

Prehistoric Orkney Historic Scotland

Considering that Orkney is a group of relatively small islands lying off the northeast coast of the Scottish mainland, its wealth of Neolithic archaeology is truly extraordinary. An assortment of houses, chambered cairns, stone circles, standing stones and passage graves provides an unusually comprehensive range of archaeological and architectural contexts. Yet, in the early 1990s, there was a noticeable imbalance between 4th and 3rd millennium cal BC evidence, with house structures, and 'villages' being well represented in the latter but minimally in the former. As elsewhere in the British Isles, the archaeological visibility of the 4th millennium cal BC in Orkney tends to be dominated by the monumental presence of chambered cairns or tombs. In the 1970s Claude Lévi-Strauss conceived of a form of social organization based upon the 'house' – *sociétés à maisons* – in order to provide a classification for social groups that appeared not to conform to established anthropological kinship structures. In this approach, the anchor point is the 'house', understood as a conceptual resource that is a consequence of a strategy of constructing and legitimizing identities under ever shifting social conditions. Drawing on the results of an extensive program of fieldwork in the Bay of Firth, Mainland Orkney, the text explores the idea that the physical appearance of the house is a potent resource for materializing the dichotomous alliance and descent principles apparent in the archaeological evidence for the early and later Neolithic of Orkney. It argues that some of the insights made by Lévi-Strauss in his basic formulation of *sociétés à maisons* are extremely relevant to interpreting the archaeological evidence and providing the parameters for a 'social' narrative of the material changes occurring in Orkney between the 4th and 2nd millennia cal BC. The major excavations undertaken during the Cuween-Wideford Landscape Project provided an unprecedented depth and variety of evidence for Neolithic occupation, bridging the gap between domestic and ceremonial architecture and form, exploring the transition from wood to stone and relationships between the living and the dead and the role of material culture. The results are described and discussed in detail here, enabling tracing of the development and fragmentation of *sociétés à maisons* over a 1500 year period of Northern Isles prehistory.

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The Neolithic village known as Skara Brae was continuously occupied for about 300 to 400 years, before being abandoned around 2500 BC. Despite severe coastal erosion, eight houses and a workshop have survived largely intact, with their stone furniture still in place. This is the best-preserved settlement of its period in northern Europe, and thousands of artefacts were discovered during excavations of the site. Who lived here? How did they live? And why did they ultimately abandon the village? In this lively account, Dr David Clarke, who led major excavations at Orkney's Skara Brae, describes the details of the site and explores some of the enigmas posed by this extraordinary survival. Discover the secrets of the Stone Age and travel back in time to see what life was like for the villagers of Skara Brae on Orkney. This book introduces little explorers to Neolithic life through Scotland's most famous prehistoric village. Moving parts let them catch a fish for dinner, cook over an open fire, travel through tunnels to visit friends, raise a standing stone at Stenness, and even uncover the village thousands of years later! Published in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland, custodians of Skara Brae, the bright and exciting illustrations are packed full of historical detail helping young children to learn as they play. An ideal gift for visitors to Scotland, this large board book is chunky but lightweight with sturdy moving parts that are just the right size for little hands.

Examines the monuments of prehistoric Orkney, spanning a period from the earliest farmers, around 4000 BC, to the Viking onslaught, about AD 800. The quality of the building stone has helped to ensure the survival of these monuments, including: the Neolithic settlements of Skara Brae and Knap of Howar; the early chambered tombs at Midhowe, Maes Howe, Quoyness and Isbister; the stone circle of Stenness; the Ring of Brodgar; and the later brochs at Midhowe and Gurness.

