

Archaeological Survey,
Church Island Graveyard,
Lough Currane,
Waterville,
Co. Kerry.



September 2012

Client: The Heritage Office,
Kerry County Council,
County Buildings,
Ratass,
Tralee,
Co. Kerry.

RMP No.: KE098-039

Archaeological
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Townland: Termons

Parish: Dromod

Barony: Iveragh

Local name of graveyard: Church Island; Inis Uasal; Oileáin an Teampaill.

ITM Co-ords: E453195, N566913

RMP No.: KE098-039

No. of tombs: 3

No. of named headstones: 1

No. of graveslabs: 9

No. of unnamed gravemarkers: 38

No. of architectural fragments: 3

No. of bullaun stones: 1

No. of cross slabs recorded: 10

No. of leachta: 3

No. of pillar stones: 3

No. of quern stones: 2

1. Introduction

Church Island graveyard was surveyed using a Magellan ProMark 3 Rover and Base station and presented in Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM). The GPS graveyard survey datasets were exported using Hangle software from GPS Ireland and then exported into AutoCAD and finished using Adobe Illustrator. Reference numbers mentioned in the main body of the report relate to the ID point given when the survey was undertaken (see A3 plan, Figure 2 below). A digital photographic record and surname database was also compiled to complement the cartographic survey (see Appendices). Digital photographs of all the features within the graveyard are referenced in the appendix and all photographs are included on the attached disc.

The survey was undertaken with due regard to:

- Conservation principles as produced by ICOMOS in the Venice and Burra Charters
- The publication in 2004 of the Architectural Heritage Protection-Guidelines for Planners by the DoEHLG, (now DAHG)
- The heritage objectives as outlined and adopted in the current Kerry County Council Development Plan 2009-2015, Built Heritage (Chapter 10)

The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe was signed at the Granada Convention in 1985 and ratified by Ireland in 1997. The conservation aims as stated in the Burra Charter are for the retention or restoration of historical significance with the minimum of physical intervention and that such intervention work be reversible, maintain the structure's character and setting and that all conservation works should be undertaken following comprehensive research.

An information booklet on care and maintenance for tombs should be compiled and supplied to the relevant parish church.

All of these graveyards are recorded monuments protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 and under the jurisdiction of Kerry County Council. All proposed works should be carried out by experience competent personnel under expert archaeological / architectural guidance and supervision. As these sites are recorded monuments conservation and restoration works can only be carried out under license from the National Monuments Service (NMS) of the Dept. of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht (DAHG).

2. Site Location

Church Island, otherwise known as *Inis Uasal* or *Oileán an Teampaill* is situated in Lough Currane (*Loch Luíoch*) in the townland of Termons approximately 3km east of Waterville (Figure 1). The site was surveyed in appalling weather in early July 2012.

3. General

Church Island is a National Monument in State ownership, (Nat. Mon.No.60), in the care of the OPW and NMS. The early medieval ecclesiastical complex encompasses the entire island with forty-four separate sub-entries in the NMS records under the general reference no. KE098-039. The graveyard number is KE098-03905. There are two modern tombs and a modern headstone immediately outside the enclosing wall of the burial ground to the west (Figure 2). Within the parameters of this study only the three modern burials, the Romanesque church and burial ground were mapped. The site was previously, extensively surveyed and published in the South Kerry Archaeological Survey (SKAS) in 1996 while elements and other aspects of its medieval archaeology and history have featured in many other publications.

Church Island associated with St. Fíonán Cam who is reputed to have founded a monastery there in the 6th century (King 1986, 334; O'Sullivan & Sheehan 1996).

Given, the comprehensive record of Church Island and description of the Romanesque church in the SKAS and the fact that it is a National Monument in good order no further description of the structure was deemed necessary.

