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Graveyard Survey at Beheenagh Burial Ground, Co. Kerry



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Acknowledgements

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I. Abstract

This report details a graveyard survey, which was undertaken by ÆGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED on behalf of the client. The report contains an accurate ground plan of all upstanding remains in the graveyard, including boundaries, paths/desire lines, grave-markers, tombs, architectural fragments, churches, areas of collapse and other miscellaneous features as discovered at the time of survey. A photographic record of the features at the site is included.

The ground plan was produced using a Trimble GeoXH 2005 Series GPS handheld receiver and datalogger survey instrument. Each position surveyed with the instrument is linked to GPS and has an Irish National Grid reference. The survey was downloaded from the instrument and corrected with Trimble GPS Pathfinder Office software. All ground plans were enhanced in AutoCAD 2010 and reproduced with added symbols and colours in Adobe Illustrator CS3.

This report contains a brief written description and statement of the general condition of the site and the condition of the features surveyed. Damaged and unstable features are noted and remedial actions to address potential issues of public safety are suggested.

A photographic record of all headstones, linked to the survey drawing is included in the report.

II. List of Figures, Plates and Tables

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III. Abbreviations and Terms Used

Architectural Fragment	A piece of worked wood or carved stone that has been removed from a building. These may be of any date from the early medieval period (5th-12th centuries AD) onwards
Barony, Parish, Townland	These terms refer to land divisions in Ireland. The barony is the largest land division in a county, which is formed from a number of parishes. These parishes are in turn made up of several townlands, which are the smallest land division in the country. The origins of these divisions are believed to be in the Early Medieval/Christian period (AD500-AD1000), or may date earlier in the Iron Age (500BC-AD500)
Bullaun Stone	The term 'bullaun' (from the Irish word 'bullán', which means a round hollow in a stone, or a bowl) is applied to boulders of stone with artificially carved, hemispherical hollows or basin-like depressions. They are frequently associated with ecclesiastical sites and holy wells. They date to the early medieval period (5th-12th centuries AD)
Burial Ground	An area of ground, set apart for the burial of the dead, not associated with a church and sometimes defined by a low earthen or stone bank. These date from the medieval period (5th - 16th centuries AD) up to the 20th century
Chapel	A free-standing building which is used for private worship. These date from the late medieval period (c. 1400 to the 16th century AD) up to the 20th century
Children's Burial Ground	An area of unconsecrated ground for the interment of unbaptised or stillborn children, often known under various Irish names: Cillin, Caldragh, Ceallunach or Calluragh. The graves were generally marked by simple, low, upright stones or slabs almost invariably without any inscription or other carving. This burial practice may be medieval in origin and continued in Ireland until the 1960s
Church	A building used for public Christian worship. These can be of any date from c. 500 AD onwards
Cross-slab	A slab of stone, either standing or recumbent, inscribed with a cross and generally used as a grave-marker or memorial. This term is applied only to slabs dating to pre-1200 AD
Ecclesiastical Enclosure	A large oval or roughly circular area, usually over 50m in diameter, defined by a bank/banks and external fosse/fosses or drystone wall/walls, enclosing an early medieval church or monastery and its associated areas of domestic and industrial activity. These date to the early medieval period (5th-12th centuries AD)
Grave Marker	A simple low un-inscribed stone marking the location of a burial. These may be situated at the head or foot of the burial or both
Graveslab	A stone designed to be recumbent and marking a grave, AD 1200-1700 in date
Graveyard	The burial area around a church or the site of church. These date from the medieval period (5th-16th centuries) onwards
Headstone	An upright stone placed over the head of a grave. These date from 17th century AD onwards
Holy Well	A well or spring, which usually bears a saint's name and is often reputed to possess miraculous healing properties. These may have their origins in prehistory but are associated with devotions from the medieval period (5th-16th centuries AD) onwards
Plot	A kerbed area enclosing a burial or burials
KE	This number is the number of the site on the RMP map (see below). It begins with the county code, here KE for Kerry, the 6-inch sheet number, followed by the number of the archaeological site
Mass Grave	A grave containing multiple, usually unidentified burials
Memorial Plaque	A plaque serving as a focus for memory of the named deceased placed in a graveyard but not necessarily indicating the location of a burial

