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was held under Udal Law by the farmers. The Harry Loch is one of the best fishing lochs in Scotland, as well as being home to thousands of wild-fowl in wintertime.

**Harray Crabs** About 1137 St Magnus' remains were to be transferred to Kirkwall, carried by the men of each parish in turn. The procession of Birsaymen was to meet the Harraymen at the Hinatuin stone on the Stoneyhill Road.

The Birsaymen were apparently late in arriving. When they did they found the Harraymen, "coming crawling oot o'the ditches like crabs oot o'the ebb", on account of them having consumed all the ale

**HARRY** (ON *Herad*, Inland District) is the only Orkney parish not to touch the sea, and lies in the centre of the West Mainland. It is

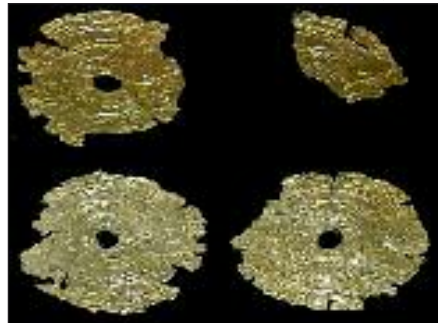
mostly fertile agricultural land, apart from the hills bordering Evie and Rendall. It was known as the "parish of lairds" as nearly all the land

The Burrian Stone was found at the Knowe o'Burrian



Replicas of gold disks from one of the Knowes o'Trotty

St Michael's Kirk graveyard sits on top of a broch



Orkney Museum

Orkney Museum



Aerial view of Harry and the Loch of Harry from the south

intended for the Birsaymen. Harry folk have ever since been called *Crabs*. The Hinatuin Stone still stands (HY318158) and the name is said to mean "going back in shame", referring to the Birsaymen who insulted the Harray folk.

**Bronze Age** Harry has many mounds, knowes or howes (ON *Haugr*, mound or gravemound). Some of these are man-made and others are glacial deposits from when the ice was retreating 11,000 years

ago. Near Winksetter the Knowes o'Trotty (HY341175) are a series of Bronze Age tumuli, which are scattered in two rows along the Ward of Redland. Four gold disks, amber beads and burnt bones were found here in 1858. Recent excavations have revealed burial cist in the largest mound as well as a Bronze Age building nearby. Another Bronze Age tumulus is the Knowe o'Smirrus (HY291215), North of Dounby.

The Hinatuin Stone on the Stoneyhill Road overlooks the lochs



**HARRY ATTRACTIONS**

**ARCHAEOLOGY**

- Hinatuin Stone
- Knowes o'Trotty
- Knowe o'Smirrus
- Knowe o'Burrian
- Russland Broch
- Knowe o'Bosquoy
- Knowe o'Gullow
- Netherbrough
- Burrian Broch

**OLD FARMING**

- Corrigall Farm Museum
- Winksetter
- Bimbister
- Click Mill

**VIEWPOINTS & WALKS**

- Stoneyhill Road
- Grimeston Road
- Lochside Viewpoint
- Russland Drivers' Road
- Chair o'the Lyde

**NATURE & WILDLIFE**

- Harray Road End Reserve
- Syradale
- Burn o'Rush
- Muckle Eskadale
- Loch of Wasdale

**CRAFTS & SERVICES**

- Fursbreck Pottery
- Dounby



Corrigall Farm Museum dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century

**Iron Age** There are a remarkable number of mostly inland broch sites within a small area in Harray. These include Upperbrough in Harray Churchyard (HY314179), the Knowe o'Burrian, Netherbrough (HY308168), Russland or Marykirk (HY295177), the Knowe o'Bosquoy (HY309186), the Knowe o'Gullow, Netherbrough (HY307163), Burrian, Corrigall (HY324194) and Burrian Broch (HY296184), which is on the shore of the Loch of Harray.

In 1936 a Pictish symbol stone with an eagle, crescent

Corrigall Farm Museum byre



and V-rod and a mirror was found at the Knowe o'Burrian and is now in the Orkney Museum. This class I stone dates from the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century and was found in a ruined passageway.

**Christian sites** The Parish Kirk, St Michael's, sits on a prominent hill from which virtually all of Harray can be seen. There are many interesting graves, including that of the 20<sup>th</sup> century novelist, Eric Linklater, many of which are set into the large broch mound of Upperbrough within the kirk-yard.

**Old Farm Buildings** Harray

has several very old farm buildings which are still standing. These include Winksetter (HY341164) which may be 15<sup>th</sup> century, and is possibly one of the oldest Norse-type farmsteads left. Here the byre end is wide enough for two rows of stalls and there are separate doors for house and byre. The adjoining building is again both byre and dwelling, perhaps for the farm servants. The few windows are small and there are no neuk beds. A further example is Bimbister (HY329163), which can be seen from the main A896 road to Dounby

**Corrigall Farm Museum** (Orkney Museums Service - signposted off the A986) is a restored Orkney farmhouse of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The dwelling, which dates from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, is a good example of an Orkney long-house which has been adapted to meet changing needs. On display are horse-drawn implements, barn machinery, traditional straw and heather crafts, as well as livestock. There are also furnishings, utensils, tools and other artefacts in the house.