The church was partially rebuilt and conserved by the OPW in 1883 (O'Sullivan & Sheehan 1996, 316 & 319). Further recent work by the OPW has also taken place at Church Island including the removal of two buttresses from the east gable and two tombs that abutted the south elevation (*ibid*, 314, Figure 2 & Plate 1). One of the removed tombs contained a cross-slab. In total five cross-slabs, (including the one from the removed tomb), were attached to the inner face of the north elevation of the nave including a cross-slab that had not been recorded by the SKAS. A chain-link fence, swing-stile and information sign were also erected (Figure 2 & Plate 2).

Church Island graveyard was in use up to the 1950's (O'Shea 2005, 135).

4. Approach

Church Island is accessible by boat hire only. The informal, somewhat difficult, uneven, landing point is situated 150° N of the early medieval ecclesiastic complex (Plates 3-4).

4.1 Recommendations

The landing place should be improved, consolidated, made safer and a mooring bollard provided.

5. Entrance and boundaries

Most of the church and graveyard is enclosed by a modern drystone sub-rectangular wall that terminates in a crook-like fashion at the north-east corner of the church (Figure 2). A recently erected green chain-link fence connects the unenclosed section in a somewhat awkward manner at the north-east. A swing-stile access is provided through the fence (Plates 5-6). The enclosing wall is breached at the south (Figure 2 & Plate 7). No re-used architectural fragments were recorded on the enclosing wall.

5.1 Recommendations

The breach in the south should be repaired.

6. Services & Signage

Services are not provided. However, a dedicated all weather information sign is provided beside the stile (Plate 2).

6.1 Recommendations

No recommendations necessary.

7. Pathways

There are no pathways or desire lines in the interior of the very small burial ground which is well maintained and grass kept low.

7.1 Recommendations

No recommendations necessary

8. Tombs

There are only three tombs in Church Island graveyard (Figure 2 and Appendix 1). Two tombs, recorded in the South Kerry Archaeological Survey, that abutted the exterior south elevation of the church are no longer present (O'Sullivan & Sheehan 1996, 316). However, it was possible to map their location footprint (Figure 2). One of these tombs, the O'Connell tomb was previously recorded with a cross-slab as its cover. This cross-slab, (CS4), is now attached to the inside of the nave, (Plate 8 and see Cross-slab section below). The surviving tomb in this area (TB1) comprises a drystone house shaped structure of local sandstone (Plates 1, 7 & 9). There is no memorial plaque or name on the tomb. No re-used architectural fragments were noted on the tomb. Tomb 2 is situated a little to the north-west of the enclosing wall (Figure 2 & Plates 5 & 10). This coffin shaped tomb is further enclosed by a robust wrought iron railing with cast-iron uprights set in dressed limestone blocks (Plate 7). The limestone coffin shaped covering slab has recently been mechanically cleaned which has removed or partially removed some of the letters of the inscription that extends around it. However, it is most likely that the tomb is the burial place of Charles Baldwin Ware. Tomb 3 is a simple rectangular box form of squared sandstone blocks covered with an inscribed slate slab (Plate 11). The inscription records the deaths of Charlotte Clementi who died in 1854 aged 25 years and her daughter Edith Emma who died in 1862 aged 15 (Plate 12). The three tombs are in good order.

8.1 Recommendations

Enquiries should be made to the OPW regarding the removal of the tombs to update the site files.

9. Named Headstones

There is only one recorded modern named headstone on Church Island. The headstone, which is without a formal grave setting, is situated outside the west limits of the enclosure and records the death of Rev P.M. Cumming, rector of Prior and Dromod who died in 1855, (Figure 2 & Plate 13).

9.1 Recommendations

No recommendations necessary

10. Graveslabs

There are nine uninscribed horizontal graveslabs in Church Island. One is situated with the church; three others within *leacht* 3; four lie in a row at the north-east corner of the graveyard while the ninth is situated immediately east of the east gable of the church (Figure 2, Plate 14 & Appendix 3).

