

Larger View of Salt Knowe movements (subsequently re-drawn from P.4 original to give more accurate base-to-summit compass alignments. All recorded readings as per original dowse.) NB: Green lines are the base, slopes, and summit of the mound.

Description of movements from Ring of Brodgar to Salt Knowe and back

The 'Procession' heads in a South Westerly direction and arrives at the E.- E.S.E. [?] base of Salt Knowe [*'route from circle'*, red lines, above centre left], where it makes a 3 x anticlockwise swirl, before commencing a continuous clockwise movement around the mound about 5 paces from its base. Moving on to S [?] of the base, there is another 3 x anticlockwise swirl. (I had not taken compass readings at these two swirls, so am using approximate readings.) Still moving clockwise, to 280°, approx West of base, where there is another 3 x anticlockwise move; then continuing to 310°, N. West, and yet another 3 x anticlockwise movement. There is then a final 3 x anticlockwise swirl on reaching 335°, the N.N.W. of base, before proceeding to the North of the base, where the rods led me to my right, to climb up the actual mound. Halfway up the North slope there is another 3 x anticlockwise swirl [*move no.7*], before the procession continues straight up to the summit, where

there is a 3 x **clockwise*** swirl that ends facing North. (See ‘North facing rituals’ later in this article.) **The only clockwise move, apart from walking around the base of the mound, and halfway up it, so was this the most important?*

Having paused here [see red arrow & ‘(N)’], the procession moves down-slope a little to the North [red lines change to blue here] and sweeps around to the East side of the mound, just below the summit, and executes another swirl [move 10]. (Here, I hadn’t recorded how many turns, or in which direction they headed, but had obviously been influenced by previous patterns to copy the earlier 3 x anticlockwise!) At the same level, the procession continues heading clockwise around to the W.S.W. and swirls again [move 12], before heading right around [dashed blue lines] clockwise on the same level to the S.E. [blue lines become dashed black here], where it once again climbs to the summit. In the S.E. area of the summit I turned to face S.W. [move 15 & black arrow]. After a pause here, the rods led me to the N edge of the summit again where the first 1 x large anticlockwise swirl enclosed following smaller 2 x anticlockwise swirls. [Move 16, solid black line and inner dashedblack lines.]

Having been left facing South, I was led back down to the base of the mound in a South line [black arrow, move 17, becomes orange line 18.] The rods led me clockwise around the base to the East, where there was another 3 x anticlockwise swirl [20], before continuing clockwise [dashed orange line 21] around the base to approx S.W. where there was yet another 3 x anticlockwise swirl [22]. [Dashed orange line changes to dashed blue line here.] The rods led me on around the base clockwise to approximately North, where the final 3 x anticlockwise move occurred [24 ‘final swirl’], before beginning the serpentine route back to the circle.

There is, of course, no way of proving any of this is true, but if my dowsing really *has* picked up on an ancient ceremony it gives fascinating food for thought as to what exactly the priests were observing during what I imagined to be an Ancestor-worshipping ceremony (especially if it resembles Silbury Hill, as discovered in 2008!) The significance of North-facing ceremonies is referred to later in the article, and mentions the fact that stars only skim the northern horizon. (I could kick myself for not photographing the view to North from Salt Knowe’s summit. There were some good photos online, but none to the North, sadly.)



Picture by Drew Parsons (Megalithic Portal) of the Ring of Brodgar from Salt Knowe (unknown source).



*Vintage view of the Ring of Brodgar from Salt Knowe (unknown source).
Largest stone in circle prominent towards left of centre.*

There are also some amazing aerial photos here, showing the circle and Salt Knowe: http://www.scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/search_item/image.php?service=RCAHMS&id=1696&image_id=DP059844

I've just found this photo: <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2605006> showing two paths cut in the grass, but on the day I visited in 2001 the grass was very tall and there were no obvious tracks at all. Another photo shown online has pathways that fork apart from each other, so they must change annually.

Seven years after that exercise, in 2008, it was announced that Salt Knowe resembled Silbury Hill, so I wrote to Nick Card about my findings, enclosing plans shown above:

"I felt very excited when I read that scientific research had led experts to believe that Salt Knowe was like Silbury Hill, and later when I heard about excavations unearthing a Neolithic 'spiritual barrier' – the wall across the Ness of Brodgar." [See Pt.3] "My Orkney dowsing plans are from 2001, when I went on a huge 'odyssey' around Britain to research these monuments. When dowsing I 'ask' to be shown the route that the ancient builders of these monuments took in their most important ceremonies, in the hope that we can learn something from them. [I don't ask for specific dates.] I use L-shaped copper rods, which point me in the right direction and react to certain features. (Examples enclosed.) I always record what I am finding by stopping every few minutes and jotting it down, and draw the final plans up neatly later."

Sadly, I never did get a reply. I don't think that Salt Knowe has featured in more excavations but maybe that's because the amazing finds on the nearby Ness of Brodgar are the focus of all the archaeology work in mainland Orkney now.



*A brilliant shot taken more recently by 'Howar' on Megalithic Portal, Feb 18th 2013. He adds:
'Salt Knowe has an amazingly flat top as if something has been carved off the top, deffo
not natural.' (Angie adds, 'It was lucky for me that there was no fence around the mound
in 2001')*

Roger Farnworth's article 'Sightlines to the Tors and Stars' [Part 1] which mentions the significance of the North aspect in rituals, was due to appear at the end of this article, but my scan from an old publication wasn't clear enough.

Apparently it appeared in Meyn Mamvro MM63 - see mention of it here in an obituary for Mr Farnworth:

<http://heritageaction.wordpress.com/2013/05/04/roger-farnworth-1937-2013>

Readers could access the item via Meyn Mamvro's website, perhaps?

He gives a fascinating reason why the Ancestors might have found the North aspect important in funeral ceremonies or ancestor worship (which could relate to the actions I'd dowsed on Salt Knowe) by comparing the Native Americans' belief that, when a body dies, the person becomes a star. As stars rotate around the Pole Star to the North, and stars rise from all directions but one, and in that one direction (North), they skim the horizon.