The way of life on Orkney farms had not changed very much for centuries until the agricultural revolutions of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The house and byre are parallel, long, low buildings, with echoes to a more distant past. The major 19<sup>th</sup> century changes were higher and bet-



The workings of this Click Mill are complete



Milling by quernstone

ter roofs, chimneys in the gable as well as bigger windows. This all required a better standard of masonry than may have previously been used.

**The Click Mill** (HY325228) is a "Norse-type" vertical-axis watermill. Called "click" mills due to the noise made while in operation, these mills have been known from Norse times and are essentially mechanised quern stones. This example was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but is very similar to much earlier mills, such as that at The Bu in Orphir. It is said to be able to mill 250kg of corn in an hour.

**Nature Reserve** Harray

The Click Mill, Burn of Hillside



Harray from Muckle Eskadale

Road End is a Scottish Wildlife Trust Nature reserve. This small area is very typical of uncultivated low-lying land in Orkney. The heath and bog areas have a vigorous growth of bryophytes, with substantial mounds of sphagnum moss, while the rough grass-

land parts harbour a good population of Orkney Voles.

Hen Harriers and Short-eared Owls are often seen here hunting for Voles, while Curlews, Lapwing, Snipe and Oystercatcher all breed. The Reserve is best accessed from the layby at the junction of the A965 and A986 (HY338137).

**Viewpoints** There is a fine view over the Lochs and the West Mainland from the Stoneyhill Road. On the edge of the loch at Quoyer there is a picnic site with a pleasant vista over to the Ring of Brodgar. The Hinatuin Standing Stone, near the top of Stoney Hill, may well be



Harray from below St Michael's Kirk

related to the Ring of Brodgar and the Winter Solstice.

**Chair o'the Lyde** Another good viewpoint is from the Chair o'the Lyde (ON Hliid, Slope HY358187) on the Lyde Road. This view was said by one old retired Harray sea captain to be "the best he had seen anywhere on his travels". In the foreground lies a wide expanse of heather moorland, with the rich agricultural land in the middle distance and the lochs and Hoy hills in the background. The Lyde Road offers good opportunities to see Hen Harriers, Red-throated Divers and other moorland species.

**Walks** There are several good Hill Walks in Harray. Syradale (HY350158), reached by following the track from the Refuge Corner (HY337155) past Wasdale Loch (good for ducks and waders), is a very pretty valley with waterfalls and many wild flowers. The Devil's Well, a lovely cup-shaped pool on the Burn of Syradale is reputed to cure toothache. By putting a pin previously placed between the sore teeth into the pool and then walking away backwards, toothache can be cured, or so it is said.

**Burn o'Rush** (HY310227) is up a peat road off the B9057. An old woman called Kitty Huntlin is said to have had an illicit still in this area and to have hidden her son from the Press Gang here. Rumour has it that she may still be found

The Loch of Harray is a favourite choice for Trout fishing



The Grimston Road has lovely views over the lochs to the Hoy Hills

engaged in her craft on a misty summer's night and that her poteen is real "fire water".

**Drovers' Road** The Russland to Swartland Drovers' Road, a Public Right of Way, goes from Russland (HY313178) past the now derelict Harray Mill and the Merkister Hotel. A signposted track leads off to the left about 100m after the hotel, passing the Dounby sewage works on the way. These use reed beds to process the effluent from the village, thus protecting Harray Loch, which is an SSSI, from pollution. The route crosses the B9057 near the Decca masts and continues through the heart of West Mainland farming country to Swartland (HY277209), at the entrance to the World War II air base of Skeabrae.

**Dounby** (HY295208) is the main settlement in Harray and has the Dounby Butcher, a Coop with petrol and the Smithfield Hotel. Nearby, on



A fine catch

the shores of Harray Loch, the Merkister Hotel, a Fisherman's Haven, has the excellent Skerries Restaurant, and also has an enticing bar menu.

**Fursbreck Pottery**, the home of the real Harray Potter (HY320170), has pottery for sale and also gives demonstrations and tuition by arrangement. All pottery is hand thrown, fired and glazed on

the premises. Andrew Appleby makes a very attractive range, which is available in several different glazes.