It is possible that GRVS 6 is a modern replacement for the fractured cross-slab CS 5 now attached to the interior of the nave (Figure 2 & Plate 8). It seems likely that the moved cross-slab, CS5, was then substituted with the current GRVS 6, (*ibid*, 317).

10.1 Recommendations

Enquiry should be made to the OPW regarding the possible substitution of the fractured cross-slab (CS5) and replacement with another slab GRVS 6.

11. Unnamed, unhewn, Gravemarkers

There are thirty-nine unhewn, unnamed gravemarkers in Church Island. The majority are disposed within the southern limits of the graveyard. These unnamed gravemarkers are denoted on the plan of the graveyard as blue triangles (Figure 2).

11.1 Recommendations

No recommendations necessary

12. Cross-slabs

The OPW information sign on Church Island states that eleven cross-slab (CS) are known on the island while the SKAS, confusingly, record ten (O'Sullivan & Sheehan 1996, 316) and later eleven (*ibid*, 319).

In the course of this survey ten cross slabs were recorded (Figure 2 & Appendix 6). One of these cross-slabs, CS7, was not previously recorded in the SKAS,(Figure 2 & Plate 15). Six cross-slabs are situated inside the nave of the church (Plates 8 & 16); three others are upright slabs in the burial ground (Plates 17-19) while the tenth lies recumbent in a row of graveslabs to the N-E of the church (Plates 14 & 20).

Two cross-slabs recorded by the SKAS were not identified in the course of this survey (SKAS, Nos. 7 & 10).

CS 1 known as the Anmchad slab is situated within *leacht* 3 outside the north elevation of the chancel (Figure 2 & Plate 18).

CS 2 is free standing immediately to the S-W of the nave of the church (Figure 2 & Plates 8 & 17). It was recorded as cross-slab 4 in the SKAS.

CS3 is attached to the inside north elevation of the nave (Figure 2 & Plates 8-21). It is also recorded as cross-slab no. 3 in the SKAS. This stone was previously recorded as lying *circa* 4m W of the church doorway (*ibid*, 320).

CS4 is attached to the inside north elevation of the nave (Figure 2 & Plates 8 & 22). It is also recorded as cross-slab no. 5 in the SKAS. This cross-slab is reputed to have marked the grave of St. Finan and when recorded by the SKAS it formed the lid of the O'Connell tomb that until recently was situated abutting the exterior south elevation of the nave (*ibid*, & Figure 2).

CS5 is attached to the inside north elevation of the nave (Figure 2 & Plates 8 & 23). It is recorded as cross-slab no. 6 in the SKAS. This stone was previously recorded as lying in a row of five other graveslabs to the N-E of the church (*ibid*).

CS6 is attached to the inside north elevation of the nave (Figure 2 & Plates 8 & 24). It is recorded as cross-slab no. 3 in the SKAS. This stone was previously recorded as lying 4m W of the church doorway and 2m N of CS3 (*ibid*, 320).

CS7 is attached to the inside north elevation of the nave (Figure 2 & Plates 8 & 15).

The motif on the broken slab fragment is a ringed cross-form with equal arms contained within a two-line outline design similar to the Anmchad slab (CS1) and CS3 (Figure 2, Plates 18 & 24). The face of the stone is much decayed with the outer lamination missing in patches. The somewhat kite shaped fragment is also spalled at the top and bottom where the breaks appear fresh. The lack of any lichen growth on the spalling indicate that that the breaks occurred in the recent past.

CS8 is a small outline cross *in situ* on the inside north elevation of the nave (Figure 2 & Plate 25).It was recorded as cross-slab 11 by the SKAS (*ibid*, 321).

CS9 is a small upright stone at the head of a graveslab (GRVS No. 6)- one of a row of five horizontal slabs to the N-E of the church (Figure 2 & Plate 19).It was recorded as cross-slab no.8 by the SKAS (*ibid*, 320).

CS10 is the southernmost recumbent slab of a row situated to the N-E of the church (Figure 2 & Plate 20). The inscribed cross is now hardly visible and barely discernible. It was recorded by the SKAS as cross-slab no. 9, (*ibid*, 321).

