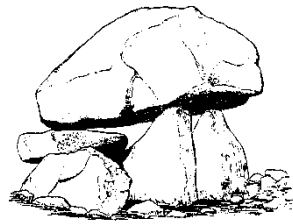


# ULSTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



**Survey Report: No. 12**



**Survey of Divis Cell Bay Enclosure  
UAS/08/02**

In association with



**Ian Gillespie**

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Ulster Archaeological Society

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## 1. Summary

### 1.1. Location

A site survey was undertaken of a circular stone structure at the National Trust's Divis and Black Mountain site in the townland of Divis, barony of Belfast Upper, parish of Shankill, County Antrim, Irish Grid reference J27411 74713.

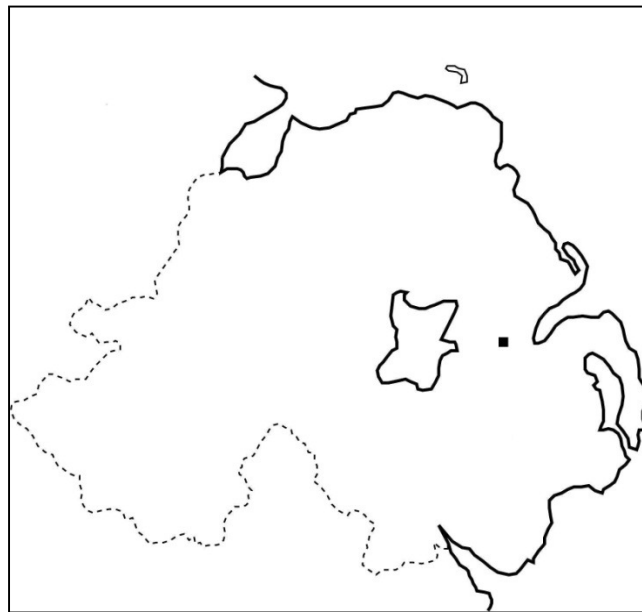


Figure 1: Location map for Divis

Divis (from Irish: *Duibhis/Dubh Ais* meaning "black back") is an area of sprawling moorland to the north-west of Belfast, Northern Ireland. It extends north to the Antrim plateau and shares its geology consisting of a basaltic cover underlain by limestone and lias clay. Between 1953 and 2004 it had been under the control of the Ministry of Defence and was used for military training. The property was acquired by the National Trust in November 2004 with funding support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Environment and Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment Northern Ireland.

The National Trust property of Divis and the Black Mountain comprises a landholding of some 559 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 2005).

This was the fifth in a series of planned surveys undertaken by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society at the Divis and Black Mountain site.



Illustration 1: Divis Mountain viewed from the south west

## 1.2. Aims

In order to enhance the archaeological record of this site, the aims of this survey were to produce an accurate plan drawing of the monument and carry out a photographic survey. This information was compiled into a report and submitted to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the National Trust.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Background

The survey of Divis Cell Bay Enclosure was carried out on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2008 by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society. This was the twelfth such survey carried out by the Society, whose survey programme has been running since April 2006. This programme 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 decision had been prompted by 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 had been 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.

### 2.2. Previous archaeological surveys

Prior to the National 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 (Rutherford 2009) and remains of a small slightly oval peat covered basalt cairn located just south of a pillar on Black Mountain.

Following an initial survey by the Trust's archaeologist, Malachy Conway in 2005, it became apparent that there were a number of hitherto unknown sites of archaeological interest on the property:

To date the archaeological field survey recording of Divis and Black Mountain has consisted of preliminary survey, identifying any visible landscape features or sites, recording these and locating their positions accurately. The results of this initial survey has already revealed some very interesting new discoveries, prompting a re-evaluation of the nature and significance of several sites within the property, not previously categorised in archaeological terms. Firstly there is what we knew or thought we knew through two stone walled enclosure sites, which have been marked as 'sheepfolds' on all editions of the Ordnance Survey maps from 1833. Close inspection of both sites revealed two separate and quite different circular enclosures. The first enclosure displayed opposing entranceways, was surrounded by a double stone wall and contained the foundation remains of a rectangular house, which typologically suggested that the site could date from between the later Early Christian period (700 AD – 1100 AD) to the end of later medieval period (c.1550 AD). The second enclosure survived as a curious cellular structure consisting of an outer double stone wall containing a series of three cells or rooms along its western inner wall circuit (Conway, M. 2005).

