Archaeological Survey, Kilbannivane Graveyard, Castleisland, Co. Kerry.



September 2012

Client: The Heritage Office,

Kerry County Council,

County Buildings,

Ratass, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

RMP No.: KE040-028

Archaeological

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Townland: Kilbannivane

Parish: Castleisland

**Barony:** Trughanacmy

Local name of graveyard: Kilbannivane

**XY Co-ords:** E501608, N610794

RMP No.: KE040-028 Church & graveyard

No. of named tombs: 25

No. of named headstones: 60

No. of unnamed, unhewn headstones: 8

### 1. Introduction

Kilbannivane Church and Graveyard was surveyed using a Magellan ProMark 3 Rover and Base station (Plate 1) 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 4). A digital photographic record and surname database was also compiled to complement the cartographic survey (Appendix 1). Digital 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 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
- 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 licence from the National Monuments Service of the Dept. of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG).

## 2. Site Location and approach

Kilbannivane Church and Graveyard is situated 2.3km NE of Castleisland (Figure 1 & Plate 1).

The roadway approach to the graveyard of Kilbannivane comprises a short and narrow cul-de-sac laneway to the original former Glebe House (Figure 2 & Plate 2).

## 3. Kilbannivane Church and Graveyard

Kilbannivane Church and Graveyard is a protected site, recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP, KE040-028).

John O'Donovan, writing in August 1841, records 'Only fragments of the north and south walls remain. Its length cannot be determined as the two gables have entirely disappeared...The doorway is on the south wall; it is pointed and formed of cut limestone' (O'Donovan 1983, 76).

Today the two walls of the church are low, denuded but traceable. However, much of the surviving visible masonry is tumbled and fallen while the interior is a mass of untended graves and loose stone (Plates1 & 3).

The graveyard itself is in a very poor state of repair with many of the twenty-five tombs recorded there in a poor, dilapidated or collapsed state of repair (Plates 3-6). Kilbannivane graveyard is severely overgrown, decrepit, unkempt and entirely neglected from a total lack of care or basic maintenance. Consequently it is very difficult to negotiate through the interior (Figure 2 & Plate 1 & 4).

No water or waste collection or storage facilities are provided.

#### 3.1 Recommendations

The limits of the surviving remains of the church walls and its interior should be fully determined, professionally cleared and maintained under strict archaeological supervision. The graveyard is much neglected and requires regular maintenance and grass cutting.

### 4. Entrance

Very restricted carparking is available immediately in front of the graveyard (Plate 2). The entrance comprises a black painted iron gate set between two square capped and rendered piers (Plates 5-6 & Figure 2).

#### 4.1 Recommendations

No recommendations feasible.

### 5. Boundaries

The graveyard at Kilbannivane is enclosed by a rubblestone wall that is very overgrown with several sections in rag order especially along the N boundary (Plates 7).

#### 5.1 Recommendations

The boundary walls should be incrementally and judiciously cleared of their overburden of ivy, trees and other growth. Breaches in the rubble stone boundary wall should be repaired with local limestone and lime mortar. This work should only be undertaken under archaeological supervision and by masons with a proven track record of repairing and restoring similar historic walls.

## 6. Pathways

An overgrown, unkempt and un-maintained pathway extends around the perimeter of Kilbannivane graveyard. A connecting pathway spur bisects the graveyard in a general N-S direction (Figure 2 & Plates). However, negotiation around and throughout the burial ground is extremely dangerous as the ground is very uneven and bumpy due to very old burials, tombs and gravemarkers. The difficulty of negotiating the graveyard is further hampered by the pervasive vegetation mossy conditions that make it slippery underfoot.

#### 6.1 Recommendations

The pathways need to be cleaned, possibly re-metalled and maintained. The grass should be kept low and grassy desire lines opened. The routes of these grassy desire lines should follow lines of least resistance. However without regular careful cutting the graveyard will become entirely unmanageable.

## 7. Tombs

There are twenty-five (25) tombs densely packed in Kilbannivane graveyard (Figure 2 & Plates). All bar one are disposed around the remains at the N, W and S. Preferential burial in above ground tombs is a common feature in several graveyards in West Kerry. However, in the case of Kilbannivane above ground tombs also appear to be the preferred burial way.