Tofts Ness is a peninsula at the north end of the Orcadian island of Sanday where mounds and banks represent a domestic landscape, marginal even in island terms, together with a funerary landscape. A combination of selective excavation and geophysical survey during 1985-8 revealed settlement and cultivation spanning Neolithic to Early Iron Age times, including burnt mounds and traces of plough cultivation. The Neolithic inhabitants of Tofts Ness appear not to have used either Grooved Ware or Unstan Ware, and it is suggested that this reflects a lack of status compared to the settlement at Pool. Instead, the pottery shares important links to contemporary assemblages from West Mainland Shetland, and this is echoed by the steatite artefacts. The link with Shetland remains visible into the Late Bronze Age. The upper levels of the main settlement mound contained the remains of stone-built roundhouses of the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, of which the last survived to a height of 1.5m. A lack of personal items amongst the artefact assemblage again indicates the low status of the inhabitants. The economic evidence for all periods shows a mixed subsistence economy based on animal husbandry and barley cultivation, together with fishing, fowling and the exploitation of wild plants both terrestrial and marine. Important studies on the farming methods employed on Tofts Ness reveal a manuring strategy in managing small fields that was more akin to intensive gardening than field cultivation and a deliberate policy of harvesting the barley crop whilst under-ripe.

"There was a smell of blood mingling with the smell of burning that still clung about scorched timber and blackened thatch, and a great wailing rose from the watching crowd. The old High Priest dipped a finger in the blood and made a sign with it on Phaedrus's forehead, above the Mark of the Horse Lord." So began the ceremony that was to make young Phaedrus, ex-slave and gladiator, Horse Lord of the Dalriadain. Phaedrus had come a long way since the fight in the arena that gained him his freedom. He had left behind his old Roman life and identity and had entered another, more primitive, world—that of the British tribes in the far north. In this world of superstition and ancient ritual, of fierce loyalties and intertribal rivalry, Phaedrus found companionship and love, and something more—a purpose and a meaning to his life as he came fully to understand the significance of the Mark of the Horse Lord. First published in 1965 but long out of print, *The Mark of the Horse Lord* has been acclaimed by many readers as the finest of Rosemary Sutcliff's many novels, imparting true insight into the nature of leadership, identity, heroism, loyalty, and sacrifice.

This book looks at the evolution of rural settlement in Scotland from the Mesolithic period through to the improving movement of the 18th and 19th centuries. The main emphasis is on changes in society and technology, but the book also considers how the development of the physical landscape laid the foundation for such changes. The author strikes a balance between general perspectives (including relevant contextual materials such as the political structures) and local studies, with much emphasis on individual sites. Lack of documentation prior to the 10th century places particular importance on the archaeological evidence, but imaginative interpretation of this evidence has led to a major re-evaluation. Ideas emphasizing continuity of settlement and local adaptation are replacing older 'invasionist' theories emphasizing

Celtic war lords and broch-building pirates.

Orkney-based archaeologist Caroline Wickham-Jones explores more than 60 of Orkney's monuments in concise and accessible terms, set in context by a brief history of the islands.

Explore the fascinating history of Scotland in an easy-to-read guide Want to discover how a small country on the edge of Northern Europe packs an almighty historical punch? Scottish History For Dummies is your guide to the story of Scotland and its place within the historical narratives of Britain, Europe and the rest of the world. You'll find out how Scotland rose from the ashes to forge its own destiny, understand the impact of Scottish historical figures such as William Wallace, Robert the Bruce and David Hume and be introduced to the wonderful world of Celtic religion, architecture and monuments. History can help us make connections with people and events, and it gives us an understanding of why the world is like it is today. Scottish History For Dummies pulls back the curtain on how the story of Scotland has shaped the world far beyond its borders. From its turbulent past to the present day, this informative guide sheds a new and timely light on the story of Scotland and its people. Dig into a wealth of fascinating facts on the Stone, Bronze and Iron ages Get to know how Scotland was built into an industrial economy by inventors, explorers and missionaries Discover the impact of the world wars on Scotland and how the country has responded to challenges created by them Find up-to-the-minute information on Scotland's referendum on independence If you're a lifelong learner looking for a fun, factual exploration of the grand scope of Scotland or a traveler wanting to make the most of your trip to this captivating country, Scottish History For Dummies has you covered.

Describes the Stone age settlement preserved almost intact in the sand dunes of one of the Orkney Islands, how it came to be discovered in the mid-nineteenth century, and what it reveals about the life and culture of this prehistoric community.

