Archaeological Survey, Curra Graveyard, Glenbeigh, Co. Kerry.

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Client: The Heritage Office,

Kerry County Council,

County Buildings,

Ratass, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Karen Buckley

Laurence Dunne

RMP No.: KE063-008

Contact details:

3, Lios na Lohart, Ballyvelly, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Tel.: 066 712 0706
E-mail: tralee@eachtra.ie
Web Site: www.eachtra.ie

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Townland: Curra
Parish: Glanbehy
Barony: Iveragh
Local name of graveyard: Curra / Killeen
NGR: 66390, 90300
RMP No.: KE063-008
No. of named tombs: 0
No. of unnamed tombs: 0
No. of inscribed headstones: 123
No. of unnamed headstones: 1
No. of unnamed grave-markers: 42
No. of architectural fragments: 0
No. of cross slabs: 2

1. Introduction

Curra 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 - 3). 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

Curra graveyard is located in the townland of Curra, located less than 1km southwest of Glenbeigh village (Figure 2, Plate 1).

The burial ground is also known as Killeen graveyard and is signposted as such on the outskirts of Glenbeigh village but the signage outside the graveyard itself states Curra Burial Ground.

The graveyard is positioned south of a third class road and gently slopes from north to south.

There are extensive views to the south, east and west while to the north, views are restricted by forestry.

There is parking space outside the graveyard for approximately 4-5 cars and this, combined with the narrow road, is a possible traffic hazard.

The interior of the graveyard is in good condition with no overgrown grass or plants, or breaches to the boundaries.

There is no water tap to service the burial ground.

There are no formal refuse facilities for the graveyard and consequently there are two areas of dumping; one in the extreme southwest corner (Plate 2) and the other immediately to the west inside the entrance gate.

A modern concrete seat is located in the northeastern corner of the graveyard next to a cherry blossom tree.

Five trees are growing within the graveyard; two holly, two evergreen and one ash tree.

The graveyard is recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) as KE063-008 classified as a *Children's Burial Ground* (Figure 3).

The graveyard was recorded as part of the Iveragh Peninsula Archaeological Survey (O' Sullivan & Sheehan 1996, 327); "...It is noted as an unenclosed children's burial ground in the OSNB...but was in use as a formal graveyard for at least part of twentieth century. Towards the centre of the site is an overgrown area, marked by holly and ash trees, which measures 28m N-S x 27m E-W and is raised .7m on average above the surrounding ground level. On its uneven surface area approximately 100 uninscribed upright slabs; these average .3m high and most are aligned in NW-SE rows. There are similar grave markers in the S portion of the graveyard but these appear to be of a more recent date. A small slab at the N end of the site bears a plain Latin cross on its NE face".

The 1st edition OS map 1842 (Figure 4) illustrates a rectangular enclosed area, and an examination of the Ordnance Survey Namebooks and Ordnance Survey Letters reveals that it makes no reference as to whether the graveyard was enclosed or unenclosed.

2.1 Recommendations

A water tap should be installed along the northern boundary to service the graveyard.

Formal refuse facilities should be provided as soon as possible.

3. Boundaries

The northern boundary comprises a modern rubble sandstone wall mortared with cement with concrete capping atop which is a modern cast iron railing, and the boundary contains a centrally disposed entrance (Plate 3). The wall has a maximum exterior height of 0.75m and an interior height of 1.58m, and a width of 0.65m. The eastern boundary is a drystone rubble sandstone wall with concrete capping atop which is a sheep wire fence. This wall measures 1m in height and 0.7m in width.

An overgrown drystone wall and sheep wire fence forms the western boundary and ranges in height from 0.5m to 1m, while a double sheep wire fence bounds the burial ground to the south, beyond which is the Behy River.

There are no breaches to the boundaries of the graveyard.

4. Entrance

The entrance is centrally disposed in the northern boundary and comprises a modern castiron entrance gate, 4m in width, set between two rubble sandstone piers with forward pointing which have an exterior height of 1.8m and interior height of 2.2m, and are 0.6m in width (Plate 4).

