

ULSTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Survey Report: No. 14

**Survey of Tervillin Court Tomb
County Antrim
UAS/08/04**



In association with



ANNE MACDERMOTT, JANEY SPROULE and JUNE WELSH

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

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1. Summary

1.1 Location

A site survey was undertaken at Tervillin Court Tomb, the local name of which is *Cloghafadd* or 'Long Stone', in the county of Antrim. It is in the Townland of Tervillin, Parish of Culfeightrin and the Barony of Cary. The site, close to Fair Head, north-east Antrim, is on National Trust property. This megalithic tomb has a SMR number of ANT 005:016 and is scheduled under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. It is located at Irish Grid Reference D 1822 4176 at an altitude of 200m+ OD. This survey was the fourth in a series of planned surveys undertaken by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society during 2008.



Figure 1: Tervillin Court Tomb, looking north-east

1.2 Aims

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



Figure 2: Tervillin Court Tomb, looking south-west

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

The survey of Tervillin Court Tomb was undertaken on Saturday 26th July 2008. 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 items of survey equipment were purchased. During discussions with 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 this court tomb was subsequently chosen to be the fourteenth of these.

2.2 Previous archaeological surveys

The monument has received attention in the past from Estyn Evans, when a sketch was made of the site. He also puts on record that the monument was said to have been blasted by an inquisitive miner in 1890!



Figure 3: Sketch of Tervillin Court Tomb (after Evans, c.1935)

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency have also organised field visits for inspection purposes. Four such visits are on record (SM7 File), including one by Clare Foley in 1978, one in 1986 by Brian Williams, who suggested the presence of three chambers and yet another in 1993 by M. McAuley, who also referred to three chambers.

2.3 Cartographic Evidence



Figure 4: Ordnance Survey, First Edition County Series Sheet 5 (part of) 1834

The megalithic tomb is designated 'Burying Place' on the first edition OS 6-inch map in 1834. As a result of this designation, Reeves (1847, 283 No.6) lists this site with his 'killeens' but notes 'No interments are remembered to have taken place here.'

On the second edition OS 6-inch map of 1855, the site is designated 'Cloghafadd' and this same designation 'Cloghafadd' is repeated on the third edition OS 6-inch map of 1935.



Figure 5: OS County Series Sheet 5 (part of) 1855

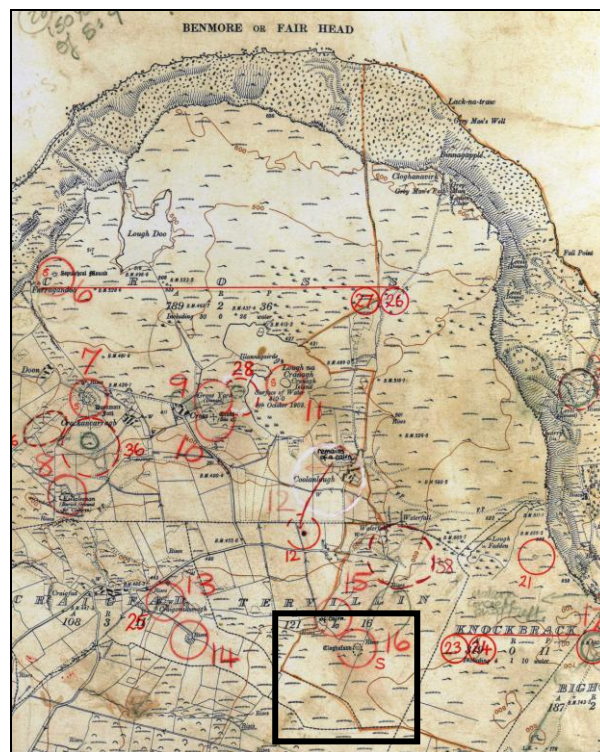


Figure 6: OS County Series Sheet 5 (part of) 1935

2.4 Archiving

Copies of this report have been deposited with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, 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 led by Harry Welsh and other members of the survey team included, Ken Best, Chris Conway, William Dunlop, Ian Gillespie, Anne MacDermott, Ken Pullin, Barbara Russell, Kathy Russell, Janey Sproule, Ruth Thompson and June Welsh. On this occasion, the team were joined by a South African visitor, Kay du Toit. The Ulster Archaeological Society is particularly grateful to Malachy Conway, Survey Archaeologist of the National Trust, who worked closely with the survey team in choosing the site and facilitating access.