He wonders if their nightly parade around the Pole Star may also have been a reason that stone circles were built to imitate their circular processions.

If the priests *were* copying this, and I **am** picking up on their movements, it helps to explain all the swirling in this ritual movement dowsing. Interestingly, the only 'clockwise' movement on Salt Knowe's summit faced North.

(No doubt many reading this will believe the patterns occur by the stones' influence on magnetic energy effects in the ground, but I still think they're amazing, and could be significant.)

Meanwhile, this web link has some excellent photos of Salt Knowe from the circle (Ring of Brodgar), and gives a good description of the mound.

<http://www.orkneyjar.com/history/brodgar/saltknowe.htm>

Part 2: New Discoveries at Salt Knowe and in the Circle - 2001



W arc to NW

Two views of the area included in the dowsing report.



SSE to SSW arc?

A useful old plan:

<http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/1696/details/ring+of+brodgar>

FIG. 2

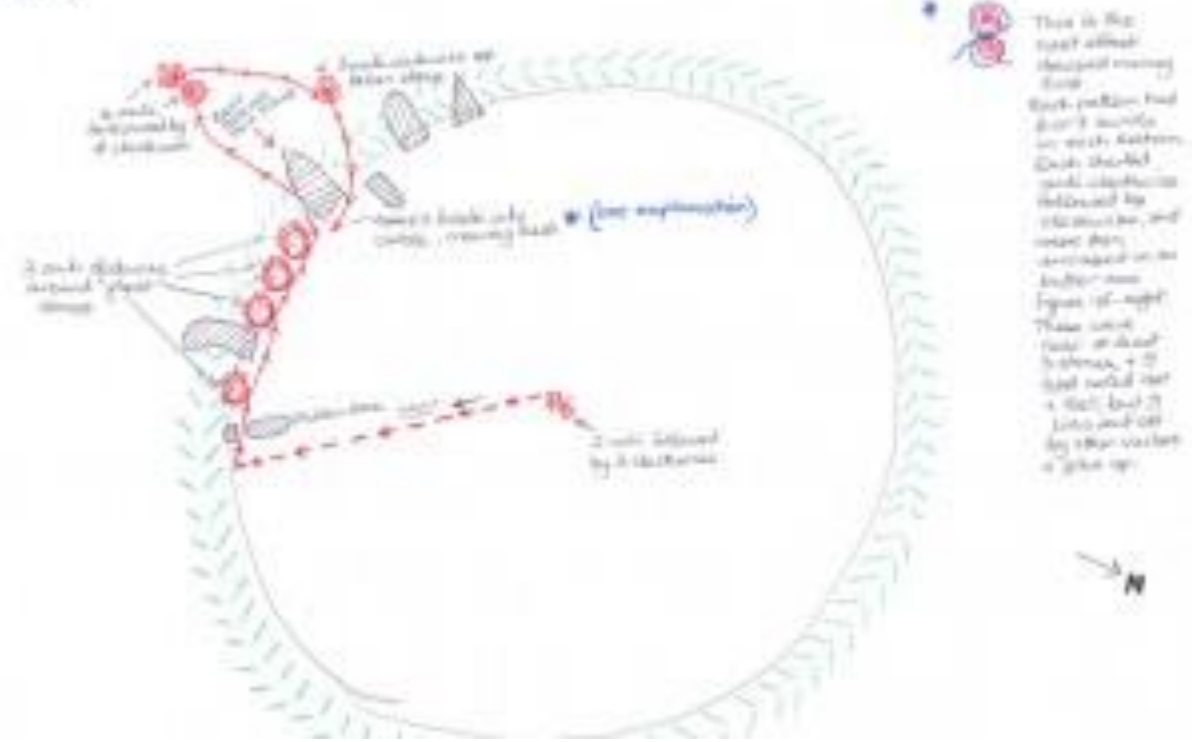


Fig.2 Above. Continuation of the Processional Route in Figure 1.

(Movement continuing from centre of circle after return for Salt Knowe - See Part 1.)

Please excuse the fact that I'd 'stretched out' this arc of stones somewhat in this plan and that the direction of the 150' line [dashed red line] doesn't match the one in the following diagram.

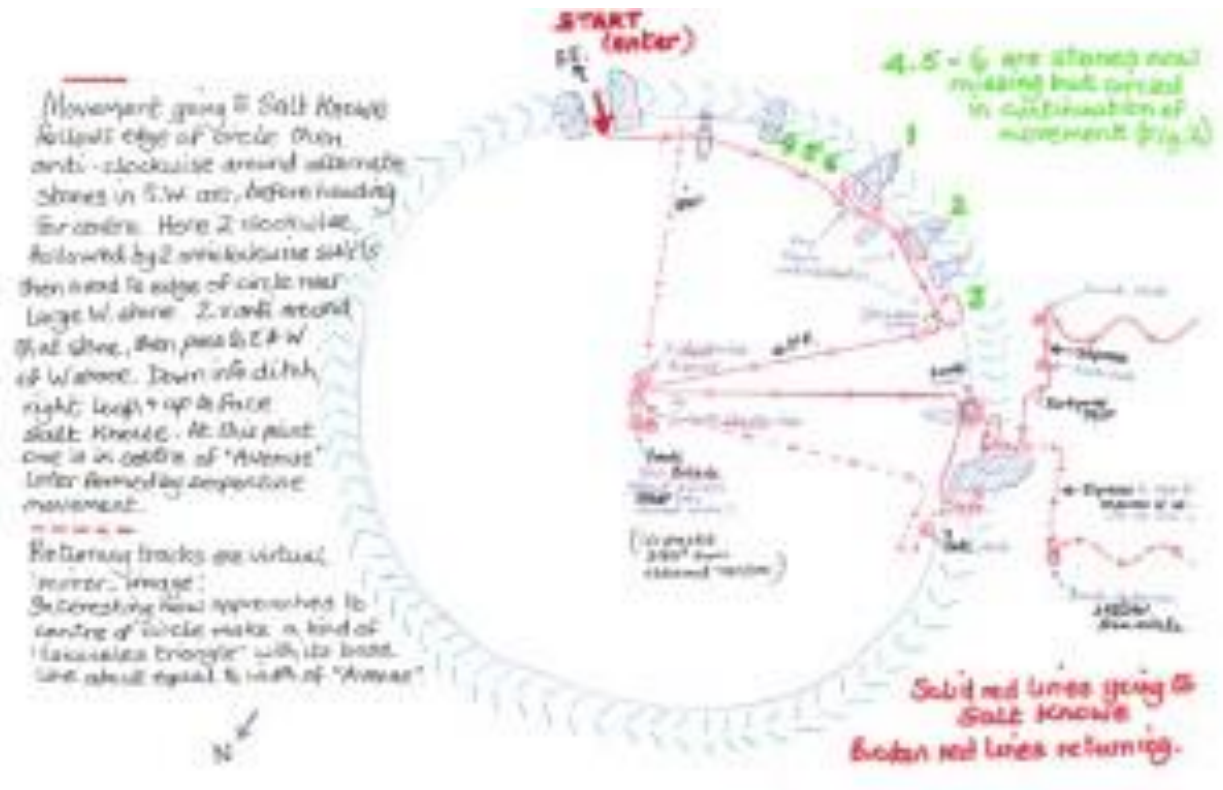
(A bad draughtswoman!)

