

1

What did they find at Skara Brae?



2

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4

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5

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Plan of Skara Brae



6

What did they find at Skara Brae?



Pieces of pottery.



Objects carved out of stone.
They are about the
size of tennis balls.



7

What did they find at Skara Brae?



Flint scrapers – just a few centimetres long.

A stone tool
or weapon



An ox-bone that
may have been
used as an axe.

8

What did they find at Skara Brae?

Bone pins and needles.



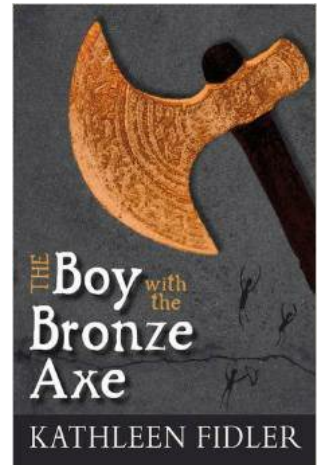
Teeth and bones
were used to
make necklaces.

9

What did the archaeologists say about their finds?

1. There was a lot of whalebone which probably came from whales which got stranded on the beach. The jaw bones of a whale may have been used to hold up the roof of one of the houses.
2. The bones of great numbers of sheep and cattle were found. There were also the remains of huge numbers of shellfish which must have been a large part of their diet.
3. The villagers made tools from the bones of sheep and cattle, rocks and flint. Many of the bone tools seem to have been good for making clothes from skins and animal hides.
4. The villagers used simple pots and cups made from stone and bone. Red colouring was found in the smaller stone pots. Several stone balls were found. One had been polished. Others had been cut to make patterns.

Extracts from
The Boy with the Bronze Axe
By Kathleen Fidler



A. Kali sat up in her stone bed filled with heather ... Her mother still slept in the stone bed-place on the other side of the hearth.

B. The two children tip-toed to the narrow entrance [of their hut] and Kali stooped under the stone doorway to the passage beyond. Quietly they crept along the passage which ... led upwards and outwards to the daylight. They stood on the sand-dune that lay about their house, almost level with the beehive-like roofs of the stone village.

C. Tenko looked about him. Bone rafters made the roof, and turfs had been laid upon them to thatch them, but a large hole had been left above the hearth for a chimney. At one side of the hut was a stone dresser built of flat slabs resting on pillars of stone.

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D. Kali emptied the limpets and shellfish on to a stone slab and began to scrape the limpets out of their shells into a shallow bowl. She used a tiny flint scraper as a knife. Stempsa [her mother] took the crabs and eel and wrapped them up in a covering of wet clay which she thrust into the glowing heart of the fire, prodding it into place with the long leg-bone of an ox which she used like a poker.

E. Birno lifted a stone axe from the keeping-place hollowed out of the wall beyond his bed. His stone axe was wedged into a piece of deer antler. Lines were chiselled on the stone in a pleasing pattern of squares and diagonals over the centre of the axe-head.

F. The women prepared new tunics of the softest sheepskin. With flint scrapers they scraped away the wool and washed the skins in the stream ... They kneaded and pounded them on the stones till the skins were soft and supple. Then they shaped them into tunics, sewing up the sides with sinews from the sheep. Kali joined the women ... She had begged two soft lambskins ... Kali sewed them into a tunic ... She tacked a deep pocket on the inside of the tunic and fastened it with whalebone pins.

G. He pulled out a necklace. It was made of the teeth of many animals, beautifully polished and shining white. They were graded from the very small teeth of rabbits and lambs to the larger teeth of sheep and cows. There were nearly a hundred of these ivory beads and from the centre hung two of the great teeth of the killer-whale.

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H. In preparation for the longest day of the year the tribe of Skara had many things to do. The previous day they cast off their old tunics and rushed into the sea. They rubbed their bodies with white sand till the skin was reddened. This was the ceremony of cleansing.

Next came the ceremony of painting. The women had prepared pigments in little basins made from whale bones. There was a yellow paint made from a clay ochre, a red paint made by crushing pieces of rusty-looking stone, and blue paint from a flax plant.

Birno came to the meeting place carrying six beautifully carved stone balls. These were the symbols of the Sun belonging to the tribe of Skara ... Two of them had been carved by Birno himself. Birno looked with pride at the last stone ball he had carved. The carving on it was so deep that the pattern stood out in spikes like a hedgehog. It had taken Birno a whole year to carve ... The spikes represented the rays of the sun.

There were two ways across the moat [into the ring]. Birno halted and lined up his people. Only the men would cross into the sacred ring ... Birno ... gave the word, "Lift up your symbols of the Sun." The six leaders held the carved stone balls high in their hands ... The company advanced across the earthen bridge with the signs of the Sun held aloft ... Three times the tribes of Orkney marched round the Ring of Brodgar and each time the men passed the highest stone of all, they lifted the signs of the Sun which they carried and shouted loudly.