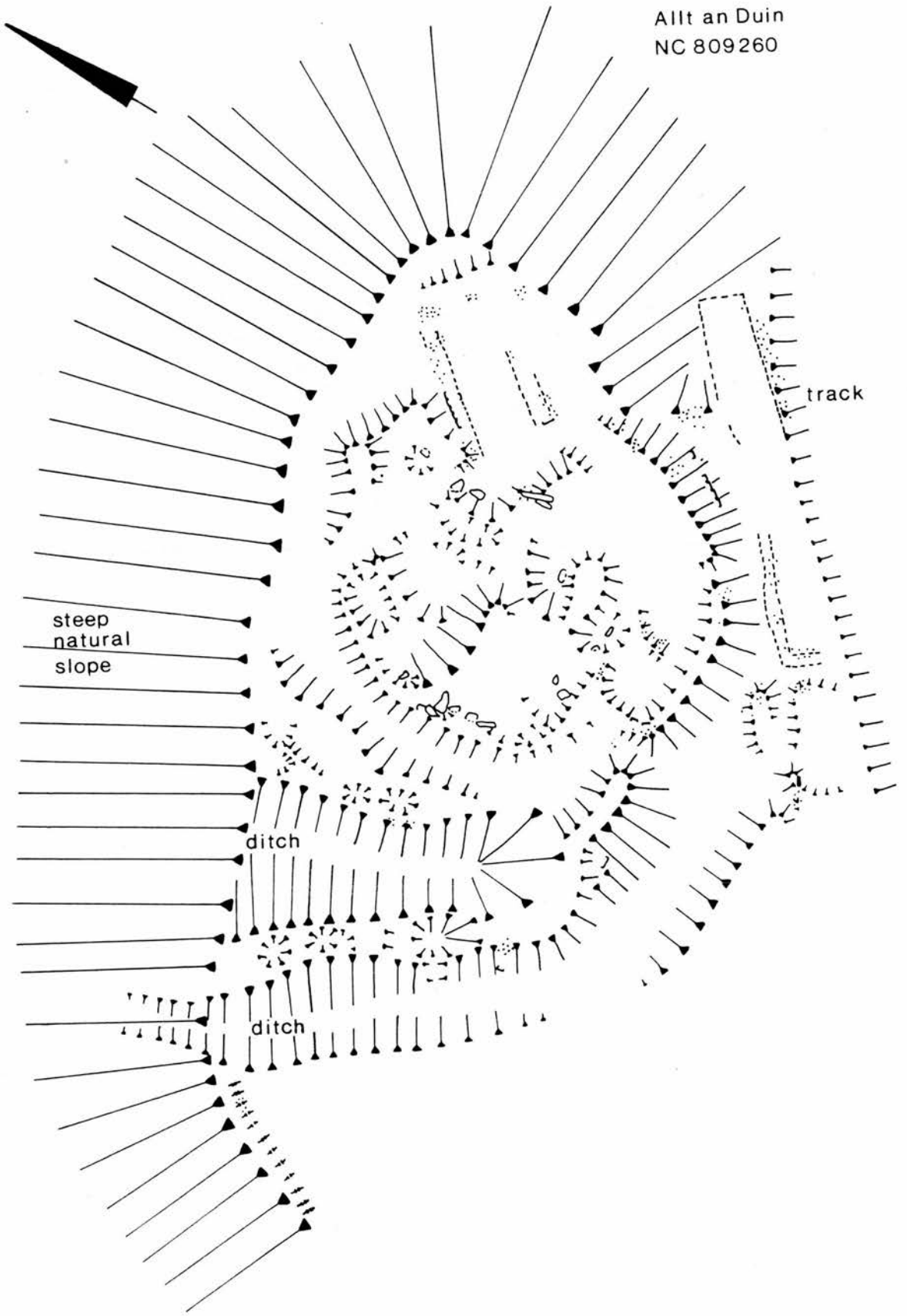
The site is protected by a steep natural slope to the N and NE. The approach to the site from all other directions is over level ground. Protection to the W and S has been provided by a rampart and ditch complex. To the E any continuation of the rampart and ditch complex has been obscured by a later track and a number of later constructions at the track's edge.

The site is so badly robbed that it is difficult to be certain of its identification. It appears to have been quarried and robbed for a number of longhouses placed both beside the later track in the E and on the central platform defined by the natural slope and the rampart and ditch complex. These later constructions are obviously themselves fairly old as they have been thoroughly robbed, probably to build the still upstanding houses which lie off the site to the SW. Such has been the extent of robbing that there is no evidence to be seen of the nature of the earliest construction which must have occupied the pitted central platform area. There are some very large stones in this area which may have been grounders too big to move or to use in later constructions. There is no surviving structural evidence that a broch

was located at this site. The OS (1981) thought identification of the site as a broch was uncertain as it bore similarities to a number of ditched homesteads recently recognised in Sutherland, such as Suisgill Lodge (SK 11) in the Strath of Kildonan and Cnoc Dalvegghouse (SN 5) in Strath Naver. On the other hand the configuration of natural and artificial defence is not dissimilar to that at the broch of Suisgill (SK 14) in the Strath of Kildonan and to that at the brochs of Dun Chealamy (SN 8) and Dun Viden (SN 7) in Strath Naver. The identification of the site as a broch must remain uncertain.

The rampart and ditch complex consists of two pitted and scarred ramparts and two ditches to the W. To the S the configuration of the complex is much less clear. The outermost ditch appears to continue until it is truncated by the later constructions and track, but there is a substantial break in the outer edge of the ditch in the SW. It is not clear whether this an original feature or a result of later modification. The inner ditch appears to have originally terminated in the SW and not to have continued around the site to the E, but in this area there is a narrower rampart or bank which does not coincide with the expected line of the rampart and ditch complex. This rampart or bank has a gap through it in the S and has the foundation of a longhouse against its inner side in the E. It may be that this feature is a later enclosing bank for the longhouse settlement rather than a part of the original defences. The two original ramparts visible in the W are both broad features with robbing pits along their tops. It is not clear what the robbing pits were designed to recover as the ramparts would appear to be earth and stone dump banks which may or may not have been revetted.

Allt an Duin
NC 809260



steep
natural
slope

track

ditch

ditch



CS.WS 27.5.85

SK 18

Kinbrace Burn

?

1 Anderson 1890, 189, Parish of Kildonan nos 11 and 12

Anderson (1890) recorded two brochs beside the Kinbrace Burn, one on the south side of the burn, a quarter of a mile above its junction with the Helmsdale River, and another on the opposite side of the Kinbrace valley. There is no further record of either of these brochs, but there are sites which are identified as cairns by the NMRS, roughly in the locations identified by Anderson. It is possible that these cairns, or some other type of site in the valley of the Kinbrace Burn, may have been mistaken for brochs. The absence of brochs in the valley of the Kinbrace Burn makes the valley of the Frithe on the W side of the Strath of Kildonan, the furthest inland location for brochs in the study area (SK 16 and SK 17).

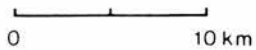
ISLE OF SKYE

Isle of Skye Study Area

IS 1	Dun Flodigarry	NG 463 719
IS 2	Dun Bornaskitaig	NG 3726 7161
IS 3	Dun Grianan	NG 5055 6529
IS 4	Dun Raisaburgh	NG 5032 6427
IS 5	Kingsburgh	NG 3891 5688
IS 6	Dun Borve, Borve	NG 4591 4772
IS 7	Dun a'Cheitichin	NG 4175 4785
IS 8	Dun Flashader	NG 3511 5349
IS 9	Dun Borve, Edinbane	NG 3426 5257
IS 10	Dun Suladale	NG 3744 5255
IS 11	Dun Edinbane	NG 3535 5092
IS 12	Dun Gearymore	NG 2368 6490
IS 13	Dun Borrafiach	NG 2354 6370
IS 14	Dun Hallin	NG 2566 5927
IS 15	Claigan	NG 238 541
IS 16	Dun Boreraig	NG 1948 5311
IS 17	Dun Fiadhairt	NG 2311 5042
IS 18	Dun Colbost	NG 2055 4947
IS 19	Dun Osdale	NG 2412 4641
IS 20	Glen Heysdal	NG 2987 4537
IS 21	Dun Feorlig	NG 2993 4235
IS 22	Dunalighlinn	NG 3098 4260
IS 23	Dun Arkaig	NG 3499 4261
IS 24	Dun Beag	NG 3395 3861
IS 25	Dun Garsin	NG 3609 3878
IS 26	Dun Diarmaid	NG 3545 3816
IS 27	Dun Ardtreck	NG 3350 3581
IS 28	Dun Ard an t'Sabhail	NG 3180 3333
IS 29	Dun Sleadale	NG 3238 2920
IS 30	Dun Ringill	NG 5619 1708
IS 31	Dun Liath	NG 5433 1427
IS 32	Dun Grugaig	NG 5354 1229

ISLE OF SKYE STUDY AREA IS

Location of sites included in catalogue



IS 1

Dun Flodigarry
NMRS Class: Broch

NG 463 719
NMRS Card: NG 47 SE 6

- 1 Martlew in *Disc Exc Scot* 1979, 17-8
- 2 Martlew in *Disc Exc Scot* 1980, 18-9
- 3 Martlew in *Disc Exc Scot* 1981, 20-1
- 4 Martlew in *Disc Exc Scot* 1982, 15
- 5 MacSween 1984-5, 44, no 18 and fig 18
- 6 Martlew 1985

Excavated between 1979 and 1982 by Roger Martlew, full report of excavation in Martlew 1985, from which the following description and site plan are taken.

This site had been identified by the OS as a circular, flat topped mound edged by drystone walling. In 1977 the owner of the Flodigarry Hotel drew the site to the attention of SDD, suggesting that it was a broch and that it should be excavated. The excavation subsequently took place over four seasons.

Dun Flodigarry is located at 58m OD on the E side of the Trotternish peninsula, overlooking an area of crofting land between the shore and the Quirang, a basaltic dyke outcropping on the E side of Trotternish. The site is itself overlooked from the N. There is a small pre-clearance settlement at the foot of scree slopes about 0.5km to the N.

The site stands in the disused vegetable garden of the hotel. There was local opinion that the site had been built as a folly when the hotel (originally a private house) was constructed in the nineteenth century. There was further local information that a 4ft depth of Portuguese topsoil had been spread inside the walled garden to improve growing conditions. There was therefore a possibility at the beginning of the excavation that the site was not in fact prehistoric, or that it had been severely disturbed.

Dun Flodigarry consists of an incomplete circuit of drystone walling, which occupies most of the gently dipping surface of a rock outcrop (see site plan drawn during the excavation at the end of the site description). The steep scarp of the outcrop on the E is no more than

4-5m above the surrounding ground. Within the thickness of the wall a gallery is visible at ground level, terminating in cells on either side of the main entrance. The entrance passage is aligned NW/SE with door rebates just over 1m from the outside. There are narrow entrances from the interior of the site to the cells and gallery, but the cell to the NE of the main entrance is blocked off from the gallery which runs around the N arc of the wall. This section is provided with a separate entrance from the interior. In the short length of gallery between the blocking stone and this entrance, the builders made no attempt to provide easy access. Stones project into the gallery from the faces of the walls, some of the lower foundation stones reaching almost from one side to the other.

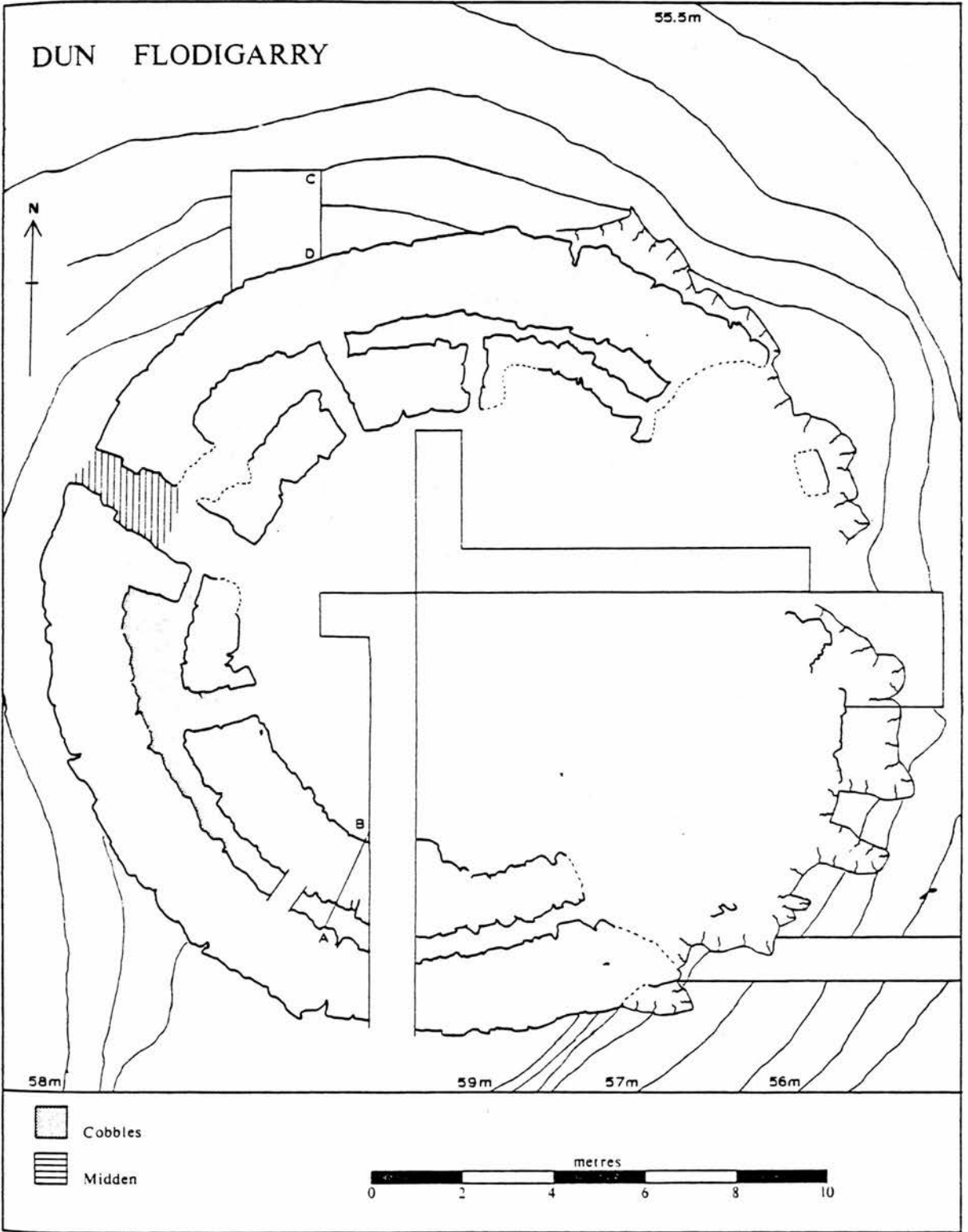
The external diameter of the site is approximately 18.11m, this being an average of measurements which range from 17.82m to 18.35m. The internal diameter is harder to ascertain, since less than half of the inner wall face exists, but 10m is a reasonable estimate. The walls are about 1.75m thick with a gallery about 0.56m wide between them. Two thirds of the circumference of the wall remains, standing to just over 1m at the highest point. Along the E side of the outcrop the only surviving traces of walling consist of relatively small boulders, filling in natural clefts or gullies in the bedrock. Projecting the line of the outer wall face would take it over some of the gullies and along the very edge of the bedrock.

In most places the wall of the broch is founded directly on bedrock which slopes by about 15 degrees, and has numerous cracks and swellings. In places upstanding bedrock was flattened off, and clay was inserted into depressions to provide an even surface. Large scatters of charcoal were found in the interior of the site overlying a clay foundation which passed under the S arc of the wall. A radiocarbon date of 45±65bc (GU 1662) was obtained from this charcoal, which the excavator calibrated to AD 55 in calendar years, giving a date thought to be immediately after the construction of the wall. There was no evidence of hearths, drains, paving or any furniture in the broch interior. There was some primary paving in the entrance passage, but it did not extend into the interior. A rubble bank against the outside of the structure on the W and NW was originally

thought to be collapse from the wall, but excavation seemed to demonstrate that it was a primary feature. Two sections cut at the foot of the outcrop in the E where the wall is missing, failed to find any evidence for the collapse of a substantial wall. Martlew concluded that the wall may originally have been little higher than it is at present (1985, 37), and that the structure had been intended to be a true broch, but had never been completed (1985, 46).

There was evidence of some secondary activity on the site in and around the entrance passage, with the deposition of fragments of charcoal, pottery, and midden on top of the primary paving. Apart from this deposit the accumulation in the interior of the site, the cells and galleries appeared to be uninterrupted natural deposition of topsoil with very little fallen stone amongst it. Martlew concluded that there was no evidence that the site had been thoroughly disturbed in more recent times, except in the NW quadrant. There was no evidence of any external activity on the outcrop outside the structure.

The finds from the site were described by the excavator as being disappointing in both quantity and variety. They included pottery, worked stone, metal objects of recent manufacture, bones and limpet shells. A description and drawings of the finds may be found in Martlew 1985, 39-44 and microfiche.



Source: Martlew 1985, 31

IS 2

Dun Bornaskitaig
NMRS Class: Broch

NG 3726 7161
NMRS Card: NG 37 SE 4

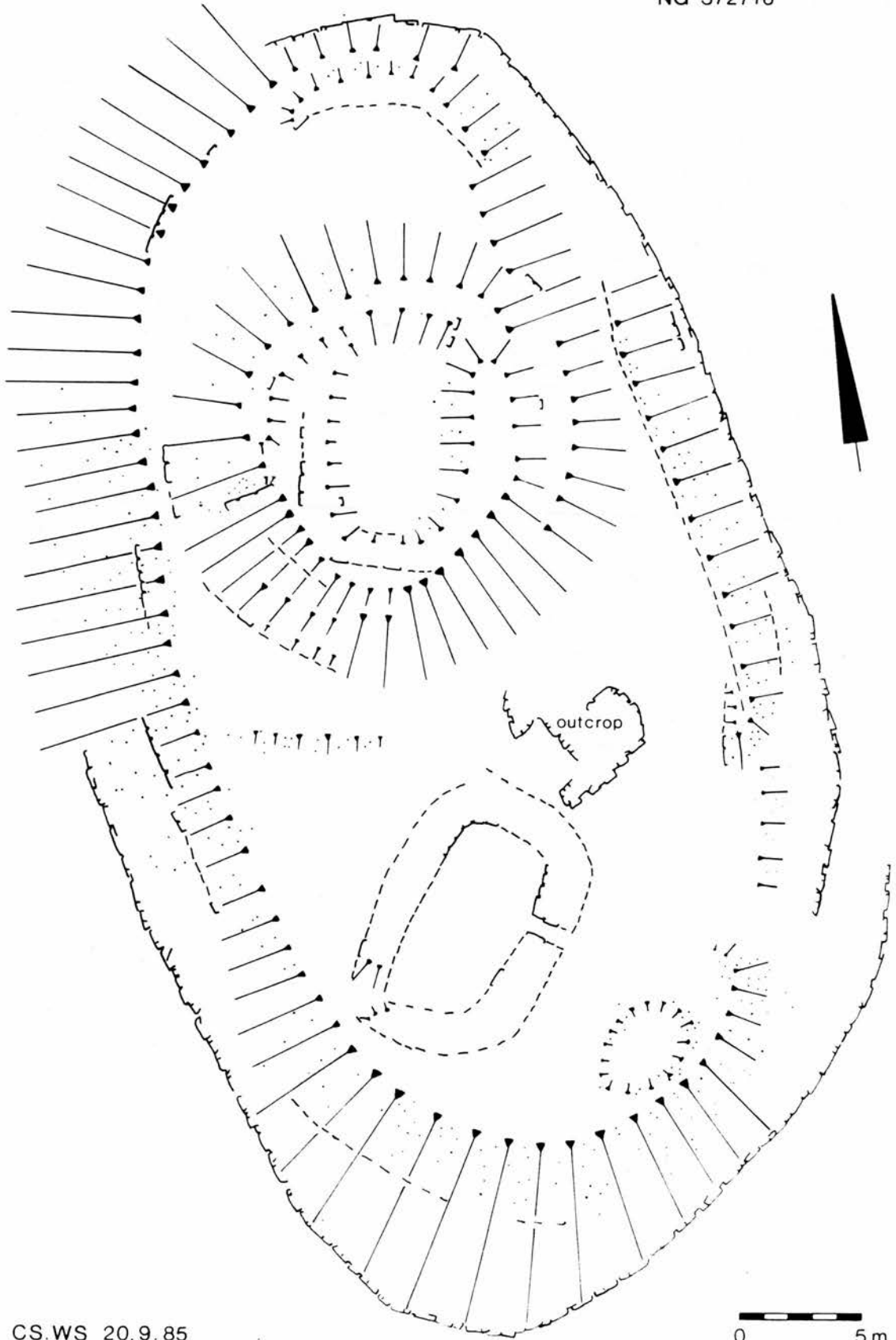
1 MacSween 1984-5, 45, no 30 and fig 30

This broch is located at about 30m OD on top of a flat topped, oval crag with a good outlook to land and sea. The crag is raised only about 6-7m above the surrounding land, and is not the formidable eminence, which is a common location for brochs in Skye.

The broch is badly ruined having been thoroughly pillaged for a settlement of about 7 houses which lie around the base of the crag to the N and NE. There are also two houses on the crag top, one in the broch interior, the other at the S end of the crag. The broch appears as a grass covered bank through which occasional stones protrude. The outer face is visible intermittently in the NE, SW and W, giving an overall diameter for the broch of about 18.4m NE/SW. Only one possible slab of the inner face is visible in the NW. If the line of the outer face is taken as the bottom of the grass covered slope of the remains in line with the visible arc of outer face in the SW quadrant, a possible wall thickness of about 3.8m can be estimated in the NW. In the WSW there is a 2m length of face at right angles to the line of both the inner and outer faces of the broch wall. As the outer face can be traced intact across the line of this revetment, it may represent the S wall of an entrance into an intramural gallery. The presence of such a gallery in the SW arc of the broch wall may be indicated by a rough line of stones, outside of which there is a break of slope. Further evidence of an intramural gallery may be the break of slope on the E arc of the remains. The site of the entrance to the broch is not apparent, but it may lie in the NE, where the entrance to the later rectangular house in the interior seems to be located.

The crag top has had a wall around its rim, now traceable only as a stony slope, with occasional lengths of outer revetment visible, particularly on the W side of the crag. The most obvious site for an entrance through the outer wall is in the SE, where it is possible to ascend the crag easily. There is no means of knowing whether the outer wall relates to the broch, but the position of the broch towards one end of the crag, leaving a sizeable, usable enclosure, measuring about 20m N/S by 20m, may point to contemporaneity.

Dun Bornaskitaig
NG 372716



CS.WS 20.9.85

IS 3

Dun Grianan

NG 5055 6529

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 56 NW 1

1 RCAHMS 1928, 169, no 539

2 MacSween 1984-5, 44, no 19 and fig 19

This broch is located on a flat promontory projecting into the N side of Loch Mealt. It is badly reduced and has been partially rebuilt to serve as a sheep fank. Nonetheless considerable details of its structure are traceable. Most of the outer face of the broch wall is visible, 1-3 courses high, or is traceable as a grassy break in slope. On the SE arc the line of the outer face is under the present water level of the loch. It is apparent that the water level when the site was occupied, must have been much lower. The water now laps the inner face of the intramural gallery on the SE arc.

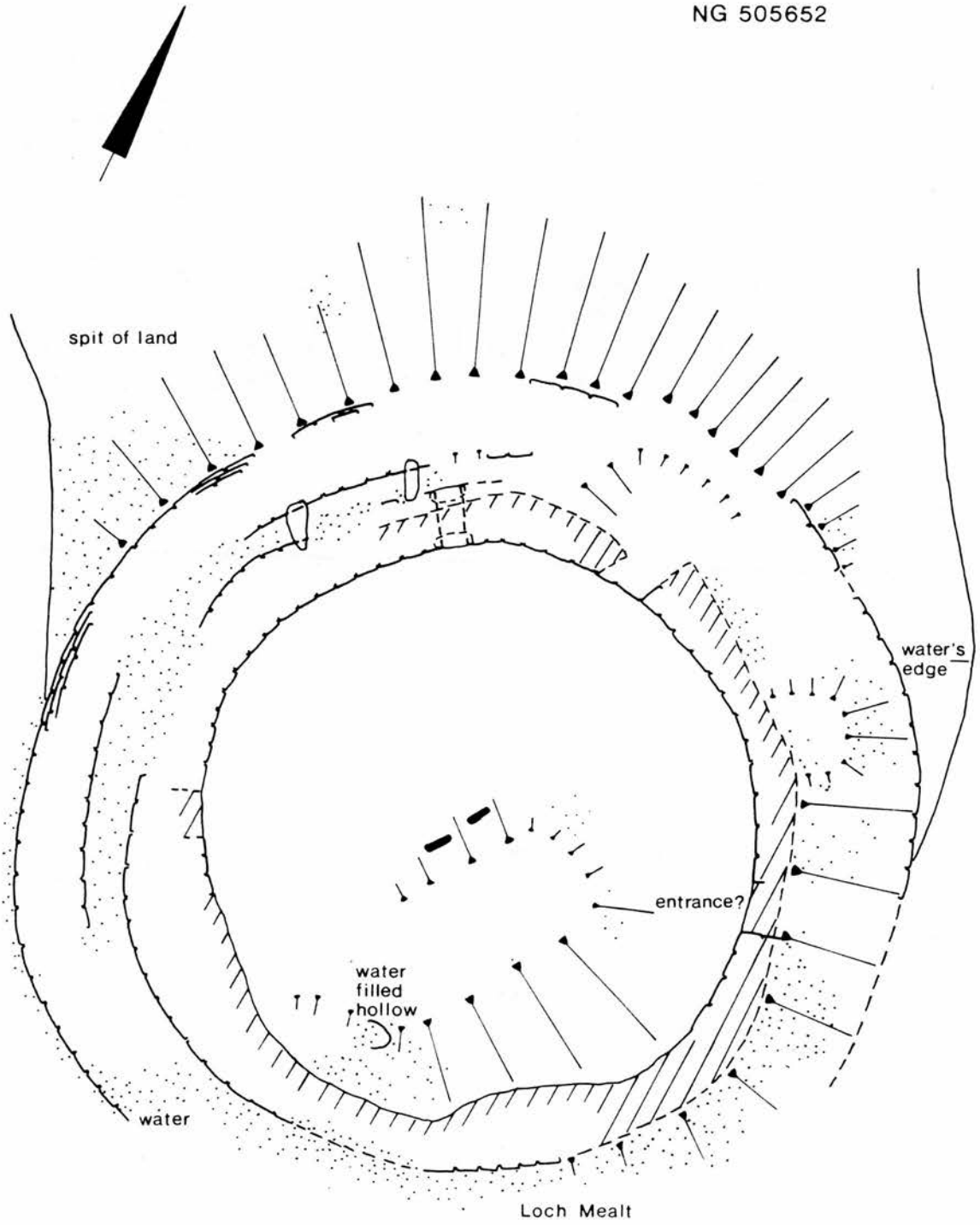
There is evidence of a gallery around the broch's circumference on the NW, W and S arcs. Only the inner face of the gallery is preserved in the S and SW, but its outer face is visible in the W and NW. Where measurable the gallery varies in width from 0.4-0.7m. There are two lintels in place over it on the NW arc. In the NNW there is a lintelled entry to the gallery from the broch interior, which is 0.5m wide. The bottom of the lintels is only about 0.2m above the present ground surface in the broch interior. There is another possible entry to the gallery in the WSW suggested by vague traces of straight walling. The rebuilding of the inner part of the broch wall to form a sheep fank obscures the detail of this possible entry.

The inner face of the broch wall appears to be largely extant around two thirds of the periphery. On the whole of the S arc however the line of the inner face has disappeared to be replaced by the bulging line of the rebuilt wall. The entrance to the broch appears to have been in the E, where the S side of the passage can be traced for a length of about 1m at its inner end. The N inner corner is also visible giving a width of about 1m at the inner end of the passage. The outer face of the broch at this point has begun to disappear under the raised water level in the loch. It is impossible to know whether there is a corresponding gap in the outer face of the wall to confirm

the feature as the broch entrance, rather than yet another entry into the wall width. There are no indications that the entrance may have lain elsewhere, and given a lower water level, an entrance from the E, away from the landward approach, seems feasible. The modern entrance to the interior is from the NNE through a gap in the rebuilt wall. The inner face of the broch wall can be traced continuing across this point, and the outer face is not exposed. The internal area of the broch is about 10.6m E/W.

Within the S of the broch interior near the presumed line of the inner face of the broch wall, there is a curved hollow containing water. Its sides appear to be built, and it may have been a cistern or well, or simply a later fireplace. Roughly in the centre of the interior there are two upright stones with a stony heap to the SE of them, which may simply be rubble, or may be indicative of some later structure in the broch interior.

Dun Grianan
NG 505652



CS.WS 16.7.85

0 5m

Dun Raisaburgh
NMRS Class: Broch

NG 5032 6427
NMRS Card: NG 56 SW 1

1 RCAHMS 1928, 169, no 540

2 MacSween 1984-5, 44, no 20 and fig 20

This broch is located at about 90m OD towards the S end of a long rocky ridge overlooking Loch Mealt from the SW. At the point where the broch sits, the ridge is about 30m wide. The broch is badly ruined but most of the outer face of its wall is traceable, largely at foundation level, although occasionally 2-3 courses high, except on the SE arc where it is hidden in debris. The broch measures overall about 17m N/S. The inner face of the broch wall is visible only in the S, giving a wall thickness of about 3.2-3.4m at this point. Within the N half of the broch interior a 5.5m length of face, one course high, seems to point to the presence of a secondary construction, possibly accounting at least in part for the broch's ruination.