Scotland is unusually rich in field monuments and objects surviving from early times. This comprehensive survey of Scotland's prehistoric and early historic archaeology covers the full chronological range from the earliest inhabitants to the union of the Picts and Scots in AD 843. Fully illustrated throughout, this book will help both students and visitors to monuments to understand the lifestyles of Scotland's early societies. Based on lectures given at the Conference of the British Summer School of Archaeology at Edinburgh in 1954, this book, published in 1962, surveys the general field of pre-historic Scotland, five archaeologists each contributing chapters discussing the main aspects and problems that have presented themselves in specialised research areas. From the first peopling of the area by human communities with hunting and food-gathering economies, to field antiquities and the introduction of copper and bronze metallurgy and on to the first settlement by Celtic speakers and the links to the first historically documented Scotland. Contributors: R.J.C. Atkinson, G.E. Daniel, T.G.E. Powell and C.A.R. Radford.

This case study is part of the Contemporary Cases Online series. The series provides critical case studies that are original, flexible, challenging, controversial and research-informed, driven by the needs of teaching and learning.

This fascinating book is all about Skara Brae, a prehistoric Stone Age site in the Orkney Islands, Scotland. There is very little published material on the site currently available. Containing beautiful photographs and written with simple, clear explanation, this book is a fascinating insight into life in the Stone Age period.

Describes the Stone Age settlement preserved in the sand dunes on one of Scotland's Orkney Islands, telling how it was discovered and what it reveals about life in prehistoric times.

12 papers from specialists covering a wide array of time periods and subject areas, this volume explores the links between identity and nationhood throughout the history of Scotland from the prehistory of northern Britain to the more recent heralding of Scottish identity as a multi-ethnic construction and the possibility of Scottish independence.

The most complete and authoritative look at Scottish history and its rich archaeological heritage. Each book in the series tells the story of a particular area of Scotland, from its earliest days of settlement to up-to-date information on modern society.

The Edinburgh Festival brings together artists from all over the world, and Cowrie is among them, telling stories and giving readings. But even Cowrie can't anticipate the chemistry that will begin when a group of traditional storytellers sets off to the Orkney Islands with Ellen, to stay at her coastal family cottages. For Ellen turns out to be Morrigan, and Morrigan is a selkie, living in the sea and on land. As an ancient mystery unravels, Cowrie and Sasha must turn detective to discover the truth behind Morrigan and the song of the selkies.

Plant-centred issues are fundamental in the definitions and explanations of the Neolithic as a phenomenon. The meeting of the Neolithic Studies Group from which this volume developed aimed to provide a forum for the wide range of approaches now applied to Neolithic archaeobotany at site and landscape scales of resolution.

A fascinating review of archaeological Great Britain, covering the deep archaeology of this long-settled island—from early hominid remains through the modern world—as well as Great Britain's role in the larger archaeological realm.

This is an account of the Neolithic period in Scotland from its earliest traces around 4000 BC to the transformation of Neolithic society in the Early Bronze Age fifteen hundred years later. Gordon Noble interprets Scottish material in the context of debates and issues in European archaeology, comparing sites and practices identified in Scotland to those found elsewhere in Britain and beyond. He considers the nature and effects of memory, sea and land travel, ritualisation, island identities, mortuary practice, symbolism and environmental impact. He synthesises excavations and research conducted over the last century and more, bringing together the evidence for understanding what happened in Scotland during this long period. His long-term and regionally based analysis suggests new directions for the interpretation of the Neolithic more generally. After outlining the chronology of the Neolithic in Europe Dr Noble considers its origins in Scotland. He investigates why the Earlier Neolithic in Scotland is characterised by regionally-distinct monumental traditions and asks if these reflect different conceptions of the world. He uses a long-term perspective to explain the nature of monumental landscapes in the Later Neolithic and considers whether Neolithic society as a whole might have been created and maintained through interactions at places where large-scale monuments were built. He ends by considering how the Neolithic was transformed in the Early Bronze Age through the manipulation of the material remains of the past. Neolithic Scotland provides a comprehensive, approachable and up-to-date account of the Scottish Neolithic. Such a book has not been available for many years. It will be widely welcomed.

