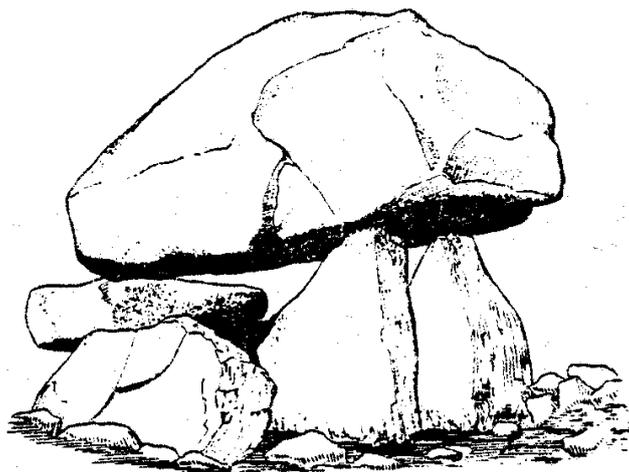


ULSTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Survey Report: No. 3

**Survey of Summit Cairn, Divis Mountain, County Antrim
UAS/06/03**

In association with



JUNE WELSH & HENRY WELSH

© Ulster Archaeological Society
First published 2007

Ulster Archaeological Society
c/o School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology
The Queen's University of Belfast
42 Fitzwilliam Street
Belfast
BT9 6AX

CONTENTS

	page
List of figures	4
1. Summary	5
2. Introduction	6
3. 2006 UAS Survey	8
4. Discussion	10
5. Recommendations for further work	12
6. Bibliography	13
Appendices	
1. CAMSAR record form	14
2. Photographic record form	15

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	page
1. Location map for Divis Mountain, County Antrim	5
2. Map of Divis Mountain with Summit Cairn indicated	5
3. UAS survey team at work at Summit Cairn, Divis Mountain	6
4. Plan of Summit Cairn, Divis Mountain	9
5. Profiles of Summit Cairn, Divis Mountain	9
6. Divis Mountain looking north	10
7. Aerial photograph with cairn indicated	11
8..Original summit cairn, Divis Mountain	12

1. Summary

1.1 Location

A site survey was undertaken at Summit Cairn, Divis Mountain (No SMR number at time of survey), in the townland of Divis, County Antrim, Irish Grid reference J2808 7558. This cairn has been given the name Summit Cairn, even though it is not situated on the exact summit of Divis Mountain. A large cairn existed on the summit but this has been destroyed by building works associated with the radio station there prior to the Second World War. Consequently the monument under consideration in this report has been given the designation of Summit Cairn by the National Trust.

