

# ULSTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



**Survey Report: No. 25**

**Divis Farm, Belfast  
UAS/10/03**



**In association with**



**JANNA McDONALD & MICHAEL CATNEY**

© Ulster Archaeological Society  
First published 2013

Ulster Archaeological Society  
c/o School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology  
The Queen's University of Belfast  
Belfast  
BT7 1NN

## CONTENTS

---

	Page
1. Summary	1
2. Credits and acknowledgements	2
3. Introduction	2
4. Survey	7
5. Discussion	11
6. Recommendations for further work.	18
Bibliography	19
Appendix 1:- Photographic Record Form and sample photographs	20

## LIST OF FIGURES

---

Figures:-	Page
1. Survey in progress, UAS Team at Divis Farm	2
2. Location maps for Divis Farm, Belfast	3
3. Section of Pattison Map 1820	5
4. 1st, 2nd , 3rd and 4th Ordnance Surveys:- OS - 6 -1- 60 - 1 to 4	6
5. Divis Farm – Survey - Plan Drawing	7
6. Magnetic Susceptibility Te <sup>st</sup> - Divis Farm	8
7. Divis Farm possible outline 1857	9
8. Griffith Valuation Table for <i>Divis</i> published 1862	12
9. Griffith Valuation Map 1857 - extract	13
10. Griffith Valuation Map 1857 <i>Divis</i>	14
11. suggested revision to Griffith Valuation Map – <i>M.T. Catney 2012</i>	14
12. Mud House – Magilligan, Co. Derry	15
13. Wattle and Daub House, Co. Kildare	15
14. 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Population of Belfast	16
15. Lazybed formation – Divis 2010	17

## 1. Summary

This report looks at a site belonging to the National Trust in the Divis and Blackmountain area of the Belfast Hills, North of Belfast which was surveyed on 26 June 2010. The site was known to have been the location of a farm dwelling in the early part of the 19th century which had stood until the beginning of the 20th century.

From Ordnance Survey NI Historical Mapping and the mid 19th century 2nd Valuation of Ireland publications of what became known as the Griffith Valuation a good deal of information was accessed to give with some degree of accuracy the location and to some extent the changes which the building seems to have undergone during the period under discussion. A description of land on which it stood and information regarding who the occupants were at various points in time is discussed.

The survey observations looked at the broader landscape surrounding the farm with a view to placing in context the building and the particular location within the Divis area.

In the process of examining the 1857 Griffith Valuation Rating Table and Related Map it became clear that the Valuation Map did not properly represent the Rating Table. A possible solution is put forward which would clear up the difference and in the process provide information regarding the tenants on the sections of land and the areas involved. As a consequence, it became possible to name the holder of *House Site 1 - Blackmountain, Belfast* ( UAS Report: UAS/8/01) which thus far had remained unknown.

A second farm building is identified as being worthy of further investigation and it is proposed that it should be considered in future surveys in this part of the DIVIS Townland.

## 2 Credits and Acknowledgements

The survey was led by Harry Welsh and other members of the survey team were the late William Dunlop, Ian Gillespie, Anne MacDermott, Ken Pullin, George Rutherford, Gillian Eadie, June Welsh, Lee Gordon, Pat O'Neill, Michael Catney, Chris Ayers and Janna McDonald. The Ulster Archaeological Society is particularly grateful to Mr Malachy Conway, Archaeologist of the National Trust, who worked closely with the survey team in choosing the site and facilitating access and was in attendance during the survey. We would also like to thank Dermot McCann the National Trust Divis Warden for his invaluable help not only for assisting in access to the site but also in providing a wealth of site and local area knowledge.

## 3 Introduction

### 3.1 Objective

In order to enhance the archaeological record of this site the Ulster Archaeological Society (UAS) carried out a survey the aims of which were to produce accurate plan and section drawings of the monument and carry out a photographic survey. This report will be submitted to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the National Trust. The report will also be added to the archives held by the Ulster Archaeological Society.



Figure 1. Survey in progress, UAS team at Divis Farm

### 3.2 Location

The surveyed site, is situated in the Belfast Hills at the side of the Divis Road (Grid Ref:- J26360 74530), and can be seen on *Google Earth™* at 54 36 11.18N 6 02 40.07W.

The farm can be reached by taking the Belfast A55 Outer Ring Road onto the B38 Upper Springfield Road (near the top of the Monagh By-pass) and from there onto the Divis Road where a National Trust Wardens Office and car park is situated at No. 12 Divis Road. From the car park the Divis Farm ruin is some 450 metres north on the right of the Divis Road. It is approached on foot through a gate opposite the lodge and car park (figure 2).