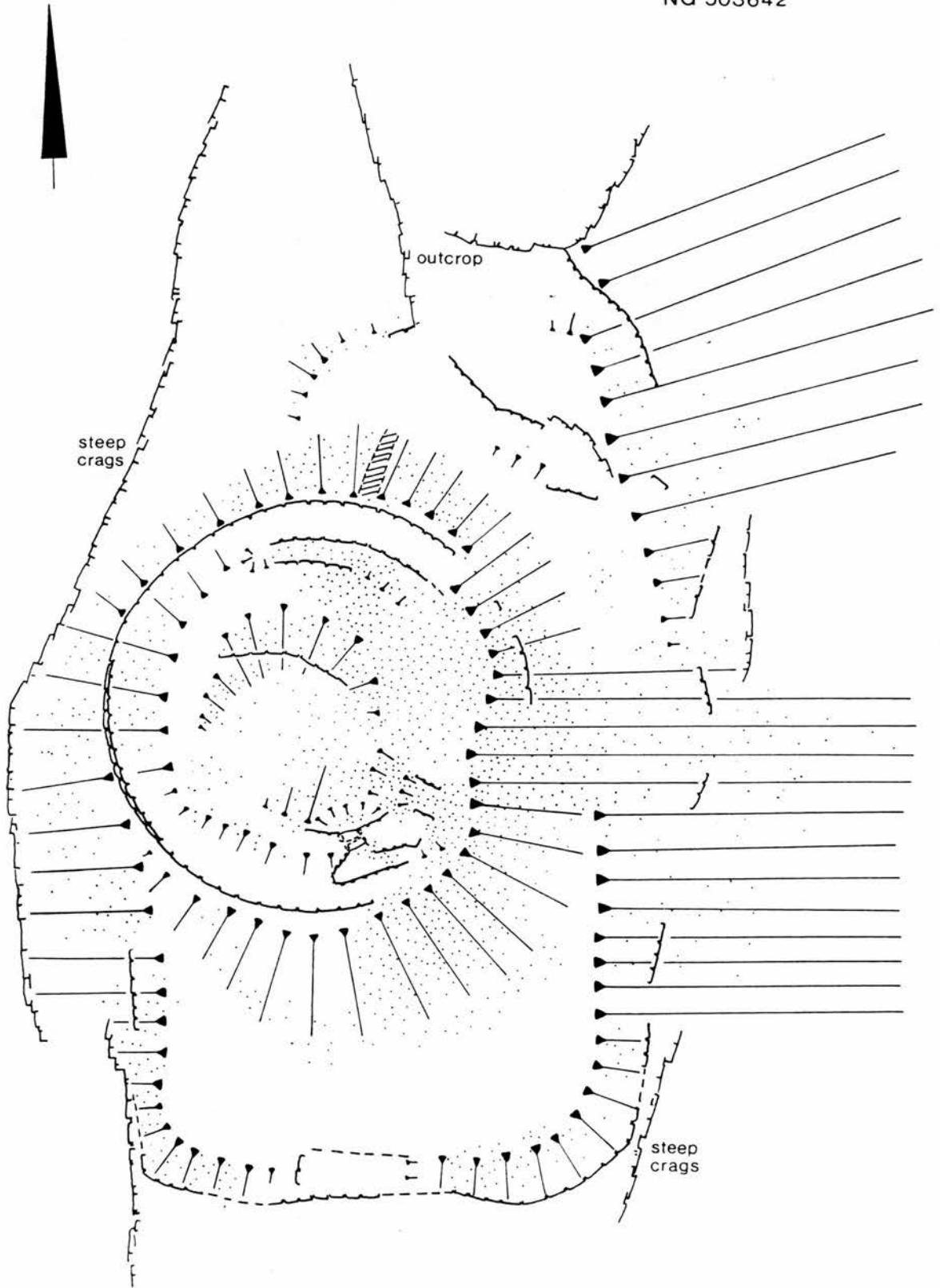
In the NE arc of the broch an intramural gallery is visible. Its outer wall can be traced for about 7m, and is rebuilt in its upper courses. The inner wall can be traced for about 3m, and the gallery is about 1m wide. In the SSE an irregular oval cell is visible. The cell is not recorded by any previous authority, so it would appear to have been cleared since the last visit of the OS in 1982. The cell is entered at basal level from the interior by an entry which is about 0.7m wide with two lintels in place over it. Just to the NE of the cell there are two parallel lengths of revetment which may be the side walls of the entrance to the broch, giving a passage width of about 1.1-1.2m. Although the evidence is fragmentary, it would appear that the oval cell may have been entered from the possible broch entrance in the SE arc of the wall, as well as from the broch interior. The site of the entrance to the broch was also not identified by previous authorities.

The broch would appear to have been enclosed, at least on its SW, S, E and NE arcs, by an outer wall. To the SW of the broch the outer wall runs along the top of the sheer crags forming the side of the ridge at this point, before turning to cross the ridge about 10m S of the broch. At the middle point of the ridge the wall is about 2m wide. The

wall then turns along the top of the precipitous E flank of the ridge, and appears to have been founded as much as 3-4m below the crest of the slope. Some of the intermittent lengths of outer face are sliding irregularly down the steep slope. The outer wall seems to have continued about 11m beyond the broch to abut against a massive outcrop of rock which helps to enclose the broch on its NE arc. About 5m NE of the broch there are traces of a wall crossing the ridge from the outer wall in the E. It seems to terminate about the middle point of the ridge, and may curve back towards the broch. It cannot be traced further W. It is not clear whether this length of walling relates to the broch and its outer wall, or is a later construction. Immediately below the ridge to the E, and in line with the length of walling on top of the ridge, there is a substantial field wall. The wall to the NE of the broch could be a continuation of that dyke. The ridge W of the broch would not appear to have been walled off at any stage. The crags on this side are very precipitous and the broch is built very close to the edge, possibly making an outer wall unnecessary.

There are vague traces of a further outwork across the ridge some 44m N of the broch, along with some possible gully blocking on the E flank of the ridge to the N of the broch. The possible outwork may however be a natural feature, as the local rock seems to split naturally into large blocks, giving the appearance of a built wall base.

Dun Raisaburgh
NG 503642



CS.WS 20.9.85

0 5m

IS 5

Kingsburgh

NG 3891 5688

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 35 NE 10

1 RCAHMS 1928, 196, no 619

2 MacSween 1984-5, 43-4, no 17 and fig 17

This broch, called Kingsburgh from the nearest settlement, is sited on a low rocky crag at about 30m OD some 400m S of the River Hinnisdal, and some 500m from the sea. Below the crag to the N there is a large pre-clearance settlement of longhouses. The broch is reduced to foundation level and is mainly turf covered. It has almost certainly been robbed of stone to build the later settlement.

Despite its denudation much of the outline of the broch is still discernible. Most of the outer face of the wall is traceable around the circuit, surviving 2-3 courses high on the NW and W arcs. The inner face is less well preserved, but is traceable around the S and W arcs. The broch wall is generally about 3.5m thick, except in the WSW where it is about 4m thick. The internal area of the broch is about 10.8m NW/SE.

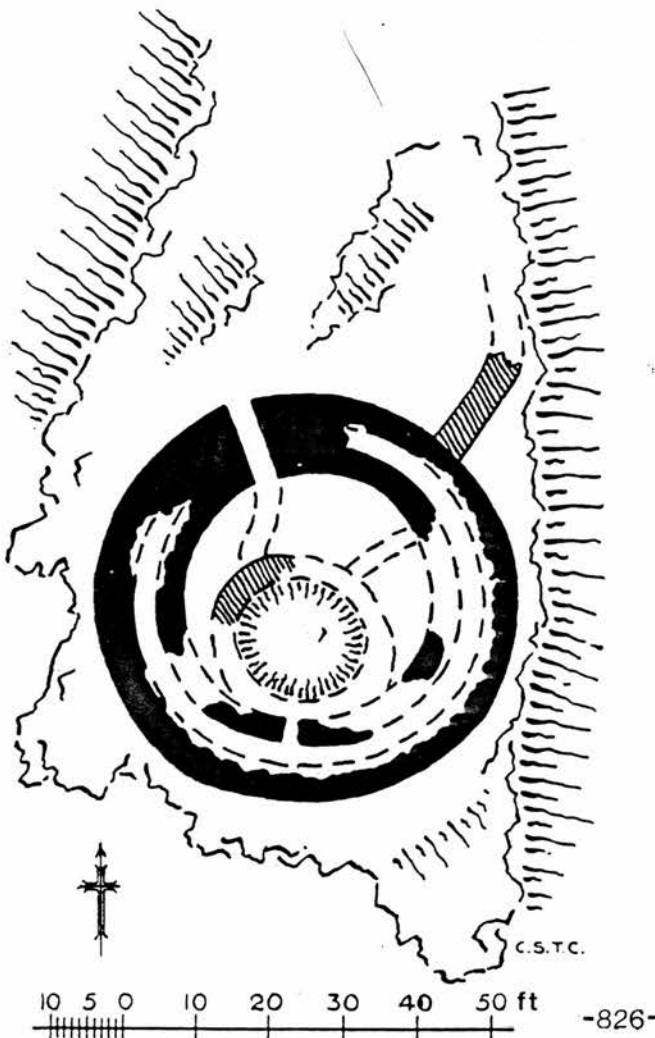
The entrance to the broch is in the NNW. It is well preserved on its E side, although it is slightly obscured by two stones which have slipped forward. The W side is less well preserved, but can be traced for about two thirds of its original length. The passage is 1.2m wide at its outer end where there is a sill or threshold stone in place. At 1.4m from the outside on the W side of the passage there is a rebate for a door. A companion door check on the E side is not obvious, but may be obscured by the displaced stones. Beyond the door check the passage widens to about 1.4m. It appears to narrow again towards the inner end, but it is difficult to be sure as the innermost part of the W side of the passage is missing.

Within the wall on the SE, SW, NW and NE arcs there are the remnants of a basal gallery. Only the inner wall of the gallery is visible in the SW, SE and NW, but a length of outer wall is visible in the NE. The width of the gallery is not measurable at any point. An entrance to the gallery is preserved in the S, the passage being about 0.5-0.6m

wide. Within the broch interior there are traces of a later construction or constructions, which have partly slighted the inner face of the broch wall in the NE.

Outside the broch to the N there is a small promontory of ground formed by high crags on its E side, and a slighter rock escarpment on the W. There appears to have been a wall around the perimeter of this promontory forming a small enclosure. The wall is traceable as lengths of inner and outer face at foundation level, and small patches of rubble. There is no access to the enclosure from the broch, except around the outside of the broch wall. It is impossible to know whether the enclosure relates to the broch or the later constructions in the broch interior.

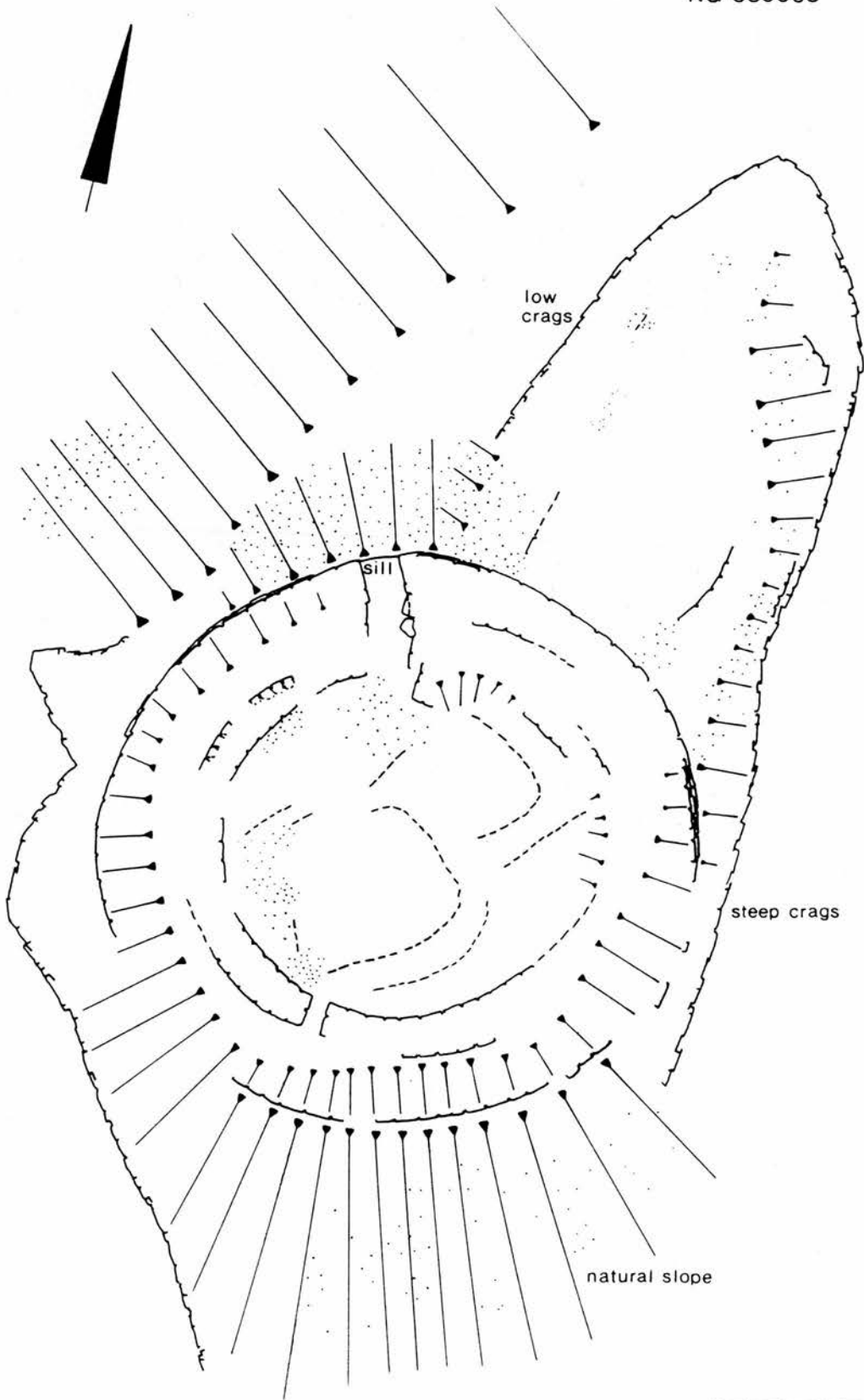
Below the broch to the E there are traces of a wall across the slope of the craggy knoll, surviving as large foundation blocks (not shown on the survey plan). A field wall approaches the crag near to this point from the later settlement below. The wall across the slope may be the remains of an outwork associated with the broch, or may be part of a later field wall.



Source: RCAHMS 1928, 196

FIG. 282—Broch, Kingsburgh (No. 619).

Kingsburgh
NG 389568



CS.WS 23.9.85

0 5m

Dun Borve, Borve

NG 4591 4772

NMRS Class: Broch (remains of)

NMRS Card: NG 44 NE 2

*1 RCAHMS 1928, 196-7, no 620**2 MacSween 1984-5, 44 no 21 and fig 21*

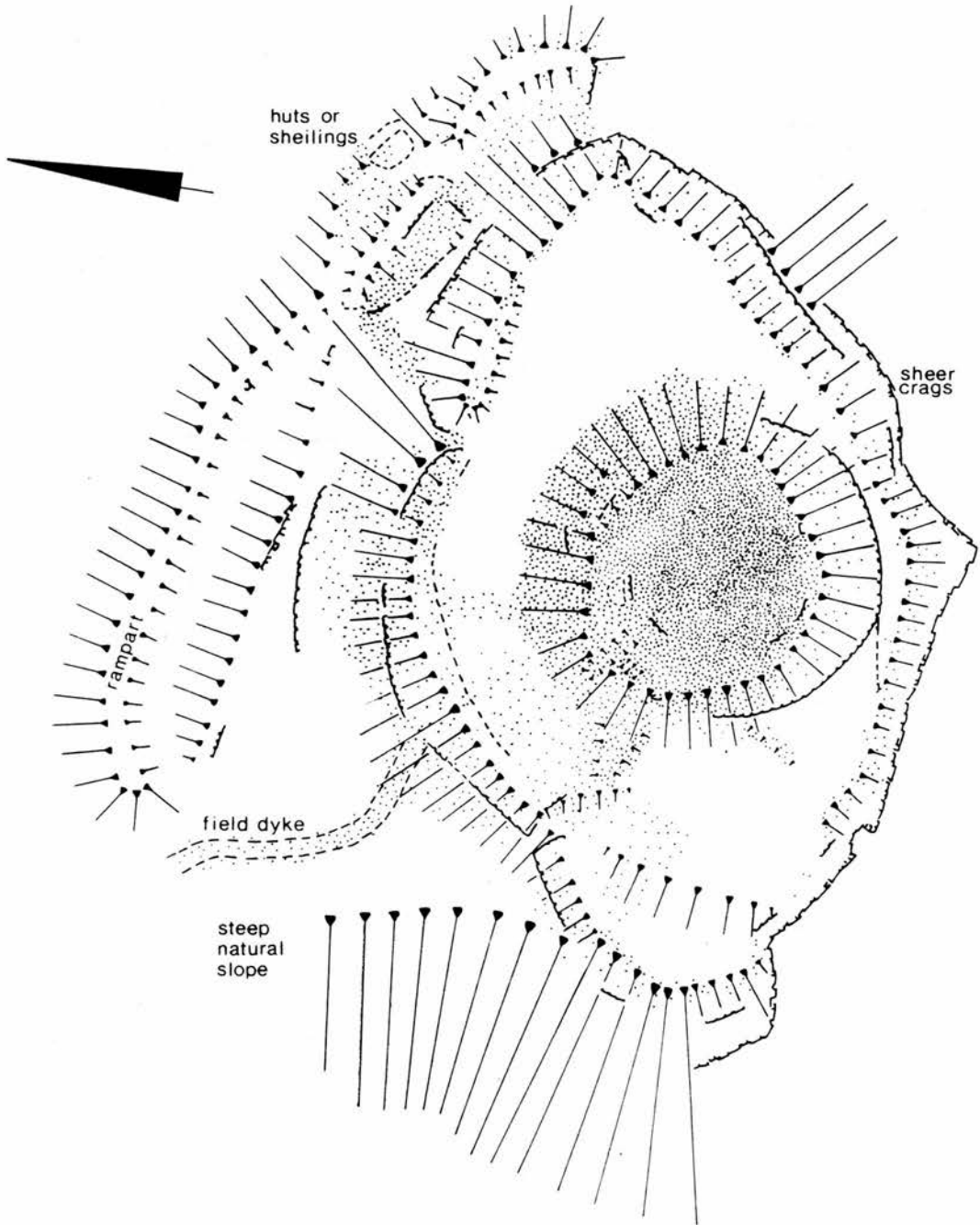
Dun Borve is sited on a rocky eminence at 170m OD overlooking the broad valley between Portree and Skeabost. The broch lies towards the S side of the eminence, where the craggy sides are most precipitous. The site has very strong natural protection on all sides but the N and NW.

The broch appears as a large stone pile. It does not seem to have been too badly robbed, but has collapsed inwards, and outwards on the N arc. The interior is completely full of rubble obscuring practically all structural features. It is likely that the broch structure may be preserved to a height of 2m or more below the rubble. The outer face of the broch wall is visible at foundation level around most of the S half of the broch. Elsewhere, apart from two isolated lengths, it is completely hidden in tumble. The inner face is totally obscured apart from intermittent lengths on the NW and SW arcs. Where measurable in the SW the wall width varies from 3.7 to 4.1m. The overall diameter of the broch is 17.3m E/W. The internal diameter may be about 10m N/S. There is no clear indication of the location of the entrance which must lie somewhere in the N half of the broch. There is a shallow linear depression in the tumble in the NW which may indicate its location. In the NNE a possible trace of an outward facing revetment and a break of slope may indicate the presence of an intramural gallery.

There is a system of enclosing walls around the broch. There has been an outer wall fully surrounding the broch, skirting the top of the sheer crags to the E, S and W. To the N and NW where the sloping approach onto the eminence is much less steep, the wall has been very substantial, with much of the outer face still traceable. There are two entrances through the outer wall, in the NNE and the NW. Outside the substantial part of the enclosing wall to the N, there appears to have been a second wall lying about 5m beyond the first, of which a

single length of massive foundation stones remains. Beyond this second wall there is a rock cut ditch and external rampart, which have not been noted by previous authorities. The OS in fact identified the rampart as part of the complex of later field walls which approach the broch. Its size at nearly 5m wide, and its complementary position relative to the broch's vulnerable flank, would seem to point to the feature being rather part of the broch's outworks. In addition the field walls close to the broch are stone built, and the rampart seems to be earth and stone. To the E, the rampart and ditch are overlain by two later constructions, which appear to be a sheiling and a small sub-rectangular house.

On top of the eminence outside the broch there is some evidence in the rubble of some sub-division of the summit by walling. To the W of the broch a wall seems to curve around from the broch to the NW entrance through the outer enclosing wall. To the SSW of the broch an outer revetment at foundation level appears to be jointed into the foundation course of the outer face of the broch wall, which is two to three courses high at this point.



CS. WS 21.9.85

0 10m

IS 7

Dun a'Cheitichin

NG 4175 4785

NMRS Class: Probable Broch (remains of)

NMRS Card: NG 44 NW 8

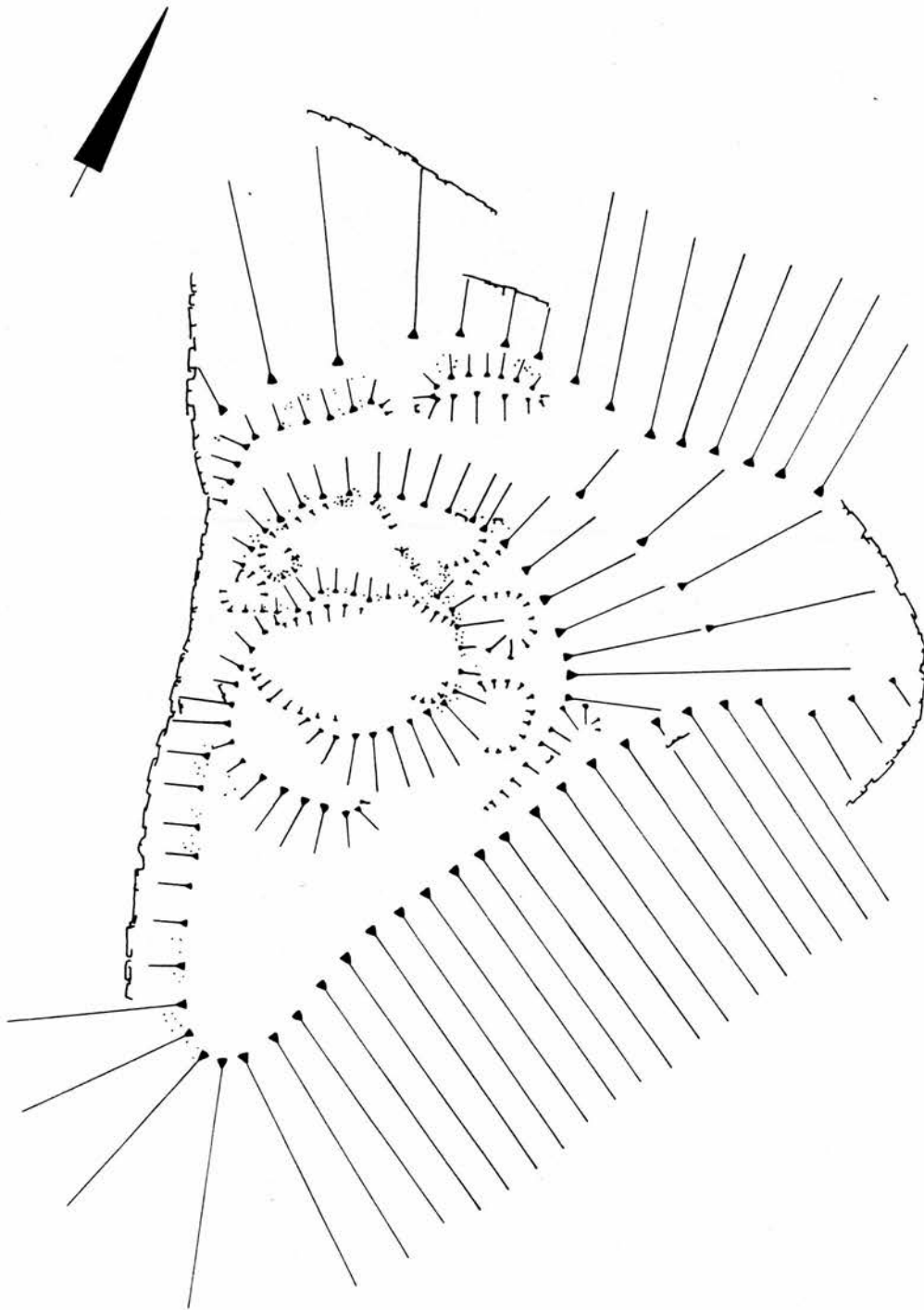
1 MacSween 1984-5, 45, no 29 and fig 29

The remains of this structure are located on a round topped knoll W of the River Snizort and about 500m S of the road from Portree to Dunvegan at Skeabost Bridge. The site is clearly visible from the broch of Dun Borve (IS 6) about 4km away on the other side of the wide valley between Skeabost and Portree. The knoll top is roughly triangular in shape, its sides formed by steep slopes or sheer crags. The structure which is identified in the NMRS as a probable broch, lies towards the W side of the knoll close to the crags on that side.

The structure has been thoroughly pillaged for stone and there are numerous robbing scoops in its grass covered remains. It appears to be a circular structure, its outline defined by a turf covered slope through which occasional stones are visible. Odd facing stones can be detected in the SW, W and N. The general shape of the robbed remains point to the possibility of the site being a broch, but the site is too ruined and obscured to be certain.

Outside the main structure there appears to have been an enclosing wall of which only vague traces remain on the N, E and S. On the NW, where the outer wall seems to lie only about 6m from the main structure, there are the most substantial traces in the form of a distinct turf covered bank, with a break in it which may be an entrance at a point where the naturally steep slopes of the knoll are gentlest. In the E there is a length of outward facing revetment which may belong to an outer wall, and in the SW there is a short length of outward facing revetment and a rubble covered slope down to the edge of the crags.

Dun a'Cheitichin
NG 417478



CS.WS 28.9.85

0 10m

Dun Flashader

NG 3511 5349

NMRS Class: Broch and Remains of Earlier

NMRS Card: NG 35 SE 3

Galleried Structure

*1 RCAHMS 1928, 160, no 513**2 MacSween 1984-5, 43, no 15 and fig 15*

This broch is located towards the W side of a flat topped craggy knoll about 500m E of the W shore of Loch Greshornish. The summit of the crag is about 50m OD. The broch is badly ruined on its E and S arcs, but 2-3 courses of walling survive on the remainder of the circuit to indicate its basic features.

The outer face of the wall is traceable only on the N and W arcs with one short length visible on the S. The inner face by contrast is visible over most of the circuit. The wall is 4m wide in the N and W, and 3.8m in the S. A batter on the outer face is not evident on the surviving 1-3 courses of the wall. The internal area is 10.6m N/S by 10.8m. The entrance to the interior has been from the WSW, but only the N side of the passage is traceable for a length of 2.6m. Towards the outer end of its surviving length the passage wall curves slightly towards an upright slab, which appears to be a broken door check. Directly opposite this upright stone there is another, which is presumably the companion check. Otherwise the S side of the passage has been totally destroyed.

Trending SE of the passage location there is a cell in the wall width. It is 1m wide at its surviving NW end, narrowing to 0.5m at its SE extremity, where the walls of the cell seem to continue under an in-situ lintel. As the NW extremity of the cell is completely ruined, any connection it may have had with the broch entrance cannot be determined. To the SE of the cell there is a substantial breach in the broch wall, which is clear of tumble, and which has probably resulted from stone robbing.