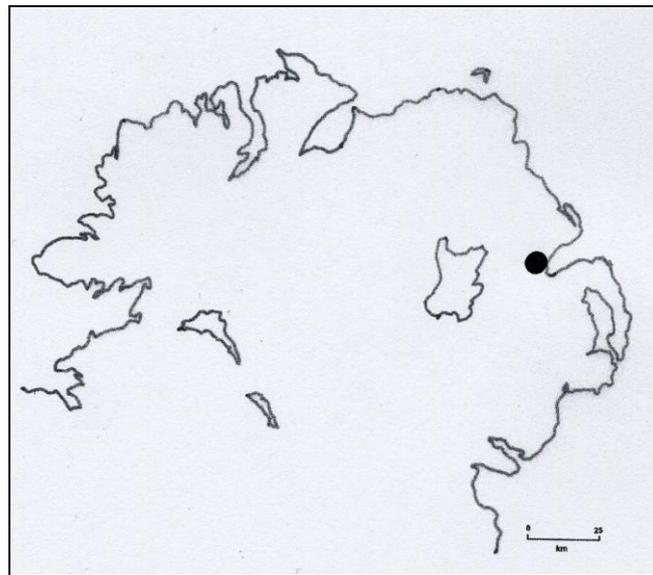


Figure 1: Location map for Divis Mountain, County Antrim

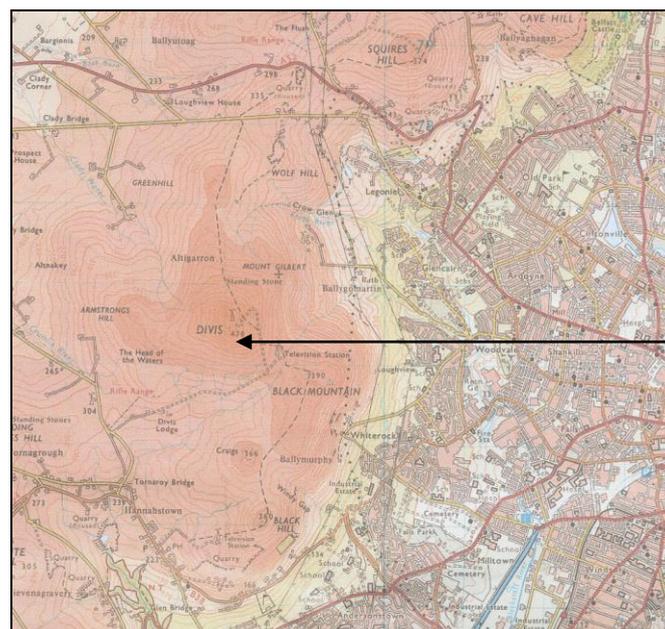


Figure 2: Map of Divis Mountain with Summit Cairn indicated

The National Trust property of Divis and the Black Mountain comprises a landholding of some 599 hectares (1,480 acres) of upland grassland and heath, rich in biodiversity and archaeological interest. Divis and Black Mountain are located towards the southern end of a north-south aligned range of upland commonly referred to as the Belfast Hills. At its most northerly end this upland range begins with Carnmoney Hill and travelling southwards includes Cave Hill, Squires Hill, Divis Mountain, Black Mountain, Collin Mountain and finally Slievenacloy (Conway 2005a, 1).

Summit Cairn is located within the grounds of the National Trust's Divis and Black Mountain property and the land on which it is situated is currently used for recreational purposes and access to radio and television transmitters. This was the second in a series of planned surveys to be undertaken by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society.



Figure 3: UAS survey team at work at Summit Cairn, Divis Mountain

1.2 Aims

In order to enhance the archaeological record of this site, the aims of this survey were to produce an accurate plan and section drawing of the monument, carry out a photographic survey and complete a Condition And Management Survey of the Archaeological Resource (CAMSAR) record form. This information was compiled into a report and submitted to the Environment and Heritage Service and the National Trust.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

The survey of Summit Cairn was carried out on Saturday 17 June 2006 by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society. It was undertaken 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 Mr Malachy Conway, Survey Archaeologist of the National Trust in Northern Ireland, it was noted that many archaeological sites on National Trust property 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 cairn at Divis Mountain was subsequently chosen to be the second of these.

2.2 Previous archaeological surveys

As far as is known, Summit Cairn had not previously been surveyed until after November 2004, when the National Trust acquired the land in the vicinity. Shortly after, Malachy Conway identified Summit Cairn as a possible prehistoric site.

Divis and the Black Mountain is a remarkable archaeological landscape revealing sites which reflect man's impact on this upland through settlement, farming, industry and burial from Prehistory to the present. Having never been ploughed the archaeology of this upland has become frozen in time from the end of the ice age when Mesolithic bands of hunter-gatherers roamed the hills. Throughout prehistory flint, found in the local limestone, was an important natural resource to be mined and worked into tools and weapons particularly during the Neolithic period on the mountain. By far the most prominent early settlement sites in this landscape are remains of two stone walled enclosures. One, visible from the road contains the footings of a rectangular building, which probably dates to the later first millennium AD and is an upland version of the familiar lowland Ringfort of the early Christian period. The mountains would have been used seasonally for cattle grazing particularly during the Medieval and post-medieval periods, though the occasional patch of ground cultivated with ridge and furrow or lazy-beds, visible to the south of the road, probably date from the time of the great famine. During the 18th and 19th century the growing thirst for water power to run Belfast's mills led to the construction of a mill dam to the south of Divis Lodge (Conway 2005, 1).

With specific reference to Divis Mountain, it has been suggested that

Prior to the Trust's acquisition of Divis and Black Mountain only 5 archaeological sites were recorded within its boundaries. This included two burial cairns, *Carn Sheaan Bhuidhe* or 'yellow Jack's cairn', from which a funerary vessel was recovered around 1840 and remains of a small slightly oval peat covered basalt cairn located just south of a pillar on Black Mountain. Perhaps most significant from this record was the apparent absence of any monuments particularly from the summits, when those of the surrounding hills in the wider range display prominent burial cairns or forts. One reason for the apparent absence of such features from Divis can be put down to the construction of a military base on the summit, which survives today as an unmanned communications and radar

station. Theoretically this would have removed any former trace of sites or monuments from the summit that existed before the middle 20th century. Unfortunately the quest for assessing what if anything formerly occupied the summit of Divis is further exasperated by the fact that none of the cartographic sources, including 1st and 2nd edition OS 6" maps show anything other than trig points on either summit. This seems highly unusual given that Divis Mountain is the highest and most prominent peak in the Belfast Hills range and from which most of the other major mountains and peaks are visible, including the Mourne Mountains where a series of passage tomb sites survive on peaks including Slieve Donard (Conway 2005a, 1-2).