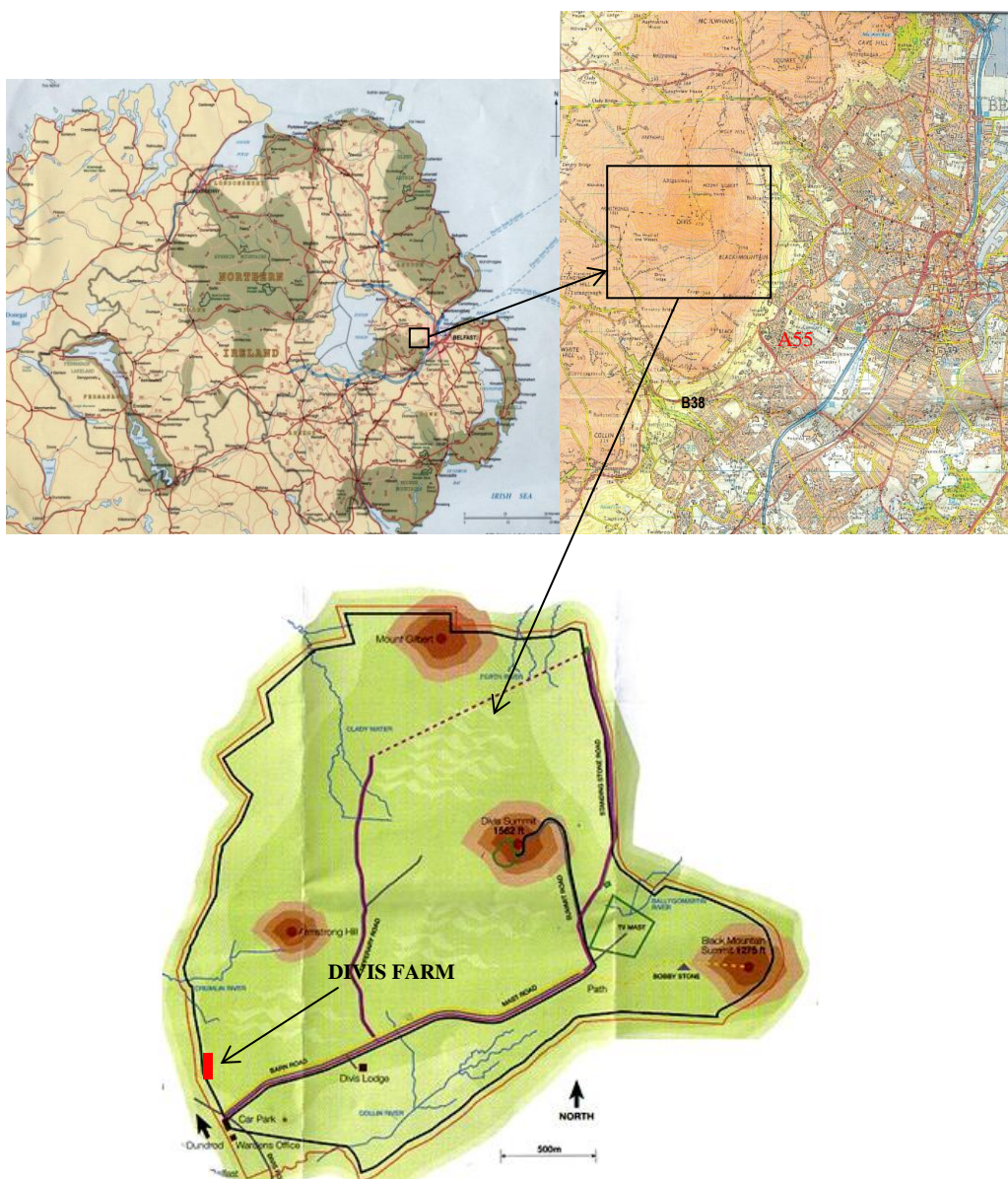


Figure 2. Location maps, Divis Farm

### 3.3 Background

The survey of the Divis Farm, Belfast was carried out on Saturday 26 June 2010. 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 Mr Malachy Conway, an Archaeologist with 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 and this site, amongst others, was identified as being worthy of investigation.

In November 2004 the National Trust completed the acquisition of Divis Mountain and most of the Black Mountain including its summit. For the previous 50 years the area was under the control of the Ministry of Defence (Northern Ireland) and therefore a restricted area. When the area was released, the archaeological features which were known to exist became available for closer inspection and a fuller exploration of the area was then possible. The Ulster Archaeological Society survey of the Divis Farm, Belfast is part of a programme to record in detail the many sites that have since been revealed.

### 3.4 Previous archaeological surveys

As far as is known, Divis Farm had not previously been surveyed prior to this survey on the 26 June 2010. When the Trust acquired the property of Divis, only 5 archaeological sites had previously been known to exist within its boundaries. This included two burial cairns, *Carn Sheaan Bhuidhe* or 'Yellow Jack's cairn' [SMR ANT 060:015], 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 Belfast [SMR ANT 060:061]. 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 (Conway 2005a, 1). With regard to Belfast specifically, though not all of Black Mt is contained within the acquisition, in summary it was found that it had a cairn on the summit, a souterrain on the northern slope, remains of a field system and enclosure to the NE, flint working sites on the E slope and two occupation sites on the S slope (Conway 2004, 1). Following a more detailed survey of the Divis and Belfast property, it was found that Dispersed hut sites along the south side of Belfast attest to man's presence here in the Bronze Age as does the discovery of round burial cairns, one of which can be seen near the summit of Divis (Conway 2005b, 1).

### 3.5 Cartographic evidence.

For the purposes of this report the cartographic evidence taken consists of the examination of a James Crow map produced for Lord Donegall in 1767 -70 (PRONI, D835/1/3/2 & 28), a "A *Map of Belfast Mountains belonging to William Hunter Esq*" produced by Thomas Pattison in 1820 (PRONI, D3566/1) and four Ordnance Survey maps, namely, the 1st Ordnance Survey(OS) of Ireland 6" County Map of Antrim dated 1831- 1832, the 2nd Edition OS



Survey 6" County Map 1857, the 3rd Edition OS Survey 6" County Map 1901 and 4th Edition OS Survey 6" County Map 1921.

The 1767-70 map by James Crow shows only two buildings in the general Divis area one of which is most likely that of Divis Lodge (J727218, 874323) and the other is located close to where *The Big River* crosses from Divis to Hannahstown townland at Irish Grid reference J27167, 73988 and very likely the building labelled "1b" as shown in the Griffith Valuation Map of 1857 and held by George Reavey at that time.. The Divis Road would appear not to have been in existence when this area was surveyed between the years 1767 and 1770.

The Pattison 1820 map (figure 3) however, clearly shows a building close to the Divis Farm area at plot 9 with the occupant being "*The Widow O'Harra*". Also of note in this map is that the adjoining plot 7 names the occupant to be one *John O'Harra*, very likely a son or other close relative. It is within this plot 7 that the building under survey in this report later appeared in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ordnance Survey of Ireland Map of the area in 1832. The area of Plots 7 and 9 in the Pattison map, gives an outline similar to that shown for Tenements 3 and 4 in the Griffith Survey of 1857 (figures 9 and 10 below). Whereas the Pattison map measurements are in *Irish Acres*, the Griffith Valuation Table of 1862 is given in Statute or Imperial measure, (1 Irish A = 1.6198 Statute A). From this, it is worth noting that the area held by *John O'Harra – Plot 7 (1820)* of 14A 2R 8P(Irish), which equates to 23A 2R 10.89P (Statute), can be said to represent the 23A 2R 10P in lease to *Elizabeth O'Hara* in 1857.