Two cross-slabs previously recorded by the SKAS, nos.7 & 10 were not located in the course of this survey, (*ibid* 320 & 321).

In total it would appear that **twelve** cross-slabs and not eleven are known from Church Island. The additional cross-slab, CS7 was recently attached to the nave of the church by the OPW but its original provenance or the other fragments from it are unknown.

The whereabouts of the two cross-slabs not located in the course of this survey may be a reflection of the appalling weather in the course of this survey.

12.1 Recommendations

Enquiries into the recent work by the OPW should be undertaken to update the existing files and tease out some of the issues raised in this survey regarding the cross-slabs, especially CS7 and their recent movement etc.

13. Leachta

There are three *leachta* within the graveyard on the northern limits of the church (Figure 2, Plates 5, 26-27 and Appendix). Two of which are surmounted by pillar stones (Figure 2 & Appendix 4). Leacht 1 is situated to the N-W of the church and is the reputed grave of St. Finan (*ibid* 319). Leacht 2, situated immediately north of the east end on the nave. It is surmounted by a large pillar stone and is the smaller of the three leachta (Figure 2 & Appendix 4). Leacht 3 is the largest of the three. The low flat sod covered structure is demarcated by a rectangular setting of stones. It encompasses a low pillar stone and a small unhewn upright gravemarker as well as the Anmchad cross-slab (Plate 18). Three possible horizontal graveslabs (GRVS Nos. 2-4, Figure 2) are also included in the *leacht* like structure.

13.1 Recommendations

No recommendations necessary

14. Pillar Stones

Three pillar stones were recorded, two of which stand upright in *leachta* 2 & 3 while the third pillar stone stands beside the W gable of the church at the S side of the doorway (Figure 2, Plate 28 & Appendix 7).

14.1 Recommendations

No recommendations necessary

15. Architectural fragments

Three loose architectural fragments (AFs) were recorded, two are situated immediately outside the doorway of the church within a loose pile of stones while the third stone stands against the interior S-W corner of the church (Figure 2 & Appendix 5). AF 1 comprises a small triangular fragment of sandstone masonry lying loosely on a small pile of stones. AF 2 is a small section of Romanesque roll-moulding possibly from one of the orders forming the S side of the doorway (Plate 29 & Appendix 5).

AF 3 comprises a rectangular block, 0.20m X 0.20m X 0.40m, of sandstone with a possible stylized zoomorphic interlaced motif featured on its short face (Figure 2 & Plates 30-31). These loose, small, mobiliary architectural fragments, especially AF3, will disappear if they are not secured or removed.

15.1 Recommendations

These three small loose mobiliary architectural fragments should be secured *in situ* if possible otherwise they should be removed to a safe repository for their preservation.

16. Quern / millstone

A fragment of a rotary quern and half of a possible millstone or quern were recorded (Figure 2 & Appendix 8). The quern fragment lies on the pile of stones that also contains two architectural fragments while the millstone lies 2m to the W beside a section of a bullaun stone. The millstone/ quern fragment was previously recorded on the altar in the church (*ibid*, 319).

16.1 Recommendations

These two small loose mobiliary quern fragments should be secured *in situ* if possible otherwise they should be removed to a safe repository for their preservation.

17. Bullaun stone

A split section of a small bullaun stone was recorded beside the millstone fragment beside the boundary wall immediately to the W of the doorway to the church (Figure 2, Plate 32 & Appendix 9). The bullaun fragment was previously recorded on the altar in the church with the millstone fragment (*ibid*, 319).

17.1 Recommendations

The bullaun fragment should be secured *in situ* if possible otherwise it should be removed to a safe repository for its preservation.