We would also like to thank Anthony Kirby of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency for providing details of Ordnance Survey maps.



Figure 7: UAS survey team members at work at Tervillin Court Tomb

3. 2008 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. This report was compiled using the information obtained from these sources, in addition to background documentary material.

3.2 Production of plan 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. A site plan at scale 1:200, a plan of the court tomb at scale 1:50 and profiles at scale 1:100 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. A detailed sketch was also made of an arrangement of stones, which is found to the east of the court tomb. Field plans were later transferred to a computer-based format for printing.

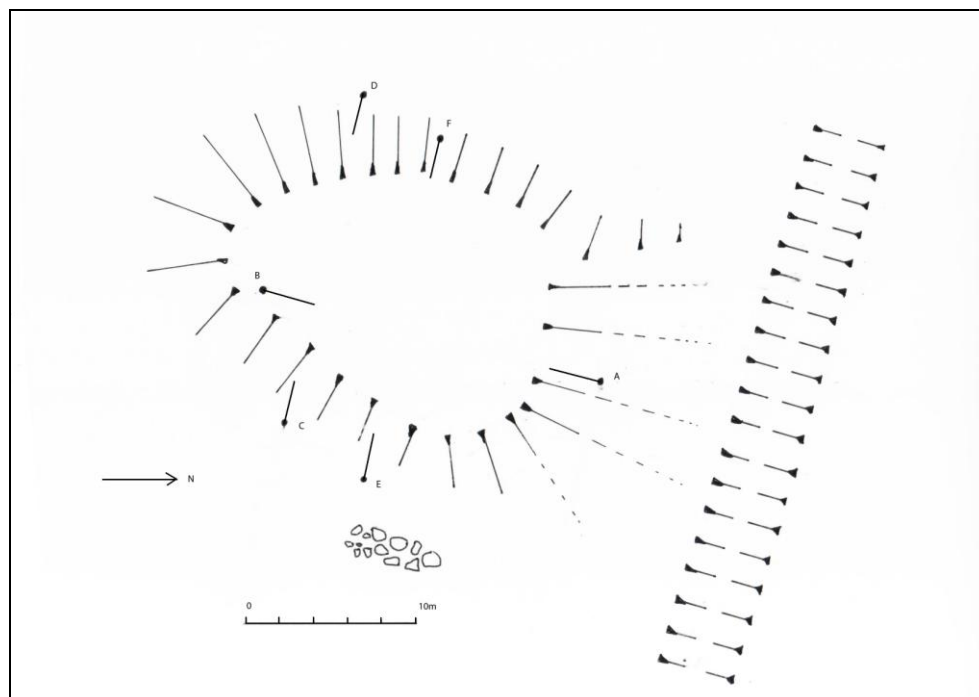


Figure 8: Site plan of Tervillin Court Tomb

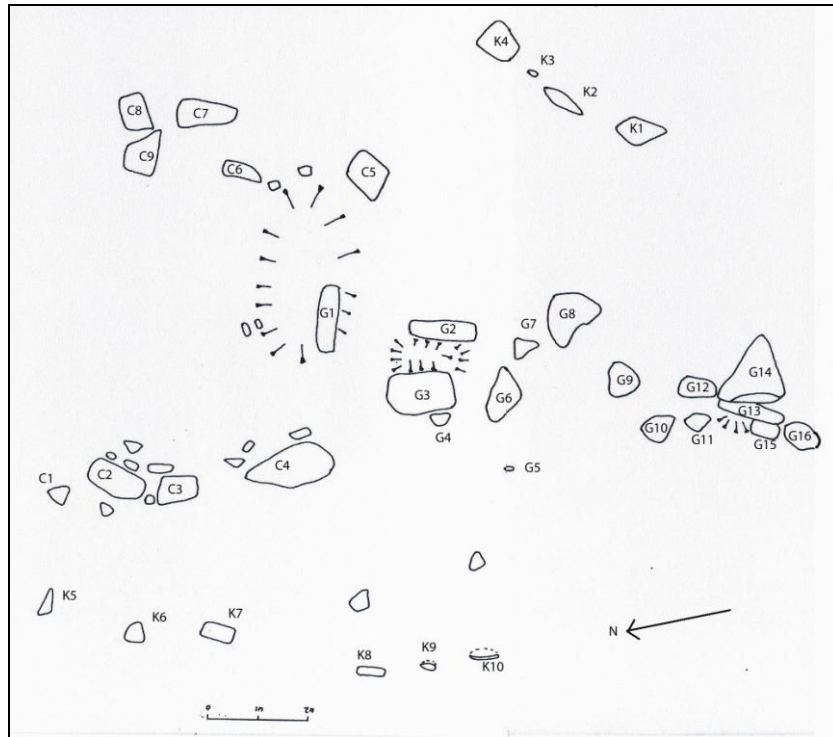


Figure 9: Plan of Tervillin Court Tomb

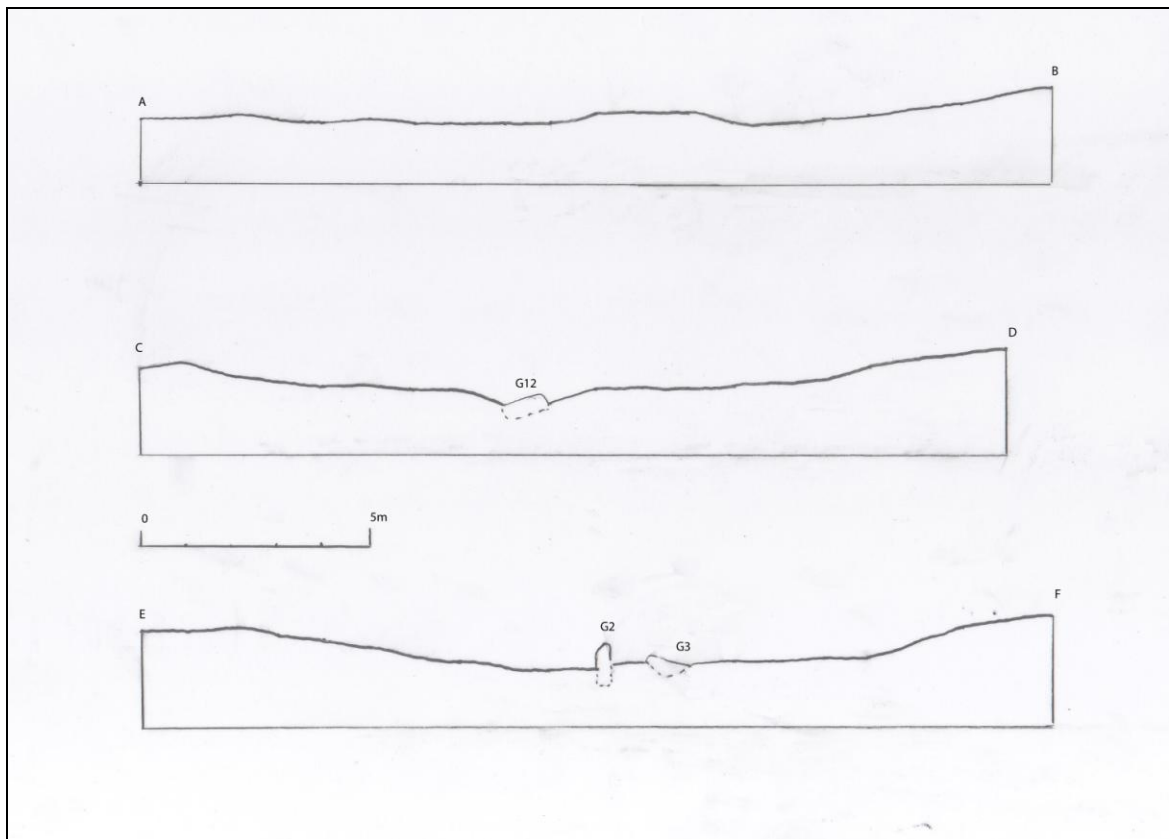


Figure 10: Profiles of Tervillin Court Tomb site

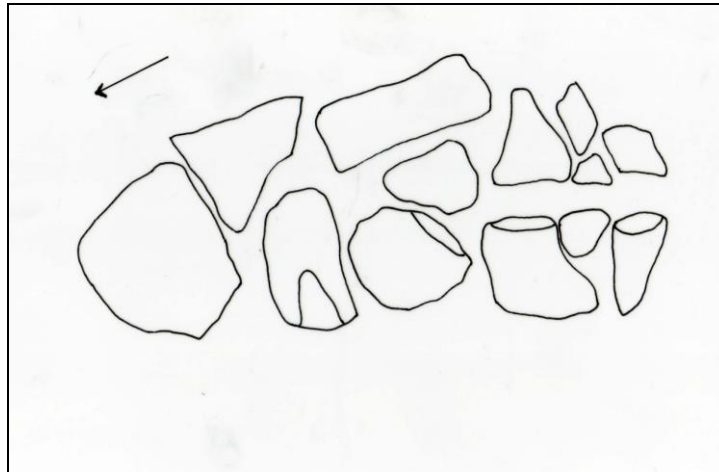


Figure 11: Plan of 'stone row', east of the Court Tomb (not to scale)

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 photographic record sheet was employed, corresponding to photographs taken during the site survey on 26 July 2008. The archive has been compiled in jpeg format and saved to compact disc.



Figure 12: Court stone C4, looking west



Figure 13: Court stones C3 (left) and C2, looking north-west



