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"See continuation cards and folders for text, plans and photographs."

3. 276 075 BRRS WICK LINKS, VIKING SETTLEMENT (10)
52. ND 376 676. (Area) Surveys were undertaken, including the examination for artefacts of the very rich eroding midden deposits and continuity of the contour survey of the site. Pollen samples from the links and three cores were taken from the peat deposits in the immediate vicinity. In addition a number of samples of grass tempered pottery from differing archaeological sites are collected for thermoluminescence dating." (24)
ND c. 376 677
(Butty et al 1981)

CAN 056

STRUCTURES. Freswick Links. Multi-period occupation throughout the Links. Excavated sites of Prehistoric period to Norse. Scheduled Monument. Elevation 5-10 m OD.
NDG 376 676
OS card no. ND 36 NE 4.
Recorded Find Nos. 67-124.

CAN 061

STRUCTURE. Curle's excavations. There is a stretch of walling from these excavations visible on Freswick Links, approx. 2 m. long and aligned roughly e-w. Scheduled monument. Elevation c. 5 m OD.
ND 376 6746.
(Curle 1939)

Norse

CAN 062

FIND. Freswick Bay. Flint tools were found approx. 110-120 m inland in the bay prior to 1954. There is no trace in 1980. Elevation c. 5 m OD.
ND c 376 676
OS card no. ND 36 NE 14.

Pre.

CAN 063

FIND. Freswick Bay. Microlithic flints were found here in 1937. No trace in 1980. Elevation c. 5 m OD.
ND c 376 676
OS card no. ND 36 NE 13.
(Lacaille 1937, 63 and 1954, 275)

Pre.

CAN 064

CAIRN. Freswick Bay. Noted in 1935 in ruinous condition. No trace in 1980. Elevation c. 5 m OD.
ND c 376 676
OS card no. ND 36 NE 12.
(Donations 1935, 247 no. 1)

Pre.

CAN 065

FIND. Freswick Links. Flint working site on the Links, associated with a chambered cairn, recorded in 1935. No trace in 1980. Elevation c. 5 m OD.
ND c 376 676
OS card no. ND 36 NE 10.
(Donations 1935, 246 and 436 no. 1)

Pre.
First Viking longhouse on Scottish mainland found at Freswick

A Viking longhouse thought to date back to the twelfth century has been uncovered near Freswick House.

The discovery made by a team of archaeologists from Durham University is regarded as very important as it is the only known such structure to be found on the mainland of Scotland although others have been found in Shetland, Orkney and other Scottish islands.

The ancient stone building is approximately 12 metres long and 4.5 metres wide and is complete with internal fittings like a hearth and benches and walls made from very substantial beams. The team, who have been assisted on their dig by six local youngsters from the Community Services Agency, have even found a number of artefacts including old bones, shellfish and pottery.

One member of the group, Andrew Jones, described the site as being "exceptionally important" and said that the items found seem to be of a special kind peculiar to Caithness. He told the "Caithness Courier" that the pottery in particular is unlike that found in other places dating back about the same period.

"Mr Jones replied: "It may be because the settlement at Freswick was small and relatively isolated whereas other places in the south were bigger and traded with other communities, possibly importing their pottery."

All the items are important, however, as they give valuable clues about an unknown way of life and help the archaeologists to piece together a more complete knowledge of the existence of these ancient people from long ago. From initial studies it appears the inhabitants of the longhouse were fisherfolk and that the location may be referred to in the famous Orkneyinga Saga.

"Naturally, such a unique discovery is exciting for the team who are anxious to find out as much as they can about the site and its occupants. And they are hoping to look next at an area just north of the longhouse where they have found another stone structure and more midden deposits."

The 20-strong group, comprised of English and American experts under the leadership of Mr Chris Morris, undertook the dig at Freswick to resume their scientific research of the area where they had previously unearthed a well-preserved broch, Norse houses, and other remnants of the Viking age but the longhouse is undoubtedly their best find to date.

The team have been at Caithness just over two weeks during which time they have been assisted by the six local youngsters who have been helping to open an old trench first excavated during the 1920s, uncovering middens, and sieving the soil for small items and artefacts.

"The work will continue for a further two weeks and then be resumed next year when they intend to spend a whole season in the county which has revealed much of its historic past to them."

As a token of their appreciation they are going to hold a special open day on the site this Sunday when any interested members can go out to Freswick to see the ancient longhouse for themselves. The site will be open for two hours from 1-3 in the afternoon and a guided tour will be given by members of the team.

Anyone interested in making what should be an exciting trip should have no problems getting there. The site is situated about 300-400 yards from Freswick House and will be signposted for that day.

Meanwhile, later this month Miss Colleen Batey, a member of the group, will be giving an illustrated lecture at Thurso Technical College on the work which has been carried out at the site.

"ND 3765 6760. Further examination and survey were undertaken, predominately along the cliff edge where extensive midden deposits were examined. These had structural traces within them. The end of a possible byre was excavated in the central coastal zone. An eroding area in the interior of the links was examined prior to consolidation and reveals of vestigial structural traces."
Frenwick Links, an area of sandy beach and dunes whose profile is subject to continual change, presents evidence of multi-period occupation from the Mesolithic to the medieval in the form of stone industries, kitchen middens, a broch (ND 36 NE 5) which produced a cup-marked stone, a settlement which began in the pre-Viking period and continued into the late medieval, and enigmatic structures which were thought to be 'earth-houses'.

The kitchen-middens, mostly of limpet shells and fish bones, occur mainly in the area of Lady's Brow (ND 375 677), but material, including pottery ranging from Neolithic to Iron Age, and even underlyeng Frenwick Castle (ND 36 NE 3) is found all over the Links. One midden, situated 100 yards inland from the bay, was explored about 1934 and proved to be the site of a Bronze Age food-gatherer's encampment.

In 1928 a shell refuse pit yielded bone tools, flint implements and beaker-type sherds. It overlies a mesolithic stratum containing flaked, core and scrapers (111 microliths have also been found in the neighbourhood). Other kitchen-middens at ND 376 676 (11) and ND 3769 6750 (15) have produced stran-topped sherds which at Jarlshof (ND 30 NE 1) proved to be 12th to 13th century Norse (15) although much pottery in no longer regarded as exclusive to this period and culture (14). Similar sherds have been collected from a sand-blow at ND 376 6724 (15). These are obviously associated with the later phase of the late 16th to late 17th centuries settlement excavated by Curle in 1917-18 at ND 3165 6745 (13j) and by Childe in 1944, probably about ND 3168 6749 since its site lay NE of Curle's, and associated with the same midden deposit and was threatened by a sand-pit.

Curle's excavation revealed the remains of one, and possibly two, substantial Viking houses overlying the incinerated remains of a wattle and daub structure, and followed by two successive Norse complexes of less substantial construction. Childe's excavation confirmed the Norse succession but revealed evidence of an appreciably earlier, though still Iron Age, occupation, in the form of a structure of edge-set stones.

In 1910 the RCAHM noted the ruins of a rectangular building, exposed by excavation, about 200 yards SE of the of the modern chapel (ND 3762 6731). Its walls were 4 ft thick, with traces of lime on the inner face, and had a doorway 2 ft 5 ins wide in the SE, behind the jambs of which were bar-holes. Iron slag covered the paved floor. Since a smithy formed part of the upper levels of Curle's excavation, this structure might be interpreted as fulfilling a similar function in a northward extension of the settlement, although the use of lime might suggest it was an early structure. This may be the 'stone and lime building' at the end of Frenwick Links from which came a short of cotswold bone which was donated to the NMGAS in 1929 (5). That occupation did extend northward as shown by the extensive area at ND 378 677 in which cliff-face erosion has exposed burnt stone and midden material.

In 1925 (11), Curle's excavation could still be identified with, 50 yards S of it, at ND 3765 6741, a long cist 2.1 m long by 0.6 m broad and 0.6 m deep, unpaved and lacking the R end-1ab, but containing an adult skeleton lying face down. Otherwise all that could be identified was a short stretch of sailing and a slight ridge of stones at ND 3770 6775, which might be the RCAHM site and 7.5 m of curvilinear walling at ND 3770 6733 (13).

Frenwick has been identified with the 'Thravik' of the
Drinkinghra Saga.

Air photographs suggest that structural remains of settlement survive over much of the links area, especially at ND 376j 677k, in the vicinity of the broch at ND 376j 675k, and at ND 375f 673k. The last two areas seem to be approximately those in which Edwards excavated in 1924 and 1926. His first excavation was of a hut circle in an E-facing valley, about 600yds N of Freswick House (ND 376 670). It was oval, 17 by 13 ft, composed of single boulders resting on turf and clay. An entrance, 3 by 9ins wide, in the SW, was formed on its S side by a portal 4 ft high. The floor was of clay.

About 16 ft NE of the hut circle, Edwards excavated an 'earth house' (see plan - 4), and two others, lying within 11 ft of each other, were excavated to the N of Lady's How (see plan - 3). These structures appear to bear more resemblance to some of the elements of a broch settlement, e.g. the two chambers in the base of the broch in the Jarrold complex (ND 45 341) than to huts.

Among many small finds from the links in the N M A S, most notably donated by Simon Bromer, and T. T. M. C. W. between 1924 and 1951, are several short and slender urn fragments from the base of a ruined farm on Freswick Links, donated in 1935. The finds from Curle's excavation are also in the N M A S.

**ND 376 677. A structure of unknown extent and nature is recorded from the N side of the dun complex known as Lady's How. The dimensions are obscured by sand fall.**

**ND 376 676. Part of one of the Norse structures excavated by Edwards is visible up to a stretch of walling about 2m long running roughly E-W.**

None of the previously recorded flint-producing sites was identified.

A detailed survey of the site, as well as exploratory work, field-sampling, minor excavation, recording of eroding cliff sections and consolidation of the excavations was carried out in 1950-1. Visible evidence of cultivation was found, as were traces of walling N and S of Curle's excavation, and a probable cist, empty of contents, in an eroding area above the beach.

None of the structures previously exposed, some of which excavation can now be seen on Freswick Links. Further excavation is proceeding at present and a report will be produced.

Approx. 160m S of this remains of several buildings of two can still be seen. This is the site excavated by Curle. See GP/40/66/56/2. Some 50m S of these buildings is a long cist, oriented W to E, measuring 2.1m long by 0.6m wide by 0.5m deep. It is constructed with flat stone slabs set on edge with no east end slab or base and covered by flat stones. It contained an adult skeleton buried face down. See GP/40/66/44/1. The whole area of the links is covered with kitchen midden material. Apart from a short stretch of walling and a slight riddle of stones, possibly the remains of the hut circle and earth house excavated by Edwards, at ND 3770 6775, 200yds SE of the Baptist church and 7.5m of curved walling, 0.7m wide at ND 3770 6733, no trace of any defined to earth houses or hut circles could be found. Surveyed at 1/2500.

The remains recovered from these excavations and from casual finds in the vicinity have been deposited in the N M A S. Mr Kirby has collected grass-tempered sherds from a midden, centred ND 3769 6750, and from a blow-out at ND 3775 6724 (there is no midden deposit visible at the latter). He donated the sherds to the N M A S in 1975-6.

**OSPI NKB 23.8.1982**

Mr J E Kirby, 3 Perry Croft, Lairg, Sutherland.)
Earth-house at Fenwick Links.

About 10 feet to the north-east of the hut-circle excavated by me in 1875, and at the same sand-gully, part of an underground construction was uncovered at the time, but owing to the quantity of sand which it would have been necessary to remove, it was found impossible then to undertake its excavation. Last year, however, I excavated the whole of the structure, that of an earth-house, some 8 feet of sand having to be removed before the top of the north-east wall was reached.

The shape of the building is rather difficult to describe satisfactorily, and it is therefore better that one should refer to the plan (Fig 6). From this it can be seen that it consisted of two curvilinear chambers, with a passage for entrance. The mouth of the passage faced southwards, and at one time, judging from the quantity of stones now lying near it and in direct line with what remained of the upright walls, it had extended outwards to the face of the sand-hill. At present it measures about 11 feet in length and 2 feet 6 inches in width, the walls at their highest part being 3 feet in height. The two chambers were divided from one another by an extension of one of the walls of the outer chamber for a distance of 1 foot, between the end of this intruding wall and the north-eastern wall a space of 2 feet was left, which afforded a means of passing from one chamber to the other. The larger and outer chamber measured 12 feet by 12 feet 6 inches, and the smaller about 6 feet by 7 feet (Fig. 6). The walls, which were 3 feet in height and averaged 1 foot 6 inches in thickness, were dry built, but in parts they had been formed of single slabs set upright with a filling of stones between. At places there was evidence on the interior wall-face of a plastering of clay, while on the outer side of the wall all corners were reinforced with a mixture of clay and stones. At the north end of the passage on its eastern side at the entrance to the large chamber the wall was checked as if for a door. No relics were found inside the chambers, the floors of which were partly paved and partly made of clay. No roofing stones were found and indeed the dimensions of the large chamber would hardly admit of the use of stones for this purpose without supporting pillars, so that one must conclude that the roofing material has presumably been of wood.

On the western side of the dwelling and close to the wall was a kitchen recess, the debris of which was mostly composed of fish bones. A few fragments of the usual hand-made, plain, hard-baked pottery were recovered. Several pieces, a base and a few wall fragments, from the position in which they were found, appeared to have been part of the pot in which a red fish had been boiled whole, as the stomach contents of the fish were still seen in situ, among the bones, as a greyish-white mass. This was preserved and has been examined by Mr. A. C. Stephen of the Natural History Department of the Royal Scottish Museum, whom I have to thank for the following report: "The contents of the fish stomach are all in a much comminuted state, and while this may be due partly to digestion in the stomach after the meal had been taken, the appearance of the fragments suggests that the fish was feeding upon very small and fragile creatures. By far the largest proportion of the stomach contents consists of vertebrae of a very small and unidentified fish. All the rest of the material is composed of fragments of Sculpins, of which there are hundreds of microscopically small pieces and tiny sections of test, and other debris. The remains are evidently those of very young individuals."

Few fragments of the vessel were recovered owing to its very rotten condition, but sufficient of the rim was found to be able to say that the diameter had been approximately 13 inches at the mouth.
The Archaeology of Late Celtic Britain

The only settlement of the Norse period that has been excavated on the mainland is at Freswick Links.\textsuperscript{10} Caithness (Fig. 63). The site is mentioned in the \textit{Orkneyinga Saga} as Thrasswick from towards the end of the eleventh century. The saga refers to a hall of Freswick, with a farmstead near it in the twelfth century. The site, like Jarlshof, was first discovered owing to sand blowing away. Although the present landscape probably differs greatly from the Norse one, the bay must always have been ideal as a landing place.

Three main phases of settlement can be detected, the first probably dating from the late eleventh century. The settlement was probably abandoned in the thirteenth century, possibly in 1264 when Alexander III of Scotland sent an army to Caithness to exact a fine from the populace for having submitted to Hakon of Norway the previous year.

The earliest structure, of indeterminate date, was an anomalous wattle and daub building with clay floor, which had been destroyed by fire. This was built over by the first main occupation phase: a badly preserved building, one end of which may have been a barn, and which was separated from the (?) dwelling room by a partition wall. In the barn was a corn-drying kiln and a clay-lined basin sunk into the floor, as well as a linear hollow found on excavation to be filled with refuse. The walls were thicker than those of the two successive periods. Finds were few and miscellaneous, but included pottery which, on analogy with that from Jarlshof, implies an occupation no earlier than the late eleventh century. Another find was a piece of a metal cauldron with 'paper fastener' rivets, and a ragged fragmentary bone pin.

The next phase on the site was the building of a large dwelling, well preserved and with slightly bow-shaped walls. On the north side the bench was still traceable, though on the south its line was marked only by the post holes for the roof supports. There was a central hearth, and the floor was covered with kitchen midden refuse, mainly limpet shells. One post-hole, identified by the excavator as possibly coming from the 'high seat', contained remains of willow. The post-holes seem to have been deliberately covered up (one with a quern) and it is possible that reoccupation was intended after its abandonment. Subsidiary buildings adjoined the house. Finds, apart from cooking pots, included a bronze belt chape, a fragmentary comb, broken bones, spindle whorls, pot lids, an iron knife, a fragment of a stoneware bowl and a tethers.

In the final phase there were two oblong buildings, which may originally have been dwellings, but one of which was converted into a

![Figure 63 Freswick Links, Caithness: Norse settlement (After Cooke)](image)

sauna and the other left derelict, or possibly used as a store, together with the smithy and an annexe, an isolated main dwelling, which may have been a 'woman house', and the boat moat. The complex was roughly grouped about a courtyard.

The finds of the final period were more varied. They included sherds of medieval pottery imported from centres of production farther along the east coast, probably in Angus. a puny of Henry III, which provided a rough indication of the date of abandonment, ship rivets, bone horn snibs, and a fine eighteenth-century bronze zoomorphic penannular brooch. Although found in a twelfth century context, other finds from this site include a bone comb case, and a glass bead.
I.

ANOTHER LATE VIKING HOUSE AT FRESWICK, CAITHNESS.

By Professor V. Gordon Childe, D.Litt., D.Sc., F.B.A.,
F.S.A.Scot.

Read February 28, 1941.

The Viking settlement on the sands of Freswick was described in these Proceedings, vol. lix.ii. pp. 71-109, by Dr A. O. Curle. He not only reported upon the excavation of a long house, a smithy, a bath and other structures, covering several architectural periods, but also gave a comprehensive account of the site's topography and collected the literary references to the region's occupation in Viking times. These matters need not, therefore, be repeated here. The great storms of 1940 blew the sand from the wall-tops of another complex of structures, 3 or 4 feet below the modern turf line, at a point to the north-east of Dr Curle's excavations and on the seaward edge of the high dune. These walls did not escape the watchful eye of our Corresponding Member, Mr Simon Bremner. Early in 1941 he warned the Inspector of Ancient Monuments that the newly exposed complex was endangered by a sand-pit that was being worked inwards from the shore to the east. As a result I went to inspect the site on behalf of the Ministry of Works and Buildings in the Easter vacation. I then cleared the sand away down to the bases of the walls at what we now term the doorway BC and pier CD and established the secondary character of wall WX (fig. 1).

