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Archaeological Survey, Kilduff Children's Burial Ground, Kilduff, Co. Kerry.

RMP Number: KE045 009002

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CONTENTS	PAGE
Summary	4
1 Introduction	5
2 Site description and location	5
3 Methodology	6
4 Results	6
4.1 Boundaries	6
4.2 Entrance	6
4.3 Pathways	7
4.4 Unnamed gravemarkers	7
4.5 Building Remains	7
4.6 Cross Slabs	7-8
5 Summary of recommendations for future management/conservation	8
6 References	9

List of Figures

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Extract from First edition OS map
Figure 3	Site plan

List of Plates

- Plate 1 – View of site from southeast
- Plate 2 – Enclosing embankment to south, from west
- Plate 3 – Area of collapsed wall to north from west
- Plate 4 – Traversing track way from southeast
- Plate 5 – Track way to west of burial ground
- Plate 6 – Field boundary from southwest
- Plate 7 – Grave no. 002
- Plate 8 – Grave no. 003
- Plate 9 – Possible ruin from east
- Plate 10 – Cross slab from northeast
- Plate 11 – Cross slab from southwest

Appendices

Appendix 1	Unnamed gravemarkers
Appendix 2	Cross slabs
Appendix 3	Attached DVD

Summary

Townland:	Kilduff
Parish:	Balinvoher
Barony:	Corkaguiney
Local name of graveyard:	Kilduff Children's Burial Ground
NGR:	63456, 105392
RMP No.:	KE045 009002
No. of unnamed gravemarkers:	2
No. of cross slabs:	1

1 Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological survey conducted at Kilduff children's burial ground, Kilduff, Co. Kerry (Figure 3). The work was undertaken in accordance with survey specifications provided by Kerry County Council.

The report comprises a detailed survey including boundaries, location of paths and desire lines, gravemarkers, tombs, cross slabs, architectural fragments, remains of churches or buildings, dangerous areas of ground collapse and a photographic survey of headstones and gravemarkers linked back to survey drawings. Also included are written descriptions of buildings, cross-slabs and early enclosures; statements on the condition of buildings; suggested suitable/necessary remedial action that may be needed to secure these structures; breaches of the boundary walls, open or collapsed tombs and the condition of paths and entrance gates. A photographic survey of damaged and dangerous structures or features is also included.

2 Site description and location

Kilduff children's burial ground is located in the townland of Kilduff, County Kerry on the Dingle Peninsula (Figure 1). The site is approximately 22km southeast of Tralee, 20km east of Dingle, 3.5km to the northwest of the Slieve Mish Mountains and 4.5km north of the coast of Dingle Bay.

The burial ground is located 1km to the north of the N86 and accessed via a rough track way that connects with a narrow country road to the west. The site is surrounded by farmland with a small farmyard located approximately 500m to the west.

The burial ground is roughly rectangular in plan and enclosed by overgrown rubble stone boundary walls (Plate 1), with an earth and stone faced embankment located to the south. The burial ground is traversed by a fenced track way that runs from the northwest to the southeast corner with recent gates located at either end.

To the interior of the burial ground, which is itself recorded in the Record of Monuments and places (RMP) as KE045-009002, there are two recorded monuments, the first being a medieval cross slab (Plate 4), recorded as (RMP) KE045-009003 which, according to the RMP, is pre 1200 AD in date. Also listed is KE045-009001, a possible ecclesiastical site, however according to the entry there is insufficient evidence for precise classification. This entry may relate to the extremely fragmentary ruin located to the southeast of the site.

The interior of the burial ground has an uneven, slightly concave surface and slopes towards the south. The ground has never been farmed and is heavily overgrown by grass, ferns and reeds. All of the sites enclosing walls are overgrown by the same vegetation.

There are very few gravemarkers within the burial ground with only two being recorded during the survey although there are most likely numerous burials. There were however several other interesting features, the first being a large limestone boulder that displays a variety of striation marks, which are most likely natural in origin, and a small area of rubble stone located to the north of the site, most likely associated with the nearby boundary wall or field clearance activities.

3 Methodology

A site survey was carried out on the 1st of October 2009 by a team of two surveyors. An electronic survey was conducted on the Irish National Grid using a Trimble GPS R6 base and rover. The GPS was supplemented with a Leica TCR407 Total Station and Panasonic Toughbook Rugged Tablet PC (with Penmap software) when necessary due to tree cover and a resulting loss in GPS signal. All grave plots, gravemarkers, headstones and tombs were surveyed in plan as were any structural remains, boundary walls, openings, paths and desire lines. Finished survey files were exported to AutoCAD where final edits were made.

