



ULSTER
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Survey Report

Reference: **Survey Report No. 66**

Author: **Harry Welsh**

Location:

**Long Cairn
Divis
County Antrim**

In association with:

 **THE NATIONAL TRUST**



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Cover illustration: View of long cairn, looking north-east

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1. Summary

1.1 Location

A site survey was undertaken at a long cairn at Divis and Black Mountain National Trust property, on Saturday 21 June 2017. The survey was the fourth in a series of planned surveys undertaken by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society during 2017.

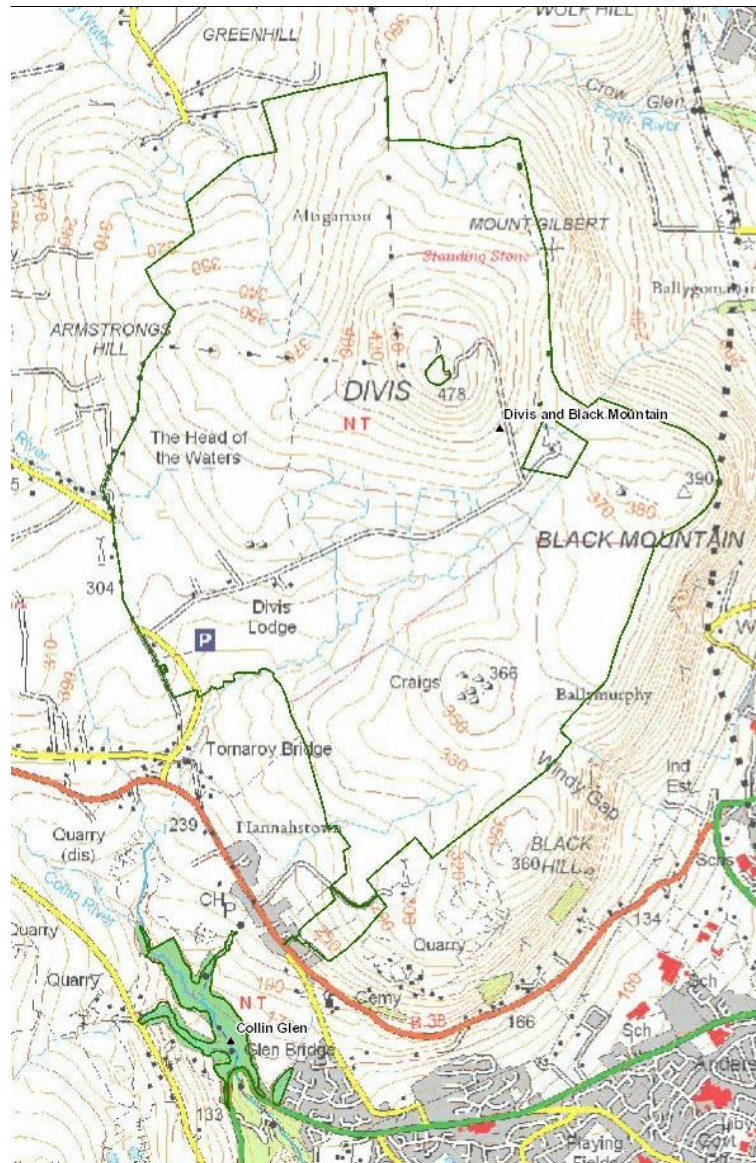


Figure 01: Location map for Divis and Black Mountain *National Trust*



Figure 02: View of the cairn, looking south-west

1.2 Aims

In order to enhance the archaeological record of this site, the aims of this survey were to produce accurate plan drawings of the monument and carry out a photographic survey. This information was compiled into a report and copies submitted to the National Trust and to the archives of the Ulster Archaeological Society.