The above was the original record of the dowsing inside the Ring of Brodgar while still 'in procession' returning from Salt Knowe. However, when I wrote to Nick Card, the resident archaeologist in charge on Orkney in 2008, **I realised there was a striking symmetry to the outgoing and returning 'processional route' or 'dance pattern' around the stones of the circle at the Ring of Brodgar.** In this section I am trying to make sense of them and produce a plan and description that makes this clear.

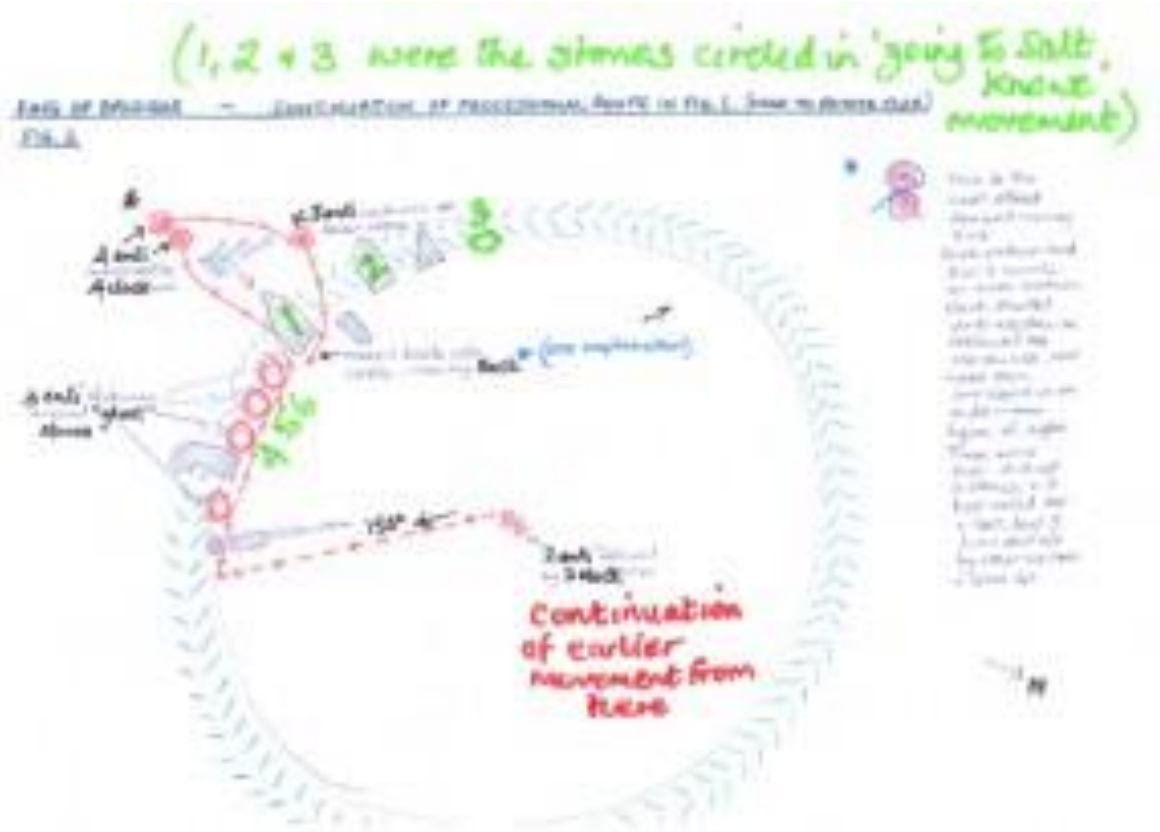
Note: ***[Blue asterisk '(see explanation)']**: Explanation reads: "This is the next effect dowsed, moving East. Each pattern had 2 or 3 swirls in each section. Each started anticlockwise followed by clockwise, and were then encased in an outer ---- [blue line] figure of eight. These were near at least 3 stones, and I had noted 160° and 150°, but I was put off by other visitors and gave up. (Movement had re-entered the circle at that point, so the actions described must have been inside it?) NB: In following pages I have used my own numbers for the stones in an attempt to explain my moves, as I only acquired the 'official' numbered plan on Page 2 much later.

**Additional Information sent in 2008 letter to Nick Card Resident
Archaeologist at the Ness of Brodgar**

(Detail of the section of the Ring of Brodgar and its Ditch)



Due to reproduction of files from old system the plans had to be re-scanned for this article, and fresh notes added. This makes some of the original diagram notes fuzzy, so some have been enhanced. It will be readable using 'zoom'. (Missing '3' is described as 'shadow' stone.) [NB: See previous note re omission of a section of the stones of the circle in the W-NW area.]



