Archaeological Survey, Kilshannig Graveyard, Kilshannig, Castlegregory, Co. Kerry.



October 2012

Client: The Heritage Office,

Kerry County Council,

County Buildings,

Ratass, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

RMP No.: KE027-002

Archaeological

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Table of Contents

Introduction2
Site Location3
Kilshannig church and graveyard3
Approach and parking4
Entrance4
Services & Signage5
Boundaries5
Pathways5
Tombs
Named Headstones6
Unnamed, unhewn Headstones7
Lintelled graves7
Cross-slab7
Summary of recommendations8
References9
Figures11
Plates14
Appdenix 1 Tombs24
Appendix 2 Named Headstones27
Appendix 3 Lintelled Graves33
Appendix 4 Cross Slabs34

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List of Figures Figure 1: Site location map. Extract from OSI online mapping. Kilshannig graveyard encircled.	II
Figure 2: Archaeological survey plan of Kilshannig church and graveyard	12
Figure 3: Kilshannig chi-rho cross-slab	13
List of Plates Plate 1: View of Chi-Rho cross-slab on W side of doorway on N elevation of Kilshannig medieval church	14
Plate 2: View from E of W gable of Kilshannig church. Image taken by author in 2009. The W gable collapsed in January 2011. Note coherent leaning and fracturing on the S side and S basal area of the W gable. Further note low rectangular tomb and Flynn burial plot	nd
Plate 3: Side view image by the author from the exterior SW corner of extant W gable in 2009. Note inadequate low buttress and outward or westerly bulge	15
Plate 4: View of collapsed masonry from W gable straddling Tomb 13 in Kilshannig church	15
Plate 5: Exterior close-up view from W of collapsed W gable. Note coherent south side of window still extant	16
Plate 6: View of collapsed NW corner of N elevation of Kilshannig church from N. Note robust railing around it erected by KCC	16
Plate 7: View from SE of collapsed south elevation of Kilshannig church. Note ragged nature of interior, modern graves and KCC warning sign	17
Plate 8: View from W of grassy pathway approach to graveyard from Kilshannig clachan .	17
Plate 9: View from E of grassy pathway approach to Kilshannig graveyard entrance. Note Scraggane Bay and Mount Brandon in the background	18
Plate 10: View of gated entrance to Kilshannig graveyard. Note ad hoc pedestrian step-aside at S or extreme right hand side of plate	18
Plate 11: View of unused step-stile on N side of entrance area to Kilshannig graveyard (Figure 2)	19
Plate 12: Interior close up view of seaward projecting ad hoc pedestrian step-aside into Kilshannig graveyard	19
Plate 13: View from E of entrance to Kilshannig graveyard. Note lower ad hoc step-aside on left of plate	20
Plate 14: View of curving S section of interior gravelled pathway and very low section of boundary wall. Note only 'soldier' capping of wall visible here	20

Plate 15: View from S of high rubble stone E boundary of Kilshannig graveyard. Note rough, stony perimeter path	. 21
Plate 16: View of O'Connor Tomb 4 from E.	21
Plate 17: View of the Goodwin house shaped Tomb 1 from SE	. 22
Plate 18: View of recently re-rendered Hussey Tomb 11 in E end of Kilshannig church. Note unhewn unnamed gravemarker beside it and other modern burials	. 22
Plate 19: View of Kenny headstone in N limits of graveyard. Note several unhewn, unnamed gravemarkers in general area	. 23
Plate 20: View from E of lintelled grave immediately outside E gable of Kilshannig church	. 23

Townland: Kilshannig Parish: Castlegregory Barony: Chorca Dhuibhne Local name of graveyard: Kilshannig **ITM Co-ords:** E462505, N619531 **RMP No.:** KE0027-002 No. of tombs: 18 No. of named headstones: 51 No. of unnamed headstones: 75 No. of lintelled graves: 4

No. of cross-slabs: 1

1. Introduction

Kilshannig 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 the features within the graveyard are referenced in the appendices and all photographs are provided on the attached disc.

The survey was undertaken as per the tender survey criteria set out by the Heritage Section of Kerry County Council, (KCC) and further, 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 of the Dept. of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG).