In the N arc of the wall there is an entry 0.8m wide giving access to a cell or gallery. The W end of the cell or gallery is intact showing a curved terminus. Part of the back wall of the feature is visible

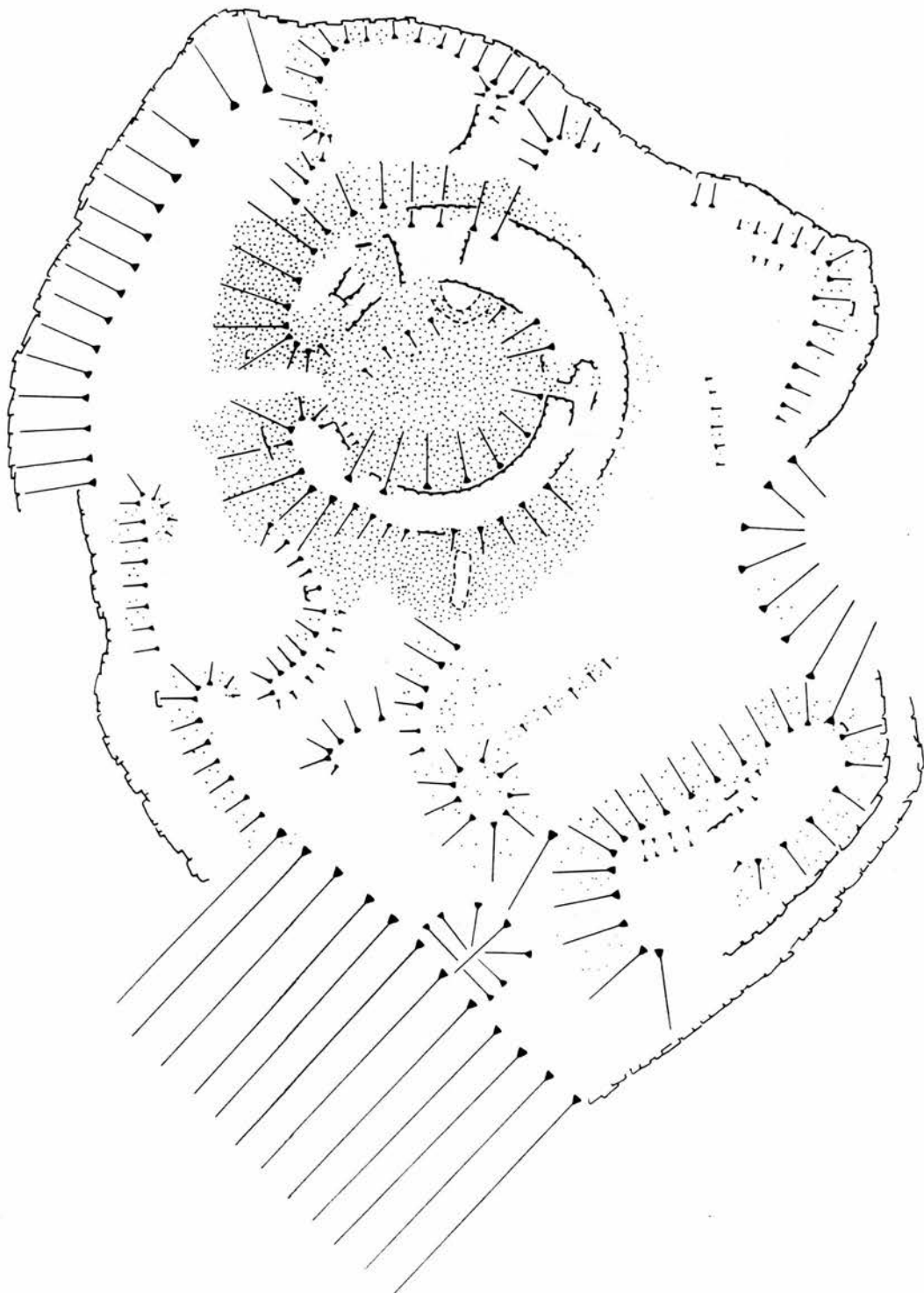
directly opposite the entry. As traces of an outward facing revetment are visible in the ruins of the broch wall on the E arc, it seems likely that the feature is in fact a gallery, possibly the stairwell. There seems to be some distortion, perhaps caused by robbing or pressure, in the intermittent traces of the inner revetment of this intramural feature.

No other features are visible in the broch wall, and the largely intact inner face indicates that the only possible location for further features at ground level would be in the S, where substantial stone robbing appears to have taken place.

There are a number of other features on the knoll top, which cannot be certainly placed in any direct chronological relationship with the broch. Outside the broch entrance to the W there are the remains of a badly ruined, sub-circular or oval building, which from its location outside the entrance, would appear to be a later construction. A similar, sub-circular building is vaguely indicated just outside the broch to the SE. These may be the remains of sheilings, although they seem rather large. The figure-of-eight sheiling recorded by the OS as lying E of the broch, was not traced during survey in 1985, although there are vague stony mounds in this area.

About 13m NE of the broch near the craggy edge of the knoll, a stony bank about 9m wide is evident. Along its side nearer to the broch there is a shallow, trench-like feature about 7m in length, within which there are opposing facing stones defining an area about 0.6m wide. This feature was identified by the OS as a galleried wall, probably earlier than the broch. It does not seem possible from field survey evidence alone to relate this enigmatic feature chronologically to the broch. There is evidence around the edge of the knoll in the form of loose rubble, that there may have been a marginal wall around the summit area. The apparent length of galleried wall may be related to such a marginal wall. An entrance point onto the knoll top may be indicated by a narrow defile in the crag face E of the broch, and just SE of the supposed length of galleried wall.

Dun Flashader
NG 351534



CS.WS 16.9.85

0 10m

IS 9

Dun Borve, Edinbane

NG 3426 5257

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 35 SW 3

1 RCAHMS 1928, 160-1, no 515

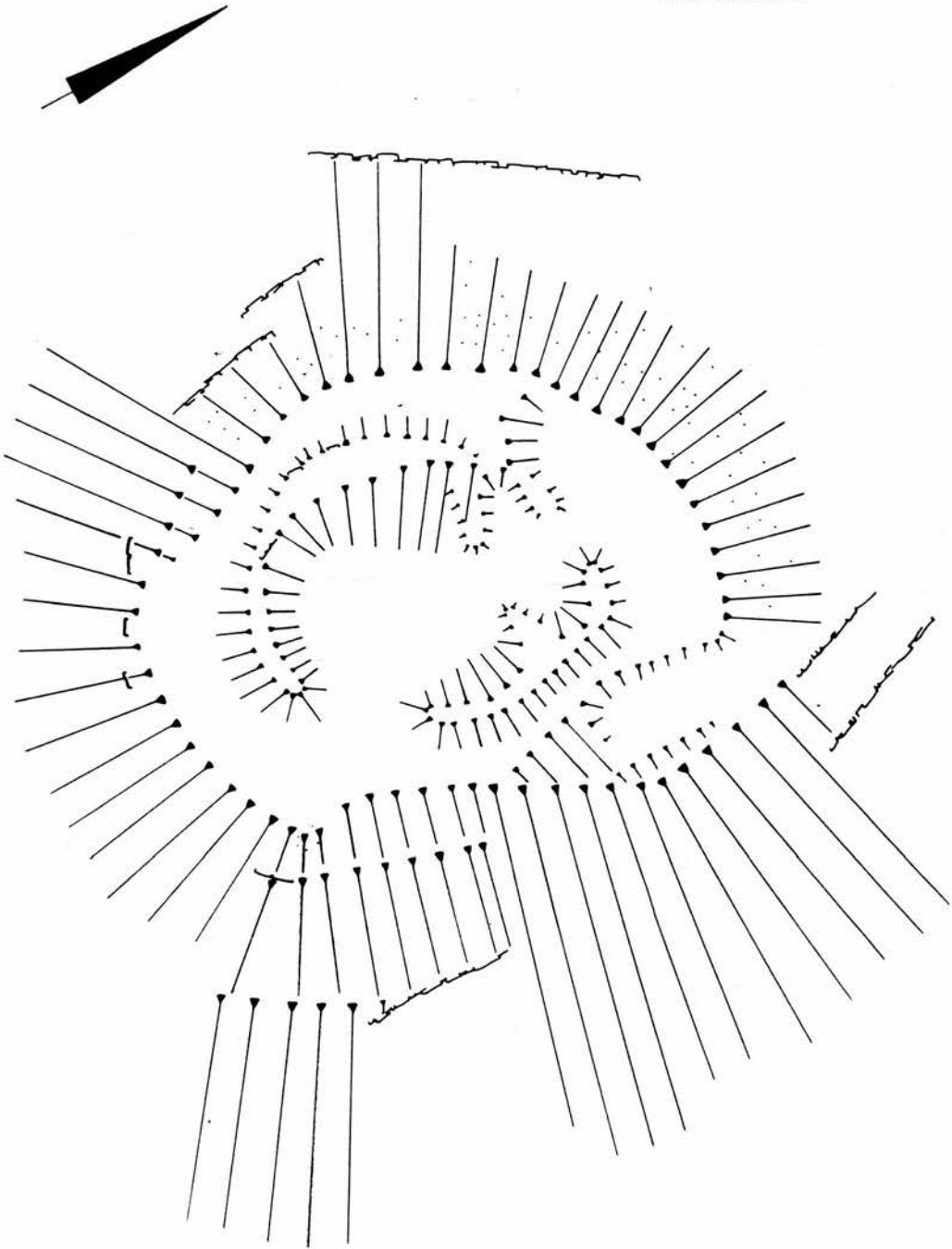
2 MacSween 1984-5, 45, no 27 and fig 27

This site, identified as a likely broch by the RCAHMS (1928), is located on top of a low knoll on the E shore of Loch Greshornish. The site has been so destroyed by stone robbing, it is difficult to be certain of its identification. Some isolated facing stones are visible on the S side of the site, apparently forming a rough arc, which could be interpreted as the foundation course of the outer face of the broch wall.

On the summit of the knoll two crescentic banks may mark the approximate location of the inner face of the broch wall. A 0.7m length of inward facing revetment on the SW arc may in fact be the inner face. The width of the wall at this point would have been about 3.8m. In the W about 1m outside the presumed line of the inner face, two single slabs of an outward facing revetment may indicate the presence of a gallery. There is no indication of the position of the entrance.

On the basis of the little structural evidence available, this site could be a broch, but its identification must remain doubtful.

Dun Borve, Edinbane
NG 342525



CS.WS 16.9.85

0 5m

Dun Suladale

NG 3744 5255

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 35 SE 2

1 RCAHMS 1928, 194-6, no 618

2 MacSween 1984-5, 43, no 16 and fig 16

This broch is located on a flat topped crag at about 100m OD in a boggy plateau with a splendid outlook all around. The broch is very well preserved particularly on its outer wall face. The interior is filled with rubble, and the inner face is probably equally well preserved, its lower part hidden in tumble.

The circuit of the outer face is almost completely intact, varying in preserved height from near foundation level at the entrance to over 2m above the surrounding rubble. It exhibits a batter varying from as little as 0.15m in 2m to 0.45m in 2m. In the E the outer face is bulging slightly from pressure within the wall core, and the batter is not apparent for a short length just outside the location of the stairwell. Because of the difference in batter the wall varies in width. It is 3.8m wide at the entrance close to base level, and 2.6-3.4m wide at the wall top elsewhere. The internal area of the broch is the largest of any broch in Skye at 13m N/S by 12.5m.

The entrance to the broch is in the WNW. It is almost completely preserved except for the S outer corner. At its outer end the passage is about 0.8m wide with shallow door rebates at 1.2m from the outside. The rebates are at most 0.15m wide. Just inside the S rebate there is a bar hole about 0.2m wide. There does not appear to be an equivalent hole opposite it, although there is a narrow slot between two stones. Inside the door rebates the passage widens to about 1.2m. There are four lintels in place over this part of the passage, the innermost being cracked into two parts. At its inner end the passage narrows again to about 0.9m.

To the S of the entrance passage there is a roughly circular cell with a partly corbelled roof still in place. The roof of the cell is about 1.5m above the present floor level in the cell interior. The presence of a lintel near to the floor on the N side of the cell points to at least a metre of debris above the true cell floor. The cell was entered from the broch entrance passage, and at least two lintels are

in place over the entry. Above the level of the broch entrance there seems to have been an oval cell/void or the curving end of an upper gallery. This is indicated by a curve of walling to the N of the entrance passage above the level of the four in situ lintels. Part of the back wall of this cell or gallery can also be seen to the S of the broch entrance, resting partly on the outermost lintel.

Almost directly opposite the broch entrance there is an entry into the broch wall which is largely hidden in debris. The passage has been about 0.5m wide at the end nearest the interior, widening into the wall, and it appears to be founded at or near the original floor level of the broch. There are two lintels in place over the entry. The passage leads into a gallery curving to the S which contains a stair of which six steps are visible. The gallery varies in width from 0.5 to 0.8m, the narrowing of the N end possibly arising from pressure distortion. The gallery survives intact for about 5m within the wall to the S, but it seems to continue around the SW arc rising as it goes, as evidenced by a single length of outward facing revetment and a break of slope on the wall top. At its N end the gallery is lost in tumble just beyond the entry to it from the broch interior. It must have terminated not far from the entry, as about 2m to the N there is an oval cell in the wall width.

This cell is well preserved although full of rubble. It is at least 5m long by 1.6m wide, with some corbelling in place at its SE end. At this end the cell roof is about 1.5m above the tumble in the cell interior. There is no sign of the entrance to the cell which must be hidden below the debris and is presumably at the level of the broch floor. In the S arc of the wall there is another oval cell which is less clearly visible. Its E curved end and part of its back wall are intact. The cell is full of stone and no entrance to it is visible. As at the cell in the NE, it can be assumed that the entrance lies at base level below the debris.

In the broch interior there seems to have been some later construction, possibly a rectangular house, of which lengths of inward facing revetment are visible. It may be that the cleared passageway through the rubble outside the broch entrance relates to this later construction.

There is an outer wall around the broch, skirting the top of the steep

slopes and crags forming the sides of the eminence on which the broch sits. On the N and NW side of the broch the approach is easiest, over level terrain. At this point the enclosure wall lies across the line of easiest approach, extending from one craggy side to the other. Considerable lengths of the outward facing revetment of the wall are visible, with some lengths of inner face in the SE and SSW. In the S where the sides of the eminence are highest and most sheer, the outer wall does not appear to have been a very substantial structure, being about 1.5-2m wide. The wall may have been wider and more substantial to the N and W of the broch. In the NW, close to the outer end of the cleared passageway through the rubble outside the broch entrance, there appears to be an entrance through the outer wall. The outer corner of the SW wall of an entrance passage survives. An entrance through the outer wall at this point should be expected, roughly in line with the broch entrance.

To the NW of the broch outside the outer enclosure wall there are vague traces of a wall continuing along the W crag edge. It does not seem to connect with anything, and is probably not related to the broch or its outer enclosure wall. Below the eminence on which the broch sits, there are shellings to the E and S.

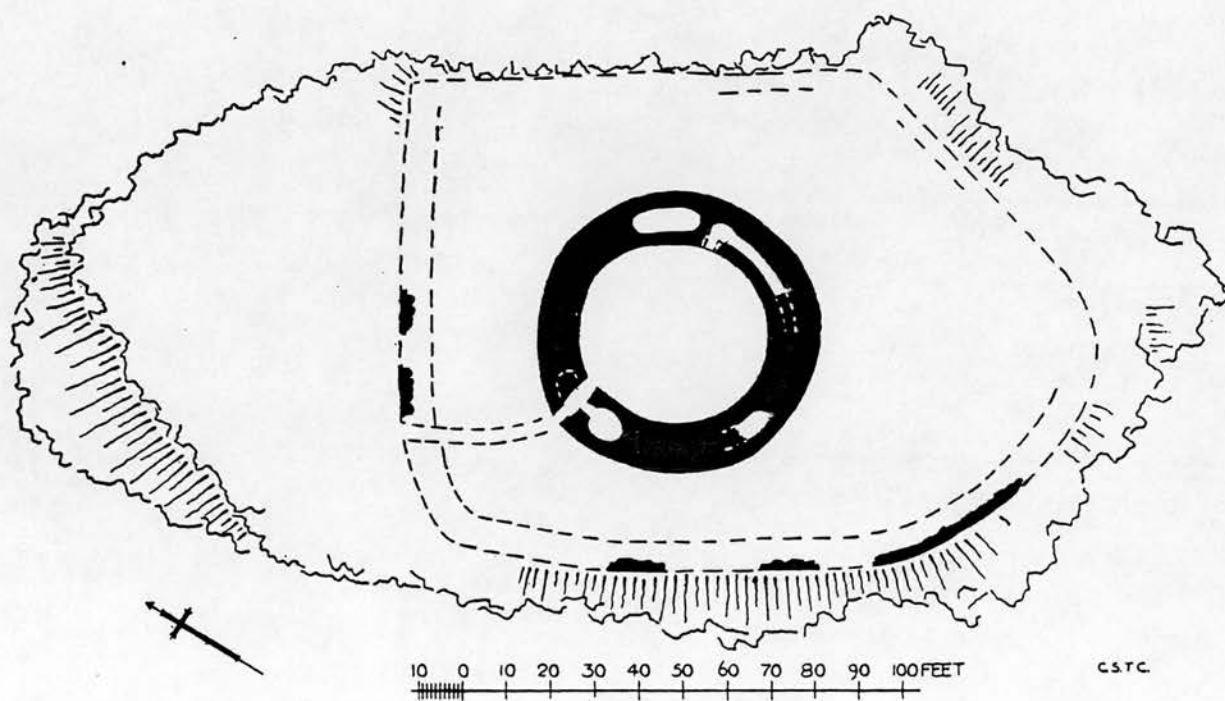
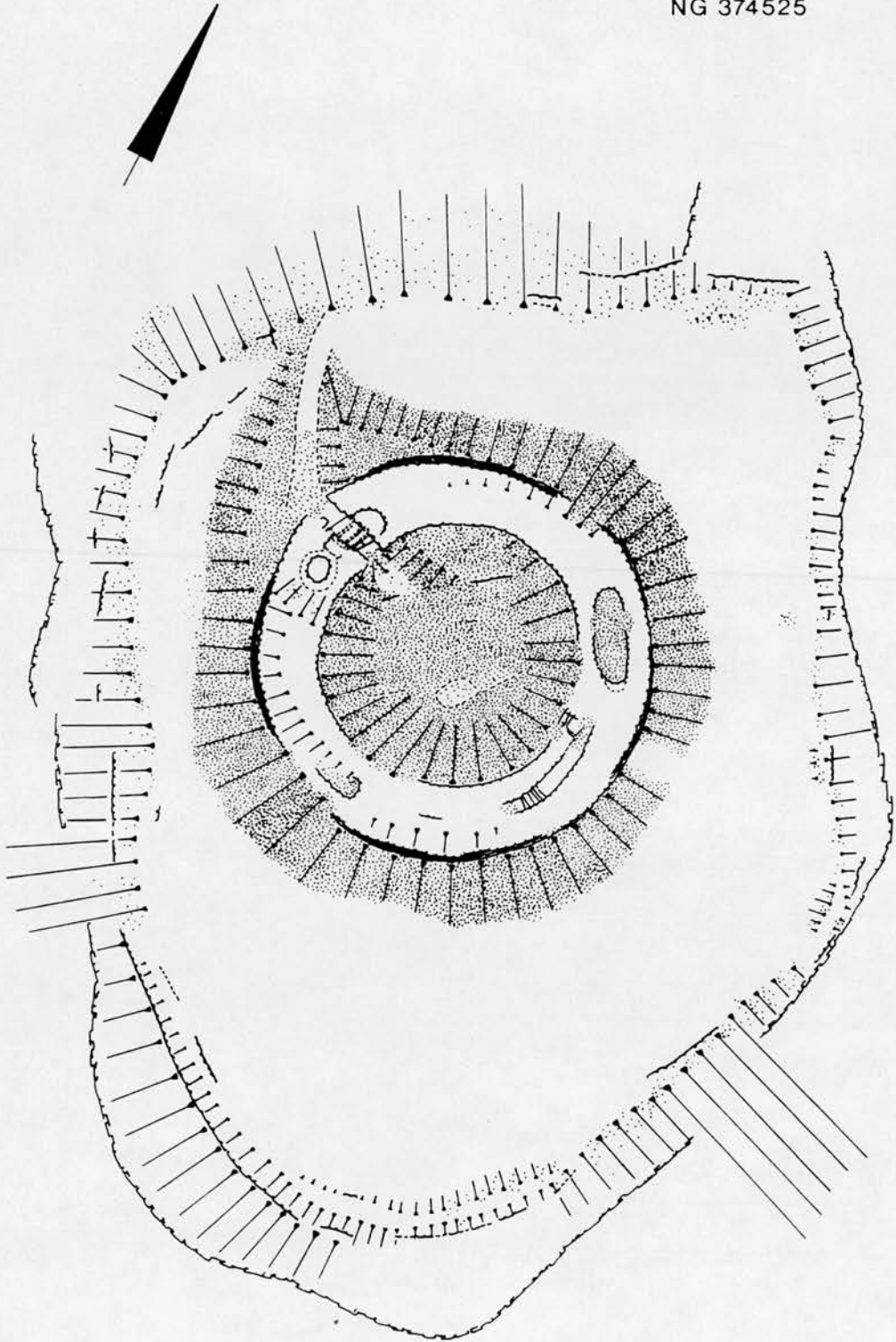


FIG. 28r—Dun Suledale (No. 618).

Source: RCAHMS 1928, 195

Dun Suladale
NG 374525



CS.WS 22.9.85

0 10m

IS 11

Dun Edinbane

NG 3535 5092

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 35 SE 4

1 RCAHMS 1928, 160, no 512

2 MacSween 1984-5, 43, no 14 and fig 14

Dun Edinbane (alternatively spelt Edinbain) is built on a knoll at about 120m OD overlooking the village of Edinbane from the E. The knoll slopes in all directions except the NW, where access is easiest. The steepest slopes are to the S and E, but even then it could not be said that the site has particularly strong natural defence. The broch has been pillaged for stone, which has been fairly comprehensively removed from its W side, that is, the side nearest the village. There is however still a large heap of rubble sitting over the E half of the broch. Two small modern shelters have been formed in this rubble pile.

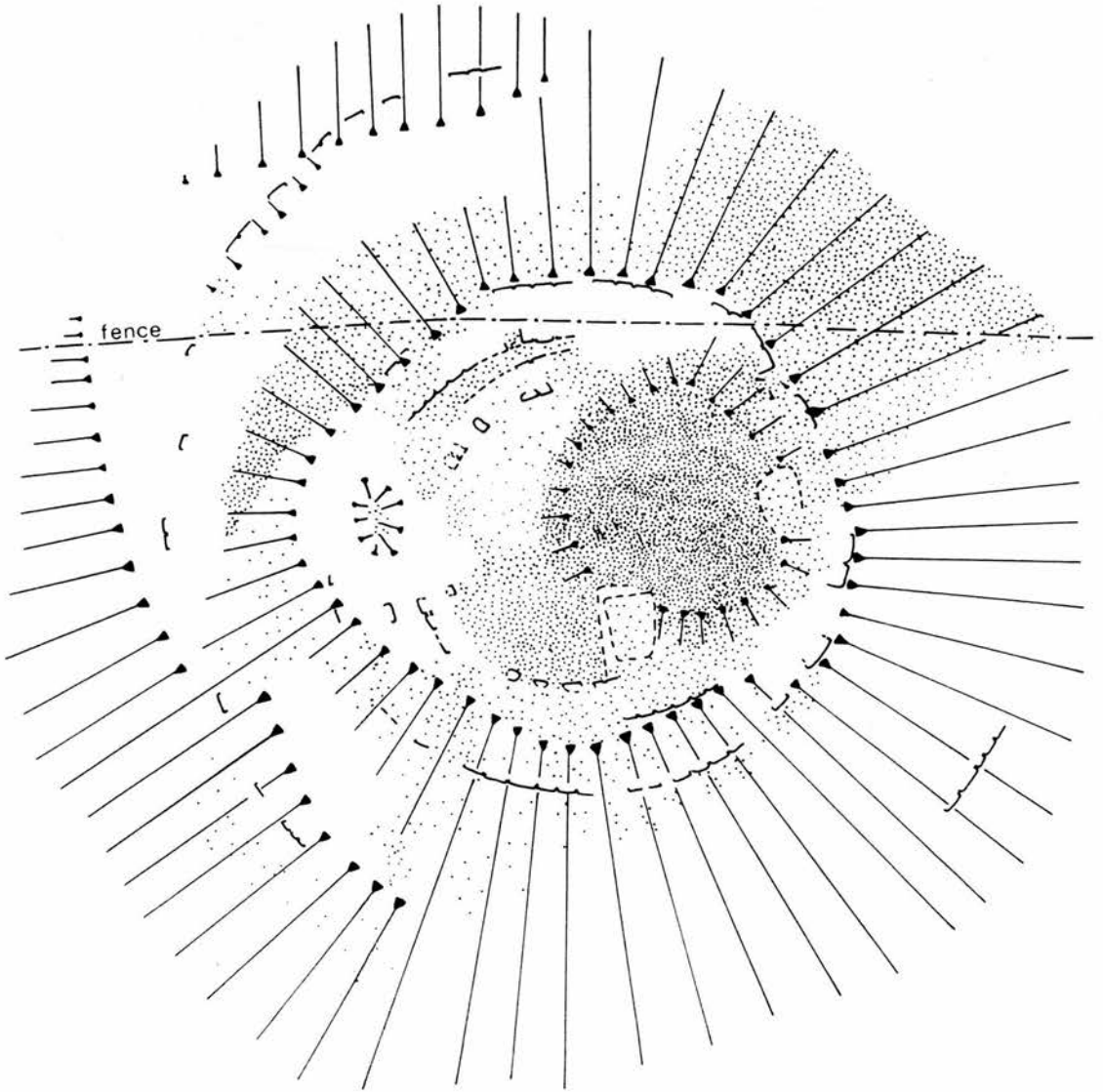
The visible structural features of the broch have been reduced to foundation level. The outer face is visible as large grounders around most of the N, E, and S arcs, but is only intermittently visible on the W arc. Isolated stones of the inner face can be detected in the loose rubble of the broch interior, but only in the roughly cleared W half of the broch. The remainder of the circuit of the inner face is likely to be intact under the massive stone pile on the E side. The internal diameter of the broch, which is measurable N/S, is 9.8m. The wall width is about 3.6-3.8m

Within the wall width a basal gallery is detectable in discontinuous lengths in the NW, SW, and SE. It is best preserved in the NW where both walls are visible, and the gallery varies from 0.5 to 0.8m in width. In the NNW there appears to be a break in the outer wall of the gallery giving the appearance of an entrance from the outside. But the effect has probably been caused by stone removal, as both the inner and outer faces of the broch wall continue across the putative line of such an entrance. In the SW the gallery is about 0.9m wide. In the SE only the inner wall of the gallery is visible for about 3.5m. No entrance to the broch can be traced, although it may have been in the NE where there is a gap in the outer face, and a hollow in the tumble. These effects may simply however have been caused by the removal of a

grounder from the outer face.

Outside the broch to the NW, W, SW, and SE there are substantial traces of an outward facing revetment, pointing to an outer wall encircling the broch, about 5-7m beyond it. On all sides except the W, where there is a small flat terrace, the outer wall is founded downslope. The enclosed area would have sloped away all round except in the W, and would not have been particularly functional. The encircling wall should therefore probably be seen as an additional defensive measure, rather than as a wall enclosing a functional area around the broch.

Dun Edinbane
NG 353509



CS. WS 24.9.85



IS 12

Dun Gearymore

NG 2368 6490

NMRS Class: Broch and Outworks

NMRS Card: NG 26 SW 1

1 RCAHMS 1928, 159-60, no 511

2 MacSween M 1958-9, fig 1

3 MacSween A 1984-5, 43, no 13 and fig 13

This broch is situated on a rocky eminence on the W coast of the Vaternish peninsula with a magnificent outlook to the Outer Hebrides. It is the furthest N of a group of three brochs situated on the same contour, about 130m OD, but not equally spaced apart. The other two brochs in the group are Dun Borrafiach (IS 13) and Dun Hallin (IS 14). The area around Dun Gearymore and the slope below it to the W has been the site of a pre-clearance farming township, largely built from the tumbled stones of the broch walls (MacSween 1958-9).

The eminence on which the broch stands is steepest in the SW and S where there are sheer crags. To the E a linear depression, 10.5m wide crest to crest, has the appearance of being a ditch quarried to supplement this less naturally defensive flank. The ditch terminates at the N, where it is infilled by a later longhouse with a superimposed building at its W end which may be a sheiling. The N arc of the broch has no natural defence with long gentle slopes tapering away, covered in lazy beds.