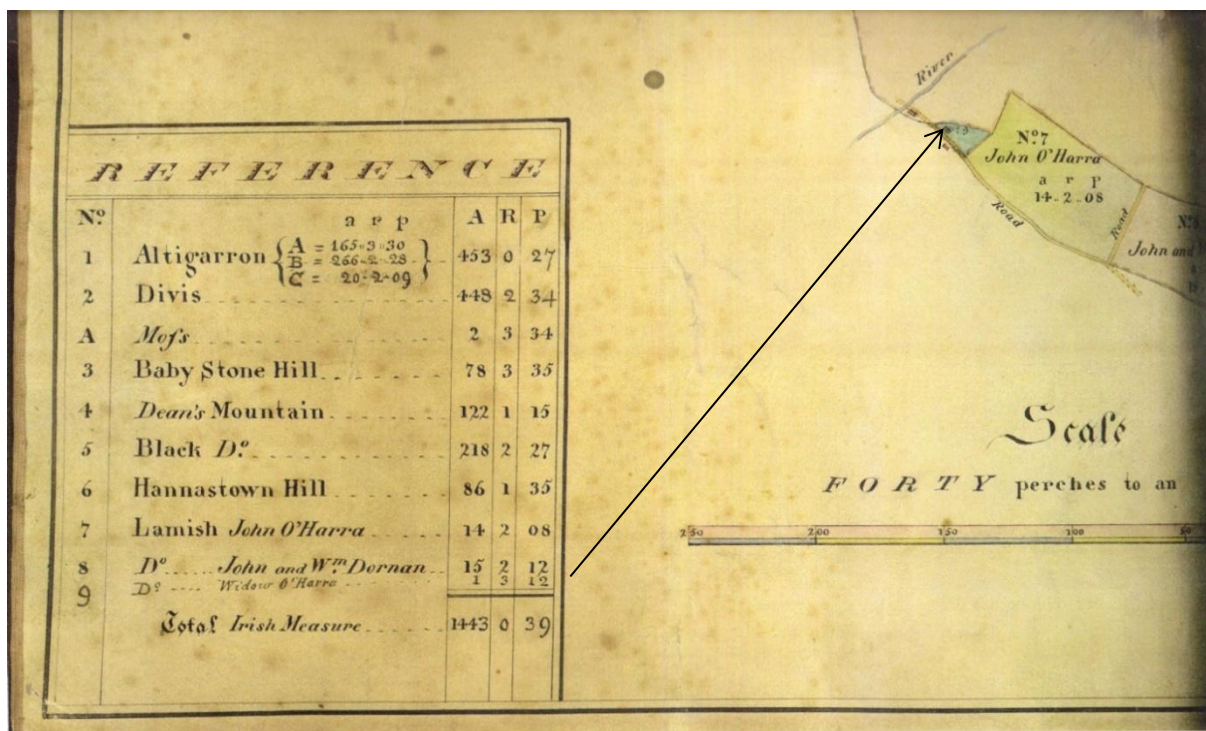


Figure 3:- section of Thomas Pattison Map of 1820 ( PRONI:- D3566/1)

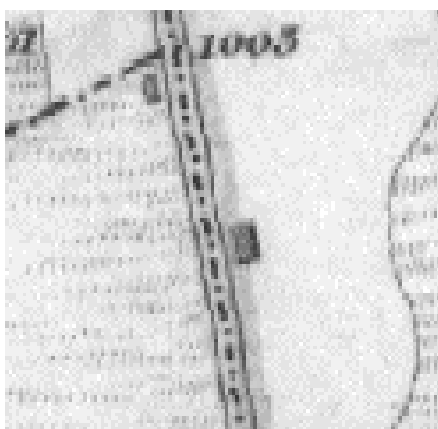


Fig. 4a OS - 6 - 1 - 60 - 1 (1831-32)

1832 shows the Divis Farm building to be a simple rectangle

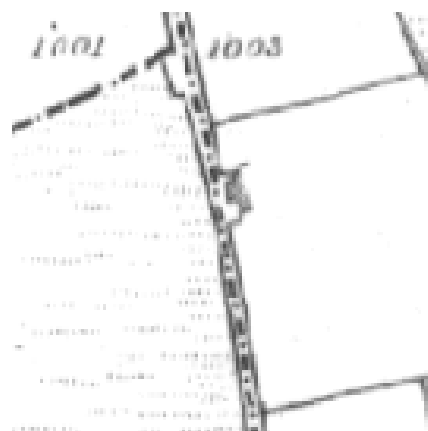


Fig. 4b OS - 6 - 1 - 60 - 2 (1857)

1857:- shows the rectangle to have been lengthened and a section added towards Divis Road.

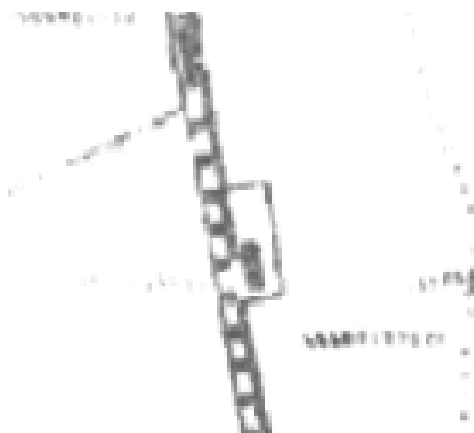


Fig. 4c OS - 6 - 1 - 60 - 3 (1901)

1901:- shows the 1857 rectangle, with the section towards the road having been removed. A yard boundary has been added

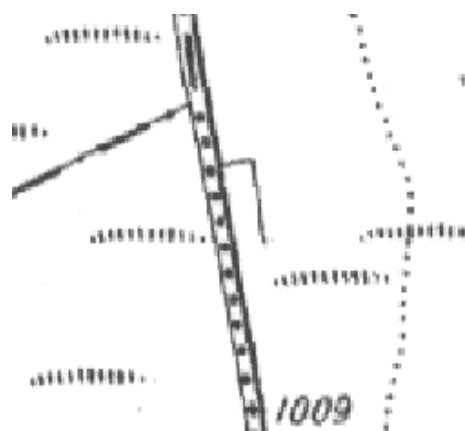


Fig.4d OS - 6 - 1 - 60 - 4 (1920 -31)

1920:- indicates that the building has been removed entirely and only half the yard boundary is shown.

Fig 4 Ordnance Survey, 6", Co. Antrim, Map Tile 60 (1832 to 1931) - OSNI

The farm buildings shown shaded in the 1831-32, 1857 and 1901 surveys would suggest that the building in each case was habitable and therefore be of a Rateable Value.

### 3.6 Archiving

Copies of this report have been deposited with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the National Trust. All site records have been archived by the National Trust at Rowallane, Saintfield, County Down. A copy is also available on the UAS website.

## 4. Survey

### 4.1 Method

It was decided that the survey would take the form of the production of plan and profile drawings, accompanied by a photographic survey.

### 4.2 Production of plan and profile drawings

On the day of the survey the area in which the farm building was known to have stood did not present a significant indication of outline of the building consequently an estimate was made from the rise and fall of what was believed to have been the moss covered remnants of the house foundations.

Measurements of the building outline were obtained by using the society's Leica Sprinter 100 electronic measuring device. 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 backed up on a field notebook for future reference. The Field Plans were later transferred to a computer-based format for printing, see figure 5.