As the sand was needed for Government work and the structures affected were clearly much dilapidated, I could not recommend the issue of a Preservation Order, but nevertheless felt it desirable that the buildings should be scientifically examined and planned before removal. Accordingly the Society made me a grant to meet the cost of a "rescue dig," and in the last weeks of June 1941 I cleared all the threatened area. I was fortunate enough to secure the help of Mr Simon Bremner and of Peter Kennedy, also of Freswick, a scholar at Wick High School, to both of whom I wish to express my gratitude for their generous and understanding co-operation.

The structures examined lie at the seaward end of a north and south bunker from which the wind has carried away 3 to 5 feet of recent drift sand exposing a tough layer of midden-like material littered with stones, bones, and sherds, and demonstrably continuous with that on and in which Dr Curle's buildings stood. To the south this layer has been undermined by sea and gale, and the sand slopes almost precipitously to the
ANOTHER LATE VIKING HOUSE AT FREWSICK, CAITHNESS.

shore some 50 feet below. The section exposed in the sand-pit showed that the occupation deposit once extended much further eastward and that under it there is at least 40 feet of pure sand uninterrupted by any earlier midden-bed or band of fossil humus. (Further inland the sand accumulation below our Viking horizon is interrupted by a well-marked occupation layer from which Mr. Bremner has recovered flints and sherds, probably of the Bronze Age. But here only a few feet of sand separate the prehistoric deposit from the shelf of the "25-foot raised beach").

Our excavation exposed a single complex of buildings, obviously representing more than one architectural period. It gave no indication of the presence of connected buildings either to the west or north. In the latter direction other buildings of our phase I may underlie the midden deposit of our latest occupation, but such must have been reduced to the barest stumps and in any case are not threatened by the sand-pit. To the south and east erosion and sand-digging have set a rigid limit to the possibilities of uncovering further structures.

The earliest phase of the complex is represented by a "long house" with an overall length of 28 feet. Its north wall PQ, though partly overlaid by later constructions, was traced over the whole of this length running some 20° north of east. It is founded on a laid bed of stiff grey clay. The basal course which alone is preserved over the whole length is formed of relatively thin slabs, on an average 6 to 7 inches thick and 7 to 8 inches wide. The second course, preserved in places near the east end, follows the same principles. The west wall has been replaced by or incorporated in the later wall KA of phase II. Similarly the contemporary wall AB must cover the western part of the original south wall. Judged by its construction, however, the inner face at least of wall DE and its eastern continuation EX may really represent the original south wall of the long house, for it is built entirely with slabs, in contrast to the boulder construction characteristic of phase II (Pl. II. 2). Its eastern extremity has been lost through the erosion of the sand dune. The same fate has probably overtaken the east wall of the house, for this is missing altogether. In the north-east corner, however, its line can be reconstructed on the one hand from the outer margin of the clay bed on which it was founded, and on the other from the limits of the paved interior.

The centre of the house was occupied by a long fire represented by a bed of peat ash, 3 to 8 inches deep at the centre, which begins 4 to 5 feet from the probable line of the east wall and extends westward nearly 15 feet. The ash bed in the eastern part of the house rests partly upon, but also underlies, a paving of thin slabs rotted by the heat of the fire. Traces of a kerb of small stones on edge survive to mark the southern margin of the hearth. Of these the outermost stone at c proved on examination to be a segment of a flat rotary quern of micaceous schist (from
Shetland. Slabs projecting at right angles southward from this stone and from d may be the margins of post-sockets. Near the west end of the hearth there were somewhat dubious traces of a similar kerb of very small stones on the northern margin of the ash, but none were noted on the south here. At the western end of the hearth an oval fire pit, about 2 feet across from east to west and nearly as wide as the hearth proper, had been dug into the underlying sand to a depth of some 6 inches. It was filled with layers of ash varying in colour from red and purple to yellow, forming a deposit with a total depth of 13½ inches, while the sand below it had been reddened by heat to a depth of a further 5 inches.

Apart from the burnt paving slabs under the hearth only the eastern end of the room had been paved (not quite certainly in phase I). For the rest the floor was formed of grey clay or a tough brownish midden mixture, trodden hard. Eight inches to a foot from the south wall a line of four slabs on edge with a total length of 5 feet 3 inches and varying in depth from 7 inches at the west end to 17 inches at the east (Pl. II, 2, in front of staff) may have formed the supports for a platform corresponding to the pailr of a classical Viking house.

To a second phase of occupation are attributed the existing walls HJ, KA, and AB with their extensions, the outer face at least of wall DE (Pl. F3) and probably also the piers CD and SR. All are built in a different style of masonry to PQ, using large boulders from the beach set on edge or on end for the foundation course and making extensive use of water-worn stones for the upper courses too (Pl. I). Where, as in AK, the wall is two courses thick, the inner and outer faces have not been bonded together by headers save at the ends.

For the new house at least the strip DB of the original south wall seems to have been retained, but it was given a new outer face the boulder foundations of which rest on midden material, 7 inches higher than the base of WX (Pl. I, 1, right). Beyond a doorway, 3 feet wide, the south wall is continued by the wall BA built in boulder masonry and bonded into the west wall AK. This ends on the north with a header forming the southern cheek to a doorway 2 feet wide, across which lie as a sort of threshold the westernmost foundation stones of wall PQ (Pl. III, 1, right). Wall AK is standing 2 feet 9 inches high on the inside and 2 feet 6 inches on the outside, the foundation course being rather higher up. The north wall is now represented by a dilapidated section JE only 8½ feet long that diverges south of the line of the original wall PQ. The stones of the latter are separated from the foundation course of the new wall by a thin sand blow only an inch thick, which may be equated with the sand layer intercalated between the surface of the phase I hearth and the paving or floor deposit of phase II in the interior of the house. The north wall seems to be finished off deliberately by the stones at H (Pl. I, 1, beside
ANOTHER LATE VIKING HOUSE AT FRESWICK, CAITHNESS.

staff), as if there had been here a door corresponding to that at BD on the south side of the room. But east of this break there is no trace of a continuation of the new north wall. I believe the stones of this section have been removed to build the still later structure TZW. In that case the house of phase II may have continued as far east as did the original house.

The hypothetical eastern room would have been separated from the well-preserved west room by the dividing wall formed by the piers DC and SR. CD (Pl. II, 1, behind staff), which still stands 1 foot 9 inches high, has been built largely of thin slabs resting upon the joints of the wall DE

![Diagram](image)

Fig. 2. Sections I, II, and III; ash layers cross hatched.

rather than being bonded into it. But it terminates in boulders in phase II style. Its western face forms the cheek to the door, the projection of the original wall at D constituting the cheek. Its base is faced with a thin slate on edge, trimmed along the top to accommodate the next course. Immediately above this comes a bar-hole which may have run right through the pier, but is now blocked by cracked slabs above. This pier rests upon the midden floor of phase II and projects over the edge of the fire-pit of phase I, which is separated from the later floor and masonry by an inch of drift sand (Pl. I, 2 and fig. 2, XY).

The northern pier, BS, is much dilapidated. Two boulders in line form its eastern face, and are related to the hearth of phase I in the same way as the terminal boulders of CD. The western face seems to have been built with flat slabs resting on paving slabs, but most have perished, and
the stump has been overlaid with later paving. Nevertheless the northernmost foundation-stone has been properly bonded into the foundation of wall FQ, 9 inches west of R.

The floor of phase II in the eastern room between the piers and the later wall WZ consists of a tough brownish deposit full of fish-bones, separated from the floor and hearth deposit of phase I by an inch of sand. About 2 feet from the door represented by the gap CS and opposite to it begins a layer of paving-stones which mark the phase II floor over the older hearth and continue eastward under wall WZ (Pl. II, 1). Beyond this later boundary there are 4 inches of tough brown midden receding in consistency and composition the phase II floor overlaying the ash of the earlier hearth, and a similar deposit extends north and south of the long fire. But still farther east it is possible that the upper layer of ashes belong to phase II.

In the west room and between DU and RS the phase II floor is represented by an irregular pavement of slabs underlying the deposit of midden and fish-bones. On the west this pavement is bounded by a groove, βp, roughly marked by pairs of thin slates sunk edgewise in the floor (Pl. I, 1, centre). This groove is about 3 inches wide and, judging by the widths of the marginal slates, 7 to 9 inches deep. From 4 to 7 feet from the south wall (b) this groove is interrupted by a definite gap, the two ends of the groove being marked by transverse stones. A sandstone slab 3 inches thick and 15 inches long at the gap rises above the pavement slates like a threshold, and west of it paving continues 27 inches beyond the groove. It is accordingly suggested that the groove is the socket for a wooden partition that was interrupted by a doorway. Just east of the groove near its northern end a slab on edge rising 2 feet high from the floor, into which it was embedded 7 inches deep, and 2 feet 4 inches wide, might be a facing to this partition (Pl. I, 1, in front of and to left of staff).

In this case the paved area will serve as a hall or passage between the east rooms already described and the west room proper. In the latter very little pavement survived: the midden deposit was thinner and less tough, and almost faded out about a foot from the wall. On the other hand large stones, presumably fallen from the walls, were scattered about in seeming disorder. Over the whole area from about a foot away from wall AK across the stump of pier RS up to wall ZW and less clearly beyond it, the drift sand filling the construction was interrupted about 1 foot above the phase II floor by a black band of tough material absolutely sterile. Mr. Brenner suggested that this black matter was roofing, principally sods, a suggestion in which I concur (fig. 2).

Entrance to the building of phase II was afforded primarily by the door on the south. It is preceded by a paved passage 9½ feet long flanked by very flimsy walls seen course thick (Pl. I, 1). The paved floor of the passage is level, but a foot higher than the paving of the interior. Accord-
a very ruinous structure LMNO. Of this the south wall is represented only by foundation slabs and the north wall only by a discontinuous line of boulder on end, while the west wall is altogether missing (Pl. III, 2, foreground). There is not even an internal face to wall MN. No floor was found to this structure. Only in the south-east corner where the channel runs out eastward to AK was there a thin deposit of brown-stained sand, which was found also in the channel outside MN. On the other hand, about a foot above the foundation of LM there is a secondary floor, including a few paving-slates extending westward for some 4 feet from the rugged inner side of MN to a line of small blocks running south from NO. On this floor in the north-east corner stood a large pot that had been crushed between fallen stones, while a "draughtsman" of cetacean bone lay just beside it. Two feet to the south-west was a small patch of ash.

In the fire-pit at the west end of the phase I hearth near C we encountered the top of what proved to be a slab on edge, 15 inches high. This turned out to be one of a series of close-set slabs that ran westward to the base of wall AK (Pl. II, 1, staff stands against slabs). The eastern end of the same line of slabs was subsequently discovered under the kerb of the phase I hearth in the east room (Pl. II, 2, foreground). There, exactly 21 feet from its western end under wall AK, the line came to an end in a stouter pillar and turned southward to run under wall WX (fig. 3). Under the west room a pier tz, one course wide and two courses high, has been built out northward from this line for 2 feet 6 inches (Pl. III, 1, foreground), and there is another pier parallel to this under AK. South of the line a sort of paving of stout slabs some 4 inches thick extends for 21 feet east of AK, flush with the top of the uprights and 9 inches below the floor of phase I (Pl. III, 1). The slabs stood in or rested on pure drift sand. There was no floor at their bases nor any deposit south of them. To the north between utz there was a layer of dirty sand mixed with a few sods a foot below the phase I floor-top.

These puzzling remains seem to have no organic connexion with the constructions of phase I or later. They are built in a different style, are differently orientated, and have in fact been disturbed and interrupted by the phase I hearth. They apparently represent an occupation (phase 0) appreciably earlier than our phase I. As a piece of hopelessly rusted iron was found between the uprights and utz, this occupation itself must fall within the "Iron Age." But it would seem to have been of a very temporary nature, for no floor nor occupation deposit was found at the base of the walls, nor was any such exposed in the sand-pit section to the east, nor yet in trial pits sunk to the west of wall AK. Perhaps more extensive digging under the midden deposits to the north would disclose more substantial remains of phase 0. But in war-time such speculative operations in an area not threatened by disturbance did not seem justified.

ReLIEs.

In point of view of relics the complex examined in 1941 proved much poorer even than those explored by Dr Curle in 1937-38. Moreover, save for a single stone whorl, none can be referred with complete confidence to the later phases II or III. One femur-head whorl, a pyramidal "loom-weight," and a couple of strpyical sherds from the eastern end of the area may perhaps belong to phase II, but the two floors were here separated by such a thin layer of blown sand that this attribution is uncertain. Building LMNO again, from which two interesting relics were recovered, is more reminiscent in its construction of phase II than of phase I and in absolute height lies on the later horizon. But it is not physically connected with structures of any specific period in the main complex and is not undertaken by any deposit corresponding to phase I. Its contents can therefore be referred to a late phase only with great reserve. The remainder explicitly belong to the long house of phase I.

The relics recovered are as follows:—

Two femur-head whorls, a type common also in the buildings of the same settlement excavated by Dr Curle (Pl. IY, 2–3).

One stone whorl, 3·5 cm. (1 inch) in diameter and 7 cm. (1 inch) thick, found near b at Easter, and certainly not older than phase II. It is of a type current at all times from Early Iron Age to Beccles.
PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY, 1942-43.

Two pyramidal loom-weights or net-sinkers measuring 3 x 4 cm. at the base and 7 cm. high. The perforation of one is unfinished. Though not found on the western site at Freswick, the type is common on Viking sites in Scandinavia and in Shetland.¹

One grooved "net-sinker"—a pear-shaped piece of sandstone with diameters of 7 x 6 cm. (2½ x 2½ inches) encircled by a groove along its major axis with a transverse notch at the wide end—a type not previously recorded from Freswick though known elsewhere in the county² and common on Viking sites in Norway (Pl. IV, 9).

One broken pin or needle of bone.

About a quarter of the upper stone of a flat rotary quern of mica-schist. If circular, the stone would have been about 36 cm. (16 inches) in diameter and 4 cm. (1½ inch) thick with a central hole 7 cm.

Fig. 4. Sections of pot rims. ¹

(3 inches) across. The boring for the hole to take a vertical handle has been begun about 3 cm. from the edge but has been left unfinished. Our fragment was actually used as part of the hearth kerb of the long house.

Pottery was not very plentiful and extremely fragmentary. All sherds seemed to belong to hand-made undecorated vessels. As usual in Viking pottery, traces of vegetable temper were always conspicuous. No complete vessel was recovered, but the fragments seemed to belong to coarse cooking-pots. The bases were flat in all cases where evidence was available, but well-defined necks are not represented in our collection. On the other hand the rims show very sophisticated treatment, as do those recovered by Dr Carle. Most of our rims were in fact flattened and squashed down inwards or less often outwards; one small sherd has indeed almost an internal flange (fig. 4, 2). As Dr Carle has pointed out, this sort of treatment is foreign to the Viking pottery of Shetland.³ But it was applied to Irish pottery, from the eighth ⁴ to perhaps the

⁴ I.d., vol. iv, p. 99 (Beds).
from Lund, Sigtuna, Gotland, and Ragnhildsholmens Castle in Sweden. The last-named specimen, like that from Tyskebyggeryn, Bergen, can be dated by its context to about 1200. A number of similar draughtsmen have turned up in and around London, but apparently without any precise context. They have been described by Dr. H. E. M. Wheeler among relics of the Viking Period. He mentions examples from Norman castle-mounds at Warrington and at Rug, Merionethshire. In Ireland similar pieces are not uncommon. Specimens from a crannog at Cloonfinlough, Co. Roscommon, and from Drumcliffe, County Sligo, would seem on general grounds likely to belong to the Dark or Early Middle Ages. But Mr T. D. Kendrick has recently seen a specimen allegedly found in a rich Viking grave in north-western Ireland. Finally, from Scotland the National Museum possesses four pieces bearing more elaborate patterns—rosettes and crosses as well as dot-and-circle motives found in a drain at Castle Donnan, Ross-shire. In the St Andrews Cathedral Museum there is a disc similar in size to ours, but decorated with interlacing work, found at Kirkhill.

Hence, surveying the accessible material from not too distant regions, I can find no piece that is at all likely to be older than A.D. 1100, while the best dated specimens are more probably a century later. The lower limit for such pieces is admittedly quite indefinite. Hence the Freswick draughtsman is not at all likely to be older than 1200 and might quite well be substantially later. The same date would seem to be a fair upper limit to the pot associated with the piece.

**Conclusion.**

The principal interest of this poor and dilapidated series of ruins is that they may illustrate the transformation of the classical long house of the Viking Age into something very like the black house such as survived in the Hebrides last century. The structure of Period I exhibited all the essential features of the long house. The reconstruction of Period II has been subdivided into at least three parts: a new door has been cut in the rear wall opposite the entrance; a pavement has been laid between these two doors, the western end partitioned off and an opening contrived in the end wall. The result is a structure agreeing in essentials with the core of the black house at Harbost, Lewis, described by Aage Rousell.

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3. Wood-Martin, Pagan Ireland, Fig. 206-7.
4. Information kindly conveyed in a letter to the author.
6. Rey Flemming, St Andrews Cathedral Museum, p. 107. (Reference kindly supplied by Mr J. S. Richardson.)
7. Norse Building Customs in the Scottish Isles, p. 10 and Fig. 1.
A VIKING SETTLEMENT AT FRESWICK, CAITHNESS

I.


Anyone interested in the science of place-names who studies the map of Caithness from that point of view will observe that the names are divisible into two groups, on a philological as well as on a geographical basis. If the county is divided into two sections by a line drawn from Crox Kirk Bay, some 6 miles to the west of Thurso on the north, to the town of Lynber on the south-east coast, thus separating the hill country from the lowland, it will be found on examination that whereas the place-names in the former are with few exceptions Celtic or Gaelic, those in the latter have their roots in Scandinavian speech.

Such a distribution points to a very considerable displacement of the native population during the period of the Norse settlement; for it can hardly be supposed that the Celtic people willingly relinquished the coasts and fertile tracts of land for the barren moors and mountains that form the western portion of the county.

Notwithstanding this abundant evidence of Norse occupation, no trace of any building referable to that period was observed when the survey of the Antiquities of Caithness was made for the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in 1911.

The earliest Viking settlements would probably be situated by the estuaries of the Wick and Thurso Rivers, on the sites of the present towns, where long since all traces of their existence must have been removed, or buried beneath the streets and houses. Attractive landing-places elsewhere on the coast, which is for the most part rocky and precipitous, are few and far between, but the bay of Freswick, some 6 miles south of Duncahill, with its shelving beach, is a marked exception to the rule.