An outer wall appears to have surrounded the broch, although it is clearly preserved only on top of the crags in the S and SE, and at the top of the scarp of the ditch in the E. If it existed elsewhere around the broch, it has been largely destroyed by robbing for later constructions. There are possible continuations of the wall in the form of short lengths in the NE and W. The whole of the area outside the broch in the N is full of constructions of both rectilinear and circular form. The smaller rectangles are likely to be either sheilings, or outhouses of the farming township. The circular features are indistinct and have been identified by the OS in the past as hut circles. There is no means of ascertaining their function or their relationship to the broch without excavation. A later rectangular structure appears to overlie the E member of the pair of outer

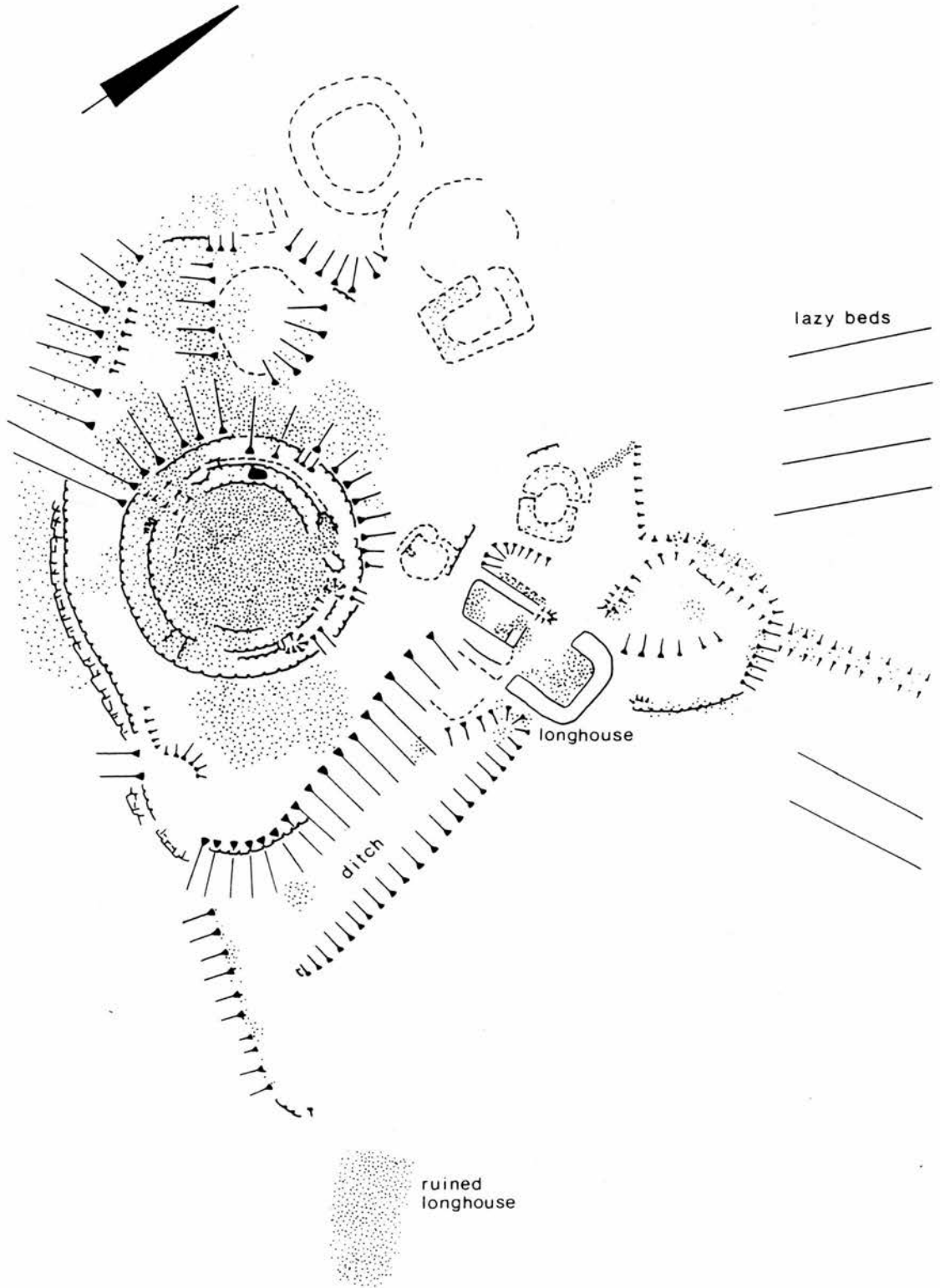
contiguous circles.

The broch structure is relatively well preserved, most of the circuit of its outer face being visible. The interior is full of rubble and the inner face is consequently traceable only on the NW arc and in the SE, giving an internal diameter of 10.8m. The line of the entrance is marked by a linear depression in the SW. The wall width varies from 3.2m in the SE to 3.8m in the N.

The broch appears to have had a narrow gallery around most of its circuit, interrupted by two curious corbelled cells in the N arc of the wall. These were previously identified by the RCAHMS (1928) as a single oval chamber in the NE directly opposite the entrance. The E cell is smaller than the W cell, which is collapsed on its E side so that the relationship between the two cells can not be determined. The gallery in the W arc of the broch terminates at the W cell.

There are in fact two galleries in the W arc of the broch, a fully lintelled lower gallery, and a superimposed upper gallery of which only the inner side is intact, except at its extreme S end where a short length of the outer side survives. The lower gallery is about 0.6m wide and 1.5m high terminating in a lintelled opening at the W cell. At its S termination the gallery opens into an oval cell-like feature which may have been a guard chamber for the entrance. Its exact relationship to the entrance is no longer ascertainable because of collapse. The only other feature in the wall occurs in the S where two lengths of crude walling at right angles to the inner side of the upper gallery form a rough shelter presumably of later construction. A modern cairn surmounts the wall in the NW.

Dun Gearymore
NG 236649



CS.WS 16.9.84

0 10m

IS 13

Dun Borrafiach

NG 2354 6370

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 26 SW 2

1 RCAHMS 1928, 159, no 510

2 MacSween M 1958-9, fig 1 (pre-clearance settlement)

3 MacSween A 1985, 43, no 12 and fig 12

This broch is very well preserved, its outer face surviving 3m high in the S in 5-6 courses of very large stones. It sits on a slight eminence at 128m OD on the gentle W slope of the Vaternish peninsula. The interior of the broch is full of rubble except for the entrance passage which has been cleared out. A very large amount of rubble is scattered over a large area around the broch and has been used to construct field walls and sheilings. MacSween (1958-9) records the site of a pre-clearance farming township at this location. Although there is a field system around the broch full of lazy beds, there would not however appear to be any longhouses in the vicinity. The secondary use of the area has masked any evidence of external constructions contemporary with the broch, such as an outer wall as at Dun Gearymore (IS 12). The walls of the field system are without doubt subsequent to the construction and occupation of the broch. They are shoddily built and mount over the rubble outside the broch wall.

Most of the outer face of the broch wall is preserved except for two breaks in the N and ENE. The inner face is less easily traced under the massive rubble filling the interior, but its outline is visible on the SW and N arcs. It is likely that the inner face is preserved to a considerable height under the rubble. The width of the wall where measurable varies from 3m in the W to 4m in the N, enclosing an area 9.9m in diameter N/S. There has been a narrow gallery within the wall, 0.5m wide where measurable in the SE. Considerable lengths of the inner side of the gallery are preserved but only two short lengths of the outer side in the E and SE. The gallery is apparently an upper gallery having continued over the entrance. This is evidenced by the inner side of the gallery continuing right to the edge of the exposed SW wall of the entrance passage. As the broch wall is preserved to 3m in height there may well be a lower gallery below the visible one as

at Dun Gearymore. No other features are visible in the broch wall.

The entrance to the broch is in the NW. The SW side of the passage is well preserved with a slab door check in position 0.5m from the outer end. The passage is 3.4m in length. The NE side of the entrance is traceable although the details are confusing, because there are two faces on this side. The original wall of the entrance would appear to be represented by a curving wall face preserved 3-4 courses high. No door check is visible but the passage would appear to have widened into a concave curve on this side behind where the door check should be. The entrance is 1.3m wide at this point as opposed to 1.1m at the inner end and 0.8m at the outer end. The second face on the NE side of the passage continues into the interior of the broch and would appear to be a secondary narrowing of the passage in line with the original outer part of the NE passage wall.

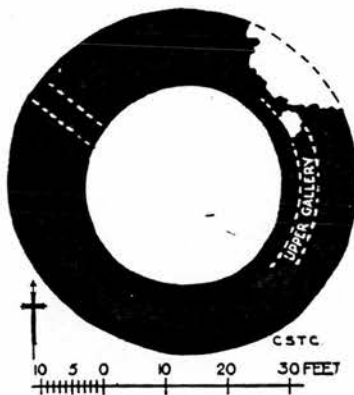
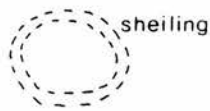
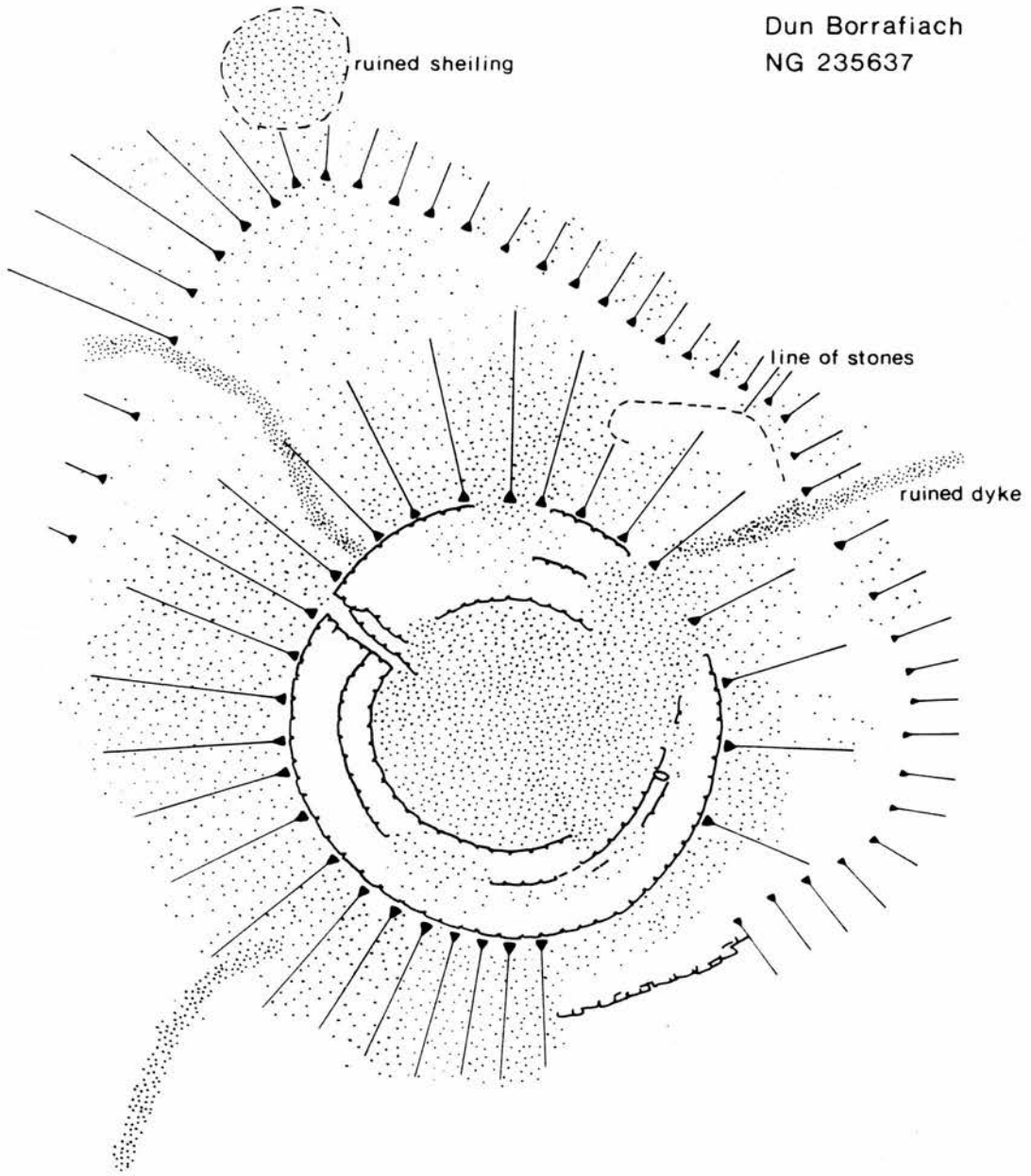


FIG. 230.—Dun Borrafiach
(No. 510).

Source: RCAHMS 1928, 159

Dun Borrafiach
NG 235637



CS. WS 17.9.84

0 10m

Dun Hallin

NG 2566 5927

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 25 NE 1

1 RCAHMS 1928, 158-9, no 509

2 MacSween M 1958-9, fig 1 (pre-clearance settlement)

3 MacSween A 1985, 42-3, 11 and fig 11

This broch occupies a very commanding and exposed position at 137m OD behind the modern township of Hallin on the W coast of the Vaternish peninsula. The broch is located to the SE of a prominent crag, the remainder of the crag possibly serving as an outer enclosed area for the broch.

The broch is well preserved, the outer face standing 3m high in the NW, composed of large blocks of stone as at Dun Gearymore (IS 12) and Dun Borrafiach (IS 13). The full circuits of both the inner and outer faces of the broch wall are extant. The inner face survives 2-3 courses high above an interior filled with grass covered rubble. The broch wall varies from 3 to 3.3m in width enclosing an area 10.8m in diameter. The entrance to the broch has been in the SE where a linear depression exists across the width of the wall. The side walls of the passage are no longer extant.

In the SW of the broch interior there is an entrance into a stairwell in the wall. Five steps of the stair are visible. In the ENE a gallery in the wall is evidenced by a 2m length of inward facing revetment. To the S of this trace of a gallery and NE of the entrance, there is an oval corbelled cell within the wall measuring 1.5m over its surviving height. At the base of the cell in the N there appears to be a large lintel with a gap beneath it. It is not clear whether this may be the entrance to a lower gallery, or simply a gap left where a stone has been pulled from the face of the cell. There is no evidence that the cell was entered either from the broch entrance or the broch interior. To the SW of the entrance there is another corresponding cell in the wall, of which only the NW arc is visible, surviving only one course high above an infilled interior.

Around the crag on which the broch stands there has been an outer

wall. It survives as a low rubble bank on the NW and W, falling away steeply to the crags on this side. The outer face of this surrounding wall seems to be visible at three points, in the SE at the bottom of a short slope down from the broch, in the SW, and in the W 3m down the very steep natural slope. Within this outer enclosure and abutted against the outer face of the broch in the N, there is a partially ruined, semicircular enclosure which has the appearance of being a later structure, possibly a sheep shelter or lambing pen.

A field wall approaches the broch upslope in the S and there are numerous traces of pre-clearance settlement around the base of the crag in the form of ruined dykes, longhouses and lazy beds.

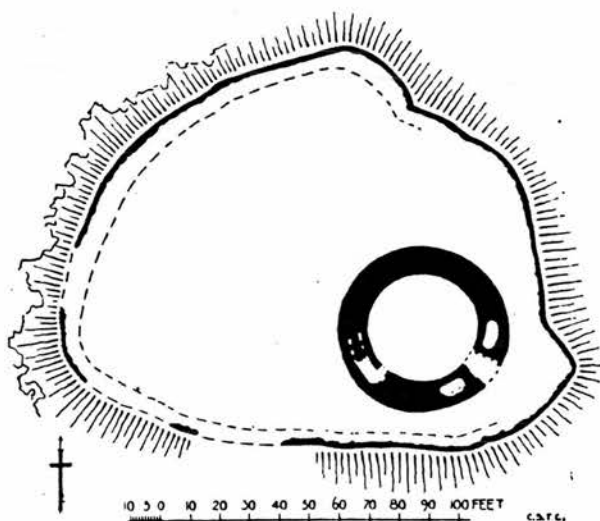
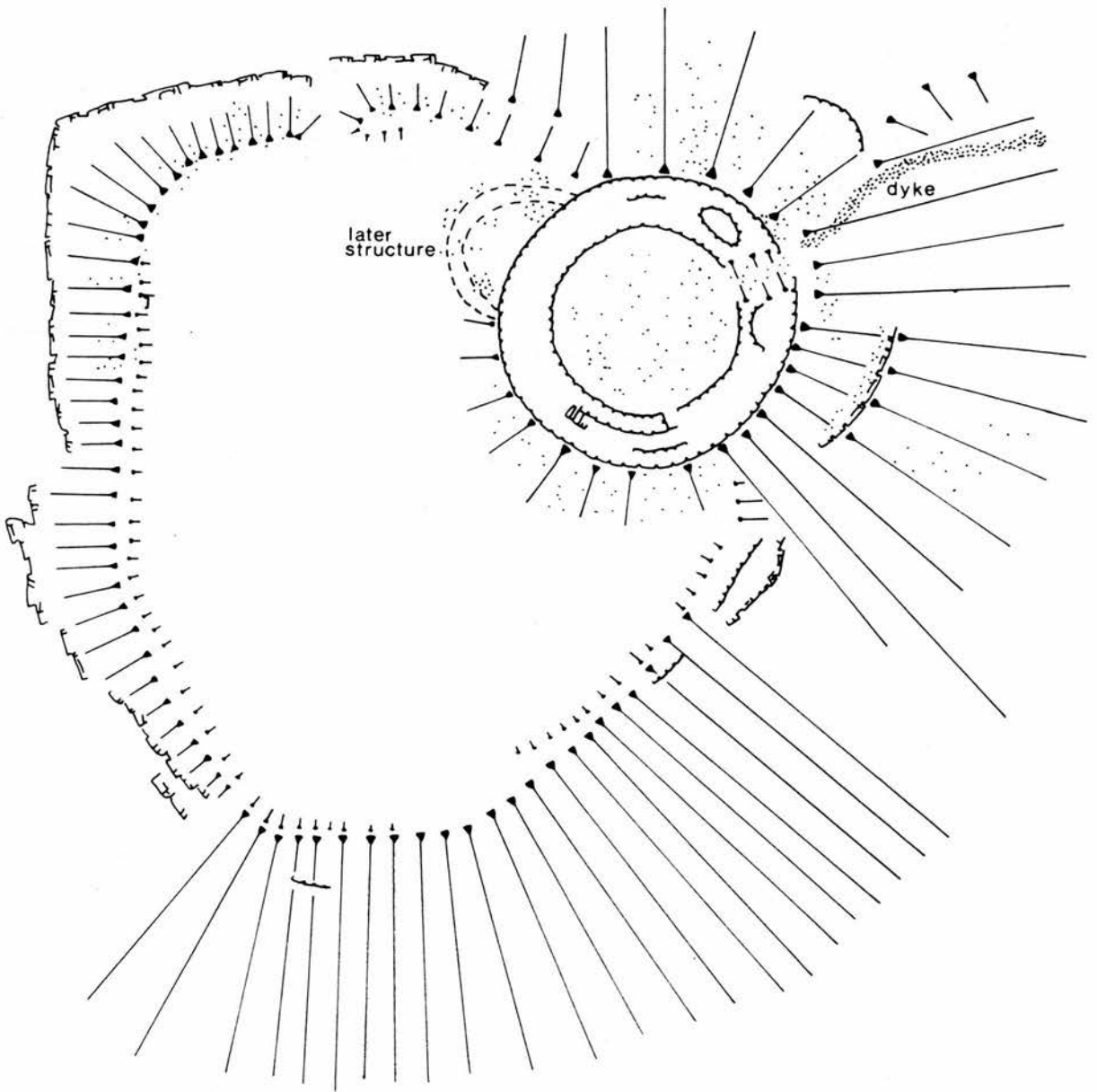


FIG. 226.—Dun Hallin (No. 509).

Source: RCAHMS 1928, 158

Dun Hallin
NG 256592



CS.WS 18.9.84

0 10m

1 Davies & Calder in Disc Exc Scot 1979, 17

Davies and Calder recorded in Disc Exc Scot 1979 a dilapidated, circular, stony structure, about 9m in diameter, overgrown and much robbed, on a knoll above a sheep fank. They suggested that the structure may be a broch. The site has not been incorporated in the NMRS, and was not checked during field survey in the Isle of Skye Study Area.

The location of the structure on a knoll overlooking ground which has been cultivated around Claigan is not out of keeping with general broch locations in Skye. A souterrain is recorded on the OS 1:25,000 map about 200m S of the structure. The extreme dilapidation of the structure could be explained by the presence of the sheep fank, and it should be noted that there are other equally dilapidated brochs on Skye, for example, Glen Heysdal (IS 20).

It is impossible to be certain of the identification of the site without a field visit, but its tentative identification points to the possibility of there being other badly ruined broch sites yet to be located on Skye.

Dun Boreraig

NG 1948 5311

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 15 SE 1

1 RCAHMS 1928, 154-6, no 505

2 MacSween 1984-5, 42, no 7 and fig 7

This broch is located on a knoll at about 50m OD with a clear outlook over Loch Dunvegan from the W. Dun Hallin (IS 14) on the other side of the loch is in view in the distance. The knoll is roughly rectangular in shape. The broch sits towards its N side, with terrace areas to the E, S and W. The sides of the knoll are composed of sheer crags or very steep slopes. There is a substantial revetment around the margins of the terraces. The revetment does not appear to extend around the N side of the broch, where the crag edge is in fact only about 1-2m from the outer face of the broch wall, perhaps making an enclosing wall unnecessary at this point. The revetment is heavily battered up the slope of the crag edges, surviving up to 1.5m high in the NW. The inner face of the enclosing wall is generally not obvious except in the SE. Elsewhere much of the wall core and the inner face appear to have fallen outwards over the edge of the crags. In the S there is an entrance through the enclosing wall, which is formed of very large slabs, but is blocked with fallen rubble. This entrance is not in line with the broch entrance which lies in the W, but gives access to the full terrace area surrounding the broch.

The broch itself is very well preserved. Most of the outer face of the wall is intact, composed of massive blocks, and surviving up to 6 courses high in the E. The inner face is also largely intact and is similarly composed of massive blocks. A scarcement is visible around most of the interior except on the E arc. It is composed of irregular blocks and varies in width from 0.15-0.25m. The wall width above scarcement level and at the top of the surviving batter on the outer face, varies from 3.1-3.5m. At base the wall appears to be about 3.8m wide in the WNW and 3.3m in the ESE.

The entrance to the broch is in the W. Both sides of the passage are fully visible except at the inner corners. The passage is 0.7m wide at the outside, widening to 1.15m behind the door checks, which are 1.25m

from the outer end. The S passage wall then converges to produce a passage width of 0.6m at the surviving inner end. To the S of the entrance passage there is a roughly circular cell. It appears to have been entered both from the broch interior, and from a ground level intramural gallery. Narrow lintelled openings into the cell are visible near its present floor level in the S and E. Both of the entries appear to be only about 0.3m wide. The roof of the cell exhibits corbelling to a height of about 1.2m above present floor level on the S side of the cell.

At a level above the scarcement, and possibly also above the roof of the cell, there has been an upper level gallery on the N and S arcs, of which only the inner wall face survives. Traces of the outer wall face of the gallery are visible in the NE and E, giving a gallery width of about 0.6-0.8m. Elsewhere the outer wall face of the gallery has fallen away. In the E, directly opposite the entrance to the broch and above scarcement level, there appears to be an entry to the upper level gallery which is filled with collapsed stones. It is 1.15m wide at its broch interior end and may be wider at its gallery end, but the collapsed stones make it difficult to trace the exact line of the passage walls. There are no other features visible in the broch wall apart from a possible lintel across the upper level gallery in the NE, which is rotated on its side and cracked right across. There may well be a lower level gallery beneath the visible gallery, but there is no trace of it at any point, except at the cell in the W arc of the wall. The interior of the broch, which measures about 10m in diameter N/S below scarcement level, is entirely choked with rubble, obscuring any entries to intramural features occurring at ground level.

To the SE of the knoll on which the broch sits, there is a sheep fold, which was probably built with stone from the broch. The broch interior is full of rubble, and there is a rubble spread around the W and E arcs of the broch wall, but it is noticeable that the amount of rubble on the site is not large.

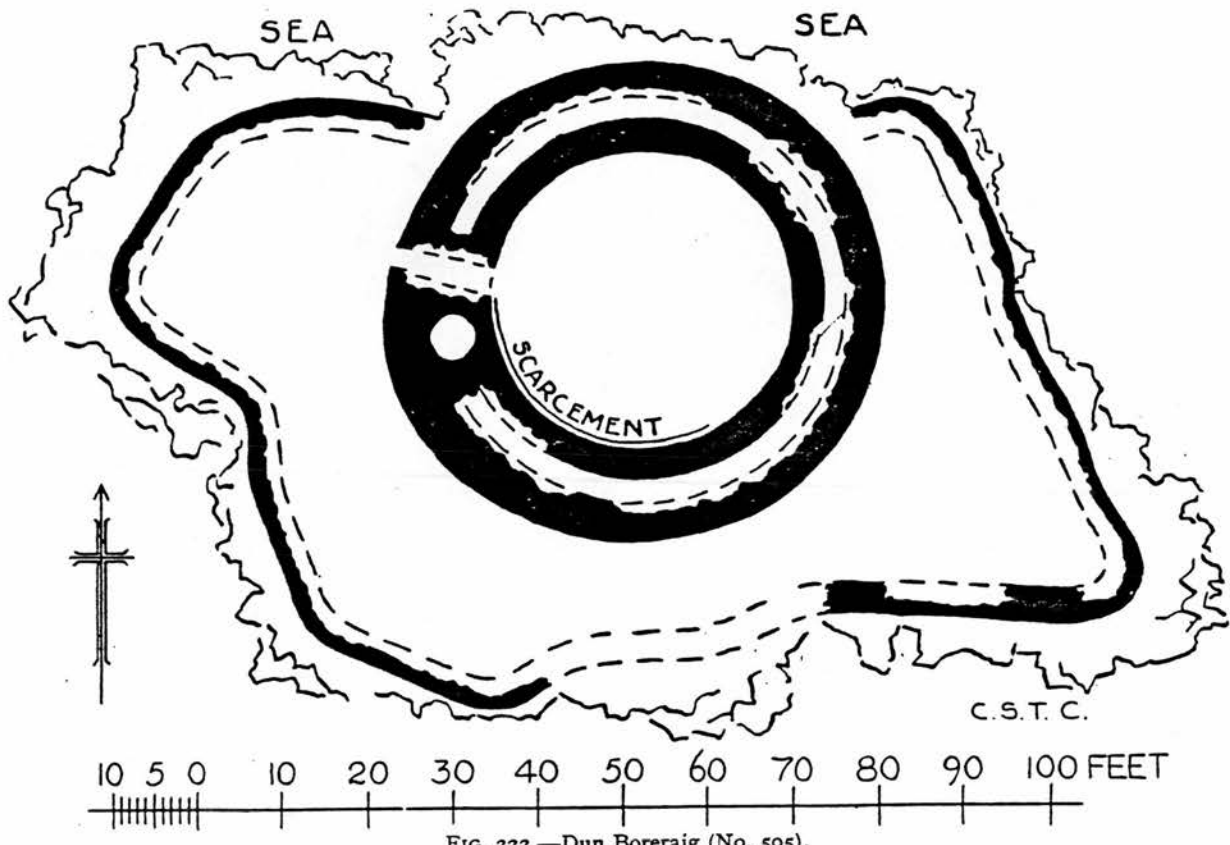
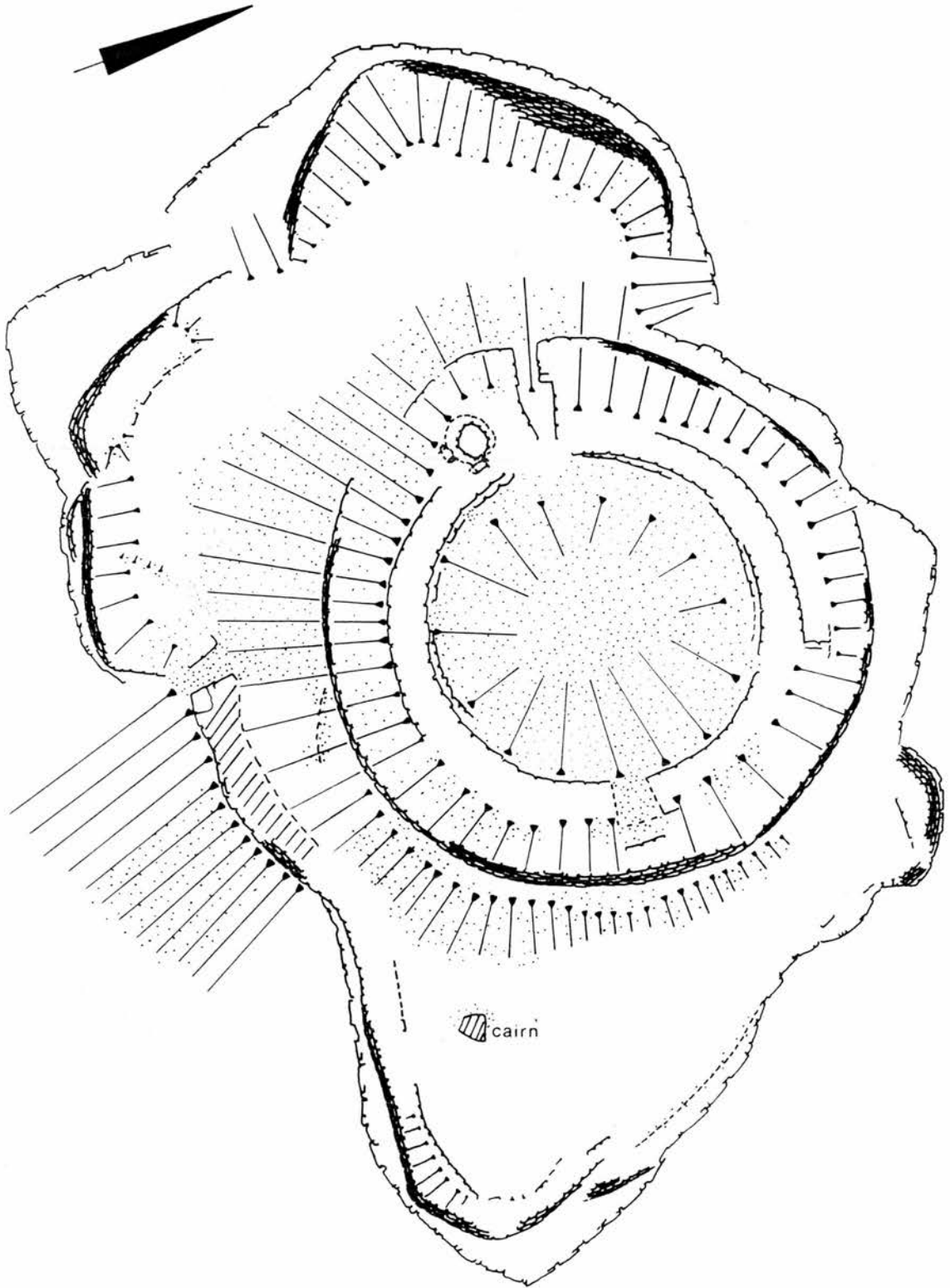


FIG. 222.—Dun Boreraig (No. 505).

