

This 'STONES, SEA and SETTLEMENTS' trail hopes to provide some insight into the often harsh struggle for survival faced by people living in remote and fragile places.



1. FISHERMEN'S MEMORIAL, GLOUP



This memorial was erected in 1981 to commemorate the 'haaf' fishing disaster of July 1881 when a total of 58 men from small local communities were lost from ten small open boats called 'sixareens'. Although it was calm at dawn on the day of the disaster, there had been high winds for many days before and the fishermen were anxious to set off for the fishing grounds. Without warning, hurricane winds blew down from Iceland and the resulting tragedy heralded the end of the 'haaf' fishing as awareness grew about the unacceptable risks involved in taking small boats far out to sea. The catastrophe was compounded by the disgraceful actions of the lairds who persecuted the wives and parents of those lost by seizing any valuables from the bereaved families in compensation for the loss of their boats.



2. COASTGUARD STATION, GLOUP

From the memorial it is well worth a walk down past the farm buildings at Kirks and through the metal gate towards the head of Gloop. After crossing the burn walk up the hill to the old coastguard station, following the clear, well laid out, markers. The coastguard hut, maintained by the Gloop Amenities Association, is in very good condition and has a map and binoculars set out on the table at the 'lookout' window. This walk, from the memorial to the coastguard station and back, is less than 3 kilometres long.

3. BRECKON BEACH

For the more adventurous, the walk can be lengthened to include Breckon beach with its widespread area of blown shell sand and fascinating indications of Viking and Pre-Viking occupation. This trip to Breckon and back adds a further 6 kilometres. Alternatively, Breckon can be reached by road.

From Gloop, return to Gutcher, via Cullivoe, for the ferry to Unst.

4. 'BORDASTUBBLE' STANDING STONE



Leave the ferry on the A968, take the Westing turn off, and then turn left again at the Lund signpost. On the right-hand side of the road we will soon see the magnificent Bordastubble Standing Stone, Shetland's largest standing stone. This massive standing stone leans to the south west and stands 3.66M high by 2.49M wide. It has a breadth of 6.7M and many visitors to Unst enjoy being photographed beside it. Standing stones are thought by some to have a purpose in determining important astronomical events.



5. LUND HOUSE

Further along the road we come across the 'haunted' Lund House on the left side. Built by Andrew Scott of Voegarth/ Greenwell between 1725 and 1740, this fairly characteristic Shetland Haa House was altered and extended around 1800 and 1900. The walled garden may also date from the 18th century. In more recent times the building's history is clearer; it was bought from the Mouat family (who built the nearby Georgian style Belmont House) by Alexander Sandison in 1891 and used as a holiday home. The farm may have been used until the 20th century. Restoration and additional building work was completed around 1902/3 and the roof was removed in the late 1940s. The door surround from the main entrance was moved to Muness Castle sometime in the 1950s. Ownership has now passed to the National Trust for Scotland. It is said that the building is haunted and that it has the cloven imprint of the devil on the underside of a porch flagstone.

6. ST. OLAF'S CHURCH

From Lund House we follow the single track road down the hill to St. Olaf's medieval church, passing traces of Viking settlements in the field on the right. By 1750, St. Olaf's church had fallen out of use. It is said that it was closed as a result of



the laird's annoyance at people crossing and grazing their ponies when accessing the kirk. He encouraged a local half-wit, "naked and smeared with soot and feathers", to

interrupt the service and terrify the congregation to the extent that they fled, thinking that it was a sign of the devil. The kirk yard, however, continues to be used as a burial ground and recently work began to enlarge the cemetery and build stone boundary walls. At present the church is in an unsafe state and it is to be hoped that a recognition of the great importance of this building will lead to prompt action to protect the structure. The 16th century tombstones of two German merchants can be found in the kirk yard. Inscribed in Low German, they remember two hanseatic merchants from Bremen, *Segelbad Detken* (1573) and *Hinrick Segelcken* (1585) who traded from booths on Unst. Thomas Mouat (1748-1819), who built Belmont, also lies here along with some of the Mouats of Garth and several other graves. There is also a leper's window and an early Christian fish symbol carved on a lintel in the church. From the church, it's a pleasant walk across the beach, over the Vinstrick burn and up the hill to the Viking settlement below Underhoull broch.



NORSE FARMSTEAD



UNDERHOULL BROCH

7. NORSE FARMSTEAD

Underhoull was a very remote, mainly self-reliant, Viking settlement, dependent on both farming and fishing. The house was 17M by 4.6M and divided in two with the byre at the south and the living area at the north end.

8. UNDERHOULL BROCH

The Iron Age Broch of Underhoull is clearly marked by the surviving traces of its defensive works. Two concentric ramparts of earth, with a wide intervening ditch, indicate that the broch has probably been about 16.7M in diameter with walls 4.5M thick at the base. It stands on a rock outcrop and enjoys commanding strategic views from its position nearly 50M above sea level, towering over the settlement below.

Further information on Underhoull can be found at Unst Heritage Centre. It opens every day from 1 May to 30 September between 11.00 and 17.00.

REMEMBER to take litter home, keep the dog under control, close gates, respect privacy, keep to the field edge and keep away from livestock and ground nesting birds.

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STONES, SEA and SETTLEMENTS

This one day trail begins at Gloup in North Yell and ends at Underhoull Broch, South Unst.