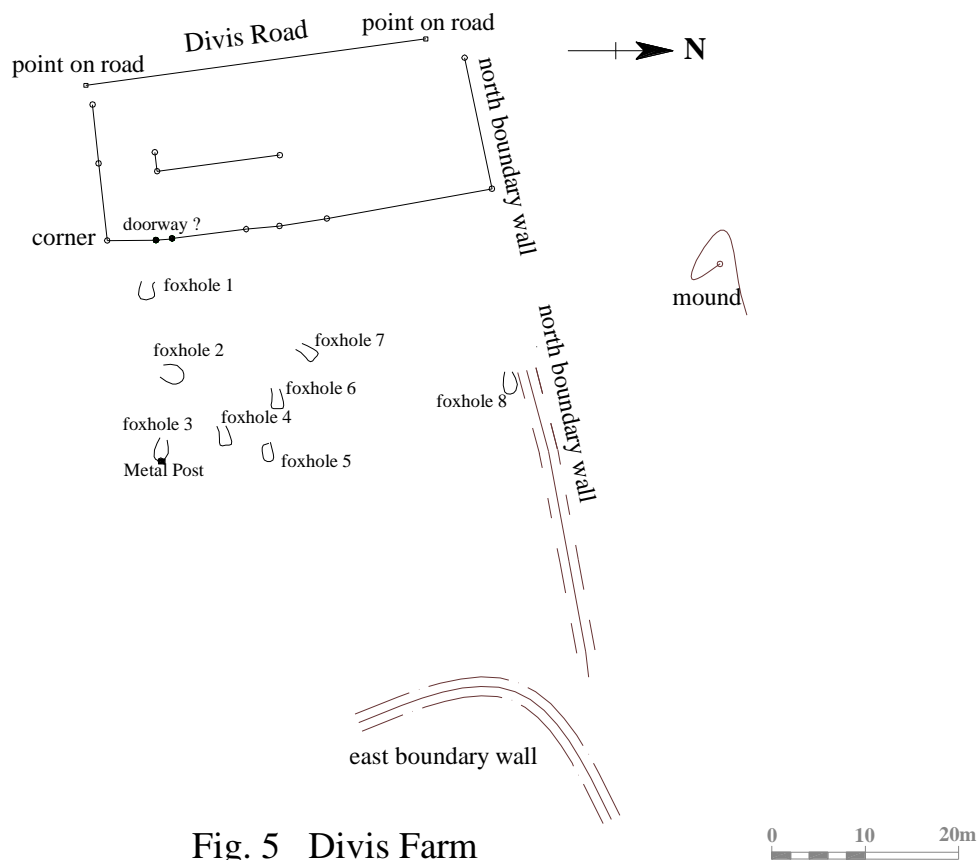


Fig. 5 Divis Farm

In an attempt to confirm the presence of the building foundation stonework a Magnetic Susceptibility sweep using a Bartington MS2 meter was made of the building area the results of which can be seen in figure 6.

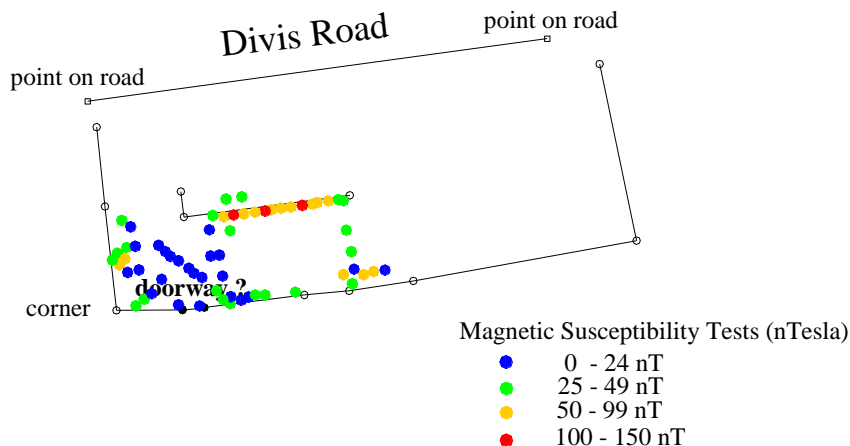


Fig. 6 Divis Farm Magnetic Susceptibility Tests

Low readings would indicate soil material whilst the higher reading would indicate magnetic enhanced material such as rocks or a location which has experienced heat from, for example, a fireplace.

Setting the Magnetic Susceptibility measurements against the Survey points and using the 1857 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS 6<sup>th</sup> County Map referred to above a possible outline of the building as it might have been in 1857 was drawn up and presented as an overlay as shown in figure 7.

The survey identified 8 foxholes and a Mound in close proximity to the building under survey and within the land area of the farm as shown in figure 9. These foxholes or "*hole in the ground used by a soldier for protection*" (OED) and the Mound were very likely created by the military for weapons training purposes during their period of ownership of the land as mentioned earlier. The foxholes, in this case measuring on average 2.5m long x 1.2m wide, were created by turning over soil to form a low level ridge and a shallow pit to provide a firing position for at least one soldier with a degree of protection and concealment. A view of the mound and a typical foxhole is included in the photographic samples in Appendix 1. The orientation of the foxholes is such as to direct outgoing fire away from the nearby Divis Road toward the east into hill slopes within the property. The location and orientation of these features are as shown in figure 5.

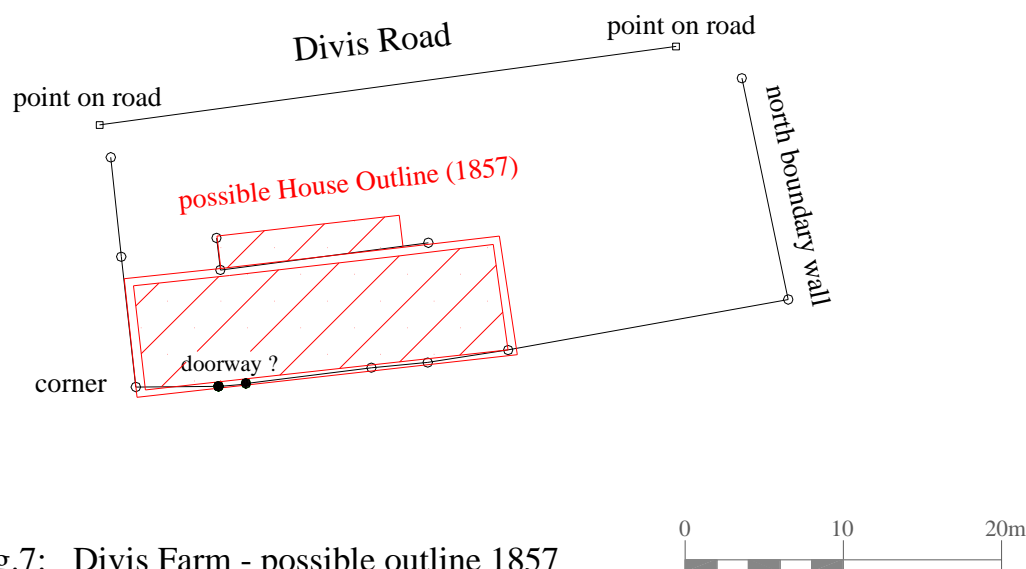


Fig.7: Divis Farm - possible outline 1857

#### 4.3 Site Observations :- Billy Dunlop's Observations:-

“At Divis with the UAS Field Survey Group on Saturday 26 June, Ken Pullin, George Rutherford and I were asked by the group leader, Harry Welsh, to have a look at the field systems in the immediate neighbourhood of the main survey site at Grid Ref:- J26360 74530 and record anything of interest. The area was largely of roughish grazing ground with remnants of lazy beds which presumably dated to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, having been used for the cultivation of potatoes. The area we were concerned with was a strip of land c50-100 yards in breadth between the south-north road and a bog running roughly in the same direction, also similar land on the rising ground on the other side of the bog. Probably there was good reason for the locations of the individual plots and the orientations of the beds, but to the inexperienced eye it all looked rather haphazard.

The venture was somewhat experimental and we decided that a reasonable project would be to find out the average width of the individual lazy beds in various plots. This would be achieved by measuring across ten conjoined beds in each plot and taking the average width of the beds. It was agreed that Ken and George would do the tape work and that I would do the recording. We did not attempt to estimate the area of each set of beds and in retrospect this was probably a mistake, although sometimes it was difficult to be sure where a particular plot of lazy beds began and ended. Survival of the lazy bed systems varied greatly, some petering out presumably due to cattle-trampling and other agents of erosion. In a few systems the orientation of the beds was noted.