Individual graves and / or associated markers or headstones were assigned a unique 3 digit grave number on the digital survey whether the latter was being carried out using GPS or Total Station and Panasonic Toughbook.

The photographic elements of the survey were accomplished using a Canon G9 digital camera. The camera was set to assign a consecutive sequence of unique photo numbers throughout the survey. These numbers were cross-referenced with grave numbers in a photo register.

Appendix 1 and 2 were created using a Microsoft Access relational database using two tables. One table relates to the graveyard and the other relates to the graves, tombs and architectural features. Filtered reports were then used to create the appendices.

The descriptions throughout were compiled using standard National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) terminology and methodology where suitable, with guidelines and techniques from other established UK and Irish government sources being respected throughout (NIAH 2006, RCHME 1996, RCAHMS 2004, DEHLG 2001, EH 2004 and 2006). In addition, terminology and methodology was cross referenced to standard texts of buildings archaeology and architectural history (Curl 1999, Morris 2000, Robertson 1990).

4 Results

4.1 Boundaries

The burial ground is enclosed by the remains of rubble stone and earth boundary walls (Plate 2) with a rubble stone embankment located to the south. The walls survive largely in a ruinous state, more closely resembling rudimentary embankments than walls, with numerous breaks and areas of collapse that are mainly concentrated to the northern section (Plate 3).

4.1.1 Recommendations

The vegetation attached to the wall remains should be managed rather than removed in order to prevent any degradation of the walls and preserve the natural habitats that this vegetation provides for local wildlife.

4.2 Entrance

There are two gated pedestrian entrances located to the northwest and southeast corners of the burial grounds. These gates are recent, of tubular galvanised steel and are in good condition.

4.3 Pathways

There is a single track way that runs between the two gates (Plate 4), with another track way running from the southeast corner and running westward toward the nearby country road (Plate 5). The track ways are most likely used by the nearby farmer for moving livestock between fields. Interestingly the western, exterior track way is margined by an early field boundary (Plate 6) to its north side.

4.3.1 Recommendations

Control of the vegetation should be the primary concern, however the track ways appear to be in good condition and should be maintained in their current state.

4.4 Unnamed gravemarkers

Two possible gravemarkers were identified during the survey, one located to the southwest, of limestone (Plate 7) and a second just beyond the south-western corner of the boundary wall (Plate 8) which was of quartz.

4.4.1 Recommendations

The unnamed gravemarkers are in relatively good condition despite some natural deterioration caused by weathering. Where possible, steps should be taken to prevent further degradation of this sort, namely through the control of the vegetation. This would benefit the gravemarkers in two ways, primarily by preventing root activity destabilising them and it will also ensure that they remain clearly visible thereby preventing accidental damage being caused to them by visitors to the grounds.

4.5 Building Remains

Located to the southeast corner of the graveyard are the remains of what may have been a small building or hut. These remains survive as a D-shaped mound of rubble stone and earth covered by vegetation (Plate 9). Further archaeological investigation would be required to be certain of the nature of the remains.

4.5.1 Recommendations

An archaeological investigation could be carried out on the remains in order to better classify them. Any investigation should however be carried out under strict supervision.

4.6 Cross Slabs

A single cross slab was identified during the survey, located toward the southeast corner of the site. The slab is in a standing position and is inscribed on either side (Plate's 10 and 11) with cruciform motifs. The slab has survived in a good condition although it has suffered a degree of wear from natural weathering processes. The slab is however located in an area of moderate overgrowth which could if unchecked destabilise the slab. The slab was likely erected at the time when the burial ground was originally in use.

4.6.1 Recommendations

The slab should, if possible, remain in situ and the surrounding overgrowth should be controlled to prevent its destabilisation.

