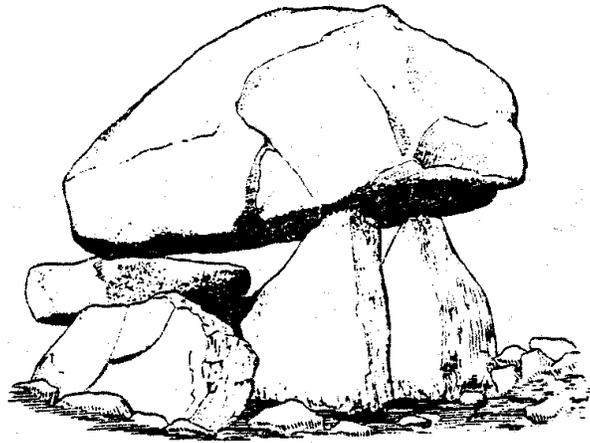


ULSTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Survey Report: No. 9

**Survey of Yellow Jack's Cairn, Divis, County Antrim
UAS/07/03**

In association with



THE NATIONAL TRUST

GEORGE RUTHERFORD

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1. Summary

1.1 Location

The site (SMR No. ANT 060:015) is the summit of Armstrong's Hill (altitude 380m+ OD) 1.2 km west of the summit of Divis Mountain and sits on the townland boundary with Altigarron on the north and Divis on the south. The boundary is meared to a low bank with stone revetting on the south side. Grid Reference: J 2690 7560. There are clear views of Slemish, Donegore Hill, Lyles Hill, across Lough Neagh to Slieve Gullion, Ram's Island and Crew Hill. On the day of the survey cloud obscured much of County Down. The cairn site is a carpet of green moss, short grass, sedges, wild sorrel and buttercup, with some rushes in hollows. In December it gives a green appearance in contrast to the prevailing browns of the surrounding vegetation. Horses and cattle graze the land.