Our main points of reference were the south-north road and the farmhouse fairly close to the main survey site. The farmhouse and the main survey site were to the east of the road, with the bog downslope further east. A start was made at the lazy bed system to the

*south of the farmhouse, between the road and the bog. The beds were orientated east-west and the ten beds measured averaged out at 1.68 metres in width per bed. Further south, beyond the field boundary, the beds in another system averaged 1.57 metres. Back north and to the west of the farmhouse, just past the main survey site, a system of beds running west-east down the slope towards the bog was measured, the average width of the beds coming out at 1.73 metres. Another system NNE of the house had beds averaging 1.76 metres in width for the ten beds measured.*

*A bit further NNE was a series of well-delineated and upstanding beds running downslope to the bog. These were photographed by the Survey Group's "official photographer", Pat O'Neill. Pat also displayed an aerial photograph from Google in which this particular system of lazy beds was distinguishable. The average width of the beds was 1.75 metres. On further NNE, at the bottom of the south-north slope, just above the bog edge and near where the road dips down to the crossing place over the bog, another lazy bed system was investigated, the average width of the beds being calculated at 1.84 metres.*

*Although obviously the major crossing place, this was not an easy or dry passage, but our party managed to pick our way across on stones with only the odd foot up to the ankle in bogwater. On the east bank was a group of large stones which were inspected as to the possibility of their being a megalithic structure of human origin. From one angle it looked like a megalith but on closer examination it was decided that the stones represented a natural outcrop that had been split by climatic activity some time in the distant past.*

*The lazy bed systems on this side of the bog were much the same as on the other side. A well-defined series running NNE-SSW, with some boulders interrupting the regularity, produced another average width of 1.84 metres for the beds measured. Directly adjoining but less well defined a series of beds running at right angles to the previous system provided an average width of 1.64 metres. The ground rose rapidly here to a plateau with good view over the bog and across to the south west and the farmhouse and main survey site. A large field, paced out to 70 metres by 40 metres, contained a large boulder, but also well-defined beds running NE-SW and averaging in width 1.89 metres. There were two other large fields here, but only one was investigated. The lazy beds in that measured were orientated roughly NE, were well defined and produced an average width of 19.1 metres, noticeably wider than the other beds that we had inspected.*

*Rather than by going back down to the "official" crossing place, we chose to make our way across the bog towards the farmhouse and the main survey site. This was achieved with a certain amount of feet-wetting.*

*Although it wasn't included in our exploration, the south-north road that ran past the main site interested me. Country roads often had beginnings going back far into antiquity, originating in trackways and with twists and turns relating to now-disappeared topographical features. As roads often served as land boundaries, changes in the routing would almost always be resisted, even during upgrading. My first thought on this particular road was that it was a ridgeway road that could go back to the Bronze Age. The right-angle (or left-angle) turn at the bottom of the hill beside the bog crossing*

*puzzled me. It didn't look right. After a bit of thought I came up with the idea that this was not originally one road, but two roads derived from trackways leading from different directions to the bog crossing. I hadn't thought that out at the time and no attempt was made to identify a road or roads leading from the east side of the crossing, but I have a feeling that we did come across one or two banks running up the hill that were more substantial than field divisions. I am not suggesting that we go back to Divis to seek to clarify this and I hope no one is offended that I decided to put my thoughts on the record.*

*I think this little walk-about investigation was well worthwhile and I recommend that it be made a feature, perhaps more formalised, on future surveys – provided there is sufficient manpower (or womanpower) available. Probably it would be pushing it a bit to describe such an investigation as an exercise in environmental or landscape archaeology, but we could decide to do it just for fun.*

*Billy Dunlop*”

#### 4.4 Photographic archive.

A comprehensive photographic record was made of the Divis Farm Site on 26 June 2010 using two cameras, namely, a Ricoh Caplio 600G Wide 8 megapixel digital camera and a NIKON D700 12.1 megapixel digital camera. Photographic Record Sheets, corresponding to the set of photographs taken by each camera, were produced to catalogue the pictures taken. The images were, in the first instance, transferred in jpeg format to a Digital Compact Disk (CD) and later a copy, again in jpeg format, was placed on a UAS Portable Hard drive to ensure security of preservation. Appendix 1 below lists a representative selection of the photographs taken during the survey/

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Divis Farm Occupancy

In 1767 James Crow carried out a survey of Lord Donegall's estates and in the process produced a drawing of an estate in the Divis, Ballyutoag, Altagaron, Blackmountain and Hannahstown area of the Belfast Hills. This map shows only two houses in what we now deem to be in the townland of Divis. One house would appear to be that of Divis Lodge and the other situated where the *The Big River* crosses the Divis / Hannahstown townland border as mentioned in 3.5 above. There is no record of a building in the area of Divis Farm in the 1767 to 1770 survey

As shown in figure 3 the Thomas Pattison map of 1820 indicated that *The Widow O'Harra, John O'Harra and John and W<sup>m</sup> Dornan* were resident in a property which the map stated belonged to *W<sup>m</sup> Hunter Esq.* Whether W<sup>m</sup> Hunter owned the land at that point in time was factual or not it was not until 1823 that William Hunter was seen to take legal possession of the Divis and Blackmountain area by virtue of the lease taken out as follows.

In 1823, William Hunter leased part of the townlands of Altigarron, and Divis which included the Blackmountain, Babbystone Hill and Hannahstown Hill amounting to 1430 acres in total, from the Marquis of Donegall for a rent of £65 – 5s – 0d. This was in William Hunter's name, his heirs and assigns and three named lives, who were, John Charley, Mary Charley and Anne Jane Charley children of William Charley of Seymour Hill, Lisburn. The term was for ever. The deed and map of this transaction, currently in the

keeping of the Public Records of Northern Ireland (PRONI, 1), do not give any detail of buildings or names of persons or families within the leased area. This lease was renewed in 1844 (PRONI, 2) but again names of persons or families occupying the estate are not given. The name Babbystone given in the lease of 1823 became known as the *Bobby Stone* from the 4<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Survey (1920–32) onwards. It was not recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup> OS Map of 1832 and was named the *Baby Stone* in the 2nd (1857) and 3rd (1901) OS Maps.

The records contained in The Primary Valuation of Ireland (1848 to 1864), commonly known as the Griffith Valuation, gives the details of who occupied the various parts of the estate leased by the Hunter family and what land and buildings they held when the valuation took place. By the time the rating valuation for Divis Townland was carried out in 1857 the principle lessor was James Hunter, presumably an heir to William Hunter referred to above. The Griffith Valuation produced a set of rating tables for each townland in Ireland which gives details of the tenement areas, lessor, lessee, the area of land involved and if buildings of commercial value such as a house or office, the latter being any useable structure be it a barn or mill or workshop etc..

