

HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL



FIELD MONUMENTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

1 SITE CODE	H	N	D	3	4	S	W	0	0	1	A	
2 NGR	N	D	3	0	8	3	4	3	4	9	C	E
3 QUAL												
6 SITE NAME	L O C H Y A R R O W S *											
10 GENERIC TYPE	BROCH											
14 PERIOD/DATE	IA = EM					15 DATING METHOD						
					TYP							
18 SHAPE												
19 THREAT AND DATE												

4 DISTRICT	CAITHNESS		5 PARISH	WICK	
7 AREA STATUS	SSSI		8 SITE STATUS	SCHEDULED	
9 REGIONAL STATUS					
11 CONCORDANCE	osND 34 SW 1		12 FORM	STANDING STRUCTURES	
13 DIMENSIONS					
16 RELATIONSHIP OF ELEMENTS	MULTIPHASE SITE OF BROCH, POST BROCH SETTLEMENT AND 13th/14th CENT. BURIALS.		17 CONDITION	INCOMPLETE (FLOODED)	
20 LAND USE	HEATH PASTURE		21 GEOLOGY		
22 SOILS			23 VEGETATION		
24 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE			25 RELIEF	PROMONTORY ON LOCHSIDE	
26 ASPECT	360°		27 ALTITUDE	90=100m OD	

28 EXCAVATION (EXCAVATOR: DATE: EXTENT: QUALITY)	D ANDERSON: 1866-67: PARTIAL:				
29 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR: DATE: TITLE: JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER: VOLUME: DETAIL)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1976: 1: 10,000 MAP. RCAHMS: 1911: CAITHNESS INVENTORY: HMSO: pp 149-51, No 509 (PLAN). : : MEMOIRS OF LONDON ANTHROP. SOC: VOL 3: p228. ANDERSON J.: 1883: SCOTLAND IN PAGAN TIMES: VOL 2: THE IRON AGE: p 223 (PLAN). : : ARCHAEOLOGIA SCOTICA: VOL 5 pt.1: p 131 (PLAN). MACKIE E.W.: 1975: SCOTLAND, AN ARCH. GUIDE: FABER & FABER: pp27-28. MERCER R.J.: 1985: FIELD SURVEY IN N. SCOTLAND: VOL 3: No WAR 13. (over). 				
30 GROUND PLAN NO.	31 GROUND PHOTO NO. 84171211, 871416/28, 30, 31				
32 SLIDES NO.	33 HR. AP. NO. M2/784/Oa				
34 NMR. AP. NO.	35 OTHER AP. NO.: SOURCE B49659-91; B49693-4; B52301-8CS				
36 ARCHIVE AND LOCATION					
37 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY	38 SAMPLES				
39 PALYNOLOGY	40 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO.				
41 SMALL FINDS					42 MUSEUM/LOCATION
43 OTHER					

44 NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER						45 ATTITUDE OF OWNER
46 NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT						47 ATTITUDE OF TENANT
48 ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS						

49 NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECORDER: DATE	50 RECORDER: DATE HAR: 8.10.1985	51 CHECK: DATE GS: 29.10.1985
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52 TEXT
"See over and cont. cards for text."

"ND 309 435 Loch of Yarrows, Broch on SW side of, Thrumster" (8)

6. * Full Name: Loch of Yarrows.

29. 8. HMB (S.D.D):1985:LIST OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS.

9. SWANSON,CB:1985:T.S. UNPUBLISHED

10. BRAMMAN, J et al:1976:VISITS O ANCIENT CAITHNESS:CAITHNESS FIELD CLUB P 20 No 11

(ND 3083 4349) Cairns of Yarrows (NAT) (I).
Broch & Settlement (NR)

The broch of Yarrows, with secondary structures, including wags, is situated on a spur projecting into the Loch of Yarrows, isolated from the mainland by a ditch 25 to 30 ft wide. (2)(3).

Before excavation by Anderson in 1866-7 the remains appeared as a grass-covered mound 18 to 20 ft high. The broch consisted of a circular wall, 12 to 13 ft thick and then 15 ft high, enclosing an area 30 ft in diameter. The relics were presented to the NMAS. (4)(5).

In 1910 the wall stood about 11 ft high. Much of the structure was still visible, and the walls of the secondary structures were in good condition.