From as early as the time of Earl Sigurd, towards the close of the eleventh century, the name of Freswick, in the form of *Thoracic*, fits across the pages of the *Sagas*. In the *Saga of Burnt Njal* we read how Sigurd, having learnt that his brother-in-law "Hauard in Thoracic" had been slain by the Scots Earls, Hundil and Montenat, gathered together a mighty host from all the isles and fought a battle at Duncahills, in which the earls were defeated. Then at a later date when Sveri Solmundsson, who had escaped from Njal's burning hall, struck off the

*The Story of Burnt Njal, translated from the Icelandic saga of Burnt Njal by Sir George Dicey, chap. xcvii.*
head of Gunnar Lambi's son at Earl Sigard's board, he and his fellows fared in his ship to Freswick, where he took up his abode in the house of a "worthy man, whose name was Skergi," and with whom they stayed "a very long time." Eventually, after Kari had made a pilgrimage, and obtained absolution, he returned to Freswick to the house of "Master" Skergi, who gave him "a ship of burden," and with eighteen men on board he sailed back to Iceland.

At a still later date, in the Orkneyinga Saga, we find Freswick again coming into notice in connection with Sweyn Aslaif's son, whose father Olaf had an estate at "Dungskóra" (Dunclusiby), where the former frequently resided. Sweyn, who was a very notable Viking, looked after the estate of Freswick for his stepsons, and had himself a fortress in the neighbourhood, called Lambasborg, for which identification has been suggested both for Bocnial to the south of the bay and the Breach of Nis to the north. Incidentally, from this Saga we also learn that there were thickness in which men hid themselves at that date (1103) not far from the "hall of Freswick," and that at a great distance from the hall there was a farmstead.

In the centre of the wide bay the sandy beach is backed with irregular banks of sand, which rise sharply to a height of 25 or 30 feet before attaining the general land level, and as yearly these banks are eroded and driven farther back by the tempestuous winds which prevail on that coast, their contours now probably differ considerably from those presented at the time of the Viking settlement.

From this area shreds of coarse, unglazed pottery, which was not analogous to any recognised ware found elsewhere in Scotland, had from time to time been sent to the Museum. The finding of pottery of similar character at Darroch in Shetland, associated with a Viking settlement, furnished the means of its identification, and a visit to the sandy area led to the discovery of the top of a wall emerging from the sand in one of the hollows on the southern limb. The characteristic feature of this pottery, it may be explained here, is the numerous impressions on the surface, of the husks and straw of oats, which have been impressed both with, or temper, the clay, in order to bring it to a proper consistency for potting.

Over most of the sandy area there were exposed evidences of occupation in the shape of traces of buildings, middens refuse, hearths, and burnt broken stones such as were used in Norse cooking and for producing steam for baths.

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A VIKING SETTLEMENT AT FRESWICK, CAITHNESS.

The exploration was commenced in June 1937, and the work carried on for a further period of six weeks during the summer of 1938. The outcropping wall above referred to made a suitable starting-point. It lay approximately east and west along the edge of the hollow, and was formed with large boulders from the beach. Eventually it proved to be the north face of a typical Viking wall, measuring a metre in width with a core of compacted earth in the centre. The remains of buildings which were revealed following this discovery have been grouped under three heads, A, B, and C, according to their apparent age, commencing with the latest.

GROUP A.

The building of which the wall mentioned above formed the south front (No. 1 on plans, figs. 1 and 2), was oblong, and measured internally 30 by 14 feet. It had been subjected to some reconstruction, for the walls at the east and west ends were of different character. Where best preserved, the building had an elevation of from 2 to 3 feet. The area contained within the walls was covered deep in kitchen-midden refuse, and there was no definite floor recognisable over the greater part of it.

The doorway, 3 feet in width, was placed in the north wall at a point 11 feet distant from the west end, and no kerb or sill remained between its jambs. At about 1 foot 8 inches inwards from the doorway, two large upright slabs set on edge protruded above the floor-level to a height of a few inches extended for a length of 6 feet 8 inches—evidently the base of some arrangement employed to screen the fire behind them from a rush of wind. In the centre axis of the house, towards the west end, and covered partially by the projecting flagstones, lay the hearth, measuring some 11 feet in length by 3 feet 9 inches in breadth. There were no remains of a surrounding kerb nor of paving beneath.

At the east end a small rectangular construction with bulls sides occupied the centre of the wall. It measured 2 feet in height, and its upper surface was so level as to suggest that the levelling had been purposely effected. As may be seen from the plan (fig. 2), the structure had not been laid on a square foundation, the north side being 3 feet shorter than the south, in order to make it isosceles. On the floor of the dwelling, between the hearth and the front wall of this interior structure, heavy flagstones had been laid in two distinct rows from an area of scattered paving at the west end (Pl. XXXVII, 4). As will be subsequently explained, the northmost row covered a drain, but no purpose was discernible for the other, which, however, led in the direction of the intake of the vent to be afterwards mentioned. On examination it
became apparent that the construction at the west end was in reality a chamber of which the walls had been reduced all round to an even level, and the interior carefully filled up with stones and turf, so as to ensure a level surface.

When the filling material had all been removed, a chamber was exposed measuring 4 feet 10 inches along the back and front walls, 4 feet 5 inches along the north, and 3 feet 10 inches on the south (fig. 3 and Pl. XXXVIII, 3). The entrance was from the latter direction by way of the space left between the main wall of the house and the south wall of the chamber, which was crossed by a line of stones forming a kerb at its commencement. The entrance, approached by a step and over a projecting sill, was placed somewhat to the west of the centre of the wall, and measured some 2 feet 4 inches in width. Directly opposite, through the north wall, was another opening, 1 foot 8 inches wide, not furnished with a kerb, and in lieu of a step, with two thin slabs of stone sloping downwards into an enclosed space or closet, between the north wall of the chamber and the outer wall of the main building, the detailed description of which will be furnished later.

The walls of the chamber on the inside remained to a height of about 14 inches. The floor was carefully paved over, except for a small area measuring about 12 inches by 6 in the south-west corner, where there had been a fireplace. A heap of levigated clay, amounting to about a barrow-load, was piled up in the north-west corner. Beneath the surface the fireplace was filled with a depth of 12 inches with burnt broken stones, and, as none of these fragments corresponded, it was evident that they had been broken before being employed, as afterwards explained, in the fire. Among the stones a small quantity of peat-ash was observed. When the clay had been removed, a stone, such as could be comfortably held in the hand, was noticed projecting from the paving. On being lifted, it was found to have been used as a plug, filling a nearly formed hole, 3 inches in diameter, and surrounded by large pebbles. Further, on removing one of the paving stones near the centre of the floor a well-dressed drain was exposed, which found its exit through an opening 3 inches wide in the west wall of the chamber, thence continued beneath the floor, previously mentioned on the floor of the house, to discharge by way of an offshoot into a sump, dug in the floor towards the north wall.

On examining the fireplace after removal of the stones with which it had been filled, a vent was discovered passing through the adjacent west wall. On the inner face of the wall the sinking of a lintel had blocked this opening. On the outer face, however, the lintel was still clear, flanked on either side by stones sunk in the floor, one level with the vent, and the other rising above it, as if to direct the air into it.

There was no doubt, from the facts above related, that this was a well-preserved example of a Viking bath, but before dealing further with it, it
description must be furnished of the small closet which opened out of it on the north side.

The angle formed by the junction of the north and west walls of the chamber had been constructed on a level, and from the base of it there ran the foundations of a light wall constructed wall, which had the appearance of being secondary, and which crossed the floor obliquely to the north wall of the house. The space, or closet, behind it measured in greatest length and breadth 7 feet by 3. At the west end, lying tilted against the north wall, were two large flagstones, with a smaller one between (Pl. XXXIX. 1), which, however, were not of sufficient length to have reached the opposite wall and to have formed a shelf, as might have been suggested by the angle at which they lay. The floor beneath them was covered with a deposit of midden refuse similar to that which was spread generally over the floor of the house. Below this there was found the remains of what appeared to be a small, open gutter, formed with thin stone set on edge obliquely on either side, which, passing beneath the westmost flag, led under the bath-chamber. The back of the closet at the east end was paved.

From early times, down in fact to the present day, for the practice still exists in remote districts of Scandinavia and Finland, the method of bathing indulged in by the peasantry, was that of the steam, or vapour, bath. So much in common had it with the bathing practices of Slavonic, Turkish, and Persian countries, that it is a reasonable supposition that the baths of these various regions had all a common origin, and that doubtless the northern peoples imported the fashion with them when they came to their present territories from the Near East during the migration period in the third and fourth centuries of our era. Nor do they, in the course of centuries, seem to have introduced any radical alterations into the system.

Various travellers who have indulged in such baths, or merely witnessed the process of bathing, have furnished accounts of it, and among the former, Paul De Chailly has described the bath-chamber as he found it, and his experience as a bather, in a passage which is worth quoting in part: 1

One of the most characteristic institutions of the country (Finland) is the Squaw (bath-house). It is a small log house, built very tight, with no windows, having a single aperture above to let the smoke out; in the centre is an oven-like structure built of loose stones, under which a fire is kept burning till they are very hot: then the fire is extinguished, and the women cleanse the place thoroughly of ashes and scum, the smoke hole having been in the meantime closed. A large vessel filled with water is placed within; and a number of slender twigs, generally of birch trees, are put into it, to be used as switches. After describing the assembling of the bathers, male and female, who, with a thermometer

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1 The Squaw (bath-house).

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standing below zero, appeared in costumes that reminded him of Africa minus the colour, and his own embarrassment on finding himself among them in the same condition, he goes on to describe the process of bathing: "I hastily pushed the door open and was welcomed by the voices of all the company as I closed it behind me. The heat was so intense that I could hardly breathe, and I begged them not to raise any more steam for a while. At first I seated myself on one of the lower benches built around, after a while getting on the other above. More water was placed on the hot stones, and such a volume of steam arose that I could not endure it, so I jumped down again and reclined in a half-sitting posture in order to breathe more freely. In a short time I was in a most profound perspiration; again and again steam was raised by pouring water on the stones, till at last the hot air and steam became extremely oppressive. Now and then we poured water on each other; thus with troughs everyone's back and loin's were washed till they smarted severely..."

In about half an hour the people began to depart, at first submitting to a final flagellation, after which cold water was poured upon the body; then they went home as naked as they came... I rolled myself in the snow as did some others."

The details of the Frews bath-chamber point to a procedure having been followed there very similar to that related by Dr. Chailly. Barred broken stones would be built up into a heap mingled with peat in the corner above the vent, and the fire lighted from beneath. When the heat of the stones had been raised to a glow heat, and the bath-chamber prepared as described, the bather, or bathers, for the space was not restricted to hold many, would take their places on a bench along the back wall, and water would be thrown on the stones to produce the necessary heat. The stones were of such a size as would retain their heat for a considerable time, so that the process of throwing water on to them would be repeated for as long as was necessary, or as their heat remained sufficient. The flagellation with twigs, no doubt, would follow, as that, from all accounts, appears to have been a regular part of the procedure, and finally a douche of cold water would be administered. It is possible that this last act of ablution took place in the closet on the north side, in front of the inclined flags, which would direct the water to the drain, passing out from beneath them. This last suggestion is put forward tentatively, for the drain was not placed in the position most convenient for such a purpose, nor would the direction of the water into the hole of the bath-chamber building be a sound arrangement when it might with little trouble have been led direct to the main drain outlet.

In a bath-house excavated by Dr. Angus Boullard at Sandness in Greenland, 2 a small lateral chamber was likewise found, but in that case it

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2 Sandness and the Neighbouring Faroes: Scandinavia into Norse Culture in Greenland, p. 96.
actually contained the stove. In the Freswick closet there were no indications of a fire ever having been laid, and, as has been shown, the steam was generated within the bath-chamber itself.

It is highly improbable that the heap of clay deposited in the north-west corner of the chamber had any connection with the building arrangement. As it had been levigated, it is likely that it was intended to be used in the manufacture of pottery.

The secondary character of the bath building was evident from the filling up of a doorway in the back wall, which had originally given access to the building adjoining on the east.

One other feature of interest was discovered in the main building. From the face of the north wall, at a point 5 feet 6 inches to the east of the entrance, there ran a gutter formed with stones set on edge in a shallow trench, and converging at base, which discharged itself into the sump, and had evidently served as a latrine.

Very few relics were recovered from the house or the bath. Such as there were consisted of two perforated femur-heads, which had been used as whistles; a discoid perforated object of bone which may have been similarly used; an oblong object of bone, polished and rounded at one extremity; a tumbrel or sub of bone for a door (Pl. XLIX, 2); several fragments of mediavul pottery, glazed and unglazed, as well as various sherds of Viking cooking pots.

Lying in alignment with No. I, immediately to the east and separated by the mutual wall which forms the back of the bath-chamber, was another building (No. II on plan), measuring 30 feet in length by 11 to 12 feet in breadth, the walls of which on both sides, and at the east end, were much dilapidated.

The mutual wall at the west end had originally, as already stated, been pierced by a doorway somewhat to the north of the centre, and at its south end there was a recess measuring 20 inches across, 9 inches in height from the original floor-level, and 18 inches deep, the back of which was formed with a large upright slab set in the west face of the wall. The wall in the immediate vicinity of this recess, which appears to have been reconstructed, is built with thin flat stones, after the nature of an interior wall. The floor of this house was covered deep in midden refuse and no feature of interest came to light in the course of its clearance. There were indications of fires having been lit on it here and there, but there were no signs of a definite central hearth, and it is doubtful if the building had been used as a dwelling.

At 2 feet 6 inches eastward of the mutual wall, and beneath the floor-level, there was exposed the top of the wall of an earlier building, lying almost parallel with the former, and returning westward at its south end (see plan, fig. 3). It was of superior masonry to the wall of the buildings on the surface, and stood erect for a height of 2 feet 6 inches. Unfortunately, the exploration of the house of which it formed a part would have entailed the destruction of the bath, and this was not considered justifiable.

No. II only yielded a fragment of the upper stone of a rotary quern of garnetiferous silex, a large avoid pebble chipped in the centre of each side, and an awl stone.

Making contact with the house No. I at its south-west corner, as shown on the plan, was a range of building in a very dilapidated condition (No. III), which had also suffered much at the hands of the spoiler. It consisted of two rooms connected by a doorway in the centre of a mutual wall, and had evidently formed a smithy, with probably a workshop (Pl. XXXIX, 2). The eastmost chamber, the walls of which had been very poorly constructed, measured some 12 feet 6 inches in length, by 10 feet at its east end and 11 feet 3 inches at the west. At one time a doorway had been broken through the west wall of No. I, but subsequently closed, and a door, probably later, opened at the west end of the south wall.

The floor was covered with five layers of flat stones rising to a convex profile, with the highest point in the centre. The lower layer consisted of flat, heavy beach-stones, lying on sand; while above them were layers of Caithness stone, nearly fitted to one another, with occasional pockets of midden refuse between. The depth of this paving was 6 inches. Below the upper layer there were remains of a hearth evidently secondary.

The purpose which this flooring was intended to serve was not obvious, but it would have provided a thoroughly stable foundation for an awl or bench set upon it.

In the south-west corner, adjacent to the doorway and 1 foot 7 inches from both walls, there was a pit 2 feet 2 inches in diameter and 1 foot deep filled with soil, having countersunk in the centre of it a post-hole surrounded with packing stones, 1 foot 10 inches deep from the surface and 9 inches in diameter. No corresponding post-hole was found on the opposite side of the doorway, nor in the opposite corner of the chamber, where there was a bed of clay.

The only relics found in this chamber were three perforated femur-heads, which had been used as whistles, all of which came from the north-east corner.

The partition wall had been constructed with thin flat stones, and still remained to a height of 1 foot 8 inches. Placed against it at some 2 feet north of the doorway was a block of stone, some 8 inches square in section, rising a few inches above floor-level, and firmly set in the sand. Stones, either built into the wall or placed as this one, are usually associated with the position of a seat. The section of the wall to the south of the doorway was founded more deeply than that opposite, and as the latter rested on a midden it had evidently subsided to some extent, as may be seen in the illustration (Pl. XXXIX, 2). The doorway was 2 feet wide, and opened on VOL XXXIII.
to a paved area at the east end of the second chamber. Of this chamber (Pl. XL, 1) the whole of the west wall, and almost the entire length of the south wall, had been removed, and accordingly the exact dimensions were not procurable. But where the walling had survived at the east end, it had measured 13 feet in width, and, judging from the size of the hearth and the extent of the south wall, it had probably measured about 21 feet in length. The south wall still showed four to five courses of stone rising to a height of 1 foot 9 inches, and towards its west end, as shown on plan (fig. 2), it had been buttressed, with a row of heavy boulders lying against its outer face.

Occupying the interior of the chamber was a large hearth, measuring some 10 feet in length, by 8 feet in breadth at its western end, and 8 feet at the east where there were intakes on both sides, covered with a bed of compacted peat-sash to a depth of 13 inches. It had been enclosed on three sides with a kerb of long, narrow stones set on edge, a number of which still remained in situ. The hearth had been distant 1 foot 4 feet from the east wall, and only 2 feet 6 inches from that on the north. The paving in front of the doorway in the division wall extended up to the edge of the hearth, and no kerb intervened at this end. At the east end, and on the south side, the end kerb stone, 2 feet 9 inches in length, was placed 9 inches inwards from the general alignment, and in rear of this was a paved recess in the hearth, which was free from peat-sash, and measured some 2 feet square in extent. Opposite this, firmly set at the base of the south wall, was a flat-topped stone about 1 foot in breadth and projecting a few inches above floor-level, which may have been connected with the amn. On the north side of the hearth, and at the east end, a flue had been formed, rather over 1 foot in width, with two flat stones set on edge parallel to the kerb. When discovered, this had been used as a fireplace, and was filled with kitchen-midden refuse. At its inner end it had been blocked with a number of thin flat stones standing on edge, which, when the true nature of the construction was realised, were found to be the original covers of the flue, and were replaced (Pl. XL, 2). The flue terminated in a slope of hard compacted peat-sash. While no food refuse lay upon the hearth, such material covered the area at the east end of the chamber.

