Archaeological Survey, Kilconly Church & Graveyard, Ballybunnion, Co. Kerry.

September 2007

Client: The Heritage Office,

Kerry County Council,

County Buildings,

Ratass, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

RPM No.: KE001-028

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1 Introduction

Kilconly 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. These numbers are illustrated on the attached A1 plan. A digital photographic record and surname database was also compiled to complement the cartographic survey (Appendices 1-2). Photographs of the features within the graveyard are referenced in the appendix and all photographs are provided on the attached disc.

The June 2007 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 Draft Development Plan 2003-2009, (121-124).

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.

Townland:	Kilconly North
Parish:	Kilconly
Barony:	Iraghticonnor
Local name of graveyard:	Kilconly
NGR:	087930,156950
RMP No.:	KE001-028
No. of named tombs:	0
No. of unnamed tombs:	1
No. of inscribed headstones:	175
No. of unnamed headstones:	7
No. of unnamed grave-markers:	108
No. of architectural fragments:	0
No. of cross slabs:	0

2 Site Location and Description

Kilconly North graveyard is located 4.5km northeast of Ballybunnion town (Figure 2, Plate 1).

Situated at the bottom of a glen on sweeping road bends from both north and south, the graveyard lies immediately west of the road and just north of a single arched bridge.

An unnamed stream flows immediately beyond the boundary on the southern side where it meanders towards, and eventually empties into, the Atlantic Ocean at Kilconly Point.

The interior of the graveyard slopes steeply from north to south.

The grass is lawnmower cut and only one tree, a Whitethorn, grows within the graveyard. Modern vegetation has established itself upon several areas of the site, especially by the western boundary wall where a modern cultivated plant has spread from its original location on a nearby grave, as well as on the walls of the ruined church. Horsetail also grows abundantly in places and is most noticeable along the pathways.

A permanent metal altar is situated to the west of the ruined church.

A service tap, attached to the boundary wall, is located to the south of the entrance gate.

A modern extension to the graveyard is located to the west of the church.

A set-aside for a Children's Burial Ground is located immediately north of the entrance on its interior (Plate 2). The Whitethorn tree is situated adjacent to this set-aside.

The graveyard is very close to full capacity and any extension could only expand to the north. A likely entrance to any proposed extension could be located on the corner where the modern boundary wall meets the original boundary wall, adjacent to grave (ref. no. 395). If possible, further burials along the boundary wall should not be permitted in order to allow for ease of any graveyard expansion in the future.

Kilconly is recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) as KE001-028 classified as 'church and graveyard' (Figure 3).

3 Boundaries

The boundary walls and interior of the graveyard are well maintained and in a good state of preservation.

The main area of the graveyard is bounded by a rubble sandstone wall with irregular coping with forward pointed sand and cement cap render visible between the stones (Plate 1).

The graveyard extension is bounded by a modern concrete wall with a dashed render and modern concrete capping.

The northwestern corner of the modern graveyard extension is being overgrown with a modern garden plant which is spreading southwards along the length of the wall.

No breaches to the boundary wall were recorded and there were no dangerous or collapsed areas visible.

An examination of the 1st edition OS map of 1842 reveals the northern boundary wall originally abutted the northern wall of the church, which was in ruins at this time (Figure 4).

3.1 Recommendation:

The overgrowth of the cultivated plant in the northwestern corner should be cut back and removed to prevent spreading southwards along the boundary wall and overtaking the headstones and graves.

4 Entrance

Entrance to the graveyard is through an iron gate set between two gable capped stone piers or via a footstile (a single step on the exterior and two on the exterior) to the immediate south of the gate (Plate 3).

There is parking space for a single vehicle in front of the entrance.

5 Pathways

A perimeter pathway exists within the graveyard and the modern extension also has defined, formal pathways between the rows of grave-plots.

The graves to the north, south and east of the church do not have formal pathways between them but are arranged in a roughly linear format, making it relatively easy to visit each

grave.

5.1 Desire lines:

The church and graveyard are adequately serviced by the existing pathways.

6 Unnamed Tomb

A single tomb, unnamed, was recorded at Kilconly. This is abutting the southwestern corner of the ruined church (Plate 4).

7 Inscribed Headstones (Appendix 1)

The vast majority of the named graves are of a modern construct and are located to the west of the church, within the extended area.

The earliest named grave recorded (ref. no. 445) is located to the south of the church and marked the burial place of a Joseph Carmody, who died on 30th September 1797 aged 37 years and Iain or Adam Carmody who died on the 7th April 1790 or 1799 aged 69 years (Plate 5). Due to erosion of the headstone, it was not possible to fully determine the exact year that Iain/Adam Carmody died or indeed, his exact name.

A number of headstone plaques associated with graves have been fixed onto the interior and exterior of church walls.

A total of 175 named graves were recorded.

7.1 Recommendations:

The practice of erecting headstone plaques to the walls of the church should not be permitted in the future.

8 Unnamed Headstones (Appendix 2)

The unnamed graves are composed of 18th and 19th century headstones from which the engraving has eroded, and recent graves which are without a headstone or the information card on the temporary metal cross has faded over time and is no longer legible. Unnamed headstones are grouped together with the unnamed gravemarkers on the plan of the graveyard (Figure 1).

Seven unnamed headstones were recorded.

9 Unnamed Gravemarkers (Appendix 2)

The unhewn sandstone grave-markers are mainly located to the southeast and east of the church.

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. A number of such distinctive unhawn stone was recorded at Kilconly (Plate 6).

108 unnamed gravemarkers were recorded.