Of the twenty-five tombs only six are in good order. The remainder vary from totally overgrown to partially or totally collapsed. The names of fifteen or 60% are unknown.

#### 7.1 Recommendations

The tombs should be repaired and restored. Repairs to the tombs should be undertaken by experienced masons with a proven track record of working on historic structures and in the use of lime mortar etc. There is an enormous amount of specialist work required to preserve, repair and restore these unnamed tombs. Several will require careful rebuilding and important repairs are required of others to close them off. Indeed in some cases there are questions as to the viability of repair and restoration at all.

Grass and moss covering some of the tombs should only be fully removed as the primary

element of an agreed inclusive strategy of repairs and other conservation and restoration works. Tombs that are fully covered in grass should be cut back for further evaluation to determine the nature and extent of further conservation / restoration works.

All repair and restoration work should only be carried out under expert archaeological advice and supervision.

It is possible that local information would furnish some of the names associated with these unnamed tombs. This information should be collected and entered into the database.

### 8. Named Headstones

There were sixty named headstones recorded at Kilbannivane graveyard. Only twenty-six have associated formalised grave plots or settings (Figure 2, Appendix 2 & Plates). There is one undressed triangular headstone with a simple lightly incised Latin cross at the top and the initials M: S also lightly incised on it (Plate). All the headstones are in good condition, however the inscriptions on many are virtually impossible or very difficult to read due to lichen growth. One was illegible (No. 35) and two were unknown (Nos. 2 & 46).

#### 8.1 Recommendations

The headstones should be cleaned and re-photographed and the inscriptions recorded.

## 9. Unhewn gravemarkers

There were eight unnamed, unhewn gravemakers recorded at Kilbannivane.

#### 9.1 Recommendations

The grass around these gravemarkers should be kept low.

## Summary of recommendations for future management/conservation of Kilbannivane graveyard

- A comprehensive restoration and conservation program of work should be undertaken at Kilbannivane graveyard as it is in a very bad state of repair. There is so much work to be done that a coherent phased step-by-step plan is required as 'first aid' type work may only exacerbate the situation.
- A water tap, water container and waste collection facilities should be provided.
- A program of focussed archaeological conservation and repairs should be undertaken on the collapsed, partially collapsed, damaged, partially covered and grass covered named and unnamed tombs.
- The tombs should be repaired re-pointed, re-rendered and restored sensitive to their original construction. This work should be done under the supervision of an archaeologist qualified in this area or a conservation architect experienced in this field and may require Ministerial Consent.
- New informal pathways should be constructed as part of a wider plan for the old graveyard and should only be undertaken under archaeological advice and supervision and as an element of a wider comprehensive conservation plan.
- Repairs to the boundary walls should be undertaken by people with a proven track record in repairing dry stone walls.
- An information booklet on care and maintenance for tombs should be compiled and supplied to the relevant parish church.
- It is likely that local information would furnish the names associated with unnamed tombs. This information should be collected.
- An information board similar to one already existing at Killury graveyard, in Lissycurrig townland near Causeway, should be established at a suitable location at the graveyard, most likely beside 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.

#### 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 DAHG.

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# 12. Figures

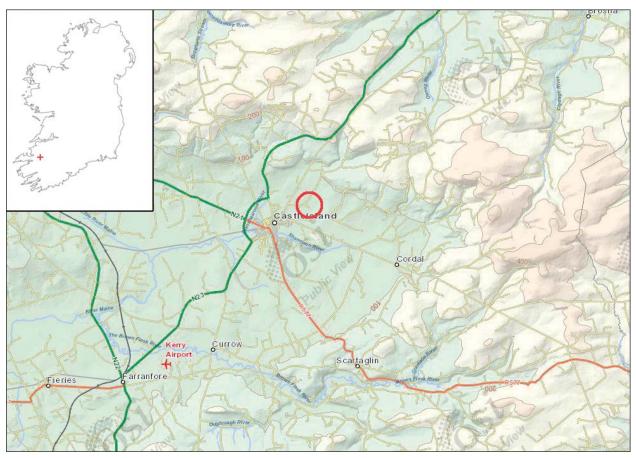


Figure 1: Site location map. Extract from OSI online mapping. Kilbannivane graveyard encircled.

