

CPAT site visit record form

* Confidential ? Y / N

* *italicised fields are compulsory entries*

Project name * Project number 715 PRN 511

* Site no * Record made by NWJ * Record made on 25/1/05

Community Bronllys..... Unitary Powys..... * NGR SO16043727..... GPS

* Site name Pipton Long Cairn.....

Locality

Owner Mr + Mrs Griffiths Tenant

Pipton Farm

* Site type 1 Chambered tomb..... & period Neolithic..... from glossary :-

Site type 2 & period

Site type 3 & period

* Site form Structure Condition Damaged

Building / Buried feature / Cropmark / Document / Earthwork / Intact / Near intact / Damaged / Near destroyed / Destroyed / Moved / Restored /
Environmental / Finds only / Folklore / Landform / Landscape / Submerged
Multiple / Placename / Structure / Wreck

* Description (quantify qualify, source, etc) Sketch plan over? Y / N

Chambered long cairn now some 25m NE-SW by 1.7m high and from 18m wide at north-east to 8m at south-west. Part excavated 1950. Two lateral chambers and dummy portal at north. At least five Mid-Medieval plus some Neolithic pottery. (Savory; H N 1952; 166-168; Savory; H N 1957; 7-48).

Re-printed in larger font on attached sheet

(CT 8) PIPTON (Figs 39,40)
The chambered long cairn, about 1 km S.W. of PIPTON, stands about 150 m above O.D., looking down the N.E. end of a ridge dividing the AFON WYE from its tributary the AFON LLYNFI. The site was first published in 1925, and was excavated in 1949 by Savory for the Brecknock Society and the National Museum of Wales. 2 Before excavation the tree-grown mound was about 37 m long; the N.E. end about 22 m broad and the height varying from 1 m to 2.2 m. A pair of upright stones protruded from the surface; set transversely in the centre of the broad end. After its restoration to the original form the mound appears slightly broader at about 25 m, still bearing several tree stumps.
The form of the cairn. During excavation enough of the outermost of the two main lines of revetment of the cairn was identified to deduce that it was wedge-shaped, 32 m long on an axis aligned at about 31 degrees E. of N. The greatest width was 18 m near the N.E. end, which contained a forecourt funnelled in from smoothly rounded terminals to a false portal 2.5 m wide at a depth of about 5.5 m. The S.E. side was straight but the N.W. side slightly concave, converging to give an estimated width of about 10 m at the S.W. end. The body of the cairn reached a maximum height of nearly 2 m above a prepared ground surface, the tallest feature being one of the two portal-stones at 2.4 m. Within the cairn only two chambers were identified, Chamber I centred only 5.5 m from the portal and entered from the N.W. side, Chamber II being apparently a closed cist on the same side. An internal revetment wall, comparable to the rotunda feature at Ty-isaf (CT 3) curved across the cairn to the S.W. of each of the chambers. Two canted slabs in the S. part of the cairn may have had a ritual purpose if they were not simply functional buttresses.
The construction of the cairn. Excavation revealed a levelled surface sunk into the crest of a ridge, stripped to subsoil where charcoal and sandstone chips accumulated during the building process, with a single featureless scrap of neolithic pottery. Several horizontal and vertical slabs on this surface were seen by Savory as marker stones for the laying out process. None of the upright stones were deeply bedded, relying rather for stability on wedging and filling with dry walling. The stony core of the cairn around the chambers consisted mainly of sandstone blocks and flags, with some thin micaceous flags and water-rolled blocks and pebbles, for the most part piled loosely, but tightly wedged in a few places.
The inner cairn revetment was more coarsely and less consistently built than the outer revetment, evidently built for strength rather than appearance up to 1.5 m away from the outer, even virtually converging with it in two places, and in another resolving into a triple line. The more northerly rotunda wall was similarly coarse, as was the innermost of the double line around chamber II, where the outer one was of a quality comparable to that of the outer walling of the sides of the cairn. The best preserved of the outer revetment consisted of up to 24 courses of split slabs in a height of about 0.75 m, possibly exceeded only in the forecourt, where it reached 0.9 m. This finer type of laid walling was used also to fill spaces between megalithic uprights in the chambers.

Sources consulted consisting mainly of small slabs and chips lying quite loosely, and in places holding slabs vertically against the revetment, was accepted by Savory as a deliberate element of the finished monument. This added material was seen to extend outwards to about 3.6 m outside the entrance of chamber I, where its heavier composition gave it a more significant blocking function, as also in the forecourt, where there was no reason to doubt deliberate filling to the height of the flanking walls. As a final act of closure at the end of its use it was plain that the stony core of the cairn had been covered by an envelope of pinkish clayey earth with small stones, which descended in a continuous slope over the extra-revetment material on the west side of the cairn, and took the place of the revetment and extra-revetment at the southern tip of the cairn.