Irrespective of the space occupied by the fire, the character of the refuse found in this part of the building left no doubt that it had been the smelting of the settlement. Heavy lumps of slag, the residue of bog iron ore from which the iron had been inefficiently extracted, were numerous, but there was no trace of a bloomery, nor did any of the slag lie among the peat-sash. We found six hones, all but one of the type which have been designated "haunches," from the haunch-like expansions at one end; three objects of iron; and a flat ovoid pebble, fastened on both sides as if by polishing. In addition to these were several objects not necessarily to be found in such associations, viz. a hammer-headed pin of bronze (Pl. L. 7) found with a small-touched, single-sided comb (Pl. XLI, 2); and a finger ring of thin, flat bronze plate, penannular, and tapered to the extremities (Pl. L. 10). As these three last-mentioned relics all come from the extreme west end, two of them may have been from the site of the wall which could not be identified, while the last-mentioned was from the upcast; they may all thus have belonged to an earlier period. There were also found a bone pin, a sandstone pebble, longitudinally grooved and plano-convex in cross-section, which had probably been used as a plummet. Near it was found a quartz object, which seemed to have served the same purpose. From the vent there came a whiff fashioned from a perforated femur-head.

To the northwest of the last building, and lying directly east and west, at a distance of some 23 feet from its eastern end, are the remains of a dwelling (No. IV on plan), the walls of which have been reduced practically to foundation level (Pl. XL, 1). Though this building is not in parallel alignment with those previously described, the relative levels indicate that it probably was in contemporary occupation in its final stage. Two doorways in the north wall were blocked, which suggests that the house at one time had formed part of another construction, or of a range of buildings extending to the north.

It measured interiorly 29 feet in length by 12 feet 6 inches in width, with a slight reduction in the latter dimension towards the western end. The walls, which appeared all to belong to one period, measured 2 feet 6 inches in breadth, except the east wall, which measured 2 feet 3 inches. The entrance, 3 feet wide, was through the east wall, a little to the north of the centre of the gable, while in the north wall were two filled-up doorways. As was not unusual in houses of the Viking period, there had been an outbuilding in front of the door, here merely represented by foundations —no doubt to afford protection from the violent winds that frequently blow in from the sea on the north-east coast. Between this and the gable a passage had been formed, leading to the main door, which was entered through a doorway, 2 feet wide, just outside the south-east angle of the dwelling. In front of this was an area of paving 12 feet by 8 feet in extent. At a point 1 foot 9 inches in from the doorway the passage was crossed by a massive kerb, which projected to a height of 10 inches (Pl. XIV. 2). At a distance of 3 feet 6 inches from the outer doorway the paving expanded from 2 to 3 feet, and continued at that width to the entrance to the house. Owing to the erection of the gable at its north end on a kitchen-midden, there had been a considerable subsidence at that point, which had resulted in a steep slope in the passage. On this had been laid several layers of paving slabs to reduce the gradient.

To the north of the doorway of the house, and covering the northmost
proportion of the gable, was a box-like enclosure (Pl. XLII, 1), measuring 5 feet by 4 feet, and divided lengthwise into two equal compartments by two large upright slabs, now incomplete, but which must originally have risen to a height of 2 feet above the floor of the box. This enclosure had been formed with a surrounding wall through which there appears to have been a gap, some 18 inches wide, on one or both sides, of the gable side. The inner or south compartment alone was paved. There was nothing to indicate the purpose served by these twin compartments, but they may have been used to contain young animals, or stores. At the inner end of the entrance there was a kerb, a thin slab set on edge and rising to a height of some 6 inches above the floor-level.

Within the house, lying in the central axis, and somewhat to the east of the centre, was the site of the "long fire," measuring 12 feet by 6 feet, which had been laid on the deep deposit of food refuse that formed the floor. If it had been originally protected by a kerb, all the stones had been removed. From the face of the north wall, and alongside the hearth, several stones projected, which may have formed brackets for the support of a bench. Occupying the south-east corner, to the left of the doorway, was an oblong area, measuring 3 feet 6 inches by 4 feet, slightly raised, and outlined on the outer side by a setting of flat stones (Pl. XLII, 2). This was evidently the site of the bed, and was analogous in position to the platforms met with in the chambers of the Viking buildings at Jarlsnaef, Shetland.1

Such bed-platforms indicate that the simple fashion of sleeping on bedding spread out on a platform in place of upon a constructed wooden bedstead still prevailed. The old Norse word seng originally meant such bedding rather than the bed itself.2

On the opposite side of the doorway a thin wall extended inwards for a length of 4 feet 6 inches, leaving between it and the north wall a space 2 feet 3 inches wide. There appeared to have been an enclosure of some sort in the south-west corner, measuring some 6 feet 6 inches by 5 feet, but the remains were very indefinite, and there were also indications of a partition wall having been erected on the top of the wall of an earlier occupation beneath, which had collapsed when the house fell into ruin. Two short lengths of wall, 1 foot 5 inches apart, projected from the south wall towards its west end, suggesting the remains of a cupboard, and an object of oseaeam bone, 53 inches in length, found in the immediate vicinity, had evidently been half of a turn buckle or snub with which to keep a door closed.

The three relics recovered from this house were neither numerous nor important. There were three whorls, two of bone made from femur-heads, and one of stone with some simple, nondescript ornamentation around the

2 Anglo-Roman, op. cit., p. 76.

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perforation on one face: a tapered penaeus-shaped ring of very thin bronze, of which one-third was missing; part of a haunched bone: a piece of thin sheet bronze with two rivets in it, probably part of a cauldron: two oseaeam pebbles both fractured at one end: an iron rivet with a lozenge-shaped head: an iron knife, and a hook of the same metal: a stone with a narrow longitudinal groove on one face, possibly a sharpening stone: and a piece of the upper stone of a rotary quern, formed of granitiferous schist, and found in the wall when opening out the eastmost of the two closed doorways on the north, also a piece of bone. A third whorl made from a femur-head was discovered in the north-west division of the enclosure outside the door. A certain amount of iron slag was also found in this house. On the level of the existing wall-head at the west end there was found a piece of a medieval cooking pot, referable in date to the second half of the thirteenth century. Based on the north wall of the house at its western end was a small enclosure in the form of a quadrant of a circle, measuring some 10 feet along the north base by 9 feet on the east. The entrance, 2 feet wide, was from the north interrupting the corner of the two sides, and beyond it the east wall extended for a distance of 8 feet. On the surface of this enclosure, at the level of the remaining wall-head of No. IV, a paving extended over one-half of the area, evidently of later date. Beneath this the soil was black and closely compacted, with little or no food refuse interspersed. Towards the west, the east wall was constructed without facing stones, and had probably been backed with turf on this side. The features of this enclosure, and the condition of the floor, suggested that it had been a small fold such as was used to hold the ewes when they were driven in to be milked. In which case the extension of the east wall at the entrance was made to facilitate the herding of the sheep. No relics were found within it.

At the east end of the sand hollow, facing directly on to the top of the sandy bank that rose up from the beach, were the foundations of a large enclosure (plan 2, No. V), which can only have been the "naust" or boat-shed into which the boats were drawn in autumn by means of rollers and ropes over a slipway up from the shore, to be sheltered from the storms during the winter, and tarred and reconditioned for the following year's voyages. The "naust," as will be seen from the plan, had been an irregular U-shaped construction open towards the sea, with the north walls of houses Nos. I and II forming the south leg of the latter, and the other lying 25 feet to the north. Forming the centre part of the back wall was a straight length of foundation, 12 feet in length and 2 feet 6 inches in breadth. Elsewhere the foundations were irregular and massive, formed with large heavy boulders. While the seaward portion of the north limb of the U, owing to the more or less less level character of its surface and the heavy boulders with which its outline was formed, suggested a slip on which a boat might have been constructed, there was no positive evidence for this forthcoming.
the north side of the open space in front was the site of a hearth on a bed of clay, burnt to a brick red, and from this was recovered an iron ship rivet. Much corroded, while remains of several others were picked up in the immediate neighbourhood. At the upper edge of the bank near the centre there was a setting of large stones extending across the area for some 4 or 5 feet, with a single stone on end sunk deeply in rear of them. From the position of these stones it seems probable that they formed the site of a windlass for drawing up the boats. On the slope in front, and towards its upper end, lay three or four large flat stones in a line, which were possibly the remains of a gangway.

At the seaward end of the "nau" (adjacent to the site of the hearth), there was found by Mr. Simon Bremer, set upright in the sand with its upper edge just protruding, the cooking pot (PL II. 4), and the pieces of the small cup (PL III. 3), now reconstructed, were subsequently also recovered from this spot. On this area there was also found a large quartz pebble, 4 inches in length (similar to others found on the site to be discussed later on), flat on one side, with a partial perforation at one end, and probably intended for use as a plunger.

As previously mentioned, the historical evidence in the Sagas shows that a Viking settlement had existed at Freswick from a period at least as early as the eleventh century, and to judge from the standing of those whose names figure in connection with it, it was the residence of people of importance. While nothing has emerged in the course of the excavation that would afford a clue to the terminus a quo, we are able from certain relics to assume a fairly sure date for the terminus ad quem, the latest occupation of the group of buildings which have been discussed on the foregoing pages.

Associated with these buildings have been found sundry sherds of medieval pottery which can be attributed to the second half of the thirteenth century. Among them is a sherd in particular, found on the wall-head of No. IV, which presents a close parallel with a sherd found at Hayleigh Castle, Essex, the occupation of which ceased some time before the year 1277. The other piece of evidence is a silver penny of the reign of Henry III of England, Moneyer "Willem on Lund," Mint, London, dating from about 1253-1279, which was picked up on the surface of the blown-out hollow. This is slender evidence for dating, but it is strengthened by the negative evidence, supplied by the fact that no relic, which could be assigned to a later date, was found.

If, for the end of the occupation, some date between 1250 and 1270 may be accepted, then it is possible to suggest a cause for the abandonment of Freswick by the Norsemen. In the year 1304, the year subsequent to the

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battle of Largs, Alexander III. sent an army into Caithness to exact a fine from the people because they had submitted to King Haakon of Norway in the previous year. The army stayed in Caithness until the autumn and departed by sea, taking with them the treasure they had collected, much of which, however, was lost during the course of their voyage to Douglas. King in the South Isles. It seems a fair assumption that at the hands of Alexander's expedition the Vikings were driven from Freswick, for as sealers they were probably in a better position than most of the inhabitants of the county to render assistance to the Norwegian king. As stated above, the buildings explored have been divided into three groups according to their periods, estimated from their relative depths from the surface. Group A, the constituents of which have been described in detail above, consisted of (1) two long buildings which may at one time have been dwellings, but which in their latest stage had in the one case been used to contain a bath-house, and in the other possibly allowed to become derelict, or been used as a store; (2) the smithy, and an interconnected chamber; (3) an isolated dwelling, not in parallel alignment, and possibly of slightly earlier construction; and (4) the "nau" (or boatshed). The group appears to have been part of a settlement on a courtyard plan, not too complex, as in the case of the Greenland farmsteads and such as also appears to have been the case in Shetland. We have here the bath and the smithy, situated on the south wing and somewhat isolated, as being both potential sources of conflict. The boatshed has occupied the east side, and the dwelling has been erected on the north-west.

The farm buildings, consisting of the stables, byre, dairy, and other outbuildings, are not represented, except perhaps, in the case of the annex to the dwelling, and it may be presumed that they occupied the north side, and so far as any parts remain they probably lie beneath a bank of sand, which rises to a height of 6 feet and more above the level of the floor of the hollow.

The dwelling-house in its details does not conform exactly to the typical Viking house of the Viking period, as revealed at Jarlsbyg, Shetland, in 1934 or to that exposed in Group B, to be shortly described. There was no indication along either side of the platform, or dais, on which the benches were placed, and where the inmates sat and took their meals, nor was there found any oven sunk in the floor, nor any of the burnt broken stones that accompany such cooking arrangements. Both features found in the houses above referred to. Nor was there any remains of a high seat, either at the side or at the end of the hearth, as in the earlier house in Group B, nor any indication of the hearth having been originally contained within a kerb. The account of kitchen refuse covering the floor pointed to rather filthy conditions of occupancy during this last phase, and suggested that slum conditions may
have arisen at Fræswick before the settlement finally closed its existence. The paucity of relics produced from the careful examination of much kitchen-midden refuse pointed to the further conclusion that the residents of 'Thraestic' had not formed a wealthy community.

GROUP B.

Group B, situated at the west end of the hollow, was covered by a much greater depth of sand than were the buildings of Group A, and part of it actually lay beneath the foundations of No. IV of the latter group.

It consisted, as shown on the plan (fig. 4), of a dwelling-house (No. VI), a small chamber constructed against its east wall, and represented by fragmentary remains of some pieces of walking and a flue. To a greater extent even than in the case of the previous group there was evidence of reconstruction, and of earlier buildings having existed in the immediate vicinity.

The three members of the group lay approximately east and west, with the dwelling-house at the end, a little out of alignment with the others. The house was, however, itself a secondary construction on the site, for, as will be observed by reference to the plan, it had been erected against, and with its south wall partially embedded in, the wall of an earlier structure, much more massive in character, and which had belonged to a building of greater length. This wall, which starts at the western end of a doorway on the east, is exposed for a distance of 50 feet, with a width of some 3 feet.
on the south and east, and one making a return to the north, at the south-west corner. Peat-ash lay upon it to a depth of 1 foot, representing two periods of occupation, distinguishable by an intercalated layer of discoloured sand. Along the north wall there was still traceable, for a breadth of some 3 feet, the site of the poltr, or dais. This was readily recognizable by the purplish tinge of the sand which lay almost at the surface, having been protected during the period of occupation by a flooring, or covering of some carpeting material, possibly of rushes or heather. This condition of the sand was in marked contrast to that on the floor of the dwelling, which was uniformly discoloured to a depth of several inches. Towards the west end two long flat stones, set on edge, were probably the remains of a kerb that had extended all along the edge similar to the remains found at Jarlshof. On the south side, and to the east of the centre, there extended for a distance of 5 feet a line of similar stones, which though only some 20 inches distant from the existing wall-face were the same distance out from the face of the original wall as were those from the north wall, and accordingly may be regarded as having formed edge-stones of a dais which had existed along that side in the original house.

At the east end, between the kerb of the hearth and the end wall, was a low platform some 3 feet 6 inches long and slightly less in breadth, with a row of boulders along the front, and a narrower platform rising at the back of it, 2 feet 9 inches broad. On the fore and foremost of these platforms, for the back one seems too narrow, stood the high seat reserved for the master of the house. On the south side of the high seat platform, covered by the upper stone of a rotary quern (Pl. XLVI, 1), was a post-hole, some 18 inches in depth and 9 inches in diameter. There were wedge stones at the mouth of the hole, and on one side a packing of clay, while a fragment of carbonised willow was recovered from the bottom. The old Norse name for the high seat was oakin, derived from the name of the two thick pillars between which it was placed. These pillars, in Viking pagan times, adorned with carved representations of the gods, were regarded as holy, and when the Norwegian colonists emigrated to Iceland they took their high-seat pillars with them. The position of the above-mentioned post-hole suggests that it may have contained such a pillar, while another post-hole on the north side, 17 inches deep and 7 inches in diameter, may have held its corresponding fellow. On the other hand, it should be noted that on the north side four post-holes were discovered more or less at equal distances from one another, in which series occurred that adjacent to the site of the high seat. On the south side, although the post-holes are not similarly in alignment, there is a series also equidistant, and accordingly the pillars they contained in both series may have been merely used in support of the roof.

In all, along the north side four post-holes were recovered 8 to 7 feet apart, and along the south side five. The three in the centre were more or less equidistant, at 6 to 7 feet, while the post-hole already referred to beside the site of the high seat was some 8 feet distant from its neighbour, and quite out of alignment. The fifth was only 4 feet west from the fourth. The post-holes on the south side, with the exceptions of the first and third, were placed nearer the wall than on the opposite side, while the fourth and fifth were situated one each side of the blocked doorway, as if they had had some connection with it.

In a number of instances the holes had been purposely preserved, in one case, as already mentioned, by covering the mouth with a quern stone, and in others by the insertion of pointed boulders, thus indicating that when this house was abandoned there still was an idea in the minds of its owners that it might again be roofed and occupied. The existence of such an intention may have saved it from the demolition that overtook other buildings in its neighbourhood.

On the north side, some 12 feet distant from the west wall, and just in front of where the edge of the dais had been, was a cooking oven. It was much dilapidated, and only a few of the stones that had formed the sides remained, while the sole at the bottom had evidently been removed. However, to dispel any doubt there might have been as to the purpose of the hole, several burnt broken stones remained within it. Its dimensions had been apparently 2 feet by 1 foot 5 inches, and its depth 7 to 8 inches. As in the similar oven found at Jarlshof, the slab forming the back was sloped backwards. The method of cooking was that still practised by some primitive tribes. The broken stones, heated in the fire nearby, were deposited in the bottom of the hole. They were then covered with a layer of grass, or other vegetable matter, such as leaves, on the top of which was placed the food to be cooked. Further layers of grass and heated stones were superimposed, and on the top, to keep in the heat, was placed a covering of turf.

On the south side of the house, at 5 feet distant from the east wall, and little more than 1 foot off from the face of the south wall, there was another stone-lined pit, on which the slabs remained on three sides. It measured 2 feet square, and had a depth of 1 foot 4 inches. It was not floored, nor did it contain peat-ash, nor any burnt broken stones to indicate that it also had been used as a cooking oven, but a number of pieces of broken pot were found within it. In its vicinity, along the margin of the central hearth, where a kerb had been removed, there was substituted an elongated
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and of bone; an iron knife-blade and two or three unimportant objects of iron; three pieces of tin bronze, two of them with rivet holes in them, parts of a cauldron; a small cylindrical block of quartz, grooved across each face for a cord, probably to be used as a plummet, or weight; three stone pot-lids of different sizes, and the upper stone of a rotary quern of unusual form, being approximately pear-shaped, with the perforations for the handle in the narrow end, bound as stated, covering a post-hole. At the base of the entry wall on the south there was found a piece of a large creature urn, and the polished time of a red deer antler.

The further remains of buildings in this group are fragmentary, and difficult to determine. Immediately to the east of the dwelling-house was an area enclosed on three sides only, measuring some 8 feet from north to south, and expanding from a width of 5 feet 9 inches at the back or north end to 8 feet at the front. The west wall, which had been reconstructed in part, to the extent of the reconstructed portion, formed its west flank. The north wall was an earlier building than the last, and the east side was formed by the west wall of the third construction in the group. There was no indication of any wall, or doorway, having closed the south end, nor was there any access to the area from either of the adjacent buildings. It may possibly have been intended for an open shed. On the floor, however, towards the south end, there were indications of an interior construction of some kind. The remains of two lines of large flat boulders, some 3 feet apart, may be seen on plan (fig. 4) projecting from the east and west walls, enclosing a space some 7 feet 6 inches by 2 feet, which had been paved. Beneath the paving was a bed of rounded water-worn stones for drainage, and the plaster material between them showed that the arrangement had been effective. Possibly this has been the site of a store closet.