This is interesting! It is now 4th August '08 + I've just realized how these stones, numbered in green "1, 2, 3 + 4, 5, 6" link up in the pre- and post-Salt Knowe ritual!

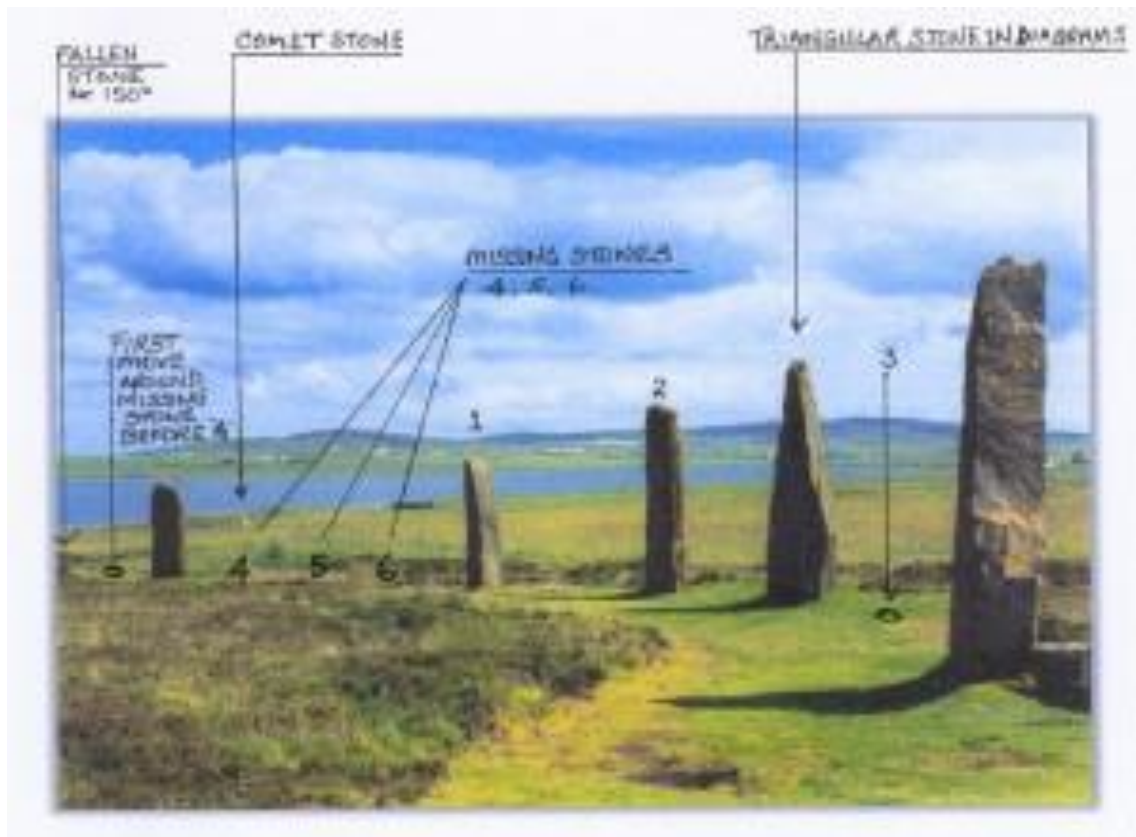
The circuits of the stones seemed to start + end with 'No.1', which must stand approx South in the circle?

(4, 5 + 6 are missing)

* This movement directly behind Stone 1.

The 'exciting new discovery' was how the second part of the processional route also circled stones, this time to the East of stone 1, before a more major (4 x anticlockwise, followed by 4 x clockwise movement) occurred just outside the circle by stone 1, possibly making it the focus of this part of the ceremony. (I believe it was at South of the Ring of Brodgar, but may be wrong?) There was a 3 x anticlockwise movement opposite the fallen stone between 1 and 2, then the procession moved back into the circle and continued as described here:

[See P.3 for transcription of note in top right corner.] I'm sorry... The original files were stored in older system, therefore they look slightly fuzzy as they all had to be re-scanned and over-written to insert in this article. Quite a lot of work, and it would have taken ages to re-draw them all. Please bear with me.



This photo was re-scanned and re-annotated to show where the actual stones stood in the circle.

Somehow I'd overlooked the first stone to the left before numbering '4' on the plans on pages 4 and 5. You'll see that I had circled it as well as 4, 5, and 6, and labelled them 'ghost' stones. (Earlier I labelled stone 3 a 'shadow' stone, but it meant the same thing – they were 'missing'.)

This was the letter I wrote to Nick Card:

To: Mr Nick Card 5th August 2008

Senior Projects Manager

Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology

c/o Orkney College

East Road

Kirkwall

Orkney

KW15 1LX

Dear Nick

Re: Recent Discoveries at Brodgar (Salt Knowe/Silbury Hill), and Neolithic Wall

Thanks for your email, asking me to re-send the information that you were due to receive back in April 08. This turned out to be a fortunate exercise, as, while studying the plans of my 2001 dowsing in the Ring of Brodgar, I found a link between pre- and post- Salt Knowe ritual moves that I'd overlooked. (ie: action in the circle, around stones on the way to Salt Knowe, and similar action on the return route from the mound, noted yesterday in black biro on 'P.12'*, in the first plastic envelope.)

You'll see that I've added many notes, mostly in red or green felt tip. The numbers at the bottoms of other pages referred to in these notes are highlighted in green. If their sequence sometimes seems confusing*, it is because they may be from different files, or subsequent additions to my proposed book '2001 – A Spiritual Odyssey', which I wrote before I retired, but had no joy in finding a publisher. (Not that I've totally given up.... just having a break from trying!) *[NB: This article is re-written for Devon Dowsers and doesn't contain old page nos.]