Dimensions The chambered long cairn was entered first through an outer passage between the cairn revetments lined only with laid walling and roofed probably with flag vaulting, then through a narrow inner passage taking a zig-zag course between portals raised at a height of about 1.4 m over a distance of some 4 m to the main gallery. This was entered through the N. side of its W. summit / ridge / plateau / col / shoulder edge / hill slope / river terrace / valley bottom / flood plain

Site capstone measuring 2.0 m by 1.0 m remained over the N. end of the main gallery, rising from the main passage to a height of 1.0 m on a base of 0.7 m and the upright slab 2.7 m long forming most of the S. side.

Aspect transept, of two unequal compartments, divided by a septal slab and measuring 3.5 m by 1.0 m overall, was brought to a similar height by corbelling added to its upright slabs, but no capstones remained. The S. transept measured about 1.0 m by 0.8 m, its single capstone split and fallen from a height of over a metre achieved with walling added to the small upright slabs of the chamber and main passage had been removed.

Vegetation Chamber II, also on the N.W. side and measuring internally 1.95 m by 1.0 m, was formed of a pair of slabs about 2.2 m long held apart by a heavy back slab, but the outer end, just within the junction of the outer rotunda wall and the inner cairn revetment, was of smaller slabs. There was no formal entrance through the side of the cairn, so that access must have been from above through there seemed once to have been a large cover stone supported on the inner orthostats and on supplementary corbelling.
Comment (access, problems, potential, etc) Use of the cairn. A layer of sterile sandy earth, over which the robbing of capstones had caused the collapse of corbelling and other roofing material, covered the floor of Chamber I and its passage, mostly 0.3 m to 0.6 m deep but deeper at the passage portal. At the junction of the transepts in the E. end was a ritual pit showing signs of fire which extended to the N. transept and beneath the sill-stone of the S. transept. Of a ritual character also were deposits of bone, comprising an incomplete assemblage of human material beneath floor slabs in the S. transept, as well as various human and animal bones and a flint flake in the passage complex, protected by structural features. Savory interpreted the sterile earth deposit as a deliberate filling of the chamber antiquity, before any burials had taken place, or after the complete removal of any burials that once existed, and further suggested that chamber I might be a dummy built for ritual purposes rather than for the practical purposes of disposal of the dead.

Photographs In chamber II a deposit of small human bones beneath the paving was probably dedication, as in chamber I, whereas the seven groups of bones heaped against the side walls and in the centre and covered with a layer of brown earth probably inserted deliberately, represented use of this chamber as a secondary resting place for remains that had decomposed elsewhere, possibly in interpretation. Although the tomb was entered through one or possibly two entrances on the W. side, and the forecourt was certainly blocked, because the building sequence is unclear, and owing to the difficulty of knowing whether or not erection was single or multi-period, the site is difficult to classify. Historical erosive factors may have been responsible for obscuring interpretations of the sealed deposits, which appear to represent a minimal period of burial.

Threat class high / medium / low high / medium / low high / medium / low high / medium / low
2 Crawford, L.B.C., pp.62-3, quoting notification by C.E.Vulliamy, but its discovery is attributed by Savory to A.F.Gwynne.

Threat response Evaluate / Preserve (schedule) / Preserve (negotiate) / Excavate / Survey / Photograph / Watching brief / Nothing
RCAMW, 1995 Draft Inventory description

Site category A / B / C / D / E

PRN 511

Chambered long cairn now some 25m NE-SW by 1.7m high and from 18m wide at north-east to 8m at south-west. Part excavated 1950. Two lateral chambers and dummy portal at north. At least five individuals plus some neolithic pottery. (Savory, H N 1952, 166-168; Savory, H N 1957, 7-48).

(CT 8) PIPTON (Figs.39,40)

The chambered long cairn about 1 km S.W. of PIPTON stands about 150 m above O.D., looking down the N.E. end of a ridge dividing the AFON WYE from its tributary the AFON LLYNFI.¹ The site was first published in 1925, and was excavated in 1949 by Savory for the Brecknock Society and the National Museum of Wales.² Before excavation the tree-grown mound was about 37 m long, the N.E. end about 22 m broad and the height varying from 1 m to 2.2 m. A pair of upright stones protruded from the surface, set transversely in the centre of the broad end. After its restoration to the original form the mound appears slightly broader at about 25 m, still bearing several tree stumps.