5. Pathways

A centrally disposed firm gravel pathway services the graveyard from immediately inside the entrance gate, running southwards before veering to the east towards the boundary wall. Grass worn pathways are present elsewhere. The regular maintenance of the graveyard ensures that grass growth is kept to a minimum for easy navigation.

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

There are no tombs within Curra graveyard.

8. Inscribed Headstones & Grave Plots

123 inscribed headstones were recorded within the graveyard.

The majority of headstones and graves are in a very good condition.

Three graves (ref. no's 30, 40 and 91) have small areas of earthen collapse.

The headstone is broken for grave no. 94 (Plate 5).

Two ex-situ 19th century headstones are lying on top of grave no. 206 with the uppermost headstone recording the deaths of John and Julia Power in 1867 (Plate 6).

8.1 Recommendations

The areas of collapse in graves 30, 40 and 91 should be repaired and made good.

The headstone for grave no. 94 should be repaired and made good.

This work may require Ministerial Consent.

The two *ex-situ* 19th century headstones lying on top of grave no. 206, should be removed from this grave and placed somewhere secure within the graveyard to prevent possible damage in the future.

9. Unnamed Headstones & Grave Plots

1 unnamed headstone was recorded within the graveyard (Plate 7).

10. Unnamed Gravemarkers

42 gravemarkers were recorded within the graveyard with the vast majority of these gravemarkers having associated footer stones.

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).

The gravemarkers in this burial ground were noticeably organised and neat with the header and footer stone clearly evident for the majority of the burials.

A memorial plaque, possibly for the previous anonymous burials of three children, was recorded beneath one of the evergreen trees on the eastern side of the graveyard (Plate 8). Alternatively, it may record the death of the Adam commemorated by his parents Jane and

Anthony. The plaque is inscribed with

Beloved

Adam

10.5.69

Jane

Anthony

The Iveragh Peninsula Survey (ibid) recorded 'Towards the centre of the site is an overgrown area, marked by holly and ash trees, which measures 28m N-S x 27m E-W and is raised .7m on average above the surrounding ground level. On its uneven surface area approximately 100 uninscribed upright slabs; these average .3m high and most are aligned in NW-SE rows'. On the day of the survey, there was no overgrown area towards the centre of the site, nor was the presence of 100 gravemarkers in this area evident. It is possible during a clean-up of the graveyard that the gravemarkers were removed and some of the burials denoted with a metal cross of which there are a number in this area (Plate 9). However, the number of metal crosses does not total one hundred. Consequently, no further grave plots or interments should be allowed in this central area as now unidentifiable burials may be disturbed.

The Iveragh Peninsula Survey (ibid) further recorded similar grave markers in the S portion of the graveyard but these appear to be of a more recent date. These are most likely the burials denoted with both a header and footer stone. Three such burials have been demarcated by two slates with one painted with the name O' Shea (Plate 10).

10.1 Recommendation:

No further grave plots or interments should be allowed in the central area of the graveyard as the now unidentifiable locations of burials may be disturbed.

The grass would need to be removed/reduced by hand under archaeological guidance and supervision to fully expose the full extent of some of the partially concealed burial markers. This work may require Ministerial Consent.

11. Cross Slabs

The Iveragh Peninsula Archaeological survey recorded the presence of a cross slab at the northern end of the burial ground bearing a plain Latin cross. This purple sandstone stone (ref. no. 88) measures 0.32m x 0.18m x 0.04m max (average) (Plate 11).

On the day of the survey, another cross slab (ref. no. 93) was recorded almost concealed and overgrown with grass lying face up along the eastern boundary (Plate 12). Its original location is not known. This previously unrecorded purple sandstone cross slab measures 0.62m x 0.28m x 0.04m (average). It bears a simple Latin cross in the same style as the cross slab recorded by The Iveragh Peninsula survey.

11.1 Recommendation

The previously unrecorded cross slab should be fixed in a secure position along the boundary wall as soon as possible to prevent possible future damage or indeed its possible theft from the graveyard.