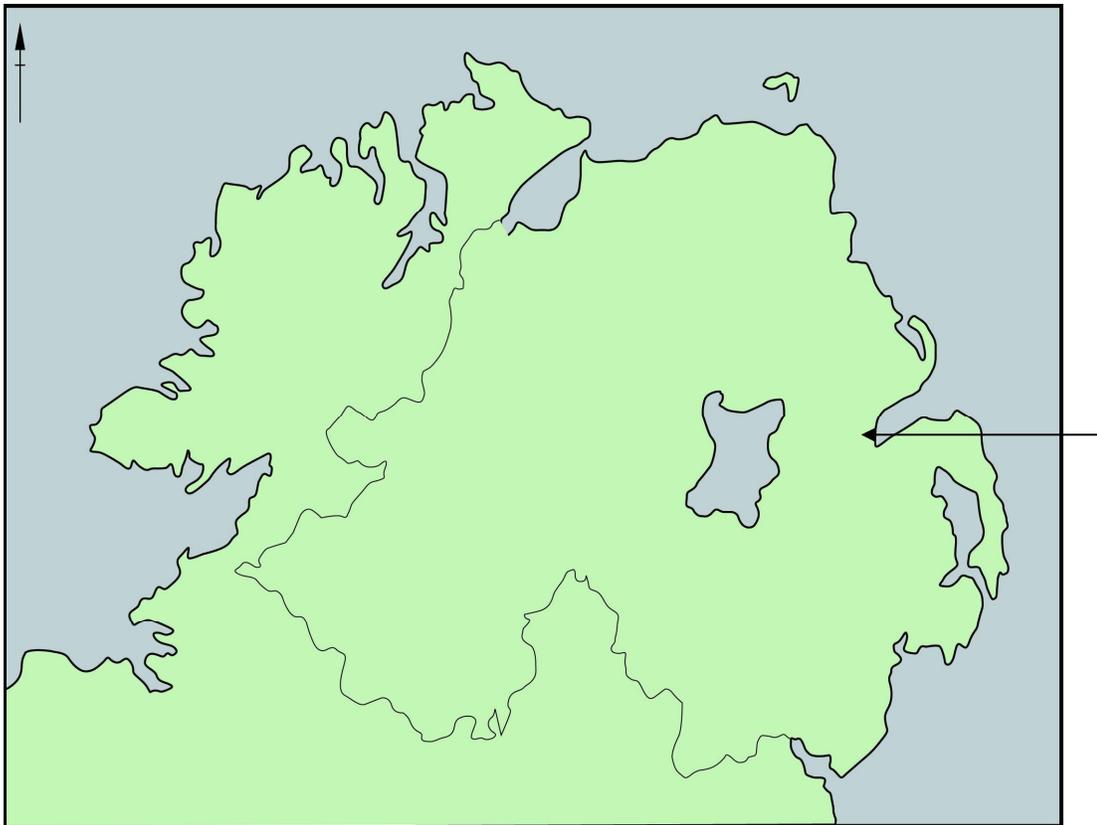


Figure 1: Location map for Divis Mountain, County Antrim

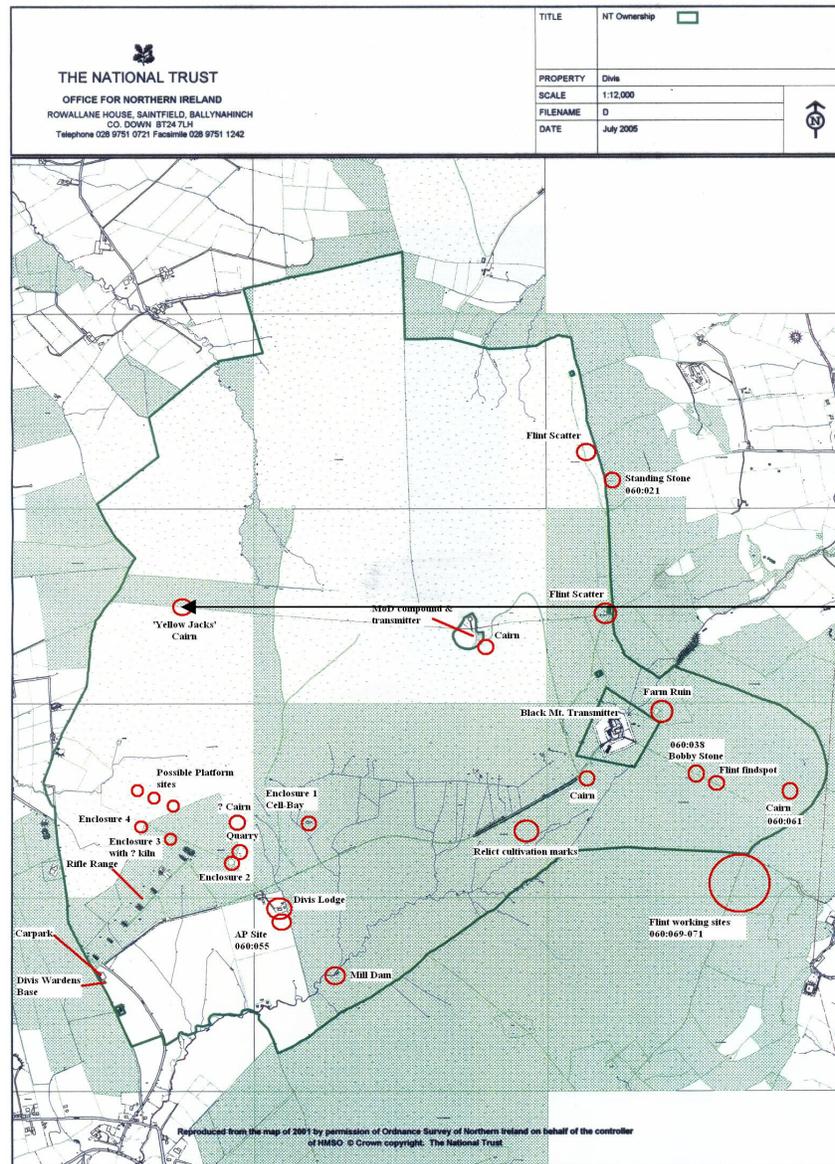


Figure 2: Map of Divis Mountain with Yellow Jack's Cairn indicated, *National Trust*

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).

Yellow Jack's 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 ninth

in a series of planned surveys to be undertaken by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society.



Figure 3: UAS survey team at work at Yellow Jack's Cairn, looking south.

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 Yellow Jack's Cairn was carried out on Saturday 25 August 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 Yellow Jack's Cairn was subsequently chosen to be surveyed.

2.2 Previous archaeological surveys

As far as is known, Yellow Jack's 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 demand for water power to run Belfast's mills led to the construction of a mill dam to the south of Divis Lodge (Conway 2005b, 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

The monument is recorded on the Ordnance Survey, County Antrim, 6-inch, Sheet 60, Plan 6, First Edition, 1832-3 as “**Carn Sheain Bhuidhe** (*Yellow John’s Carn*)”. This annotation is beside a small circular area of stones against the south side of the townland boundary. Running along the north side of the boundary is a strip of woodland about 120m wide and more than a kilometre long. A trigometrical point “Armstrong’s Hill” (altitude 1142 feet) is to the west in the townland of Ballyutoag – but this is lower than the spot heights taken through the woodland. From the cairn the boundary veers slightly to the north as it travels west. A solid line runs straight to the Ballyutoag boundary enclosing a small sliver of woodland between it and the Altigarron boundary. The cairn is not marked on twentieth century Ordnance Survey maps.