## SKERRIES RESTAURANT at the Merkister Hotel, Harray



**Dinners from 7pm**  
**Booking essential**  
**Bar Lunches**  
**Bar Suppers**

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VIEWS OVER  
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Interior of Kirbuster Farm Museum showing fireback

**LONGHOUSES** The traditional Orcadian longhouse changed little over the centuries, being well adapted to the climate and the needs of its occupants. Over 5,000 years ago the people at the Knap of Howar were living in very well built houses, only the lack of iron for tools and utensils really differentiating their life style from later Orcadians.

Although there is evidence that the Picts built at least

A "firehouse" with a fireback and a box-bed



some quite prestigious houses, it was only after the Norse settlement that longhouses appeared. The basal courses of such houses at the Brough of Birsay differ little in shape and size from later houses, such as Winksetter, Bimbister or Corrigan, all in Harray.

Larger farms had a separate dwelling house and outbuildings, as seen at the Norse farm at Westness, while at smaller holdings man and beast

shared the same roof. Constructed of stone, the easily-quarried local sandstone being readily available, the buildings were sturdy and cosy. With couples of driftwood, wood from an old boat or even whalebone, perhaps lined with simmons as insulation and with a covering of large flagstones, or turf, maximum use was made of available materials.

As at Skara Brae much use was made of flagstone for interior fittings such as shelves and stone box beds. Smaller houses were commonly of two rooms, the *ootby* or *but* and the *inby* or *ben*. The *but* was the living and cooking room, where everything happened, while the *ben* was the bedroom. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century box beds provided some privacy and protection from draughts. Prior to this the people slept around the fire on benches along the walls, or in neuk

beds set into the walls similar to those at Skara Brae.

The hearth was originally central as at Skara Brae, with a hole in the roof to let the smoke out, but later a *fireback* was introduced as can be seen at Kirbuster Museum, with a wooden smoke hole and *skylin* board to disperse the smoke. Later the *fireback* was placed against the gable and only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were chimneys introduced in gable ends. The smoke-hole or *liora* also served to let light in, as windows were small or non-existent, except in bigger houses.

nd and beasts at the bottom. A good example of a small 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead can be seen at Park Cottage near Houton in Orphir (HY312044). Byres and dwelling houses were very similar in construction even when separate, underlying the importance of cattle to the economy.

Local materials were also much used in furnishings. The traditional Orkney straw-backed chairs and other straw articles such as *caisies*, *cubbies* (baskets) and *simmons* (ropes) are examples. Wood was not however absent and many a house was lined with the fittings of a wrecked ship. While peat was used as fuel where available, the sandy islands such as Sanday and North Ronaldsay had to make do with dried cow dung or seaweed.

Crusie lamps were used for light using oil or fat which



A "firehouse" with an open, central hearth and three-toed pot



Kirbuster Farm Museum, Birsay

came from whales, seals, fish, or animal tallow. Initially they were made of bone or steatite, but the wrought iron versions were much better. Rush pith was generally used as a wick. The development of the Tilley

Lamp, which uses pressurised paraffin as a fuel, in 1920 transformed winter evenings in Orkney houses. Many houses had generators long before mains electricity arrived after WWII.

Crusie lamps were common



## LONGHOUSES

Orphir	Park Cottage
Birsay	Brough of Birsay
	Kirbuster
Harray	Bimbister
	Corrigan Farm Museum
	Winksetter
Rendall	Mossetter
Firth	Langalour
Rousay	Skail, Westness
Westray	Nether Ouseness
N Ronaldsay	several houses
Sanday	Ortie and others
Eday	Redhouse, etc
Gairsay	Skelbist, Boray



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good place for finding migrant birds, the woods are very colourful in springtime when the bluebells come into flower. Below the wood, is the picturesque Old Mill is now a house.

**The Ouse** (ON Oss, tidal estuary) is open to the sea at the east end, where the bridge is a popular place to fish for Sea Trout. Nearby there is a large broch mound with a somewhat incongruous World War II pillbox on top. There is a pleasant walk around the Ouse, which is a good place to observe wading birds, waterfowl and swans. Otters are also sometimes seen here.

**Longer walks** A public right of way leads from Finstown, through the woods, to the Refuge Corner in Harray. The Loch of Wasdale has an ancient ruin on a small islet, and is another good place to see wildfowl.

A fairly strenuous walk takes the road up past Cruan and along the track to the top of Keelylang (HY378102, 221m) with its TV and radio masts. There are excellent views along the way of the Bay

**FINSTOWN**, on the main Kirkwall to Stromness road, is Orkney's third largest settlement. It was formerly called *Toon o'Firth*, but the became *Phinstown* after an Irish soldier named David Phin, who arrived in Orkney in 1811 when he was transferred to the 9<sup>th</sup> Royal Veteran Battalion. Phin married a Kirkwall girl in 1813 and in 1820 he made an agreement with John Miller of Millquoy to open an ale house which was called the *Toddy Hole*, now the Pomona Inn. In 1824 the two fell out and Phin went to Aberdeen but the name stuck despite the short time the Phins stayed in Finstown.