Figure 14: 'Stone row', looking north-east

4. Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The Antrim Coast and Glens was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1989, under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order. It includes Rathlin Island, the Glens of Antrim and the coastal area between Larne and Ballycastle. Undoubtedly, this area contains some of the most beautiful and varied scenery in Northern Ireland. The area is dominated by the Antrim Plateau rising to over 500m and cut by fast flowing rivers to form a series of picturesque glens running east and north-east towards the sea. This is an area of contrasts, with Northern Ireland's only inhabited off-shore island, gentle bays and valleys, dramatic headlands, farmland and the wild open expanse of moorland. The

area has a long settlement history with many important archaeological sites, listed buildings, historic monuments and conservation areas. Rich in folklore, there is a strong cultural heritage and close associations with Scotland. On a clear day there are fine views eastwards to the Scottish Islands and the Mull of Kintyre, which is only 20km from Torr Head.

4.2 Local Geology

The geology of the Antrim Coast and Glens is dominated by tertiary basalts, which formed part of a massive flow some 55-60 million years ago, overlying other older sedimentary rocks such as sandstone, shale and limestone. In the north-eastern region, the basalt has been eroded away to reveal silvery schists more than 300 million years old. This has created a landscape of many contrasts with red sandstone, white limestone, black basalt and grey clays, often reflected in the place names. The area is also characterised by deep glens, which are the product of glaciations and were formed during the last Ice Age, when sea levels fell to leave a series of raised beaches along this coast. Fair Head comprises a narrow coastal strip between the Antrim Plateau and the sea, including the lower slopes of Greenanmore, Carnanmore and Carnaneigh. The interesting topography of the area results from its complex underlying geology of schists and basalts, with igneous intrusions giving rise to prominent cliffs and headlands. Short, steep streams drop from the plateau to small, secluded bays such as Murlough Bay. Fair Head itself, is one of the most striking features in the Tertiary igneous rocks of the Antrim Coast. The headland is a sill, mainly composed of dolerite, which was intruded horizontally during the Tertiary into gently, dipping, lower Carboniferous shales. Erosion of the overlying limestone beds has left the sill as a dramatic promontory. Vertical jointing of the dolerite forms impressive columnar structures that emphasise the sheerness of the cliff face. The cliffs at Fair Head rise 120m above sea level and can be described as a coastal 'pivot point' marking the boundary between the Atlantic Ocean and the Irish Sea. Glacial erosion is evident at Fair Head and also at Lough na Cranagh, nearby.



