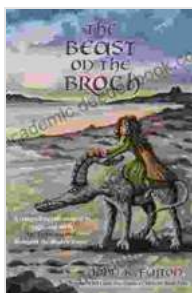


Unveiling the Beast: A Comprehensive Exploration of the Broch of Gurness

Nestled amidst the rugged coastline of Mainland Orkney, the Broch of Gurness stands as a formidable testament to the resilience and ingenuity of the ancient Picts. This Iron Age fortress, dating back to the 1st century BC, is one of the most well-preserved and impressive examples of its kind in Scotland, offering a unique glimpse into the lives and culture of the people who inhabited this windswept archipelago over two thousand years ago.



The Beast on the Broch by John K. Fulton

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 486 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 188 pages
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The Broch of Gurness is part of a network of over 500 brochs scattered throughout Scotland, but it is by far the largest and most complex. It is believed to have been the seat of a powerful Pictish chieftain, who ruled over a vast territory that included much of Orkney and the neighboring islands.

Architecture and Design

The broch is a roundhouse, a type of building common in Iron Age Scotland. It is constructed of massive drystone walls, which are up to 13 feet thick in places. The walls are composed of large, irregular stones that were carefully fitted together without the use of mortar. The broch is entered through a narrow, low doorway that leads into a central courtyard. The courtyard is surrounded by a series of concentric rings of galleries and chambers, which were used for living, storage, and defense.

The broch is a remarkable feat of engineering. The walls are incredibly strong and have withstood centuries of storms and sieges. The interior of the broch is spacious and well-lit, with a series of large windows that provide views of the surrounding countryside.



Life in the Broch

The Broch of Gurness was home to a large community of Picts. It is estimated that up to 100 people could live in the broch at any one time. The broch was a self-sufficient community, with its own food and water supply. The Picts were skilled farmers and fishermen, and they also kept livestock. The broch also had a number of workshops, where craftsmen made tools, weapons, and other goods.

The Picts were a warlike people, and the Broch of Gurness was designed to withstand attacks from enemies. The narrow doorway and thick walls made it difficult for attackers to enter the broch. The galleries and chambers provided excellent vantage points for defenders, who could rain down arrows and stones on attackers below.

History

The Broch of Gurness was built in the 1st century BC, during the late Iron Age. It was occupied for several centuries, but it was eventually abandoned in the 5th century AD. The broch was later reoccupied by the Vikings in the 9th century AD, and it was used as a stronghold until the 12th century AD.

In the 16th century AD, the Broch of Gurness was acquired by the Earl of Orkney. The Earl used the broch as a prison, and it was also used as a place of execution. In the 19th century AD, the broch was restored by Magnus Eunson, a local farmer and antiquarian. Eunson's restoration work helped to preserve the broch and make it accessible to visitors.



Exterior of the Broch of Gurness

Folklore and Legend

The Broch of Gurness is steeped in folklore and legend. It is said that the broch is haunted by the ghost of a Pictish chieftain who was killed in battle. The chieftain's ghost is said to roam the broch at night, searching for his lost treasure.

Another legend tells of a giant who lived in the broch. The giant was so large that he could reach out and touch the mainland with his fingertips. The giant was a friendly creature, and he often helped the Picts with their farming and fishing.

Visiting the Broch of Gurness

The Broch of Gurness is a popular tourist attraction, and it is open to the public every day of the year. Visitors can explore the broch's interior and exterior, and they can learn about the history and culture of the Picts. The broch is located on a beautiful headland, and it offers stunning views of the surrounding countryside.

To get to the Broch of Gurness, take the A965 road from Kirkwall. The broch is located about 5 miles from Kirkwall, on the left-hand side of the road. There is a small car park at the broch, and there is also a bus stop nearby.

The Broch of Gurness is a must-see for anyone visiting Orkney. It is a remarkable example of Iron Age architecture and engineering, and it offers a unique glimpse into the lives and culture of the ancient Picts.

Sidebar:

More Information

- [VisitScotland: Broch of Gurness](#)
- [Historic Environment Scotland: Broch of Gurness](#)
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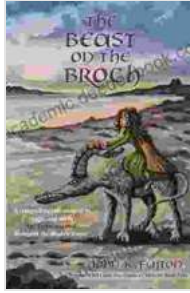
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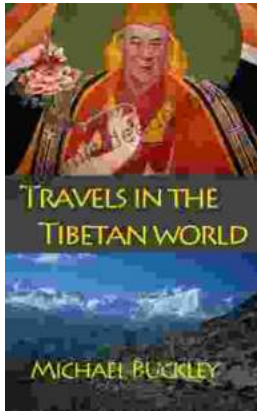
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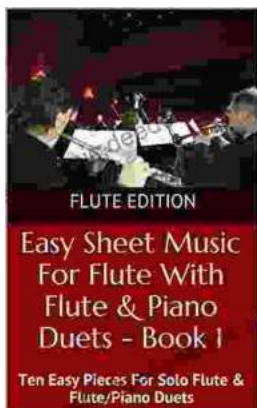
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