2.3 Cartographic evidence

Summit Cairn has not previously been recorded by the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland and does not appear on any of the maps consulted during this survey process.

2.4 Archiving

Copies of this report have been deposited with the Environment and Heritage Service and the National Trust. All site records are temporarily archived with the Honorary Archivist of the Ulster Archaeological Society.

2.5 Credits and Acknowledgements

The survey was led by Harry Welsh and other members of the survey team were Liz Curtis, William Dunlop, June Easton, Ian Gillespie, Julie Hanse, Margaret Hay, Ruth Logue, Anne MacDermott, Ken Pullin, Joan and Wesley Semple. The Ulster Archaeological Society is particularly grateful to Mr Malachy Conway, Survey Archaeologist of the National Trust, who worked closely with the survey team in choosing the site and facilitating access. Assistance was also given by staff of the Queen's University of Belfast, particularly Mr Barrie Hartwell for providing instruction on survey techniques and Mr John Davison for arranging the loan of additional items of survey equipment.

3. 2006 UAS Survey

3.1 Methodology

It was decided that the survey would take the form of the production of plan and profile drawings, accompanied by a photographic survey and the completion of a Condition And Management Survey of the Archaeological Resource (CAMSAR) form. A report was compiled using the information obtained from these sources, in addition to background documentary material.

3.2 Production of plan and profile drawings

Plan and profile drawings were completed, using data obtained from a field survey. Measurements were obtained by using the society's *Leica Sprinter 100* electronic measuring device.

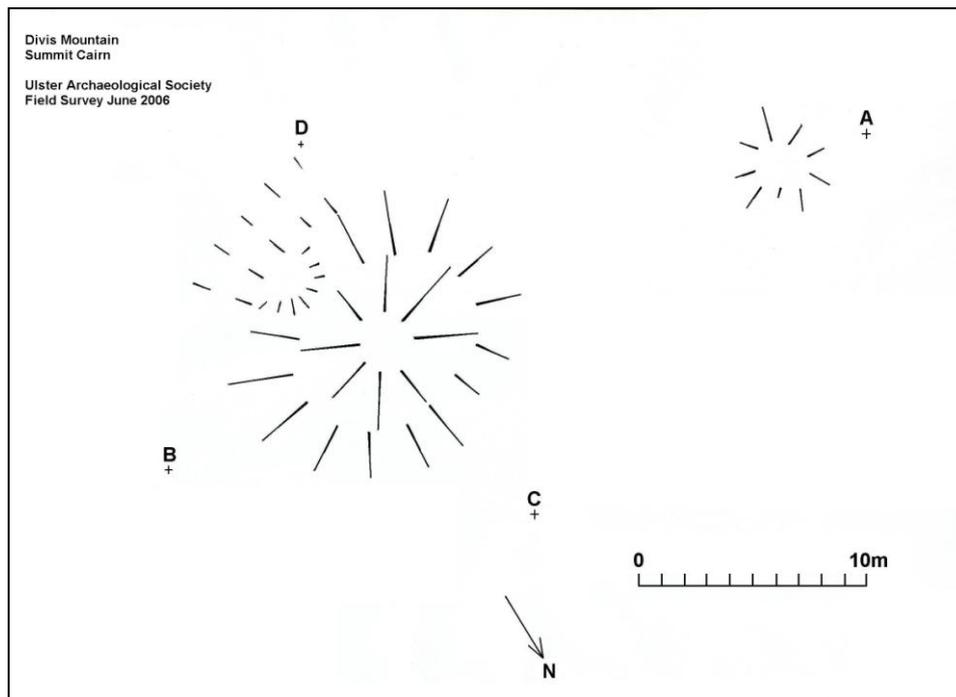


Figure 4: Plan of Summit Cairn, Divis Mountain

Sketch plans at 1:200 scale were completed on site by recording these measurements on drafting film secured to a plane table and the data obtained was also recorded on a field notebook for subsequent reference. Field plans were later transferred to a computer-based format for printing.

