

Archaeological Survey,  
Cummer Graveyard,  
Ahane,  
Glencar,  
Co. Kerry.

October 2008

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

RMP No.: KE064-014

Written by: Karen Buckley  
Laurence Dunne

**Contact details:**

3, Lios na Lohart, Ballyvelly,  
Tralee, Co. Kerry.  
Tel.: 066 712 0706  
E-mail: [tralee@eachtra.ie](mailto:tralee@eachtra.ie)  
Web Site: [www.eachtra.ie](http://www.eachtra.ie)

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**Townland:** Ahane

**Parish:** Knockane

**Barony:** Dunkerron North

**Local name of graveyard:** Cummer

**NGR:** 73220, 87490

**RMP No.:** KE064-014

**No. of named tombs:** 0

**No. of unnamed tombs:** 0

**No. of inscribed headstones:** 36

**No. of unnamed headstones:** 1

**No. of unnamed grave-markers:** 20

**No. of architectural fragments:** 0

**No. of cross slabs:** 1

**No. of mass rocks:** 1

## 1. Introduction

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Cummer graveyard was surveyed using a Trimble Pro X-H GPS (Figure 1). The survey is linked to GPS and tied into the National Grid. The graveyard plan was produced 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 attached A1 plan). A digital photographic record and surname database was also compiled to complement the cartographic survey (Appendices 1 - 4). Photographs of the features within the graveyard are referenced in the appendix and all photographs are provided on the attached disc.

The survey was undertaken in May 2008.

## 2. Site Location & Description

---

Cummer graveyard is located in the townland of Ahane which is situated approximately 7km south and 9km southeast from the village of Glenbeigh and town of Killorglin, respectively (Figure 2).

Sited close to Lough Caragh, the graveyard is positioned south of a third class road and gently slopes from north to south while the ground surface is irregular and undulating in places (Plate 1).

There is a small lay-by for parking for a small number of vehicles to the west and north of the entrance gate which is set back from the third class road.

The interior of the graveyard is in very good condition and is obviously well maintained.

There is no service tap.

There are no refuse disposal facilities and while neat and tidy on the day of the survey, such facilities should be provided for the graveyard.

The graveyard is recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) as KE064-014 classified as '*ecclesiastical remains*' with sub classifications of KE064-014:01 '*Children's Burial Ground*', KE064-014:02 '*Cross-slab*', KE064-014:03 '*Bullaun Stone*' and KE064-014:04 '*Mass rock*'.

The graveyard was recorded as part of the Iveragh Peninsula Archaeological Survey (O' Sullivan & Sheehan 1996, 251 & 252), where it is also referred to as Killeen Burial Ground:

*“This D- shaped enclosure is located on the E side of the Caragh river valley, abutting the modern road from Killorglin to Glencar. The land slopes down to the SE and the site is located in a clearing in an afforested area. Modern walls enclose it at N and E, while its S limits are defined by a 3.6m high scarp. At W traces survive of an enclosing bank that measures 1.05m high externally, 2.5m wide and .5m internally. Remnants of this stony bank also underlie the later wall at N. The enclosed area measures 42m N-S x 39.4m E-W internally. A modern burial-area occupies the central area of the enclosure and is bounded by numerous uninscribed grave-markers to W and S. These average .15m high and .18m wide. Also occurring within the site is a cross-inscribed slab and a boulder which is locally referred to as a mass-rock...”*

The graveyard is illustrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map 1842 as a sub-circular dotted line (Figure 4).

### 3. Boundaries

The boundaries in general are in a poor state of repair. The best preserved section is in the immediate vicinity of the entrance gate where the drystone construction of local sandstone is apparent. The remainder of the boundaries are extremely overgrown with brambles and trees, with the southern and eastern boundaries in particular being almost inaccessible (Plate 2). The western boundary is mature hedgerow and earthen bank which is not in such an overgrown state as the rest of the enclosure. Some small-scale dumping of waste has taken place near the eastern boundary (Plate 3).

#### 3.1 Recommendations

The overgrowth of brambles on all boundaries but especially the northern, eastern and southern boundaries should be cut back.

Refuse facilities should be provided for the graveyard.

### 4. Entrance

The entrance is located towards the northwestern end of the northern boundary wall (Plates 1 & 3).