Source: RCAHMS 1928, 155

Dun Boreraig
NG 194531



CS.WS 19.7.85

0 5m

Dun Fiadhairt

NG 2311 5042

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 25 SW 1

- 1 MacLeod 1914-5, 57-70
- 2 RCAHMS 1928, 157-8, no 508
- 3 Curle 1931-2, 349
- 4 Young 1961-2, 187, no 42
- 5 Robertson 1970, Table 2
- 6 MacSween 1984-5, 42, no 10 and fig 10

Excavated by the Countess Baillet de Latour pre-1914, report by MacLeod 1914-5. Finds in the National Museum

This broch is located on a craggy knoll in the middle of a promontory jutting into the E side of Loch Dunvegan. The promontory is connected to the land by a narrow neck. The site is not visible from the approach across the neck. Remnants of field banks and sheiling huts point to some later use of the promontory. The broch occupies almost the whole summit of the knoll, the ground falling away sharply on all sides except the W, where there is a small terrace offering a less steep approach to the top.

The broch is well preserved, still exhibiting the features described by the RCAHMS (1928). Its hidden location has probably contributed to its state of preservation. All of the broch's intramural features have been exposed by excavation, and the interior is largely clear of stone, apart from a length of walling in the N half of the internal area, which appears to be a secondary construction. The outer face of the broch wall is preserved intermittently around the circumference, but is largely missing on the SW and N arcs. There is a heavy cover of tumbled stone on the E and S sides of the knoll.

All of the circuit of the inner face is intact, except for a broken down corner of an entry into the wall width in the NW. The internal area of the broch is about 9.4m in diameter. The inner face is preserved up to 1.5m high, but it is difficult to be certain that its present height is wholly original. There may have been some rebuilding after the excavation. The possibility of rebuilding is evinced by the evidence of a possible scarcement, 0.3-0.45m wide, appearing on the S

arc only. If this isolated feature is in fact a scarcement, then the rest of its length has been obscured by rebuilding of the inner face. The RCAHMS referred to a scarcement to the "left" of the entrance, but this was not traced during survey, unless the length in the SSE was meant.

There are two entrances into the broch interior. The one on the W arc was identified by the RCAHMS as the "main" entrance. It is located at the top of the easiest approach to the summit of the knoll. It is 3.5m in length, and 0.8m wide at both its inner and outer ends, widening to 1.25m near the centre. There is a clear door rebate in the S wall of the passage, about 1.1m from the outside. The N door rebate is not so clear, appearing as a 0.15m wide slot in the N side of the passage. There does not appear to have been rebuilding at this point, but this might explain the apparent absence of a proper door rebate.

Outside the entrance the passage is continued by walling on either side for a distance of about 4.6m. This walling was identified by the RCAHMS as being of "late date". The terrace outside the entrance appears to have been edged by a revetment, of which some facing stones can be traced.

On either side of the entrance there are roughly oval cells behind the position of the door rebates. There is a single lintel in position over the entry into the N cell. The S cell has a 0.4m deep corbelled or lintelled recess in its curved back wall. The W wall of the cell appears to continue through beyond the curve of the back wall, to form the outer wall of an intramural gallery lying in the S arc of the broch wall. It is possible that some blocking and rebuilding has taken place in the area of the back wall of the S cell.

Directly opposite the W entrance, there is another entrance into the broch interior. It is very narrow, only being 0.3-0.35m wide at its inner end. There are three lintels in place over this part of the entrance. The outer part of the entrance is slightly wider at 0.55-0.6m, and has four lintels in place. This outer part trends slightly eccentrically to the narrower inner part. Opening off either side of the entrance there is an intramural gallery, about 0.5 to 0.6m wide. The gallery in the S arc of the wall extends as far as the cell

at the W entrance, and has a number of lintels in place over it. In the S arc of the broch wall behind the length of apparent scarcement, there are slight traces of the inner wall face of an upper gallery, still in place over two lintels forming the roof of the lower, ground level gallery. To the N of the entrance the ground level gallery is largely unexcavated, but about 2.7m of its inner wall face, and about 0.6m of its outer wall face, are traceable. A ground level gallery opening to the N of the entrance was not recorded by the RCAHMS or Macleod (1914-5), and it may have been only recently revealed. Its terminus towards the N is not visible, but it must lie before the stairwell which rises over it in the NE arc of the broch wall.

The outer face of the broch wall is well preserved on either side of the E entrance, up to 8 courses high on the NE arc, exhibiting a strong batter. The E entrance has the appearance of being a primary feature of the broch wall, but the reason for its existence is not obvious. It leads out onto a small terrace, at most 2m wide, above a steep slope. The edge of the terrace appears to have had a stone revetment. There are no signs of any door checks for the entrance; it is very narrow; and the outer face of the broch wall does bulge markedly near its base, just to the N of the outer end of the entrance. It is possible that the E entrance was originally a narrow entry to the ground level gallery, which was extended to the outside at some stage, but there is no trace of rebuilding on the outer wall face to support such a hypothesis.

In the NE arc of the broch wall an entry, varying from 0.7-0.9m in width, leads into a stair well with a stairfoot chamber opposite. Six steps of the stair, each about 0.2m wide, are visible. In the NW arc of the broch wall an entry, 0.4-0.5m wide, gives access to a long oval cell. Opposite the entry there is a projection in the back wall of the cell, which partly divides it in two. In the SW extremity of the cell there is a recess in the wall, which is corbelled or lintelled over.

Outside the broch on the NW arc there is evidence of a revetment below the line of the broch outer face, and about 2m from the edge of the crag. It is not clear whether the traces of an outer wall in the E, N and W should be interpreted as contemporary with the broch, or the remains of an earlier or later construction.

The finds made during excavation included beads, pottery, stone objects, and iron refuse.

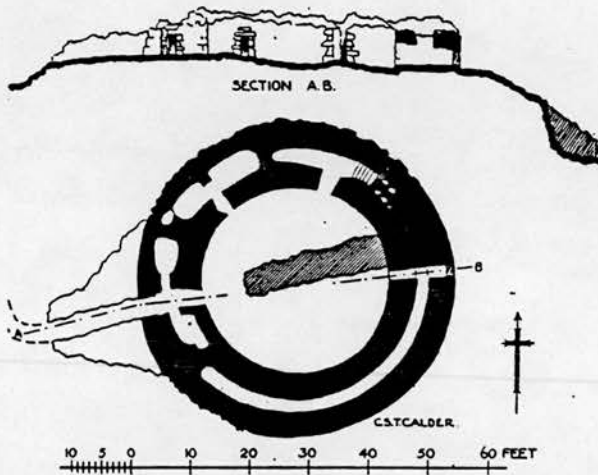
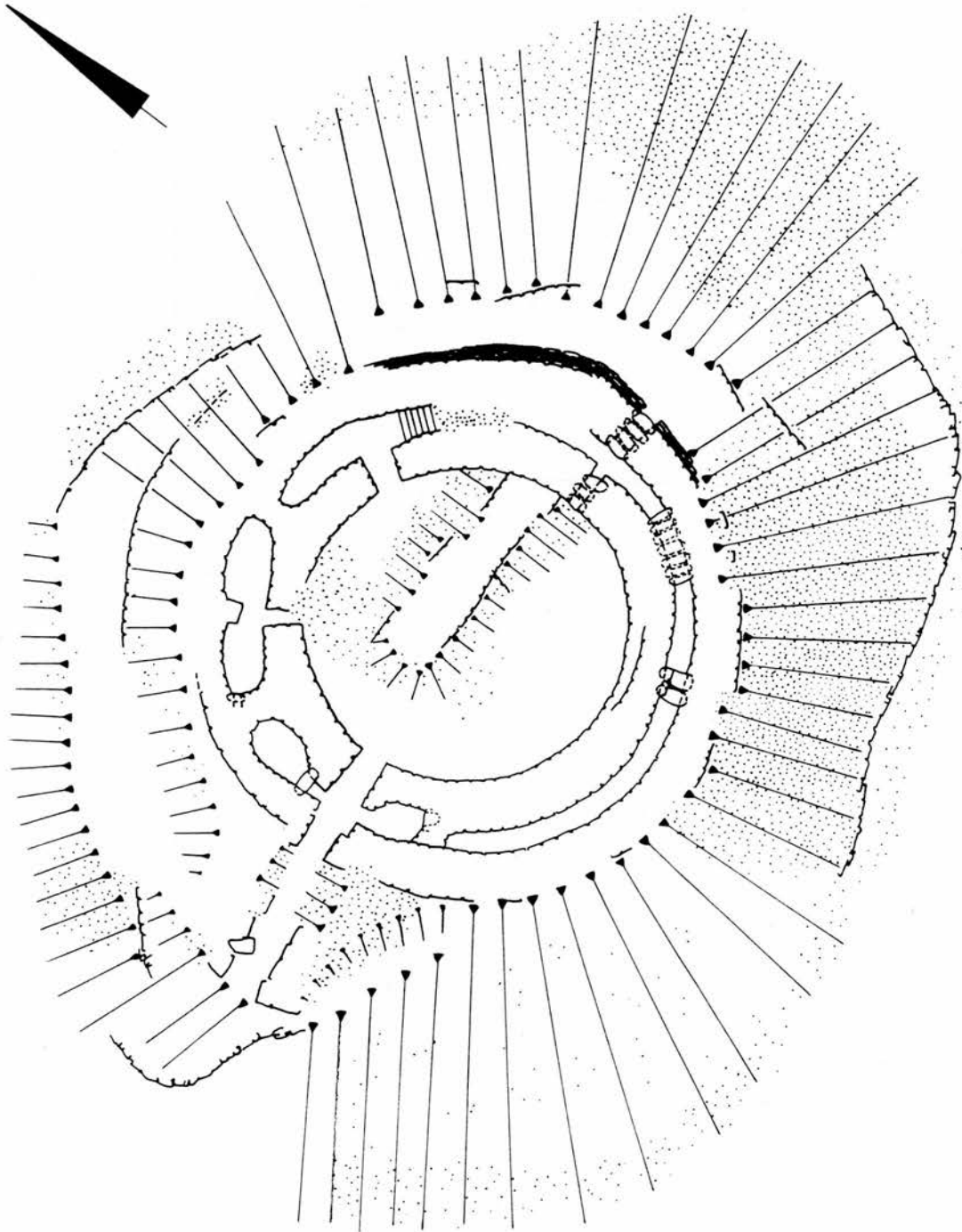


FIG. 225.—Dun, Fiadhairt, Dunvegan (No. 508).

Source: RCAHMS 1928, 157

Dun Fiadhairt
NG 231504



CS.WS 15.9.85

0 5m

Dun Colbost

NG 2055 4947

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 24 NW 5

*1 RCAHMS 1928, 156, no 506**2 MacSween 1984-5, 42, no 8 and fig 8*

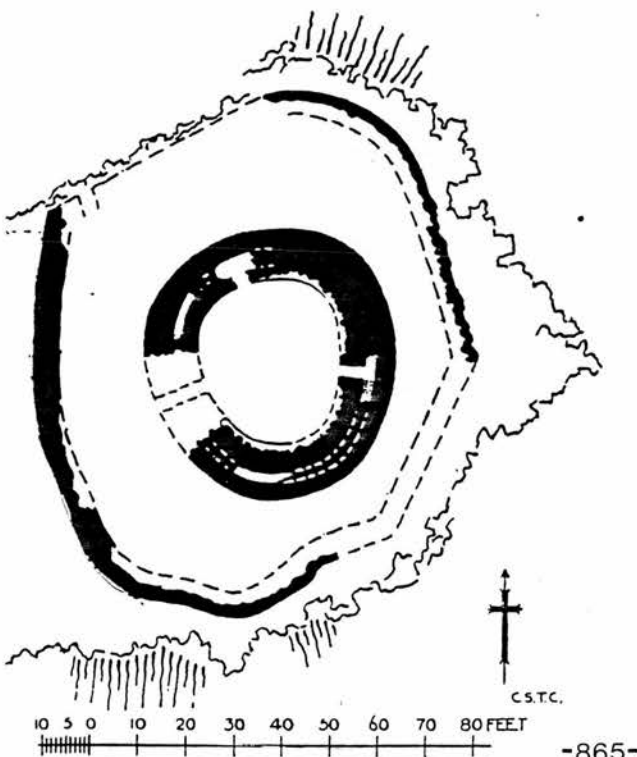
This broch occupies an elongated knoll situated in an area of rough grazing. The summit of the knoll is about 90m OD. The broch is badly reduced, the RCAHMS (1928) recording that it was robbed earlier this century, presumably for the sheep fold located below the knoll to the SE. Nonetheless much of the outer face of the wall survives, built of very large slabs, in places 7 courses and 2m high. The inner face is less well preserved and is traceable only in the NW and SE quadrants. The interior of the broch is full of rubble with a small excavated hollow close to its centre, and a modern shelter in its W half. Measured between the traceable lengths of the inner face, the diameter of the internal area is about 9.6m. There is no evidence that the internal area was oval as depicted by the RCAHMS in their plan made in 1921. (The plan may be found at the end of the site description.) It appears in fact to be almost circular. The entrance to the broch seems to lie in the SW, but it is distinguishable only as a linear hollow in the tumbled stones. At the inner end of its apparent position, a moss covered lintel can be distinguished in the rubble. It is possible that the entrance may be largely intact beneath lintels and the rubble covering them.

Within the wall width there is evidence of two tiers of galleries. A lower gallery can be seen on the E arc, measuring about 0.7m in width before disappearing towards the N under in-situ lintels. It has been entered by a narrow opening from the broch interior almost opposite the presumed site of the broch entrance in the W. The entry is about 0.55m wide, partially lintelled, and blocked by rubble. Above the level of this lower gallery there is an upper gallery, the inner wall face of which is traceable on the E, SW and W arcs. In the W the outer revetment of the gallery is clearly visible giving a gallery width of 0.45-0.5m, with three lintels in place. In the SE an entry to the upper gallery is visible. It is about 0.6m wide and is blocked with rubble. Two long stones on end against the S side of the entry appear to be fallen lintels. The RCAHMS identified this entry as probably

leading to a staircase rising to the SW, although no steps were visible at the time of their survey.

In the N arc of the broch wall there are the remains of what was described as an oval cell by the RCAHMS. The N and W walls of the cell are clearly visible, with some corbelling in place in the W. The remainder of the cell is wrecked. In the W just above the rubble blocking the cell, a lintel can be distinguished, which is clearly in place over a gallery connecting with the cell. This gallery is at the same level as the gallery visible in the E arc of the broch wall, and it obviously runs below the upper level gallery visible in the NW arc of the wall.

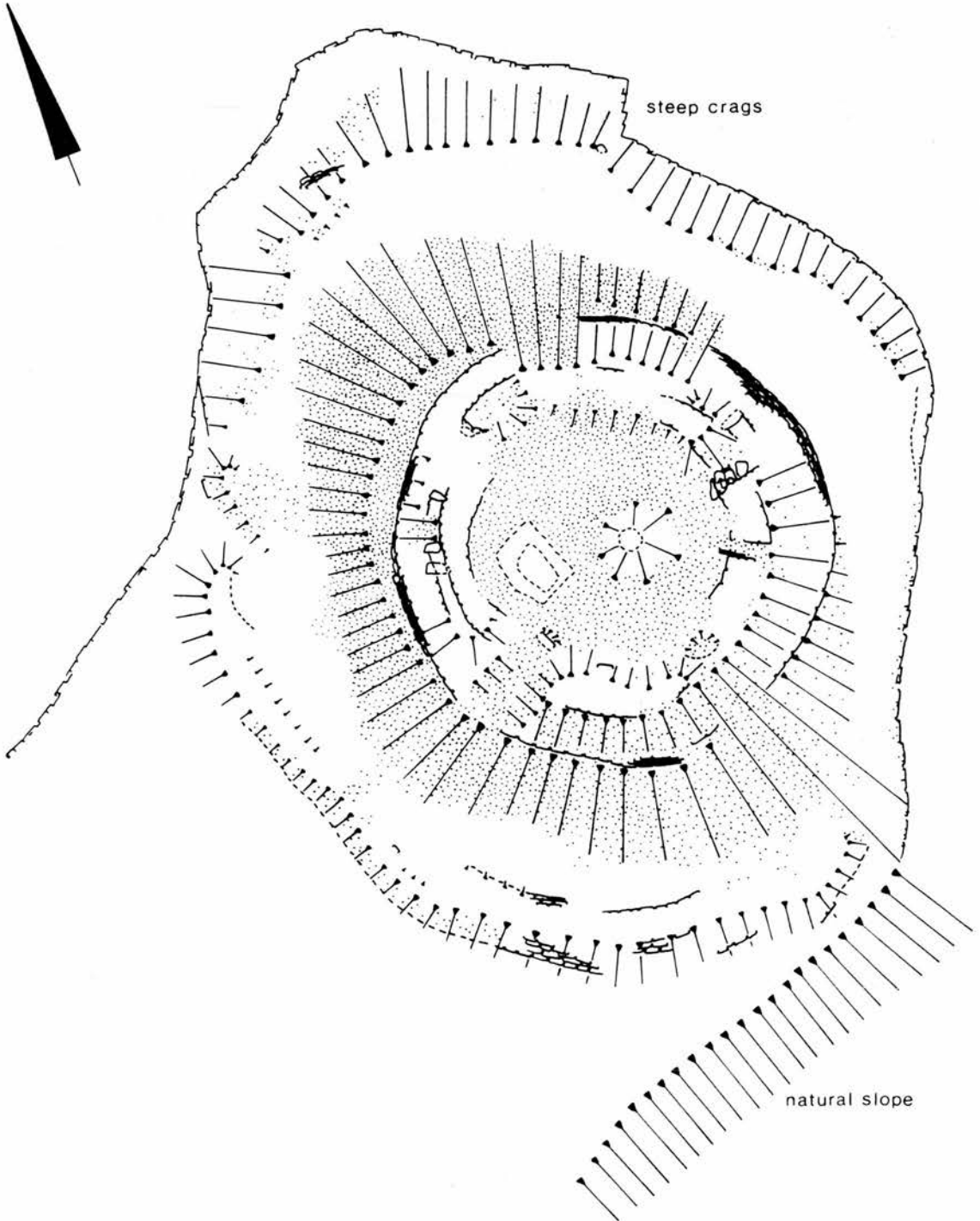
Outside the broch there is an outer enclosing wall, which edges the crags on the NW, N, NE and S, and cuts across the elongated knoll on the W. The wall is badly ruined, appearing as a turf covered stony bank. Some lengths of both inner and outer facing are visible in the SW, most of which are collapsing backwards into the wall core. It is not clear whether the outer wall also edged the crags on the SE. Slight traces of rubble on the crag edge may indicate that there was a light parapet wall at this point. The entrance through the enclosing wall appears to have been in the NW, at a point where it is possible to climb fairly easily up the crags. There does not appear to have been an entrance through the outer wall from the even easier W approach, in line with the broch entrance.



Source: RCAHMS 1928, 156

FIG. 223.—Dun Colbost (No. 506).

Dun Colbost
NG 205494



CS.WS 20.7.85

0 5m

Dun Osdale

NG 2412 4641

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 24 NW 4

1 RCAHMS 1928, 156-7, no 507

2 MacSween 1984-5, 42, no 9 and fig 9

This broch is located at about 30m OD on the edge of a rocky escarpment overlooking the marshy ground at the SE end of Loch Dunvegan. There are sheer crags to the N and E, and steep slopes fall away on the remaining arcs. The easiest approach to the broch is from the E. The broch is fairly well preserved, much of the circuit of the inner and outer faces of the wall being traceable. The outer face is founded well downslope, and is strongly battered where it survives 4 courses high in the W and NE. The inner face is intact around the circuit except in the NE, where it has fallen out over the rocky escarpment. There is clear evidence of a scarcement in the SE and W, varying in width from 0.25-0.45m. The entrance to the broch is in the E arc, in line with the easiest approach to the summit. The passage walls are largely ruined except for a 1.8m length on the S side, and a single facing stone on the N side. Where measurable towards the interior, the passage is about 1.1m wide.

There are three openings through the inner face leading into intramural features. In the SSE there is a lintel in place above an entry giving access to a gallery of variable width, extending towards the broch entrance. Opposite the entry it is 0.95m wide, narrowing to 0.6m towards the E, where it is obscured by two in-situ lintels, the W one of which is cracked in the middle. Beyond the lintels the gallery widens into what was described by the RCAHMS (1928) as an oval cell. It would appear that the feature is not an oval cell, but rather part of the longer gallery within the wall. Further to the E the walls of the gallery continue under intact lintels or corbelling, and the position of its terminus cannot be identified. This irregular gallery appears to be at ground level. Above it there has been a second gallery identified by its inner wall face, which curves to the W of the lintelled ground level entry for a distance of about 2.7m. Above the ground level entry there is the suggestion of the W wall of a void

or entry giving access to the upper level gallery. A second entry to the upper level gallery lies in the SSW above scarcement level. This opening is 0.8m wide at the inner face of the broch wall, and has been blocked. It was identified as the entry to the stair by the RCAHMS. Neither a stair, nor an extension of the gallery around the SW arc of the broch, are recognisable.

Directly opposite the entrance to the broch in the W, there is an entry into the wall below scarcement level, which has at least one lintel in place over its outer end. The entry gives access to an oval cell, most of which is visible, showing corbelling in place over each of its curved ends. The inner face of the broch wall is partly missing at this point above scarcement level, and therefore it cannot be determined whether there was a void above the ground level entry to the cell. To the NE of the cell there is another trace of the inner wall face of an upper level gallery. It is not clear whether the corbelled roof of the cell would have risen through the level of the gallery.

The interior of the broch which measures 10.2m in diameter NW/SE below scarcement level, is filled with loose rubble in all but the NE quadrant, which is turf covered. There is an extensive rubble spread on the slopes below the broch on the S and SW.

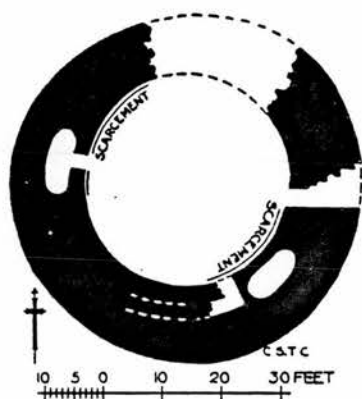
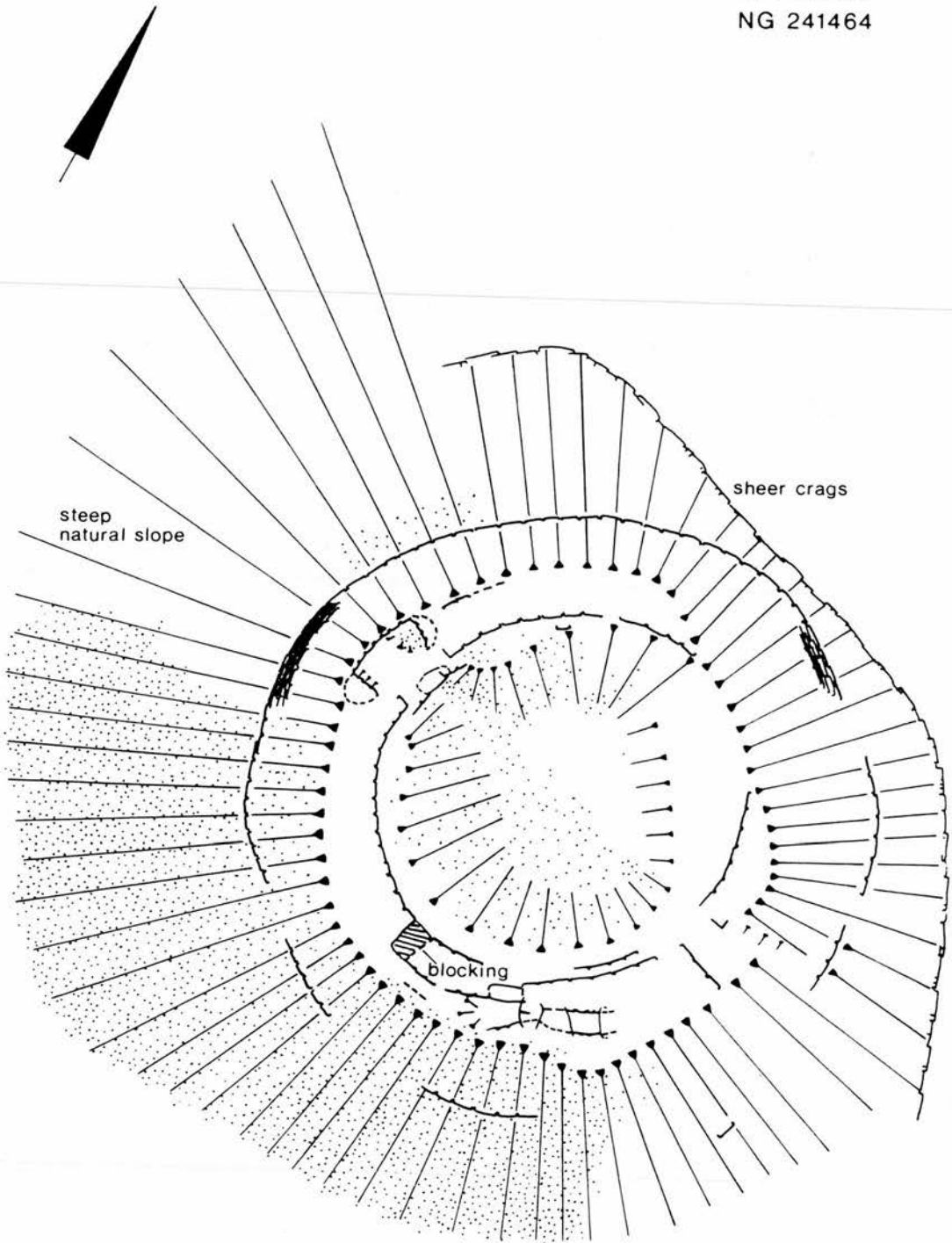


FIG. 224.—Dun Osdale (No. 507).

Source: RCAHMS 1928, 157

Dun Osdale
NG 241464



CS.WS 18.7.85

0 5m

Glen Heysdal

NG 2987 4537

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 24 NE 5

1 RCAHMS 1928, 160, no 514

2 MacSween 1984-5, 42, no 6 and fig 6

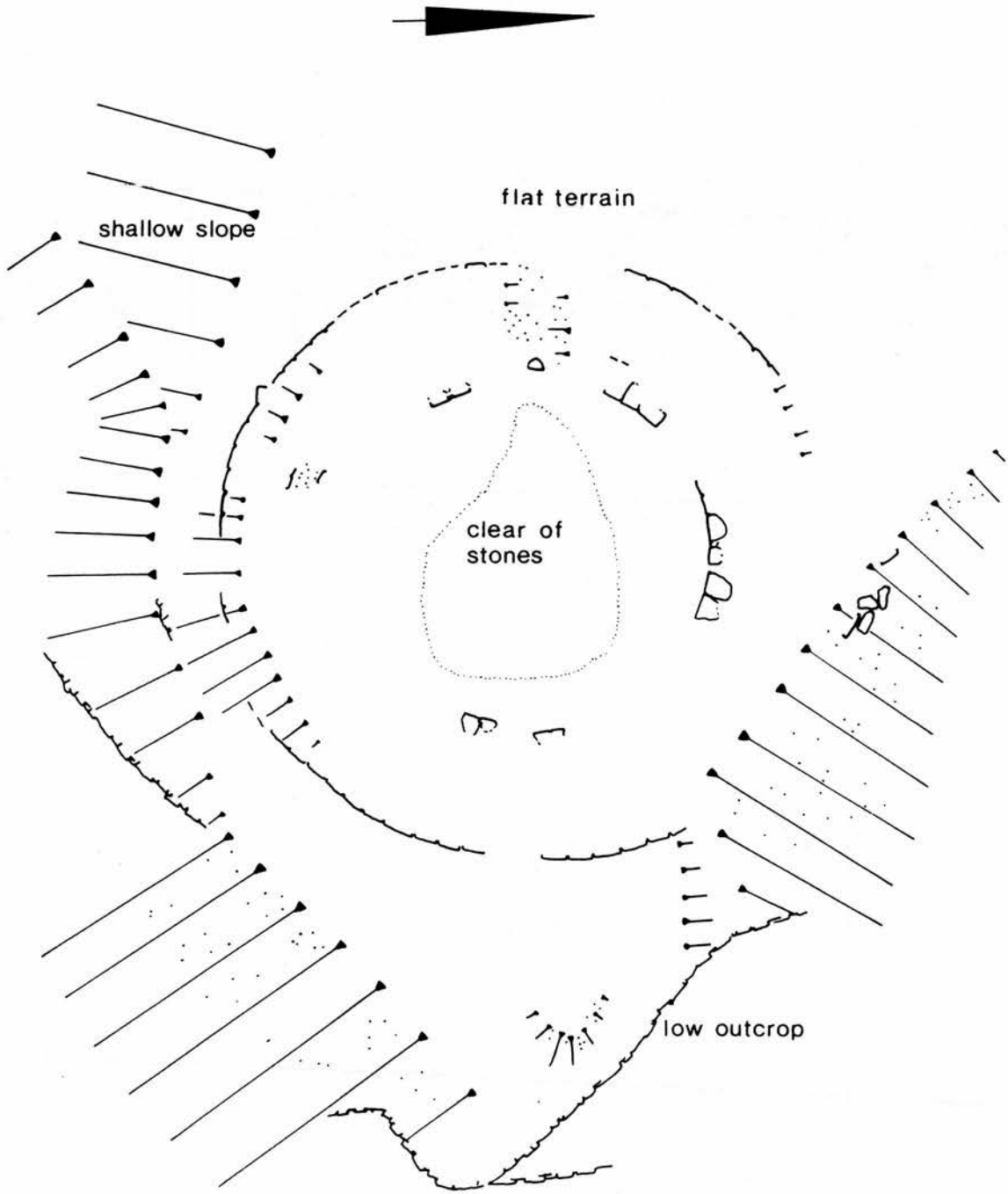
This broch is located at about 60m OD on the W side of the valley of the Caroy River, also known as Glen Heysdal. The valley is shallow and the broch is sited about 2km from the head of Loch Caroy and the sea. The broch does not occupy a rocky eminence as do many Skye brochs, but it sits instead on a slight terrace with gentle slopes to N, E and S, and flat terrain to the W.