5 Summary of recommendations for future management/ conservation

- The vegetation throughout the graveyard should be controlled and tended to regularly in order to prevent further degradation of the remaining walls and interior features. This should not however be done at the expense of the natural habitats that this vegetation provides to local wildlife.
- The use of broad spectrum weed killers should not be used during the clearance of vegetation under any circumstances, especially in this instance given the sites rural location and close proximity to grazing cattle.
- Measures should be taken to secure the fragmentary building remains through the control and monitoring of all attached vegetation
- A more detailed archaeological investigation could be carried out on the site in order to better classify the possible building remains but any investigation should be carried out under strict supervision and care should be taken not to disturb any burial deposits.
- The Cross slab should be kept clear of vegetation and left in situ. The feature should however be periodically inspected to check its condition.
- Following the above recommendations, the site should periodically be inspected on a bi-annual basis to ensure that the site remains in a good state of repair.
- The publication: *The care and conservation of graveyards* by the office of public works should be consulted prior to the carrying out of any maintenance work on the burial grounds or church.
- Any proposed ground works should be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

6 References

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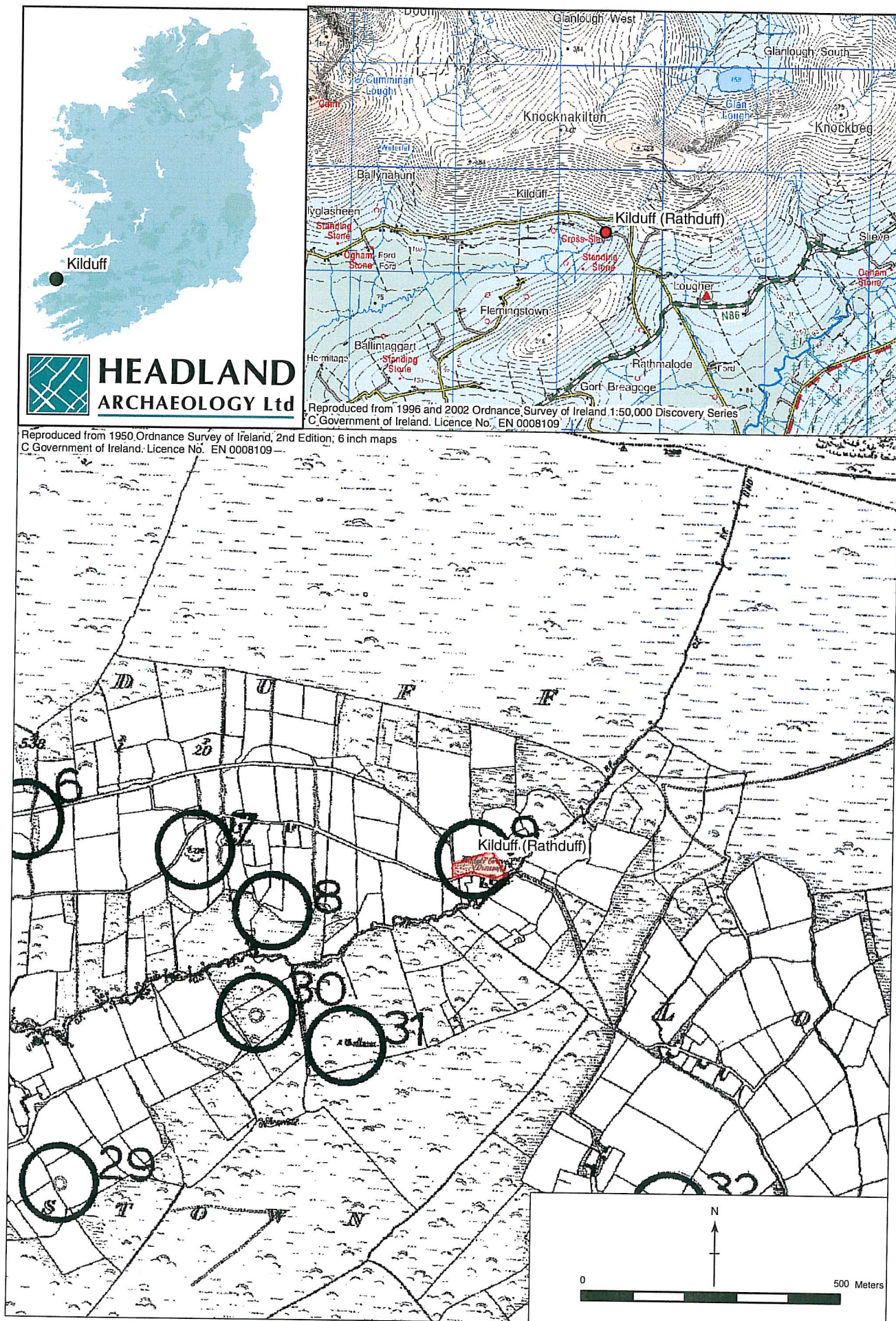