Anderson also found five human skeletons, one with a 13th / 14th century brass brooch, in the mound.

A broch and settlement, generally as described by the RCAHM, partly waterlogged due to the damming of the Loch of Yarrows. The encircling ditch is now visible as a vague silted-up marshy area. The name 'Cairns of Yarrows' is no longer used locally. (OSFI:NKB:2.5.1967).

Published survey (1:2500) revised.

This broch is probably an early form. A stretch of linteiled ground-level gallery, unnoted by the excavator, is in the NE arc. The entrance in the E is probably primary, that at the foot of the mural stair probably being pushed through when the settlement outside was being built. A secondary wall has been introduced to the interior of the broch, which is usually an indication that it has been converted into a dwelling and its high wall destroyed. (6).

See cont. cards for text of (2) and (8).

509. *Broch, Yarrows, Loch of Yarrows.*—Situated at the S. end of the Loch of Yarrows is the broch of Yarrows (or Yarhouse), which was excavated by Dr Joseph Anderson in 1866-67, and from whose description the following particulars are derived:—

HND 34 SW 001A

The appearance before excavation was that of a conical grass-covered mound 18' to 20' in height, standing on a low, flat triangular projection of the shore of the loch cut off from the land by a ditch varying from 25' to 30' wide. Remains of five human skeletons were found embedded in the earth and stones of the mound, but not deep enough to have any determinable relation with the structure of the broch below, and near one of these was recovered a flat circular brooch of brass inscribed with a talismanic inscription common to the brooches of the 13th and 14th centuries.

(2).

When excavated, the broch consisted of a circular wall 12' to 13' thick, enclosing a central area 30' in diameter. The height of the wall remaining was about 15'. The doorway, which passed straight through the wall, was about 6' high and 2½' wide, slightly narrower at top than at bottom, and well built with long flat slabs, some of which were 8' in length. There were no guard chambers or bar holes, and the checks for the door were quite on the inner side of the wall. Opening from the interior area to the left of the doorway was the entrance to the stair, which also gave access to an oblong chamber at the stair foot. The stair itself was 3' wide, and sixteen steps up there was a landing with a light-hole or window looking into the interior of the broch. Above the entrance to the stair there were also three windows placed vertically over each other. In the thickness of the wall opposite the doorway was an oblong chamber roofed in the usual manner by overlapping stones. The broch had an interior wall of inferior masonry built against the main wall, and partially bonded into it at the door openings. This inner wall was 2½' thick and rose to a height of 8' where the wall head formed a level scarcement all round the interior: and there were also partition walls running half way across the area from both sides of the doorway. These were partly built and partly formed of long slabs set on end, and they rose to about the same height as the scarcement. The partitions and the inner wall forming the scarcement were founded on an accumulation of rubbish largely mixed with ashes and food refuse which covered the original floor of the broch to the depth of 12" to 14". They were therefore clearly secondary constructions made to adapt the broch to the purposes of a secondary occupation. Outside the broch were two long irregularly shaped enclosures (C and D on plan), and several smaller cells. The outer enclosure was 100' in length and varied in width from 6' to 20'; the inner enclosure was 70' in length and about 12' in width, and each had a little cell provided with door checks opening off them. In some places their walls remained entire to the height of 10' without showing any sign of overlapping for a roof. Both of these large enclosures had irregular rows of long slabs set on end in their floors. A long covered way (A) leading to the entrance of the broch traversed the N.E. end of these enclosures. It varied in width from 3' at the door of the broch to about 5' at the outer end, and had checks for doors at four different places in its length. The secondary character of all these exterior constructions was obvious from the fact that underneath their foundations there was a considerable depth of stones overlying the original soil, and mingled with ashes and food refuse. It was also evident that various occupations of the interior of the broch had taken place from time to time when the original floor had become covered with rubbish to a considerable depth. Partition walls were met with at three different levels, dividing the internal area on three different plans, the last being a partial partition utilising only one side of the area, at a time when the original floor had become covered with 8' of stones and rubbish.

The relics recovered consisted of grain rubbers and stones hollowed like mortars, stone pestles, pounders or hammer stones, whetstones, circular discs of slaty sandstone, stone balls, a small rounded pebble of quartz with a hole through it, and a number of spindle whorls, a ring and armlet of bronze, and a few fragments of iron knives, besides pottery. The animal remains included those of the reindeer and the red-deer.