**Bay of Firth** There is a very fine panoramic view over Finstown and the Bay of Firth from the Heddle Road (HY359133), before it passes a large quarry. The islands of Holm of Grimbister and Damsay (ON *Daminsey*) lie in the Bay of Firth. The latter takes its name from a Celtic word, *Dímun*, which refers to twin islands. There are ruins on Damsay of a chapel, which was reputed to have healing powers. The *Orkneyinga Saga* describes church buildings and a castle being there.

**Binscarth plantation** was created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and remains one of the few areas of woodland in Orkney. A

Aerial view of Damsay with its ruined buildings



Loch of Wasdale



Aerial view of Finstown from the west with Binscarth foreground, the Ouse centre and the Bay of Firth background

of Firth and a wonderful panorama of Scapa Flow, the Mainland and the North Isles from the top. The name means long keel. In early summer many species of moorland birds nest here.

On the Redland Road a well-preserved 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead, Langalour, has now been done-up. This longhouse is typical of old Orkney farms, where the people slept in neuk beds in the walls, and shared the premises with their animals. In 1920 John Firth of Finstown published a book *Reminiscences of an Orkney Parish*. This book, reprinted in 1974, gives a good insight

Finstown and the Bay of Firth from Wideford Hill



Tinkers camping on the site of the present community hall in the 1920s

into the life of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in Orkney. The Farm Museums at Kirbuster in Birsay and Corrigan in Harray allow visitors to experience some of this old farm and folk life.

**FIRTH ATTRACTIONS**

- Finstown
- Binscarth plantations
- The Ouse
- Heddle viewpoint
- Loch of Wasdale
- Keelylang
- Redland Road
- Finstown broch
- Redland broch
- Burness broch
- Chapel Knowe
- Ingashowe broch
- Cuween chambered cairn
- Stonehall settlement
- Rennibister earth house
- Rennibister Neolithic site
- Holm of Grimbister
- Damsay



Cuween chambered cairn is superbly built with a rock floor



The entrance passage is roofed by large slabs set on end

**Archaeology** Firth has several Neolithic prehistoric sites. Cuween chambered cairn (HY363127) dates from the third millennium BC. The tomb is similar to Maeshowe, with a long entry passage, a

large rectangular main chamber and four small cells. When opened in 1901 the remains of at least eight burials were found as well as 24 dog skulls and many other animal bones.

The entry passage, cells and chamber were entirely filled with material. The top layer was stony debris and animal bones, while the bottom 0.3m was filled with a *fatty unctuous substance* and human bones. The entry passage faces due east, directly towards Quanterness cairn and the rising Autumn Equinox sunrise.

Two Neolithic domestic sites have been excavated recently, one at Stonehall, and the other at Rennibister. Iron Age Stonehall lies down the hill from Cuween and seems to have consisted of a loose cluster of houses, the earliest of which dates to 3800BC. Of greatest interest were a number of structures which did not have fireplaces, and thus were probably not houses. Perhaps these buildings had some ritual function.

The Rennibister site below Wideford Hill revealed the foundations of a Neolithic house similar to the Knap of Howar on Papay. Unstan Ware pottery shards, stone axes and tools as well as flint were all found. The remains

Excavation work below Wideford Hill



Sigurd Tourrie



Stonehall Neolithic house, Cruan, Firth

Sigurd Tourrie



Post holes in Neolithic building

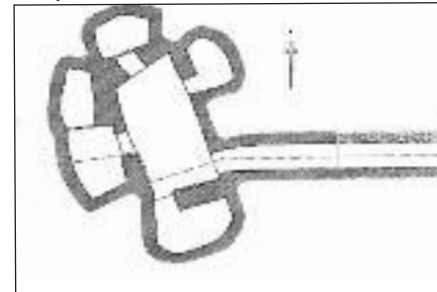
of another building nearby consisted of a number of large post-holes but no stone foundations. This was probably the site of a substantial early wooden building, the first of its kind so far found in Orkney. The houses were dated to about 3900BC.

**Iron Age** At Rennibister (HY397127) there is also an Iron Age souterrain, or earth



Rennibister Earth House

Plan of Cuween cairn showing the arrangement of chambers



RCA/HMS



Ingashowe Broch

house, in the middle of the farmyard, (please park in space provided and do not obstruct farmer), which was found to be full of black earth, shells and human bones. Earth houses were common from about 600 BC and were used as storage cellars for Iron Age Round Houses. Unfortunately nothing now remains of the associated house.

**Brochs** Firth has a number of broch mounds which run from Burness to the Oyce and on to Ingashowe. There is also an inland broch below Redland. None have been examined in recent times, but a Pictish symbol was found at Redland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Burness Broch is called Chapel Knowe, yet another instance of a medieval chapel being built beside a broch.

Redland Pictish symbol stone