18. Summary of recommendations for future management/conservation of Church Island church & graveyard

- The landing place on Church Island should be improved and a mooring bollard provided.
- A shelter should be provided for inclement weather.
- Further enquiry should be undertaken with regard to the recent work undertaken at the site by the OPW to better understand the changes / alterations that took place and to further determine where CS7 originated from.
- The loose architectural fragments and other artefacts should be secured and made safe. Further, enquiry should also be made to the OPW as to the whereabouts of the other architectural fragments recorded in the SKAS.

Note on Recommendations

All recommendations as set out above are recommendations only based on visual site fieldwork undertaken by the writer. No invasive or other intervention work was undertaken in the course of producing this report. Access into the surviving church tower was not possible as the entrance was boarded up. Ultimately, no responsibility will be accepted by the writer with regard to the undertaking of the conservation work as recommended in this report and based only on visual inspection. The ultimate decision on recommendations etc rests with Kerry County Council and the National Monuments Service of the Dept. of Environment Heritage and Local Government.

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20. Figures



Figure 1: Site location map. Extract from OSI online mapping. Church Island graveyard encircled.

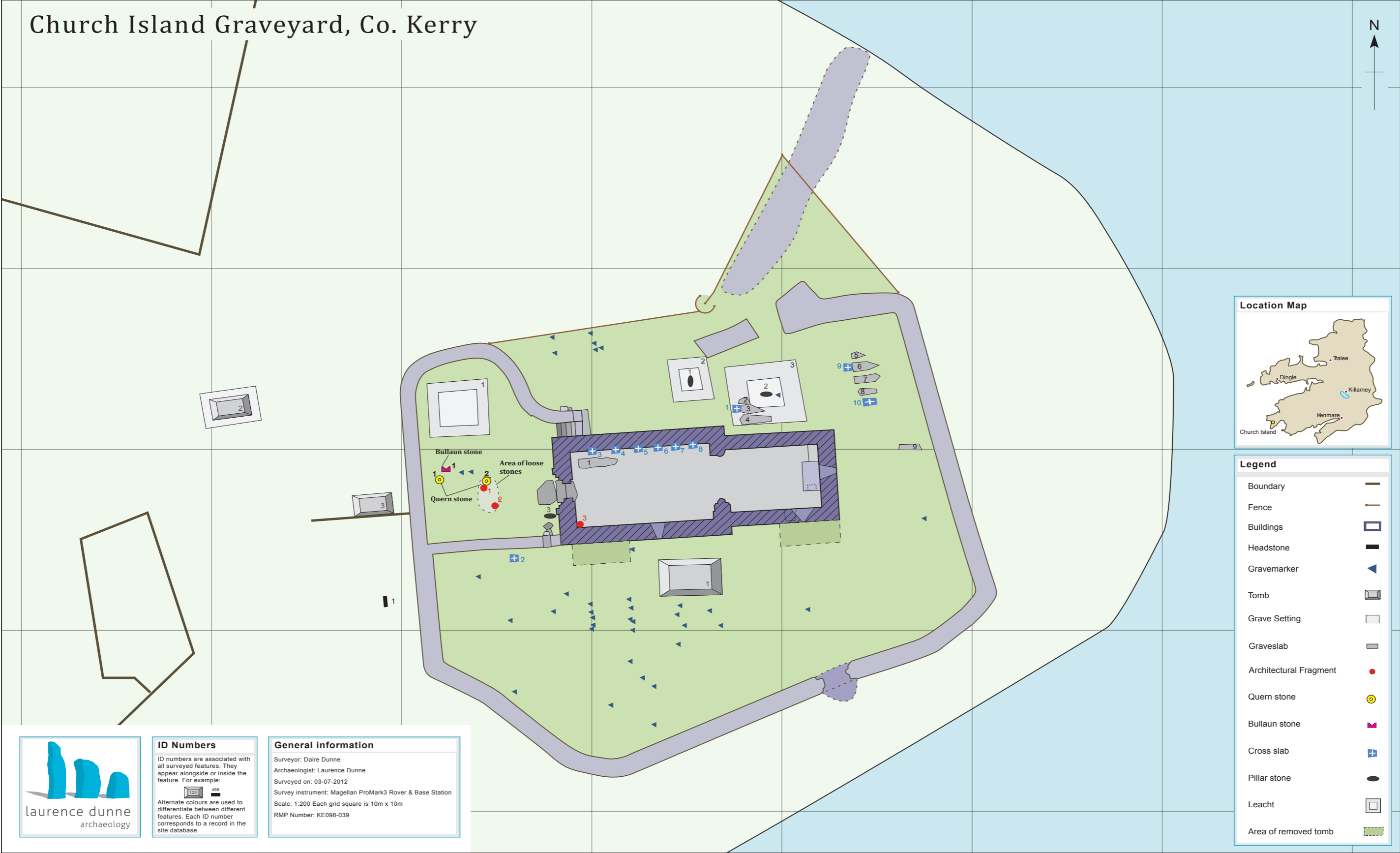


Figure 2: Archaeological survey plan of Church Island church and graveyard.

21. Plates



Plate 1: View from S-E of interior of Church Island burial ground. Note the absence of the E gable buttresses and the two abutting tombs at the S elevation



Plate 2: View of modern chain-link fence, swing-stile and information sign at Church Island from N



Plate 3: View S from northernmost limits of landing point at Church Island



Plate 4: View from S of landing point at Church Island



Plate 5: View of curving section of graveyard enclosing wall at the N-W limits of site. The crook-like meander is disposed around the leacht of St. Finan



Plate 6: View of Church Island church and burial ground from N-W



Plate 7: View on interior S limits of Church Island burial from E. Note breach in boundary wall on left of plate