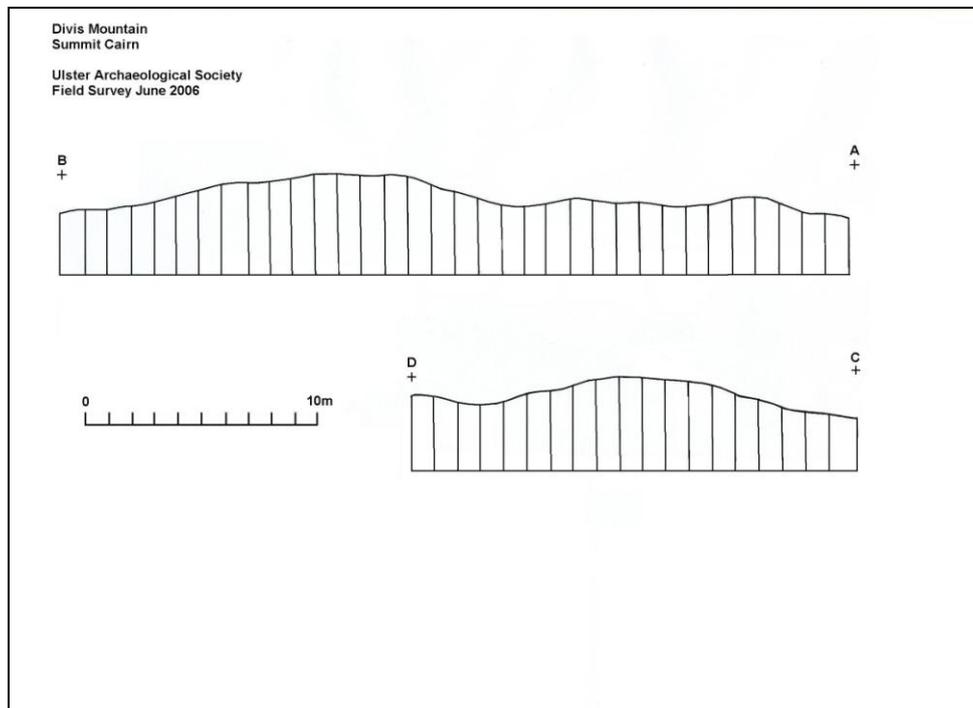


Figure 5: Profiles of Summit Cairn, Divis Mountain

3.3 Photographic archive

A photographic record of the site was taken by using a *Sony Cyber-shot DCS-H1 5* megapixel digital camera and a photograph record sheet was employed, corresponding to photographs taken during the site survey on 17 June 2006. The archive has been compiled in jpeg format and saved to compact disc.

3.4 Completion of CAMSAR form

A Condition And Management Survey of the Archaeological Resource (CAMSAR) form was completed by the survey team on 17 June 2006 and is given in appendix 1 below. As far as is known, this is the first occasion on which this type of record form has been completed for the monument.

4. Discussion

This monument sits close to the summit of Divis Mountain at altitude of 460 metres above sea level. It is one of a number of monuments in this area and

a rich and varied archaeological landscape reveals evidence for life and death rituals on the mountain particularly in prehistory. At least four Bronze Age burial cairns are now known along with the site of an earlier megalithic tomb. Prehistoric hut sites survive along with two curious stone walled enclosures, one of which may be early Christian period in date.
(National Trust 2005, 1).



Figure 6: Divis Mountain, looking north

It would not be surprising to find prehistoric burial cairns in this area, as

this fossilised landscape owes its survival to a number of factors, its elevated and exposed location, the fact that farming here over many centuries was largely restricted to rough grazing and by its later ownership by the Ministry of Defence and the access restrictions to the area which this imposed. For these reasons the Divis and Black Mountain landscape is unique amongst the Belfast Hills and has the potential to reveal many further new archaeological discoveries through co-ordinated research (Conway 2005a, 2).

At the time of the survey, the monument was covered with grass and heathland plants, but appeared to consist of sub-angular stones of approximately 20 centimetres in size and several of these were visible at ground level. This type of monument has been described as a cairn, defined as ‘a mound of rough stones built as a memorial or landmark’ (Soanes & Hawker 2005, 132). The cairn was approximately 13.8 metres in diameter and had a maximum height of 2 metres.

During the survey, consideration was given to whether the cairn was merely a dump of stones, left over during the construction of the adjacent military base. It was observed that building debris was scattered around the summit of the mountain, but was not concentrated to form regular mounds.

