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**Report on  
Archaeological Survey at  
Scord Quarry, East Voe,  
Scalloway, Shetland**

**October 2005**



STRUCTURE  
DEPARTMENT  
24 OCT 2005

**Prepared by**

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Graeme Wilson**

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**Commissioned and funded by**

**Shetland Islands Council**



**EASE Archaeology**

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**Scord Quarry, Shetland**

Plan showing features of archaeological interest

Scale 1: 1250

Base map derived from SIC original

# **Report on Archaeological Survey at Proposed Extension to Scord Quarry, East Voe, Scalloway**

## **1.0 Summary**

**1.1** An archaeological survey was conducted in response to a proposal to extend Scord Quarry, Scalloway. Five features of interest were identified and a programme of assessment via trial trenching has been recommended.

## **2.0 Introduction**

**2.1** Shetland Islands Council (SIC) propose to extend Scord Quarry at East Voe, Scalloway (central grid reference: HU 41297 40042). The preferred option is to extend operations into an area to the south east of the existing quarry (see attached plan).

**2.2** It is further proposed that, when the new quarry is eventually worked out, the A970 Lerwick-Scalloway main road should be re-routed through the area to eliminate a hairpin bend (see attached plan).

**2.3** Shetland Amenity Trust, Archaeology Section have recommended that a programme of archaeological assessment, comprising of a desk-based study and a walkover and instrument survey be conducted prior to development. The purpose of this work is to determine the nature, extent and location of any archaeological remains which may survive within this area.

**2.4** EASE Archaeology were commissioned by SIC to undertake the archaeological work.

**2.5** This report documents the findings at all stages of the work and provides recommendations for mitigation.

## **3.0 Archaeological Background**

**3.1** A desk-based study was undertaken to collate information on all previously recorded archaeological remains within and surrounding the proposed extension area. Sources interrogated include the National Monuments Record (NMRS), held by The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and their web-based databases, Canmore and Canmap. The documentary search included Discovery and Excavation and the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. References are provided within the text. Where they are known, corresponding references for sites from the local Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) have also been provided.

**3.2** One archaeological site has been previously documented *within* the proposed extension area. This site, at Wind Hamars, Outnabreck Hill, comprised of a ruinous prehistoric burial

cairn. It is sited at HU 4142 4003; the National Monuments Record reference is HU44SW50. It was excavated in 1990 (Hamilton, 1991). The cairn stood at the south end of a flat ridge at a height of some 120m OD. It is thought to have been disturbed and robbed of stone in antiquity and had been further damaged by two modern quarry access roads. While it did not, therefore, survive in a complete state, work revealed that it contained a central cist and had possibly originally been heel-shaped in plan. A small number of artefacts, including a pot sherd and a stone bead were recovered from the cairn material, but no human remains were present. Prior to excavation, much of the cairn had been covered with peat. At the close of excavations, a survey was conducted of the strip of land lying behind the quarry face, but no further archaeological remains were noted (Hamilton, 1990).

**3.3** A number of archaeological sites are recorded *outwith but in the vicinity of* the proposed extension area. These include:

- A burnt mound at Utnabrake (Scord Junction), thought to be of prehistoric date lies at HU 4090 4017. This is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Historic Scotland Index 6291, NMRS: HU44SW9). Note: the local Sites and Monument record notes two burnt mounds in this vicinity (SMR 889 & 5843).
- A horizontal or click mill was previously noted on the OS 6-inch map, Shetland, 1st ed. (1881), sheet lvi at HU 4083 4000. No trace of it now survives. (NMRS: HU44SW24).
- A lime kiln has been recorded at HU 4100 4057. (NMRS: HU44SW22).
- A multi-period settlement site at Upper Scalloway, including an Iron Age broch and medieval burials, was excavated at HU 406 399. (NMRS: HU43NW32).
- The site of a possible farmstead and enclosure has been identified at Blydoit (HU 4103 3956) from the OS 6-inch map, Shetland, 1st ed. (1881), sheet lvi. (NMRS: HU43NW42).
- The site of a possible farmstead has been identified at Scord of Scalloway (HU 4103 3956) from the OS 6-inch map, Shetland, 1st ed. (1881), sheet lvi. (NMRS: HU43NW41).

## **4.0 Survey: Methodology**

**4.1** The fieldwork was carried out on 7th- 8th October 2005 by a team of two archaeologists.

**4.2** The fieldwork consisted of two stages of work: (i) a walk-over survey, (ii) an instrument survey.

**4.3** The survey area extended beyond the boundary of the proposed extension on the north east and south sides. The survey area is shown on the accompanying plan.

**4.4.1** The walk-over survey consisted of methodically walking over the entire surface of the proposed extension area to search for features or traces of an archaeological nature.

**4.4.2** The factors affecting site visibility in the area are soil/peat cover and dense vegetation (heath) Much of the ground within this area is sloping.

**4.4.3** On the upper slopes, the soil and peat cover is relatively shallow and thus it is likely that any archaeological remains which are present will be visible as topographical features.

**4.4.4** On the lower slopes and more level ground at the base of the hill, the soil and peat cover increases and may obscure archaeological remains.

**4.4.5** Where features of interest were noted, a grid reference was taken using a hand-held Global Positioning System. In most cases, this provided a level of accuracy to within 5m. A written description of each feature and a photographic record were also made.

**4.5.1** An instrument survey was conducted using a TopCon GTS 212 EDM. The survey recorded the locations of all features of interest which had been noted during the walk-over survey, together with boundary fences and built features.

**4.5.2** The survey data was digitised and integrated with the map-based data provided by SIC to produce an area plan. This shows both the proposed development area and the features of interest and is included within this report.