2. Site Location

Kilshannig graveyard is situated on the shoreline near Rough Point on the east side of Scraggane Bay that juts out at the end of a tombola on the N side of the Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry (Figure 1)

3. Kilshannig church and graveyard

The medieval church of Kilshannig, *Cill Senach* is associated with the 7th century saint, Senach who is also associated with the nearby monastic site of Illauntannig. Kilshannig was recorded in the Dingle Peninsula Archaeological Survey (Cuppage 1984, 324). The existing rectangular parish church dates to the high medieval period but the association of the site with the early St. Senach as well as the presence of an early chi-rho cross-slab within the church demonstrate that the sites origins date from around the 7th century (Figure 2 & Plate 1).

KIlshannig church and graveyard is recorded in the Record of Monuments & Places, (RMP), KE027-002.

The church was a ruin when visited by John O'Donovan in 1841 who states that 'its side walls were two and a half feet thick but no more than five feet high' (O'Donovan 1986, 122).

When Kilshannig was surveyed by the Dingle Archaeological Survey much of the south elevation had disappeared. Its gables still stood to full height and the N elevation was as it had been in O'Donovan's time (Cuppage 1986, 324).

In 2009 the site was inspected by the writer and Fionnbarr Moore who reported that the W gable was seriously fractured, slipped and twisted and was imminently about to collapse (Plates 2-3). The W gable did unfortunately collapse in March 2011 (Plates 4-5). Some of the collapsed masonry fell on top of a tomb (TB13, Figure 2) and also slightly against the modern grave of Paddy Flynn (HN 36, Appendix 2).

Prior to the collapse of the W gable Kerry County Council had erected a robust metal railing around it and erected warning signs (Plates 6-7).

Shortly after the collapse of the W gable the Kilshannig church site was inspected by the writer who took several images and video clips.

The S elevation is still actively eroding and is the most neglected area of the church (Plate 7). The interior is also neglected with loose stones and bones visible throughout as well as discarded rubbish and other graveyard detritus. Modern burials have also impacted on it.

3.1 Recommendations

- The collapsed masonry should be collected and temporarily stored nearby. An assessment of the viability of the partial or total reconstruction of the W gable should be undertaken.
- The interior of the church requires attention and its structural fabric requires consolidation. This work should only be done by experienced qualified personnel under archaeological supervision.

4. Approach and parking

Kilshannig is approached along a short grassy pedestrian pathway from the clachan settlement of Kilshannig where adequate carparking is available (Figure 2 & Plates 8-9).

4.1 Recommendations

The grassy path should be kept low and if upgraded should only be done with gravel to maintain the distinct cultural ambience that it enjoys at present.

5. Entrance

Entrance is through a modern galvanised gate pivoting between two solid square rubblestone piers with forward ribbon pointing and rounded gravel cement capping (Plates 10 & 11). An unused step-stile is provided abutting the N pier however visitors generally use an *ad hoc* sidestep around the S pier on the shore side (Plates 12-13).

5.1 Recommendations

The *ad hoc* sidestep that many visitors choose is a distinct H & S issue as it is possible that some individual will slip and fall down onto the rocky shoreline. The sidestep should be closed off.

6. Services & Signage

There is no water or waste collection services provided. No information sign is provided either.

6.1 Recommendations

Water and a watering can and an all weather information sign should be provided.

7. Boundaries

The triangular shaped graveyard (Figure 2) is enclosed by rubblestone walls along all of its boundaries varying in internal height from as low as 0.20 in sections around the curving S shoreline to almost 3m along the E boundary (Plates 14-15). The walls are in general good condition however the low S shoreline boundary wall area suffers from the ingress of blown sand that reduces the effectiveness of the already low wall where the 'soldier' capping is all that is visible in places (Plate 14).

7.1 Recommendations

Along the S shoreline area of the graveyard the boundary needs to be increased in height. This work should match the existing walls and be undertaken by a tradesperson skilled in rubble stone and mortar walls.

8. Pathways

There is an informal sandy gravelled path extending beside the curving sweep of the S boundary while a rougher stony gravelled path extends along the base of the E boundary wall (Figure 2 & Plates 14-15).

8.1 Recommendations

The rough stony path beside the E boundary should be properly metalled with gravel.

9. Tombs

There are eighteen tombs in Kilshannig graveyard and church mainly of the strong-box variety (Figure 2, Plates 16-18 & Appendix 1). There is a single gabled house type also, (Goodwin, TB 1), Plate 17). The majority of them are constructed of local rubble limestone and rendered while (Figure 2). Fourteen of the tombs are in excellent condition; another, the grassed over Kenyon tomb (TB2), requires maintenance. Three other tombs, whose names are currently unknown, are in a poor dilapidated and neglected state (Tombs 9, 12 & 13, Figure 2). One of the three (TB13) is still covered with a mass of tumbled masonry since the W gable collapsed in January 2011.

