

## Dun Ara: a Norse-period ‘harbour’ in Mull?

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### ABSTRACT

*This short article explores the archaeology and fragmentary history of the site known as Dun Ara, in Mishnish, north Mull, in the light of increasing evidence of a Norse presence both generally in this part of the Inner Hebrides and more specifically this area of Mull. The focus is on the harbour and its appendages but it refers as well to the associated settlement and dun – or castle – perched above to the north. It is set in the context of recent work on early harbours and landing places in the Western Isles, some of which have been demonstrated to have had a Norse presence. Consideration is given to the ramifications of the tidal cycle and to what extent, if any, isostatic change and rising sea levels may affect the ‘picture’ as it is now observed. While reflecting that the evidence for a ‘Norse’ period at Dun Ara remains circumstantial, it suggests that the absence of conclusive proof does not preclude the likelihood.*