## **5.0 Survey: Findings**

**5.1** Five features of interest were noted by this survey. These can be briefly summarised as follows:

- Feature 1: A mounded anomaly located to the immediate north side of the Outnabrake cairn site.
- Feature 2: The remains of the excavated Outnabrake cairn, located on the top of the hill.
- Feature 3: An amorphous stony concentration, located on the southern slope of the hill.
- Feature 4: A probable prehistoric structure, located outwith and to the north east of the proposed extension area.
- Feature 5: An upright slab marking the Road Reconstruction Programme, 1980, erected by SIC.

**5.2** Fuller descriptions of these features, together with locations, are provided below in Appendix 1.

**5.3** The depth of soil/peat cover on the lower slopes and flatter ground at the base of the hill was identified as a potential issue affecting site visibility. It is possible that the depth of deposits here may obscure archaeological remains surviving beneath the ground surface. The extent to which this may be the case was demonstrated at Feature 4, where part of a probable prehistoric structure was apparently visible only as a result of previous peat extraction in the immediate area. It is consequently considered possible that other remains may survive within the wider area which are covered with peat and so therefore not visible as topographic features.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

**6.1** The findings of the survey indicate that archaeological remains are present both *within* and *outwith but in the vicinity of* the proposed quarry extension area. This must be qualified, however: of the three features identified within the proposed extension area only one is definitely of an archaeological nature (Feature 2) and this has already been excavated. The other features located within the proposed extension area (Features 1 and 3) represent anomalies of unknown character and may not be archaeological. Two features were recorded outwith but in the vicinity of the proposed extension area: one is a modern construction (Feature 5), the other is likely to be a structure of prehistoric date (Feature 4).

**6.2** The survey indicated that the soil/peat cover on the lower slopes and flatter ground within the proposed extension area may obscure archaeological remains and, for this reason, topographical survey alone may not provide a reliable picture of the archaeology in this area.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

**7.1** It is recommended that a short programme of intrusive assessment (trial trenching) is conducted to test the findings of the survey. The purpose of this work would be two-fold: (i) to rapidly investigate the nature of features and anomalies identified by this survey and (ii) to randomly sample a proportion of the downhill area in order to ascertain the presence or absence of subsurface features covered by deeper soil/peat cover.

**7.2** While very little of the excavated Feature 2 remains visible on the ground, it is recommended that a sample of the surrounding area is subjected to trial trenching. This site represents the only verifiable site of archaeological significance located within the proposed extension area and the purpose of this work will be to investigate the possibility that associated features may survive in the immediate hinterland.

**7.3** Although it lies outwith the proposed extension area, it may prove useful, and ultimately cost-effective, to further assess Feature 4 within the programme of trial trenching. This feature, currently thought to represent a structure of prehistoric date, could be rapidly tested and the findings would serve to inform any future development which might impinge upon this area (i.e. fencing, access roads etc.).

**7.4** An outline proposal for trial trenching has been separately prepared and provides costs for this work.

## **Appendix 1: Feature Descriptions**

### **Feature 1**

Grid reference: HU 41450 40051

An amorphous grass covered mound is located close to the excavated cairn, in an elevated position behind the current quarry face. It measures some 8m in diameter and stands up to 0.75m high. Several stones, apparently set upright or on edge, protrude from the south side.

### **Feature 2**

Grid reference: HU 41456 40013

The scanty remains of an excavated cairn are visible in an elevated position behind the current quarry face. The vegetation in this area is locally greener than in the surrounding area. Two grid pegs from the 1990 excavation, situated some 13m apart, remain in situ. In places, bedrock protrudes through the grass.

### **Feature 3**

Grid reference: HU 41481 39951

An amorphous concentration of loose and earth fast stone covers an area measuring some 8m N-S by 7m E-W on the slope of the hill. This feature occurs below a rough track and it is possible that at least some of the loose stone may represent material which has been disturbed either by the creation of the track or during its subsequent use. Several earth fast stones, apparently set in an upright position are also present, however, and it is possible that this feature may represent a conflation of rubble covering the remains of a built structure.

### **Feature 4**

Grid reference: HU 41584 40033

A horseshoe shaped concentration of stone, located towards the base of the hill, includes both upright and coursed elements. The visible dimensions are 7m N-S by 10m E-W. The stone protrudes through peat and it is probable that this feature was once entirely covered in peat. Traces of peat cuttings survive nearby, and it may be that this feature was originally discovered through peat cutting, although it has not been previously recorded as an archaeological monument. It is probable that this feature represents a prehistoric house.

### **Feature 5**

Grid reference: HU 4141 3979

A large sandstone slab has been set up close to the north side of the road. It stands to 1.6m high and bears a bronze plaque bearing the inscription 'Shetland Islands Council Road Reconstruction Programme 1980'.

## Appendix 2: list of Photographs

Pic #	Description	Digital shots
1	Feature 2: view with EDM set up over old grid peg, looking N	1
2	Feature 2: looking S with central cairn area in foreground	1
3	Feature 1: looking N	1
4	Feature 3: general view	1
5	Feature 4: general view	2
6	Feature 5: general view	2

## References

- Hamilton, J 1990 'Outnabrake (Tingwall Parish), Burial Cairn', in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*. Council for Scottish Archaeology, Edinburgh. 48.
- Hamilton, J 1991 'Excavation of a cairn at Wind Hamars, Outnabreck Hill, Scalloway, Shetland', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*. (121). 45-49.



Feature 4



Feature 2



Feature 2



Feature 3



Feature 5



Feature 1

**Scord Quarry Survey:  
Features 1-5**

**October 2005**