9.1 Recommendations

Specialist work is required to preserve, repair and restore four of the tombs at Kilshannig Graveyard. Two will require careful rebuilding and collapsed masonry should be removed from TB 13. Work should only be undertaken by skilled masons with a proven track record of working with historic structures and ashlar masonry.

All work on these historic tombs should be undertaken with expert archaeological advice and guidance.

10. Named Headstones

A total of fifty-one, (51) modern named headstones (HN) were recorded in Kilshannig graveyard (Figure 2 & Appendix 2). All the headstones are in good order and legible (Plate 19).

10.1 Recommendations

No recommendations necessary.

11. Unnamed, unhewn Headstones

A total of seventy-five (75) unnamed unhewn gravemarkers were recorded dispersed throughout the north and eastern limits of the graveyard, (Figure 2 & Plates 18 & 19).

11.1 Recommendations

The unnamed headstones and their associated informal grass covered graves should be retained and protected without intrusion from nearby formalised grave settings. No burials should take place in these informal burial areas unless proof of ownership can be established.

12. Lintelled graves

There are four exposed lintelled graves one of which is situated immediately inside the main breach in the S elevation of the church while the three others are situated immediately outside the E gable (Figure 2, Plate 20 & Appendix 3).

12.1 Recommendations

The lintelled graves should be covered over with sod following under archaeological supervision. The potential for recording medieval architectural fragments re-used as lintels is regarded as high.

13. Cross-slab

A single free standing early medieval chi-rho cross-slab, that is decorated on both faces, stands immediately inside the entrance to the church on the N elevation at the W side (Plate 1 & Figure 3). No damage occurred to this very important chi-rho slab when the W gable collapsed in 2011.

13.1 Recommendations

No recommendations necessary.

14. Summary of recommendations for future management/conservation of Rattoo church & graveyard

- Water and a watering can should be provided.
- The collapsed masonry should be removed and an assessment on the viability of repairing, restoring or conserving the W gable in particular and other structural elements should be carried out.
- Cleaning, conservation and restoration works should only be carried out by qualified personnel under archaeological supervision.
- The lintelled graves should be fully exposed, examined by an archaeologist and re-sodded over.
- It is likely that local information would furnish the names associated with some of the unnamed tombs and this information should be collected and added to the database.
- An all weather 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.
- An informative booklet on Kilshannig should be compiled by Kerry County Council and available locally. 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.

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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16. Figures



