

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
AND RELATED LITERATURE

Dear Janet,

First, I should like to thank you very much indeed for all the hard work and co-operation you gave to the Orkney expedition.

Though there are various aspects of the organisation we shall no doubt wish to change for next year, by and large I think the expedition can be regarded as a great success and something worth repeating. Sam, as was apparent from his zealous use of the pickaxe, would have been happier if a few dozen more skulls had been got out, but, that apart, both he and Don were impressed and pleased with what you managed to achieve in so short a time.

Don believes that we now have the largest series of early Orkney skeletons yet to be made available for study, which is one substantial and important outcome of the dig. Clearly, too, the site is much more complex, and perhaps much more important, than we anticipated, so that we found ourselves digging not merely to get out the bones Sam wanted, but digging with the possibility of adding some information to the rather scanty scholarly knowledge so far assembled about the early Christian settlements in Deerness and in Orkney in general. Next year's expedition will have several other major motives apart from the acquisition of bones for Sam!

*To follow -
Sometime!*

~~Enclosed is a provisional account of the site, as far as information from books and ingenious speculation can build on the findings of the dig.~~ There is still more information available in various written sources about the early history of Christianity in Orkney, Norse religious and domestic settlements, and the early landowners and their properties, and I shall be glad to receive any material or informed speculation anyone can add to my account.

I also take the opportunity to remind you that I will gladly accept relevant special essays concerning Orkney history for the ON paper - even for the OE paper, if a tenable association is made between Anglo-Saxon and Orcadian-Norse history. It would be very appropriate for academic work of this kind to arise from the expedition.

I should also be interested to hear from any of you who might wish to follow up this excursion into archaeology by forming a group to muscle its way into the Yorkshire archaeological scene. There's plenty to see and to do all around us, particularly in relation to the Anglo-Saxon and Norse occupation periods. York University would be a natural centre for work of this kind, which is after all a logical

adjunct to the study of Old English and Old Norse literature. We can discuss this when we meet, fairly soon, to see photos and slides of the excavation.

Yours,

Sid.

PS We now have the electricity bill, which shares out at 14/3 per head. Please settle this as soon as you can - cheques payable to me, *before the end of term?!*

* plus 6/3 cooker installation.