12. Dangerous areas of ground or collapse

There are no dangerous areas of ground or collapse within the burial ground.

13. Description of buildings within Curra graveyard

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

14. Summary of recommendations for future management/conservation of Curra graveyard

- A water tap should be installed along the northern boundary to service the graveyard.
- Formal refuse facilities should be provided as soon as possible.
- The areas of collapse in graves 30, 40 and 91 should be repaired and made good. This
 work may require Ministerial Consent.
- The headstone for grave no. 94 should be repaired and made good. This work may require Ministerial Consent.
- The two ex-situ 19th century headstones lying on top of grave no. 206 should be removed from this grave and placed somewhere secure within the graveyard to prevent possible damage in the future.
- No further grave plots or interments should be allowed in the central area of the graveyard as the now unidentifiable locations of burials may be disturbed.
- The grass would need to be removed/reduced by hand under archaeological guidance and supervision to fully expose the full extent of some of the partially concealed burial markers. This work may require Ministerial Consent.
- The previously recorded cross slab (ref. no. 93) should be fixed in a secure position along the boundary wall as soon as possible to prevent possible future damage or indeed its possible theft from the graveyard.
- 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 Lissycurrig 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.
- 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 Curra 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.
- No conservation restoration works should be undertaken without an additional comprehensive individual report based on the results of invasive archaeological and architectural investigation specific to Curra Graveyard.

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.

15. References

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- County Kerry Development Plan, Draft, 2003-2009.

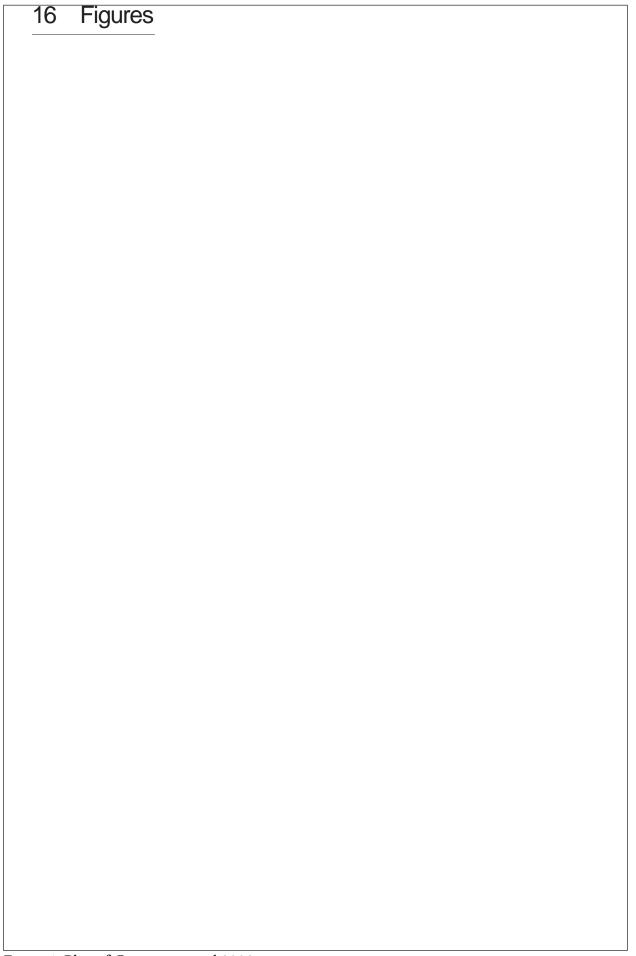


Figure 1: Plan of Curra graveyard 2008.

