

The 19 surviving letters are admirably presented by Bertil Johansson. Text and commentary are accompanied by appendices on the Nightingale Institution at St Thomas's and on Emmy's English, and by 8 photographs showing Emmy, her handwriting, and persons and hospitals that she was connected with. The letters are excellent and they have been made into a delightful and informative book.

In the bibliography Lytton Strachey and Edward Cook are to be found, but not Cecil Woodham-Smith.

## BROUGH OF BIRSAY, ORKNEY (NGR HY 239285)

C.D. Morris

*Excavations and Survey 1976: Interim Report on work by Durham University*

Excavations and survey under the direction of C.D. Morris of Durham University took place on this site on behalf of the Department of the Environment (Scotland) and Durham University Excavations Committee, for a period of four weeks, with some post-excavation work immediately following in Durham. The Assistant Director was Sonia Thingstad (now Jeffrey) of Gothenburg University, and other staff and volunteers were recruited through Durham University, with individuals from other institutions. Work by the University of Bradford under the direction of J.R. Hunter is reported separately.

Excavation took place in three areas to the west of the church: an area immediately adjacent to House N, excavated in 1974 and 1975, was examined, and a new phase of excavation began in and around the complex of walls named "House E" and a large area to the north of it, including "House S".

### *Area Adjacent to House N*

The area opened this year investigated the features to the south of the building only partially examined in 1975. A series of gravel spreads and clay layers had been distinguished in 1975, but few of these on excavation proved to be substantial. Two small regularly-shaped pits contained burnt material, but no

finds of note. One of these had been set into the end of a gully dug into natural clay, and filled with brown soil, lumps of clay, and stones on top. This gully was traced for approx. 10 metres, and appeared at first to be parallel to the south wall of the building, but then at the west end was seen to run under the wall, and may well link up with features earlier than the building detected in previous work. The gully was of varying width, but at the east end was c. 0.75 m. wide. Few other substantial features to the south of the building were encountered, and once again variations in the natural subsoil were observed and tested archaeologically.

### *"House E"*

The complex of walls known as House E was so designated in 1938, when excavations first took place in this part of the site. An area of some 193 square metres was opened in 1976 in and around those walls. Removal of the turf revealed in the northern part of the area a roughly rectangular building c. 6½m. long and 4½m. wide externally, with walls under a metre thick. Its axis lay up the slope i.e. east-west. Examination of the walls indicated that rebuilding had taken place, and indeed what appeared to be a cross-wall or partition with an entrance through it, on excavation looked to be best explained as an earlier wall, perhaps later utilised as a partition. It divided the building into two compartments, the eastern one approximately half the size of the western one. This western compartment, although excavated in 1938, still had evidence for probable benches inside the walls, and a spread of burnt clay and charcoal in the centre suggested the existence of a hearth. All walls appeared to be of stone and earth construction. Sections cut through the walls at strategic points confirmed suspicions of different phases, and some features (such as small post-holes) were found both under and around the walls, as well as an area of burning outside the north-west corner of the building. Upright and flat slab-stones were encountered to the north of the building, which again do not seem to be associated with its standing walls. Inside the eastern compartment of the building, a burnt spread quite distinct from anything within the western compartment was observed. Small finds in this area are mainly nondescript, but included small pieces of iron and slag as well as very small fragments of tuyères.

A small wall of upright slabs, c. 2 m. long, and running

east-west linked this building to a series of small chambers to the east, distinguishable after removal of much rubble. Three such were revealed, with long axes approximately north-south. They appeared to have stone walls approximately 1 m. thick, and yet the internal dimensions of two of them were only c. 2 m. x 1 m. The third, with an open north end, was slightly larger. Small finds so far from these 'rooms' have been few. Two small fragments of crucible were found in the stump of a north-south wall further to the east, apparently truncated by a stone drain of similar triangular shape and construction to ones found previously on the site. This runs south-east to north-west across the area, and rubble spreads and brunt patches in a large area to the north of these 'rooms' and the walls of building E, were also found. Finds here include small fragments of bronze, mould- and pottery-fragments, pumice, steatite, a bone pin, and bone spindle-whorl.

### *"House S"*

This was so distinguished during the ground survey of the site in 1975, when the fragments of what appeared to be the walls of a large building were located. Some small tranches had previously been cut across the area, but no work had been carried out in the 1930s in this region, to the best of our knowledge. An area of approximately 130 sq. metres was opened immediately to the north of the area around "House E". A very large amount of rubble lay across this area, and systematic plotting and removal has revealed quite a number of wall-remnants, and other features, which clearly cannot all be related to one phase and/or structure. It would be inappropriate at this juncture to attempt to interpret these, and indeed detailed description at this stage is also inappropriate. However, it is clear that a large stone-capped drain ran west-east down the slope, and the centre of the building, and a stone hearth and burnt area possibly in a doorway were also located. Small finds from this area include several of classic Viking type: a grooved net-sinker, spindle-whorls, a small whetstone, a stone lamp, steatite sherds, as well as slag/fuel ash and corroded iron objects.

### *Site Survey*

Work continued on the overall site-survey, and the area to the east of the church was the main object of the work under

the supervision of Mr. F. Bettess. Most of the site has now been accurately surveyed, and interim plans have been produced of the areas so far completed.

*Objectives for 1977*

- 1) Continued excavation (completion if possible) of "House E", and the area around it, possibly linking it to the areas excavated in 1974 and 1975.
- 2) Continued excavation of the "House S" complex.
- 3) Small-scale work to answer specific questions arising out of the excavation of Houses L and N.
- 4) Final checking of the details of the site-survey, prior to production of definitive plans.