

marine resources. (Bjerck 1995). Visible from Caithness to hunter-gatherers & migratory populations. Temporary or no structures. Stone flakes, charcoal. Fish important part of diet. Predominantly coastal sites, many now submerged. Peat formation began. [rcd from Scapa]

7,000 Thousands of flints found on Stronsay [site name?] may be evidence of a temporary camp. Poss. dating to 7000 BC or older would make this the oldest settlement site found so far on Orkney.

6,700 Earliest certain evidence of humans in Orkney. Charred hazel nut from Tankerness rcd 6820-6660. Unclear whether seasonal or permanent settlement.

6,200 The Storegga Slide - submarine landslide off Norwegian coast caused tsunami & inundation of 'Doggerland'. Connection between Britain and Europe broken - till 1994.

6,000 Lake Agassiz melt-through. Massive fresh-water addition to N. Atlantic caused rapid rise in sea level.

5,000 Sea level stabilised to approx. current level.

4,400 Mount Hekla eruption [Hekla 5] Climate cooling.

4,000 First settled farmers in Orkney. Barley, cattle, sheep, pigs, dogs. Red deer hunted, fishing.

NEOLITHIC (3,800 – 2,000) Communal tomb inhumation; polished stone and bone; fishing; animal

husbandry and cereal cultivation. Thick 'Grooved Ware' pottery, some decorated. Population predominantly 'long-headed' **dolichocephalic** people. Estimated population ca. 10,000

3,800 Start of Neolithic building boom. Construction of stalled & Maeshowe type tombs for inhumation. Many remained in use for over 1000 years.

3,600 - 2,800 **Knap of Howar** rcd. "The oldest house in Europe." Evidence of even earlier occupation. Single family farmstead. Stone, bone & Unstan Ware.

3,500 Tree cover disappeared - partly deteriorating climate, partly human activity.

3,400 **Quanterness**, rcd 1st of ca. 12 Maeshowe-type tombs. **Barnhouse** settlement begun. Abandoned **2,800**

3,300 Earliest structures on **Ness of Brodgar** including one of Europe's largest roofed structures: 80' x 60'

3,200 Newgrange, Boyne. Maeshowe-type tomb.

3,100 **Scara Brae** occupied by small community of ca. 50 people. Abandoned **2,500**

3,038 **Stones of Stenness** begun. Abandoned **2,134**

3,000 Stonehenge Phase 1: outer bluestone ring.

c. 2,800 **Maeshowe** itself constructed before 2,700.

- 500 Scots [from Scotia in 'Ireland'] established kingdom of Dalriada in Argyll.
- 550-800** Pictish symbol stones. Class 1 [symbols only] in Orkney from c. 600
- 555 Poss. unified Kingdom of Picts established by Bridei ('Brude') son of Maelcon.
- 565 Columba's mission to the Picts. Largely a failure! But...
- 565-620 Picts converted to Christianity.
- 582** Cormac's mission to Orkney.
- 586 Death of Bridei.
- 600** Orkney part of Pictland but status within Pictland unclear.
- 600-750 Buckquoy** Pictish farm settlement established. 'New' style Pictish dwellings appeared; central hearth with chambers off. 'Clover' leaf plan.
- 681** Orkney "devastated" by Picts under King Bridei mac Bile. Name sounds Blackadderish but isn't. [Irish Annals of Tigernach].
- 685 Battle of Nechtansmere – near Dunichen. Picts under King Bridei Mac Bile defeated Northumbrians under King Ecgfrith halting 'English' northward expansion.

700-1300 Warmer – rapid rise in sea-level at onset.

709 Irish expedition to Orkney victorious under Artablaire [Annals of Ulster].

729 Pictish ‘navy’ lost 150 ships.

NORSE ERA (750-1468) Steatite vessels (soapstone) rather than pottery. (Steatite had been imported to Orkney from Shetland during Iron Age.) Inhumation with grave goods till conversion to Christianity. Planked ships up to 50’

750 Picts abandoned **Buckquoy**. Signs of Pictish decline & Norse growth in Orkney

787 First Vikings in southern Britain.

793 Lindisfarne Abbey raided by Vikings.

794 “All the islands of Britain attacked” by Vikings (Annals of Ulster)

795-806 Skye, Iona, Hebrides, Ireland, Ulster all raided. (Dicuil)

800 **Buckquoy** site used and over-built by Vikings.