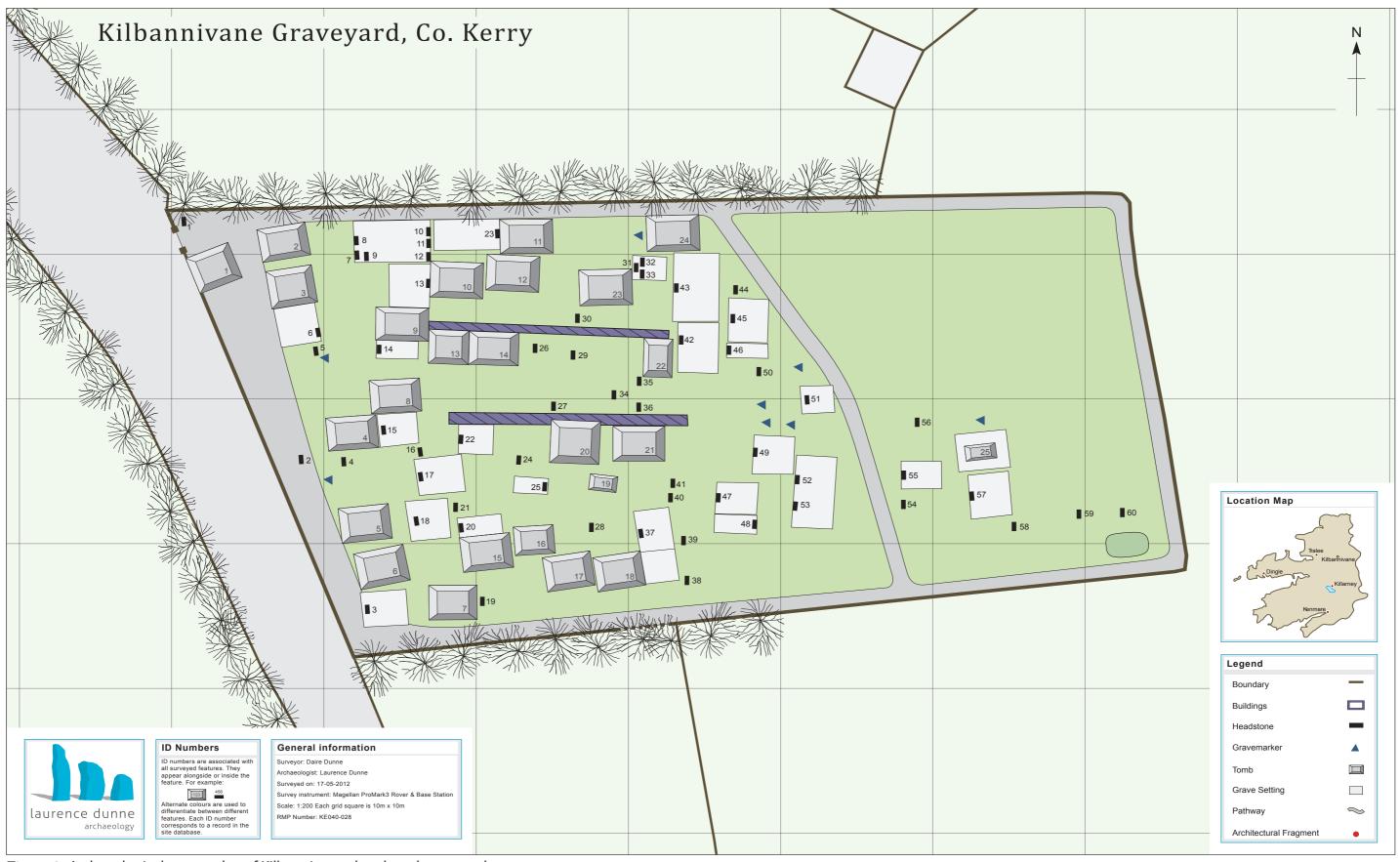


Figure 2: Archaeological survey plan of Kilbannivane church and graveyard.