In an update Conway comments further on this cellular structure:

Circular Cellular Enclosure, designated 'Sheepfold'; located NE of Divis Lodge represented by circular stone walled enclosure containing 3 cells or bays along W side. Two entranceways, at S and NW (former appears original). Likely later prehistoric in date, could be later Bronze Age or Iron Age (links with Atlantic roundhouses of similar form in Scotland Bronze Age/Iron Age which developed into Brochs & Wheelhouses). This structure is so far unique in the Irish archaeological survey record (Conway, M. 2006).

A 3D High Definition Laser Scanning Survey of the cellular enclosure was carried out by Gridpoint Solutions Ltd. on behalf of the National Trust in March 2006.

### 2.3. Cartographic evidence

The cell bay structure does not appear on the 1832 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 6 inch County Ordnance Survey map, however it does appear on subsequent editions, usually referred to as a 'Sheepfold'.



Figure 2 Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> Ed 1832 © OSNI

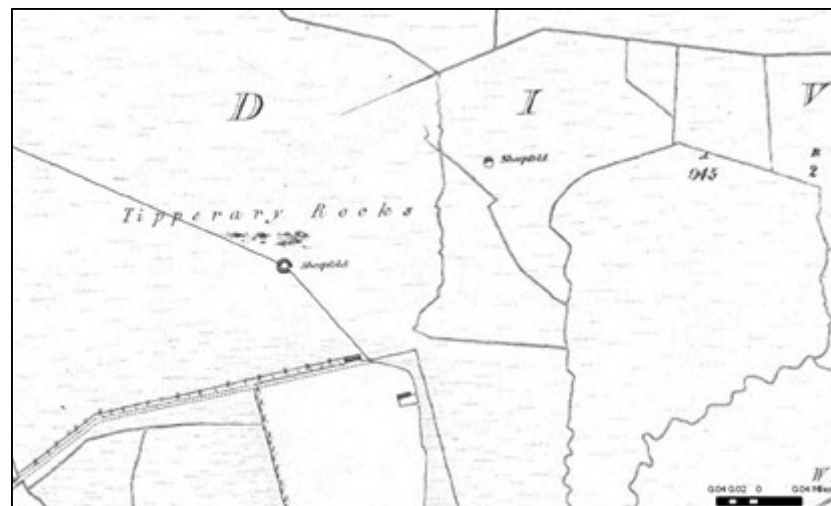


Figure 3 Ordnance Survey 2nd Ed 1857 © OSNI



Figure 4 Griffiths Valuation 1861

Interestingly, on both the 1857 OS map and Griffiths' 1861 map (probably based on the 1857 map) the structure is partially shaded – designating that it was partially roofed and therefore subject to valuation. Griffiths assigns it with the designation '1a' indicating that it is part of James Hunter's 706 acre holding on Divis Mountain.



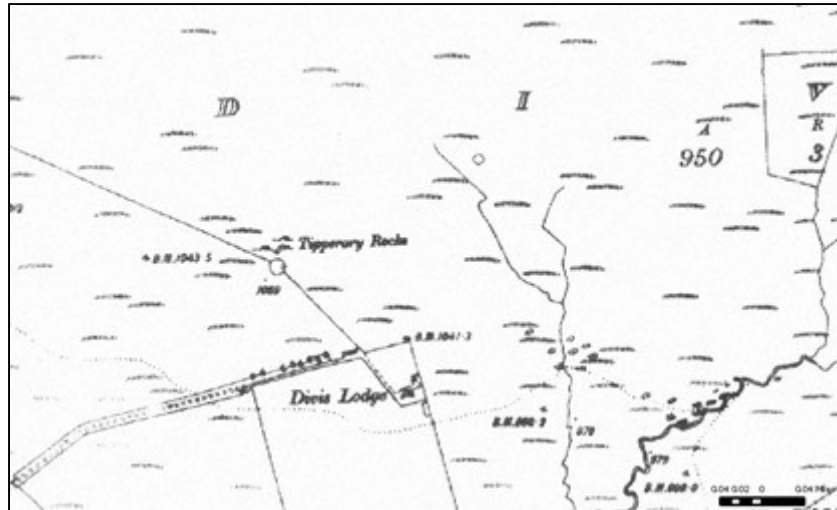


Figure 5 Ordnance Survey 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed 1901 © OSNI