Still more perplexing than the last were the remains adjoining on the east. Here again there had been walls on three sides of an enclosed area, now represented by a fairly good wall 1 foot 10 inches high; on the west, a much reduced wall on the south, and a mere foundation on the east. It will be observed on reference to the plan (fig. 4) that the south-east corner had been rounded, which is unusual.

This area is crossed at 1 foot 8 inches back from the front, or south wall, by a wall of heavier construction, 3 feet wide, which joins the west wall with a butt-joint. An air-vent, 1 foot wide and traceable for 1 foot 10 inches to the northward, is carried through this wall in alignment with a corresponding opening in the south wall. The space between the two walls is paved, but there is no indication that a constructed duct led across it, nor that it was open at the east end, as it certainly was not at the west.

The vent is formed with flat boulders on either side, and is still carrying its course for a few feet at the north end. Adjacent to its termination
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there was a bed of peat-ash, but not of sufficient extent to induce the belief that it had been associated with the flue, but the similarity between this dust and that proceeding from the west end of the adjacent dwelling, which is believed to have been a flue, indicate that they had served a similar purpose. There has been no such reconstruction, however, of the buildings on this site that it seems possible to determine the original purpose of any remaining fragment.

Only one relic was found, and that among midden refuse to the north of the westmost section of cross-wall. This was the portion of a pentagonal brooch of bronze with a zoomorphic terminal (PI. XLIV, 16).

Unconnected with the constructions forming Group B were other fragmentary remains in the immediate neighbourhood.

From the front of the doorway at the eastern extremity of the early wall against which house No. VI had been erected, there was uncovered a short length of walling running in a south-easterly direction, but absolutely in isolation owing to the removal, as far as ascertainable, of all other portions of the structure to which it had belonged. To the west of this lay a large kitchen-midden which, on examination, produced the greater part of a bone case for a long comb (PI. XLIV, 1).

GROUP C.

This group, lying at a lower depth than Group B and so probably of earlier date, was situated at the extreme east end of the hollow, and lay in a north to south direction. It consisted of the southern portion of what appeared to have been a range of buildings (fig. 3), much dilapidated, and passing away to the northward beneath the bank of sand which forms the boundary of the hollow in that direction.

It will be observed from the plan that the walls had been thicker than in the later buildings, measuring 1 feet across, the same width as the early wall utilized in part to form the south side of house No. VI. They had been constructed in characteristic Viking fashion with a core of compacted earth between two facings of stone. At a point in the west wall the skull of a small whale had been inserted. Underneath the building lay the remains of an earlier structure which had been formed with walls of wattle and daub erected on a bed of clay 4 inches thick. The carbonised wattles and baked clay, which lay to a depth of 4 inches between the later wall and the primary clay foundation, showed that the house had been destroyed by fire. An examination of the carbonised wattles revealed that they had been of willow, a fact which supplies a clue to the nature of the thicket mentioned above, as having existed in the neighbourhood in Saga times.

The southmost building of the range consisted of a chamber measuring

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18 feet by 14, which had probably been a barn. A doorway, which appeared to have been some 3 feet wide, had given access to the interior from the west by a paved passage through the wall. The north side was formed by a broad partition wall, through which there had been a narrow doorway leading to an adjacent chamber, and subsequently closed. The floor consisted of clay and peat-ash beaten to a hard consistency, and on it there were no remains of a central hearth, nor of any of the characteristic features of a dwelling.

In the south-west corner a kiln had been constructed, obviously for drying grain or fodder, and the rounding of the corners in which it had been placed, both externally and internally, indicated that it was a part of the original building. Over the remains of the kiln and of the adjacent walls, as well as over the greater part of the interior, lay a mass of clay, which seems to have been used as a core to the walls, or for some other indefinite purpose in the structure.

The kiln measured some 9 feet from the intake of the vent to the back of the chamber, and had expanded from 14 inches to 2 feet 2 inches at the widest point at the inner end, where the width appeared to have been reduced by a lining of stones on one side, as shown in the illustration (Pl. XLV, 2), possibly for the purpose of carrying a floor. The floor of the kiln was covered to a depth of several inches with peat-ash.

In the south-west corner of the "barn," directly opposite the mouth of the flue, a small rectangular basin had been formed by excavation, with large stones placed against the two walls. It was paved on the floor, and the sides were luted with clay so that it could contain water. In the opposite, or north-west corner, there was a small basin-shaped hollow, sunk some 8 inches below floor-level, and with a diameter of about 2 feet, lined all round with clay and floored with flat stones (Pl. XLV, 3). The interior was filled with peat-ash and kitchen-midden refuse, but there was no sign of the action of heat on the clay.

Beyond the partition wall on the north the building was much dilapidated. The west wall was traceable, for a further distance of 26 feet from the cross-wall, by a line of tumbled boulders, and the east wall for a shorter distance. From the latter, at a distance of some 2 feet 6 inches from the built-up doorway, a very narrow wall projected for a short distance into the interior, and at its termination appeared to have been set on the circumference of a round hearth, or the remains of a second kiln, constructed against the north face of the partition wall. All that remained of this construction was an outline of flat stones set on the circumference and not contiguous. In the course of the exploration of this last-mentioned building, the east wall which passed across No. II to the east of the bath was uncovered and was found to be part of an earlier building than No. VII.
Very few relics came from this group. Such as there were consisted of a number of sherds of the usual hand-made pottery, a strip of thin bronze, obviously a patch for a cauldron, and which had been affixed with paper-fastener rivets, three of which still remained attached: and a long pin of bone, in pieces, and only partially fashioned.

**The Relics found Throughout the Excavations.**

The relics found were not numerous, and on the whole were characteristic of the later Viking period in Scotland.

**Bone.**

The objects fashioned from bone form the largest category.

**Comb (Small).**—There are three combs (Pl. XLVII. 2-4), all incomplete. Two of them (Nos. 2 and 4) have the teeth on one side only, but the third (No. 3) has had on the top of the bow a short subsidiary comb, furnished with finer teeth, and which appears to have extended for only a short distance along the centre. The bead-like ends of this last-mentioned comb, both above and below, are ornamented with a single double concentric circle and a dot.

Of the other two, one (No. 2) is ornamented with two incised parallel lines extending the length of the bow, enclosing between them the row of rivets that hold both sides together; and the teeth, in place between them. The other comb is not decorated in any way.

No. 2 came from the smithy: No. 4 was found on the top of the wall of house No. 11; and No. 3 came from the hearth in No. VI.

The type of complete double comb which is not represented here is probably referable to the thirteenth century. As, however, No. 3 was found on a site of an earlier period, and does not conform to the double-booted comb type, it is probably referable to an earlier date. Its bowed or beaked ends, with double circle and dot decoration engraved upon them, in form resemble those features on a large single comb found in Bergen, and dating from the commencement of the thirteenth century. Both single and complete double combs from the Viking and post-Viking periods are of frequent occurrence owing to the fashion then in vogue for the men to wear their hair long, but a comb of this form appears to be unusual. As in the Oslo comb, the larger teeth are rounded, not rectangular in section as is usually the case in the later combs.

**Comb-case.**—This object (Pl. XLVII. 1), which is in pieces, and incomplete, has consisted of four tapered strips of bone each 3½ inches in length, of which two broader pieces, ¾ of an inch in breadth at the centre, formed the upper part of the case, and the other two strips, ⅛ of an inch in breadth.

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1. Interior of I, showing Flagstones on Floor.
2. Interior of Bath Chamber A, showing Position of Flagstone Lintel of Entrance.

A. O. CURLE.

PLATE XXXVIII.
1. View into Closet to north of Bath Chamber showing displaced Slabstones.

2. Remain of Smithy with Workshop beyond.


4. East end of Smithy showing Pine on left of hearth.
1. Dwelling VI from east showing site of High Seat at west end with Keeb-stones of Dalle on left.

2. Remains of Doorway into Dwelling VI.

1. Section of Passage on north, burned broken stones in north, and different styles of masonry in the south wall of Dwelling VI.

2. Trench at west end of Dwelling VI.
1. Dwelling VI, showing foundations of secondary cross-wall.

2. Remains of kiln in corner of supposed Barn, VII.

A. O. CULLE.

PLATE XLV.

1. Queen found in Dwelling VI.
2. Blade-shaped hollow on floor of Barn.
3. Specimen of dough showing impressions of wattles, from VII.

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PLATE XLVI.
1 and 2. Turn Handles of Cooking Vessels. 3 and 4. Whets made from Roman Heads.

A. O. CURLE.

PLATE XLIX.
A VIKING SETTLEMENT AT FRESWICK, CAITHNESS.

At centre and tapering more than the larger pieces to either end, formed the lower parts. The strips forming each pair were placed opposite to one another with the larger strips uppermost, and fastened at one end by single iron rivets to a plate of bone about \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch square, inserted between the ends so as to leave space for the comb, and projecting to the extent of one-half its length beyond. One plate, imperfect, remains, and has measured about 1 inch by \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch. The other part of this plate has been pierced by two oval holes, one of which is still complete, and shows considerable evidence of wear at its outer edge. Through these holes a cord was passed to enable the owner to carry his comb in a case suspended from his neck.

All four strips are plano-convex in section and decorated with a series of lightly incised parallel lines, between the outer pairs of which, in each case, occurs a row of dot and circle ornament. At a point some \( \frac{1}{4} \) of an inch back from the end of the upper strip where the remaining plate occurs, both strips have been perforated with circular holes, the one measuring \( \frac{3}{4} \) of an inch in diameter, and the other \( \frac{1}{2} \) of an inch. To prevent the comb falling out of the case when it was worn, some temporary fastening was necessary, and this was probably supplied by a tapered pin of bone or wood, which was passed through these holes. The size of the rivet hole remaining at the opposite end of one strip makes it quite clear that the purpose of these larger perforations was not to hold rivets, and no other use than that suggested appears to meet the case.

The complete length of the comb within the case has been \( \frac{1}{4} \) inches.

Among the combs found at Jarlshof there is one with straight ends measuring \( \frac{1}{2} \) inches in length and pierced at one end obviously for such a pin, while perforations at one end of other combs of the period are not uncommon.1 A case for a small comb, found in Oslo, shows also two perforations for a cord in the bone-plate at one end.1 In the long comb found on the Links of Skail, Orkney, and preserved in the Museum, there are perforations through the plates at either end, and one perforation only at one end of the comb-case. Such an arrangement would obviously save trouble in making it immaterial as to which way the comb was replaced in its case.

As mentioned above, the remains of this comb-case were found in a kitchen-midden of early date, which in respect that it appeared to be situated within the limits of an earlier house was probably not referable to the earliest occupation of the site. It was, however, obviously earlier in date than dwelling No. VI, in which the comb No. 3 was found.

Dress Fasteners.—Four objects (PI. XLVIII, 11–14), thus generally designated, made from metacarpals of pig, and perforated in the centre of their length, were found. Three of the four came from the earlier
buildings—two from dwelling No. VI and one from the floor of No. VII—while the fourth was a surface find. Though such objects are usually termed "dress fasteners," there is a difficulty in accepting this explanation of their use, in case at any rate, from the absence of any signs of wear around the edges of the perforations such as might be expected from the friction of a cord.

Similar objects, made either from tubular fragments of bone, or from complete bones as in this case, have been found on sites ranging over a long period of time from the Oseberg and Gokstad sites to Viking times. One was recovered from the Viking house at Jarlsby, Shetland, and another, found in a woman's grave at Viking period at Cursa, near Berwick. The last was found associated with a pair of iron shears, and, typical details of a woman's attire, a pair of oval brooches of bronze and a pin with a movable ring head.

If they had really been dress fasteners, it is singular that they do not occur on Viking sites more frequently, and are only represented by isolated examples.

Pins, Pincers or Bodkins. Pins.—There are among the relics three small pins (Pl. XLVIII, 7-9), with rounded heads, varying in length from 1 1/2 inches to 1 1/4 inches. Two of them taper directly to the point, while the third shows a definite swelling towards the point, indicating its probable use in some textile fabric. A short baluster-shaped object (Pl. XLVIII, 10), of an inch in length, has apparently been the head of another pin. All these objects were surface finds.

Pincers or Needles.—Of these there are eight, six of which are illustrated in Pl. XLVIII. Of the others, one is represented merely by the upper end, and the other by a partially shaped object in process of manufacture. The largest example (No. 4), made from the cannon bone of an ox, or deer, measures 4 1/2 inches in length. It has been much smoothed by use at the pointed end, and was found while opening out one of the closed doorways on the north wall of No. IV. Another, with a certain amount of artistry in its production (No. 3), has been likewise fashioned from a cannon bone of an ox, or deer. It was found at a high level in clearing out No. VII. No. 5, measuring 2 1/2 inches in length, made from the cannon bone of a sheep, was found on the floor-level of No. VI. No. 6, measuring 4 inches in length, was found in a kitchen-midden in front of the entrance to No. IV. Included with the bone pincers is one of polished deer-horn, not illustrated, made from the brow tine of a red deer's antler. It is of coarser form, with a larger point than any of the others, and was found clearing off sand and gravel on the north-east of No. VI.

Eye-Pins. — There are two eye bodkins, or needles (Pl. XLVIII, 1 and 2). The larger, No. 1, is imperfect, and measures 4 3/4 inches in length. No. 2 is of a form frequently found on Viking sites, and measures 3 1/2 inches in length. Both were surface finds.

Turn Buckles or Door-Snakes. — These of these objects, made of cetacean bone, two complete (Pl. XLIX, 1 and 2) and one represented by a half only, were found. The complete examples measure respectively in length 4 1/2 inches and 4 1/4 inches. No. 1 is pierced with a circular perforation for the pin on which it revolved, near its centre, while No. 2 has a similar perforation at 1 1/2 inches from one end. Both perforations are about 1/8 of an inch diameter. The imperfect example has been broken across the pin hole, which has probably been towards one end, as in the case of No. 2.

Fig. 5. Object of Cetacean Bone. (1/4)

These objects resemble the wooden snakers formerly used on the doors of cupboards, and they possibly served a similar purpose.

Two similar objects, one complete and one represented by one-half only, were recovered from a kitchen-midden in the immediate vicinity of the Viking dwelling of Jarlsby, Shetland. Object of Indeterminate Use.—An object made from cetacean bone (Fig. 5), which in general appearance resembles a turn buckle, on closer examination appears to have served some other purpose. It measures 3 1/2 inches in length, 1 1/4 inch in breadth at one end, and 1 1/2 at the other. At 1 1/2 inch from the narrower end the block has been pierced by a hole for a bolt, 1 1/2 of an inch square in section, and the upper surface has been slightly lowered at this point to receive a circular iron washer beneath the bolt head, the rest of the iron being visible on the surface. It is thus obvious that it was not intended to revolve. The underside of the object has been cut back on a level from a point just in advance of the hole to the end, so that if the block was bolted to a flat surface there would be a space of 1/2 inch between it and the latter at the extremity. If it is clear from the size of the perforation and the evidence of the washer that it was intended to be firmly fixed, possibly it was a cleat.

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Whorls.—Hemispherical whorls made from the heads of ox femurs (Pl. XLIX, 3 and 4) were found throughout the area excavated, and totalled 15 in number. As a rule they have been rather loosely fashioned with little effort to give them any elegance of form. Spindle whorls from femur-heads are of frequent occurrence in prehistoric and later excavations, and are by no means confined to Viking sites. They were found by Pit Rivers in Roman-British excavations at Woodcatts Common, also by Sir Henry Dryden at Henbury or Danes Camp, near Northampton. They were among the relics from the Kees broch in Caithness, and the broach of Burtran in North Ronaldsay. Though now probably too light to affect their original purpose, they would be sufficiently heavy before the obvious matter, which they contained, perished.

Bronze.

Belt-clasp.—A belt-clasp (Pl. L, 5), 2 inches in length, with a rivet round which the end of the strap has been passed across the open end, was found about 1 foot above the floor-level on the north side of No. VI.

Brooch.—About ⅛ of a penannular brooch of Irish-Celtic design (Pl. XLVII, 8), and which had originally been coated with silver, was found among kitchen-midden refuse covering the floor of what appeared to have been a small chamber to the north of the inner cross-wall, and to the west of the vent which traverses the indeterminate foundations lying to the eastwards of No. VI. The only indication of date which this findspot conveys is derived from the fact that the west wall of dwelling No. IV, presumably of thirteenth-century date, actually lay on the top of it; moreover, the period of the building in which the object was found appears to have been coeval with that of No. VI adjacent, which in its turn was secondary to the massive wall which in part contains it on the south. The date of deposit of the brooch might thus be as late as the twelfth century.

The brooch has measured when complete some 2 inches across in either direction. As will be seen from the illustration, the terminal is more realistic in conception of a dragon than that of any other example of the style so far recorded. The head is outlined by a rounded moulding, which swells to a collar at the junction of the bow. The eye is well defined as a pointed oval, and enclosed with a narrow moulding to represent the eyelid. The surface is ornamented with two rows of herring-bone, or feather ornament, extending respectively to the ends of the jaws. The outer ends of both jaws terminate in volutes, and from the top of the upper jaw a spur-like projection, also hatched with herring-bone ornament, suggests a horn, or an ear. In the centre of the bow there is a sunk oblong panel within a raised moulding ⅛ of an inch in length, containing in the centre a rounded boss, while the surface of the panel is enriched with threads of interlacing ornament indifferently conceived and executed.

A VIKING SETTLEMENT AT FRESWICK, CAITHNESS. 101

The bowl is plano-convex in section, measuring ¼ of an inch in breadth by ¼ of an inch in depth.