## 13. Plates



Plate 1: View of interior of Kilbannivane graveyard from SW. Note linear ivy covered remains of church at centre



Plate 2: View from S of narrow cul-de-sac laneway to Kilbannivane graveyard



Plate 3: View of interior of Kilbannivane church from W



**Plate 4:** View from N of narrow cul-de-sac lane to closed Glebe farm outside Kilbannivane graveyard



Plate 5: View of interior of entrance to Kilbannivane graveyard from E



Plate 6: Exterior view from W of entrance to Kilbannivane graveyard



Plate 7: View from W of N boundary wall and perimeter pathway



Plate 8: View from E of overgrown and breached section of the S boundary wall



Plate 9: View from NW corner or entrance area S along W boundary wall and path. Note density of tombs



Plate 10: View from W of Lombard Tomb 1 incorporated into W boundary wall beside the entrance



Plate 11: View of partially overgrown Connor Tomb 20



Plate 12: View of partially collapsed unknown Tomb 21



Plate 13: View of unknown destroyed Tomb 24



Plate 14: View of unknown collapsed Tomb 13

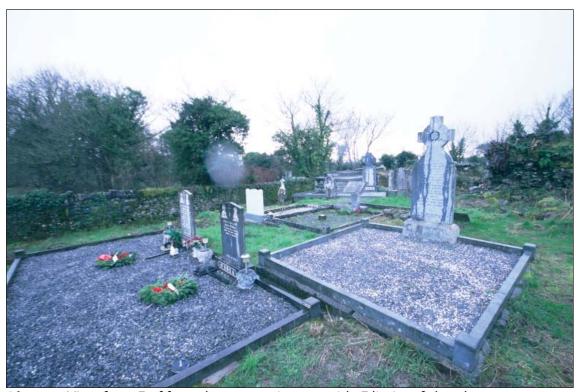


Plate 15: View from E of formal grave settings outside E limits of church

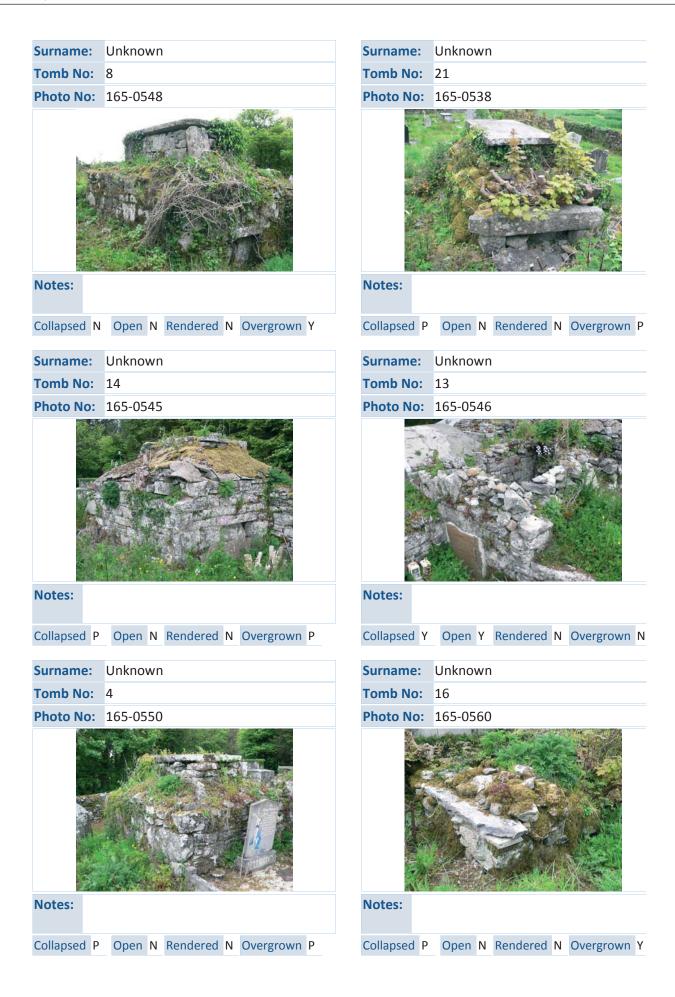


Plate 16: View of unhewn gravestone inscribed with the initials M:S

## 14. Appendix 1 Tombs











## 15. Appendix 2 Named Headstones

Surname: Bradley
Grave No: 24
Photo No: 165-0558

Surname: Burke
Grave No: 29
Photo No: 165-0543

Surname: Coffey
Grave No: 25
Photo No: 165-0559







Surname: Darby
Grave No: 5
Photo No: 165-0570

Surname: Dempsey
Grave No: 56
Photo No: 165-0514

Surname: Devane
Grave No: 37
Photo No: 165-0530



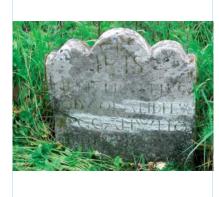




Surname: Duggan
Grave No: 34
Photo No: 165-0541

Surname: Finn
Grave No: 59
Photo No: 165-0509

Surname: Fitzgerald
Grave No: 13
Photo No: 165-0594





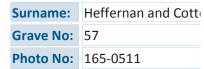


Surname: Fitzgerald
Grave No: 36
Photo No: 165-0539



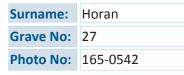
Surname:	Flynn
<b>Grave No:</b>	17
Photo No:	165-0553







Surname:	Hickey
<b>Grave No:</b>	45
Photo No:	165-0520











Surname:	Illegible
<b>Grave No:</b>	35
Photo No:	165-0540

Surname:	Kearney
<b>Grave No:</b>	12
Photo No:	165-0596