The relics are preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh.

The broch is now in a rather dilapidated condition, and the stone of which it is built, especially on the inner face of the wall, is disintegrating rapidly. The greatest height of the main wall visible in the interior is 11', and the greatest height of the lining 6'. The width of the passage is 2' 8". There is no guard chamber, and the door checks occur at 11' from the outside near the inner end of the passage. Three consecutive lintels remain over the passage for 4' 6" of its length. The entrance to the stair is blocked, and only one of the windows is complete above it. The chamber at the foot of the stair is still entire, and is 3' 8" wide at greatest width, and 6' 2" high. The walls slightly converge upwards and support a roof of flags. The steps of the stair are almost entirely hidden with soil and vegetation. The chamber entering from the interior opposite the main entrance is still intact for some 9' 4" at its S. end, and measures 4' across at greatest width, and 6' 4" in height above the present floor level. A large portion of the facing wall has recently fallen away on the N. side, while the walls which crossed the court are now hardly recognisable. The walls of the outbuildings are still in good condition. A plan made by Sir Henry Dryden at the date of excavation is here reproduced (fig. 37).

See *Mem. Anthropol. Soc. Lond.*, iii. p. 228; Anderson, *The Iron Age*, p. 223 (plan and illus.); *Archaeologia Scotica*, v., pt. i. p. 131 (plan and illus.).

O.S.M., CAITH., xxix. ("Cairns of Yarrows (Brough)")

Visited, 6th June 1910.

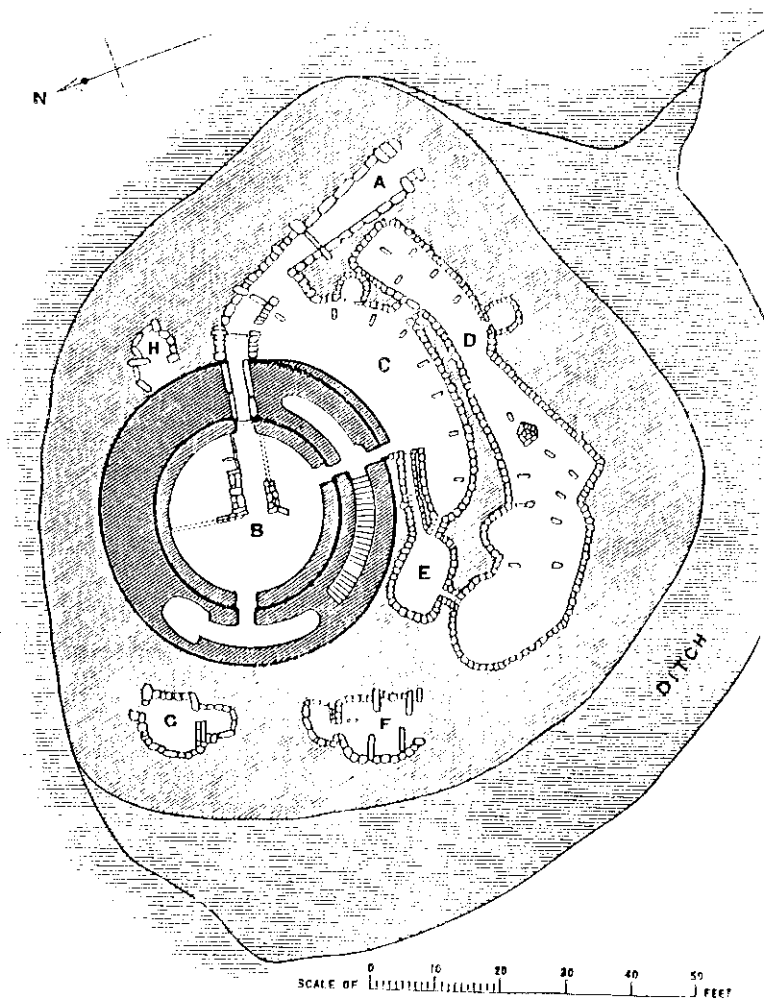


FIG. 37.— Broch, Yarrows (No. 509).