Plate 8: View of recently attached cross-slabs on the interior north elevation of the nave of the Romanesque church at Church Island



Plate 9: View of the remaining drystone house-shaped tomb outside the S elevation of the nave



Plate 10: View of the Baldwin-Ware tomb



Plate 11: View of the Clementi tomb from W



Plate 12: Overview image of inscription on the Clementi slate tomb-slab

Plate 13: View of the Re. P.M. Cumming slate headstone. The headstone is the only modern upright headstone at the site



Plate 14: View from W of the row of graveslabs and two cross-slabs at the N-E area of the burial ground



Plate 15: Close-up view of cross-slab CS7 on the nave of the church. Note the fresh spalling at the top and the surviving patch outer lamination of its face



Plate 16: View of nave from the chancel arch. Note the cross-slabs attached to the wall and the loose architectural fragment at the S-W corner

Plate 17: View of cross-slab, CS2, from S-E



Plate 18: View of Anmchad cross-slab, CS1, from W

Plate 19: View of cross-slab, CS9, from W



Plate 20: View of recumbent cross-slab, CS10, from E

Plate 21: View of cross-slab, CS3 on interior N elevation of nave



Plate 22: View of cross-slab, CS4 on interior N elevation of nave

Plate 23: View of cross-slab, CS5, on interior N elevation of nave



Plate 24: View of cross-slab, CS6, on interior N elevation of nave



Plate 25: View of in situ cross-slab, CS8, on interior N elevation of nave



Plate 26: View of leacht 3 from N-W



Plate 27: View of leacht 2 from N-W



Plate 28: View of pillar-stone 3
immediately outside the S orders of the
doorway on the W gable of the church



Plate 29: View of roll-moulding fragment, (AF2), lying loose on a pile of stones outside the doorway on the W gable of the church



Plate 30: Upright view of architectural fragment, (AF3), in the SW corner of the nave of the church

Plate 31: Close-up view of the motif on the short face of AF3



Plate 32: View of split fragment of possible bullaun stone lying loose immediately W of the church


22. Appendix 1 Tombs

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Surname: | Baldwin Ware |
| Tomb No: | 2 |
| Photo No: | 100, 101 |




| | |
|---------------|---|
| Notes: | |
| Collapsed | N |
| Open | N |
| Rendered | N |
| Overgrown | N |