1 2. Introduction

2.1 Background

The survey of the long cairn was undertaken on Saturday 21 June 2017. It was carried out by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society, in response to a decision taken by the committee of the society to extend an opportunity to members to participate in practical surveys of archaeological monuments that had not previously been recorded. This followed a bequest to the society from the late Dr Ann Hamlin, from which the items of survey equipment were purchased. During discussions with Malachy Conway, Archaeologist of the National Trust in Northern Ireland, it was noted that many archaeological sites on National Trust properties had not been subject to a detailed archaeological survey. It was therefore agreed that members of the society would commence a programme to survey these sites and the Divis long cairn was subsequently chosen to be the sixty-sixth of these.

The survey was carried out during public outreach excavations at Divis Cashel (ANT 060:083) and a burial cairn (not in SMR), which had previously been thought to be one of several prehistoric hut platforms. These were surveyed by the Ulster Archaeological Society in 2009 (Gillespie 2009).

2.2 Previous archaeological surveys

As far as it is known, there has been no previous archaeological survey at this site.

2.3 Cartographic Evidence

The long cairn is not recorded on any of the Ordnance Survey County Series maps (Sheet 60) of the area, but a cellular enclosure (ANT 060:082) is recorded on the Second (1859) and Third (1924) editions.

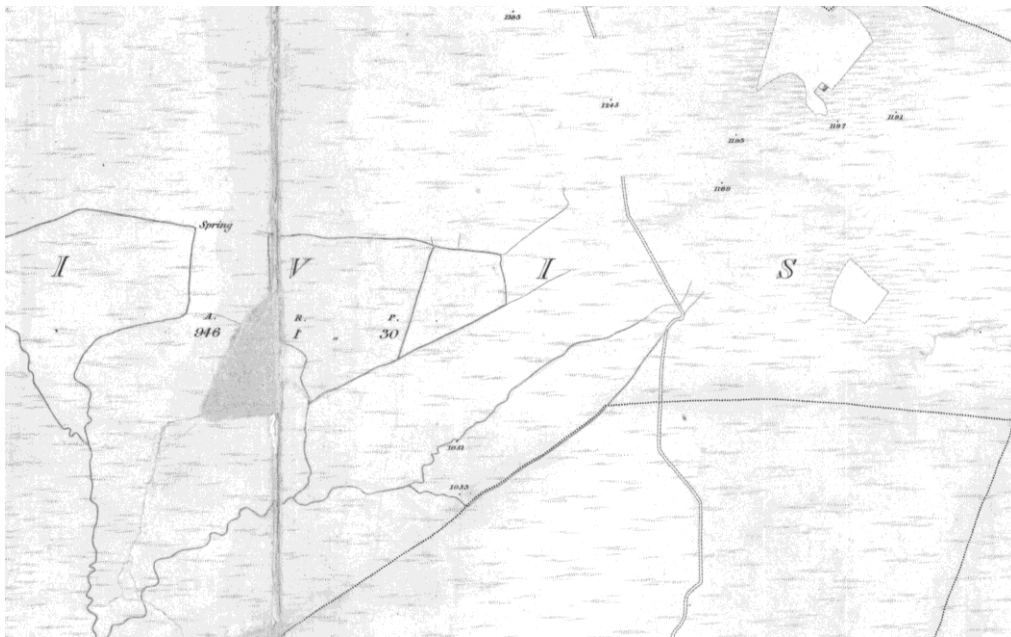


Figure 03: OS County Series Antrim Sheet 60, First Edition (part of) 1832

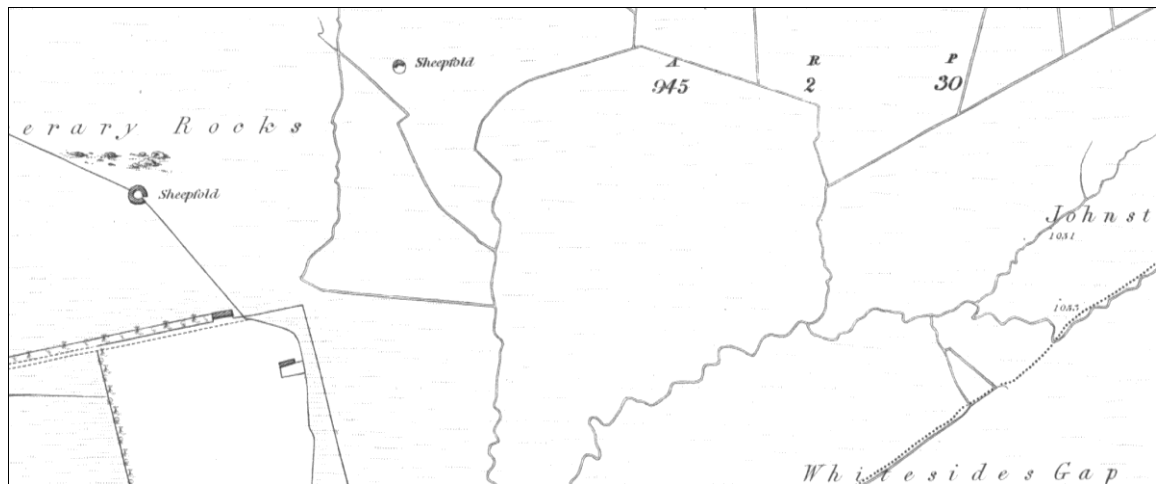


Figure 04: OS County Series Antrim Sheet 60, Second Edition (part of) 1859

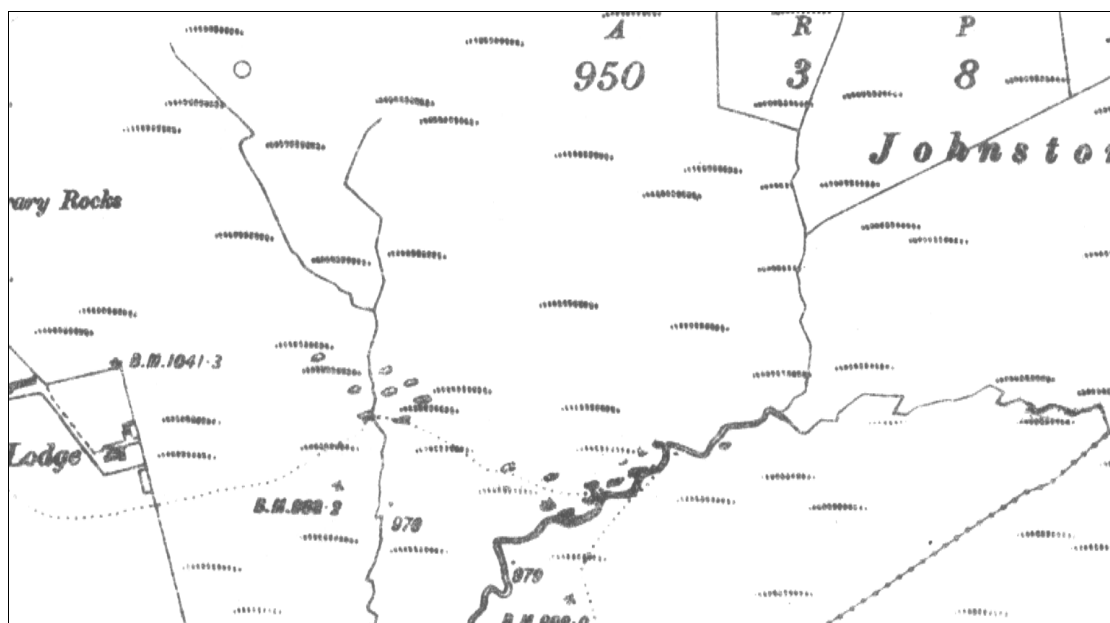


Figure 05: OS County Series Antrim Sheet 60, Third Edition (part of) 1924

2.4 Archiving

Copies of this report have been deposited with the National Trust and the Ulster Archaeological Society. All site records have been archived by the National Trust at Rowallane, Saintfield, County Down.

2.5 Credits and Acknowledgements

The survey was carried out by Harry Welsh, Ana Copeland and June Welsh. The Ulster Archaeological Society is particularly grateful to Malachy Conway, Archaeologist of the National Trust and Dermot McCann, Warden at the Divis and

National Trust property, who worked closely with the survey team in choosing the site and facilitating access.