2.4 Archiving

Copies of this report have been deposited with the Environment and Heritage Service and the National Trust. All site records are archived with the National Trust, Northern Ireland Region.

2.5 Credits and Acknowledgements

The survey was led by Harry Welsh and other members of the survey team were Sapphire Mussen, William Dunlop, June Welsh, Ross Bailey, Michael Catney, George Rutherford, Anne MacDermott, and Ken Pullin. 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.

3. 2007 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

To the north of the townland boundary, the edge of the cairn was indistinct, as it had been heavily truncated by the construction of the boundary wall. Most of the cairn material has now gone, presumably removed in the mid-nineteenth century and now incorporated into the wall itself. The team also surveyed a presumed edge lying to the

south of the boundary bank and created a D-shaped plan. As the change in slope here is very gradual the demarcation of top-of-slope is subjective, as is the bottom, because the slope of the cairn merges with the natural fall of the hill.

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.

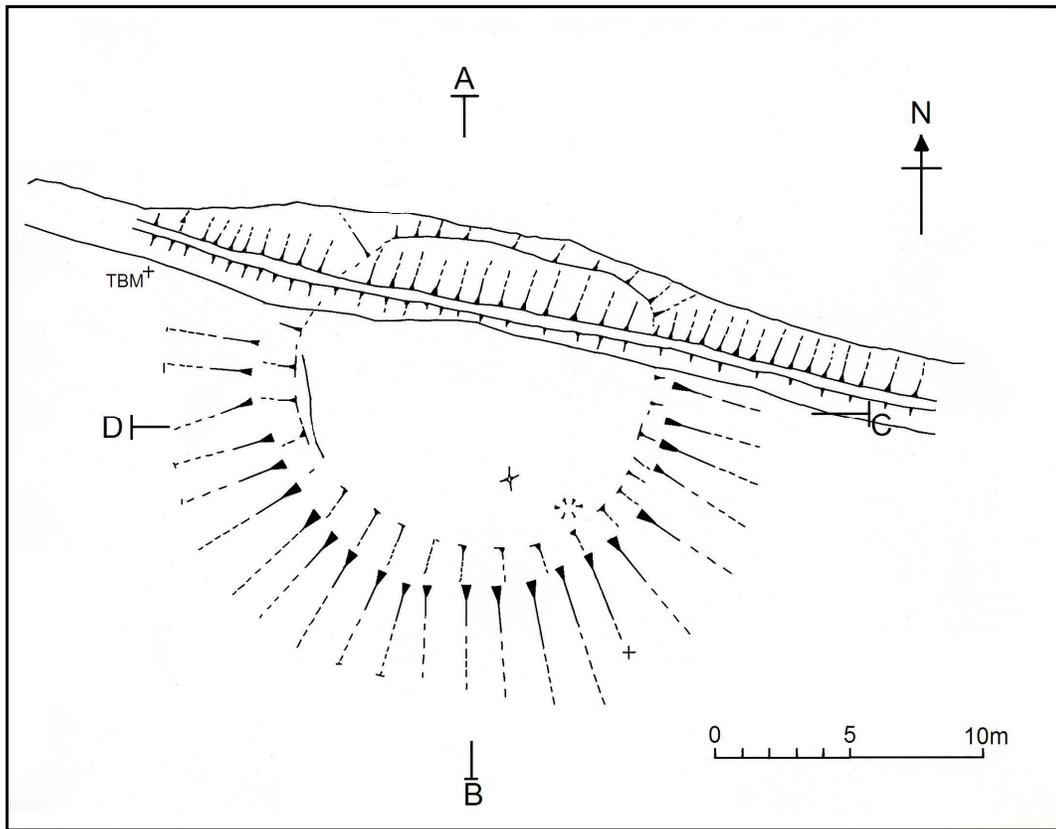


Figure 4: Plan of Yellow Jack's Cairn

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.

3.3 Photographic archive

A photographic record of the site was taken by using a *Nikon Coolpix S1* 5.1 megapixel digital camera and a photograph record sheet was employed, corresponding to photographs taken during the site survey. The archive has been compiled in jpeg format and saved to compact disc.