Of all prehistoric monuments, few are more emotive than the great stone circles that were built throughout Britain and Ireland. From the tall, elegant, pointed monoliths of the Stones of Stenness to the grandeur of Stonehenge and the sarsen blocks at Avebury, circles of stone exert a magnetic fascination to those who venture into their sphere. In Britain today, more people visit these structures than any other form of prehistoric monument and visitors stand in awe at their scale and question how and why they were erected. Building the Great Stone Circles of the North looks at the enigmatic stone structures of Scotland and investigates the background of their construction and their cultural significance.

This book provides a reassessment of the peoples who lived in Scotland from 1500BC to 200AD.

For much of its history, Orkney had its own language, culture and institutions. The prehistoric inhabitants created monuments which are

unmatched anywhere in Europe, and the medieval period saw the magnificent earldom that expressed itself through the Orkneyinga Saga and the building of St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall. Like Shetland, Orkney was heavily influenced by Viking traders and raiders from Scandinavia, and for a long period it formed an outlying part of the kingdom of Norway. Over 500 years ago, however, the islands lost their Scandinavian links and since then have had a sometimes difficult association with mainland Scotland. More recent times have seen the use of Orkney as a strategic stronghold during two world wars, and the far-reaching impact of oil and gas exploitation in the North Sea. This classic book covers the whole fascinating story and will be of interest to readers far beyond the rocky shores of Orkney itself.

In *Human Ecodynamics in the North Atlantic: A Collaborative Model of Humans and Nature through Space and Time*, Maher and Harrison have compiled a series of separate research projects conducted across the North Atlantic region that each contribute greatly to the area of study.

Orkney lies only 20 miles north of mainland Scotland, yet for many centuries its culture was more Scandinavian than Scottish. Strong westerly winds account for the scarcity of trees on Orkney and also for the tradition of well-constructed stone structures.

Looks at megalithic sites and monuments in Great Britain

Long before astronomy was a science, humans used the stars to mark time, navigate, organize planting and dramatize myths. This encyclopaedia draws on archaeological evidence and oral traditions to reveal how prehistoric humans perceived the skies and celestial phenomena.

In this exciting and lavishly illustrated new guide, Damien Noonan explores a variety of historic sites.

An investigation of the origins of the Neolithic farming village on Orkney Island • Reveals the striking similarities between Skara Brae and the traditions of pre-dynastic ancient Egypt as preserved by the Dogon people of Mali • Explains how megalithic stone sites near Skara Brae conform to Dogon cosmology • Examines the similarities between Skara Brae and Gobekli Tepe and how Skara Brae may have been a secondary center of learning for the ancient world In 3200 BC, Orkney Island off the coast of Northern Scotland was home to a small farming village called Skara Brae. For reasons unknown, after nearly six centuries of continuous habitation, the village was abandoned around 2600 BC and its stone structures covered over--perhaps deliberately, like the structures at Gobekli Tepe. Although now well-excavated, very little is known about the peaceful people who lived at Skara Brae or their origins. Who were they and where did they go? Drawing on his in-depth knowledge of the connections between the cosmology and linguistics of Egyptian, Dogon, Chinese, and Vedic traditions, Laird Scranton reveals the striking similarities between Skara Brae and the Dogon of Mali, who still practice the same cosmology and traditions they once shared with pre-dynastic Egypt. He shows how the earliest Skara Brae houses match the typical Dogon stone house as well as Schwaller de Lubicz's interpretation of the Egyptian Temple of Man at Luxor. He explains how megalithic stone sites near Skara Brae conform to Dogon cosmology, each representing sequential stages of creation as described by Dogon priests, and he details how the houses at Skara Brae also represent a concept of creation. Citing a linguistic phenomenon known as "ultraconserved words," the author compares words of the Faroese language at Skara Brae, a language with no known origin, with important cosmological words from Dogon and ancient Egyptian traditions, finding obvious connections and similarities. Scranton shows how the cultivated field alongside the village of Skara Brae corresponds to the "heavenly field" symbolism pervasive throughout many ancient cultures, such as the Field of Reeds of the ancient Egyptians and the Elysian Fields of ancient Greece. He demonstrates how Greek and Egyptian geographic descriptions of these fields are a consistent match with Orkney Island. Examining the similarities between Skara Brae and Gobekli Tepe, Scranton reveals that Skara Brae may have been a secondary center of initiation and civilizing knowledge, a long-lost Egyptian mystery school set up millennia after Gobekli Tepe was ritually buried, and given the timing of the site, is possibly the source of the first pharaohs and priests of ancient Egypt.