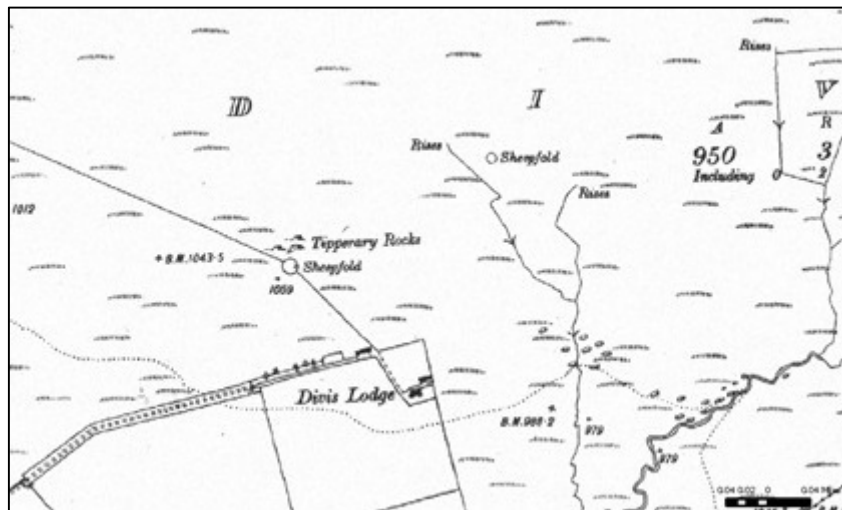


Figure 6 Ordnance Survey 4<sup>th</sup> Ed 1920 © OSNI



Figure 7 Ordnance Survey 5<sup>th</sup> Ed 1938 © OSNI

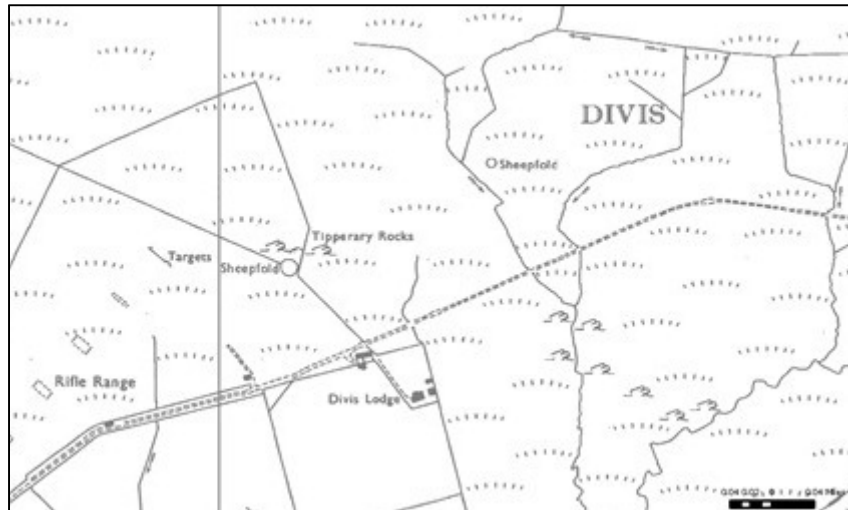


Figure 8 Ordnance Survey 6<sup>th</sup> Ed 1938 © OSNI

## 2.4. Archiving

Copies of this report have been deposited with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency: Built Heritage and the National Trust. All site records are temporarily archived with the Honorary Archivist of the Ulster Archaeological Society and are available on the UAS website.

## 2.5. Credits and acknowledgements

The survey was led by Ian Gillespie and the other members of the survey team were: Ken Best, Michael Catney, Billy Dunlop, Lee Gordon, Yvonne Griffiths, Julie Hanse, Anne MacDermott, Pat O'Neill, Barbara Russell, Kathy Russell and Ruth Thompson. 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. 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.

### 3.2. Production of a 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.

Sketch plans at 1:100 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. It was later decided to use the 2006 high definition laser scan for the current report as this was of much higher quality.

