

# Trail 4 - Underhoull to Lund: a Viking World

Every bit of this attractive landscape was used in Viking times, and before that by Iron Age broch builders. Emmerge yourself in longhouses, noosts, a chapel, and graves as well as the broch.

## 1 Underhoull Longhouse (upper)

The Vikings adapted their building styles to the materials and conditions in Shetland. The drystone seaward long wall of this longhouse was built to be seen; the upslope wall was turf built. A sprung floor in the main room helped keep it dry. The lowest of the three rooms was a byre and there were two side rooms as well.

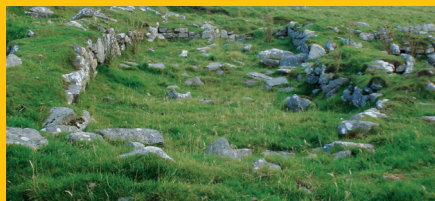


Underhoull Longhouse (upper)

Turn your back on the longhouse and head towards the very impressive **2 Underhoull Broch** which is surrounded by two massive defensive banks standing to above head height. The 17m wide broch commands an excellent view of the bays below. A rectangular building on the south side of the outer bank may be a Viking chapel. The site is unexcavated and so retains its secrets.

**3 Field Systems** - walk down the hill towards the coast, through a complex of small fields. These small "garden" plots belong to 2 or 3 different periods of cultivation which may be as early as Iron Age and are unusual in Shetland.

**4 Underhoull Longhouse (lower)** was excavated in 1960 by Alan Small who thought it was 9th century. Unusually it is aligned along the hillslope. It was built on top of Iron Age remains, including a souterrain (below ground storage chamber) on the upslope side.



Lower Underhoull



Underhoull Broch

Follow the coast, where the banks above the sandy bay contain boat noosts, some stone lined. These are places where longships were pulled ashore and berthed. The bay ends at **5 Vinstrick Ness**. Some of the mounds on this headland might be Viking graves. Their position between the Underhoull and Lund Norse settlements and near the coast, is typical for Viking graves of either or both communities.



Vinstrick Ness (background)  
Lower Underhoull (foreground)

Continue round the coast, crossing the bridge, and walk around the second sandy bay. Leave the beach via the gate and enter the graveyard of **6 Lund Chapel**. On the south side, view 3 distinctive Viking stone crosses, and a 4th worn cross close by. Inside the chapel there is a Pictish fish or serpent drawn on the underside of a window lintel. The chapel itself is pre 12th century, probably built for the occupants of the Viking/Norse settlement nearby (see 7).



St Olaf's Chapel, Lund



Viking cross

Follow the track/road. Just before the 2nd gate across the road, enter the field to your left via a gate. Cross the field diagonally to find a group of three **7 Viking Norse houses**. Two have side rooms. This is the biggest group of longhouses so far discovered in Unst. To date, they are unexcavated.



## Getting there

Turn left at the Westing junction, by the bus stop. Park in the extended layby opposite Underhoull Broch. Enter the field via the gate. Turn left, through two more gates to start the walk at the longhouse. Alternatively, from layby, walk back along road and cross fence at stile.

Duration: 90 minutes – 2 hours.

## Interpretation

- Panels at both longhouses.

## Access

Moderate walk. If you have 2 cars, you could leave one at Lund Chapel. From Underhoull the walk is largely downhill. Either return via the road (and Shetland's largest standing stone) or cut back across fields - includes walk up steep slope below Underhoull at end of walk. Stiles and gates, track and road.

## Facilities

Available at Baltasound

- Food/drink
- Toilets
- Camping



Fish at St Olaf's Chapel, Lund