Surname: Kearney **Grave No: 10** 

**Photo No:** 165-0598

**Surname:** Kearney

**Grave No:** 9

**Photo No:** 165-0599

**Surname:** Kearney

**Grave No: 7** 

**Photo No:** 165-0600







Surname: Kearney

**Grave No:** 8

**Photo No:** 165-0601

Surname: Kelliher

Grave No: 42

**Photo No:** 165-0578

Surname: Lenihan Grave No: 15

**Photo No:** 165-0551







Surname: Lucid

**Grave No:** 19

**Photo No:** 165-0563

Surname: M:S **Grave No: 44 Photo No:** 165-0577 **Surname:** Mahoney **Grave No:** 50

**Photo No:** 165-0522







**Surname:** Mc Carthy **Surname:** Mc Swiney **Surname:** Murphy **Grave No:** 16 **Grave No: 1 Grave No:** 18 Photo No: 165-0552 **Photo No:** 165-0602 **Photo No:** 165-0554 **Surname:** Murphy **Surname:** Murphy Surname: Nolan **Grave No:** 4 **Grave No:** 43 Grave No: 20 **Photo No:** 165-0568 **Photo No:** 165-0579 **Photo No:** 165-0555 Surname: Nolan Surname: Nolan Surname: Nolan Grave No: 54 Grave No: 55 **Grave No:** 3 **Photo No:** 165-0516 **Photo No:** 165-0515 **Photo No:** 165-0567

Surname: O'Connell
Grave No: 60
Photo No: 165-0508

Surname: O'Connor
Grave No: 58
Photo No: 165-0510

Surname: O'Connor
Grave No: 26
Photo No: 165-0544







Surname: O'Riordan
Grave No: 28
Photo No: 165-0534

Surname: O'Shea
Grave No: 53
Photo No: 165-0517

Surname: O'Shea
Grave No: 52
Photo No: 165-0518







Surname: O'Sullivan
Grave No: 51
Photo No: 165-0519

Surname: O'Sullivan
Grave No: 30
Photo No: 165-0583

Surname: O'Sullivan
Grave No: 49
Photo No: 165-0523







Surname: Prendiville

Grave No: 23

**Photo No:** 165-0595

Surname: Prendiville
Grave No: 14
Photo No: 165-0547

Surname: Prendiville
Grave No: 21
Photo No: 165-0556







Surname: Reidy
Grave No: 47
Photo No: 165-0524

Surname: Reidy
Grave No: 48
Photo No: 165-0525

Surname: Reidy
Grave No: 40
Photo No: 165-0528







Surname: Reidy
Grave No: 41
Photo No: 165-0529

Surname: Reilly
Grave No: 39
Photo No: 165-0527

Surname: Shea
Grave No: 38
Photo No: 165-0526

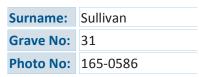






Surname:	Sullivan
<b>Grave No:</b>	33
Photo No:	165-0584

Surname:	Sullivan
<b>Grave No:</b>	32
Photo No:	165-0585









Surname:	Sullivan
<b>Grave No:</b>	22
Photo No:	165-0557

Surname:	Unknown
<b>Grave No:</b>	46
Photo No:	165-0521