The locally forged gate is set between two squat square sandstone piers which are in a good state of repair.

#### 4.1 Recommendations

The interior immediately inside the entrance gate should be stepped or graded to provide safer access/egress for visitors, especially for the elderly. A handrail would also be a suitable addition.

### 5. Pathways

A steep grassed over gravel path extends south, southwest-wards and southeast-wards from immediately inside the entrance gate (Plate 1).

### 6. Desire Lines

The grounds of the graveyard are well maintained and relatively easy to traverse, and coupled with the small size of the graveyard, the recommendation of desire lines is not required in this instance.

### 7. Named & Unnamed Tombs

No tombs are present within this graveyard.

### 8. Inscribed Headstones & Grave Plots

A total of 36 inscribed headstones were recorded across both the old and new areas of Cummer graveyard.

Three stones were found to have unusual inscriptions with two dating from the 1700's, (ref.



no. 8 & 9), with the former inscribed with 'BXXWM 1719' and the latter with 'A.S. 1796(?)' (Plates 5 & 6, respectively). The third stone dates from 1819 (ref. no. 2) and was inscribed with letters which made no obvious sense; 'HLRCDE 1819' (Plate 7).

One named headstone, Foley, (ref. no. 42), is becoming overgrown by shrubs and planting by the grave plot and the railing which formalises the plot is sunken and obscured by this overgrowth (Plate 8).

## 9. Unnamed Headstones & Grave Plots

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1 unnamed grave (ref. no. 110) was recorded within the graveyard (Plate 9).

This was a recently dug grave for which no temporary plaque was established at the time of the survey.

Unnamed headstones are grouped together with the unnamed gravemarkers on the plan of the graveyard (Figure 1 and attached A1 plan).

## 10. Unnamed Gravemarkers

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20 gravemarkers were recorded within the graveyard.

The unhewn sandstone grave-markers are identifiable as a rubble stone or roughly rectangular stone completely devoid of any inscription or decoration.

They are generally low set and rise above the ground surface for an average 0.3m. Occasionally, a distinguishing feature of these stones is a semi-circular concave shape cut into the stone, often at the top of the stone.

Gravemarkers are grouped together with the unnamed headstones on the plan of the graveyard (Figure 1 and attached A1 plan)

## 11. Cross Slab

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The cross slab (ref. no. 56) was recorded as part of the Iveragh Peninsula Archaeological Survey (ibid, 251 & 252): "*This slab is located in the site's SE quadrant and stands 1.2m high.*"

*It is orientated N-S, measures .36m x 1m at base and inclines slightly towards SE. On its W face is a large, encircled, linear cross. Its arms terminate just short of the circle, while its shaft extends beyond it and features a T-shaped terminal”.*

The cross slab today stands in the same location as recorded above and its inscribed cross is still easily visible (Plate 10).

## 12. Mass Rock

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The mass rock (ref. no. 58) was recorded as part of the Iveragh Peninsula Archaeological Survey (ibid, 251 & 252): “*Located in the NE corner of the site, this large boulder measures 1.3m long and .65m high. It bears three incised Latin crosses and two motifs that consist of linear grooves terminating in expansions with radial lines. Resting on its SE end is an irregularly shaped stone, measuring .39m x .29m, which features a hemispherical depression, .08m in diameter and .03m deep*”.

The mass rock today is largely unchanged since being recorded above (Plates 11 & 12). However, the *irregularly shaped stone* described above is no longer present and a search of the graveyard proved fruitless. A chance encounter with the ex-caretaker, Dan Foley, while on site provided a little information as to its disappearance, largely that it vanished over night several years ago and has not been seen since.

## 13. Dangerous areas of ground or collapse

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There are no dangerous areas of ground as such but two small sunken areas were noted in the graveyard. These may represent graves for which the marker has long since disappeared or robbed out.

### 13.1 Recommendations

These sunken areas should be made good and their location denoted with a rubble stone similar to the other gravemarkers in the vicinity. This work may require Ministerial Consent.

## 14. Description of buildings within Cummer graveyard

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Archaeologically and historically, there are no buildings associated with Cummer graveyard (Figures 3 & 4).