Though a possible twelfth-century date has been suggested for the deposit of this brooch, that date has, of course, little bearing on the date of the object itself, other than to supply a limit beyond which it cannot have been made. The possibility is that the brooch belongs to a considerably earlier date. The evolution of the Irish brooch has been treated of by various authors, and it is agreed that the source from which it sprung was a penannular flana with zoomorphic terminals of a stylised form, which made its appearance in Roman-British times, and examples of which have been found at numerous sites in Britain. It is not intended here to follow the various steps in the evolution of this brooch through periods which show a farther and farther departure from the zoomorphic character, until it is almost lost in the splendid achievements of such brooches as those from Tara, Ardagh, Hacketstown, etc. The history of the development over the five centuries from A.D. 500 to 1000 has been demonstrated by Mr Reginald A. Smith, F.S.A., and other authorities have likewise treated of the subject. At a certain point in this evolution, somewhere about the ninth century, there appears to have been some measure of return to zoomorphism in the treatment of the terminals, and we are fortunate in having an approximately dated example, the Croy brooch (Pl. XLVII, 9), found at Croy in Inverness-shire, as illustrating this process, and supplying us with a type from which the Freswick brooch may be descended. The Croy brooch, which was found associated with a coin of Cononulf, King of Mercia, who ruled from 790 to 822, has been dated by Mr Smith to about the year 819. It will be noted that the terminals consist of two monstrous, triangular figures which occur at the end of the bow, with a spherical motif in front of it. If we eliminate the latter we are left with a figure which might well have suggested, or itself have been suggested by, the gaping head of a monster, and which has several features in common with the Freswick head. Here, we have indicated, the profile head with open jaws, the ridge or collar that cuts off the bow, and the moulding carried along the edge of the jaws, and turned up at each respective end so as to form a slight volute. There is also an eye, a triangular figure which, though quite suggestive, lacks the developed realism of the other, while the surface is hatched, though not exactly in the same manner as on the Freswick relic. To compare the brooches further, in the Croy brooch, in the centre of the bow there is a panel containing a central boss, surrounded by interlacing threads, executed in competent style, and in that respect differing from the degenerate rendering on the Freswick example. This tendency to evolve a head with gaping jaws has been suggested by Mr Reginald Smith, and in the Freswick brooch we may well have...
an example of the complete evolution occurring at a late date in the series.

**Finger-rings.**—Two penannular finger-rings with tapered ends were found (Pl. L. 9 and 10). They are both made from thin strips of bronze. One is imperfect, but the other measures ¾ of an inch in diameter. The imperfect example was found to the right of the doorway outside No. IV, and the other came from the upper part of the wall at the west end of No. III.

**Bracelet.**—A bracelet, evidently for a child's wrist (Pl. L. 6), formed from a piece of bronze wire, ½ of an inch in thickness, was found among the spoil soil when the deep wall crossing No. II at the back of the bath was being exposed. When recovered it was slightly out of shape, but has now been restored to its original form, showing an interior diameter of 1¾ inches. It is slightly penannular, and has remaining at one terminal a collar of bronze, the corresponding collar being missing. One surface is decorated with a series of short transverse notches.

**Plates and Patches.**—As in the Viking house at Jarlshof there were found a number of fragments of plates of bronze, most of which had been used as patches on large bronze vessels, of which the largest still retained in them the rivets of paper-fastener type by which they had been attached (Pl. L. 8). Two small pieces are each perforated with two circular holes of small diameter, evidently for pin rivets. The distribution was general. One piece with paper-fastener rivets was recovered from beside the bed-platform in No. IV, and another from the middle filling in No. VII.

**Pin.**—A hammer-headed pin of well-known Viking type (Pl. L. 7) was found at the west end of the smoky No. III, from what was probably the site of the west wall of the building which had been torn out. The pin is complete, except for the actual point which is wanting, and measures 1½ inches in length.

**Glass.**
A small barrel-shaped bead of green glass, measuring ½ inch in longest diameter and weathered on the surface, was found on the surface of the hollow.

**Coin.**
A single specimen of a silver penny of Henry III of England, inscribed "WIlliam de Luski," from the Mint of London and dating from 1258-1272, was picked up from the surface at the seaward end of the area.

**Iron Objects.**
**Knife.**—Four knives were found. Two were of the pronounced hag-back form shown by Pl. L. No. I. One (Pl. L. 2) is a narrow-pointed blade, triangular in section, with a comparatively broad back. One blade was too much decayed for determination of form. Both the former are types of blades characteristic of the early medieval period, and similar blades appear among the relics from Dunadd. 1 Argallhoire, preserved in the National Museum. 2 Identical examples were found recently in the stone fort of Cahermoneen in County Clare by Dr. H. O'Neill Finucane. 3

Pl. L. No. 3. appears to be the remains of a key, and No. 4. of the same plate the remains of a butt, or a socket. There was also found the remains of a pair of shoes consisting of the spring and upper portion of one leg.

**Pottery.**
The sherds of pot recovered were numerous and of two distinct classes: first, a limited quantity of wheel-made medieval ware, unglazed, or only so treated to a small extent; and second, a considerable quantity of potsherds of the quality which, from finds in Shetland and elsewhere, may now be regarded as characteristic of the Viking period.

**Medieval Ware.**—The medieval ware was, with the exception of one small piece which was found above floor-level in No. VI, all referable to the later occupation. It consisted of sherds of some three or four vessels, unglazed, or only partially so, on the shoulder and neck. With one exception it is of a reddish-brown colour, and the two bases that occur among the remains are sagging, one markedly so, and the other slightly. There is no indication of thumbing around the bases. The remainder of a large hag-backed pitcher with an interior diameter at base of 7½ inches was found for the most part on the floor of No. I, and in the passage leading to the bath-chamber on the north of that structure, and what was evidently a small sherds of the same vessel was recovered from the floor of the bath, beneath the heap of clay in the north-west corner. A portion of what is evidently the handle was found on the floor of No. I. It has a single groove down the centre lengthwise, and deep finger impressions on either side at the point of juncture with the neck. This vessel has evidently been for holding water, and may well have been used in the bath-chamber.

The base of a cooking pot, sagging, and much encrusted with soot, was found in a kitchen-midden in front of No. IV. The interior diameter of the base is 4½ inches. A portion of a handle, circular in section, but with a ridge along the top, was found while clearing to floor-level in No. IV.

The only piece of medieval ware with any distinctive character was the sherd (Pl. L. 2), previously referred to (p. 86), comprising part of the rim, of light red ware, soot-encrusted on the outside and so evidently part of a cooking pot, with a diameter at mouth of some 9½ inches. This rim is covered with an approximately rectangular section, and is...
ornamented on the upper surface with three waxy, narrow, parallel, continuous ridges. The outer surface, as far as revealed by the fragment, is decorated with zones of parallel lines in relief. This sherd was found on the level of the wall-head of No. IV when the wall was being removed to explore the structure beneath. It must therefore obviously refer to the latest occupation. A very close parallel is to be found, as previously stated, in a sherd from Bayleigh Castle, the occupation of which ceased in the latter half of the thirteenth century, and which is preserved in the Prittlewell Priory Museum, Southend-on-Sea. A late thirteenth-century date may fairly be claimed for these few medieval sherds.

_Viking Pottery._—Plate L.I. 4 illustrates a cooking pot, complete except for some slight damage at the rim, which was found by Mr Simon Bremner, when the excavations were not in progress, set upright in the sand, in front of the "naust," No. V., and forwarded by him to the Museum. It is of typical Viking hand-made ware as found in Scotland, with numerous impressions of vegetable matter in the body, and it is heavily encrusted with carbon on the outside. In form it is globular, with a flat base and an everted rim. In height it measures 8 inches, and in breadth at the bulge 6½ inches. From an adjacent spot there were recovered sufficient fragments of a much smaller pot (Pl. L.I, 3) to enable its reconstruction to be effected. It has been fashioned with a very uneven surface, and from the encrustation of soot on the surface, appears also to have been used as a cooking pot. It has measured 2½ inches in height, by 3½ inches in diameter at the bulge. Both the above vessels are flat-bottomed.

The general character of the ware, all of which is hand-made, is, besides the use of grass in the paste, a coarseness of technique which is displayed in the very uneven surface of the exterior. The body is hard and well-fired, varying in colour from buff to grey, and black. The pots are in general encrusted with soot only on the upper portion of the exterior surface, indicating that they had been sunk in the embers up to the shoulder. There is invariably an encrustation of carbon also in the interior. While the general character of the ware is uniform, there is a considerable variety in the treatment of the rims, as shown in the sections illustrated (Figs. 9). Finger impression has been applied as a decoration on the rims of one or two vessels (Fig. 6, No. 4), while a single rim, part of a pot of large size, apparently of 9 to 10 inches in diameter at the mouth, has been ornamented with a series of small, irregularly placed notches cut across it (Fig. 6, No. 18). Some oblique cuts placed one inch or so below the rim of another sherd may have been part of a decorated scheme of the complete vessel (Fig. 6, No. 20). Another sherd, not illustrated, is decorated with a series of deep vertical grooves, probably finger impressions, extended around the rim. A sherd of a pot with an indicated diameter of some 6 inches (Pl. LI. 1) has been decorated with a series of broad streaks, in some dark brown colouring matter. Several pieces show perforations evidently made to effect repair. The bases appear to have been flat-bottomed. The cooking pots, as far as measurable from the sherds, show indicated diameters at the mouth of from 10 to 11 inches.

While the more sophisticated forms and decorated rims found at...
Freswick were entirely absent from the pottery found in the Viking house excavated at Jarlshof in 1924, yet in both respects they recall ceramic styles of an earlier period found in a prehistoric site there. 1 Pottery with characteristics very similar was recovered by Professor V. Gordon Childe in the excavation of a promontory fort at Larriban, or Larry Ban Head, on the coast of Antrim, in 1935; 2 in regard to which he remarks on its being "a very characteristic North Irish type." The typical cooking pot found at Jarlshof, a barrel-shaped vessel, is represented most closely by No. 10 of fig. 6. It was not found possible to restrict any form to either of the periods represented by three groups of buildings. On the whole, the sophisticated rims appeared to belong to the late rather than to the earlier periods. A number were found in the material with which house No. VII had been filled up.

Stone.

Hones.—Twelve sharpening stones or hones, of quartzose schist from the Moine series, were found on various sites, five of them coming, as might be expected, from the smithy. They are all, with one exception, of the launched type, the exception being a straight-sided hone of black phyllite or clayey schist, a different material from that of any other. Except the last mentioned, all are much worn and incomplete. A typical example is shown in Pl. XLIX, 8.

A sharpening stone, probably of Caithness flagstone, to be used for some narrow, round-pointed metal instrument, has a deep groove the length of each of the two opposite faces, and is considerably abraded at one end.

Plumes of Quartz, etc.—A number of small blocks of quartz, varying in weight from 1 lb. to 1 lb. 2 oz., were found on the site of the "nauze" and elsewhere. Each block presents one flat surface, and towards one edge there has been an attempted perforation for a cord, in one case only completed. A specimen is illustrated (Pl. XLIX, 8). The process of perforating a block of quartz must have been difficult, for several of these blocks have been broken in the attempt. Quartz would be selected for use as plumes owing to its high specific gravity.

In one instance an ovoid sandstone pebble, similarly with one flat side, shows an incomplete perforation on one edge, owing to a fracture (Pl. XLIX, 7); and another, with a fractured groove on the flat side, has a groove continued across the opposite face. A small block of quartz, also flat on one face, has been grooved round the centre of the other sides, evidently to hold a cord.

Polishers.—There were two polishers, an ovoid pebble of porphyry, darkened by use on each side, which was found in the smithy, and a larger water-worn ovoid pebble of quartzites. The latter at one end has been reduced to an angular section by rubbing, and at the opposite end has been slightly abraded.

Pit-styles.—Three pit-stones of stone, from 2½ to 3½ inches in diameter, were found, all in No. VI. One of these is illustrated (Pl. XLIX, 9 and 10).

Querns.—Several pieces of the grinding stones of rotary querns were found fashioned from carragheenite mica schist. This material was also used for querns by the Vikings in Shetland, where it is plentiful. Likewise occurs in the west and south parts of Caithness. One of the pieces, which amounts to somewhat less than one-half of an upper stone, has had a counterbend circular area about 2 inches wide round the central opening, and though much weathered still shows the base of the socket to hold the vertical wooden handle with which to turn the stone.

The upper stone of a rotary quern, complete but for a chip off one end, was found, as above related, overlying a post-hole at the east end of No. VI. It is in outline, with a hole for a handle at one end, and measures 16½ by 13 inches.

Steatite.—A piece of the rim, slightly curved, and 14 inches long, of a very large steatite vessel was found to the north of No. VI, and another fragment on the floor-level of the house.

Weights.—A number of larger ovoid pebbles, with grooves cut in opposite faces, and across the end, to hold a cord or rope, were also found. Such stones are still used at the present day for weighting lobster creels.

Sinkers.—A pointed oval pebble of steatite, with a perforation at either end for a cord, was found in No. III. And, on the analogy of the lead object used at the present day, was probably a "line sinker" (Pl. XLIX, 5). In addition to the foregoing there were found a number of flat-sided oval pebbles, some 6 to 8 inches in length, much chipped and indented at the ends and on the edges of the sides. For the purpose for which these were used, the ingenious theory was advanced by Mr. Simon Bremner, a corresponding member of the Society, and the foreman at the excavation, that they had been employed in boat-building to "hold on," against the point of the rivet when it was being driven in.

The Viking house discovered at Jarlshof in Shetland in 1923 was probably a long house, as being of earlier construction than the well-preserved example, No. VII, found at Freswick, but in respect that the former no doubt continued in occupation until a date contemporary with the Caithness example, it is of interest to contrast the cultural evidence found on both sites. The Freswick settlement discloses by its relics a class of occupants in poorer circumstances, as the finds were fewer in proportion.
to the area uncovered, and as a rule, also, they were ruder in character. There was a complete absence of the serrated dates which were such a remarkable feature of the Jarlshof finds, nor were there found at Freiswick any bone pins to compare with the finer examples found in Shetland. While bones were proportionally numerous among the relics from Freiswick, they were all of the small kind, and there was entire absence from among them any example of the "small back bones, quadrangular in section and perforated at one end for suspension, which occurred in considerable numbers at Jarlshof—a type which is not infrequently found associated with Viking relics. At Jarlshof bronze weights were found in great numbers; at Freiswick they were comparatively absent. Whereas at Freiswick the most common relics were whorls made from the femur-heads of ox-bones, nor was a single example of such a whorl recovered at Jarlshof. In both places remains of querns made of granite were found, and while at Jarlshof remains of vessels of sandstone were common, at Freiswick they were very rare.

The most remarkable contrast in the finds from the two sites is to be found in the pøt-clips. The ware from both places is identical, and distinct from other wares so far discovered in Scotland, by the evidence it bears so fully of the numerous impressions of the hands and straw of oats on the body, but the forms of the rims differ materially. The Shetland rims of the Viking period are very simple, being as a rule either slightly everted or curving inwards in the manner of a barrel, while the Caithness examples supply, as already mentioned, a variety of forms. Whether such early forms were extant among the native population of the county at the date of the Viking invasions can only be learned by excavations on native sites. There is a probability, however, that they had been imported from Ireland.

In both settlements numerous fragments and patches of sheet bronze were found, showing that large bronze cauldrons were still in use. The objects for which a use as plummets is suggested were peculiar to Freiswick, as also the pebbles supposed to have been used by boat rivers. The characteristic combs of the period are common to both sites.

The interior arrangements of the principal house (No. VI) at Freiswick are in every way characteristic of Viking culture, and the general impression derived from the excavation is that the Norwegian settlers in Caithness brought with them a distinctive culture of their own, which through the period of two or three hundred years in which they flourished in the county, remained entirely unaffected by the indigenous culture of the region. The conclusion to be adopted from these circumstances is that the immigrants either lived in complete isolation among the native inhabitants, or, as seems more likely, that they ousted them from the plains and

A VIKING SETTLEMENT AT FREISWICK, CAITHNESS.

fertile regions to seek out a scanty subsistence among the moors and mountains that form the western and southern confines of the county, and where the place-names and the people are still for the most part Celtic.

REPORT ON THE ANIMAL REMAINS. By Miss Margaret J. Platt of the Natural History Department of the Royal Scottish Museum.

The majority of the bones are of a small but mature Ox or shorthorn variety.

The remainder of the species present are given in order of their numerical importance:

Pony, very small variety like the Shetland race.

Dog, remains of three, one very small and fox-like.

Sheep, extremely heavy-dorned variety.

Red Deer, Cervus elaphus scoticus Louisberg.

Grey Seal, Halichoerus Grypus (Fabricius).

Rip, Sula bassana L.

Cod, Gadus callarias L.

In conclusion it gives me pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to Admiral Sir Edwin Alexander Sinclair, G.C.B., etc., the proprietor of Freiswick, for having so readily accorded me his permission to excavate, and also to the Messrs. Gullick, the farmers, for according their permission, and helping wherever possible.

Also to Mr. Edwards, the Director of the National Museum of Antiquities, for having directed my attention to Freiswick, and for much assistance in the production of this paper.

My thanks are due to Miss Margaret J. Platt, M.Sc., of the Royal Scottish Museum, for her report on the animal remains; as well as to Mr. David Balilie, B.Sc., of the same Museum, for determining the character of mineral specimens, and Mr. M. Y. Orr, of the Royal Botanic Garden, for having identified the vegetable remains.

Dr. Sigurd Grieg, of the University Museum of Oslo, helped me to date the combs, while Mr. Gerald C. Dunning, of the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales, etc., gave me valuable assistance in dating the sherds of medieval pottery.

I am grateful to Mr. R. B. K. Stevenson, Keeper in the National Museum of Antiquities, for the valuable assistance he gave me over a period of two weeks on the spot. My excellent team of local workmen, under Mr. Simon Bremer, tackled their job with such zeal and interest beyond the mere terms of their employment as to deserve special recognition.

(i) INTRODUCTORY.

The southern border of the Highland massif is formed by the great boundary fault on the northern limits of Strathbogie and Strathmore. Here the Highlands begin and the Lowlands end, and beyond this point, before the age of firearms, no invader of Scotland pressed. It has long been known that here too the permanent partitions of Rome reached the farthest north-west frontier of that great empire, seizing the points where the principal rivers debouch into the plain, and thus controlling entry to and exit from the Highlands. The forts and temporary camp at Donside, 1 first mentioned by Comrie in Strathmore, were among the first Roman sites to be observed north of the Antonine Wall. Later, the legionary fortress 2 and forts at Inchtuthil, where the Tay emerges from the Dunkeld gorge, attracted attention and eclipsed all other Roman sites in the district. Earlier still, however, as Sir George Macdonald has shown, 3 a Roman fort had been discovered by Colonel Shand in Glenalmond, at the point where the river Almond leaves the northern slope of the Snail Glen, and guides the line of the Roman road towards the Tay. At that time the rampart and ditch of the fort were in good order, as described 4 by the contributor to the Statistical Account. Later, ploughing reduced them to low heaps difficult to discern, and the site was temporarily lost to knowledge of field-workers, who selected two unsatisfactory candidates for recognition as Roman earthworks, rightly dismissed 5 by Christie as negligible. The rediscovery of the site reported in the eighteenth century came in 1830, and has already been described 6 in these Proceedings.

