

Introduction by R. Friel



Well the second week of excavation is upon us and with it the arrival of the Bradford and Faroese students who will participate in the training program. Word of our activities is spreading as the visitor numbers are increasing and the interest level among the local community is high, helped no doubt by the national newspaper and internet presence as well as an on-site radio interview carried out by Símun Arge the faroese archaeologist. So far the weather has been extremely unfaroese in nature with cloudless skies and endless sunshine, which has enabled the excavations to proceed at a good rate. Friday will see a visit to the capital city, Tórshavn. When museum visits and a guided tour of the old town lead by Helgi Micheleson of Føroya Fornminnisavn will be combined with the all important opportunity to purchase the essential faroese jumper or two.

Week two by A. Mustchin

The weather at the end of this week took a slight turn for the worse with Saturday being drizzly with a stiff on-shore breeze. Conditions were generally good however and a great deal was achieved on site. To the east of the emerging structure various layers of re-deposited ash-rich middens were found, interleaved by numerous wind-blown sand events. The middens overlay a substantial layer of natural sand and might have been deliberately laid as a consolidating agent. Environmental samples of these layers should prove extremely interesting with a great deal of charcoal already evident in the surfaces. All post-date the deposition of a substantial pile of burnt stones in the southeast corner of the excavation

In the northeast of site work continued on a shallow ditch feature first uncovered in 2008. This was originally excavated in an exploratory sondage and is cut into the basal sand layer.

Visitor Book

This week we have had 29 visitors from the Faroes, Canada and Denmark. Here are some of their comments:

“Thanks Helgi for giving his time to tell us about the excavation, it was very interesting!”



“We are two visitors from South Jutland in Denmark who are very interested by early settlements such as this one. We recieved a very nice explanation from Bobby about the excavation, and it was fantastic to see such an enthusiastic group of young colleagues!”



The ditch runs between two baulks (NE-SW) rather than tracing the base of the burnt stone pile, as first thought.

Work on the structure has advanced greatly this week, with an annex-type addition to the primary build emerging to the east. The surviving walling of this annex appears less substantial than the main building, perhaps denoting a turf construction; it is hoped that this will resolve itself in the coming week. Within the principle structure secondary stonework was removed from within the 'drain' feature along the inside of northern wall, which now appears straighter than previously thought. Walling stone present in the main western baulk may form a corner with this wall, denoting a square plan to the structure. Wall stones found to the south of the current trench in 1978 may also form part of the main structure and a re-investigation of these is intended before the end of the season.



The student view

by K. Horsley and S. Fitzgerald

It's astonishing that on a small archipelago planted out in the middle of the North Atlantic, midway between Iceland and Scotland, we've all caught the sun and so far have been bathed in glorious sunshine – great for improving our tans but a bit problematic for excavating sand. Still, we shouldn't complain – it's better than horizontal rain and gale force winds!

As for community relations, we have trained up a few of the local children on the sieve and have had loads of other interested visitors to site. Sinéad is picking up a little of the Faroese language too – she can certainly manage in the cake and ice cream shop!

After last week's clear up operations we're down to the archaeology and are starting to excavate new material. The structure is becoming better defined by the day but artefacts are still thin on the ground. A few of us are now competent EDM operators and we're steadily being taught how to record different contexts. Kev has proved to be a planning whiz! Being given more responsibility has been great, making us think, and feel, like real archaeologists.

We had our first trip day on Friday. Helgi took us around the old quarter of Tórshavn and showed us how building styles in Faroe have developed over the centuries. We went to the National Museum too and learnt about the cultural history and archaeology of the islands. It was great to learn about past excavations and see the types of artefacts we might find. We were given a tour of the museum stores too – we felt really lucky to get a look behind the scenes. We rounded off the trip with a visit to Café Natúr and a few of us bought Faroese woolly jumpers – lets hope we haven't jinxed the weather!

Excavations are taking place this year in Sandur from the 22/06/09 to the 19/07/09. Please feel free to visit the site, we are there 9.00 to 17.30 Monday to Saturday and guided tours are provided.