839 Battle of Strathearn. Picts thrashed by Norse.

843 Union of Picts with Scots under Kenneth MacAlpin. Picts melt away as mysteriously as they arrived but survive in 10% of modern Scots’ DNA

- 1443** Last official Orcadian document in Norse.
[Thomson] Norn spoken till 18th C.
- 1455** Orkney and Caithness earldoms re-united under Earl William.
- 1468** The Impignoration. Orkney pledged by Christian I of Denmark to Scotland on betrothal of Christian's daughter Margaret to James III. Ended 300 years of competing Norwegian and Scottish interests. England now enemy No. 1.

SCOTTISH (1468-1707)

- 1469 Shetland Impignoration.
- 1470** Excambion of Orkney and Shetland earldoms by Scottish crown.
- 1472** Transfer of Orkney see from Nidaros [Trondheim] to St Andrews.
- 1486** Kirkwall granted Royal Burgh status by James III. Ownership of St Magnus Kirk, i.e. the cathedral, transferred to the burgh.
- 1492** 1st of 2 rentals compiled by Henry Sinclair. 2nd in **1500**.
- 1507 1st licence to print in Scotland
- 1513 Battle of Flodden. Death of Henry Sinclair

- 1524 Union of Kalmar dissolved.
- 1529** Battle of Summerdale. Last pitched battle in Orkney - between feuding members of Sinclair family. Essentially resident Orkney Sinclairs led by James Sinclair of Brecks v. southern Scottish Sinclairs. Orkney contingent victorious with considerable slaughter of adherents of defeated party in both Orkney and Shetland.
- 1535** Grant of first feu in Orkney to James Sinclair. Erosion, i.e. misappropriation, of udal rights.
- 1540** James V's first circumnavigation of Scotland. Spent six weeks in Orkney.
- 1541** Lawthing & Lawman abolished by James V. Replaced by Sheriff Court & Sheriff.
- 1557** Victory at Papdale. English naval force repelled with some 500 killed including 3 captains and the Admiral, Sir John Cleere.
- 1560** Scottish reformation. Parliament outlawed mass on pain of death.
- 1564** Robert Stewart, "vain and nothing worth" [Randolph, Eng. ambassador], granted earldom.
- 1567** Continuance of Norse law in Orkney confirmed by Scottish Parliament. Duchy created for Bothwell, first and only Duke. Denied possession of 'his' castle by rebel

- 1913** Orkney herring peaked. Collapsed with WW1. Revived somewhat in 1920s.
- 1914-18** Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow. Orkney population increased by up to 100,000.
- 1916** First tractor at Stove, Sanday. [Thomson] Horses remained much in use till after WW II. In **1933** there were 5,434 horses recorded. In **1938** there were 26 licensed tractors. Oxen worked till **1940**. By **1960** there were 1,100 tractors & only 380 working horses. H.M.S. Hampshire sunk off Marwick Head. 723 drowned including Kitchener.
- 1918** German High Seas Fleet interned in Scapa Flow.
- 1919** German High Seas Fleet scuttled 21st June in act of treachery on Admiral von Reuter's orders.
- 1920-30** Break-up and sale of big estates to owner-occupiers [o-o]. Greatest effect on ownership since arrival of Vikings. [Thomson] 1919 9% o-o. 1930 66% o-o
- 1922-3** Mains gas, electricity & telephone taken into public ownership. 1st radio broadcast in Orkney.
- 1923-4** Bulk of the Earldom estate sold off to tenants.
- 1924** Cox and Danks began salvage of German ships in Scapa Flow.

- 1934** Introduction of commercial air travel.
- 1939** H.M.S. Royal Oak sunk by U-47 in Scapa Flow. First German bombs on UK soil land on Hoy. James Isbister, first civilian casualty in UK, killed 1940.
- 1942/4** Construction of Churchill Barrier to close eastern channels into Scapa Flow. Connected Mainland to South Ronaldsay. First vehicle crossed 1944.
- 1955** First t.v. seen in Orkney
- 1957** Peak eggs! [? number ?]
- Mid 1960s** North Sea oil discovered. 1st field, Piper, drilled in 1973.
- 1968** Tankerness House Museum opened. [Now Orkney Museum.]
- 1969** Loss of Longhope Lifeboat with all eight hands.
- 1970** Egg industry in decline
- 1971** Population 'low' of 17,077
- 1974** Orkney Islands' Council created after opposition to proposed 'Unitary Highland Council'. Flotta oil terminal developed.
- [1975]** Crown successfully challenged under udal law over right to Flotta foreshore pipeline royalties.