### 3.2.1 Site Plan

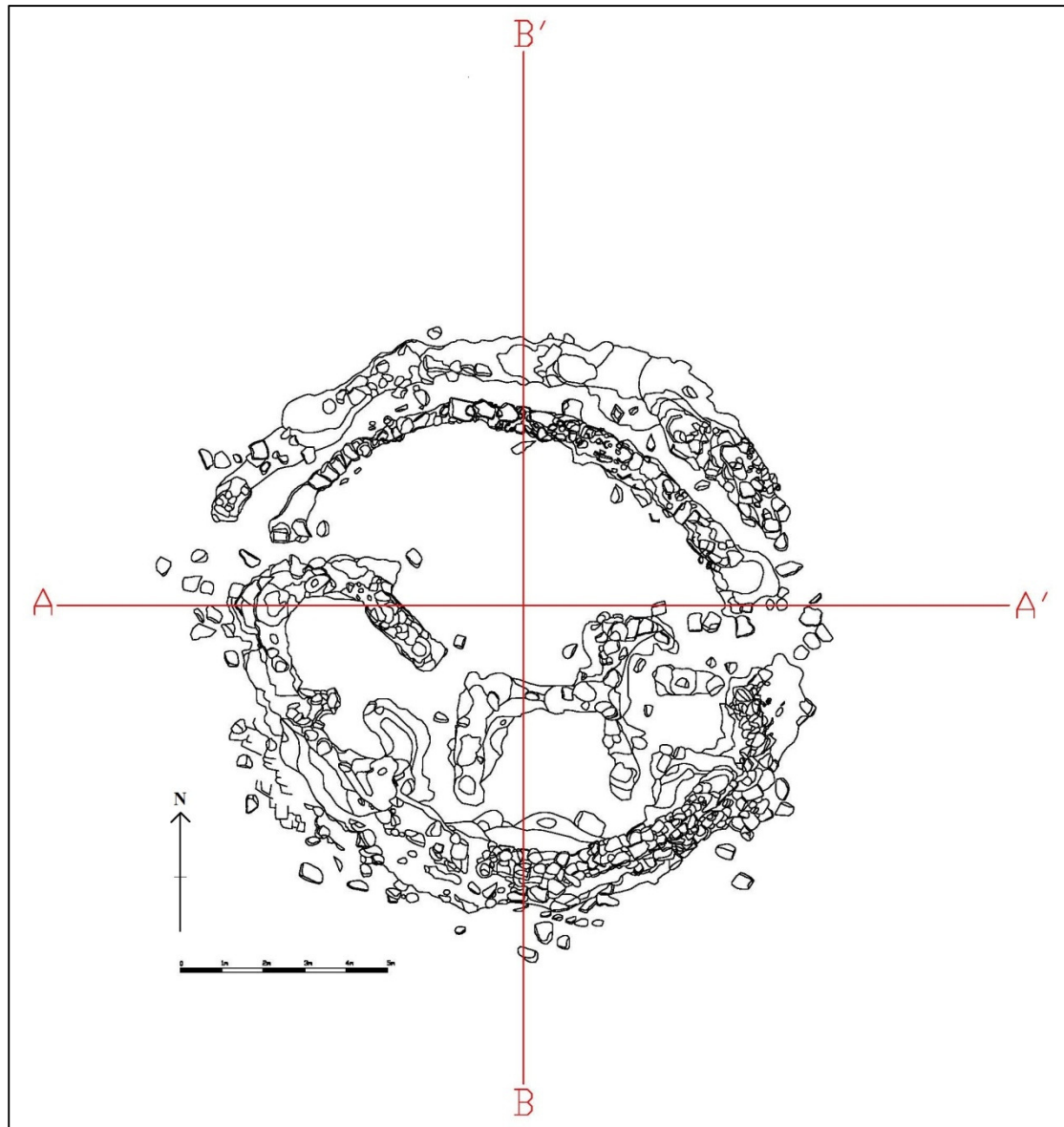


Fig 9 Site Plan © Gridpoint Solutions Ltd

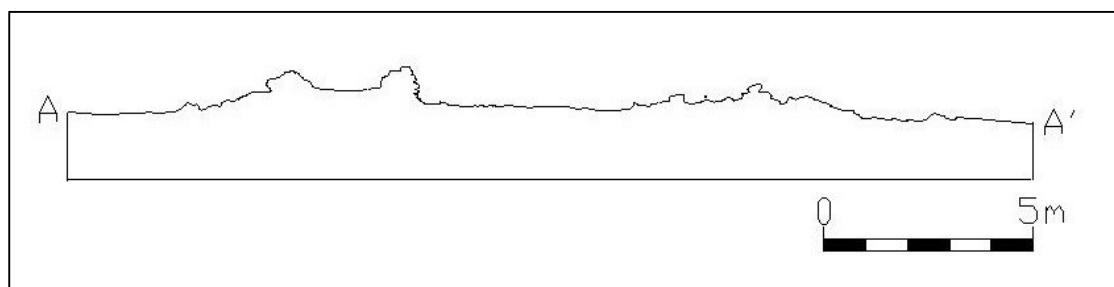


Fig10 Profile A-A' © Gridpoint Solutions Ltd

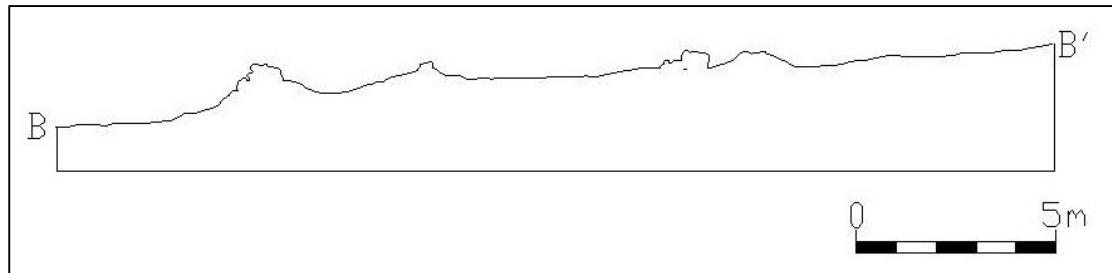


Fig 11 Profile B-B' © Gridpoint Solutions Ltd

### 3.3. Monument description

The monument is a sub circular dry stone wall enclosure measuring 13 meters north-south and 15 metres east-west. It is constructed on a platform on the south-western slopes of Divis Mountain, 332 metres above sea level. Internal walls divide the southern aspect of the enclosure into three or four sub-rectangular cells. There is an apparent entrance at the north west. The northerly wall has a double skin construction with a narrow void or passageway between the outer and inner walls.

The monument is located 30 metres east of a small stream.

### 3.4. Photographic archive

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

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Archaeological landscape

The Cell Bay structure sits in a landscape rich in archaeological features. It is located 150m NNW and overlooks Divis Settlement Site (UAS 09/01) which comprises a collection of circular hut platforms located along a tributary of the Collin River. It is 350m ENE of a more substantial circular enclosure or Cashel situated at Tipperary Rocks.

A combination of rising population and improving climate towards the end of the Neolithic period made upland areas more amenable to permanent settlement. There is much to suggest that there was a substantial community inhabiting this landscape in prehistory.



Fig 12 Nearby Archaeological features

#### 4.2 The Atlantic Roundhouse

Conway has remarked that some of the unique features of this enclosure – double wall structure and internal cells – resemble features found in Scottish Atlantic Roundhouses.

Armit (1990; 1992) devised the rather unwieldy phrase ‘complex Atlantic roundhouse’ to cover the range of galleried structures, including developed broch towers and less typologically-correct galleried duns which formed the core of his class of monumental, stone-built structures of circular or sub-circular plan, which characterised the Atlantic north and west. In the Northern Isles these buildings could have developed from the ungalleried, or ‘simple’ (though still substantially-built) roundhouse tradition exemplified by Quanterness or Calf of Eday (Fig. 13).