A map showing the outline of each tenement plot was produced to accompany the rating table (*Ask about Ireland*). (Dunlop and Catney, 2009)

2

## VALUATION OF TENEMENTS.

## PARISH OF SHANKILL.

No. and Letters of Reference to Map.	Names.		Description of Tenement.	Area.	Rateable Annual Valuation.		Total Annual Valuation of Rateable Property.	
	Townlands and Occupiers.	Immediate Lessors.			Land.	Buildings.		
	DIVIS. (Ord. S. 60.)							
1	a	James Hunter, . . .	In fee, . . .	Caretaker's ho. offs. & ld.	768 1 20	186 10 0	6 0 0	191 10 0
—	b	George Reavy, . . .	James Hunter, . . .	House,	—	—	1 5 0	1 5 0
—	c	Margaret Manning, . . .	Free, . . .	House and garden, . . .	0 1 20	0 5 0	0 5 0	0 10 0
2		Thomas Deane, . . .	James Hunter, . . .	House, offices, and land,	10 2 20	5 15 0	0 15 0	6 10 0
3		John Gilmore, . . .	Same, . . .	Land,	142 3 0	14 0 0	—	14 0 0
4		Elizabeth O'Hara, . . .	Same, . . .	House and land,	23 2 10	5 10 0	0 10 0	6 0 0
				Total, . . .	945 2 30	212 0 0	7 15 0	219 15 0

Fig . 8 Griffith's Valuation Table for *Divis* - published in 1862 (*Ask About Ireland*)



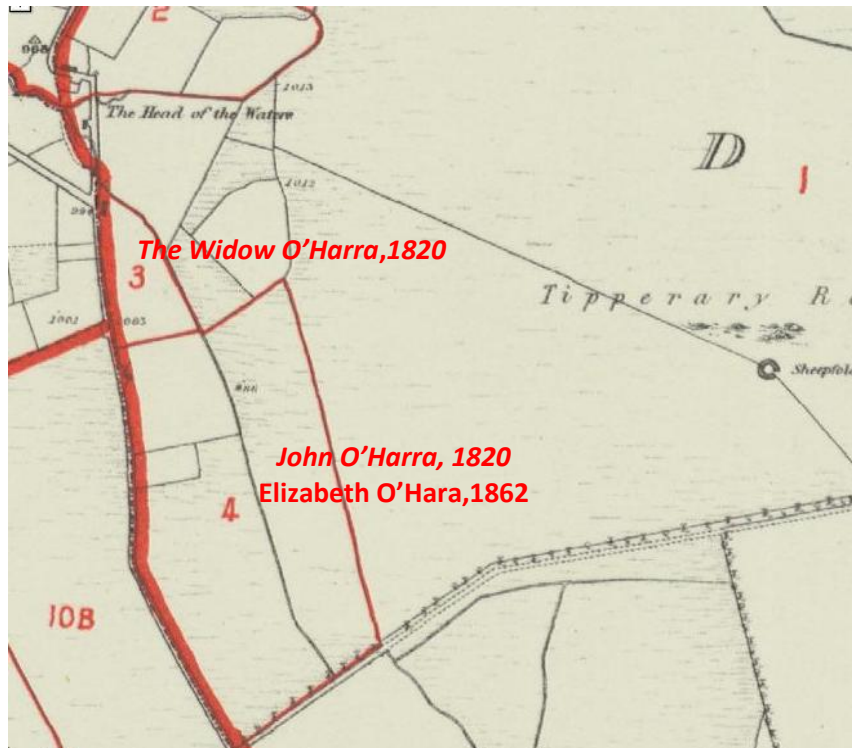


Fig. 9 Griffith Valuation Map 1857 – extract

The above extract from the Valuation Map, figure 9, shows that Tenement 4 was sublet by James Hunter to Elizabeth O'Hara, with an acreage of 23Acres 2 Rood and 10 Perch.

However, comparing the Rating Table of 1862 (fig. 8) with the 1857 Valuation Map extract (fig 9) there is an anomaly in that, Tenement 3 in the Rating Table held by John Gilmore is over 142 acres whereas map area 3 outlined in figure 9 is only a fraction of the area given for the adjoining Tenement 4 with a recorded area of just over 23Acres.

Examining the Valuation Map for the whole of the Divis Townland in figure 10 below reveals yet another anomaly insofar as that the Rating Table has only four divisions of land whereas the Townland Map shows five distinct areas. Farm 5 is not referred to in the Rating Table and also the House and Garden held by Margaret Manning is not shown on the map. Given that the Rating Table accounts for the entire Divis Townland area of 945A – 2R – 30P then the 1857 Griffith Map is clearly not suitable for use with the rating Table.

This would imply that there was a change of occupancy between the time of the 2nd Survey of 1857 and the declaration of the Taxation Rates which were published in 1862.

The principle change seems to have been that the O'Hara family gave up the lease on the house and 2A 3R 28P of land seen to have been held by *The Widow O'Harra* in 1820 outlined as Tenement 3 in the Valuation Map, figure 10. This in turn reduced the number of tenement areas from 5 to 4. Area 5 would then have been designated Tenement number 3 in the changed situation. A proposed revision to the 1857 Map which would more closely represent the Valuation Table is shown in figure 11 below.

Using the revised map of figure 11 this would place John Gilmore at Farm 3 in the new map with an area of the 142A- 3R – 0P which he was deemed to have held and been rated against. Regarding Margaret Manning, it is possible that Margaret Manning could have taken the house vacated by The Widow O’Harra together with 1Rood 20Perch (approximately 39m x 39m) of land as a garden area. If she had, then she would have been resident at house 1c in the Hunter estate, figure 11.