10 Dangerous areas of ground or collapse

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

11 Description of ruined church within Kilconly graveyard

The graveyard and its extant church remains were recorded in the North Kerry Archaeological Survey (Toal 1995, 236);

"...this church would appear to be dedicated to St. Conla, whose feast day is on the 10th May. A small rectangular church measuring 15.4m x 8.5m externally with walls just over 1m thick, it is constructed of small hammered stones with lime-and-sand cement. A gradual batter can be noticed. The S wall contains the doorway, which is situated 5.3m from the W gable. It has a round-headed arch, which is slightly recessed on the outside, measuring 1m in width and 2m in height. The S wall also contains a small rectangular window which is recessed. It measures .3m x 1.2m and is situated 2.5m from the E gable. The E gable contains a narrow oblong window which measures 0.3m x 1.4m and internally, it has a splayed arch."

This current survey, undertaken in 2007, found that the church has remained in a remarkably good state of preservation (Plate 7). However, recent cultivated vegetation has gone wild and has taken hold on several areas of the church exterior and interior.

Several graves are located within the church interior.

An attractive orange-yellow lichen, typical in coastal regions, is also visible on the building but is most likely benign.

Northern elevation exterior

The northern elevation survives to full height but as the ground rises sharply from west to north, it is only c.1.3m above present ground level (Plate 8).

The upper course of the wall has been tidied with a dressing of mortar.

A possible bullaun stone is located on top of the wall at its eastern end (Plate 9).

Northern elevation interior

Several graves abut the northern wall and one memorial plaque has been fixed onto the wall at its eastern end.

11.1 Recommendation:

The practice of fixing memorial headstone plaques to the walls of the church should not be permitted.

Southern elevation exterior (Plate 10)

The church is built upon a north-south slope and consequently, the southern elevation is battered from the roofline to the base.

A rectangular slit window ope is located on the southeast corner of the southern elevation. It is comprised of undressed stone with a simple flat lintel and sill. It is slightly set back from the wall.

There is a distinct outward slump directly beneath this window and some modern cement repairs are visible but urgent attention is required (Plate 11).

The adjacent graves on the exterior and interior of the wall are most likely undermining the wall.

The partial remains of a rectangular window are located on the southwestern corner of the elevation. However, it was only noted when inside the church due to the overgrowth on the exterior. This window was not recorded in the North Kerry Archaeological Survey (Toal, 1995).

Six modern memorial plaques are fixed in concrete onto the elevation at varying heights.

11.2 Recommendation:

Urgent care is needed to prevent the collapse of the window ope on the exterior of the southeastern corner of the southern elevation.

The practice of cementing memorial plaques to the walls of the church should not be permitted in the future.

Southern elevation interior

The south-east window has splayed ingoings with a socket for a shutter visible on the western corner of the split lintel (Plate 12).

There is no evidence for the base of this socket on the window sill as it has been rendered.

The interior lintel of the splayed embrasure is missing and the area of slump visible on the exterior, directly beneath the window, is also visible on the interior. The adjacent graves are most likely undermining the wall.

A square recess is located on the corner where the southern wall meets the eastern wall and is located 0.7m above present ground level.

It may have originally functioned as a piscina but rubble stone and waste cement has been dumped within it (Plate 13).

The remains of the rectangular window located on the southwestern corner of the elevation are partially obscured by vegetation, but a splayed embrasure was noticeable.

Two modern memorial plaques are fixed onto the wall with the kerbing of one the associated formal grave settings abutting the wall itself.

11.3 Recommendation:

Urgent care is needed to prevent the collapse of the window ope on the interior of the southeastern corner of the southern elevation.

The practice of cementing memorial plaques to the walls of the church should not be permitted in the future.

Entrance doorway exterior

A doorway, comprised of a circular arch of 22 voussoirs, is located towards the western end of the southern elevation (Plate 14).

The arch is slightly recessed from the exterior of the elevation and has slipped slightly on the western side.

Two sandstone steps lead into the interior of the church, however kerbing from a modern grave surrounds the entranceway and access to the church cannot be gained without walking over the grave-plot which is still in use, as a very recent burial (approximately one to two weeks previous) had taken place prior to undertaking the survey at the site (Plate 15).

11.4 Recommendation:

No further interments should take place within the burial plot directly in front of the doorway. It may be necessary to divide in two and judiciously reduce the burial plot to allow a direct accessway to the doorway from the existing ground surface. This work may require Ministerial Consent.

Entrance doorway interior

The interior arch is a flattened segmental type and the arris of the arch has been removed (Plate 16).

Splayed ingoings are present on the western side of the doorway while the eastern side is composed of straight ingoings.

The socket for the drawbar is situated on the western side of the doorway while it would have extended into the eastern side.

A broken holy water stoop of local sandstone is noticeable to the immediate east of the entrance.

Western elevation exterior

The west gable survives to full height and is in a good state of preservation.

It is composed of well matched, roughly coursed, flat rectangular blocks of sandstone (Plate 17).

Three through apertures are located 1.2m above present ground level and these may have allowed light to penetrate into the church interior or a listening posts for the less well-off parishioners attending mass.

Several put-logs are visible on the upper level of the elevation.

Western elevation interior

The interior of the western elevation is featureless apart from the through apertures that may have allowed light into the church as well as allowing sound to travel outside (Plate 18). Modern vegetation is well established on wall, especially on its upper levels.

A modern headstone plaque is fixed onto the wall at the northwestern corner and is partially obscured by the overgrowth.

11.5 Recommendations:

The overgrowth of vegetation should be cut back and removed under archaeological supervision.

The practice of fixing headstone plaques onto the walls of the church should be prevented.