The position is a good one, not unlike others of Roman choice, for example, the fort of Brougham-Bainbridge in Wensleydale, or the newly discovered fort at Loudon Hill in Ayrshire. The glacier which once occupied the Snail Glen has formed 7 a bold terminal moraine, centred on the mouth of the valley. This moraine is now divided by erosion into a series of irregular hummocks, most of which are unlined. The fort occupies one of the largest and most regular hillocks available, and placed upon it a fort 308 feet long and 320 feet wide. The unusual proportion, indeed, of the square or rectangular form normally chosen for Roman forts, is entirely due to the difficulty in finding a suitable position.

Tactically, the site chosen (Pl. LIX, 1 and fig. 1) is good. The little plateau falls steeply on every side, southwards to the Fendoch Burn, and elsewhere to marshes indifferently drained by a nameless streamlet on the north. On the east the Romans did not occupy the tapering tail of the moraine, but supplied extra defences (see p. 112). Intended to cancel any apparent advantage gained by massing there for an assault, the site is overlooked by hills on all sides; but this circumstance, disadvantageous in the days of long-range weapons, was of little moment when only hand-thrown missiles were in question. Much more important was the advantage conveyed by good lateral communications. To east the valley of the Almond offered an easy passage towards the site of Perth, at the junction 8 of the river with the Tay. To west the wide valley of the Fendoch Burn gave almost immediate access to Strathbogie and the fort of Ardoch Ross. It is not known that the Romans provided this route, controlling the very fringe of the Highlands, with a metalled road, though the observation by Shand 9 of a road leading from the south towards the Snail might suggest that they did so. But it is certain that the route was recognised and employed as a natural passage. No Lowland invader had ever pushed

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1 Christie, Early Fortifications in Scotland, 25-3, fig. 1. 2 Proceedings, clxxvii. 188-189. 3 Hogg, 354. The account is dated 1736. 4 Christie, Early Fortifications in Scotland, 25-3, fig. 1. 5 Christie, Early Fortifications in Scotland, 25-3, fig. 1. 6 Proceedings, clxxvii. 188-189. 7 Christie, Early Fortifications in Scotland, 25-3, fig. 1. 8 Christie, Early Fortifications in Scotland, 25-3, fig. 1.

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1 Proceedings, clxxvii. 188-189.
2 Christie, Early Fortifications in Scotland, 25-3, fig. 1.
3 Christie, Early Fortifications in Scotland, 25-3, fig. 1.
Excavations at Freswick Links.

Freswick Links, situated at the head of Freswick Bay, on the east coast of Caithness, in the parish of Canisbay, is one of these areas covered with deposits of sand blown up from the seashore, of which we have many examples round our Scottish coast. Unlike the Culbin Sands in Morayshire and the Glenure Sands in Wigtownshire—two similar but much larger areas which for years have yielded a rich harvest of relics, dating from prehistoric to modern times—few objects have as yet been obtained from Freswick Links. Bounded on its south side by Freswick Burn and on its north side by the road which leads to Skirza Head, the area measures about half a mile from north to south and about a quarter of a mile from east to west at its widest part. From about the middle and towards its northern end large sandy hollows or gullies have been swept out by the wind, so that there is exposed to view at the bottom of these a dark layer of soil or old land surface. Here and there in the gullies large boulders, some completely exposed, are scattered over the surface, while portions of others protrude from underneath. One feature worthy of note is the quantity of burnt stones, nearly all of which have been fractured by intense heat, many having been reduced almost to the size of road metal. At various places also, and perhaps more particularly near the spot called the Lady's Brow, are the remains of kitchen-middens composed mainly of limpet-shells and fish-bones. In a gully about 600 yards north of Freswick House a single pillar-like stone protruded some 3 feet above the level of the ground, while in close proximity and with some appearance of regularity in the form of their setting, the upper portions of other smaller stones just appeared above the surface. As the seaward side of the gully, where it sloped towards the beach, was covered with a quantity of kitchen-midden debris, I decided that the site might be worth investigation. Excavation exposed to view an oval-shaped construction composed of single boulders resting on pure sand (Fig. 2), which measured 17 feet in greatest length and 13 feet in greatest breadth. This had probably been a
outlines of a building took definite shape, and the interior was cleared of the discoloured sand and loose stones which completely filled it. The structure (fig. 3, A), which was evidently an earth-house, was roofless. It lay nearly east and west, the total length measuring 10 feet 8 inches internally. The building consisted of two chambers with an entrance passage. The walls, which were dry built, had a thickness of about 1 foot 6 inches, and consisted of rough boulders and slabs, entrance having been obtained from the south-east by a short passage, 2 feet 3 inches in length, 1 foot 9 inches in height, and 1 foot 6 inches in width, the floor of which was paved. The inner end of this passage opened into an oval compartment which measured 4 feet 9 inches from front to back by 7 feet in greatest width; the walls were 3 feet 2 inches in height. Separated from this compartment by two small upright slabs

set in the floor, each of which measured 7 inches in height, and 1 foot 5 inches and 1 foot 3 inches in length respectively, was another small chamber, transversal in shape, the floor paved with two flat slabs, which exactly fitted into position. This chamber measured 1 foot in length, 2 feet in width at its narrow end, and 3 feet 3 inches at its wider end, with walls 2 feet 9 inches in height. Two large flaps, which may have formed part of the original roof of the structure, were found in the circular compartment near the inner end of the passage, one on either side. The upper portion of the flaps rested against the inner edge of the topmost course of the wall, while their bases, which nearly touched, rested on the floor. That on the south side measured 4 feet in length, 1 foot 6 inches in breadth, and 4 inches in thickness, the measurement of the other on the north side being 3 feet 8 inches in length, 1 foot 3 inches in breadth, and 3 inches in thickness.

In an easterly direction and at a distance of 10 feet 6 inches from the
entrance to earth-house A, the wall of another earth-house, B (Fig. 3), was found. This earth-house, the median line of which lay nearly east and west, measured 18 feet 9 inches in total length, and resembled the previous one, in respect that it also contained two compartments although of somewhat different shape, one being semi-circular and the other sub-oval. Facing nearly due east was a paved passage, which measured 5 feet in length, 1 foot 2 inches in width, and 1 foot 2 inches in height. At its inner end and built in the thickness of the wall of the larger chamber was a lintel stone, which measured 2 feet 7 inches in length, 1 foot 5 inches in breadth, and 7 inches in thickness. Entrance to the chamber must necessarily have been made with some difficulty, as the underside of the lintel was only 1 foot 2 inches above the floor-level.

The passage was completely filled with dark soil mixed with quantities of limpet-shells, the whole so impacted that it was only removed with difficulty. The chamber, which was sub-oval in shape, measured 9 feet 3 inches in length, and the stones which formed the dry-built walls were set in such a manner that they showed a fairly smooth and regular interior face. At the eastern end the height of the walls was 2 feet 6 inches and the width of the chamber 8 feet 3 inches; near the centre the height was 2 feet 9 inches and the width 8 feet; and at the western end, or entrance to the other compartment where the walls had converged until the distance which separated them was only 5 feet 8 inches, the height was 3 feet. The line of demarcation between the two compartments was made by a single course of large stones and the other was made by two large slabs set upright, one on either side of the entrance to the inner compartment; that on the north side measured 2 feet 9 inches in height, 1 foot 2 inches in breadth, and 7 inches in thickness, and the other on the south side, 3 feet 3 inches in height, 2 feet 3 inches in breadth, and 8 inches in thickness. The compartment itself was semi-circular in shape and built of rough boulders and stones, the height of the walls being 4 feet 6 inches. At the floor-level it measured 5 feet 6 inches in width, but at the head of the first course, which consisted of boulders placed in such a manner that their inner faces were tilted out at an angle of over 100° with the floor, the width increased to 6 feet 0 inches (fig. 4). On top of these boulders were several courses of rough stones, each of these courses protruding inwards.

EXCAVATIONS AT FRESWICK LINKS, CATHNESS.

The passage was washed out by the rain, and the passage was filled with dark soil mixed with quantities of limpet-shells, the whole so impacted that it was only removed with difficulty. The chamber, which was sub-oval in shape, measured 9 feet 3 inches in length, and the stones which formed the dry-built walls were set in such a manner that they showed a fairly smooth and regular interior face. At the eastern end the height of the walls was 2 feet 6 inches and the width of the chamber 8 feet 3 inches; near the centre the height was 2 feet 9 inches and the width 8 feet; and at the western end, or entrance to the other compartment where the walls had converged until the distance which separated them was only 5 feet 8 inches, the height was 3 feet. The line of demarcation between the two compartments was made by a single course of large stones and the other was made by two large slabs set upright, one on either side of the entrance to the inner compartment; that on the north side measured 2 feet 9 inches in height, 1 foot 2 inches in breadth, and 7 inches in thickness, and the other on the south side, 3 feet 3 inches in height, 2 feet 3 inches in breadth, and 8 inches in thickness. The compartment itself was semi-circular in shape and built of rough boulders and stones, the height of the walls being 4 feet 6 inches. At the floor-level it measured 5 feet 6 inches in width, but at the head of the first course, which consisted of boulders placed in such a manner that their inner faces were tilted out at an angle of over 100° with the floor, the width increased to 6 feet 0 inches (fig. 4). On top of these boulders were several courses of rough stones, each of these courses protruding inwards.

A peculiar feature was the fact that the highest course had been covered with a layer of clay of convex shape on the upper surface, showing a thickness of 3 inches at its centre. The clay when first uncovered was quite soft and pliable, but after a few days' exposure to the sun it had become as hard as brick.

Part of the floor of the compartment was roughly paved, and near the entrance was a bed of limpet-shells, about 1 foot in breadth and from 4 inches to 5 inches in depth, a portion of which extended into the larger chamber. Amongst the shells at the north end of the deposit were found the lower jaw of a child in its first dentition, before eruption of the permanent molars, and 1 foot further south in the same deposit, another part of the skull in a fragmentary condition.

Except for a saddle quern and rubber found at the floor-level in the large compartment, a few feet from where the passage entered, no relics were found. The quern measured 1 foot 8 inches in length, 13 inches in breadth, and 5 inches in thickness. The rubber was 10 inches in length, 7 inches in breadth, and 2 inches in thickness.

With regard to the actual excavation of this earth-house, the larger chamber presented no difficulty, except for the great quantity of sand which had to be removed; but the excavation of the smaller chamber was rendered more difficult, because of the mass of burnt stones mixed with dark soil with which it was almost completely filled. The boulders which formed the lower course were blackened with fire, and still had adhering to their surfaces a sooty deposit which blackened the fingers.

Both earth-houses are new in type, and it is unfortunate that no relics were obtained, so that the period to which they had belonged could have been more or less definitely ascertained. That they are early is without doubt, as the saddle quern is associated with the prehistoric remains of nearly every country in Europe. A comparison between the relics found at Freswick and those from the earth-house excavated at Galston in Lewis's last year shows some striking differences. At Freswick the people seemed to have lived mainly by the harvest of the sea. They possessed only a limited supply of pottery, as none was found in the interior of the dwellings, and a search made of the kitchen-middens yielded only a few shards of rough, hard, undecorated ware. At Galston, in addition to limpet-shells and fish remains, large quantities of the bones of various animals, shreds of pottery, decorated and undecorated, and implements of bone and deer-bone, were found inside the chambers of the earth-house and in the kitchen-middens.

Relics recovered from the vicinity of the kitchen-middens consisted of ...
of a hollow scraper of flint, which measured 1\(\frac{1}{4}\) inch in length by \(\frac{1}{4}\) inch in breadth, a whorl made from the head of a femur or humerus of an animal, and a pointed splinter of bone which showed cut marks. Very few fragments of pottery were recovered; one small shard being of the broch type, with everted lip and bulging sides, and the remainder, pieces of vessels of a rough undecorated ware, the sides of which had been nearly straight and the lips flat or partially rounded, somewhat similar to certain of the unornamented fragments found in the kitchen-midden at Gaisler.

I am indebted to Messrs John C. Brodie & Sons, W.S., who very kindly obtained for the Society the necessary authority to examine the cairn at Ham, and to Lady Alexander-Sinclair, who, in the absence of Vice-Admiral Sir Edwin Alexander-Sinclair, readily gave permission to excavate any sites at Freshwick Links.

**A WINGED HORSE CARVED ON A LINTEL STONE IN THE EARTH-HOUSE AT CRICHTON MAINS.**

In the earth-house at Crichton Mains, Midlothian, it has long been known that the walls contained a number of squared and chiselled stones with the diagonal and diamond markings so frequently seen in Roman buildings, but it has now been possible to add to this record by the discovery of a carving on one of the lintel stones.

In the long chamber of the earth-house to the east, about 27 feet from the inner end of the entrance passage, and 63 inches from the northern wall, on the third lintel from the end of the chamber, there is carved in high relief the figure of a Pegasus or winged horse, showing head, shoulders, forelegs, and wings (fig. 3). The wings are raised as if in the motion of flight and the legs outstretched as if galloping. There is no trace of the body or hind legs and it is impossible to say if ever the figure had been complete. Over all, from the tip of the wings to the forefront, the carving measures about 7 inches, and from the poll of the head to the belly about 4 inches. Individually the head measures 2\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches in length, the legs 2 inches in length, the wings 3 inches in length by 2\(\frac{1}{4}\) inches across, and the neck from the poll of the head to the base of the wings, as nearly as can be ascertained, 2\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches. The surface of the lintel is roughly picked, but that portion on which the figure is cut is more finely tooled. Whether the carving was done before the stone was put to its present use, or worked on it as now placed, is a matter of opinion. But, as it certainly would not have been easy to

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*Excavations at Freshwick Links, Caithness.*

excavate the design on the stone as it now lies, it is more probable that the sculpturing had been done previously.

![Fig. 3. Winged Horse sculptured on Lintel in Earth-house at Crichton.](image)

I have to thank Mr Bryan Clayton, F.S.A.Scot, for his flash-light photograph of the stone from which the illustration has been made.
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"See over card for text of (11)" "See continuation card for text of (11)."

"See HND 36 NE 004A for other text."
Arrow-heads, Scrapes and other Objects of Flint: two leaf-shaped arrow-heads of yellow and red colour, measuring \( \frac{1}{4} \) inch by \( \frac{1}{8} \) inch and 1 inch by \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch; three scrapers, measuring \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch by \( \frac{1}{4} \) inch, \( \frac{3}{4} \) inch by \( \frac{1}{4} \) inch, and 1 inch by \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch; five knives or side scrapers, measuring \( \frac{3}{4} \) inch by \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch, \( \frac{3}{4} \) inch by \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch, \( \frac{3}{4} \) inch by \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch, \( \frac{3}{4} \) inch by \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch, and \( \frac{3}{4} \) inch by \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch; a notched implement (penknife), measuring \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch by \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch; a pointed implement, measuring 2 inches in length; a triangular object with slight secondary working, measuring 3 inches by 2\( \frac{1}{2} \) inches, and a core, measuring 1\( \frac{1}{4} \) inch in length. All found at \( \text{Frewick, Caithness.} \)

"ND 377 673. Numerous sherds of \text{grass-tempered pottery, several sherds of medieval} \) were, a bone comb fragment and a small piece of clipped bronze were collected from the eroding face of the midden.

ND 377 673. A possibly Norse food or liquid container carved out of a block of red sandstone was recovered from the \text{HHW. This measured approx. 0.33 x 0.31 x 0.121m externally, with sids 0.08m thick. Now in Inverness Museum.}"
Archaeologists are familiar with the reports on the mounds which at Keiss, Caithness, concealed stone-built dwellings with their abundant relics of occupation and industry. Not so well known is the fact that one of these massive structures had been erected upon an ancient shell-midden.\(^1\) This contained a crude industry of quartz, flint, and other stones, with simply-worked splinters of bone and poor pottery. The stone industry was not unlike that from the refuse-heaps near Dornoch, and in many of its products similar to that found in the building above at Keiss. Two-period occupation is just as interestingly illustrated by the site of the food-gatherers' encampment which was recently explored at Fresswick Bay in the same county, and which was found separated geologically from an underlying flint industry of Mesolithic facies in the upper part of the ill-developed Early Post-Glacial raised beach (above, pp. 184-5). These Fresswick remains are very similar to those recorded from the overbuilt shell-midden at Keiss. Thus they indicate a primitive economy coupled with some marked progress, probably due to the contacts of peoples. It was therefore in advance of the standard represented by the flints from the underlying bed. From an aggregate of molluscan shells, remains of large red deer, birds, and fishes, there has been recovered an industry in the fairly common drift-borne brown and grey flint of the region. Other relics yielded by this deposit are worked flint and bone, an artificially perforated shell of Turritella (Fig. 117, no. 1), and also a small quantity of potsherds.

The stone industry is not unlike a Late Larinian. It consists of coarse flakes and some blades, many exhibiting signs of considerable use (Fig. 117, nos. 1 and 2), besides a few reworked and much-worn scrapers (nos. 3-5). These relics are unpatinated, but otherwise similar to the series from the horizon beneath (Fig. 72). Split cobbles are common, many being much edge-worn from use as choppers (e.g. Fig. 118, no. 1); and there also occur rude slate pot-holes.

The recent local find of a large plucking flake of honour flint (Fig. 117, no. 6) is interesting. Quite unaltered of surface, but trimmed slightly and considerably worn at the narrow bulbar end, it is exactly like a Larin pick. This most northly example is noteworthy; it shows the wide distribution of a type long thought restricted to the classic region of the North Channel.