The form of the cairn. During excavation enough of the outermost of the two main lines of revetment of the cairn was identified to deduce that it was wedge-shaped, 32 m long on an axis aligned at about 31 degrees E. of N. The greatest width was 16 m near the N.E. end, which contained a forecourt funnelled in from smoothly rounded terminals to a false portal 2.5 m wide at a depth of about 5.5 m. The S.E. side was straight but the N.W. side slightly concave, converging to give an estimated width of about 10 m at the S.W. end. The body of the cairn reached a maximum height of nearly 2 m above a prepared ground surface, the tallest feature being one of the two portal stones at 2.4 m. Within the cairn only two chambers were identified, Chamber I centred only 5.5 m from the portal and entered from the N.W. side, Chamber II being apparently a closed cist on the same side. An internal revetment wall, comparable to the rotunda feature at Ty-isaf (CT 3), curved across the cairn to the S.W. of each of the chambers. Two canted slabs in the S. part of the cairn may have had a ritual purpose if they were not simply functional buttresses.

The construction of the cairn. Excavation revealed a levelled surface sunk into the crest of a ridge, stripped to subsoil where charcoal and sandstone chips accumulated during the building process, with a single 'featureless scrap of neolithic pottery'. Several horizontal and vertical slabs on this surface were seen by Savory as marker stones for the laying out process. None of the upright stones were deeply bedded, relying rather for stability on wedging and filling with dry walling. The stony core of the cairn around the chambers consisted mainly of sandstone blocks and flags, with some thin micaceous flags and water-rolled blocks and pebbles, for the most part piled loosely, but tightly wedged in a few places. The inner cairn revetment was more coarsely and less consistently built than the outer revetment, evidently built for strength rather than appearance up to 1.5 m away from the outer, even virtually converging with it in two places, and in another resolving into a triple line. The more northerly rotunda wall was similarly coarse, as was the innermost of the double line around chamber II, where the outer one was of a quality comparable to that of the outer walling of the sides of the cairn. The best preserved of the outer revetment consisted of up to 24 courses of split slabs in a height of about 0.75 m, possibly exceeded only in the forecourt, where it reached 0.9 m. This finer type of laid walling was used also to fill spaces between megalithic uprights in the chambers and between the portal slabs.

Extra-revetment material, consisting mainly of small slabs and chips lying quite loosely, and in places holding slabs vertically against the revetment, was accepted by Savory as a deliberate element of the finished monument. This added material was seen to extend outwards to about 3.6 m outside the entrance of chamber I, where its heavier composition gave it a more significant blocking function, as also in the forecourt, where there was no reason to doubt deliberate filling to the height of the flanking walls. As a final act of closure at the end of its use 'it was plain that the stony core of the cairn had been covered by an envelope of pinkish clayey earth with small stones, which descended in a continuous slope over the extra-revetment material on the west side of the cairn, and took the place of the revetment and extra-revetment at the southern tip of the cairn'.

The chambers. The main T-shaped structure of Chamber I was entered first through an outer passage between the cairn revetments lined only with laid walling and roofed probably with 'false vaulting', then through a narrow inner passage taking a zig-zag course between portals roofed at a height of about 1.4 m over a distance of some 4 m to the main gallery. This was entered through the N. side of its W. end over a sill of small-upright slabs, and consisted of

three compartments, 4 m long overall by up to 1 metre, expanding at its E. end into two unequal transepts. One capstone measuring 2.0 m by 1.5 m remained over the W. end of the main gallery, resting with maximum headroom of 1.3 m on a transverse divider and the upright slab 2.7 m long forming most of the S. side.

The N. transept, of two unequal compartments divided by a septal slab and measuring 3.5 m by 1.0 m overall, was brought to a similar height by corbelling added to its upright slabs, but no capstones remained. The S. transept measured about 1.0 m by 0.8 m, its single capstone split and fallen from a height of over a metre achieved with walling added to the small upright slabs of its walls. All other capstones of the chamber and main passage had been removed. Chamber II, also on the N.W. side and measuring internally 1.95 m by 1.0 m, was formed of a pair of slabs about 2.2 m long held apart by a heavy back slab, but the outer end, just within the conjunction of the outer rotunda wall and the inner cairn revetment, was of smaller slabs. There was no formal entrance through the side of the cairn, so that access must have been from above, though there seemed once to have been a large cover stone supported on the inner orthostats and on supplementary corbelling.