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

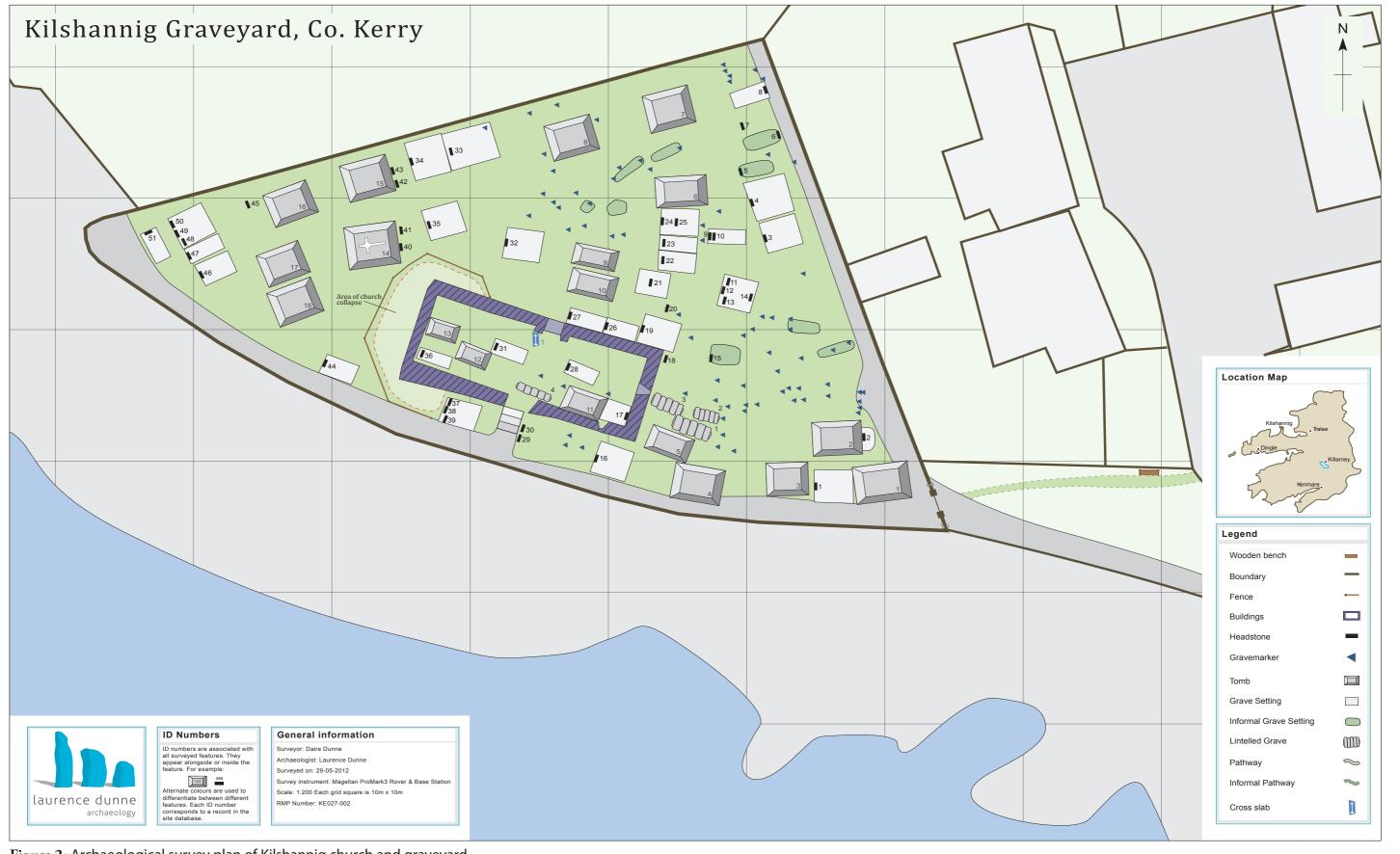


Figure 2: Archaeological survey plan of Kilshannig church and graveyard.

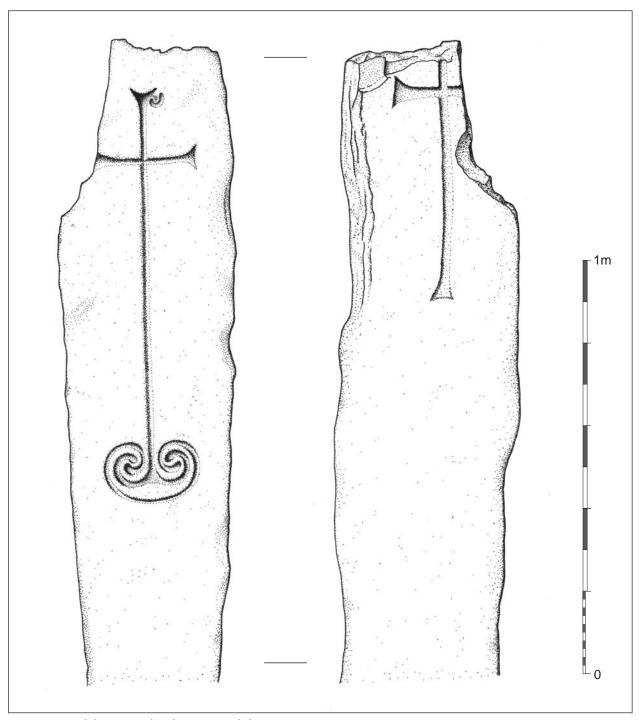


Figure 3: Kilshannig chi-rho cross-slab

17. Plates



Plate 1: View of Chi-Rho cross-slab on W side of doorway on N elevation of Kilshannig medieval church



Plate 2: View from E of W gable of Kilshannig church. Image taken by author in 2009. The W gable collapsed in January 2011. Note coherent leaning and fracturing on the S side and S basal area of the W gable. Further note low rectangular tomb and Flynn burial plot



Plate 3: Side view image by the author from the exterior SW corner of extant W gable in 2009. Note inadequate low buttress and outward or westerly bulge



Plate 4: View of collapsed masonry from W gable straddling Tomb 13 in Kilshannig church