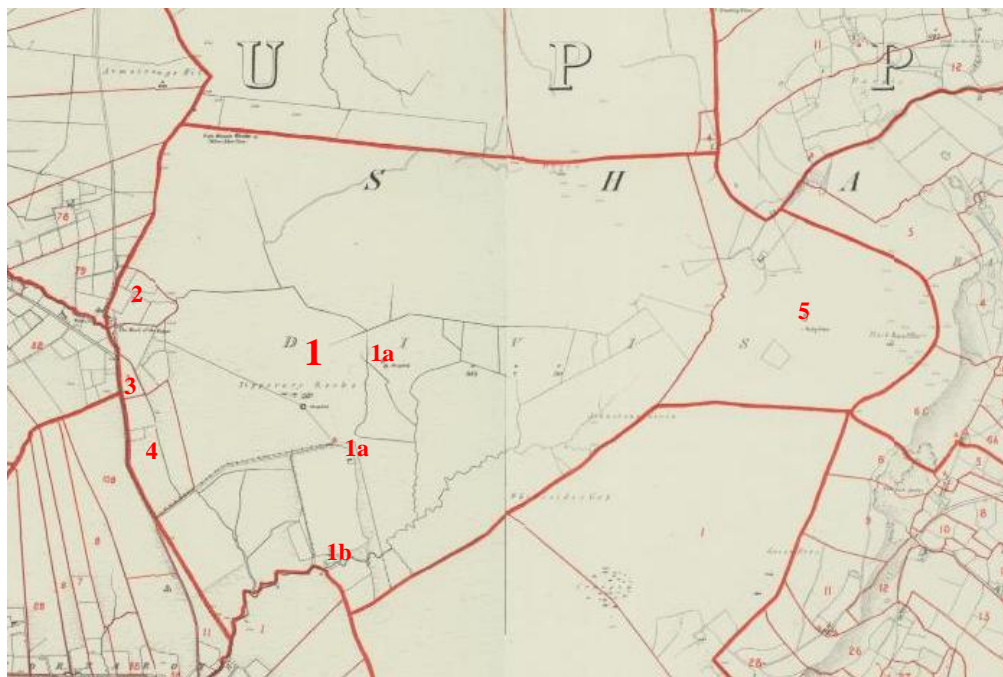


Figure 10 Griffith Valuation Map 1857 – *Divis (Ask About Ireland)*

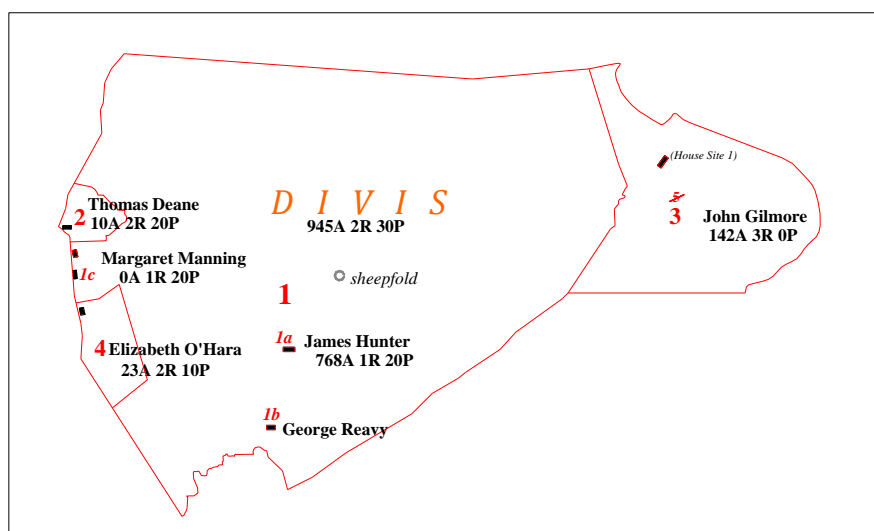


Figure 11. suggested revision to Griffith Valuation Map of 1857

Again, by applying the revision it is now possible to identify that *House Site 1*, which was the subject of UAS Report No 11, 2009, (Dunlop, Catney), was occupied by John Gilmore who held Tenement 3 in 1862, at the date of publication of the Griffith Rating Table. Thus far it has not been possible to name the holder of *House Site 1*.

As mentioned above the Hunter Family held the Divis Townland “*In Fee*” or perhaps “*In Fee Simple*” (OED), which means that they were secure for an unlimited amount time on the payment of the annual rent of £65. Given that the Griffith Valuation of 1862 put the Rateable Value at £212 then this would suggest that they would have been secure, in terms of the agreement, “*For Ever*”. With the O’Hara family having un-interrupted rental agreement with the Hunter’s spanning four decades from 1820 to 1860 and the fact that Margaret Manning held her small house and garden in *Free* or *Freehold* a tenure which is defined as in “*Permanent and absolute tenure of land or property*” (OED) then a pattern of a stable and enduring tenancy existed in Divis townland for a considerable part of the 19th century.

When considering the population of Divis during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century then those listed in the Griffith’s Rating table may well not have been the only dwellers at any point in time. Given that Hunter, Gilmore and Elizabeth O’Hara had sizable properties to manage, then it would not be unreasonable to suppose that they would have engaged a labour force some of whom may have been temporary resident in what was known as *conacre* terms. . *Conacre* – “*In Irish land-system: The letting by a tenant, for the season, of small portions of land ready ploughed and prepared for crops or grazing.*” (OED). These would be landless labourers who were known as *cottiers* who would have been there on a *cottier tenure*, that is in Ireland - *the letting of land in small portions direct to the labourers, at a rent fixed by competition* (OED). Whereas some would have put down small single room stone cabins, in remote harsh environments many resorted to the construction of Mud Huts which are described in Kevin Danaher’s book “*Ireland’s Vernacular Achitecture*” examples of which are shown in figures 12 and 13 below.



Fig. 12 Mud House, Magilligan Co.Derry, Danaher, p 64



Fig. 13 Wattle & Daub House, Co. Kildare, Danaher, p68

In figure 13, Danaher points out that, “one of the upright posts in this example was a used railway sleeper, proving that it must have been constructed no earlier than the middle of the nineteenth century”.

It has to be stated that, the presence of these dwellers is by no means certain. Indeed, it is very rare for them to leave behind much by way of a surface expression of their ever having been there at all. However, it cannot be entirely ruled out that they added to the numbers who occupied this mountain during the Mid-Victorian era. The discovery of the remains of this type of house would add to the depth of understanding and appreciation of what life was like at that time in the Divis Townland.

By the time of the 1901 Census of Ireland, the number of householders on Divis was reduced to two. These were, Robert Darling a Gamekeeper and Robert Milligan (Herdsman) and his family. It can be taken from the census that Robert Darling occupied Divis Lodge but there is insufficient detail to say where the Milligans lived. It could have been in one of three locations, viz., in houses located at 1b, 3 or 4 in figure 10 above.

In the 1911 Census, John Smith (Shepherd) his wife Margaret and their two daughters, Sarah Jane(2) and the baby Margaret(7 months) were the only family present in the townland. They lived in Divis Lodge.

## 5.2 Economy.

The population of Belfast in 1801 was 19,000 and rose steadily though each decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to a figure of 349,180 in 1901(Bardon, 68, 101 and 125)

With Belfast sitting at the foot of the Divis mountain then whatever fresh produce the farms on Divis could provide they would have had a steady and readymade market in the constantly expanding city.

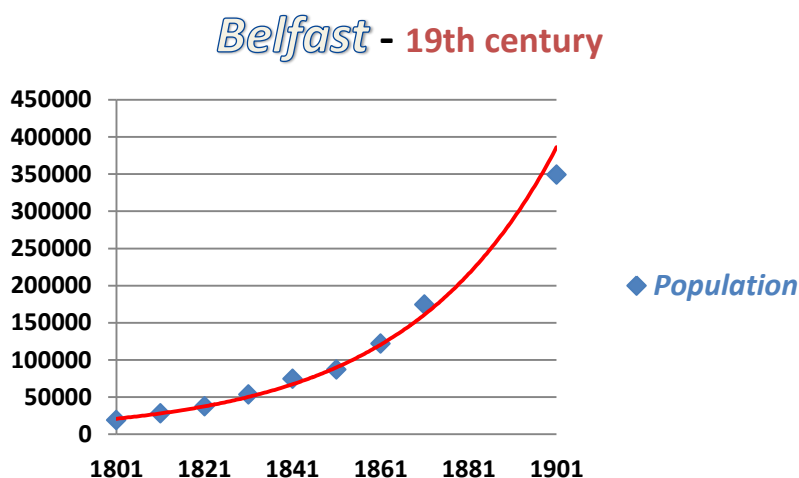


Figure 14: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Population of Belfast(after Bardon,68,101,125)