You now have all the info I sent you before, and also even more than Drs Jane Downes and Colin Richards were sent. (I wonder if they DID receive this? I asked if an email could be sent to confirm its arrival, but heard nothing.)

Enclosed here are (for convenience) 5 separate files:

1): An envelope containing the last 2 letters and an article to help you understand how I record my dowsing records: 'Examples of Dowsing Movements and Symbols used in Plans.' You may need to refer to that. (NB: the patterns '8' and '9', which reminded me of rock art.) Also here is the evidence of 2 stages of Cairn Holy I, which may explain why I had two different routes when I dowsed that tomb. (In general Dowsing Plans file, for further reference. Please take time to look at these, as they may be important.) At the bottom of that page is a diagram that could explain why my rods open repeatedly at right-angles on approach to the entrances of tombs.

2): This contains the evidence for the ritual movement from the Ring of Brodgar to Salt Knowe. I felt very excited about sending you this when I read that scientific research had led experts to believe that Salt Knowe was like Silbury Hill, and later when I heard about excavations unearthing a 'Neolithic spiritual barrier' – the wall across the Ness of Brodgar. [Devon Dowsers see Part 3 for info on latter.]

My Orkney dowsing plans are from 2001, when I went on a huge 'odyssey' around Britain to research these monuments. When dowsing I 'ask' to be shown the route that the ancient builders of these monuments took in their most important ceremonies, in the hope that we can learn something from them. [I don't ask for specific dates].

I use L-shaped copper rods, which point me in the right direction and react to certain features (see 'Examples' article). I always record what I am finding, by stopping every few minutes and jotting it down, and draw the final plans up neatly later (examples of

one or two in Dowsing Plans file). There is obviously no way to prove any of this happened, but if you keep an open mind, the results may yet prove not just useful, but very important indeed. The results certainly don't look like the usual 'Earth Energies.' I don't believe anyone else has ever made a similar study.

As well as the excerpts from my book, there is an article written for Devon Dowsers magazine (and not yet used) following the discoveries published on Orkneyjar.

3): This contains the continuation of the dowsing plan from the Ring of Brodgar to Fresh Knowe, showing up a rectangular area skirted by those movements, which could possibly be the outline of such a wall as was recently discovered on the Ness of Brodgar. (I DO hope so!) [This will be shown in Part 3.]

Also here is the fascinating Comet Stone labyrinth, the Stenness circle plan, and Barnhouse ceremonial house movement. Anna Ritchie questioned the 'SE entrance' to Stenness, but maybe I'd picked it up from the central area after crossing the N causeway? (See copy letter of 23 April). Notice that R of B was entered from SE too. [Devon Dowsers: Will write a Part 4 about Stenness and Barnhouse.]

4): This file contains my personal discoveries from 2006/2007. Stone 16 at Stonehenge and its possible Fertility Rite links, the 'Dawn Dagger' of sunlight on Stone 57, and the possible Fertility rite stones in West Kennet Long Barrow.

I hope someone may take a serious interest in these and prove my theories.

5): This file contains several examples of my site dowsing records, and an A-Z index, on which the ones that are enclosed are ticked in red. (The Orkney ones will be in separate envs. as above). Some relate to the Brodgar area – ie: Gib Hill and Dragon Hill, both mounds with action on their summits and N focal points; and 'Machrie Moor circle 2' has 'double swirls' behind each stone, possibly showing the position of missing ones. You'll see this also happened at Brodgar, when I ran out of steam on the Fig.2 plan (notes in green on P.12, in 1st plastic env., though they also had 'fig of 8' enclosures). [Devon Dowsers, see Part 2, Fig.2 Page 3.] Rathgall shares its 'petal patterns' with Dragon Hill. You may find Stanton Drew really fascinating, and Avebury, Bryn Celli Ddu,

Please try to keep an open mind about these findings. Let me know what you think. I'm a 'lay person', having passed 6 'O' levels in 1962, but not History, as our teacher was hopeless and never inspired me. (If only....!) I just wish someone would tell me that all this is valuable while I'm still alive and can celebrate it!!!

END Well, is it any wonder he didn't reply?!

In Part 3 the focus is on a movement outside the circle near the action in Part 2, which addresses another mound, Fresh Knowe. It appears to avoid a long wide area, which could have possibly been another thick wall. Much later I found Thom's diagram of lunar observation alignments which also matched it uncannily! The Comet Stone labyrinth movement will feature too.

The photos of the NW to SE of the Ring of Brodgar, as promised in Part 1, pages 2 and 5

(Both taken in July 2001 from the small mound outside the SW of the circle.)



I'd written on the back: 'The Ring of Brodgar and Harray Loch form smaller mound to SW on right looking North 9/7/2001. Stones from SW (right) to NW (4th from left) of circle.'