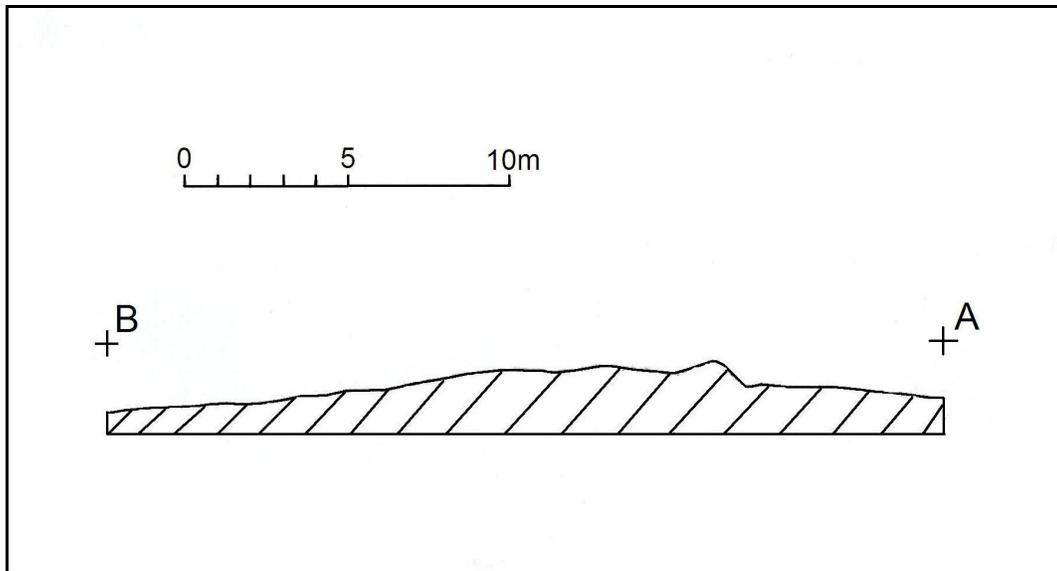


Figure 5: Profile A-B of Yellow Jack's Cairn

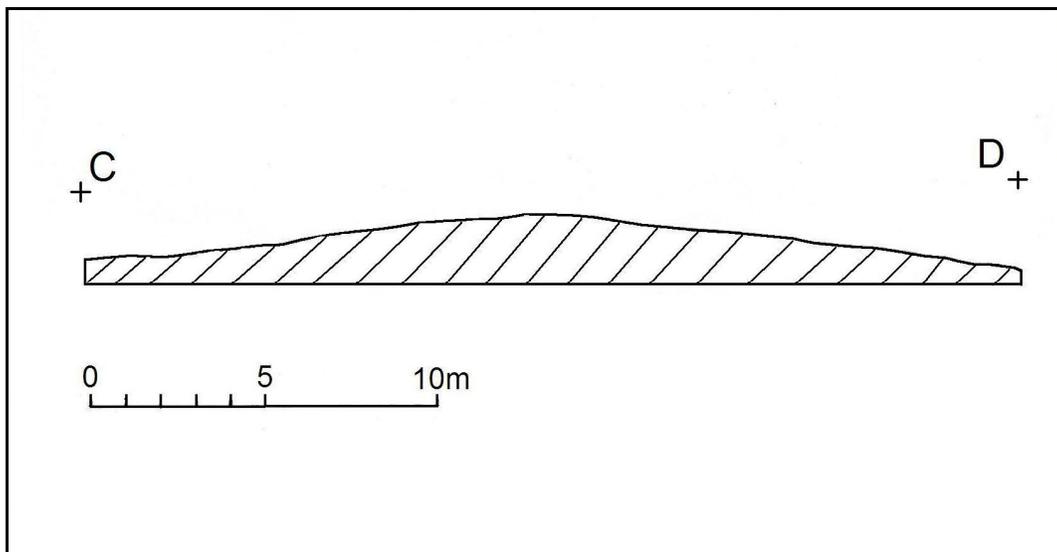


Figure 6: Profile C-D of Yellow Jack's Cairn

3.4 Completion of CAMSAR form

A Condition and Management Survey of the Archaeological Resource (CAMSAR) form was completed by the survey team on 25 August 2007 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.

3.5 Additional Observations

From the temporary bench mark (TBM, see figure 4) at a distance of 49 m and on a bearing of 245° is a flat-topped basalt boulder (1.2m x 1.0m) with circular dimples that

collect rain water. Two have diameters of 90 mm, another of 40 mm. (This boulder now shelters empty beer bottles). It is not clear if the cup-like hollows in this boulder are natural or artificial.