Eastern elevation exterior

The east gable survives to full height and is in relatively good condition (Plate 19).

The elevation is lit by a centrally disposed single narrow rectangular slit window ope of undressed stone, located 1m above present ground level.

Several put-logs are present on the upper levels of the elevation.

A modern concrete plaster panel is located on approximately 60% of the wall and tapers in height (from south-north) from 1.6m to 0.9m.

There is substantial modern vegetation established on the upper levels of the wall. Several crows' nests are visible within this growth.

11.6 Recommendation:

The overgrowth of vegetation should be cut back and removed under archaeological supervision.

Eastern elevation interior

The window ope on the eastern gable has a splayed embrasure and is composed of well matched sandstone with a flattened segmental arch over (Plate 20).

A shutter socket is also present on the northern side of the window ope but no base socket was visible.

Two intra-mural recesses or aumbrys are located on either side of the window and the northernmost recess has been filled with loose rubble stone.

Recent removal of a course of masonry beneath the arch of the window has taken place and this may undermine the window and cause its eventual collapse.

11.7 Recommendation:

The arch of the window ope is in need of urgent repair to prevent its total collapse.

12 Summary of recommendations for future management/conservation of Kilconly graveyard

- The overgrowth of modern cultivated plants should be cut back and removed along the western boundary wall.
- The building has been thoroughly surveyed but the upper levels of the walls were not accessible. Consequently, it is recommended that the vegetation cover be removed under archaeological supervision and the exposed fabric recorded. Samples of *in situ* fabric, stone, mortars, renders etc should be recorded and removed. Where possible and in principle, all original fabric should be re-used or similar substitutes sourced and matched.
- The cultivated plants established on the walls of the church, both interior and exterior, should be cut back using relevant appropriate equipment and should not be pulled from the walls by its roots which could affect the stability of the walls. All work should be undertaken under archaeological supervision.
- The practice of setting memorial plaques on the walls of the church, both interior and exterior, should no longer be deemed acceptable.
- The outward slump noted directly beneath the southeastern window on the southern elevation is in need of urgent repair to prevent its total collapse.
- The arch of the window ope on the interior eastern elevation requires urgent attention to prevent its collapse.
- No further interments should take place within the burial plot directly in front of the doorway. It may be necessary to divide in two and judiciously reduce the burial plot to allow a direct accessway to the doorway from the existing ground surface. This work may require Ministerial Consent.
- Further burials along the northern boundary wall should not be permitted in order to allow for ease of any graveyard expansion in the future.
- 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 south of the entrance gate.
- 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 Kilconly graveyard should be compiled by Kerry Coun-

- ty 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 need the services of a professional.
- All primary ground works should be archaeologically monitored and all features recorded and protected.
- Professional consultation and advice should be sought prior to undertaking any maintenance and conservation works at Kilconly church and graveyard.
- 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 Kilconly Church and Graveyard.

Note on Recommendations

All recommendations as set out above are recommendations based only 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.

13 References

- Burra Charter 1979. (Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance). Australia.
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- County Kerry Development Plan, Draft, 2003-2009.

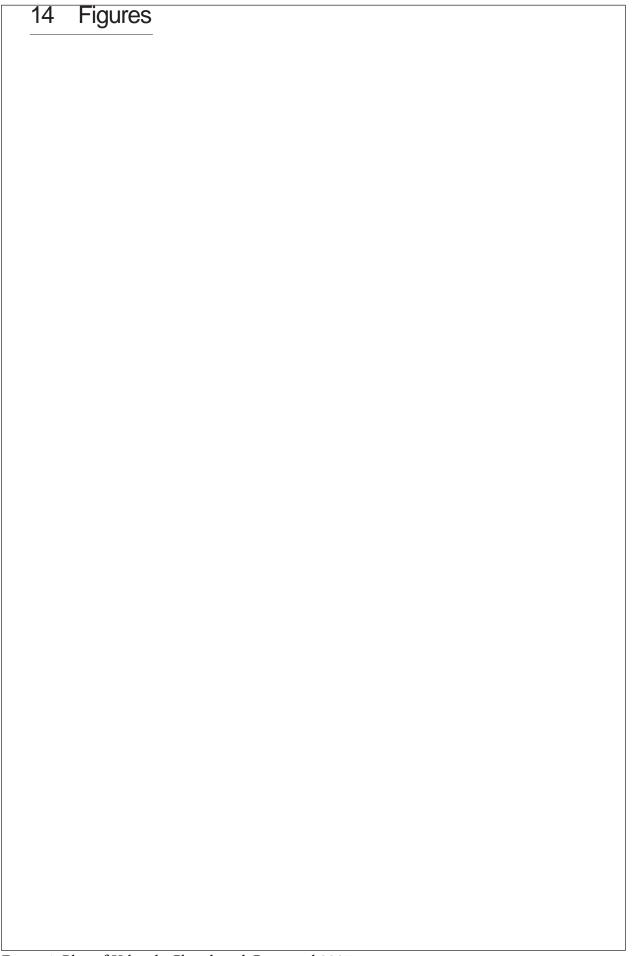


Figure 1: Plan of Kilconly Church and Graveyard 2007.



Figure 2: Extract from Discovery Series OS map with Kilconly Church and Graveyard encircled in red.