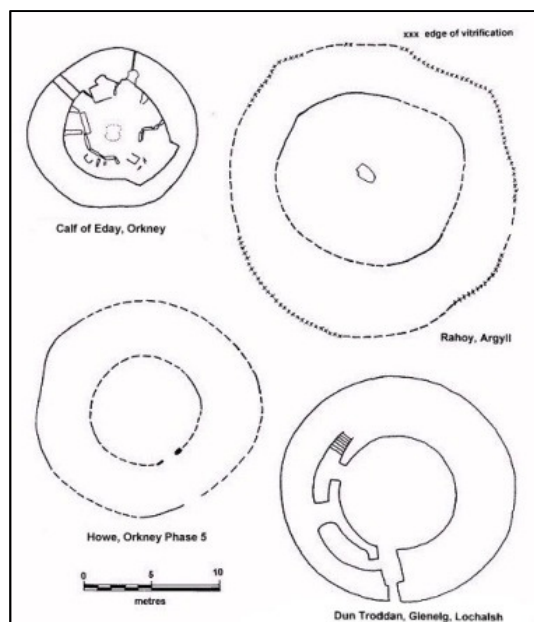
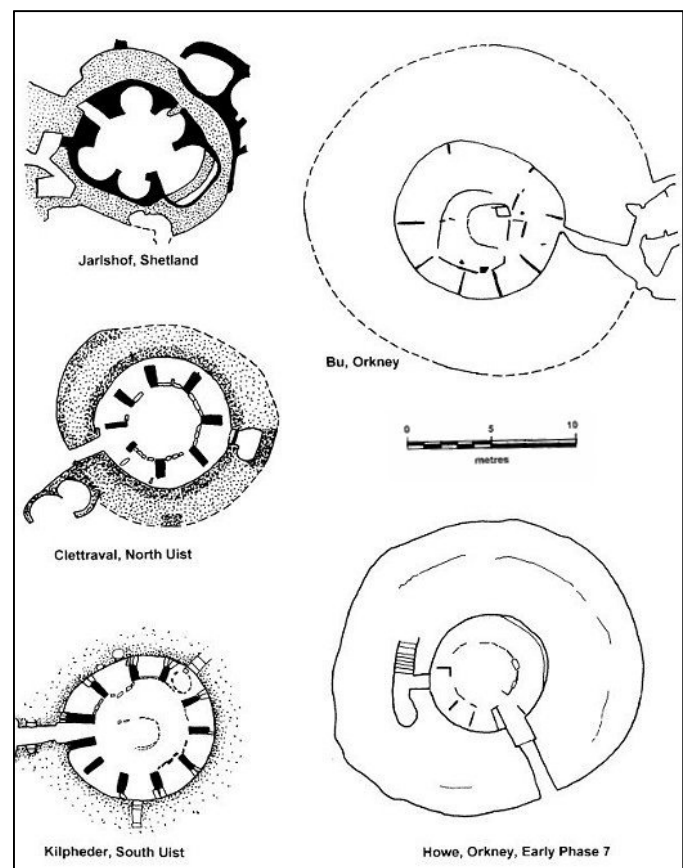


Fig. 13 Atlantic roundhouses, simple and complex: Calf of Eday, Orkney (after RCAHMS, 1946), Howe, Orkney, phase 5 (after Smith, 1994), Rahoy, Argyll (after Childe and Thorneycroft, 1938), Dun Troddan, Glenelg, Lochalsh (after Curle, 1921).

Atlantic roundhouses are dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Armit (1998) suggests that these roundhouses were the standard dwellings in these islands during the Iron Age, and that each landholding family owned one.

After the demise of the Atlantic roundhouses, monumental roundhouse-building had one last gasp, the wheelhouse, named after its distinctive floor plan. The nature and precise date of the transition between the two house forms is a matter of debate, but wheelhouses were certainly being built in the 1st centuries BC and AD, and probably originated rather earlier. There seem to have been as many wheelhouses as there had been Atlantic roundhouses, and it is possible that in some cases there was a direct replacement of one form by the other (Armit 1998).

Fig. 14 Structures with radial division of internal space: Jarlishof, Shetland ( after Hamilton, 1956), Cletraval, North Uist ( after Scott, 1948), Kilphedir, South Uist ( after Lethbridge, 1952) Bu, Orkney ( after Hedges, 1987), Howe, Orkney, Early Phase 7 ( after Smith, 1994) (Drawings D.W.Harding)



Atlantic roundhouses and wheelhouses appear to have been the progenitor of the monumental Scottish Broch – double walled substantial dry stone buildings with intra-mural staircases and rooms.

The Divis enclosure is unusual in that it exhibits some of the features of the Atlantic roundhouse/wheelhouse structures, but on a much smaller scale.

The structure does not appear on the 1831 OS map however it does appear, as a roofed structure, on both the 1857 OS and 1861 Griffith's maps suggesting that it may be a much more recent structure.

## 5. Recommendation for further work

The site is at risk from damage due to grazing animals, and should be protected by fencing.

Excavation is required to determine the date and purpose of the structure.

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## Appendices

Appendix 1. Photographic Record Form;

*Nikon Coolpix S1* 5.1 megapixel digital camera

<b>Frame no</b>	<b>Direction viewed from</b>	<b>Details</b>
DSC2323	E	Looking W
DSC0718	N	Looking S
DSC0705	NW	Looking SE
DSC2322	W	Looking E
DSC0714	E	Double wall looking W
DSC0697	NE	Looking SW
DSC0712	E	Looking W
DSC0689	N	Looking E



## Appendix 2. Photographs

