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NEWS » Local News
Heritage Loch Croispol Schoolhouse

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Durness

Old Schoolhouse - Funding for the historical research into the old schoolhouse at Loch Croispol was secured from the Heritage Lottery, Historic Scotland and the Highland Legacy funds recently.

Glasgow University Archaeology Research Division (GUARD) propose to carry out a programme of trial trenching and limited survey at the schoolhouse in order to provide information on the nature and duration of its use and its immediate environs. As part of this project, they also plan to review the archaeological sites identified in their 2001 survey of the Borrallie headland to assess how best to interpret them for the public.

GUARD propose to record the schoolhouse and its immediate environs by electromagnetic distance measurement (EDM) survey. They will excavate up to two trial trenches inside the schoolhouse, in order to answer questions about how the schoolhouse was organised internally, what different parts of it were used for and if possible the longevity of that use.

They also plan to open up to three small trial trenches outside the schoolhouse and in the possible garden to establish how these areas were used.

The trenches will be excavated and the survey carried out by a team of experienced archaeologists over a period of two weeks.

All archaeological features and deposits will be recorded using standard techniques of recording, including written, drawn and photographic records. The positions of all artefacts will be recorded in three dimensions, and samples may be taken as appropriate for radiocarbon dating.

Following excavation, all trenches will be backfilled and the turf replaced by hand. As an adjunct, they also plan to revisit some of the archaeological sites identified in the 2001 survey with a view to constructing a more over-arching interpretation of the landscape's occupation over time.

The results of the work, as well as advancing research into the prehistoric to post-medieval occupation of northern Scotland in general and Mackay Country in particular, could be used for public education and outreach, including the contents of interpretation boards. The archaeology is scheduled to commence in mid August.

The site was also visited by Andrew PK Wright OBE, chartered architect and heritage consultant, who said "This is without question an important site, of which a surprising amount remains which is a testament to the high standards of construction employed by the masons."