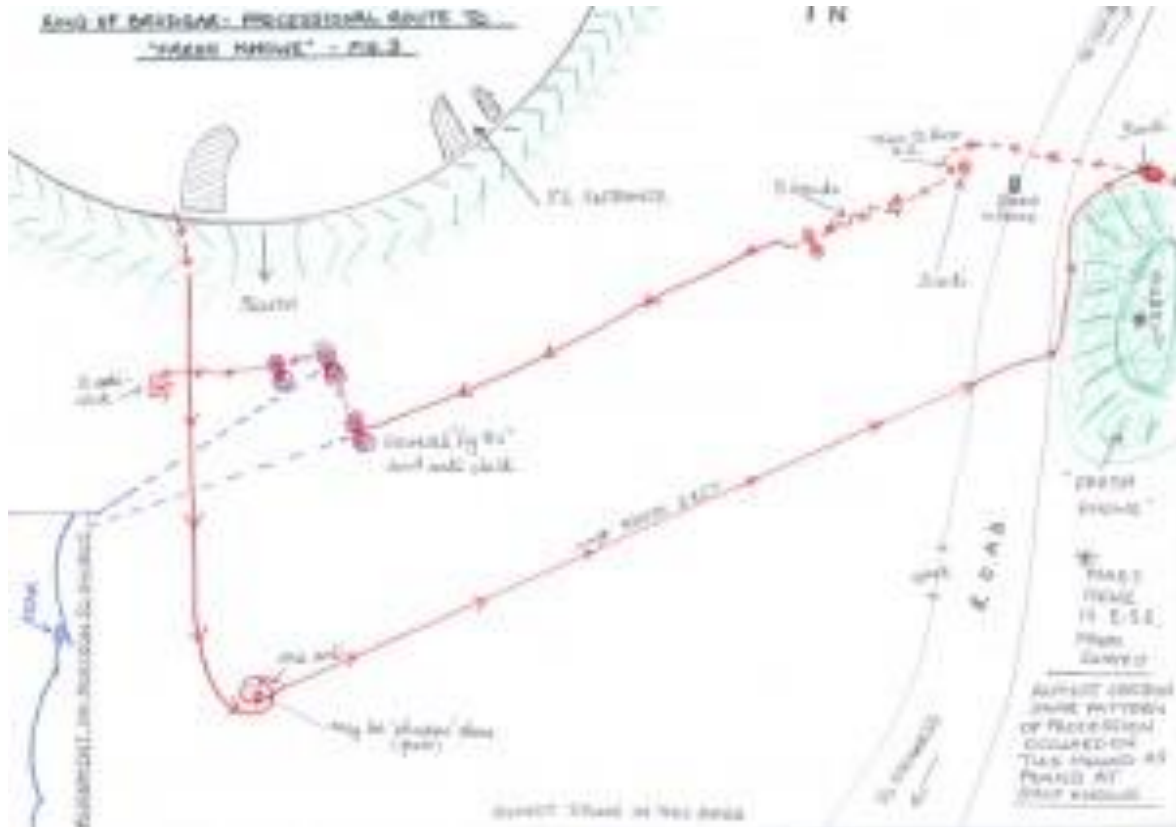
On this one I'd written: 'View towards East (and Harray Loch) from small mound at SW of Ring of Brodgar 9/7/2001 [Stones of Circle from S.S.W] to E.N.E' (The lower photo shows the outside of the stones on P.6's annotated photo and view bottom P. 1) It seems obvious that in drawing up the 'dowsing shorthand' shown on pages 2 and 4 I'd omitted most of the top left of this page [also shown at top of P.1] Explanation in Part I.



Hoy's Mts and SW. Mound from centre of circle

Part 3 - Dowse from Ring of Brodgar to Fresh Knowe [Fig.3]

(How similar are these plans ?!!)



It looks as if mine should be tilted over to the left to match the positions of Fresh Knowe & Comet Stone in the plan below. (I've obviously drawn the road at a slightly wrong angle here.)

[NB: The blue dashed lines are not movement; they point to the view from position – see insert.]

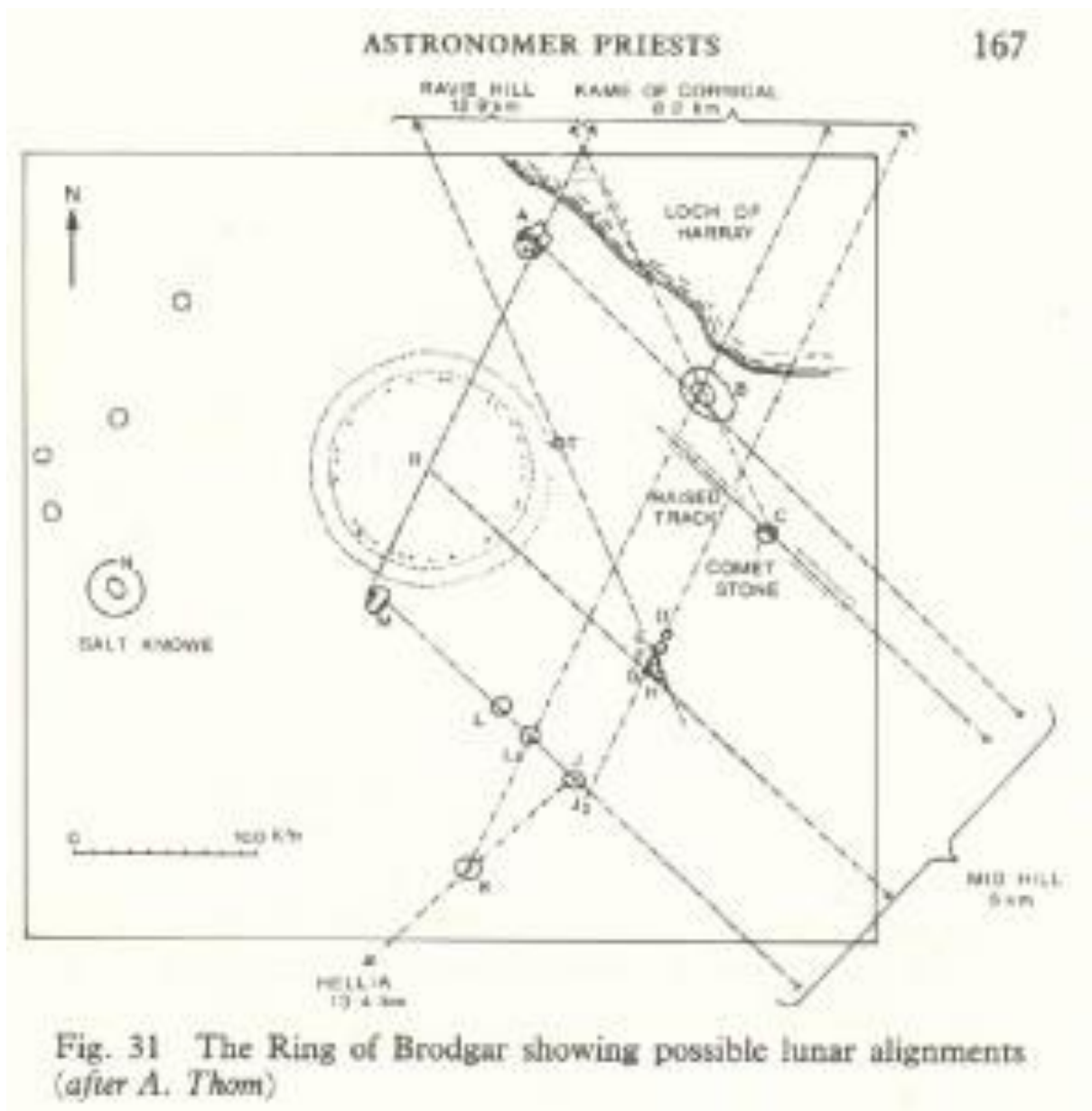
An excerpt from my letter to Nick Card, 5th August 2008:

3): This contains the continuation of the [2001] dowsing plan, from the Ring of Brodgar to Fresh Knowe, showing up a rectangular area skirted by those movements, which could possibly be the outline of such a wall as was recently discovered on the Ness of Brodgar. (I DO hope so!)

[July 2014]: Having read about the discovery of a wall at the Ness of Brodgar in 2008, I wanted Nick Card to know about this 2001 plan from the Ring of Brodgar area, as I believed that my dowsed processional routes to and from the mound of Fresh Knowe may have been separated by such a wall.

Since then archaeologists have found much more than just a wall on the Ness of Brodgar, and we've had fascinating TV footage of the exciting excavations there, which

are heralded as “ A Neolithic temple complex that is without parallel in western Europe.” [Guardian]



A year or two (?) after the letter to Nick Card I found this amazing diagram in a book I picked up in Oxfam in Marlborough – ‘Tomb of the Eagles. Death and Life in a Stone Age Tribe’, by John W. Hedges, this edition published by New Amsterdam Books, 1987. It is from Chapter 4, ‘Rites for the Living’, in the section about ‘Astronomer Priests’.

Immediately, I remembered the 2001 dowsing plan and fished it out to compare the lines and circles, which all occur in the same area between the Ring of Brodgar and Fresh Knowe mound. Could I have been picking up on lunar alignments too, or a ceremony held by priests of those far-off days, while observing them?

At the time of writing (his 1st edition was 1984), Hedges says [P.164]

“Both the Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brodgar have now been surveyed accurately but information on the possible observation of the moon is almost totally limited to the latter and alignments with positions of the sun, planets, and stars have yet to be looked for.”

Hedges continues (discussing the stones of the Ring of Brodar) [P.166] by saying that only Thom’s accurate survey of the Ring of Brodgar exists (Fig.31) and, in this one, he focuses on the lunar alignments that he thought were most important.

“His main interest in Brodgar and its outlying mounds and standing stones has focused on its apparent use as a lunar observatory for, in his own [Thom’s] words:

‘Here, as in no other place, there are enough remains to prove conclusively that the movements of the moon were being fully observed.’

“The fact of the matter is that there are only four fixed points in the complex cycle of the moon and Thom has found between one and four alignments for each, which coincide with distinct parts of the horizon. At its extreme major standstill the moon would have risen over a slope on the Kame of Corrigal and set in a small dip near Ravie Hill. Some nine years later, at the extreme minor standstill, it would have risen in a small clean-cut notch on Mid Hill and set on the cliffs at Hellia. [Fig.32 in the book illustrates this in a graph-type plan.] Apart from the understanding this supposes, it also points to an ability to carry out observations over a long period in order to get exact azimuths on which alignments could be set up. The markers are usually considered to be Bronze Age, because most are mounds, but the original location of the henge-ring in a position where such sitings [sic] could be made is unlikely to have been coincidental.”

(He goes on to discuss the idea of Astronomer Priests and their importance “... in that the liaison of the paramount chief with the high gods is seen as vital for the good of the tribe – and, in reality, is as vital for his position. As has been previously discussed, this picture of paramount chiefs, high gods, and priests is completed in the tribal world by grand centralised ceremonies which often take place at great monuments, these being both product and reinforcement of the chief’s authority.”)

The following is a good link for info about the Ness of Brodgar excavations, and provides many other clickable links to aspects of that work:

<http://www.orkneyjar.com/archaeology/nessofbrodgar/excavation-background-2/a-millennium-of-activity>

Nick Card and team: <http://www.orkneyjar.com/archaeology/nessofbrodgar/meet-the-2014-team>

A couple of excerpts from a news article below underline the sites’ and the area’s importance:

The Guardian, Oct. 2012:

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/oct/06/orkney-temple-centre-ancient-britain>

“In size and sophistication, the Ness of Brodgar is comparable with Stonehenge or the wonders of ancient Egypt. Yet the temple complex predates them all. The fact that this great stately edifice was constructed on Orkney, an island that has become a byword for remoteness, makes the site's discovery all the more remarkable. For many archaeologists, its discovery has revolutionised our understanding of ancient Britain.”

[And this is where the **walls** come in]:

“Once protected by two giant walls, each more than 100m long and 4m high, the complex at Ness contained more than a dozen large temples – one measured almost 25m square – that were linked to outhouses and kitchens by carefully constructed stone pavements. The bones of sacrificed cattle, elegantly made pottery and pieces of painted ceramics lie scattered round the site. The exact purpose of the complex is a mystery, though it is clearly ancient. Some parts were constructed more than 5,000 years ago.”

Nick Card says:

"We need to turn the map of Britain upside down when we consider the Neolithic and shrug off our south-centric attitudes," says Card, now Brodgar's director of excavations.

"London may be the cultural hub of Britain today, but 5,000 years ago, Orkney was the centre for innovation for the British Isles. Ideas spread from this place. The first grooved pottery, which is so distinctive of the era, was made here, for example, and the first henges – stone rings with ditches round them – were erected on Orkney. Then the ideas spread to the rest of the Neolithic Britain. This was the font for new thinking at the time."