Use of the cairn. A layer of sterile sandy earth, onto which the robbing of capstones had caused the collapse of corbelling and other roofing material, covered the floor of Chamber I and its passage, mostly 0.3 m to 0.6 m deep but deeper at the passage portal. At the junction of the transepts in the E. end was a ritual pit showing signs of fire which extended to the N. transept and beneath the sill-stone of the S. transept. Of a ritual character also were deposits of bone, comprising an incomplete assemblage of human material beneath floor slabs in the S. transept, as well as various human and animal bones and a flint flake in the passage complex, protected by structural features. Savory interpreted the sterile earth deposit as 'a deliberate filling of the chamber in antiquity, before any burials had taken place, or after the complete removal of any burials that once existed', and further suggested that 'chamber I might be a dummy built for ritual purposes rather than for the practical purposes of disposal of the dead'.

In chamber II a deposit of small human bones beneath the paving was probably dedicatory, as in chamber I, whereas the seven groups of bones heaped against the side walls and in the centre, and covered with a layer of brown earth probably inserted deliberately, represented use of this chamber as a secondary resting place for remains that had decomposed elsewhere, possibly in chamber I, though there was no evidence there of such use.

Interpretation. Although the tomb was entered through one or possibly two entrances on the W. side, and the forecourt was certainly blocked, because the building sequence is unclear, and owing to the difficulty of knowing whether or not erection was single or multi-period, the site is difficult to classify. Historical erosive factors may have been responsible for obscuring interpretations of the sealed deposits, which appear to represent a minimal period of burial.

1. O.S. SO 13 NE 2; Grimes, L.C.B.B.M., pp.266-270, 274; Fieldnotes and sketch in Grimes MSS, Dyfed Archaeological Trust; Daniel, P.C.T., p.214.
2. Crawford, L.B.C., pp.62-3, quoting notification by C.E.Vulliamy, but its discovery is attributed by Savory to A.F.Gwynne.
3. Excavation report, H.N.Savory, Arch.Camb., 100 (1949), pp.7-48, from which this account has been mainly compiled.

RCAHMW, 1995 - Draft Inventory description

Present form of the cairn is a turf-covered, wedge-shaped mound, aligned NE-SW. The main visible structure comprises the 2 large slabs of the portal at the NE end. Only 2 other stones are now visible, both previously described as possible buttresses, one midway along the SE side & the other near the SW end, close to a large tree stump. There are other stumps on the mound, & a standing oak on SE edge of the mound.

The position of Chamber 1 is marked by a hollow between it & the portal, while a hollow on the NW side marks the position of Chamber 2.

The cairn is sited ~~at~~ towards the end of a NE-SW ridge, on its SE side, with views SE to Black Mountain & NE ~~at~~ down the Wye valley.

Currently sheep pasture.

erosion = stock, low, long.

PRN: 511 Site name:

DISCRIMINATION CRITERIA

circle one category under each heading below

Survival

- High - over two thirds of the original intact
 Medium - one third to two thirds intact
 Low - less than one third intact

Potential

visible structure/buried structure/buried landsurface/palaeoenvironmental potential/associated finds

- High - 3 or more of these factors applicable
 Medium - 1 or 2 of these factors applicable
 Low - 1 factor applicable

Group value

- High - more than 5 associated sites within 1km
 Medium - 2 to 5 associated sites within 1km
 Low - less than 2 associated sites within 1km

Archaeological documentation

- High - description, survey and some published excavation
 Medium - description and detailed measured survey
 Low - brief or no description and only sketch survey

Historical documentation

- High - two or more relevant sources
 Medium - a single relevant source
 Low - no such sources

Amenity and cultural value

- High - remains easily visible and understood by layperson
 Medium - remains extant but not easily understood
 Low - remains not visible, disturbed or destroyed

Palaeoenvironmental deposits

- High - within 50m
 Medium - within 100m
 Low - over 100m or none visible

MANAGEMENT CRITERIA**Condition**

- Good - good condition, no erosion
 Medium - moderate condition, some erosion
 Poor - poor condition, serious erosion

Fragility

- High - low earthwork sites/cropmarks, exposed and unstable internal features
 Medium - more robust earthwork sites, predominantly stone structures partially turf covered
 Low - predominantly stone structures mostly turf covered

Vulnerability

- High - unsympathetic land-use, high immediate threat
 Medium - stable land-use, possible longer term threat
 Low - stable land-use, sympathetic owner, no threat

Recommend for Scheduling Y / N