Figure 15: Looking north-west to Lough na Cranagh

4.3 Site Description

Tervillin Court Tomb is in a truly magnificent location, on a grassy knoll, which is approximately 36m long and approximately 20m wide, aligned north-north-east/south-south-west, with panoramic views over the coastline. The visible land around the court tomb is probably sited on relatively soft Dalradian schist, as the monument itself stands on an outcrop of this. There is also a large amount of medium-coarse dolerite, presumably from one or other of the Fair Head sills and brought to the site from the north by glacial action. Approximately 3m to the north of this rocky knoll, a drainage ditch, aligned east/west, has been cut by the farmer. Contained in the spoil from this excavation are numerous stones, which may well have been cairn material.

To the east of the court tomb is an arrangement of ten large stones and a number of smaller ones, aligned north-north-east/south-south-west and referred to here as the 'stone row'. These stones, which are sited 3m to the east of the knoll, have probably been placed here during farming operations and it is possible that they originated from the adjacent court tomb.

Approximately 36m to the south of the court tomb, there is a collection of large, earthfast boulders, which may represent the remains of yet another megalithic tomb.



Figure 16: Earthfast boulders, looking north-east

Court tombs tend to be built on platforms, knolls and small ridges with spectacular views over the surrounding countryside. The broader court ends of single-court tombs are generally aligned in an easterly direction, mostly between north-north-east and south-east. They seem to have a close connection with the rising of the sun. Tervillin Court Tomb faces north-north-east and through a natural gap in a hill.



Figure 17: Tervillin Court Tomb and gap in distant hill, looking north-north-east

The visible but disturbed remains of the court tomb at Tervillin are approximately 15m in length and 13m in width and are aligned north-north-east. Several of the court stones are visible and the court itself appears to be 6.5m at its maximum width and 4.5m deep. Many of the court stones are over 1m in height, as indicated below. All the stones seem to be of basalt. The gallery measures almost 10m in length and 2.5m in width. Several gallery stones are also visible. At the northern end of the gallery, an oval-shaped pit is located, measuring 3.5m long and 2m wide. It is aligned east-west. This would appear to be the result of a previous excavation into the monument, or as has been suggested, the result of ‘blasting’ by a miner in 1890.



Figure 18: Court stone C8, looking north

During the survey, the structural stones that were visible were given numbers, in order to identify them in the plans and photographs, generated during the survey on 26 July 2008. C stands for Court, G is for Gallery and K is for Kerb.

STONE NUMBER	HEIGHT (cm)	WIDTH (cm)	DEPTH (cm)
C1	37	30	17
C2	156	55	90
C3	91	87	45
C4	105	167	90
C5	26	80	57
C6	27	63	38
C7	26	103	45
C8	122	54	3
C9	22	86	60
G1	27	130	47
G2	40	134	37
G3	130	76	
G4	23	44	9
G5	50	15	
G6	92	95	24
G7	20	50	22
G8	63	103	57
G9	31	110	36
G10	73	35	
G11	43	38	20
G12	58	33	12
G13	140	36	33
G14	150	130	40
G15	38	33	17
G16	61	42	34
K1	90	84	40
K2	57	100	20
K3	19	31	
K4	60	74	
K5	26	35	
K6	20	30	20
K7	45	20	45

Figure 19: Measurement Table for Court, Gallery and Kerb stones

4.4 Court tombs in Northern Ireland

Court tombs usually have three key features:

- 1) There is a stone gallery for the burials, divided into a number of chambers, which can vary from two to five. Often the chambers are separated from each other by jambs or a single flat stone forming a sill.

- 2) A forecourt is at the entrance to the gallery, which is formed by a series of stones set upright in an arc. These stones are called orthostats, translated from the Greek as 'straight' and 'standing'. Sometimes the space between them is filled with drystone walling.
- 3) The entire area behind the court, including the gallery, is then enclosed in either an earthen mound or more commonly with stones, as in a cairn. It is usually trapezoidal in shape, with the wide end at the court side and the narrow end beyond the end of the gallery. (Mallory and McNeill 1991, 56)

Radiocarbon dates are available from court tombs, within the range of 4230-2920 cal. BC, placing them in the Neolithic period.