The broch has been very thoroughly robbed, and there is very little rubble either in the broch interior or outside of it. Only very large stones, which were presumably too large to move, remain. Despite its state of denudation the site is still identifiable as a broch, many of the large grounders of the outer face of the wall remaining, along with some of the inner face. The outer face is largely traceable on all but the N and NE. The inner face is intermittently visible in the W, N and E. Where measurable the internal area of the broch is about 10.4m in diameter. The wall width is 3.7m in the NW and 3.9-4m in the E.

The entrance to the broch is not obvious. The RCAHMS (1928) recorded it as being in the WSW with the S wall of the passage partly indicated. There is a shallow linear depression in line with a gap in the outer face in the W arc of the broch, which may be the entrance. There is an apparent inner facing stone lying in line with the middle of this linear depression, but it is probably a displaced stone as it seems eccentric to the true line of the inner face of the broch wall. The RCAHMS also recorded the curve of an oval cell in the NW arc of the broch wall, and the OS recorded the presence of a gallery at this point. There is no trace of a cell, but a possible gallery is vaguely traceable as a short length of outward facing revetment. A gallery is clearly traceable in the SSW arc of the broch wall, indicated by a 0.6m length of inward facing revetment (the outer wall of the gallery), and a single stone of the inner wall of the gallery. The

gallery is at basal level and is about 0.7m wide.

There is no clear trace of an outwork outside the broch despite its lack of any natural defence in the form of steep slopes. A field wall approaches the S side of the broch from the W, appearing as vague traces at the top of the shallow slope on this side. To the N and NE of the broch slight traces of rubble and two apparent facing stones point to the former presence of a wall at the top of the slight slope on this side. It may be part of a field wall system in the area, and would appear not to relate to the broch as it does not extend around or close to it. There is no sign of any walling across the most vulnerable W flank, where the terrain is flat and the entrance to the broch may have been located.



CS.WS 24.9.85

0 5m

Dun Feorlig

NG 2993 4235

NMRS Class: Broch with Outwork

NMRS Card: NG 24 SE 8

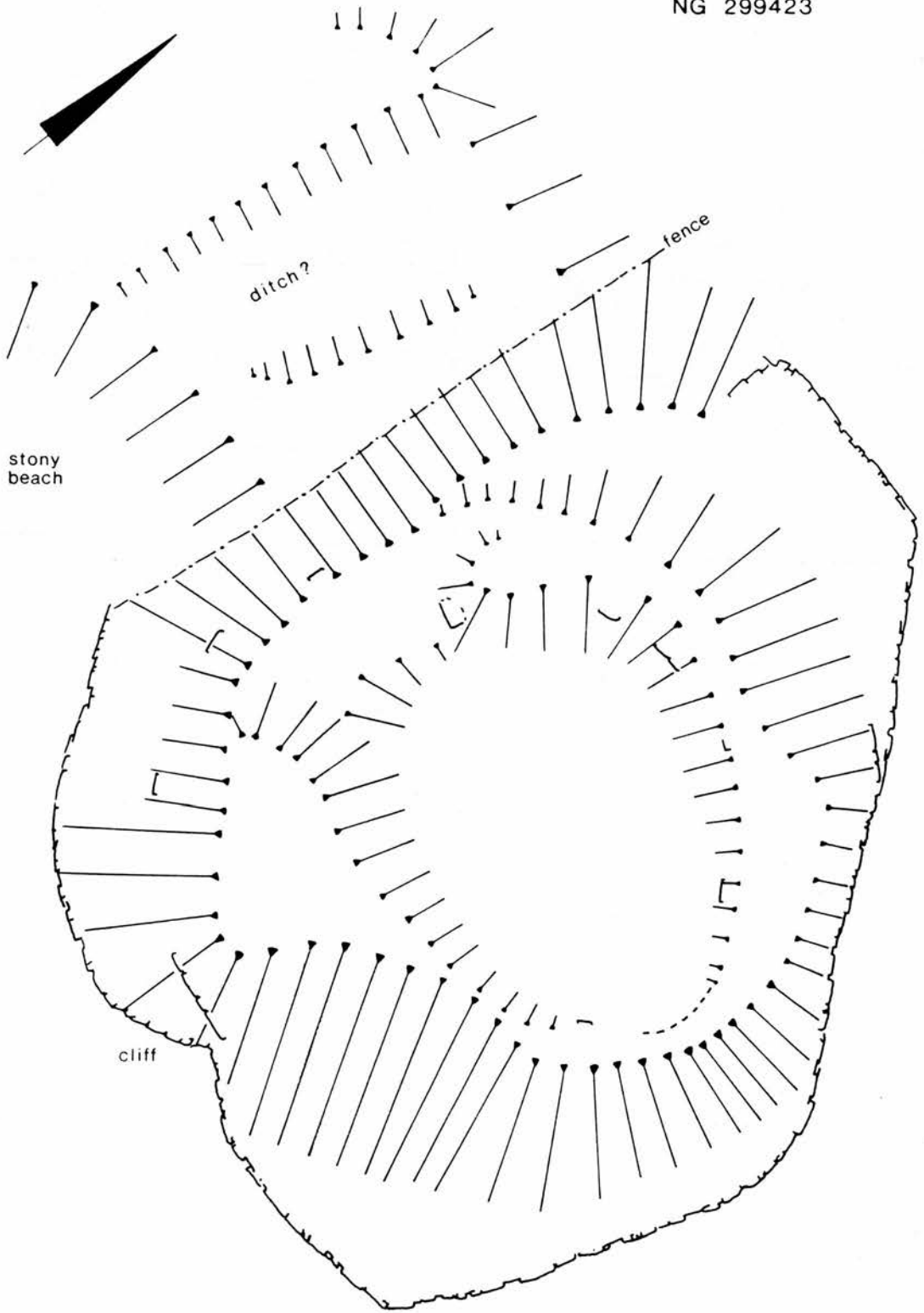
*1 RCAHMS 1928, 161, no 516**2 MacSween 1984-5, 45, no 25 and fig 25*

This structure which has been identified as a broch in the NMRS and a probable broch by the RCAHMS (1928), sits on a crag on the seashore, jutting into the W side of Loch Caroy. The crag is formed by cliffs on its S, E and N sides. The approach to it is from the W over a broad neck of land, and up a fairly steep slope onto the crag top. A shallow quarry ditch seems to have been excavated across the neck of land, which the OS identified as an outwork. It seems too shallow and too partial to have been for this purpose. It may rather have served as a source of stone for the structure on the crag top, although suitable building material is readily available along the rocky shoreline to N and S.

At the time of survey the structure appeared as a substantial penannular ring covered in a luxurious growth of grass. It seems to occupy most of the available space on the crag top. Occasional stones of an inner and outer face are visible on the SW, S and N arcs. In the NE a wall width of 3.2m is indicated. The disjointed remains of the outer face point to a roughly circular structure about 16m in overall diameter NE/SW. The internal area of the structure as presently defined by the grass covered bank, is distinctly oval or egg-shaped. This may arise from a later structure built within or on top of the remains. Extrapolating from the lengths of outer face which are visible, it appears that part of the structure has fallen away on the SE, and that the crag has eroded slightly on the NE, carrying away part of the outer face. No clear entrance to the structure is visible, but the only sensible position for one is on the W arc. A single slab on this arc may represent the N inner corner of an entrance passage.

There are few structural features to allow positive identification of the nature of the site, but the remains appear to be those of a circular structure about 16m in overall diameter with a wall about 3.2m wide. Given these dimensions it seems very likely that the structure is a broch.

Dun Feorlig
NG 299423



CS.WS 17.9.85

0 5m

IS 22

Dunalighlinn

NG 3098 4260

NMRS Class: Broch (remains of)

NMRS Card: NG 34 SW 2

1 RCAHMS 1928, 143, no 481

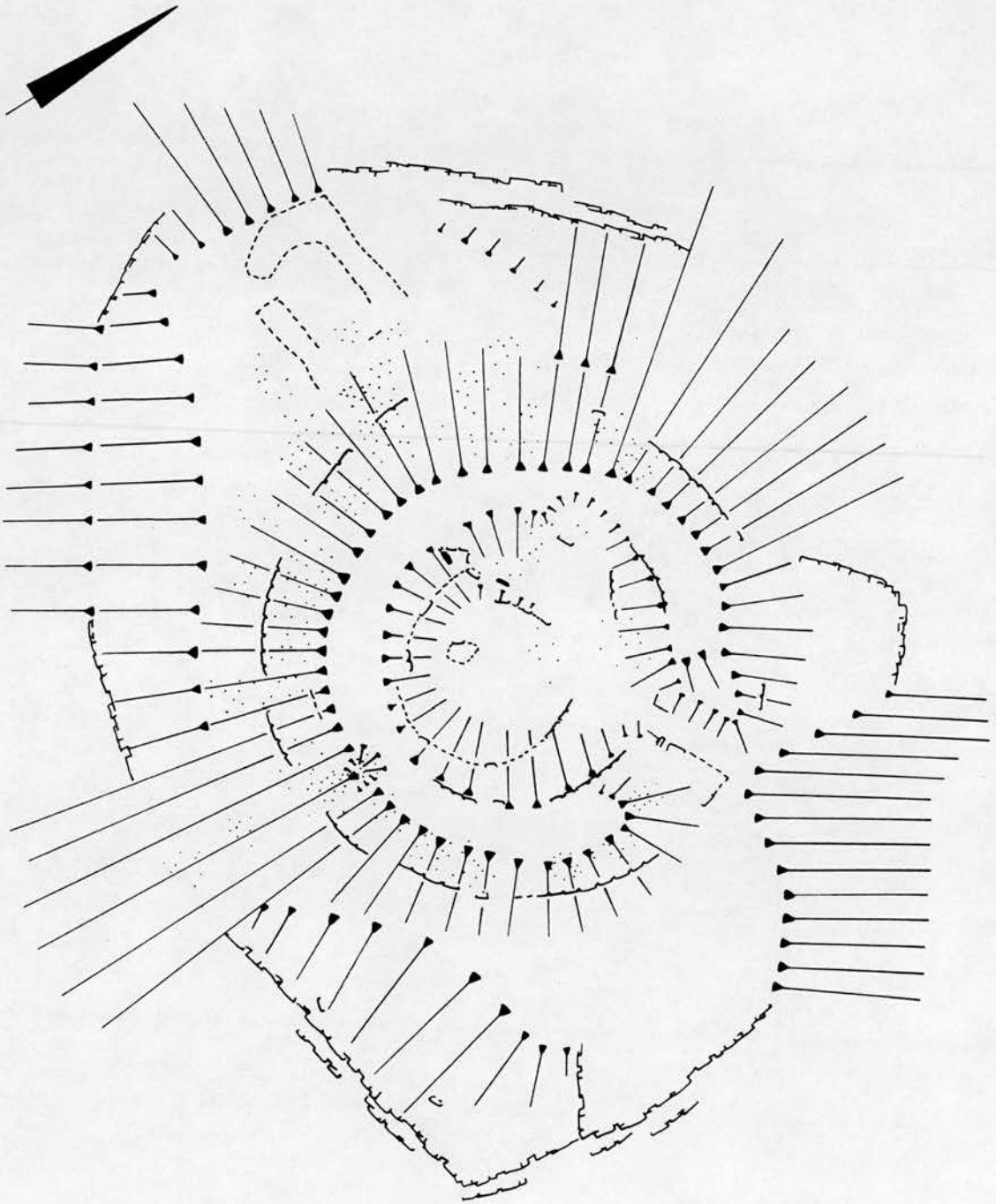
2 MacSween 1984-5, 45, no 24 and fig 24

This broch was named Abhuinn Bhaile Mheadonaich by the RCAHMS (1928) after a nearby burn, but perhaps it would be more appropriately named Dunalighlinn after the extensive ruined pre-clearance settlement, which lies to the N and E beneath the knoll on which the broch sits. The knoll is prominent and rocky, and the summit is at 45m OD. The broch has been heavily robbed, presumably for building stone for the settlement.

Despite the pillaging most of the outer face of the broch wall is traceable, one course high, and parts of the inner face are also visible on the N, E and SE arcs. The wall width varies from 3.35m in the SE to 3.7m at the entrance in the ENE. Most of the S wall of the entrance passage is traceable, although the foundation stones are turf covered at the outer end. About 0.7m from the S inner corner of the passage there is a single upright stone, which is probably the door check identified by the OS. The N side of the entrance passage is not clearly traceable, but is marked by the base of the slope down from the turf covered wall debris. No intramural features are visible in the remains of the wall, except for a possible trace of an inner wall of a gallery on the SW arc. There is a trace of a later structure within the broch interior.

The broch occupies the centre of the knoll with terraces to the W and E. The W terrace is occupied by the turf covered foundations of a later rectangular hut. The E terrace has two apparent isolated facing stones above the crags forming its S side. These may be the sole indicators of a possible enclosing wall around the edge of the knoll, associated with the broch.

Dunalighlinn
NG 309426



CS.WS 18.7.85

0 5m

Dun Arkaig

NG 3499 4261

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 34 SW 1

1 RCAHMS 1928, 143, no 480

2 MacSween 1984-5, 41-2, no 5 and fig 5

This broch is located at about 100m OD on the S side of Glen Ose, which was described by the RCAHMS (1928) as the second largest green glen in Skye. It is sited well inland at about 4.5km from the sea in the upper reaches of the valley. No other broch or other Iron Age site is recorded anywhere else in the valley, despite its reasonably fertile and sheltered nature. The broch occupies an elongated rocky ridge, one of the few rock outcrops in the upper part of the valley. It sits at the narrowest point of the ridge where the slopes are highest and most precipitous. It has been robbed for some large rectangular enclosures below the ridge to the NE and W, but nonetheless structural features are still visible.

Most of the circuit of the outer face of the broch wall is intact except on the N arc, where only isolated foundation stones are visible in the turf cover. On the other arcs the face varies from foundation level to 3-4 courses high with a slight batter. The inner face is largely hidden on the N arc of the broch, but can be detected in the debris in the S half of the interior. The internal diameter is about 9m. The wall is about 4m wide at the surviving top in the S, but seems to be narrower elsewhere. In the SE sector of the wall there is a cell or gallery with some corbelling still in place at its rounded end. Near its SW end the cell or gallery is about 1.5m wide, but it narrows to about 1m wide as it curves towards the N. The N end of the cell or gallery is ruined, but 3 lintels are in place over it about 2m S of the location of the broch entrance.

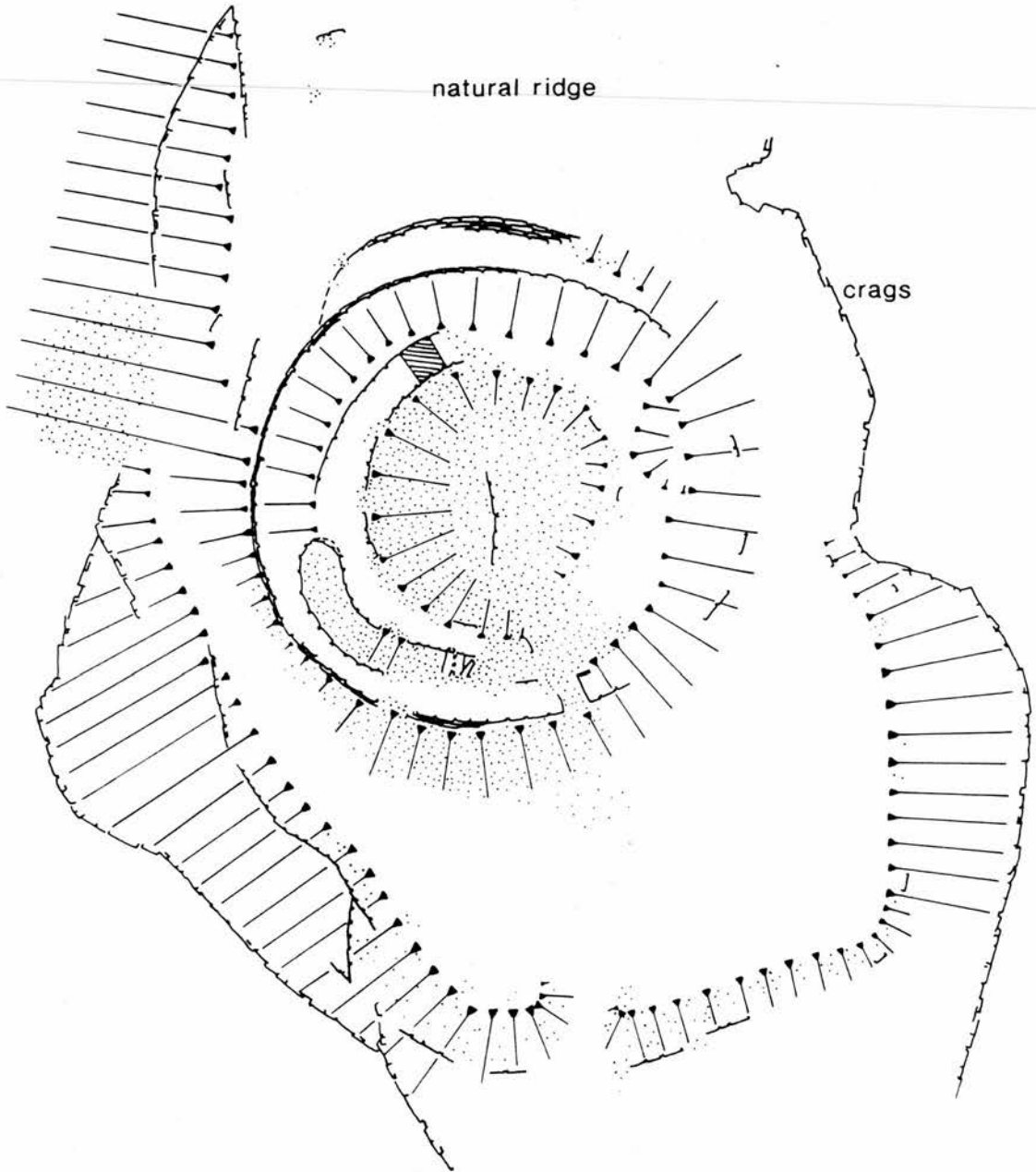
The entrance to the broch is in the NE, but is largely ruined. It is distinguishable at its outer end where it is 0.9m wide. There is an upright slab forming a door check on the N side of the passage at about 1m from the outside. No check can be detected on the S side of the passage, but close to where it should be, there is a length of inward facing revetment, which is probably the outer side of an entry

into the cell or gallery in the SE arc of the broch wall. The interior of the broch is full of rubble, below which the inner face is probably preserved about 1-2m high. Across the interior a length of face can be seen in the rubble, possibly indicating a later structure built within the interior.

Against the outer face of the broch wall in the W there is a platform described by the RCAHMS (1928) as a buttress. It is about 1.3m wide at the top, but it has a rapid batter on its outer face, 0.35m in 1m over 4 courses. The RCAHMS thought the masonry in this feature was not as good as in the broch. The courses have slipped slightly, but the style of building is very little dissimilar to that in the broch wall, consisting of very large blocks of stone. The purpose of this feature is not clear, as there is no apparent deviation, bulge or break in the visible broch wall, indicating the need for a buttress. The platform appears to have curved back to abut the broch wall on either side, but the joints are obscured by turf.

Outside the broch there has been an enclosing wall. It crosses the ridge about 11m outside the broch entrance. It appears as a stony slope, with lengths of outward facing revetment at foundation level at the base of the slope. Roughly in line with the broch entrance there is a break in the remains of the wall, presumably the site of an outer entrance. The OS recorded the trace of a wall between the broch entrance and the outer wall, but there is no sign of such a feature although there is some rubble in the area. The outer wall turns W on either side of the broch to edge the steep margins of the ridge. To the N there is no evidence that the outer wall continued past the broch. The crags are particularly high and sheer in this area, so that the wall may not have been considered necessary, or alternatively it has fallen over the steep edge. To the S of the broch the OS recorded that the outer wall joined the broch on its SE side. There is no evidence of this, and on the contrary the outer wall seems to continue along the edge of the ridge beyond the broch. A single length of face at foundation level and some rubble may indicate that the outer wall may have, at least partially, recrossed the ridge to the W of, or behind, the broch.

Dun Arkaig
NG 349426



CS.WS 25.9 85



IS 24

Dun Beag

NG 3395 3861

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 33 NW 3

1 Callander 1920-1, 110-31

2 RCAHMS 1928, 142-3, no 479

3 Young 1961-2, 188, no 43

4 MacSween 1984-5, 41, no 4 and fig 4

Excavated by the Countess Vincent Baillet de Latour in 1914, reported in Callander 1920-1. Finds donated to the National Museum

Dun Beag in the care of the Secretary of State for Scotland, is the best preserved broch in Skye. It was excavated in 1914, and its structural features have been exposed and consolidated. It sits on a small plateau at 70m OD, close to the crags which form the N and W sides of the plateau. There is no sign of an outer enclosing wall around the broch. A large rectangular stone pile to the S of the site is presumably a product of the excavation. The rubble cover downslope from the entrance to the E, would also appear to have been tipped there during excavation.

The outer face of the broch wall is intact on all but the E arc. To the N of the entrance the rubble core of the wall is exposed where the facing has fallen or been taken away. The surviving outer face varies in height from a single course at the N outer corner of the entrance passage, to as much as 4m on the extremely well preserved W arc above the crags. The face exhibits a batter of varying strength. In the NE it is particularly strong at about 1m in 3-4m. Elsewhere it is about 0.5m in 3-4m.

The entrance to the broch is in the ESE. There is a threshold slab in position at the outer end of the passage, and there are door rebates at 1.4m from the outer end. There are no openings off the passage into the wall width. The entrance gives access to an internal area 10.8m N/S by 10.5m. The interior is clear of any debris, but there is a large uneven rock outcrop in the interior, which would not have provided a good floor, unless it was substantially made up in places. The inner face of the broch wall is fully intact except for two small

areas of slump on the NE arc. The inner face stands about 1-1.5m high. Remnants of a possible scarcement seem to be indicated on the SW, S and E arcs. It is about 0.4m wide. The existence of a scarcement was not recorded by the RCAHMS (1928) or the OS. The RCAHMS thought it might have been at a higher level than the surviving height of the inner face. The existence and need for a scarcement to support a floor may be indicated by the uneven rocky nature of the natural floor within the broch. There is also an entry into the gallery in the NW arc of the wall, which is about 0.7m above the present floor level in the broch interior. This entry would appear to have been sited at the level of the apparent scarcement.

There are two entries from the interior into the broch wall at floor level. To the N of the broch entrance there is an entry varying from 0.5 to 0.65m in width with two lintels in place over it, leading into a round roofless cell. To the S of the broch entrance another entry varying from 0.7 to 0.85m in width leads into a stair which has a short chamber opposite its foot. Thirteen steps of the stair are still visible, although twenty steps were recorded by the RCAHMS (1928). The inner wall of the stair gallery continues around towards the W for a length of 3.2m. No lintels are in place over the stair gallery or the entrance to it, although there are some large stones lying near the foot of the stair. The small stairfoot chamber is partly roofed.

Within the W arc of the wall both sides of a gallery, varying in width from 0.5-0.7m, can be seen for a length of 14m. Entry to it seems to have been via a void or entry in the NW arc of the inner wall face at about 0.7m above present floor level. The built sides of the entry are not visible and its presence is indicated only by a grass covered gap in the inner part of the wall. The floor of the gallery is level along its visible length, at about 1m or less above the present floor in the broch interior. This gallery would not appear to have contained a continuation of the rising stair. The gallery appears to have continued to the round cell lying to the N of the broch entrance. An apparent short length of outward facing revetment, possibly part of the back wall of the gallery, terminates at the present wall top of the cell.

During excavation (Callander 1920-1) a rough wall was found crossing

the NE sector of the interior for a distance of 16 feet (4.9m), and was subsequently removed. Many layers of peat ash were found along with pottery, broken rotary querns, and food refuse in the form of animal bones and shells. There was also a regular network of drains at various levels and a slab pavement in the S part of the court bringing the floor up to the level of the top of the rock outcrop. It was thought that the rough wall and the drains were of very late date, and the greater bulk of the pottery and nearly all the other finds were made at the lowest level, some being found under the paving in the S part of the court.

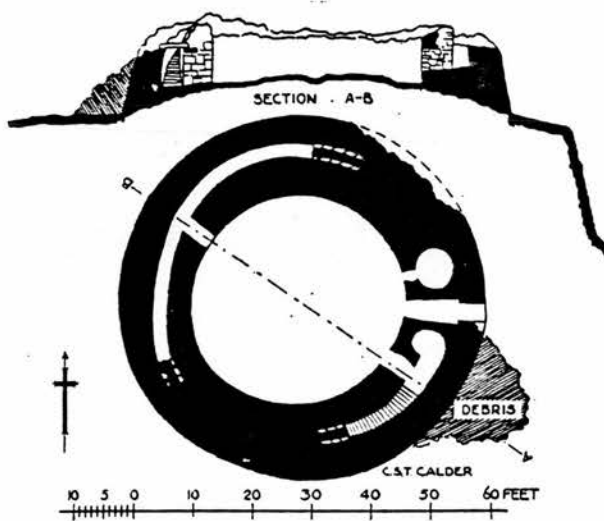
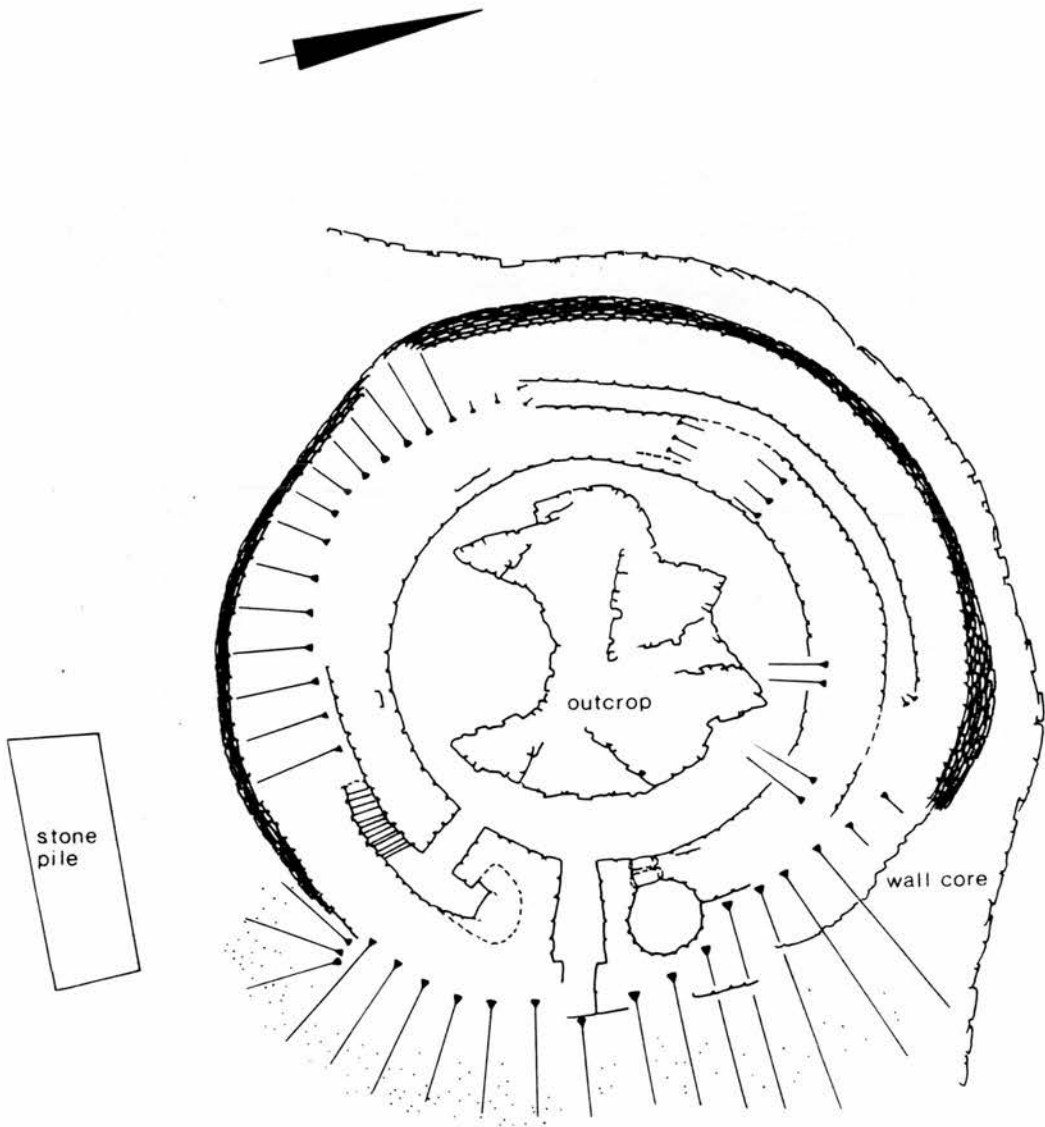


FIG. 201.—Dun Beag, Struanmore (No. 479).