Memorial Monument	A monument erected to commemorate a person or group of persons associated with an important historical event
OS	Ordnance Survey
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places. An update of the older SMR, (sites and monuments record), on which all known archaeological sites are marked and listed in an accompanying inventory. The record is based on the 6-inch map series for the country and is recorded on a county basis. Each archaeological monument on the RMP has a unique code known as the RMP number (see below)
Tomb	A monumental grave or sepulchre. These date from the medieval period (5th-16th centuries AD) onwards

1. Description of Site

1.1 Site Location and Cartographic Background (figs 1-5)

Beheenagh burial ground is located in the townland of Beheenagh, parish of Kilcummin, barony of Magunihy, in east Co. Kerry, approximately 5.5km east of the town of Killarney and the same distance west of the Kerry/Cork county boundary (NGR 110479/90405). The site is accessed by a road to the south from the N72 main road at approximately 2km to the east of the village of Barraduff. The burial ground is an enclosed area to on the north side of a junction of three small local roads and is bounded on the north side by a farm complex. The site is recorded on the OS Discovery map 79 as 'Cillín'. It is also listed by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland in the Record of Monuments and Places as KE068-010----'Children's Burial Ground'.

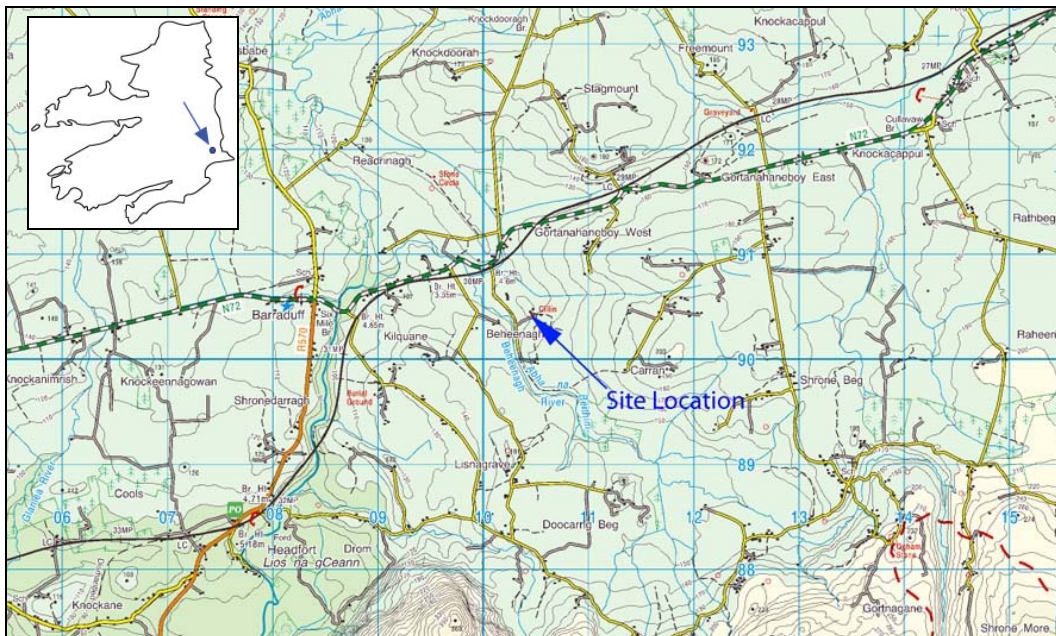


Figure 1. Site Location, OS Discovery Map 79, north to top (Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No AR0095409 ©Ordnance Survey Ireland Government of Ireland)



Figure 2. Location of site indicated on aerial image (north to top)