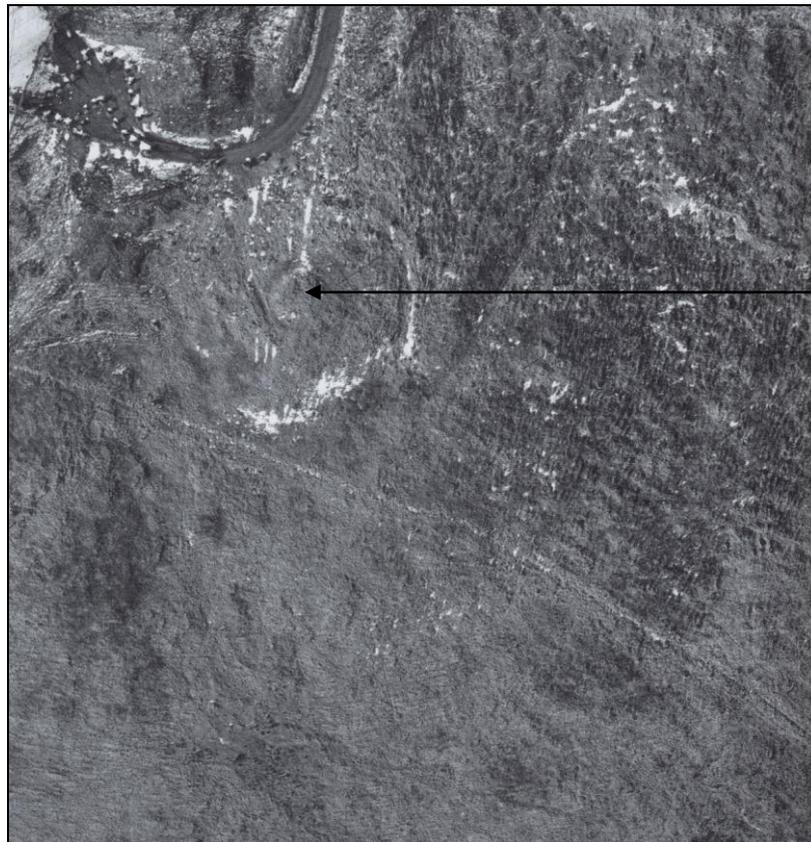


Figure 7: Aerial photograph with cairn indicated. *Crown Copyright*

Aerial photography (figure 7 above) revealed a sub-circular ditch and bank surrounding the cairn itself and at least one smaller cairn was visible to the west. These features were confirmed on profiles A-B and C-D. The smaller mound was found to be approximately 5.4 metres in diameter, with a maximum height of 1.2 metres. The survey of the main mound indicated a semi-circular depression of approximately 3.6 metres in diameter on the southern edge of the cairn and this could be the result of the past removal of some cairn material or an attempt to gain access to and loot the interior.

The regular shape of the mound, combined with the evidence for a surrounding circular enclosure, seems to militate against the cairn being a dump of building materials and point to a prehistoric origin. This may only be confirmed by further archaeological examination.

Little is known about the original cairn that was situated on the summit of Divis Mountain. However, one of the members of the UAS Survey Group (William Dunlop) kindly donated a photograph of his brother, Jim, standing on the cairn on 5 May 1940. This is the only known photograph of the cairn and must have been taken shortly before its destruction (figure 8 below).