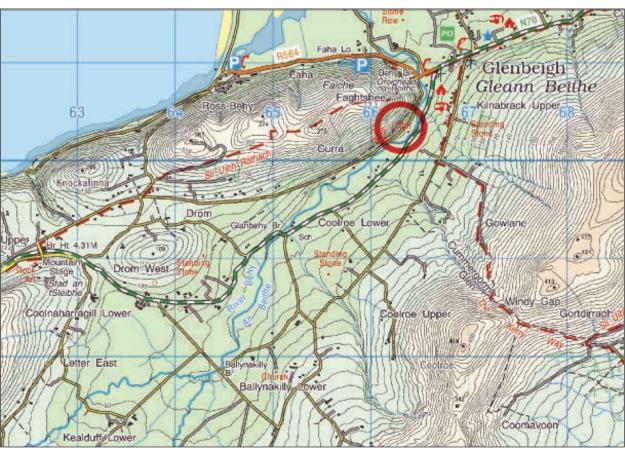


Figure 2: Extract from OS Discovery Series with Curra highlighted in red.

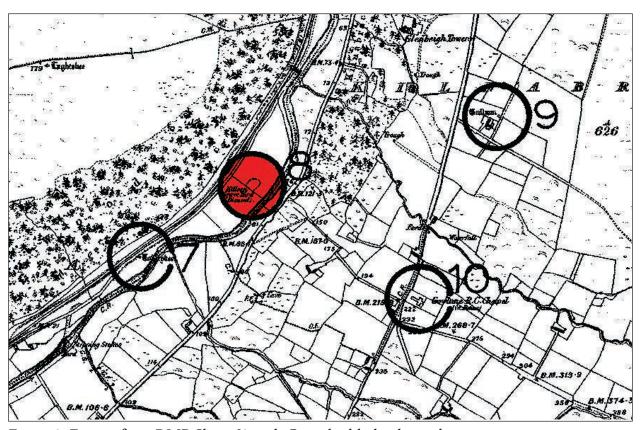


Figure 3: Extract from RMP Sheet 63 with Curra highlighted in red.

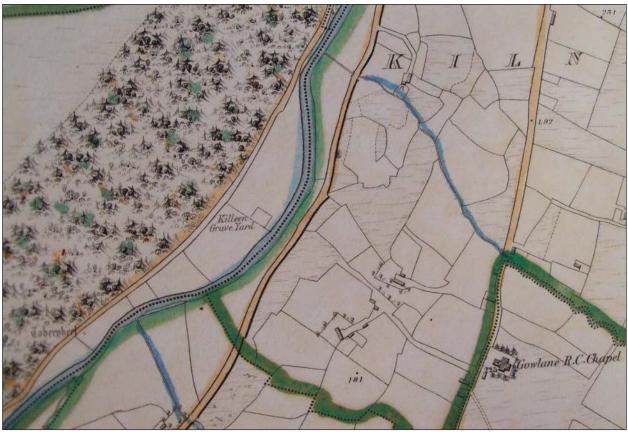


Figure 4: Extract from 1842 1st edition OS map Sheet 63.

17 Plates



Plate 1: View of Curra graveyard from northeast



Plate 2: View of dumping in southwest corner of graveyard from southeast



Plate 3: View of northern boundary wall from northwest

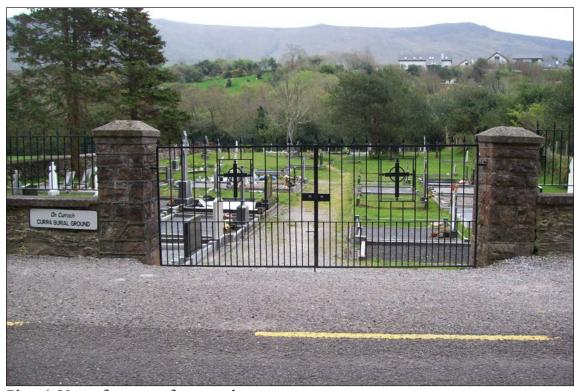


Plate 4: View of entrance from north



Plate 5: View of broken headstone ref. no. 94 from east





Plate 7: View of unnamed headstone (ref. no. 27) from east



Plate 8: View of memorial plaque for a child's burial underneath an evergreen tree towards the eastern side of the graveyard, from south



Plate 9: View of metal crosses on western side of the graveyard which may have replaced traditional stone gravemarkers, from southwest



Plate 10: View of three burials with header and footer stones demarcated with slates painted with the name O' Shea, from north