Figure 1 - Archaeological Survey
 Kilduff (Rathduff) Graveyard, Co. Kerry,
 site location

Reproduced from 1846 Ordnance Survey of Ireland, First Edition, Six Inch to One Mile map
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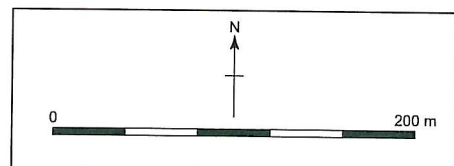
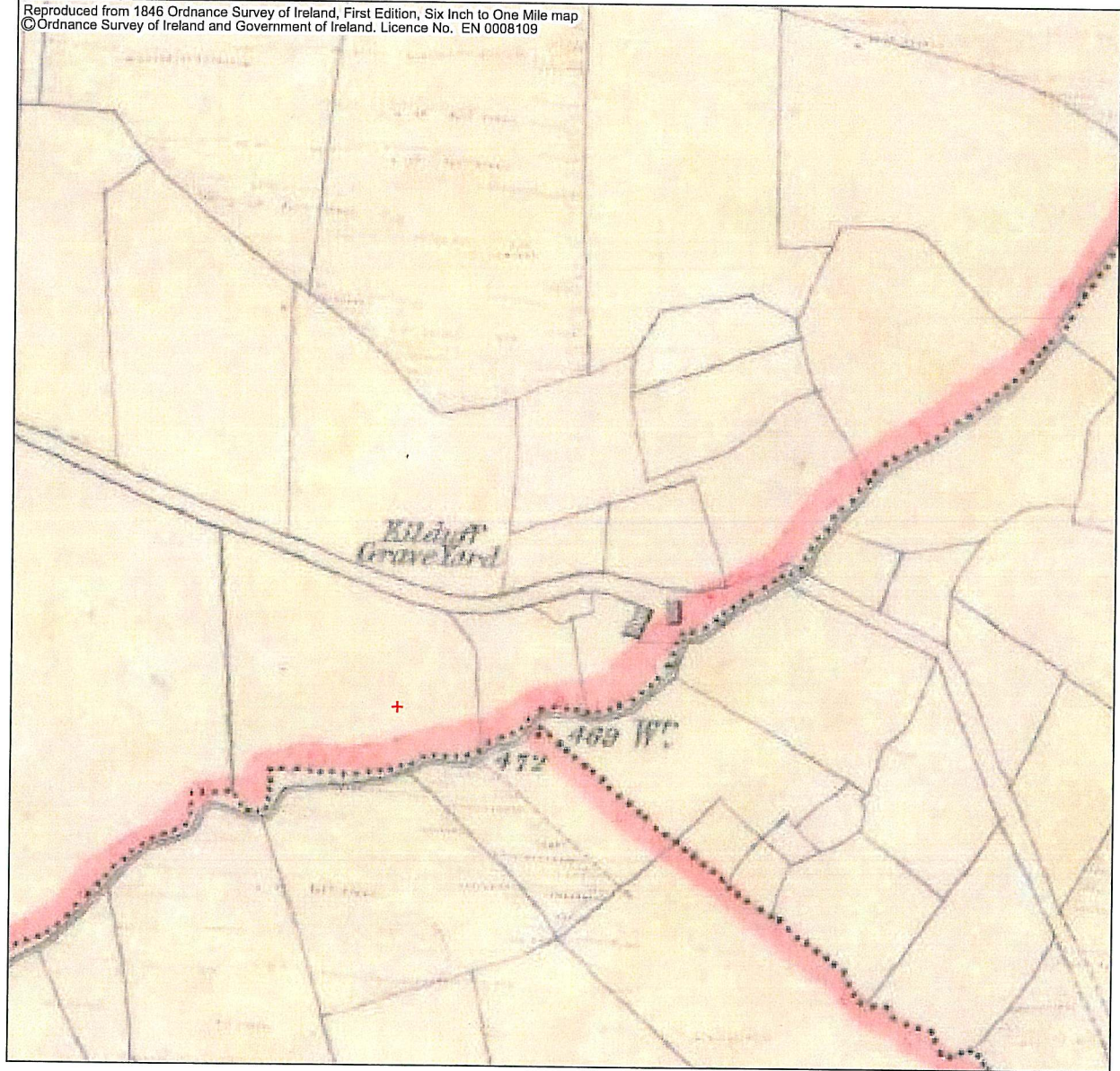


Figure 2 - Kerry County Council Graveyard Surveys, Kilduff, County Kerry:
Site location with extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map.