Plate 5: Exterior close-up view from W of collapsed W gable. Note coherent south side of window still extant



Plate 6: View of collapsed NW corner of N elevation of Kilshannig church from N. Note robust railing around it erected by KCC



Plate 7: View from SE of collapsed south elevation of Kilshannig church. Note ragged nature of interior, modern graves and KCC warning sign



Plate 8: View from W of grassy pathway approach to graveyard from Kilshannig clachan



Plate 9: View from E of grassy pathway approach to Kilshannig graveyard entrance. Note Scraggane Bay and Mount Brandon in the background



Plate 10: View of gated entrance to Kilshannig graveyard. Note ad hoc pedestrian step-aside at S or extreme right hand side of plate



Plate 11: View of unused step-stile on N side of entrance area to Kilshannig graveyard (Figure 2)



Plate 12: Interior close up view of seaward projecting ad hoc pedestrian step-aside into Kilshannig graveyard



Plate 13: View from E of entrance to Kilshannig graveyard. Note lower ad hoc stepaside on left of plate



Plate 14: View of curving S section of interior gravelled pathway and very low section of boundary wall. Note only 'soldier' capping of wall visible here



Plate 15: View from S of high rubble stone E boundary of Kilshannig graveyard. Note rough, stony perimeter path



Plate 16: View of O'Connor Tomb 4 from E



Plate 17: View of the Goodwin house shaped Tomb 1 from SE



Plate 18: View of recently re-rendered Hussey Tomb 11 in E end of Kilshannig church. Note unhewn unnamed gravemarker beside it and other modern burials



Plate 19: View of Kenny headstone in N limits of graveyard. Note several unhewn, unnamed gravemarkers in general area

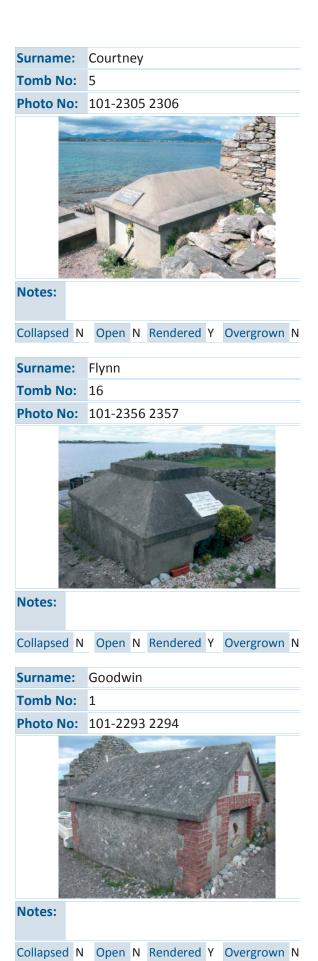


Plate 20: View from E of lintelled grave immediately outside E gable of Kilshannig church

18. Appdenix 1 Tombs

Surname: Ashe O'Connor Flynn Lynch Tomb No: 17 Photo No: 101-2358 2359 **Notes:** Collapsed N Open N Rendered Y Overgrown N Surname: Driscoll Tomb No: 18 Photo No: 101-2360 2361 **Notes:** Collapsed N Open N Rendered Y Overgrown N Surname: Flynn Tomb No: 15 Photo No: 101-2349 2350 Notes:

Collapsed N Open N Rendered Y Overgrown N



Surname: Hussey

Tomb No: 11

Photo No: 100-0011 0012



Notes:

Collapsed N Open N Rendered Y Overgrown N

Surname: Kenny

Tomb No: 6

Photo No: 101-2327 2328



Notes:

Collapsed N Open N Rendered Y Overgrown N

Surname: Moriarty

Tomb No: 8

Photo No: 101-2341 2342



Notes:

Collapsed N Open N Rendered Y Overgrown N

Surname: Kennedy

Tomb No: 14

Photo No: 101-2353 2354 2355



Notes:

Collapsed N Open N Rendered Y Overgrown N

Surname: Kenyon

Tomb No: 2

Photo No: 101-2295



Notes:

Collapsed N Open N Rendered N Overgrown Y

Surname: O'Connor

Tomb No: 3

Photo No: 101-2298 2299



Notes:

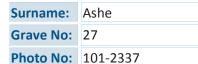
Collapsed N Open N Rendered Y Overgrown N