The 1832 OS map shows the Divis Road in the West of the townland connecting to Hannahstown, Ballymurphy and Woodvale and with lanes and roads from the *Forkings* in the East of Divis townland connecting to Ballygormartin, Wolfhill and Ligoneil all of which portrayed a good road system connecting Divis and Blackmountain to the North of Belfast to facilitate any trade there might have been.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Townland Survey of Ireland surveyed the Divis area in 1835. The brief and only note made in the *Townland Name Book* for *Divis* was as follows – “*All mountain and mountain pasture, with a small bog fit for fuel*” (PRONI: MIC6A/15)

The survey “*Valuator*”, John Kelly, on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1835 split the townland into 11 sections for assessment. There is no map showing which piece of land related to which section. In his assessment he valued the land ranging from *3d* (¼ of a shilling) *per acre* to *12 shillings per acre* with descriptions such as *Green Pasture, Coarse Green Pasture, Coarse Green Mountain Pasture, Green Kind Pasture, Arable Land and Bog* and valued the 946A 1R 30P at £189 18s 1d being reduced by the *Final Committee* to £179 18s 1d. (PRONI: VAL/1/B/128 A). This would have made Hunters Rental fixed in perpetuity at £65 in 1823 a seemingly viable proposition.

As well as cattle and sheep on the mountain and turf fuel from the bog, a good deal of the land was set to producing potatoes in *Lazybed Plots*.

On close examination, the extent of lazybed formations in Divis and Blackmountain area can be observed on *Google™ Earth* starting at the Divis Farm plot of land at - 54 36 8.45N 6 02 34.83W (see figure 10 above) and expanding the scan N, S and Eastwards. More distinct arrays can be seen in Cardtown, Laois, Ireland at 53 02 19.71N 7 35 29.28W.

The viability of Lazybed farming in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century is exemplified by W Steuart Trench, Land Agent in Ireland to Marquis of Lansdowne, Marquis of Bath and Lord Digby, when in 1845, at Cardtown in Queens County (Laois), he planted 100 acres of mountain track in lazybeds which he stated increased the value of the land from 1 shilling per acre to a permanent value of £1 per acre, a 20 fold increase.



Figure 15. *Lazybed* formation - Divis 2010

The method he used, and describes in some detail, won for him a Silver and then Gold Medal Award from the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland at the time in recognition of his work, namely, “*For the best report on the largest quantity of waste land reclaimed in Ireland*”. He regularly employed not less than 200 labourers for some years at these works - digging, levelling, liming, and the heavy work of sowing and digging out again enormous quantities of potatoes. Tragically, as he painfully explains, that on the morning of 1st August 1846 he discovered that the much reported “*Potato Rot*” (Potato Blight: *Phytophthora infestans*) had struck his property destroying the entire crop. (Trench, 98, 100).

However, the disaster of the Potato Blight and the Famine years 1845 to 1852 did not suppress James Hunter’s *Divis* property too greatly since as the figures above show his rateable value increased from £179 – 18s – 1d in 1835 to £210 – 0s – 0d in 1862 consequently it would appear the he remained in a fairly secure position for a long number of years..

## **6 Recommendations for further work**

The 1st and 2nd Ordnance Surveys of the land rented by O’Harra/O’Hara family recorded two buildings within the boundary of the property, one of which is the subject of this report and the other, some 160m North of the Divis Farm House ( 54 36 15.75N 6 02 40.54W ) was shown to have been occupied by *The Widow O’Harra* in Pattison’s 1820 map (fig.3, above). This house may have been, together with a small piece of garden land, taken by Margaret Manning in Freehold between 1857 and 1862. As far as is known the second house site to the North of Divis Farm has not so far been surveyed. To add to the record of this area in Divis, consideration should be given to locating and surveying this second house.

## Bibliography:-

Bardon, J, 1995, “*BELFAST, An Illustrated History*”, Belfast

Conway, M. 2004. *Divis Mountain acquisition*. National Trust.

Conway, M. 2005a. *Divis and Belfast, an archaeological update*. National Trust.

Conway, M. 2005b. *Divis & the Belfast; An Historic Landscape*. National Trust.

Dunlop and Catney, 2009, *House Site 1, Black Mountain, Belfast, UAS/08/01* Ulster Archaeological Society

OED 1 *Cottier*, Definition given in *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, last visited 28 Nov 2012

OED 2 *Conacre* Definition given in *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, last visited 28 Nov 2012

OSNI. Ordnance Survey:- Land and Property Services NI - Map Store - Historical Mapping

PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND (PRONI)

D835/1/3/2 & 28 :- James Crow map produced for Lord Donegall in 1767 -70

D3566/1:- “*A Map of Belfast Mountains belonging to William Hunter Esq, Thomas Pattison, 1820*”

MIC6A/15:- Ordnance Survey Name Books – Co. Antrim, Shankill Parish

PRONI 1, *Marquis of Donegall to Wm. Hunter Dunmurry, Co. Antrim*. October 1823, Lease, T662/98

PRONI 2, *Marquis of Donegall to Wm. Hunter Dunmurry, Co. Antrim*. October 1844., Lease Renewal, T662/16

VAL/1/B/128 A:- Ordnance Survey 1st Valuation Field Book – Barony of Belfast Upper, Parish of Shankill

Trench, W. Steuart, 1869, “*Realities of Irish Life*”, London

Website:-

*Ask about Ireland*:-

<http://askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml>

[accessed: 24 January 2013] (Information required for each level in the search field is given in paragraph 2.2 Location, above).

Griffith Valuations. The original pages of the Rating Table and Map for *DIVIS* can be viewed in the “*Place Name Search*” category in the free to viewed in the above educational website

## Appendix 1

### PHOTOGRAPH RECORD FORM

**Site**            *Divis Farm*

**Date**            *26 June 2010*

**Make and model of camera:- NIKON D700 - 12.1 megapixel digital camera**

<b>Frame no</b>	<b>Direction viewed from</b>	<b>Details</b>
DSC1229	South	View of Farm Site
DSC1230	South East	View of Farm Site
DSC1231	North East	View of Farm Site
DSC1233	West	View of Farm Site
DSC1234	North	View of Farm Site
DSC1239	North West	Survey in progress
DSC5450	South West	Lazybeds
DSC5451	West	Lazybeds
DSC5452	North West	Mound within Divis Farm
DSC5436	South	Typical Foxhole on Divis Farm





**DSC1229 Farm Site, looking North**



**DSC1230 Farm Site, looking N/W**



**DSC1231:- Farm Site, looking S/W**



**DSC1233:- Farm Site, looking East**



**DSC1234:- Farm Site, looking South**



**DSC1239:- Survey in progress**



**DSC5450:- Lazybeds, looking N/E**



**DSC5451:- Lazybeds, looking East**



**DCS 5452 Mound within Divis Farm, looking N/W**



**DSC 5436 Typical Foxhole on Divis Farm, looking South**