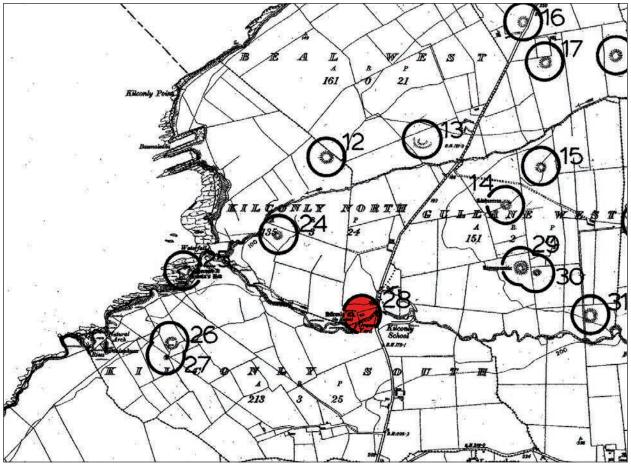


Figure 3: Extract from RMP Sheet 1 with Kilconly Church and Graveyard highlighted in red.



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

15 Plates



Plate 1: View of Kilconly Church and Graveyard taken from southeast



Plate 2: View of set-aside for Children's Burial Ground taken from west



Plate 3: View of entrance to graveyard taken from west



Plate 4: View of unnamed tomb recorded within the graveyard



Plate 5: View of earliest recorded named headstone, dating to 1797 and recording the death of Joseph Carmody, taken from east



Plate 6: View of unnamed gravemarkers recorded in Kilconly graveyard, taken from east



Plate 7: View of Kilconly Church taken from southeast



Plate 8: View of northern elevation and east gable, taken from northeast



Plate 9: View of possible bullaun stone on top of northern elevation at its northeastern corner, taken from northeast



Plate 10: View of eastern extent of southern elevation taken from south



Plate 11: View of noticeable outward bulge directly beneath easternmost window on southern elevation



Plate 12: Interior view of easternmost window on southern elevation, taken from north



Plate 13: View of possible piscina at interior southeastern corner of southern elevation, taken from northwest



Plate 14: Exterior view of doorway in southern elevation, taken from south



Plate 15: View of doorway showing recent internment in burial plot directly in front of doorway, taken from south



Plate 16: Interior view of doorway in southern elevation, taken from north



Plate 17: Exterior view of west gable, taken from west

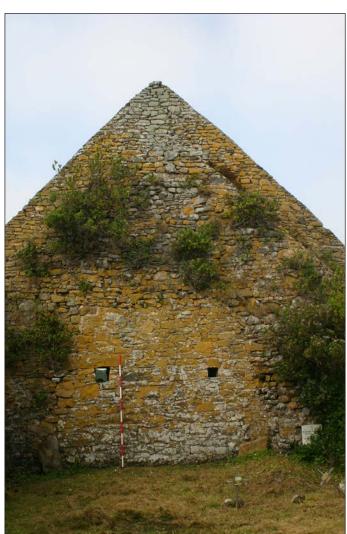


Plate 18: Interior view of west gable, taken from east



Plate 19: Exterior view of east gable, taken from east



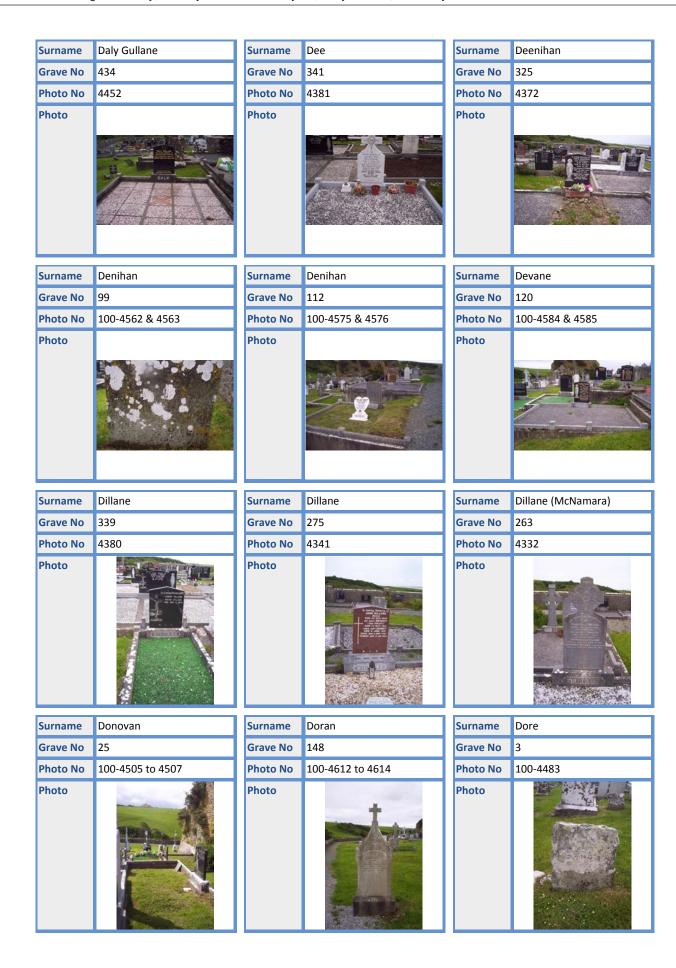
Plate 20: Interior view of window in east gable, taken from west

