



Telephone: 27662.

ROYAL COMMISSION  
ANCIENT AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS  
(SCOTLAND),

27 YORK PLACE,  
EDINBURGH, 1.

2nd June 1943.

K. J. Lyon, Esq.,  
16 Yorke Street,  
Wrexham.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of May 30th, 1943, has been passed to me for answering by the Director of the National Museum.

Anderson's Scotland in Pagan Times - Stone and Bronze Ages is difficult to pick up as copies seldom come on the market; but I should expect that Orr would be able to get you a copy in the course of time if you left an order with him.

For the ancient monuments of Sutherlandshire in general, you might do well to refer to this Commission's Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in the County of Sutherland, published in 1911. You would find this work in the larger public libraries. It states that the Earl's Cross at Dornoch, though traditionally attributed to the 13th century, is actually much later. It would thus have nothing to do with the Norsemen.

It /

It also mentions large numbers of hut circles and small cairns in the neighbourhood of Bonar Bridge. Small piles of stones are frequently associated with hut circles, and it is now thought likely that in most cases they are simply the result of the prehistoric inhabitants clearing stones off the ground that they wished to cultivate. You are quite safe in ignoring information on these matters provided by the local crofters.

I hope that this will give you the information that you require.

Yours faithfully,

*A. Graham.*

Secretary.

National Museum of



Antiquities of Scotland

QUEEN STREET

EDINBURGH, 2

Tel. 031-556 5984

4th September, 1967.

~~K.J. Lyon, Esq.,  
12 Castle Street,  
Dornoch,  
Sutherland.~~

Dear Sir,

You wrote to the Society of Antiquaries in March about the standing stone at Ospisdale, and the letter was referred to me. For advice on the place-name I consulted Dr. Nicolaisen of the School of Scottish Studies who, owing to the work of organising an International Celtic Congress in Edinburgh, has only been able to reply to me now.

While he knows of J.B. Johnston's suggestion that a 14th century spelling Hospostyl indicates a connection with hospital he finds the -s- before -tyl difficult in this connection, and inclines to the alternative etymology of Norse personal name plus dalr. There is a similar place name in Norway, Ospedalen.

None of this affects the date of the stone, of course, as neither dalr nor hospice would have any connection with it. The chances are, as you say, that it could be 3000 years before the Norsemen, but stones have been erected on occasion throughout the centuries and there seems no way of telling for certain unless excavation provides evidence.

Yours faithfully,

Keeper.

Robert Stevenson