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Surname: | Unknown |
| Tomb No: | 1 |
| Photo No: | 89 |



| | |
|---------------|---|
| Notes: | |
| Collapsed | N |
| Open | N |
| Rendered | N |
| Overgrown | N |

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| Surname: | Clementi |
| Tomb No: | 3 |
| Photo No: | 112, 113 |



| | |
|---------------|---|
| Notes: | |
| Collapsed | N |
| Open | N |
| Rendered | N |
| Overgrown | N |

23. Appendix 2 Named Headstones

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| Surname: | Cumming |
| Grave No: | 1 |
| Photo No: | 114 |



24. Appendix 3 Graveslabs

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Surname: | Unknown |
| MGS No: | 1 |
| Photo No: | 102 |



| | |
|---------------|--|
| Notes: | |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Surname: | Unknown |
| MGS No: | 3 |
| Photo No: | 94 |



| | |
|---------------|--|
| Notes: | |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Surname: | Unknown |
| MGS No: | 5 |
| Photo No: | 107 |



| | |
|---------------|--|
| Notes: | |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Surname: | Unknown |
| MGS No: | 2 |
| Photo No: | 95 |



| | |
|---------------|--|
| Notes: | |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Surname: | Unknown |
| MGS No: | 4 |
| Photo No: | 93 |



| | |
|---------------|--|
| Notes: | |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Surname: | Unknown |
| MGS No: | 6 |
| Photo No: | 106 |



| | |
|---------------|--|
| Notes: | |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Surname: | Unknown |
| MGS No: | 7 |
| Photo No: | 105 |



| | |
|---------------|--|
| Notes: | |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Surname: | Unknown |
| MGS No: | 9 |
| Photo No: | 90 |



| | |
|---------------|--|
| Notes: | |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Surname: | Unknown |
| MGS No: | 8 |
| Photo No: | 104 |



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| Notes: | |
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25. Appendix 4 Leachta

ID No: 1

Photo No: 81



Notes:

ID No: 3

Photo No: 92



Notes:

ID No: 2

Photo No: 98



Notes:

26. Appendix 5 Architectural Fragments

AF No: 1

Photo No: 88



Notes:

AF No: 3

Photo No: 3500



Notes:

AF No: 2

Photo No: 87




Notes:


27. Appendix 6 Cross Slabs


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|---|----|
| CS No: | 1 |
| Photo No: | 96 |
|  | |
| Notes: | |

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| CS No: | 2 |
| Photo No: | 85 |
|  | |
| Notes: | |

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|--|------|
| CS No: | 3 |
| Photo No: | 3570 |
|  | |
| Notes: | |

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| CS No: | 4 |
| Photo No: | 3569 |
|  | |
| Notes: | |

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| CS No: | 5 |
| Photo No: | 3568 |
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| Notes: | |

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| CS No: | 6 |
| Photo No: | 3567 |
|  | |
| Notes: | |

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| CS No: | 7 |
| Photo No: | 3566 |



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| Notes: | |
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| CS No: | 9 |
| Photo No: | 115 |



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| Notes: | |
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| CS No: | 8 |
| Photo No: | 3571 |




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| Notes: | |
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| CS No: | 10 |
| Photo No: | 103 |




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| Notes: | |
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28. Appendix 7 Pillar Stones

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|---|--------------|
| ID No: | 1 |
| Photo No: | 99 |
|  | |
| Notes: | Pillar Stone |

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|--|--------------|
| ID No: | 2 |
| Photo No: | 97 |
|  | |
| Notes: | Pillar Stone |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| ID No: | 3 |
| Photo No: | 84 |
|  | |
| Notes: | Pillar Stone |

29. Appendix 8 Quern Stones

QS No: 1

Photo No: 82



Notes: Quern Stone

QS No: 2

Photo No: 86



Notes: Quern Stone

30. Appendix 9 Bullaun Stones

ID No: 1

Photo No: 83



Notes: Bullaun Stone