Many pieces of antler and bone are cut and marked by stone tools. Rubbing on stone also accounts for the shaping of several in round of bevelled ends, and so far, smooth surfaces and sharp points (Fig. 117, nos. 7-13). These include short pieces (e.g. no. 10, antler), exactly like those which are common in Obanian deposits, and several piercers, one being adopted by rubbing down a branchiosteal ray of a large fish, probably a cod (no. 11). A remarkable item is a plain point of circular section, like a spindle, 16 cm. long and 6 mm. thick (no. 12), made in antler and tapered at the base for insertion into a holder. Another shaped piece (no. 13), drilled through in two places, has been cut and rubbed regularly to symmetrical shape out of the shoulder-blade of an ungulate, which, from the thickness of the bone, was probably a deer. The lower part of the internal edge, particularly at one corner, is polished from use, possibly as a skin-scaper. The object may be compared to the Eskimo whis(k) or ‘woman’s knife’.\(^1\)

The potsherds, which are bits of beakers or of some allied ware,\(^2\) include: (a) a rim from a ‘cord-ornamented’ vessel (Fig. 118, no 2; (b) a rim decorated with a hatched line (no. 3); (c) a slightly bevelled rim with shallow grooving (no. 4); (d) fragments with warm brown surface bearing hatched lines (no. 5), in one case supplemented with a shallow tooting (no. 6); (e) pieces of softer black ware adorned with hatched lines; (f) minute sherds of black ware with internal bevelling (no. 7); (g) fragments coated with a thick slip and decorated with small knobs (nos. 8 and 9).

This potsherds corresponds to that of Bronze Age character from the upper levels of the herdsmen's habitations at the classic Orcadian sites of Skara Brae and Rinvo (Rozay). That the economy represented at Fresswick Bay was, however, on a much lower plane than that of the islanders is shown by the crude equipment and by the entire absence of remains of domestic animals. Evidence of comparable developments on Mesolithic foundations could certainly be adduced from many other accumulations of occupation-refuse at open-air sites and in caves along the Scottish coasts. The upper deposits of certain caves at Oban (pp. 206 et seq.) are cases in point.
CAITHNESS
------ A ------
Cultural Crossroads

Edited by

JOHN R. BALDWIN

SCOTTISH SOCIETY FOR NORTHERN STUDIES

EDINA PRESS LTD.
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1982
THE LATE NORSE SITE OF FRESWICK

Colleen Batey

THE LOCATION

Freswick Links is situated at the head of Freswick Bay in the parish of Canisbay, far north on the east coast of Caithness [Fig. 3.1]. It is an area of shifting sand dunes rising twenty to thirty feet (6m - 9m) to the general land level, of gullies inscribed by the wind and now the home of countless rabbits. The area is delimited on the south side by Freswick Burn and on the north side by the road to Skirra Head; in all, an area of half a mile from north to south, by a quarter of a mile from east to west. In some places the wind has swept away large amounts of sand to reveal the old land surface and traces of masonry. The site today is characterised by large amounts of stones, reddened by fire and shattered by heat; and by extensive traces of kitchen midden (most commonly limpet shells, animal and fish bones), the debris from the occupation of the site and including remains from the prehistoric period to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Settlement has been traced here both by the discovery of stray finds by local people and through the excavations of A.J.H. Edwards, F. Tress Barry, A.O. Curle and V.G. Childe.

PRE-NORSE OCCUPATION

The earliest evidence from the locality is in the form of 'small truncated blades with batter-trimmed edges' of the microlithic industry and considered to be Mesolithic (Lacaille 1937, 56, 63). It is described only as 'in the neighbourhood of Freswick Bay', but is of importance because of its early dating. However, whether microlithic flint is Mesolithic or Bronze Age is a moot point.

Excavations by Edwards in the 1920s (Edwards 1925, 89-94) in a gully some six hundred yards (550m) north of Freswick House, produced an oval-shaped construction of single boulders with a gap to the south-west side, interpreted as a doorway. Edwards considered this to be a prehistoric hut circle although, despite the proximity of a midden deposit, the only find was a sandstone sinker with longitudinal groove — a find common to other periods. Further work by Edwards in 1926 (1927, 200-2) revealed walls of single boulders forming three structures interpreted as earth houses. One, for example, comprised two chambers and a paved entrance passage. An adjacent structure took a similar pear-shaped form, but was larger; and an interesting feature of the third was clay plastering on the interior of the walls. There was a curious lack of internal finds, but the adjacent midden produced fish bones and some fragments of plain, handmade pottery. The asserted pre-Norse evidence for these structures relies
on the presence of a saddle quern of an apparently prehistoric type, a flint scraper from the midden and also a spindle-whorl of a femur-head animal bone. Each of these are common types and could be dated up to and including the Norse period.

The work of Tress Barry at the turn of the century on the brochs of Caithness indicated that the sandhills on the margin of the bay to the north of Ferswick House concealed a large structure with walls seven feet (2.1m) high and eleven and a half feet (3.5m) wide (Anderson 1908, 143-4). Within the walls, fourteen steps remained, and also a chamber within the thickness of the wall; this was reasonably interpreted as a broch. The finds ranged from two bones of the Great Auk to bone pins and a borer, half a bone whorl and two double-edged bone combs with bronze rivets. Here there are apparently prehistoric and Norse finds mixed together, but since neither the stratigraphy nor the spatial distribution of the finds is detailed in the report, the nature of the re-use of the site must remain conjecture.

**NORSE OCCUPATION**

Despite the presence of place-names of Scandinavian origin in Caithness, structural remains are remarkably few. Indeed the 1911 Royal Commission survey failed to detect any at all (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1911). More recent fieldwork is, however, rectifying this situation; for instance, surface finds have been made in bays on the north coast of Caithness and are mentioned below. The best known site, however, is Ferswick on the east coast.

In the two sagas, *Njal's Saga* and *Orkneyinga Saga*, the site of Ferswick is mentioned: this is commonly identified with Ferswick (Taylor 1938, 397 footnote 3). In *Njal's Saga*, Earl Sigurd's brother-in-law is described as Havard of Ferswick (ch. LXXXV Magnusson & Pálsson 1960, 183 and later Karl Solmundsson and his crew sailed to Caithness and went ashore at Ferswick to the home of a worthy man called Skeggi..." (ibid. ch. CLV, 344). In *Orkneyinga Saga*, 'Svein Asleifarson was at Ferswick in Caithness... looking after the estate of his stepsons' (ch. XCII Pálsson & Edwards 1978, 165).

**EXCAVATIONS AT FERSWICK: 1937-1938**

**The Buildings**

The first excavations on Ferswick Links to produce Norse remains were by Curle in 1937. These were undertaken as a result of rapid wind erosion and sand quarrying revealing traces of buildings, midden and burnt stones, and the discovery of large amounts of coarse unglazed pottery with grass markings. The buildings uncovered he divided into three groups, A, B and C [Fig. 3.2]. Buildings 1 to 5 form Group A; Building 6 forms Group B; Building 7 forms Group C, with A being the first uncovered and consequently theoretically the latest (Curle 1939).
Group A consisted of four buildings and a suggested boat naust (Building 5). Building 1 had walls of sandwich construction, that is an outer stone shell with inner earth core; it measured internally thirty feet by fourteen (9m x 4.5m). The interior was filled with midden material which yielded both fragments of mediaeval glazed and unglazed pottery, and sherds of coarse pottery which Curle interpreted as Viking. Dominating the central axis of the house was the traditional long fire of eleven feet (3.4m) in length. A drain in the house was covered by heavy flagstones and led into a small interior chamber with a hearth of burnt stones and peat ash. A blocked-off doorway at the back of this chamber and possible benches along the wall, have led to the interpretation that in a secondary use this was a Viking bathhouse. A pile of levigated clay there may indicate a subsequent amendment to a potter's working area.

Building 2 lay immediately adjacent to this building, separated by a mutual wall. It was thirty feet (9m) long and, as it lacked all traces of a central hearth, could possibly have been a storehouse. Once again, there was midden on the floor surface.

Building 3 was a range of badly-damaged rooms at the south-west corner of Building 1. One room had five superimposed floor levels of flat stones, the uppermost, very carefully fitted together and rising slightly in the centre. Finds seem to indicate that this was a smithing area — for instance, slags, residue of bronze ore and six haunched bones. Non-industrial finds came from the extreme west end, which was badly damaged and could therefore have been from a different phase of occupation. These include a hammer-headed bronze pin and a small-toothed, single-sided comb.

Building 4, twenty-nine feet by twelve and a half (8.8m x 3.8m), with walls two and a half feet (1.8m) wide, lay to the north of these buildings, where the walls were reduced to foundation level. Although it is on a different alignment, it has been taken as contemporary with the others. A curious feature was found north of the doorway, being a box-like enclosure five by four feet (1.5m x 1.2m), divided lengthwise into two areas with one paved; it may have been for animals or for storage, but there is no conclusive evidence. Once again, in the house a long fire dominated the central axis, and other features noted include a possible bed in the form of a slightly raised area in the south-east corner, outlined by a setting of flagstones. Part of the building wall may originally have been constructed of turf, as no traces of an outer shell are indicated.

The so-called 'naust' was an irregular U-shaped construction with foundations of large, heavy boulders. However [see Fig. 3.2], this interpretation may possibly be revised to take account of traces of buildings of different phases.

These Group A buildings were dated by Curle to the thirteenth century on the basis of one sherd of mediaeval pottery paralleled in Essex at a site with occupation ending in the mid-thirteenth century. He thus associated the end of the occupation of Freswick with the levying of fines by Alexander III in 1264 on Caithness for the rendering of assistance to Haakon of Norway (Curle 1939, 86-7). Such precision in dating on the basis of pottery might however be challenged today.
A brief summary of Group A would therefore be:

a) two rectangular buildings, one later with a bathhouse and the other possibly a storehouse with finds of pottery ranging up to the end of the thirteenth century. A more precise date for the other finds is rather difficult because they are types common throughout the Norse period, e.g. perforated femur-head wheels and Viking cooking vessel fragments. Earlier finds, possibly including the small-toothed single-sided comb, may be from earlier phases at the damaged western end of the building.

b) the smithy with associated material, slag and hones for example.

c) the isolated Building 4, possibly of earlier construction because of its different alignment — although this is difficult to tell from the finds which include a tapered pennular ring and part of a hoarded bone.

d) the possible 'tomb' of larger boulder walls and irregular U-shape.

If the isolated Building 4 is contemporary with the rest of Group A, the plan would have resembled a courtyard type of farm, the bath and smithy being on the southern wing because of the danger from fire. Other farm buildings one might have expected to find, such as stables and byres, are not represented, but may possibly have been on the north side, and at the time of excavation they were buried under very deep sand.

Group B was located partially underlying Building 4 of Group A, although this relationship is far from clear on the published plan. Building 6 to the west was embedded in the wall, eighty-one feet long by twelve wide (24m x 1.5m), of a larger 'structure' and which appears to represent an earlier phase. The walls were on average three feet (9m) thick, with the posterior length being sixty-six and a half feet (11.1m) with a long hearth. Four postholes to the south and four to the north indicate the method of construction of the roof, being an aisled support of upright and cross timbers. The eastern end of the house was covered by midden which produced, for example, a comb, an iron knife-blade and a large piece of swivel vessel.

Only fragments of buildings from the rest of this group remained, possibly representing store-houses. Midden deposits here produced the portion of a pennular brooch with zoomorphic terminal.

Group C was found to underlie the main block of Group A, with a north-south orientation and, although badly damaged, the walls could be seen to be up to four feet (1.2m) across, and of sandwich construction as with Group A. In the west wall, the skull of a small whale had been incorporated. The southern part of the building of Group C was possibly a barn, as it had a very hard floor of clay and peat ash, and no certain central hearth remains. In the south-east corner was a kiln for drying corn or fodder apparently built into the original structure. Beyond the partition wall a second kiln was located. The finds from here include hand-made pottery fragments, a partially-worked bone pin and a bronze piece interpreted as a cauldron patch: all are generally attributable to the Norse period.

Beneath this building, traces of a carbonised wattle-and-daub structure were located, on a bed of clay.

The Finds

A summary of finds from the excavations:

Bone: many objects of bone were found, and some have been collected from the site since the excavations. Bone combs of both single and double type were found, including the distinctive 'butterfly' type [Fig 3.3] found widely in Scandinavia and generally there of twelfth to thirteenth century date, e.g. at the Bryggen, Bergen (Greig 1933, 232), and very similar at Lund (Mårtensson 1976, 330). A fine comb case of four perforated tapered strips was also uncovered. Many examples of socalled dress-finders of pig metacarpals with a single central perforation were found, also found widely in Scandinavia, e.g. Birka (Svarta Jorden catalogue, Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm) and possibly being some kind of game. Additionally, there are two so-called door-snegs of bone, planed off to swivel freely and again with parallels at Birka (ibid.); many bone pins and piersers; hemispherical whorls of ox-femur heads. All are directly comparable to Scandinavian material of the Viking and early Medieval periods in Scandinavia.

Bronze: finds include three-quarters of a pennular brooch of 'Irish-Celtic' design [Fig 3.4] — possibly of the eighth century (E. Bakke, Bergen University, pers. comm.) but presumably deposited at a date considerably later than this; a possible zoomorphic strap-end; finger-rings and bracelites of types common in Scandinavia [Fig 3.5] (Svarta Jorden Catalogue, Fig. J.3. Combs from the 1937 excavations, showing the distinctive 'butterfly' type.
Stockholm). These finds, although extremely interesting, provide only limited aid in dating the structures with which they are associated.

Iron: objects from the site are of a great variety and include knives of pronounced hogback type, keys, padlocks and shears.

Pottery: this ranges from a reddish-brown fabric mediaeval ware to 'Viking' handmade wares with grass-markings. This latter type is often encrusted with carbon on the outside and of hard, well-fired fabric of buff to grey-black in colour. Shapes characteristic of the ware include the globular with a flat base and everted rim — the variety usually being achieved by the treatment of the rims with for example, finger impressions or oblique cuts. Curie suggested (1939. 106) that the more sophisticated rim treatment may be of a later date. The same pottery was found at Jarlshof (Hamilton 1858) and recent finds have been made at Huna and a site near John O'Groats at the Ness of Duncansby (J. Close-Brooks, National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh, pers. comm.); the Pentland Skerries, Birsay, Orkney; and possibly at Papa Stour, Shetland.

Stone: many hones were found during the excavations, especially in the area interpreted as a smithy; also querns and neolithic chisels. Steatite vessel fragments of a very fine quality indicate large and well-hewn vessels. All such finds are very difficult to date precisely because the forms were often functional rather than aesthetically pleasing, and consequently tended to continue in an unchanged form for long periods at a time.
EXCAVATIONS AT FRESWICK: 1942

Further excavations at the site were directed by Childe in 1942 because the combined action of sand quarrying and winter storms revealed another building complex to the north-east of Curle's excavations, "on the seaward edge of the high dune" (Childe 1942, 5-17). These produced a midden layer which appeared to be associated with Curle's buildings and a single complex of building phases with no evidence for surrounding structures.

The Buildings

Phase 1 comprised a long house, twenty-eight feet (8.5m) long, with the walls founded on a bed of grey clay and a basal course of thin stone slabs; the eastern part had been lost because of erosion. In the centre of the house was a long fire represented by a bed of peat ash fifteen feet (4.6m) long with an oval fire pit at the west end.

Phase 2 (Figs. 3.6; 3.7) had walls constructed of large boulders, and in the west room the floor was formed of an irregular pavement covered with midden. This was bounded by a groove roughly marked out by pairs of thin slates sunk into the floor, and interpreted as a groove for a wooden partition with a gap for the doorway. The entrance had a long paved passage in this phase.

Phase 3 was a new construction built on top of the east part of the house incorporating some of the walls, but mostly separated from phase two by one foot (0.3m) of sand accumulation. This building had no hearth.

The Finds

In the finds recovered, there was a lack of items which could be attributed to the second and third phases. There was in general the same 'Viking' pottery as before, but with more 'sophisticated' rims, generally flattened and with almost an internal flange. In the first phase, one almost complete pot was found in the corner of the building, which had been crushed when the wall collapsed. This was a flat-based open bowl, in close association with a whalebone draughtsman. This draughtsman has many Scandinavian parallels, especially from the Tyskebyggen, Bergen (Grieg 1932, 260, Fig. 233), which was found in a deposit predating the 1248 burning layer and considered to be post 1200. Other close parallels have come from Oslo, Trondheim and Sigtuna. Dating the structures therefore is rather problematic; the draughtsman from phase one could date from the thirteenth century (if the continental analogy is reliable in this context), and consequently phases two and three are later on stratigraphical grounds. However, the gap between these phases cannot be judged because in a single winter storm, for instance, one foot (0.3m) of sand could have covered the site. The remaining finds from these excavations comprised stone weights and femur-head whorls amongst other items: all things which are insufficient to date individual phases.

The excavations of Curle and Childe revealed substantial building remains and many valuable artefacts; a rich group of finds rather than...
THE PRESENT SITUATION

The combination of erosion from the elements and from rabbits has resulted in an area now largely devoid of its vegetation and from which sand is easily removed. This erosion has clearly indicated the site as larger than the previous excavation reports suggest; and random collections of artefacts (e.g. pottery) and other material have been gathered from the whole area of Freewick Links [Fig. 3.8]. While the collections of material in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland are very important, the systematic study of material in other collections, already begun, has confirmed the outstanding importance of this site. Moreover, the winter storms of 1978-9, which removed a further bite from the coastline in the bay, have revealed yet more walls and midden material consisting of animal and fish bone, burnt stones and pottery. Almost each time the wind blows something new is revealed! [Fig. 3.9].

In an attempt to underline the need for a systematic large-scale investigation, to include a study of the whole area of Freewick Bay (c.f. Morris 1979), a short survey sponsored by the Scottish Development Department was undertaken at Freewick in September 1979.

Fig. 3.8. Eroding midden at Viking Freewick, 1979.
layer could almost be removed in a single plate. Species identified from the
columns and eroding spread of material include: ox, sheep and pig; cod,
haddock, ling, crab and various types of shellfish; cereals including oats
and barley; and various grasses and sedges consistent with a heathland
and dune environment. However, perhaps the most interesting fact to emerge
from the preliminary analysis is that virtually all the fish bone collected
both in the sample and randomly from the beach midden is from fish over a
metre long.

Our understanding of Freswick is still based primarily on that of the
excavators of 1937 and 1942. Questions remain, however, about the
relationships of the structures and their artefacts — questions that have
only multiplied following the very brief investigation of 1979 and the
multiplicity of random finds.

The scale of the problem is indicated by the area of the known site (½
mile x ½ mile) (0.8km x 0.4km) most of which suffers from continuing
erosion. And the known site itself continues to grow so that it extends
south of the burn. Alterations in the cellars of the Castle, which led to
further archaeological investigation in the autumn of 1979, revealed midden
material with large concentrations of Freswick pottery possibly related to
a structure underlying the present Castle.

This re-emphasises the need to study the whole area of Freswick as a
case for the known site. For at Freswick there is undoubtedly an
unparalleled opportunity to study settlement in relation to its environment
in the Late Norse Period.

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