Source: RCAHMS 1928, 142

Dun Beag
NG 339386



CS.WS 17.9.85

0 5m

Dun Garsin

NG 3609 3878

NMRS Class: Broch (remains of)

NMRS Card: NG 33 NE 1

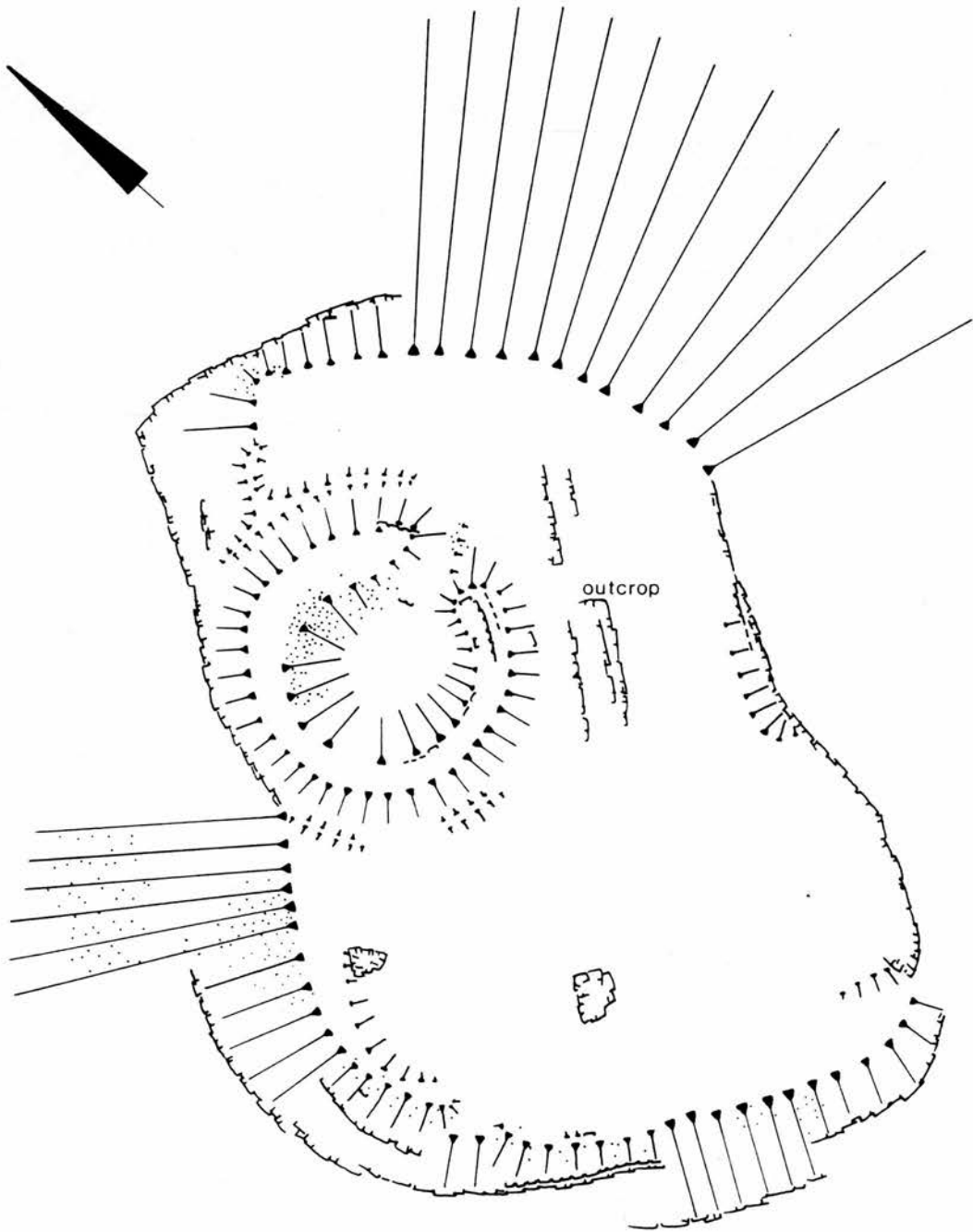
*1 RCAHMS 1928, 143, no 482**2 MacSween 1984-5, 41, no 3 and fig 3*

This structure, identified as a broch by the RCAHMS (1928) and in the NMRS, sits on the top of a very steep sided crag at about 50m OD above an arm of Loch Beag, a sea loch. The sides of the crag are particularly sheer to the N, E and S, and at no point is there an easy approach to the summit. The crag is roughly rectangular in shape, measuring 47m N/S by 33m. Its top is fairly level with occasional patches of rock outcrop. The perimeter of the summit has been edged with a stone wall which is now largely destroyed, traceable only as a stony bank with occasional visible facing stones. It is best preserved in the SW, where an 8.8m length of outer face can be seen right on the crag edge. A single inner facing slab also visible at this point demonstrates that the perimeter wall was 2.4m thick at base. It was presumably steeply battered on the crag edge to give stability.

Towards the N corner of the crag, built close to the edge, there is a circular structure now badly ruined. The RCAHMS (1928) recorded that stones from the structure were removed to build the revetment on the side of the road to Sligachan. The structure appears as a penannular grass covered stony bank, within which few structural features are visible. Occasional slabs of both an inward and an outward facing revetment can be traced, indicating a wall width of about 3.4m in the SE. Also on this arc a length of outward facing revetment, 3.7m long, appears to be part of the inner wall of an intramural gallery. The outer wall of the gallery is not visible, but a gallery width of 0.5m is indicated by a slight trench in front of the length of face. There is no clear structural indication of the location of the entrance, but the gap in the stony bank in the ENE probably marks its position.

The few structural indicators available seem to verify that this structure is a broch with a ground level gallery. The chronological relationship between the wall around the crag perimeter and the broch is unclear, but the wall appears to abut the broch in the N and possibly also in the SW, and may therefore be contemporary.

Dun Garsin
NG 360387



CS.WS 19.9.85

0 10m

Dun Diarmaid

NG 3545 3816

NMRS Class: Probable Broch

NMRS Card: NG 33 NE 2

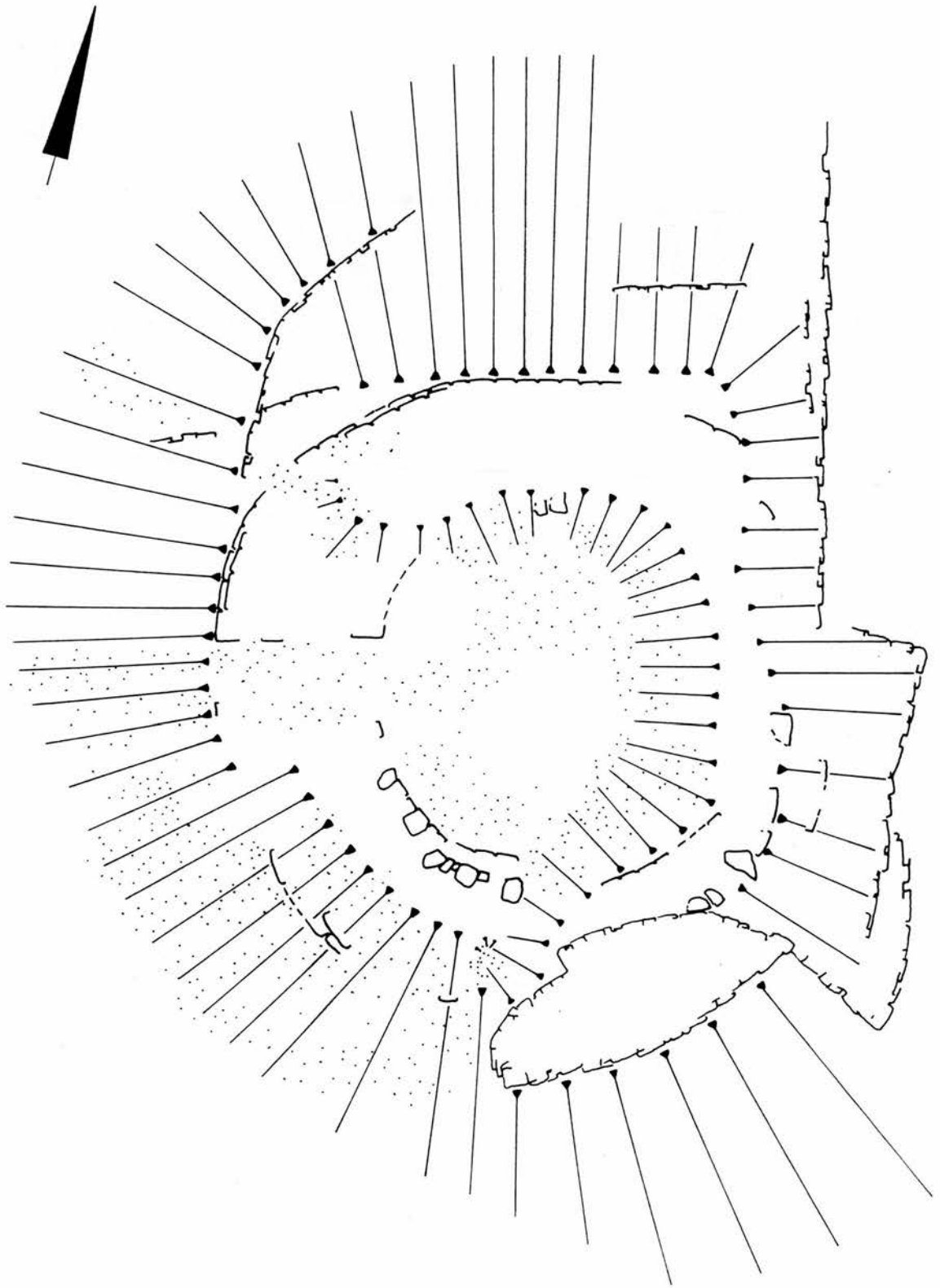
*1 RCAHMS 1928, 145, no 485**2 MacSween 1984-5, 44, no 23 and fig 23*

This structure, identified as a probable broch in the NMRS, but as a dun by the RCAHMS (1928), is located on an isolated rocky knoll on the shore of Loch Beag close to the road between Sligachan and Dunvegan. The knoll is naturally defended by crags and steep slopes on all sides. The easiest access onto the knoll top is from the W, where the entrance to the structure is located.

The structure is badly ruined, the stone probably having been extracted for a ruined house or enclosure below the knoll to the W, or for road building. The outer face of the wall is traceable in the N, W and S but only intermittently elsewhere. It survives two courses high, displaying a batter in the NW and W. The inner face is traceable on the W and S arcs. In the S there is evidence of a scarcement about 0.45m wide. The line of the inner face above the scarcement is continued on the SE arc. Where measurable below scarcement level the internal diameter is 8m N/S. The visible traces of inner face point to an oval internal area, with the E/W diameter being less than the N/S. The entrance is in the WSW, with the N wall of the passage largely traceable, and the S wall completely ruined.

The width of the wall at the entrance is 3.7m and in the S below scarcement level it is 3.6m. In the SE the wall is only 1.7m wide above scarcement level, giving a probable basal width of only about 2.2m. The line of the outer face on the SE arc seems to have cut inside a massive area of outcrop rock. In the E the outer face is set well back from the edge of sheer crags. The oval internal area, coupled with the variation in wall width, makes the identification of the structure as a broch very uncertain.

Dun Diarmaid
NG 354381



CS.WS 18.7.85

0 5m

Dun Ardtreck

NG 3350 3581

NMRS Class: Galleried Dun

NMRS Card: NG 33 NW 5

- 1 RCAHMS 1928, 144-5, no 484
- 2 MacKie 1965a
- 3 MacKie 1965b
- 4 MacKie 1969, Table 1
- 5 Robertson 1970, 205
- 6 MacSween 1984-5, 53, no 76 and fig 76

Excavated 1964-5 by EW MacKie, interim report of excavation in MacKie 1965b

This structure is normally identified as being a galleried dun (RCAHMS 1928; current NMRS class). MacKie however identified it as a semibroch (1965a) and undertook excavations at the site in 1964 and 1965. The results of the excavation have not been fully published, but there is an interim report (MacKie 1965b) from which the following description and the site plan are taken.

Dun Ardtreck stands on a rocky knoll at about 21m OD on the edge of a sheer sea cliff (see site plan drawn during the excavation at the end of the site description). There is local information that the cliff is subject to rock falls (Dr Roberts, Orbst Gallery, pers. comm.). The knoll is separated from the surrounding rocky moorland by a marshy depression on all three sides. The sides of the knoll are precipitous, and access is best achieved by means of a small cleft in the ESE. The margin of the knoll is topped by a wall, which is traceable in the SE and E but is not so clear on the N arc. There is an entrance through this outer wall in line with the easiest approach to the knoll top. MacKie thought that there was no reason to doubt that the outer wall and the main structure were contemporary, noting that both were founded on the thin old turf line which covered the rock surface of the knoll. The outer wall is 6ft (1.8m) thick and survives over 3ft (1m) high on its inner face, although this was hidden by later accumulations of rubble and debris. The entrance through the wall is 5ft (1.5m) wide, with parallel sides but no signs of door checks.

The main structure is built on rock which slopes down sharply from W to E, so that, while the wall near the cliff edge is reduced to one course of masonry, the present wallhead is horizontal and the outer face on the landward side consequently stands over 8ft (2.4m) high. The entrance passage which is located in the ENE, facing the land, slopes quite sharply outwards and downwards.

The wall of the structure was found to have been built in two stages. First a massive semicircular rubble platform was constructed, retained by a battered face of massive blocks. This platform merged with the rising rock surface to provide a level base for the structure. The lower part of the entrance passage was constructed through the rubble platform. Second a galleried wall was built on top of the platform, which nowhere survives more than 3ft (0.9m) high. There are two entries from the interior to the gallery, but no clear evidence of a stairway was found. To the NW of the entrance passage there is a roughly rectangular guard cell which does not connect with the gallery in the N arc of the wall.

The entrance to the structure has a sill stone at its outer end, the top of which is about 2ft (0.6m) above the ground surface. The area outside the entrance was found to be paved, the paving continuing through the entrance passage and into the interior to merge with the rising rock surface. The passage has two door rebates, faced with large slabs set edgewise into the walls, at just over 4ft (1.2m) from the outside, with a bar hole and socket immediately behind them. An iron ring and bar which had been subjected to intense heat was found on the entrance passage floor about 2ft (0.6m) behind the checks. MacKie suggested that this was the door handle from a wooden door, which had been destroyed by a fierce fire.

MacKie found evidence of three phases at the site, which he labelled as follows: Phase 1 - construction; Phase 2 - primary occupation; and Phase 3 - conversion to a dwelling. Charcoal samples were collected from low down in the rubble platform under the wall, and from these a radiocarbon date was obtained as follows: 55 ± 105 bc (GX-1120) (MacKie 1969). MacKie calibrated this date to 115 BC in calendar years, giving a date for the construction of the site sometime in the late second century/early first century BC. A negligible amount of occupation

debris seems to have been deposited in Phase 2 and MacKie suggested that the structure had been only sporadically occupied as a fort. The end of Phase 2 was marked by falls of masonry from the wall.

Phase 3 consisted of a thick deposit of fine earth containing ash spreads and many sherds and artefacts. MacKie noted that this deposit at the edge of the interior rested on the rubble platform and contained many large blocks of stone fallen from the wall. Nearer the centre of the interior the deposit was almost free of large stones and rested on rock. During Phase 3 a short flight of steps was inserted at the inner end of the entrance on top of the primary paving, to facilitate access onto the rising floor level in the interior. Similarly a massive ramp was built up to the outer end of the entrance on top of the primary paving outside the structure. Some Roman sherds of the Antonine period were found in the body of the ramp (Robertson 1970), dating Phase 3 to later than AD 142. The great majority of the finds are ascribed to Phase 3. They include a complete iron axe, iron fragments, a bronze chain, a large bronze ring-headed pin, a spiral bronze ring, fragments of rotary querns and of a probable saddle quern, a number of small ring beads of glass paste, and Roman finds of samian pottery and a piece of melon bead. Local pottery was also found, similar to that found at other Iron Age sites on the west coast.

The outer court was also investigated and was found to have become filled with rubble in Phase 3. There were sporadic signs of occupation in the form of ash spreads attributable to this late phase, but no artefacts were found. Traces of the foundation of one possible hut were located. There were no signs of post Iron Age levels.

It is clear from MacKie's excavation plan that not all of the interior of the main structure was investigated and that only a single trench was dug in the outer court. The excavation did not approach the cliff edge, which is hardly surprising on this dangerous site. Because the excavation stopped well back from the edge, there is some doubt that the W extremities of the wall do in fact recurve as shown on MacKie's plan. Such recurving is not particularly obvious at the site. It should also be borne in mind that the wall at the cliff edge is reduced to foundation level (one course of masonry). In view of these

facts, the local information of cliff falls, and the very regular appearance of the structure, there must be a strong possibility that Dun Ardtreck was once a full broch structure which has been cut by cliff falls. If it was in fact a full broch, it would have had an internal diameter of 12.8m, within the range for broch structures in Skye, and would have been second only in size to Dun Suladale (IS 10) which has an internal diameter of about 13m.

Dun Ard an t'Sabhail

NG 3180 3333

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 33 SW 1

*1 RCAHMS 1928, 141, no 478**2 MacSween 1984-5, 41, no 2 and fig 2*

This broch sits at the N end of a large high crag at about 160m OD with a splendid outlook all round. The broch fully occupies the narrow N end of the crag. It is badly ruined, appearing as a pile of stones on its S and E arcs. Elsewhere much of the stone has gone, either robbed out or tumbled downslope, and the ruins are grass and heather covered. The only free access to the broch is from the E where there is a large open area on the crag top. To reach this plateau however would necessitate scaling the precipitous E side of the crag. The only feasible approach to the site is from the SE.

The outer face of the broch wall is traceable on the W and E arcs. In the E it still stands 3-4 courses high, but elsewhere it is reduced to foundation level. In the NE much of the broch wall seems to have slipped down the steep natural slope on this side. The inner face of the broch wall is less well preserved than the outer face, but is traceable in the NW, SW and E. In the S there is a 3m length of revetment, which does not fully follow the expected line of the inner face. This feature appears to be modern rebuilding. The wall width is about 3.5m at the broch entrance in the ESE. The RCAHMS (1928) recorded a scarcement to the S of the entrance. The presence of a scarcement is indicated now only by a single slab close to the S inner corner of the entrance passage. The remainder of the scarcement seems to have been obscured by the modern rebuilding.

The entrance is badly ruined but is partly traceable. It is about 1.15m wide at its outer end, and 0.9m at its inner end. In the S wall of the passage, at about 1.45m from the outer end, an entry about 0.6m wide gives access to an oval cell, the wall of which is fully intact in the debris, preserved to about 1m in height. Opposite the entry to this cell there appears to have been another entry through the N wall of the broch entrance passage, giving access to a cell or gallery. The wall is very ruined at this point, but there is a 0.8m length of

outward facing revetment, which may be the back wall of a cell entry, or the back wall of a gallery. To the N of this short length of revetment on a different alignment and at a higher level, there is a 3.5m length of outward facing revetment with a modern cairn built close to its S end. This length of revetment is undoubtedly the inner wall of a gallery within the wall width. A further short length of the gallery inner wall is traceable around the curve of the broch wall towards the NW, close to another modern cairn. In the SW there appears to have been an entry into the wall width of which only the W side is now visible, surviving for a length of 1.3m. The internal area of the broch appears to have been about 11m NW/SE.

Outside the broch to the E and S there is walling. To the E the walling has served as gully blocking, presumably affording protection for the entrance on this side. A length of revetment parallel to the broch outer face in the E and 1.8m outside it, may indicate an entry through the gully blocking. To the S of the broch there are two partially enclosed areas, the second on a level below the first. The SW sides of the enclosures are formed by a common wall which seems to spring from the outer face of the broch on its SW arc, skirting the precipitous crag edge for a distance of about 25m. The SE wall of the first enclosure lies about 11.5m beyond the outer face of the broch wall, curving back towards the broch to form the E side of the enclosure. The enclosure wall is badly ruined on this side and there is no means of knowing how close to the broch it approached. A narrow sloping approach gully lies between the E side of the enclosure and a large rock outcrop. The SE wall of the second enclosure lies about 20m beyond the outer face of the broch wall. It also curves back towards the broch, leaving a sloping approach gully to the E of it. Both sides of the gully are walled, forming an entrance passage. The walling on the SE side of the passage terminates at a large rock outcrop.

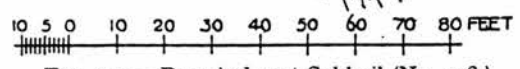
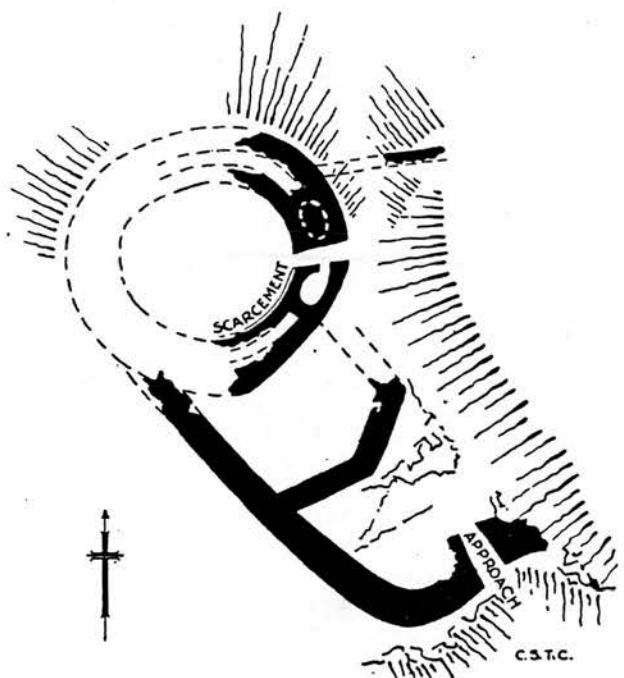
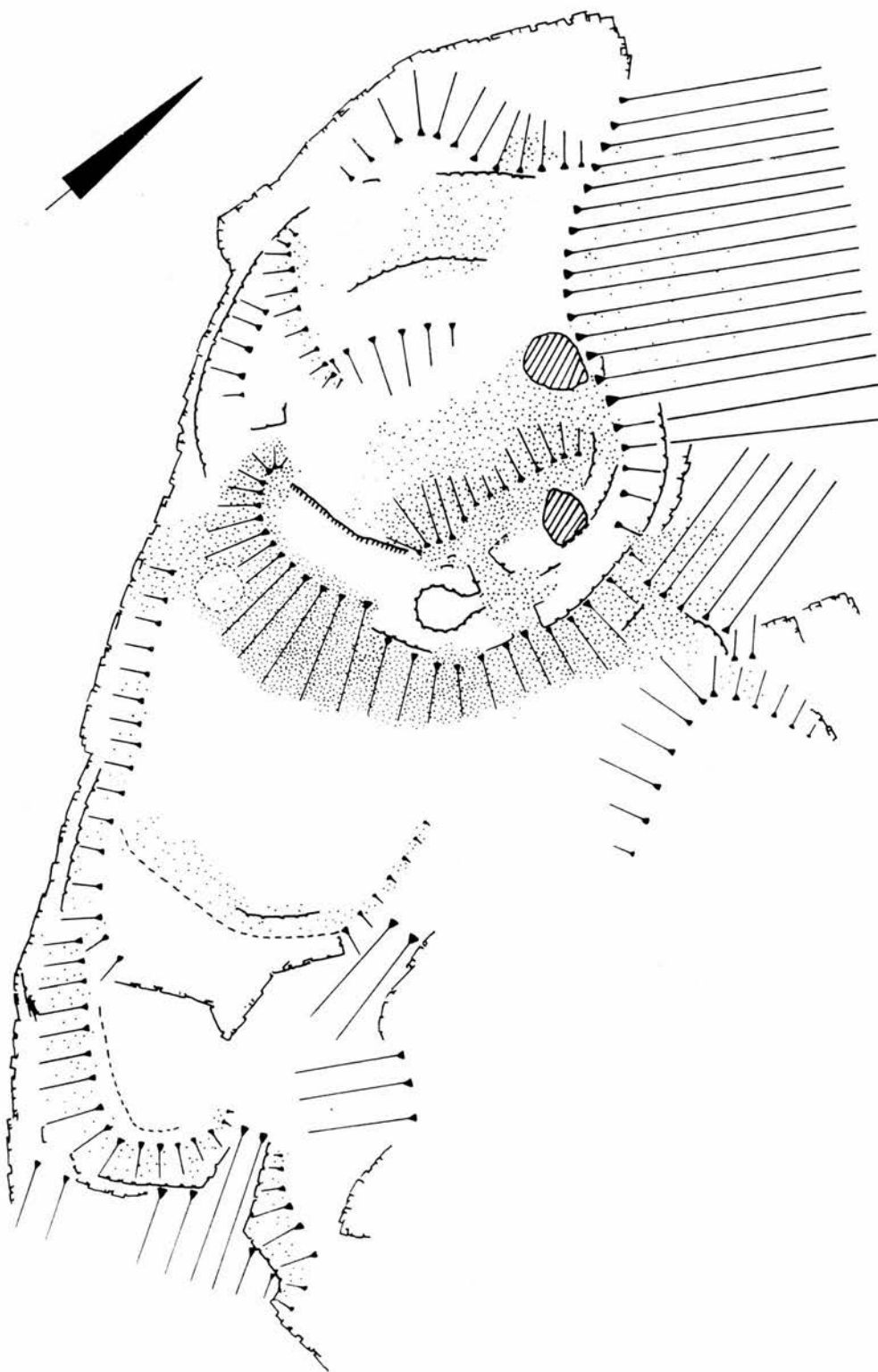


FIG. 200.—Dun Ard an t-Sabhail (No. 478.)

Source: RCAHMS 1928, 141

Dun Ard an t'Sabhail
NG 318333



CS.WS 19.9.85

0 5m

Dun Sleedale

NG 3238 2920

NMRS Class: Broch

NMRS Card: NG 32 NW 1

*1 RCAHMS 1928, 140-1, no 477**2 MacSween 1984-5, 41, no 1 and fig 1*

This broch, which is located at 160m OD on a rocky knoll on the W side of the Sleedale Burn, is well preserved. The interior of the broch has been used for the construction of sheilings, which are also visible below the knoll to the W and E. In terms of later land use, the broch is located in an area of summer pasture, and is well above the cultivated area, which would have lain further down the Sleedale Burn close to where its valley joins Gleann Oraid.

The wall of the broch can be traced around most of the circumference. The outer face is best preserved on the E arc at the entrance, and on the NW arc where a distinct batter is visible, the face surviving 5-6 courses and over 1.5m high. In the NNE and SW the outer face has tumbled down the steep slopes of the knoll. The inner face of the wall is traceable for much of the circuit except in the SW and NE, where it is obscured by tumble and the large canopy of an elder tree growing in the NE quadrant of the interior. Where the inner face is traceable in the NNE, it is collapsing outwards at the point where the outer face and the wall core have fallen away. Hence it no longer follows the expected line of the inner face. On the W arc a scarcement is visible on either side of an entry into the wall. It is about 0.25-0.3m wide. The wall width varies below scarcement level from 3.8m at the entrance in the E to 3.3m in the W. In the NW the wall measures only about 2.8m wide at base and 2.3m at its surviving top, which is above scarcement level. The internal area measures about 12.2m in diameter N/S by 11.5m.

The entrance to the broch is in the E. It is 0.8m wide at its outer end, widening to 1.2m at about 1.3m from the outside. A distinct door rebate is visible on the N side of the passage, but there is only a slight accompanying deviation in the wall face on the S side. There is no evidence that the passage walls curve after the door checks as described by the RCAHMS (1928). Two lintels are in place over the inner end of the entrance, which is otherwise obscured by tumble in the broch interior. It is possible that the passage may curve inwards

slightly under the lintels, but this is not visible.