In Ireland, there are five main classifications of court tombs:

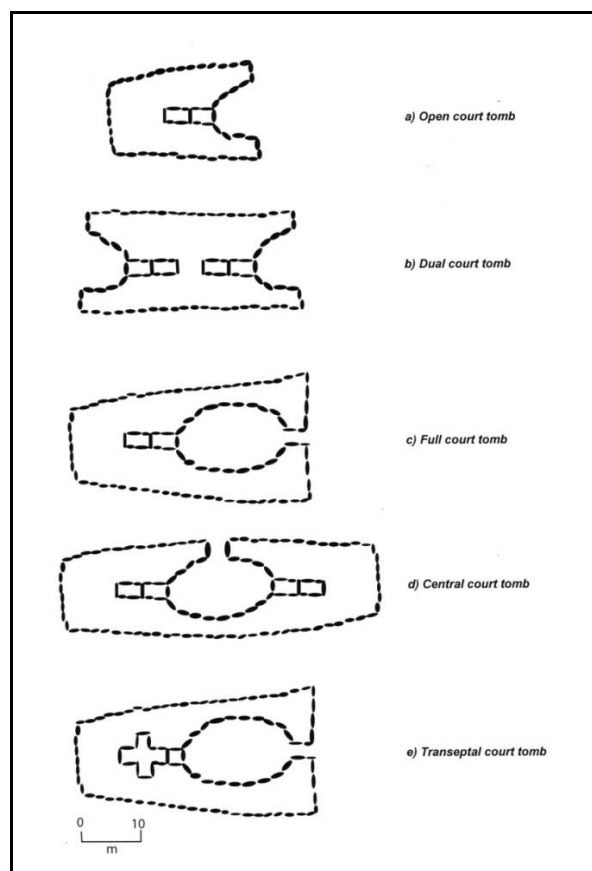


Figure 20: Schematic plans of court tomb types (after Cooney and Grogan 1994, 59)

Most court tombs in Northern Ireland are of the simple, or open court type and Tervillin Court Tomb appears to be one of these. From several excavated examples of this type of tomb, archaeologists have been able to determine their probable appearance at the point of completion. There are a number of well-preserved court tombs in Northern Ireland, such as Annaghmare in County Armagh.

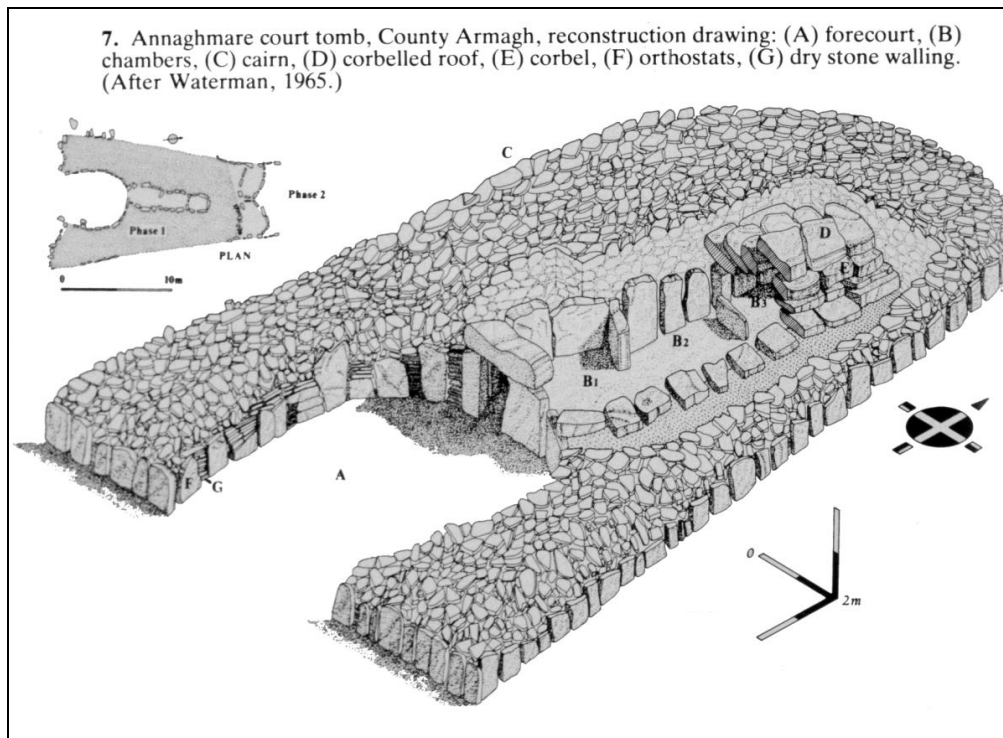


Figure 21: Reconstruction Drawing and Plan of Annaghmare Court Tomb, County Armagh (Crown Copyright, Northern Ireland Environment Agency)

There are twenty-six court tombs in County Antrim, of which only two are dual court tombs. Here are a few examples from this county, which is rich in all types of prehistoric burial monuments, including megalithic tombs.