Surname: O'Connor Surname: O'Connor Tomb No: 4 Tomb No: 10 Photo No: 101-2300 2304 **Photo No:** 101-2338 2339 **Notes: Notes:** Collapsed N Open N Rendered Y Overgrown N Collapsed N Open N Rendered Y Overgrown N **Surname:** O'Leary Surname: Unknown Tomb No: 7 Tomb No: 13 Photo No: 101-2324 2325 2326 Photo No: 100-0005 **Notes: Notes:** Collapsed N Open N Rendered Y Overgrown N Collapsed Open Rendered Overgrown Surname: Unknown Surname: Unknown Tomb No: 9 Tomb No: 12 Photo No: 100-0006 Photo No: 101-2340 **Notes: Notes:** Collapsed Open Rendered Overgrown Collapsed P Open N Rendered N Overgrown N

19. Appendix 2 Named Headstones

Surname: Ashe
Grave No: 33

Photo No: 101-2345



Surname: Brown
Grave No: 18
Photo No: 101-2335







Surname: Browne
Grave No: 49

Photo No: 101-2364

Surname: Browne
Grave No: 19
Photo No: 101-2310

Surname: Browne
Grave No: 50
Photo No: 101-2363







Surname: Browne
Grave No: 26
Photo No: 101-2336

Surname: Browne
Grave No: 48
Photo No: 101-2365

Surname: Browne
Grave No: 1
Photo No: 101-2297







Surname: Bruton
Grave No: 47

Photo No: 101-2366

Surname: Finn
Grave No: 5

Photo No: 101-2320

Surname: Flynn
Grave No: 16
Photo No: 100-0003







Surname: Flynn
Grave No: 36
Photo No: 100-0004

Surname: Flynn
Grave No: 42
Photo No: 101-2347

Surname: Flynn
Grave No: 43
Photo No: 101-2348







Surname: Flynn
Grave No: 30
Photo No: 100-0002

Surname: Flynn
Grave No: 29
Photo No: 100-0001

Surname: Flynn
Grave No: 44
Photo No: 101-2369







Surname: Flynn
Grave No: 39

Photo No: 101-2370

Surname: Flynn Herlihy

Grave No: 38

Photo No: 101-2371

Surname: Goodwin

Grave No: 46

Photo No: 101-2367







Surname: Goodwin

Grave No: 6

Photo No: 101-2321

Surname: Harrington

Photo No: 101-2313

Grave No: 12

Surname: Harrington

Grave No: 11

Photo No: 101-2314







Surname: Harrington

Grave No: 14

Photo No: 101-2315

Surname: Harrington

Grave No: 13

Photo No: 101-2312

Surname: Heasman

Grave No: 51

Photo No: 101-2368







Surname: Herlihy
Grave No: 37

Photo No: 101-2372

Surname: Hoare

Grave No: 35

Photo No: 101-2346

Surname: Kennedy

Grave No: 7

Photo No: 101-2322







Surname: Kennedy

Grave No: 40

Photo No: 101-2352

Surname: Kennedy

Grave No: 28

Photo No: 100-0010

Surname: Kennedy

Grave No: 41

Photo No: 101-2351







Surname: Kenny

Grave No: 4

Photo No: 101-2319

Surname: Kenny
Grave No: 24

Photo No: 101-2330

Surname: Kenny

Grave No: 25

Photo No: 101-2329







Surname: Kenny

Grave No: 17

Photo No: 100-0013

Surname: Kenyon

Grave No: 2

Photo No: 101-2296

Surname: Martin

Grave No: 45

Photo No: 101-2362







Surname: Moriarty

Grave No: 8

Photo No: 101-2323

Surname: Moriarty

Photo No: 101-2343

Grave No: 32

Surname: O'Brien

Grave No: 15

Photo No: 101-2311







Surname: O'Connor

Grave No: 34

Photo No: 101-2344

Surname: O'Connor

Grave No: 31

Photo No: 100-0007

Surname: O'Connor

Grave No: 3

Photo No: 101-2318







Surname: O'Neill
Grave No: 20
Photo No: 101-2334

Surname: Spillane
Grave No: 9
Photo No: 101-2316

Surname: Spillane
Grave No: 21
Photo No: 101-2333







Surname: Spillane
Grave No: 23
Photo No: 101-2331

Surname: Spillane
Grave No: 22
Photo No: 101-2332

Surname: Spillane
Grave No: 10
Photo No: 101-2317







20. Appendix 3 Lintelled Graves



21. Appendix 4 Cross Slabs