## 15. Summary of recommendations for future management/conservation of Cummer graveyard

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- A service tap should be installed adjacent to the interior of the entrance gate.
- Refuse facilities for the graveyard should be provided as soon as possible.
- The overgrowth of brambles all boundaries but especially the northern, eastern and southern boundaries should be cut back.
- The interior immediately inside the entrance gate should be stepped or graded to provide safer access/egress for visitors, especially for the elderly. A handrail would also be a suitable addition.
- The two sunken areas should be made good and their location denoted with a rubble stone similar to the other gravemarkers in the vicinity. This work may require Ministerial Consent.
- The use of broad spectrum weedkillers, used for maintaining the grounds of the graveyards, is not deemed acceptable and should be discouraged.
- An information board similar to one already existing at Killury graveyard, in Lisscurrig townland near Causeway, should be established at a suitable location within the graveyard, most likely to the east of the entrance gate on its interior giving information about the mass-rock and cross slab in particular.
- *The Care and Conservation of Graveyards*, a publication from The Office of Public Works (OPW) is recommended reading for future maintenance of the church and graveyard.
- An informative booklet on Cummer graveyard should be compiled by Kerry County Council and supplied to the relevant parish church. It should include helpful tips for parishioners on caring for the graveyard, and the individual plots, as well as giving advice about works which may professional services such as the cleaning of old headstones etc.
- All primary ground works should be archaeologically monitored and all features recorded and protected.

### 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. 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.**

## 16. References

- Burra Charter 1979. (*Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance*). Australia.
- Condit, E (ed). 1987. *Recording the Past from Ancient Churchyards and Other Sources*. Wordwell Ltd., Dublin 2.
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- O'Donovan, J. 1841. *The Antiquities of the County of Kerry*, Royal Carbery Books, Cork, 1983.
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- Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland, 1995. *Guidelines for the Conservation of Buildings*. Dublin.
- Venice Charter 1964. (*Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*). Venice.
- County Kerry Development Plan, Draft, 2003-2009.