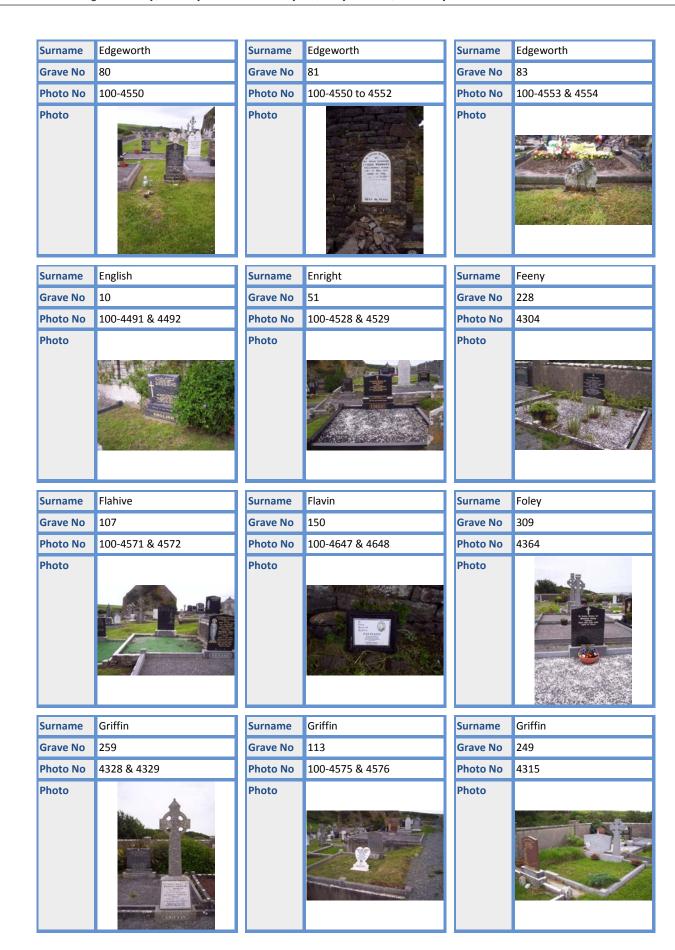
17 Appendix 1 Inscribed Headstones

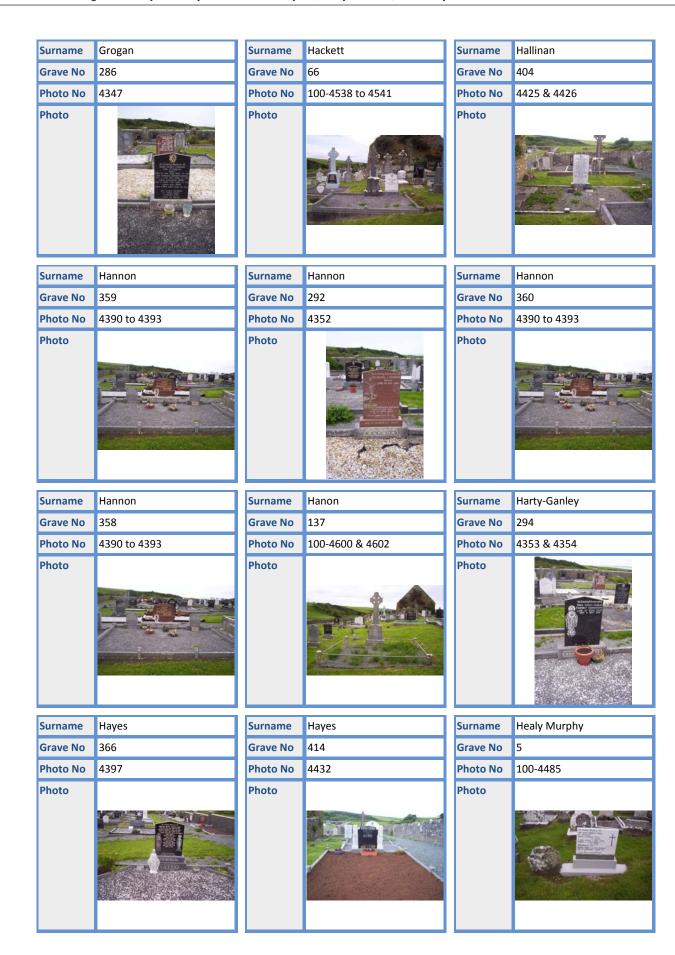


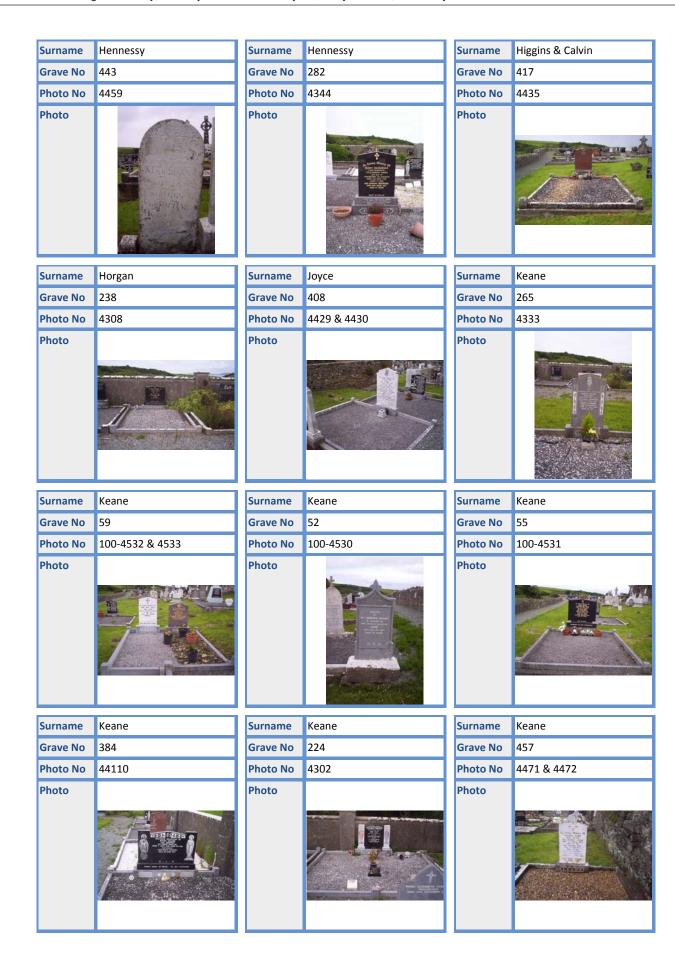


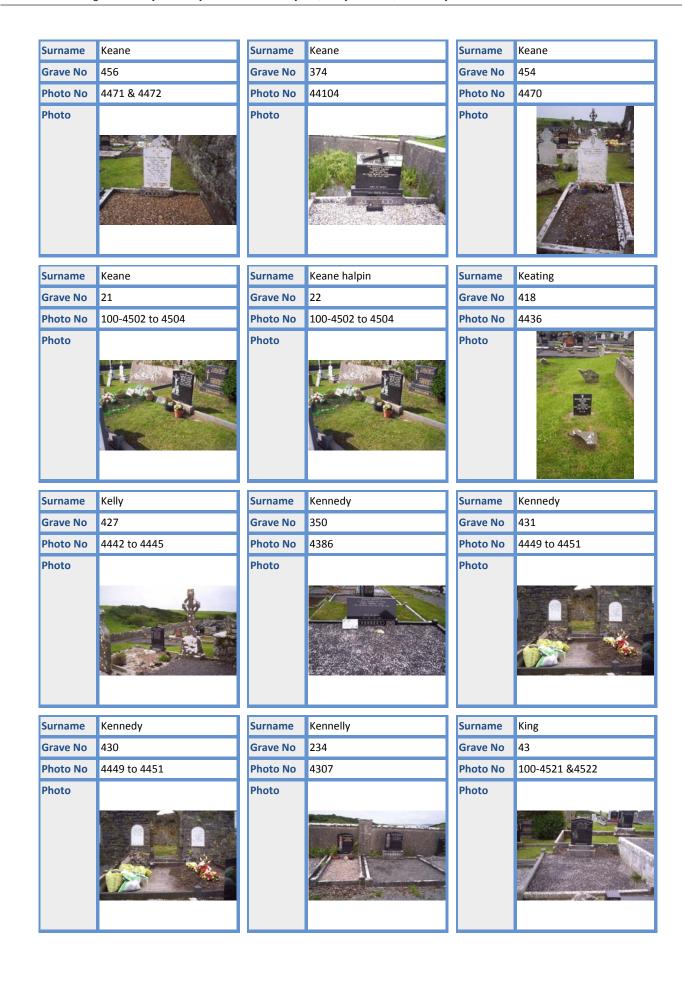


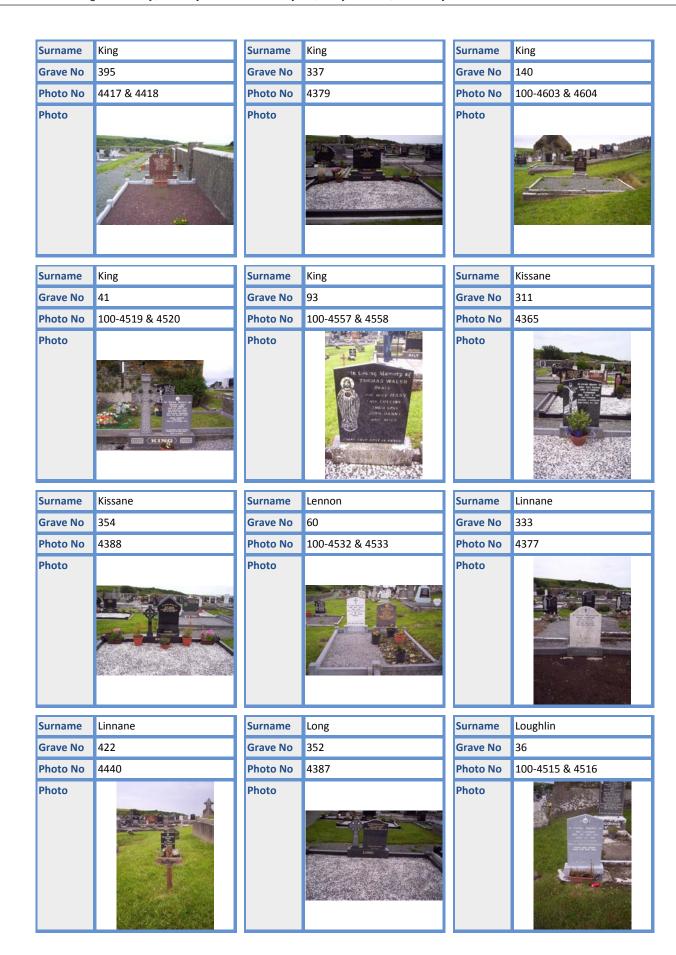


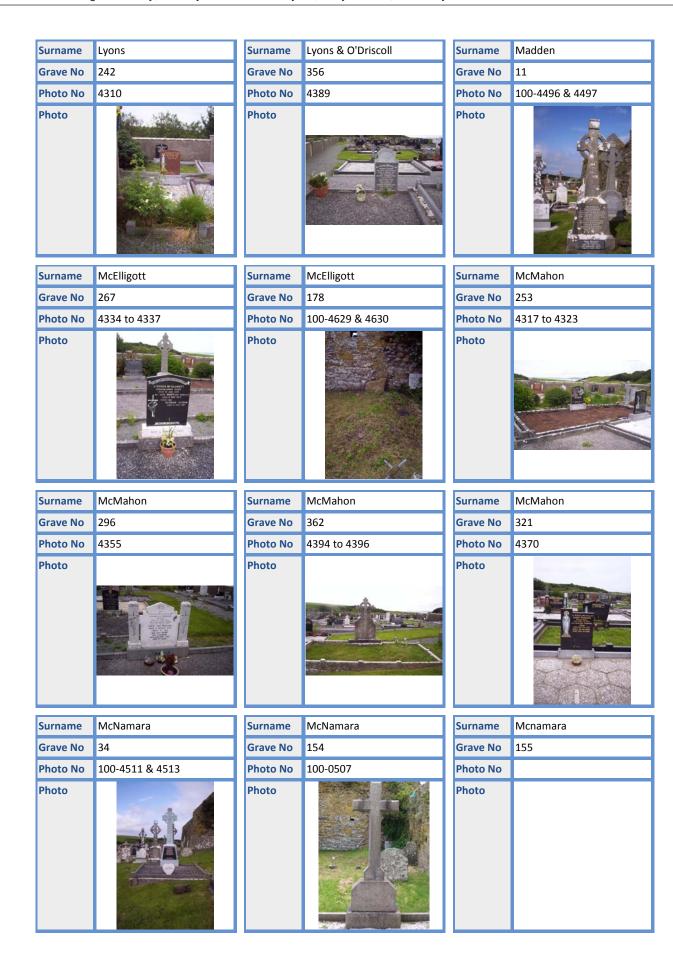


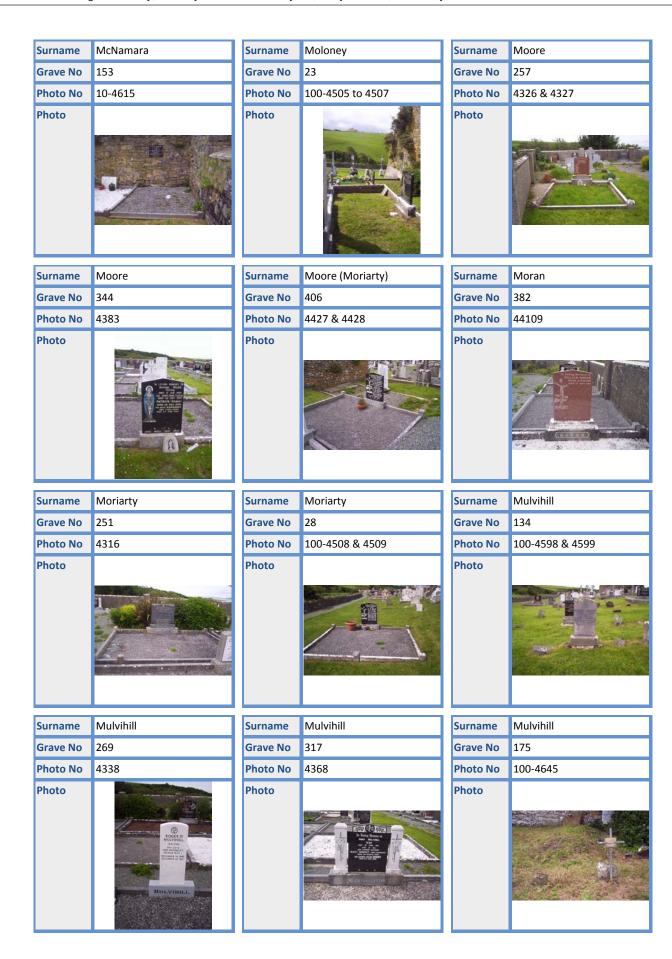


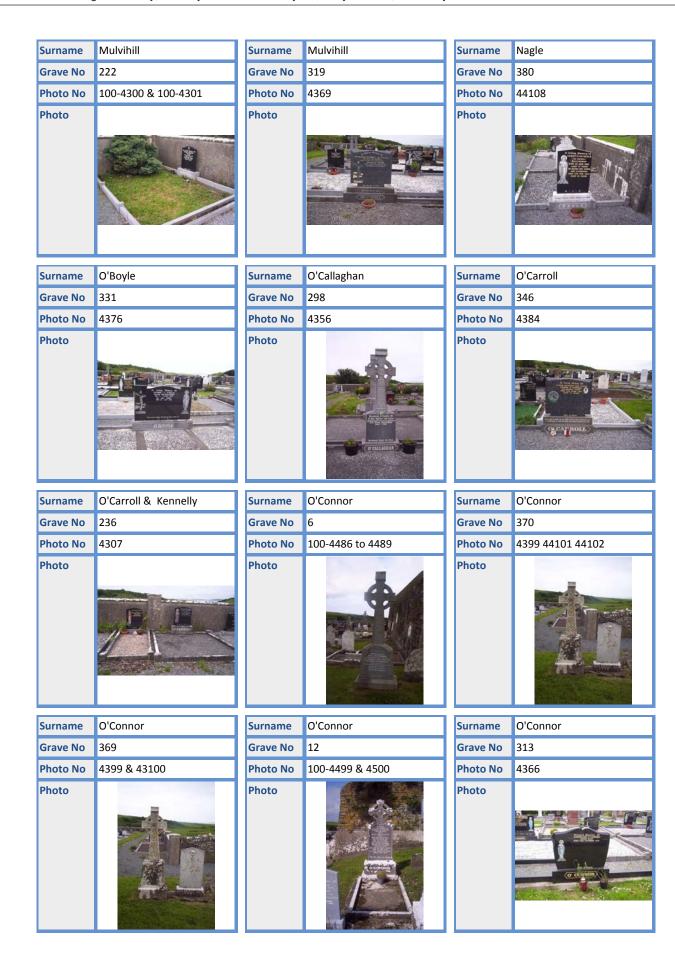


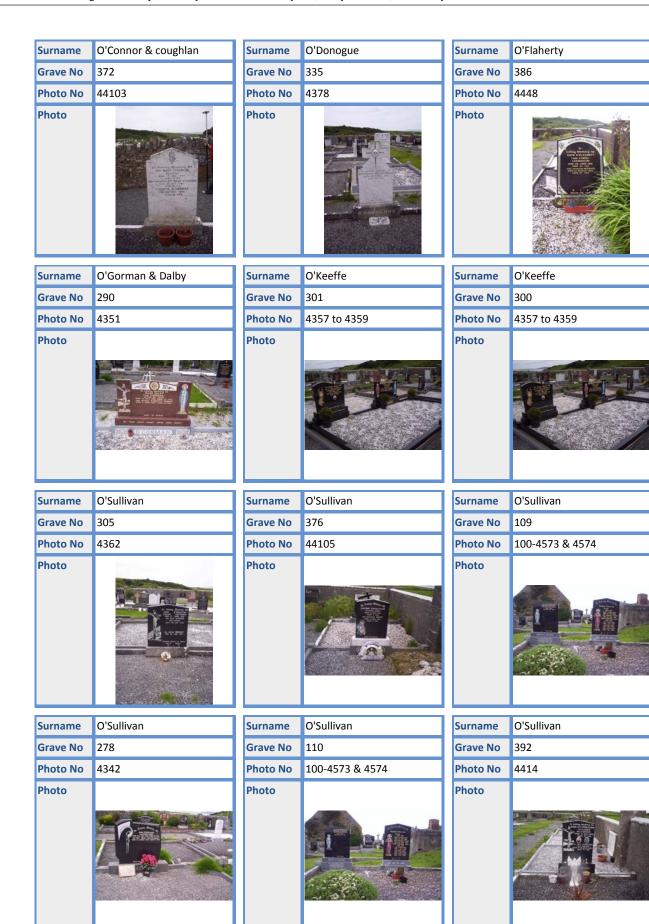