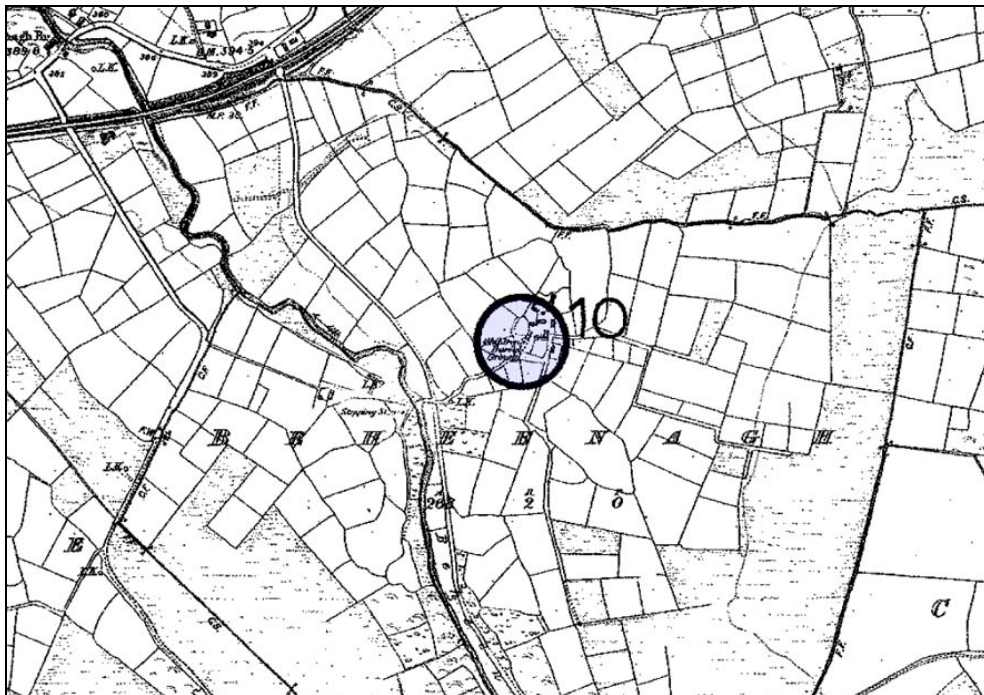


Figure 3. RMP constraints map Sheet 68 showing RMP KE068-010----

The site was originally indicated on the 1841 1st edition 6" Ordnance Survey map as 'Burial Ground for Children' and on the 1895 25" Ordnance Survey map as 'Children's Burial Ground'. The extents of the burial ground, a sub-rectangular enclosed space, as shown on the Ordnance Survey maps appear to have remained unchanged through time.