Plate 11: View of recorded cross slab (ref. no. 88) located towards the northern end of the graveyard



Plate 12: View of previously unrecorded cross slab (ref. 93) found along the eastern boundary wall from south

18 Appendix 1 Inscribed Headstones



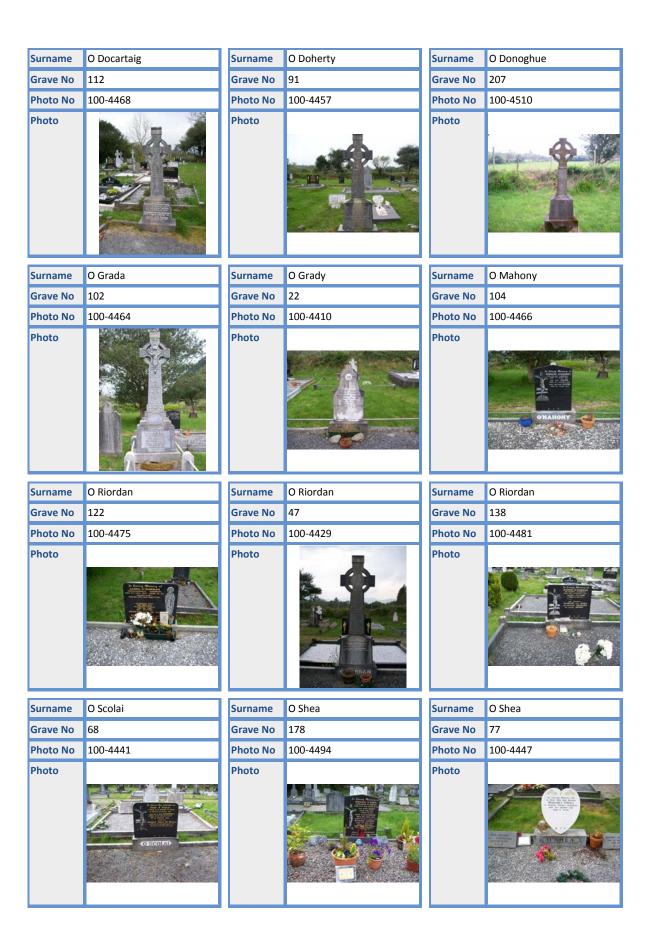
























19 Appendix 2 Unnamed Headstones and Gravemarkers

Grave No.	Notes	Photo No.
	Grave Marker	
6	Grave Marker	
7	Grave Marker	
8	Grave Marker	
10	Grave Marker	
11	Grave Marker	
13	Grave Marker	
23	Grave Marker	
27	Grave Marker	100-4413
31	Grave Marker	100-4416
35	Grave Marker	
53	Grave Marker	
55	Grave Marker	
63	Grave Marker	
65	Grave Marker	
67	Grave Marker	
70	Grave Marker	
80	Grave Marker	
89	Grave Marker	
97	Grave Marker	
100	Grave Marker	
101	Grave Marker	
105	Grave Marker	
106	Grave Marker	
107	Grave Marker	
108	Grave Marker	
110	Grave Marker	
111	Grave Marker	
118	Grave Marker	
131	Grave Marker	
133	Grave Marker	
135	Grave Marker	
141	Grave Marker	
149	Grave Marker	

Grave No.	Notes	Photo No.
150	Grave Marker	
151	Grave Marker	
153	Grave Marker	
155	Grave Marker	
157	Grave Marker	
159	Grave Marker	
161	Grave Marker	
163	Grave Marker	
166	Grave Marker	
167	Grave Marker	
169	Grave Marker	
171	Grave Marker	
172	Grave Marker	
174	Grave Marker	
175	Grave Marker	
179	Grave Marker	
181	Grave Marker	
187	Grave Marker	
188	Grave Marker	
190	Grave Marker	
192	Grave Marker	
196	Grave Marker	
204	Grave Marker	
208	Grave Marker	
219	Grave Marker	

20 Appendix 3 Cross Slabs