Figure 22: Ballyboley Court Tomb (ANT 040:018)

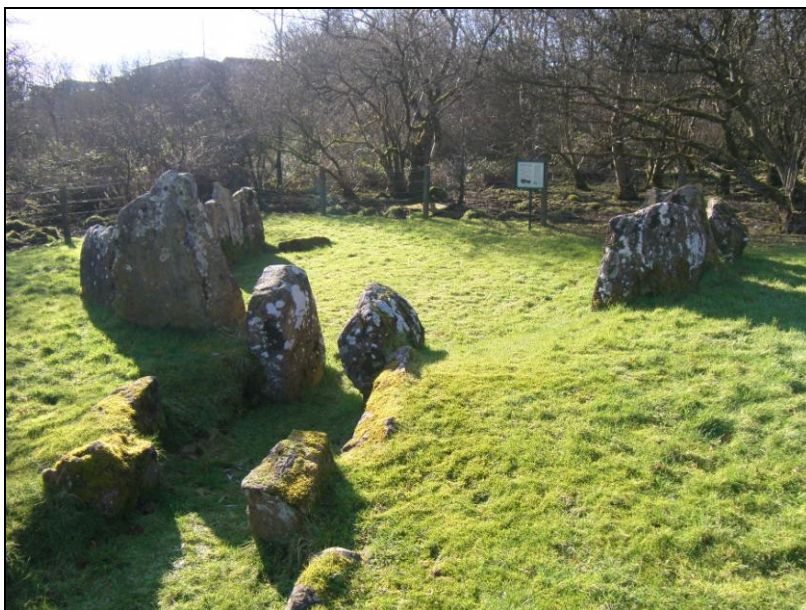


Figure 23: Ballymacaldrack Court Tomb (ANT 022:012)



Figure 24: Lubitavish Court Tomb (ANT 019:006)

5. Conclusions and Recommendations for further work

- 1.1 In order to obtain more information about this monument, The National Trust and Northern Ireland Environment Agency together, may in the future wish to consider limited excavation. This would verify the number of chambers present and also if human remains or grave goods survived.
- 1.2 At the moment there is no protection from animals, domestic or wild. Perhaps the National Trust should consider an agreement with the farmer, to protect the monument.



Figure 25: One inquisitive sheep exploring the monument!

- 1.3 A group of rocks of megalithic proportions is located about 100m to the south of the site of Tervillin Court Tomb. This may also be worthy of further investigation, to establish if indeed this is a megalithic tomb, in an area rich in such monuments.
- 1.4 At present, access to this site involves going through a working farm and this depends upon the goodwill of the farmer. Visitors should contact the National Trust and the farmer in advance. Perhaps access could be improved and story boards erected to provide information about this magnificent site.

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County Antrim-selected monuments 2009.
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APPENDIX A

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD FORM**Site:** Tervillin Court Tomb, County Antrim**Date:** 26 July 2008

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

Make and model of camera...*Nikon Coolpix SI & others*

Frame no	From	Details
IMG 1384	SW	Tervillin Court Tomb looking north-east
IMG 1438	NE	Tervillin Court Tomb looking south-west
DSC 02752	SE	UAS Survey team at work
131	NE	Stone row looking south-west
101	E	Court stone C4, looking west
100	SE	Court stone C3 (left) and C2, looking north-west
IMG 1387	SE	Lough na Cranagh looking north-west
IMG 1382	SW	Earthfast stones looking north-east
IMG 1383	SSW	Tervillin Court Tomb looking north-north-east
IMG 1428	S	Court stone C8, looking north
DSC 02748		One inquisitive sheep at monument!