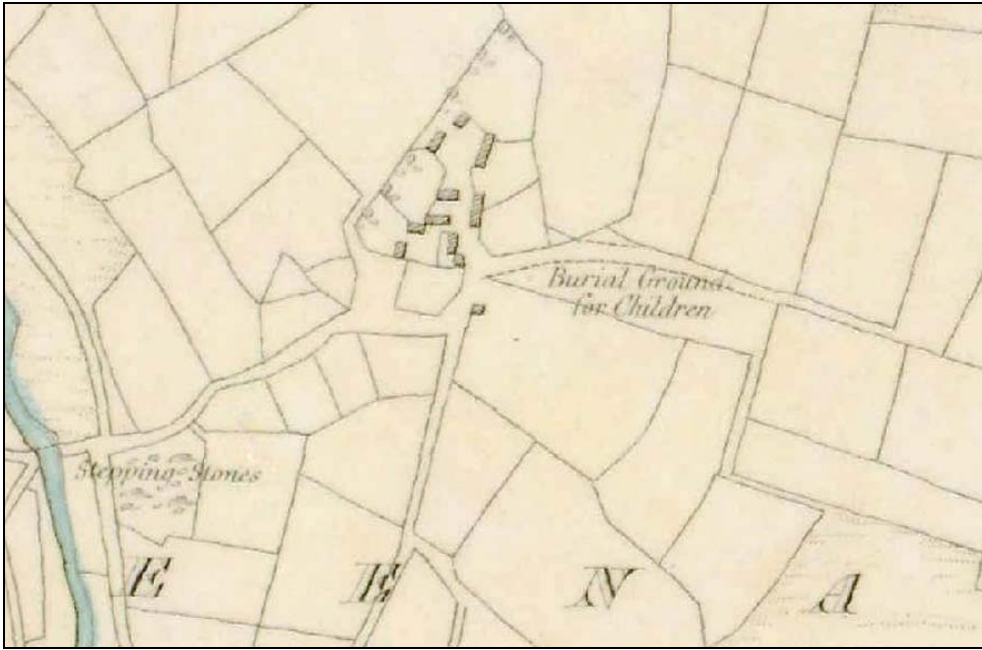


Figure 4. 1841 1st edition 6" OS map 68

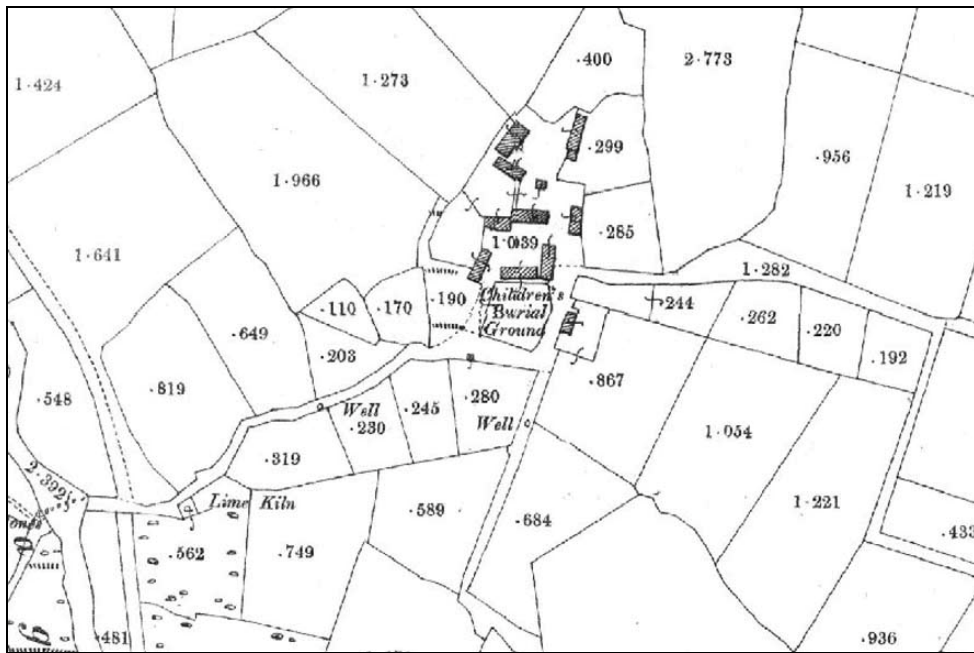


Figure 5. 1895 25" OS map 68

1.2 Site Description

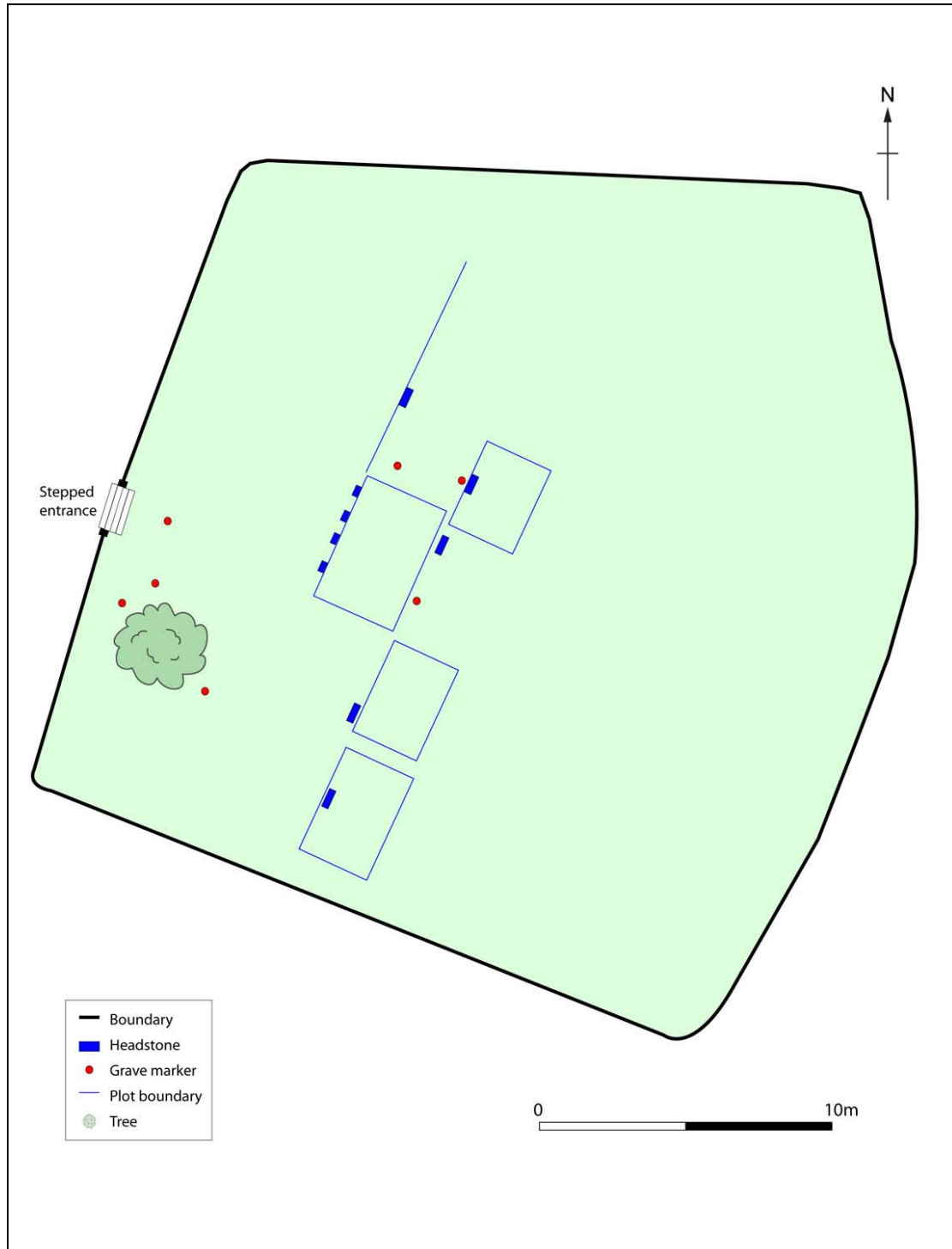


Figure 6. Plan of Beheenagh burial ground

The burial ground is elevated approximately 2m above the surrounding ground level to the top of the enclosing random rubble stone wall boundary. It measures 28m north-south by 27m east west. The graveyard is bounded on its north east and south sides by a curving roadway, its west side by a concrete driveway to an adjacent farmyard and on the north side by a range of farm buildings. The graveyard is entered by a flight of concrete steps towards the centre of the western side. It contains a total of 9 headstones, 7 grave markers and 2 unmarked burials. A large tree stands in the southwest corner of the burial ground.



Pl. 1. Burial ground boundary on S side



Pl. 2. Burial ground boundary on SE side



Pl. 3. Burial ground boundary on NE side



Pl. 4. Burial ground boundary on N side



Pl. 5. Burial ground boundary and entrance on W side



Pl. 6. View of burial ground from NE

The burial ground is in good order. The boundary wall is free of vegetation and it appears to have been re-pointed recently on the east side. The inscriptions on the older headstones on the south side of the burial ground have become worn and are difficult to read and one headstone has become enveloped in ivy.



Pl. 7. Ivy covered headstone on S side of burial ground

Though some grave markers are visible in the centre and on the eastern side of the burial ground there may be others on the western side of the graveyard, where the grass has grown high and may be concealing further burials. Local information would suggest that burial in unmarked graves was practiced in all areas of the graveyard up to the recent past. The uneven nature of the ground on the western side of the graveyard would suggest that this area does contain some unmarked burials.

1.3 Suggested Mitigation

The burial ground is in good order. Ivy growth on headstones should be restricted and grass cutting should be considered, particularly on the west side of the burial ground to expose any further burials.

2. Project References

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www.archaeology.ie

3. Signing-Off Statement

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Signed: _____
For ÆGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

Dated: October 2009

4. Appendix I - Photographic Survey of Headstones

Name	Moynihan
Headstone No	1
	


Name	Moynihan
Headstone No	2
	

Name	Moynihan
Headstone No	3
	


Name	Moynihan
Headstone No	4
	

Name	Moynihan
Headstone No	5
	

Name	Moynihan
Headstone No	6
	

Name	Moynihan
Headstone No	9
	

Name	McCarthy
Headstone No	7
	

Name	Ryan
Headstone No	8
	

5. Appendix II – Plan of Numbered Headstones