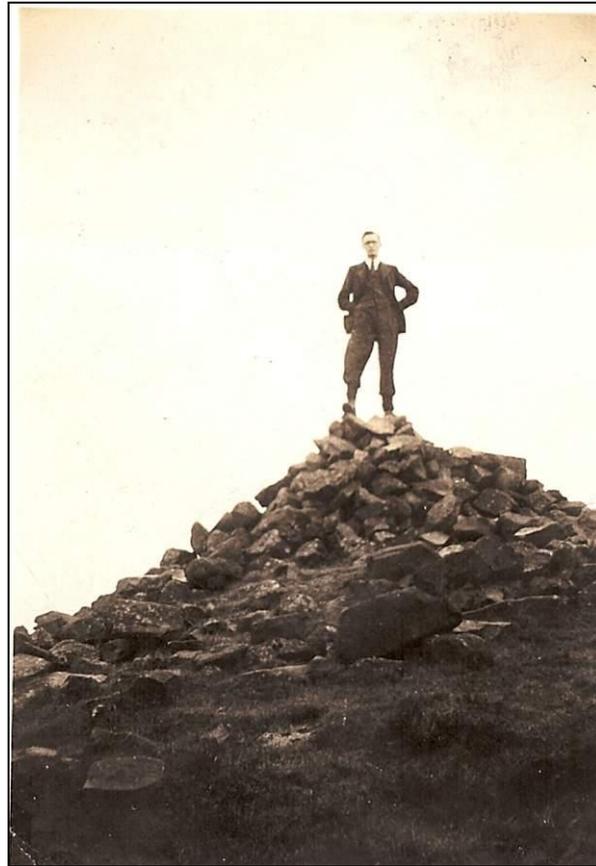


Figure 8: Divis Mountain, original summit cairn, *William Dunlop*

5. Recommendations for further work

In order to obtain more definitive dating material for the monument, the National Trust may wish to consider a limited excavation, or geophysical survey. The monument is currently unprotected and is therefore liable to damage by grazing animals such as

sheep or cattle. The National Trust may therefore wish to consider restricting animal access to the site by the provision of a suitable fence. This would also highlight the presence of the site to contractors who might be periodically carrying out maintenance works to the nearby road surface. However, the presence of an area of restricted access may also encourage vandalism and the illicit use of metal detectors. It is also recommended that the Environment and Heritage Service consider statutory protection of the cairn until such time as its antiquity can be confirmed.

Bibliography

- Conway, M. 2004. *Divis Mountain acquisition*. National Trust.
- Conway, M. 2005a. *Divis and Black Mountain, an archaeological update*. National Trust.
- Conway, M. 2005b. *Divis & the Black Mountain; An Historic Landscape*. National Trust.
- Conway, M. 2006. *Update: Divis Archaeology*. National Trust
- National Trust. 2005. *A short guide to Divis and the Black Mountain*. Belfast
- Soanes, C & Hawker, S. (eds.). 2005. *Oxford English Dictionary, Third Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

CAMSAR record form

SUMMIT CAIRN

12

NISMR No.		Grid Reference J28085 75582		Townland Divis	
Landuse Cat. 18	Structural Cat.	Site Type CAIRN		Protection	Approved 1460m
Field Boundaries (e.g. contemporary/intrusive later/owners attitude towards monument i.e. dis/regard) none					

Site description/ notes
 mountain top cairn covered in vegetation with boulders in natural position. Disturbance caused by erection of nearby M.O.D installations. Electricity post(s) on site

Landuse					
On Site			Around Site		Comments
Previous	Present	% site	Previous	Present	
17	17		17	17	M.O.D. security installation near site + access road.
			28	28	

Fencing Site Fenced? Y N
 Condition (e.g. recent/broken)
 Type of fence
 Distance of fence from edge of monument

Remains	Is the site visible?	Archaeological site?	Survival						Condition					
	1 2 3 4		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5

Comments (e.g. human interference and management)

Surface Problems (e.g. ploughing, trampling, planting, scrub growth: localized/widespread)
 soil cover - grass, heathland plants ie bilberry, some scrub willow
 some cattle trampling
 Drainage ditch along one side -

Sub-Surface Problems (e.g. rabbits, badgers, subsidence: localized/widespread)
 rabbit hole on top?

Damage Sustained						
Past		Recent		Future Risk		Observations
Category	Extent	Category	Extent	Category	Extent	
13	1	13	1	29	1	
29	1	29	1			
3	1					
7	2					

Photographs Digital images	Recommendations
--------------------------------------	------------------------

Map Evidence			Last Visit
1st Ed	2nd Ed	3rd Ed	
NONE	NONE	NONE	Date of last visit Deteriorated since last visit? N/A

Recorder _____ Date 17/06/06

PHOTOGRAPH RECORD FORM

Site.....Summit Cairn, Divis Mountain

Date.....17 June 2006

Film no.	B/W Print	Colour print	Colour slide	Digital image (m.pixels)
				5

Make and model of camera... *Sony Cyber-shot DCS-H1*

Frame no	Direction viewed from	Details
DM001	Above	Aerial photograph of Summit Cairn
DM002	South	Members of UAS survey group
DM003	North-west	Cairn
DM004	South-east	Surveying area to south of cairn
DM005	North-east	Cairn
DM006	South	Members of UAS survey group
DM007	South	Members of UAS survey group
DM008	North	Divis Mountain
DM009	East	Stones adjacent to cairn
DM010	South	Members of UAS survey group
DM011	South-west	View of Belfast