3. The 2017 UAS Survey

3.1 Methodology

It was decided that the survey would take the form of the production of plan drawings and elevations, accompanied by a photographic survey. This report was compiled using the information obtained from these sources, in addition to background documentary material.

3.2 Production of plan drawings

Plan drawings were completed, using data obtained from the field survey. Measurements were obtained by using the society's hand tapes. Sketch plans were completed on site by recording these measurements on drafting film secured to a plane table and backing up the data on a field notebook for subsequent reference. Field plans were later transferred to a computer-based format for printing.

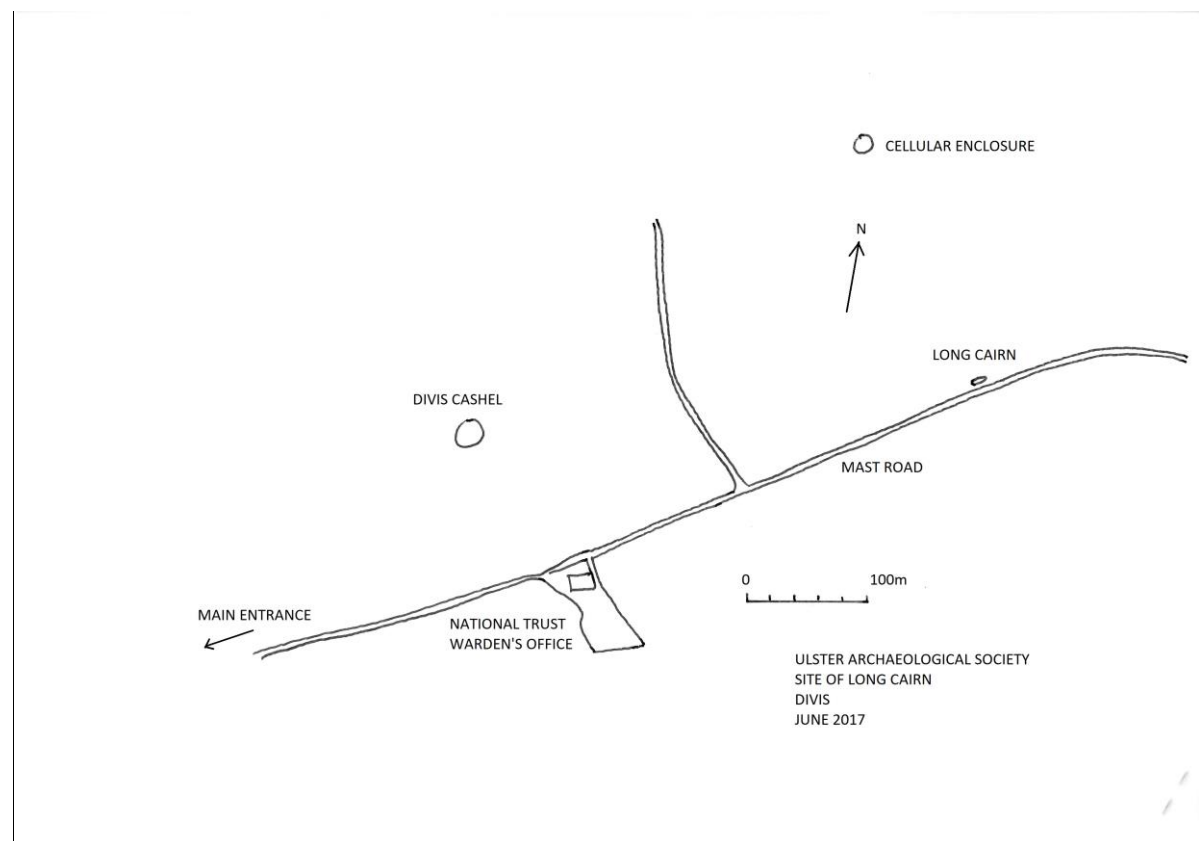


Figure 06: Plan of long cairn in relation to adjacent features

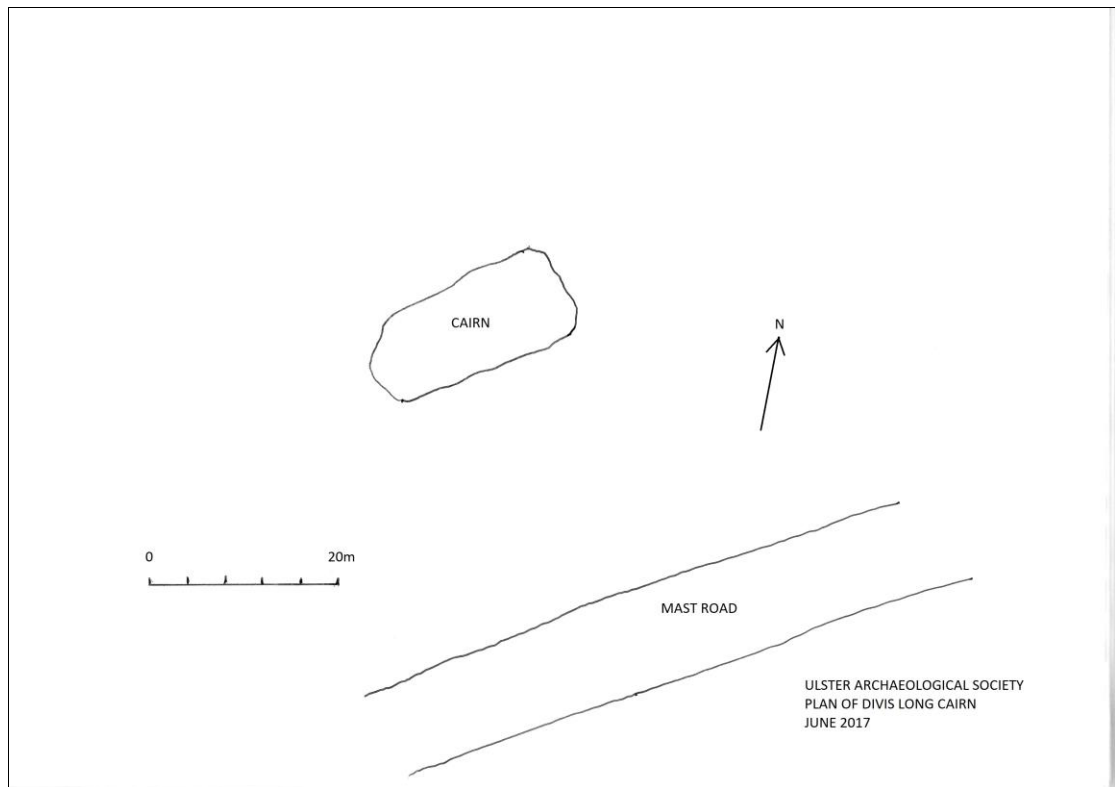


Figure 07: Plan of Divis Long Cairn

3.3 Photographic archive

A photographic record of the site was taken by using a *Ricoh G600W* 8 megapixel digital camera and a photographic record sheet was employed, corresponding to photographs taken during the site survey on 21 June 2017. The archive has been compiled in jpeg format and saved to compact disc.



Figure 08: View of cairn material, looking north-west



Figure 09: View of eastern part of cairn, looking north-west



Figure 10: View of western part of cairn, looking north-west

4. Discussion

The cairn is located in an area of unimproved grassland at national grid reference J 2762 7463 at an elevation of 326m OD. It is located approximately 14m to the north-north-west of Mast Road, which connects the main entrance of the property to the telecommunication masts at Divis Mountain, which overlook the area. The cairn is on a similar alignment to Mast Road at this point. The cairn is 221m to the east-south-east of a stone cellular enclosure, known locally as the Cell Bay Enclosure (Gillespie 2011) and recorded in the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record as ANT 060:082.

The cairn is 9.8m in length (east-north-east/west-south-west), by 3.3m in width (north-north-west/south-south-east) and 1.0m in maximum height above the surrounding land surface. It is composed of angular and rounded cobbles of various rock types, but predominantly basalt. These range in size from 53cm by 34cm by 32cm, to 9cm by 5cm by 5cm. Several display evidence of burning.