## 17 Figures

**Figure 1: Plan of Cummer Graveyard 2008.**

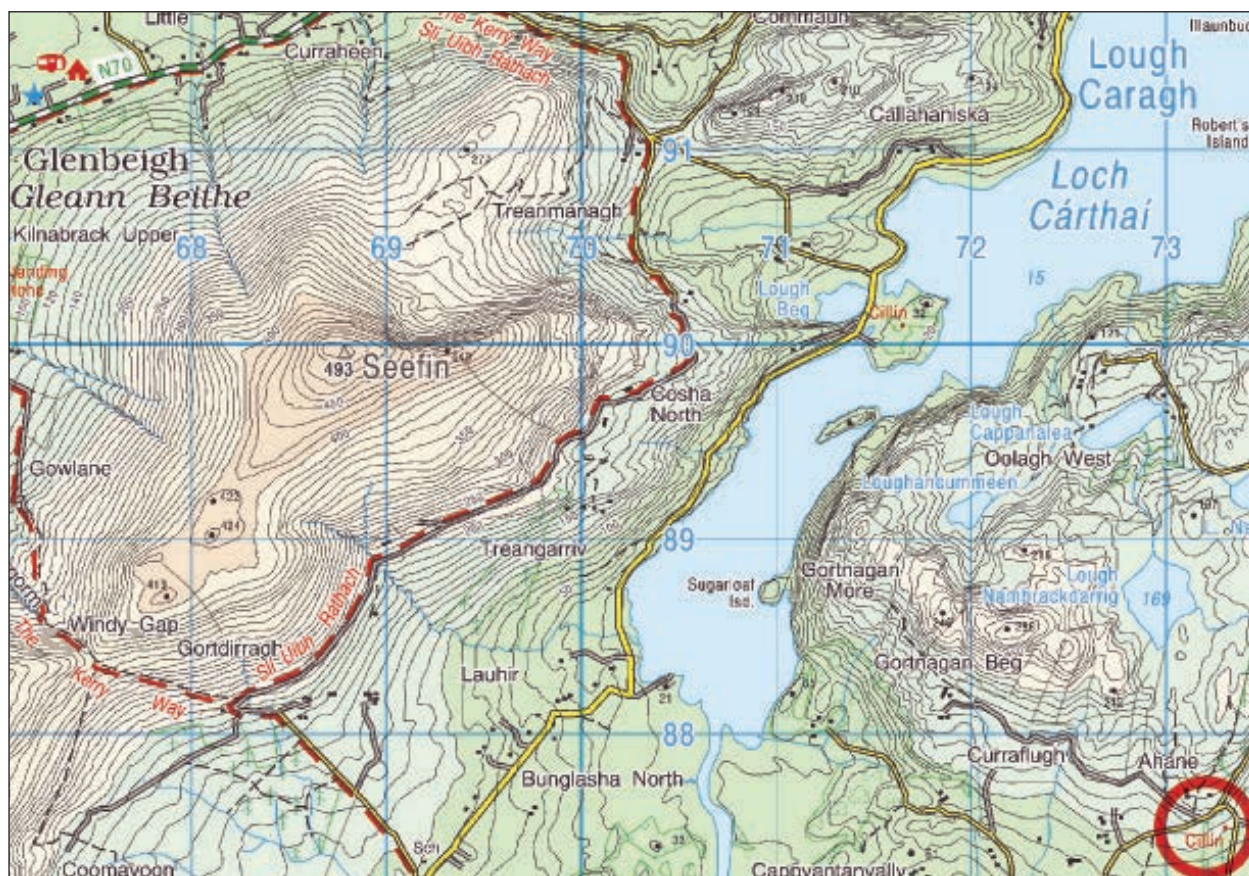


Figure 2: Extract from OS Discovery Series map with Cummer graveyard highlighted in red.



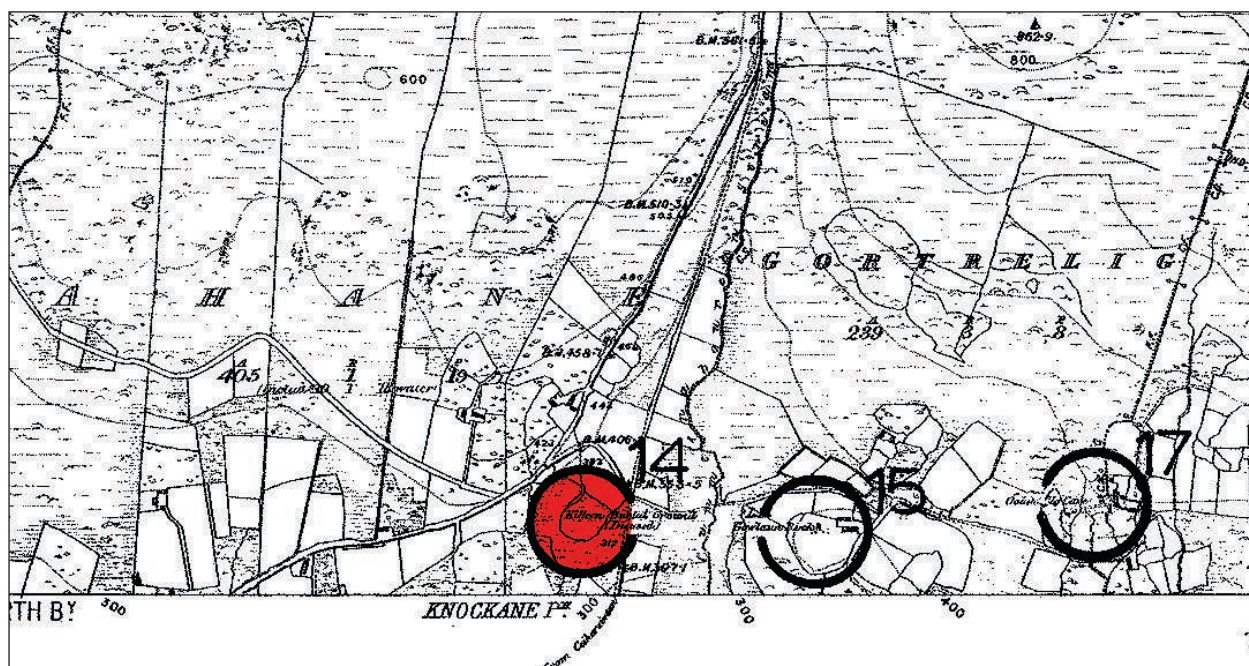


Figure 3: Extract from RMP Sheet 64 with Cummer graveyard highlighted in red.