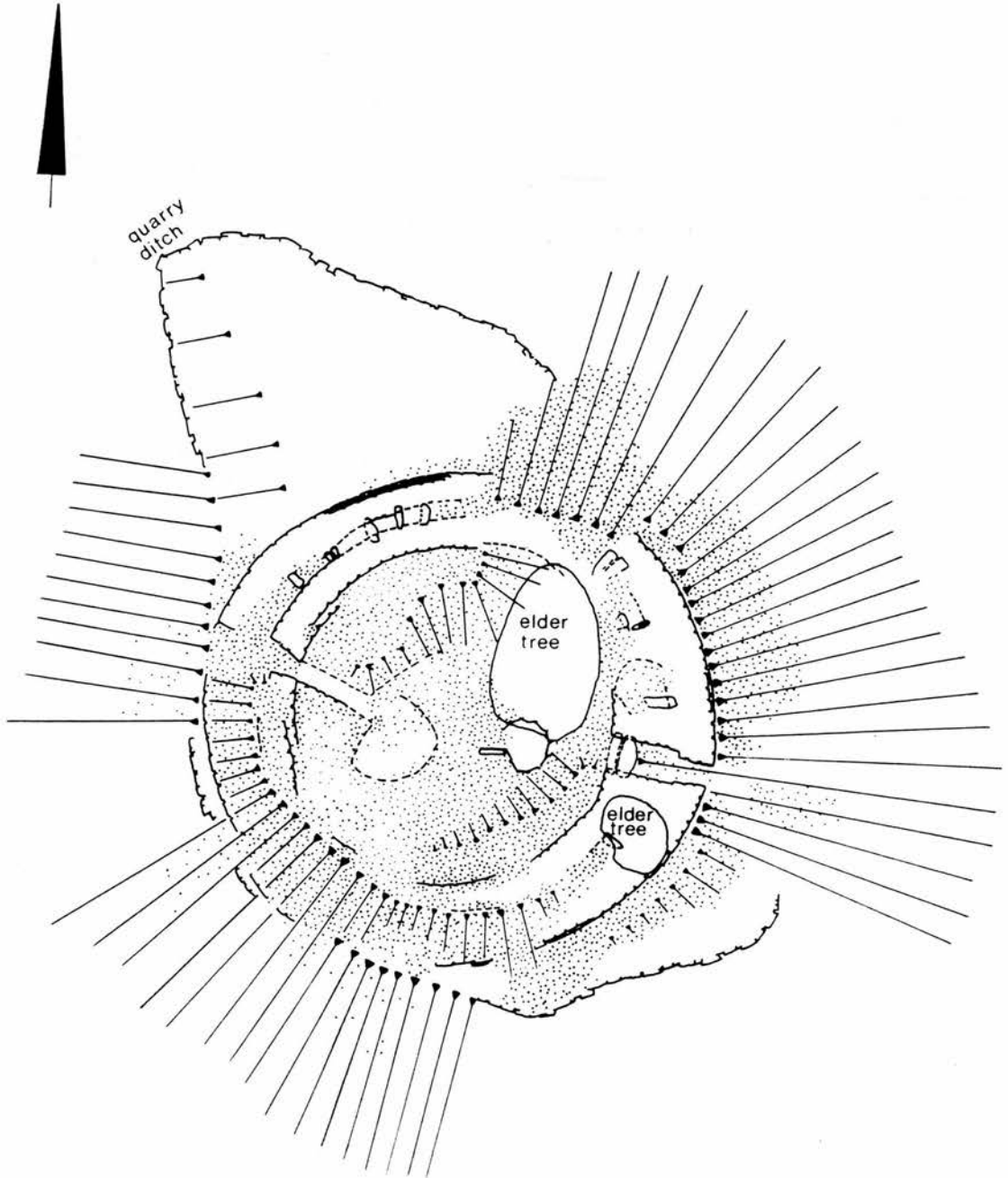
There is evidence of a gallery within the wall width around most of the N half of the structure. It is largely visible only as a collapsed linear hollow with occasional lintels and lengths of face visible. Its width seems to vary from 0.3m in the NW to 0.6m in the NE. There is evidence of two entries to the gallery from the broch interior, one in the W roughly opposite the entrance, the other in the NE. The W entry is more easily identifiable, leading into the gallery running around the N arc of the wall, and also into an apparent continuation of the gallery around the SW arc, of which only a vague trace of the inner wall face is visible. The NE entry into the gallery is obscured by debris, and only the end where it meets the gallery is traceable, with a lintel in place over it. The end of the gallery in the E is not visible, but there is a lintel in place about 1.3m N of the entrance passage. It is possible that there are two tiers of galleries in the NW arc of the wall where it also stands the highest, but it is difficult to be certain of this because of collapse.

There are clear indications that a gallery continued around the S half of the broch wall. There are vague traces in the tumble of the wall core in the WSW and SE, with a fairly clear trace in the ESE, to the S of the entrance passage. The feature is partly obscured at this point by an elder tree which appears to be rooted in the gallery space. An in-situ lintel is visible under the tree, with the inner wall face of the gallery just visible running beneath it to the SW.

Within the broch interior there are two sheilings. The sheiling in the E half of the broch just inside the broch entrance, is well built. The other in the W half is vaguer, but had an entrance to it, formed by an extension into the interior of the W entry into the intramural gallery. Access to the outside was achieved over the broch wall, which is reduced to foundation level at this point.

The broch is built close to the steep craggy slopes of the knoll on the W, S and E. To the NW of the broch there is a small terrace with natural precipitous crags forming its NE and W sides. At its NW extremity there are also crags, but these have been formed by the excavation of a quarry across the NW/SE trending ridge, isolating the knoll on which the broch sits. The quarry ditch may have been intended to provide some extra defence on the NW approach.

Dun Sleedale
NG 323292



CS.WS 15.7.85

0 5m

Dun Ringill

NG 5619 1708

NMRS Class: Galleried Dun

NMRS Card: NG 51 NE 4

- 1 RCAHMS 1928, 208-10, no 650
- 2 Young 1961-2, 192, no 44
- 3 MacKie 1965a
- 4 MacSween 1984-5, 47, no 38 and fig 38

This site, classed as a galleried dun by the RCAHMS (1928) and in the NMRS, and as a semibroch by MacKie (1965a), sits on the edge of a small rocky promontory overlooking Loch Slapin from the W. The structure is well preserved. The strongly battered outer face of the wall on the W, and possibly also the entrance passage, appear to have been revealed by excavation at some time. The structure forms a rough C-shape against the cliff edge, and it is clear that there is a natural slope within the interior from the cliff in the E down towards the W.

The site is multi-period, the different phases of use being revealed to some extent in the structure. The earliest phase appears to have been a thick walled structure, described as broch-like by the RCAHMS. At the entrance to this structure in the NW, the wall is 4.8m wide. The entrance passage is fully extant, 1.25m wide at its outer end, checked for a door at 1.35m from the outside. The bar holes are fully preserved, 0.25m deep on the SW side of the passage, 1.5m deep on the NE. Within the checks the passage walls curve, widening the passage to 1.65m, before narrowing again to 1.25m at the inner end of the passage. There are no lintels in place over this original part of the entrance.

The entrance has been extended inwards for about another 4m, curving towards the E. The extension seems to have taken place in phases, as straight joints are evident in the extended passage walls to either side. The RCAHMS recorded a flight of steps at the end of the passage extension, leading up to a higher level in the interior, but steps are no longer visible. Four lintels are in place over the first part of the passage extension. These support a substantial block of walling, which appears as two levels or steps when viewed from the site's interior. The lower level exhibits mortar between the stones, indicating a medieval or later origin.

Within the wall of the original structure above the presumed level of the passage lintels, there has been an upper level gallery, of which the inner wall face is preserved along the W arc. The line of the outer wall face of the gallery is probably marked by a distinct break of slope lying parallel to the inner wall face, giving a gallery width of about 0.9m. In the N arc of the structure there is an entry to this upper level gallery, giving access to a stair, of which four steps are preserved, rising from E to W.

Within the wall of the original structure in the S there is an elongated, curving cell which is well preserved on its inner or N side, but which has largely fallen over the cliff on its outer or S side, with only a small part of its back wall preserved towards its SE extremity. There is a considerable corbelled overhang on the preserved inner side, which stands about 3m high. The roof of the cell must have risen through the level of the upper gallery to some extent. There appears to be an entry into the cell towards its SE end. It is 1m wide and is at the level of the upper gallery. As the ground in the interior of the original structure appears to slope up towards the E, the entry may not however have been much above the floor level of the internal area. It is possible nonetheless, that there may be another lower level entry below the visible one, hidden in the tumble obscuring the SE end of the cell. Alternatively if there was access into the cell at this point, there may have been steps leading down to its floor from the high level entry.

The outer face of the wall of the original structure is revealed in an excavation trench on the SW arc. It is strongly battered and stands between 1.5 and 2m high. The outer face is also visible to the NE of the entrance passage, and for a short length near the cliff edge in the S. The inner face of the wall is visible on the N, SW and S arcs, but at a high level only, as the interior of the structure is choked with rubble. The revealed inner face on the N arc is set back about 0.4m from the expected line of the inner face as indicated by the position of the NE inner corner of the entrance passage, indicating the presence of a scarcement otherwise hidden beneath the debris. A part scarcement may have been required to provide a level floor within the naturally sloping interior (as at Druim an Duin, Argyll NR 781

912).

The former shape and size of the original structure is difficult to ascertain. The internal area is about 12m in diameter N/S above scarpment level. No evidence was found during survey to support the view put forward by the RCAHMS, that a slight wall had edged the cliff on the E, completing the structure. The revealed faces of the wall of the structure outline a regular curve, which only begins to deviate on the S arc, close to where the wall approaches the cliff edge. To the S, below the knoll on which the structure sits, in a gully created by the sea, there is a pile of rubble from the wall where it has collapsed outwards. It is possible that a slight wall has also fallen over on the E arc, perhaps aided by undermining of the cliff. It is equally possible that a more substantial wall has been eroded away on the E arc, and that the structure may originally have been a regular pear or egg shape, as at Dun Borodale on Raasay (NG 555 364). There seems to be no means from field survey of estimating the original configuration of the E arc of the structure.

Within the site later buildings have clearly been constructed. The pattern of these is difficult to trace, especially as the site was overgrown with nettles and bracken at the time of survey. The remains of a building outside the original structure to the W, may be associated with the buildings within the interior. The inner wall face of the original structure is clearly preserved to a considerable height by the depth of later debris blocking the interior. A substantial multi-period stratigraphy is likely to be preserved within the structure.

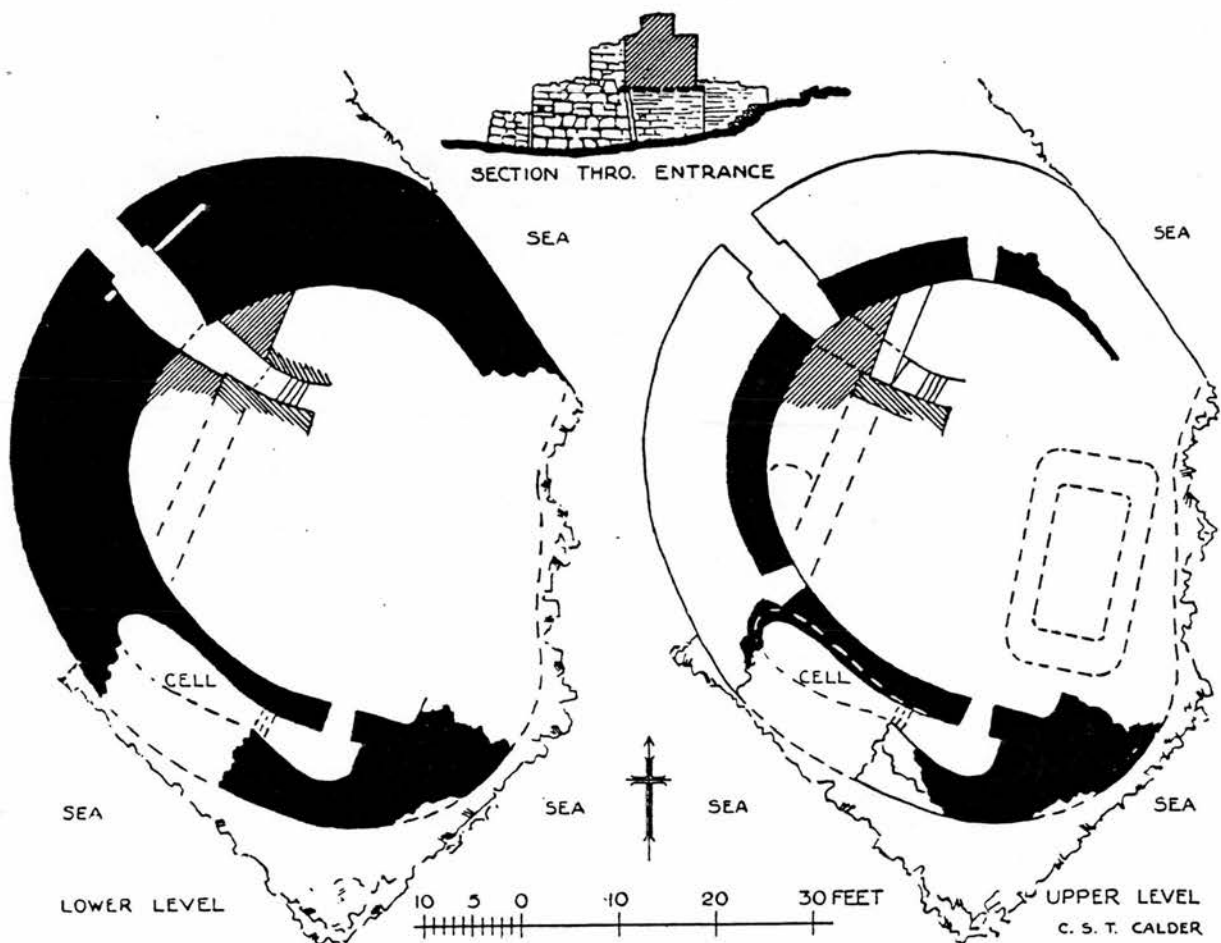
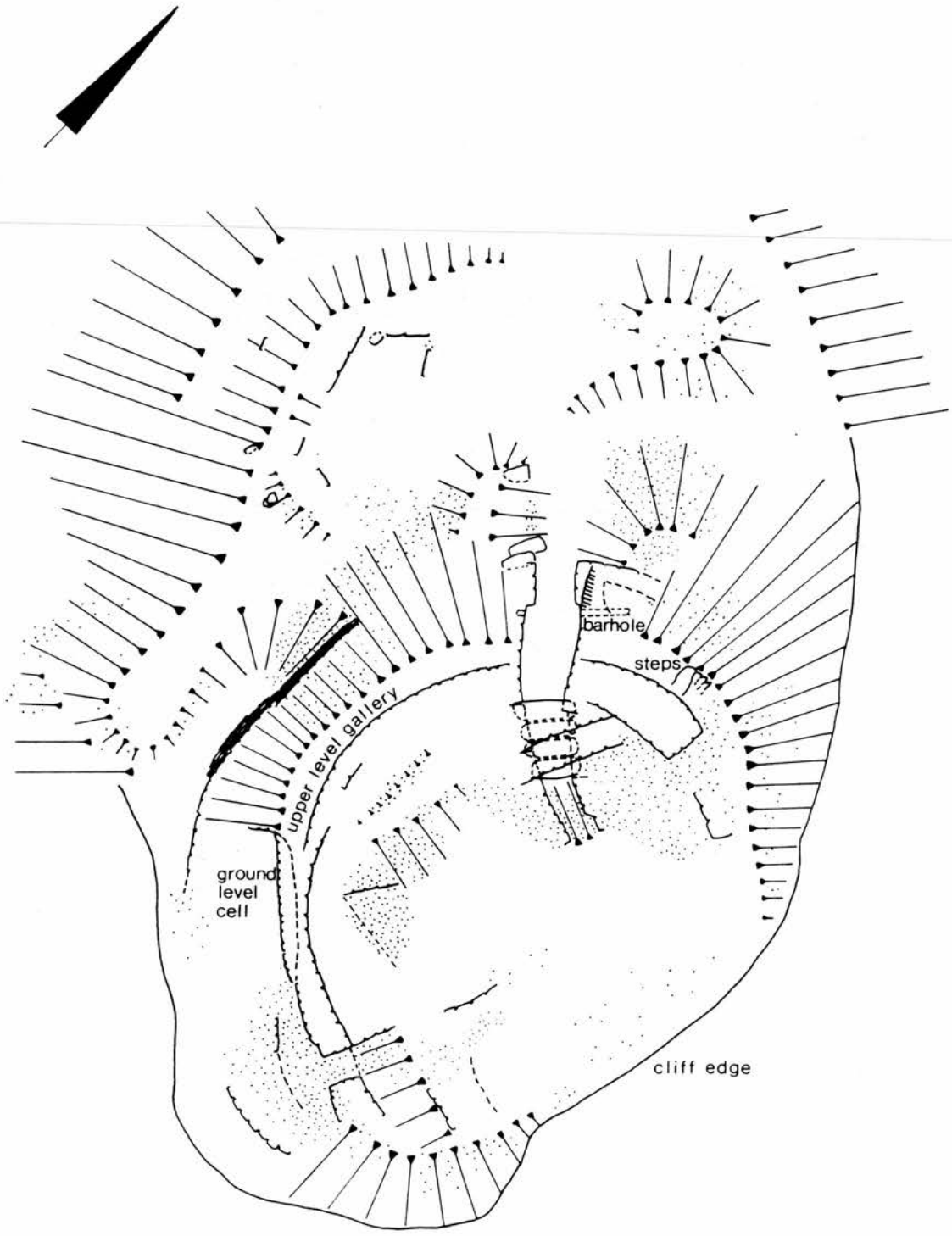


FIG. 293—Dun Ringill (No. 650).

Source: RCAHMS 1928, 209

Dun Ringill
NG 561170



CS WS 14.7.85

0 5m

Dun Liath

NG 5433 1427

NMRS Class: Broch (remains of)

NMRS Card: NG 51 SW 2

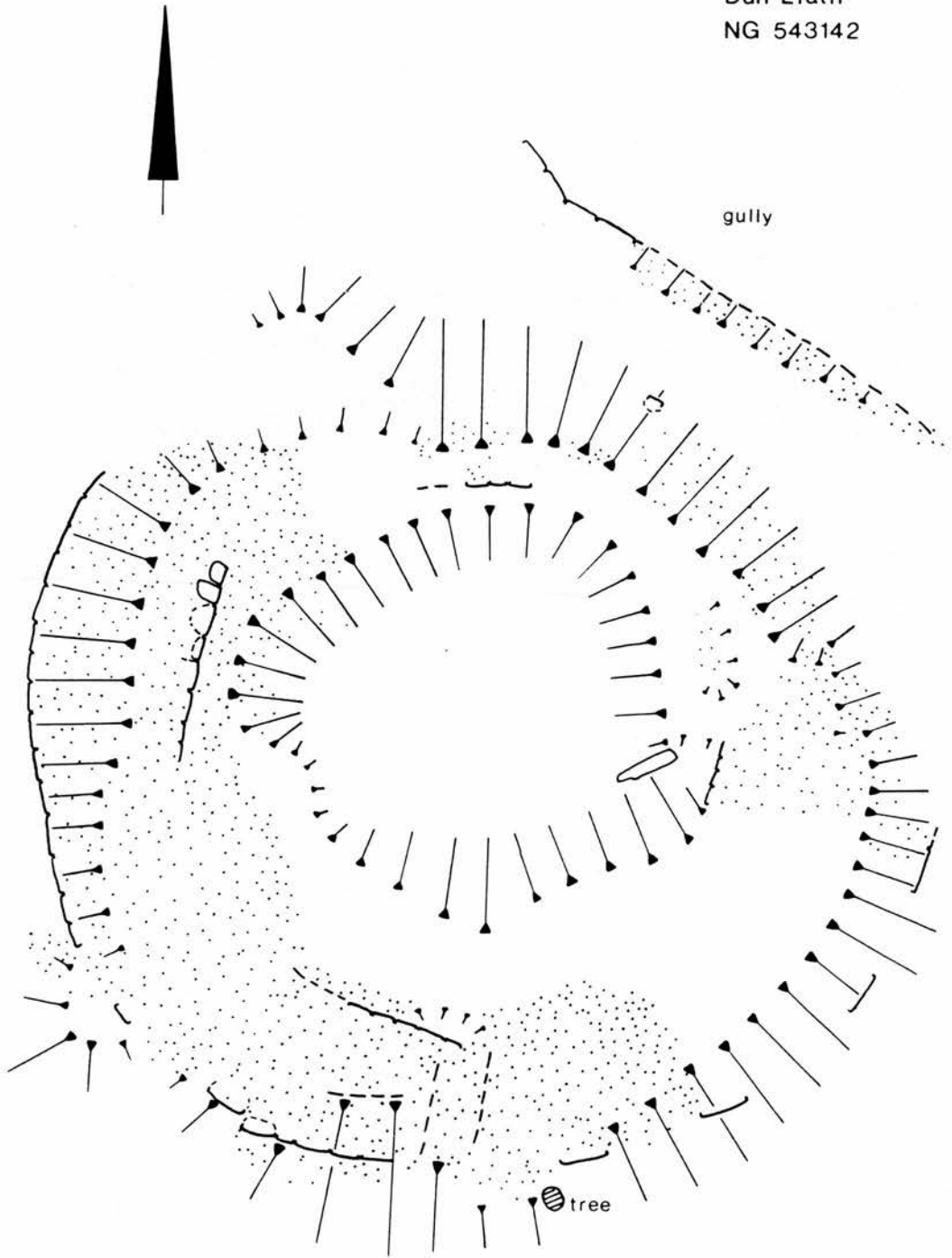
*1 RCAHMS 1928, 211, no 655**2 MacSween 1984-5, 44, no 22 and fig 22*

This structure appears as a ring of loose stones set near the edge of a flat terrace at 60m OD on the E coast of the Strathaird peninsula about 2.1km NE of Dun Grugaig. The site is overlooked from the N. The structure is badly ruined, but a number of lengths of inner and outer facing are recognisable. The outer face of the wall is best preserved on the W and S arcs, where it survives as grounders and also up to 3 courses high. The grounders do not form an even arc, but make a distinct bulge in the W.

An inward facing revetment is traceable as short lengths in the N, E, S and W. If these lengths of face all belong to the inner face of the wall of the structure, then an irregular internal area has been enclosed by an irregular wall width. A wall width of 4.7m is indicated on the E arc, and only 3-3.6m on the W arc. No entrance to the structure is visible, but a slight depression in the tumble in the S of the site may be indicative of its presence at this point. Outside the structure there is a massively built wall to the NE, edging a gully. This appears to be a late field wall related to others in the vicinity of the structure.

It is not clear that this structure is in fact a badly ruined broch. Its overall diameter is about 19.3m NW/SE, and the outline has a vague circularity, but the lengths of inward facing revetment in the interior do not form a regular outline. It is possible that the lengths of inner face may not all be contemporary. The structure is too badly ruined for its identification to be confirmed by survey alone.

Dun Liath
NG 543142



CS.WS 13.7.85

0 5m

Dun Grugaig

NG 5354 1229

NMRS Class: Galleried Dun

NMRS Card: NG 51 SW 1

1 RCAHMS 1928, 210-1, no 651

2 Young 1961-2, 192, no 45

3 MacKie 1965a

4 MacSween 1984-5, 50, no 59 and fig 59

This structure, identified as a semibroch by MacKie (1965a) and as a galleried dun by the RCAHMS (1928) and in the NMRS, occupies a long, narrow coastal promontory on the E coast of the Strathaird peninsula. The site is approached from higher ground to the W down a steep slope cut by gullies.

The structure appears as a length of walling across the promontory, standing 6 courses high, and extending from edge to edge. Because of the danger posed by the high cliffs forming the promontory margins, it is impossible to ascertain whether the outer face of the wall turns along each margin, or has fallen away as a result of erosion. The RCAHMS (1928) identified an outer face extending along each margin, and also recrossing the promontory to complete the enclosure. Because of a very dense bracken cover at the time of survey, little trace of marginal walls, and no trace of the rear wall of the structure was found.

The substantial cross-promontory wall is pierced by an entrance slightly off-centre towards the NW. There is a strong batter to the outer face of the wall, which is crowned by a roughly triangular lintel over the outer end of the entrance passage. There are in addition six other lintels over the passage, the third one from the outside showing a large crack. The passage is 4.6m long, 0.9m wide at its outer end, and 1.15m at its inner end. There are rebates for a door at 1.3m from the outer end. There is a bar hole, 0.7m deep on the NE side of the passage, with a corresponding but large opening in the SW side, which has a loose stone set into it. Some stones may have been pulled out of the SW bar hole, although the RCAHMS did record it as a long, narrow slot widening at the passage wall. There has clearly been a void above the lintels at the inner end of the entrance

passage, the S side of which is still in position. The void appears to have given access to an upper level gallery about 1.3m wide, both wall faces of which can be traced to the S of the entrance passage for about 2.5m. A large lintel stone is recumbent, partly on the gallery floor, partly on the lintels over the entrance passage. It may be the lintel missing from the outer end of the passage above the door checks. Similarly a large lintel lying in the interior of the structure just inside the entrance, may be the lintel missing from the inner end of the passage.

The inner face of the wall is traceable on either side of the entrance passage for about 4m. Immediately E of the passage there is an entry into the wall width, which varies from 0.8m at its outer end to 0.6m at its inner end. The entry appears to lead to stairs, two steps of which are visible, trending eccentrically to the line of the entry.

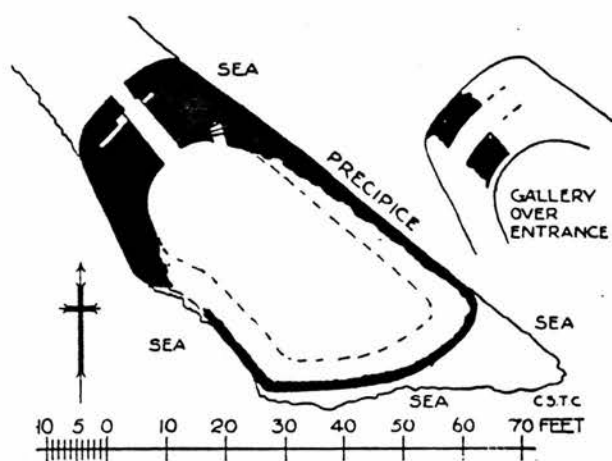
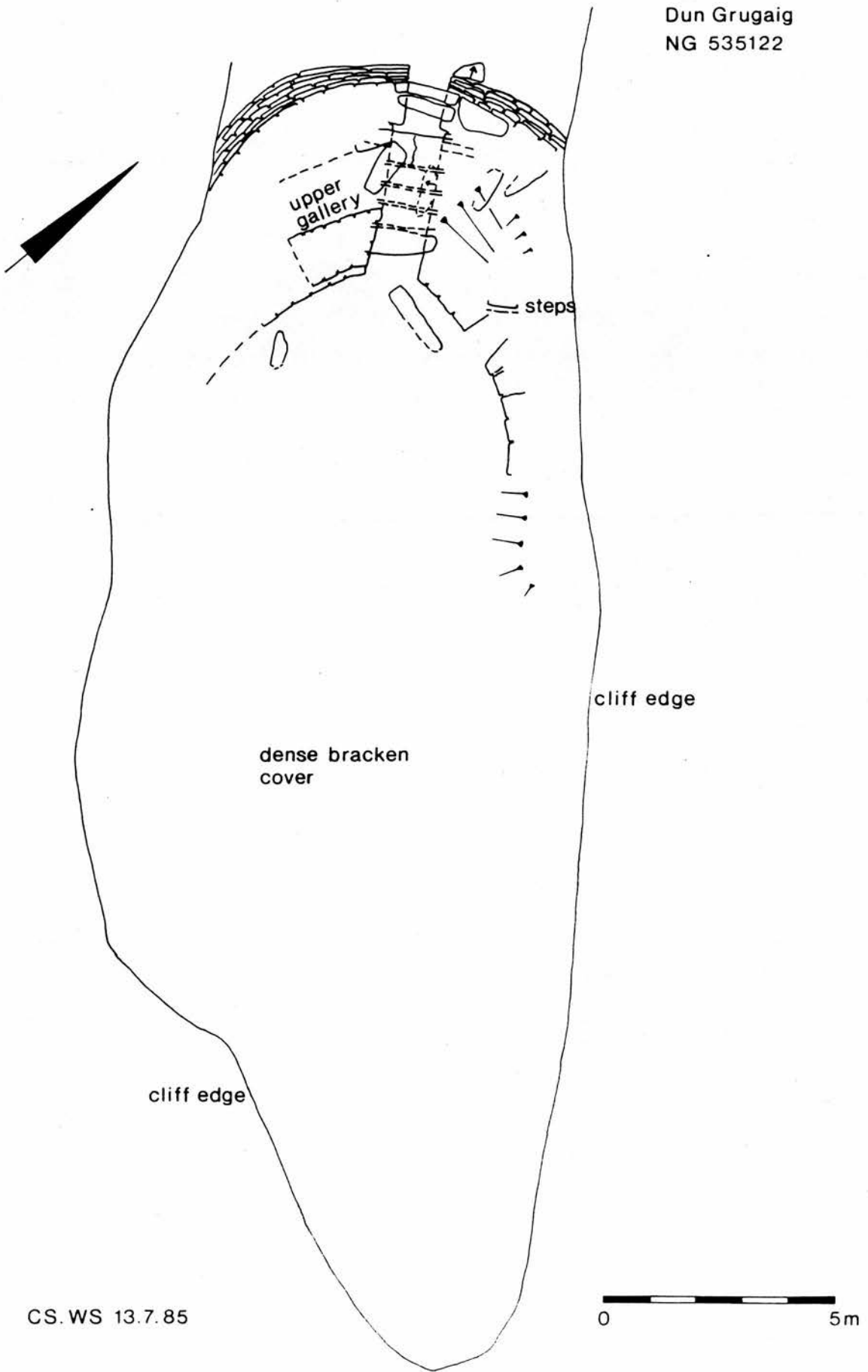


FIG. 294—Dun Grugaig (No. 651).

Source: RCAHMS 1928, 210

Dun Grugaig
NG 535122



CS. WS 13.7.85