On first inspection, the cairn appears to be a clearance cairn, but there are a number of unusual features that require further investigation.

The first of these is the suggestion that the monument is a clearance cairn. This implies that the cairn is the product of clearing the area adjacent to facilitate some agricultural purpose, such as drainage, or for arable farming. The area around the monument shows no evidence of such clearance having occurred. Further, it would be likely that clearance activities and subsequent cairns would have been widespread across the area, but this is the only known example.

The proximity of Mast Road has led to speculation that the cairn was a by-product of road construction, but here again, this is the only such example known. Also, one would expect this material to have been employed during the construction of the road, as a handy source of hard core.

A third possibility is that the cairn is part of the prehistoric burial tradition. It is known that the Divis and Black Mountain area is rich in prehistoric monuments, several of which have been recorded (figures 11 and 12 below).

IG Reference	Townland	Site Type	UAS Reference
J 2857 7490	Black Mountain	Burial Cairn (<i>Cairn 2</i>)	Survey Report No. 2
J 2808 7558	Divis	Burial Cairn (<i>Summit Cairn</i>)	Survey Report No. 3
J 2690 7560	Divis	Burial Cairn (<i>Yellow Jack's</i>)	Survey Report No. 9
J 2735 7445	Divis	Burial Cairn (<i>Cairn 3</i>)	Survey Report No. 31
J 2747 7456	Divis	Settlement Cluster [<i>Burial Cairns</i>]	Survey Report No. 16

Figure 11: Table of burial cairns at Divis and Black Mountain surveyed by UAS

NISMR Number	Townland	Site type	IG Reference
ANT 060:015	Altigarron/Divis	Burial Cairn (<i>Yellow Jack's</i>)	J 2690 7560
ANT 060:072	Black Mountain	Neolithic flint working site	J 2914 7452
ANT 060:075	Black Mountain	Neolithic occupation site	J 2854 7277
ANT 060:038	Divis	Findspot of flint arrowhead	J 2903 7489
ANT 060:055	Divis	AP site – circular enclosure	J 2727 7418
ANT 060:061	Divis	Burial cairn	J 2935 7481
ANT 060:082	Divis	Stone circular complex (<i>Cellular enclosure</i>)	J 2741 7471
ANT 060:083	Divis	Stone circular complex (<i>Divis Cashel</i>)	J 2700 1050

Figure 12: Table of sites in Divis area currently recorded on NISMR

Long cairns are unusual, but not unknown. A similar example can be seen at Old Freehold, also in County Antrim (ANT 040:094). The Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record records this as ‘an antiquity rather than a clearance cairn’ (HED 2018).



Figure 13: Old Freehold long cairn (ANT 040:094)

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This interesting and enigmatic monument is one of many that have been discovered since the site was taken over by the National Trust and a programme of systematic archaeological surveys was carried out there.

A more positive identification of this monument may not be possible without further archaeological investigation. It is recommended that the monument is protected from damage and that further archaeological investigation is carried out there as time and resources permit.

6. Bibliography

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Websites

Historic Environment Division: Department for Communities
<https://aps.communities-ni.gov.uk/NISMR-PUBLIC/Details.aspx?MonID=2874>
 [accessed 22 October 2018].

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD FORM**Site:** Divis Long Cairn**Date:** 27 June 2017**Make and model of camera:** Ricoh G600W

Frame no	From	Details
DSCF1656	West	View of cairn, Divis Mountain in background
DSCF1657	North-west	View of cairn, looking south-east
DSCF1658	North-west	View of cairn (eastern part), looking south-east
DSCF1659	East	View of cairn, looking west
DSCF1660	South-east	View of cairn (eastern part), looking north-west
DSCF1661	South-east	View of cairn (western part), looking north-west
DSCF1662	South-east	View of cairn material
DSCF1663	South-east	View of cairn material (close-up)
DSCF1664	South-east	View of cairn material (close-up)