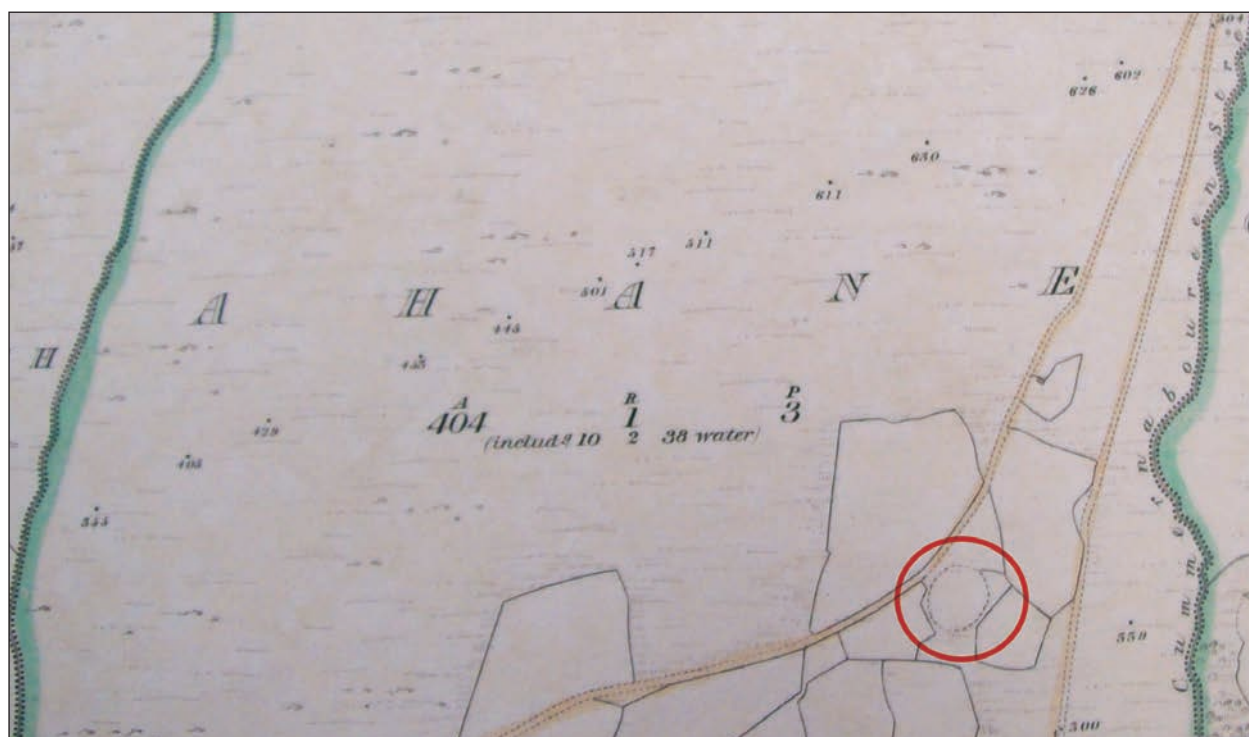


Figure 4: Extract from 1st edition OS map Sheet 64 with Cummer graveyard highlighted in red.

## 18 Plates

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Plate 1: View of Cummer graveyard, from north



Plate 2: View of eastern boundary, from south





**Plate 3: Interior view of entrance, from south**



**Plate 4: View of dumping from recent grave-digging along eastern boundary, from west**





Plate 5: View of inscribed stone dating from 1719, ref. no. 8, from east



Plate 6: View of inscribed stone dating from 1796, ref. no. 9, from southeast





Plate 7: View of inscribed stone dating from 1819, ref. no. 2, from east



Plate 8: View of Foley headstone (ref. no. 42) which has a sunken and overgrown railing from south