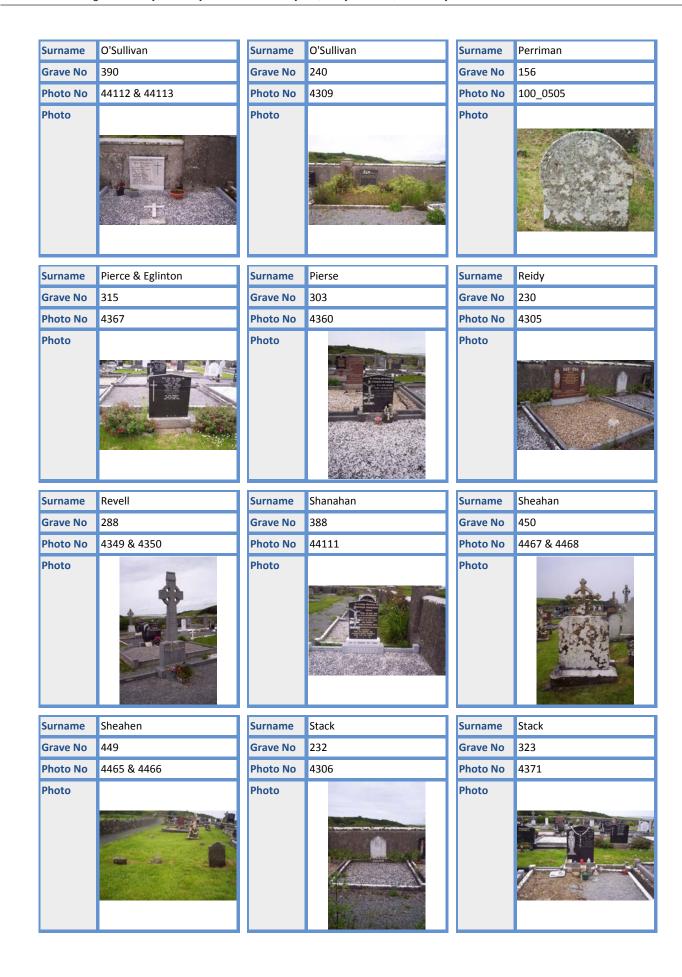














Surname	Stack
Grave No	378
Photo No	44106 44107
Photo	
	63/45

Surname	Walsh
Grave No	67
Photo No	100-4538 to 4541
Photo	

Grave No	402
Photo No	4423 & 4424
Photo	





Surname	Wren & King
Grave No	255
Photo No	4324 & 4325
Photo	

18 Appendix 2 Unnamed Headstones and Gravemarkers

Grave No.	Notes	Photo No.
4		100-4485
7		100-4490
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Grave No.	Notes	Photo No.
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147		
149	sacred to the memory of our holy innocents. "let the little children come to me"	
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Grave No.	Notes	Photo No.
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169		
170		
171		
172	steel cross	100-4644
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180		
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183		
184		
185		
205		
280	plastic cross unnamed	100-4343
342		100-4382
363	metal cross	
364	metal cross	
367		100-4398
368		100-4398
396		100-4419
409		100-4431
410		100-4431
411		100-4433
412		100-4433
415		100-4434

Grave No.	Notes	Photo No.
419		100-4437
420		100-4438
421		100-4439
432		100-4453
435		100-4454
436		100-4454
437		100-4454
438		100-4455
439		100-4456
444		100-4460
447		100-4465
448		100-4465
451		100-4469
452		100-4469