It is a view shared by local historian Tom Muir, of the Orkney Museum.

"The whole text book of British archaeology for this period will have to be torn up and rewritten from scratch thanks to this place," he says.

I never did get a reply from Nick Card.

Angie Lake, July 2014



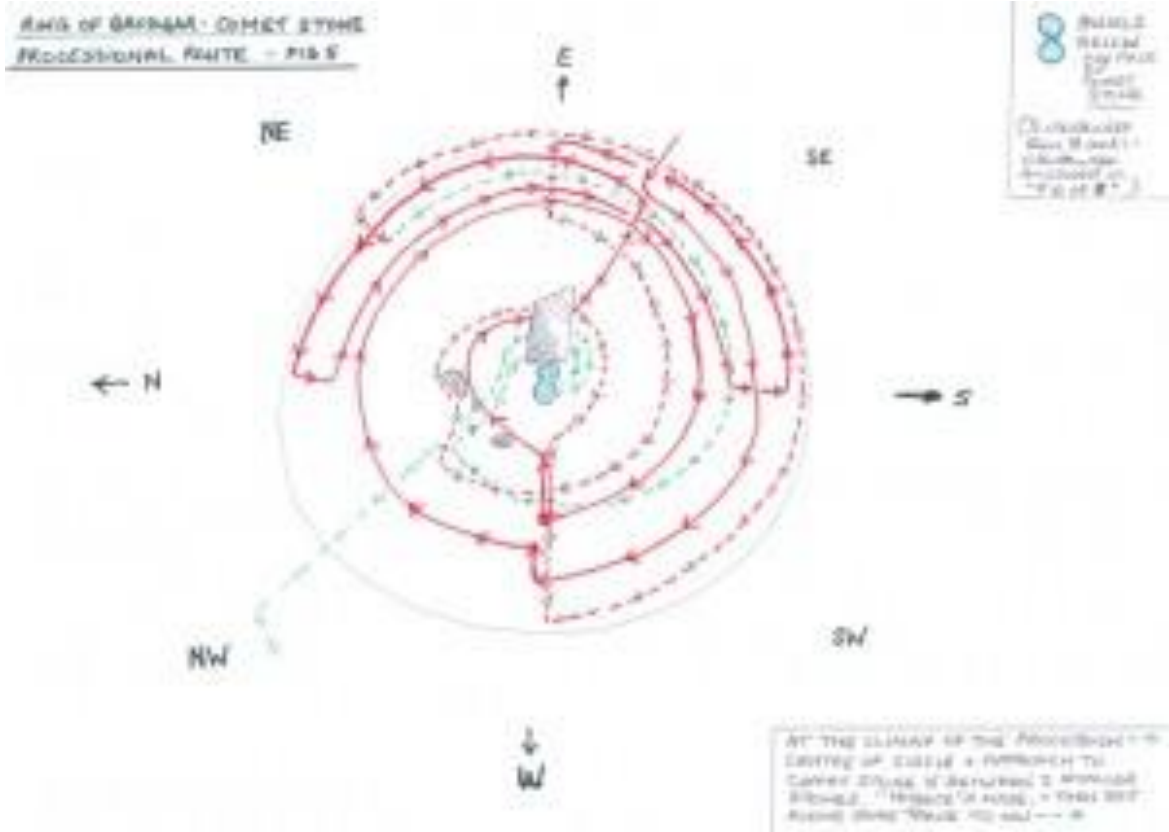
Fresh Knowe looking towards Loch Harray



Comet Stone on its raised platform [see below]

The Comet Stone. Another plan sent to Nick Card was this intriguing labyrinth-style pattern:

(See position in relation to Ring of Brodgar on Astronomer Priests plan by Thom, above.)



I found one other site that dowsed like this, at a cairn near Houndtor on Dartmoor.

COMET STONE PROCESSIONAL ROUTE - DETAILS

ENTRANCE IS AT E.S.E.

1ST TRACK IS TO WEST, THEN SLIGHTLY TOWARDS CENTRE.
THEN CIRCLES TILL BACK AT WEST AGAIN, (CLOCKWISE).
CENTRE (COMET STONE) IS APPROACHED, BUT GOES (PAST) OFF TOWARDS E.S.E.
NOW CONTINUES ANTI-CLOCKWISE TO NORTH.
APPROACHES CENTRE SLIGHTLY, THEN CLOCKWISE TO SOUTH.
GOES TOWARDS SOUTH, THEN SWINGS BACK ANTI-CLOCKWISE TO EAST.

MES HOWE
LIES E.S.E. OF
COMET STONE

2ND TRACK (a continuation - this is for readers' benefit)
APPROACHES CENTRE SLIGHTLY, THEN SWINGS CLOCKWISE TO N.W. IT THEN TRACKS AROUND OUTSIDE OF LARGEST OF THE 2 SMALL STONES BEFORE GOING CLOCKWISE AROUND COMET STONE TURNING OUT TO THE EDGE OF CIRCLE TO THE WEST. IT THEN CIRCLES ANTI-CLOCKWISE TO N.E.

3RD TRACK (a continuation - as above)
THIS PARTY TURNS IN TOWARDS THE CENTRE THEN CONTINUES CLOCKWISE UNTIL IT REACHES N.W. IT THEN ENTERS THE INNERMOST PART OF THE CIRCLE BETWEEN THE TWO SMALLER STONES. IT TRAVELS CLOCKWISE, CLOSE TO THE COMET STONE THEN EXECUTES ITS TRIBUTE (?) BY FOLLOWING, FIRST 3 CLOCKWISE, THEN 3 ANTI-CLOCKWISE TURNS, WHICH ARE THEN "SEALED IN" A 'FIGURE-OF-EIGHT', PROCESSION IMMEDIATELY RETURNS ANTI-CLOCKWISE AROUND, 1 CLOSE TO, COMET STONE, THEN EXITS BETWEEN THE SMALLER STONES AND GOES OUT OF CIRCLE IN N.W. DIRECTION.