**Plate 9: View of recent unnamed grave (ref. 110) in southeast corner of graveyard, from east**



**Plate 10: View of Cross Slab, KE064-014:03, from west**




**Plate 11: View of Mass Rock, KE064-014:04, from south**





**Plate 12: View of Mass Rock, KE064-014:04, from northeast**





## 19 Appendix 1 Inscribed Headstones

Surname	A.S.
Grave No	9
Photo No	100-4025
Photo	

Surname	B.X.X.W.M.
Grave No	8
Photo No	100-4024
Photo	

Surname	Breen
Grave No	48
Photo No	100-4049
Photo	


Surname	Breen
Grave No	47
Photo No	100-4048
Photo	

Surname	Carey
Grave No	34
Photo No	100-4037
Photo	


Surname	Clifford
Grave No	20
Photo No	100-4031
Photo	

Surname	Doherty
Grave No	12
Photo No	100-4026
Photo	

Surname	Doherty
Grave No	25
Photo No	100-4034
Photo	

Surname	Foley
Grave No	36
Photo No	100-4039
Photo	


Surname	Foley
Grave No	45
Photo No	100-4046
Photo	


Surname	Foley
Grave No	52
Photo No	100-4054
Photo	

Surname	Foley
Grave No	42
Photo No	100-4045
Photo	




<b>Surname</b>	H.L.R.C.D.E.
<b>Grave No</b>	2
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4023
<b>Photo</b>	


<b>Surname</b>	Lucey
<b>Grave No</b>	22
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4032
<b>Photo</b>	


<b>Surname</b>	McGillycuddy
<b>Grave No</b>	16
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4028
<b>Photo</b>	


<b>Surname</b>	McGillycuddy
<b>Grave No</b>	17
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4028
<b>Photo</b>	


<b>Surname</b>	McGillycuddy
<b>Grave No</b>	18
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4029
<b>Photo</b>	


<b>Surname</b>	McNamara
<b>Grave No</b>	15
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4027
<b>Photo</b>	


<b>Surname</b>	Moriarty
<b>Grave No</b>	49
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4050
<b>Photo</b>	


<b>Surname</b>	Morris
<b>Grave No</b>	46
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4047
<b>Photo</b>	


<b>Surname</b>	Murphy
<b>Grave No</b>	1
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4022
<b>Photo</b>	


<b>Surname</b>	Murphy
<b>Grave No</b>	35
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4038
<b>Photo</b>	


<b>Surname</b>	O Brien
<b>Grave No</b>	54
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4056
<b>Photo</b>	


<b>Surname</b>	O Connor
<b>Grave No</b>	39
<b>Photo No</b>	100-4042
<b>Photo</b>	


Surname	O Connor
Grave No	24
Photo No	100-4033
Photo	


Surname	O Connor
Grave No	23
Photo No	100-4033
Photo	


Surname	O Connor
Grave No	50
Photo No	100-4051
Photo	

Surname	O Connor
Grave No	41
Photo No	100-4044
Photo	


Surname	O Connor
Grave No	40
Photo No	100-4043
Photo	


Surname	O Mahony
Grave No	29
Photo No	100-4035
Photo	


Surname	O Mahony
Grave No	30
Photo No	100-4036
Photo	

Surname	O Sullivan
Grave No	37
Photo No	100-4040
Photo	

Surname	O Sullivan
Grave No	19
Photo No	100-4030
Photo	

Surname	O Sullivan
Grave No	38
Photo No	100-4041
Photo	

Surname	Quirke
Grave No	51
Photo No	100-4052
Photo	

Surname	Quirke
Grave No	53
Photo No	100-4055
Photo	

## 20 Appendix 2 Unnamed Headstones and Gravemarkers


Grave No.	Notes	Photo No.
3	Grave Marker	
4	Grave Marker	
5	Grave Marker	
6	Grave Marker	
7	Grave Marker	
10	Grave Marker	
11	Grave Marker	
13	Grave Marker	
14	Grave Marker	
21	Grave Marker	
26	Grave Marker	
27	Grave Marker	
28	Grave Marker	
31	Grave Marker	
32	Grave Marker	
33	Grave Marker	
43	Grave Marker	
44	Grave Marker	
55	Grave Marker	
57	Grave Marker	

## 21 Appendix 3 Cross Slab

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ID No.	56
Photo No.	100-4014
Photo	
Notes	

## 22 Appendix 4 Mass Rock and Unnamed Grave Plot

<b>ID No.</b>	110
<b>Photo No.</b>	100-4057
<b>Photo</b>	
<b>Notes</b>	Unnamed Grave Plot

<b>ID No.</b>	58
<b>Photo No.</b>	100-4058
<b>Photo</b>	
<b>Notes</b>	Mass Rock