A hollow to the southeast containing several stones was photographed, but not surveyed (see figure 9).

4. Discussion

4.1 Food Vessel

A food vessel was reported as found here in 1840 and subsequently discussed and illustrated (figure 7 below) in several articles, including Patterson (1870, 506-7), Benn (1877, 58) and O'Lavery (1880, 341). Unfortunately, there was no account of the circumstances of the find, whether by deliberate excavation or chance discovery, but it is reasonable to assume that the cairn was dismantled about this time.



Figure 7: Illustration of Irish Bowl (after Patterson 1870, 507)

The bowl was described as being '5 inches high, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter at the broadest part, and 6 inches in diameter across the mouth. The bottom was plain' (Patterson 1870, 506).

4.2 Onomastic evidence

The staff of the Northern Ireland Placename Project have not researched the name nor know the identity of Jack. A local chieftain or hero with the epithet 'Yellow', perhaps an O'Neill, may have become associated with the cairn by burial at or near it. The *Annals of the Four Masters* mention a **Seaan Buidhe**, but his associations are with Tyrone, not Clondeboy. Altigarron may mean *Glen of the cairn* or *Glen of the horses*. Research would be needed to establish the balance of probability.



Figure 8: Yellow Jack's Cairn, looking north



Figure 9: Stone outcrop south-east of cairn, looking north

5. Recommendations for further work

Excavation may yield evidence concerning the removal of the cairn as well as its use in prehistory.

Its distance from established paths might be expected to afford sufficient protection. However, the presence of beer bottles signals a possible cause for concern, if they become a persistent feature.

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- O'Laverty, 1880, *An Historical Account of the Diocese of Down and Connor II*, 1880, reprint by Davidson Books, 1981.

CAMSAR record form

NISM No. ANT 060:015		Grid Reference J26907560		Townland Divis. ALTIGARRON	
Landuse Cat. 14	Structural Cat. 1	Site Type GARDEN	Protection NONE	Altitude 446M?	
Field Boundaries (e.g. contemporary/intrusive later/owners attitude towards monument i.e. dis/regard) HEAD BOUNDARY WITH ACCESS MONUMENT - SEE PLAN					
Site description/ notes Cairn covered by rough grass					
Landuse					
On Site	Present	% site	Around Site	Present	Comments
Previous 18	18	100	Previous		Rough grazing
Fencing Site Fenced? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N Condition (e.g. recent/broken) Type of fence Distance of fence from edge of monument					
Remains	Is the site visible? 1 2 3 4	Archaeological site? Y/N?	Survival 1 2 3 4 5 6	Condition 1 2 3 4 5 6	
Comments (e.g. human interference and management) PROBABLY SUBJECTED TO LIMITED EXCAVATION					
Surface Problems (e.g. ploughing, trampling, planting, scrub growth: localized/widespread) Grass covered, uneven townland boundary bank running across site					
Sub-Surface Problems (e.g. rabbits, badgers, subsidence: localized/widespread)					
Damage Sustained					
Past		Recent		Future Risk	
Category	Extent	Category	Extent	Category	Extent
33					
Observations Excavation in 192, Condition unretained (whirlpools now unknown)					
Photographs Original photographs taken (in situ)			Recommendations		
Map Evidence			Last Visit		
1st Ed CARN SHEAIN SHUIDHE Yellow John's Cairn	2nd Ed CARN SHEAIN SHUIDHE Yellow John's Cairn	3rd Ed	Date of last visit	Deteriorated since last visit? —	
Recorder Wm Dunlop Date 25/6/07					

PHOTOGRAPH RECORD FORM**Site.....Yellow Jack's Cairn, Divis****Date.....25 August 2007**

Film no.	B/W Print	Colour print	Colour slide	Digital image (m.pixels)
				5.1

Make and model of camera... *Nikon Coolpix S1*

Frame no	Direction viewed from	Details
DM001	N/a	Survey Group in action
DM002	N/a	Survey Group in action
DM003	North	Small raised feature on Cairn
DM004	North	Small depression in cairn
DM005	South	Field/ townland boundary wall
DM006	South	Stone outcrop south of cairn
DM007	South	Stone outcrop SE of cairn
DM008	South	cairn
DM009	West	cairn
DM010	West	Cairn showing truncation
DM011	North	Cairn – note curvature
DM012	East	Cairn – note curvature
DM013	East	Wall construction – possibly cairn material
DM014	West	Wall to east – note width
DM015	East	View of cairn