This book brings together the results of the Orkney Barrows Project, initiated and directed by Jane Downes and funded by Historic Environment Scotland. The barrows sites detailed and discussed in the volume are Linga Field, a barrow cemetery in West Mainland which was comprehensively excavated and which provides extraordinary evidence of pyre sites and cremation practices; Gitterpitten, a barrow cemetery in Rendall of which three barrows were excavated partially, and Varme Dale also in Rendall of which two barrows were excavated - these sites both produced a range of cremation deposits, Vestra Field, Sandwick barrow site which was surveyed and excavated to a limited extent is also reported upon. Eight Bronze Age cist burials excavated under 'rescue' conditions by a range of other individuals are also included within this volume. The evidence is also used to compare and contrast the rites and practices of cremation and inhumation.

Discussion of chronology and typology of the burials is placed in the context of the other burial evidence from Orkney, and the other aspects of Bronze Age represented by settlement, burnt mounds etc. As such the book will form an update to M Hedges' contribution 'The Second Millennium and After' in ed. C Renfrew *Prehistory of Orkney* (1985). The significance of the findings will also be placed in the wider Scottish/UK/N Europe context. The Bronze Age of Orkney is a poorly understood topic with little written on it; the book will make a significant contribution to this area.

A definitive history of six hundred years of Viking civilization traces the political, military, social, cultural, and religious history of the Viking world from Iceland to Lithuania.

An evocative look at the ancient Scottish monuments, and what they reveal about the Orcadian way of life, from the earliest farmers around 4000 BC, to the Viking onslaught of AD 800.

The Orcadian archipelago is a museum of archaeological wonders. Its largest island, Mainland, is home to some of the oldest and best-preserved Neolithic sites in Europe, the most famous of which are the passage grave of Maeshowe, the megaliths of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar and the village of Skara Brae – evidence of a dynamic society with connections binding Orkney to Ireland, to southern Britain and to the western margins of continental Europe. Despite 150 years of archaeological investigation, however, there is much that we do not know about the societies that created these sites. What historical background did they emerge from? What social and political interests did their monuments serve? And what was the nature of the links between Neolithic societies in Orkney and elsewhere? Following a broadly chronological narrative, and highlighting different lines of evidence as they unfold, Mark Edmonds traces the development of the Orcadian Neolithic from its beginnings in the early fourth millennium BC through to the end of the period nearly two thousand years later. Juxtaposing an engaging and accessible narrative with beautifully evocative photographs of Orkney and its monuments, he uses artefacts, architecture and the wider landscape to recreate the lives of Neolithic communities across the region.

Who were the first Britons, and what sort of world did they occupy? In *A History of Ancient Britain*, much-loved historian Neil Oliver turns a spotlight on the very beginnings of the story of Britain; on the first people to occupy these islands and their battle for survival. There has been human habitation in Britain, regularly interrupted by Ice Ages, for the best part of a million years. The last retreat of the glaciers 12,000 years ago brought a new and warmer age and with it, one of the greatest tsunamis recorded on Earth which struck the north-east of Britain, devastating the population and flooding the low-lying plains of what is now the North Sea. The resulting island became, in time, home to a diverse range of cultures and peoples who have left behind them some of the most extraordinary and enigmatic monuments in the world. Through what is revealed by the artefacts of the past, Neil Oliver weaves the epic story - half a million years of human history up to the departure of the Roman Empire in the Fifth Century AD. It was a period which accounts for more than ninety-nine per cent of humankind's presence on these islands. It is the real story of Britain and of her people.

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