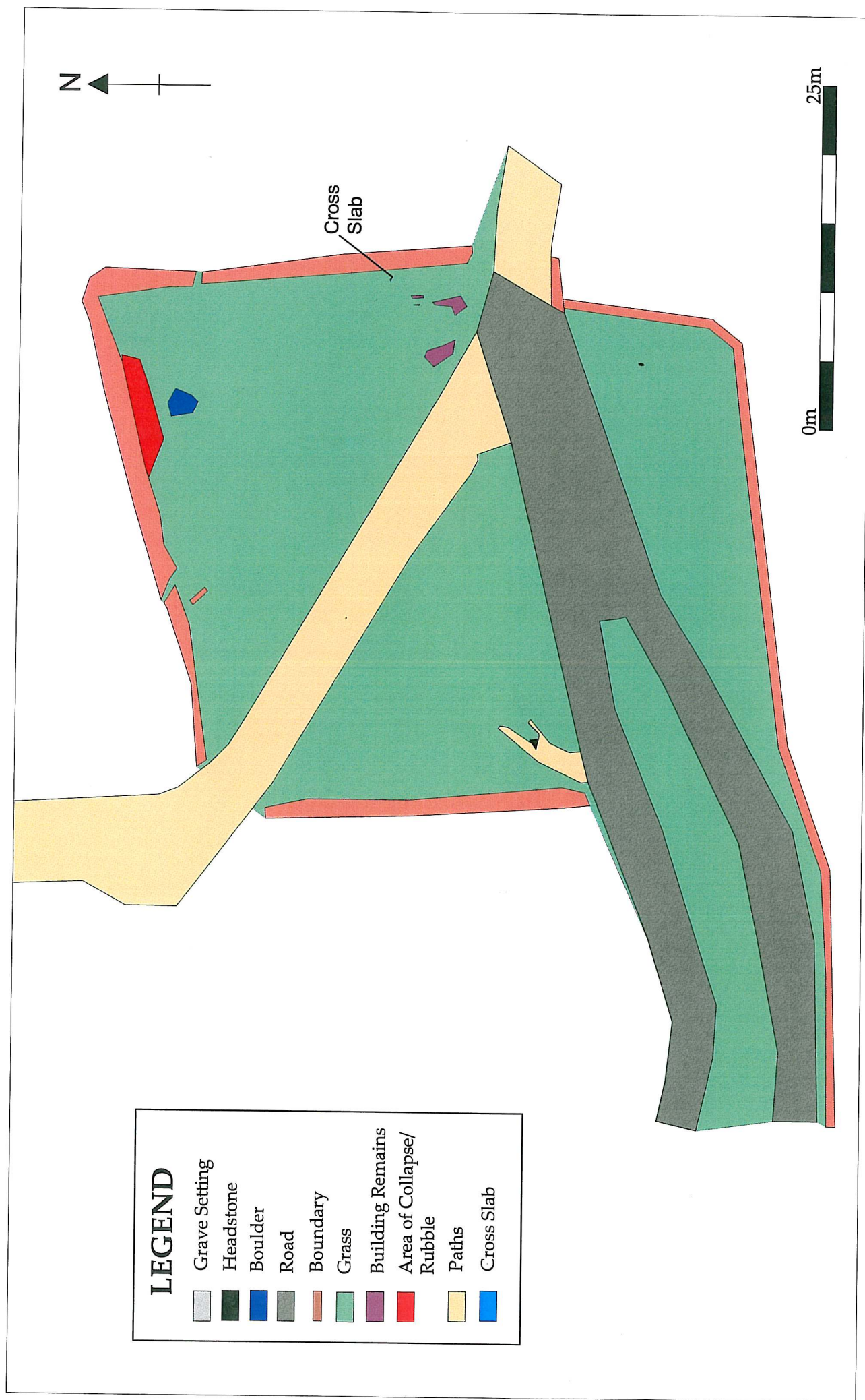


Figure 3 : Archaeological Survey, Kilduff Childrens Burial Ground, Co. Kerry.

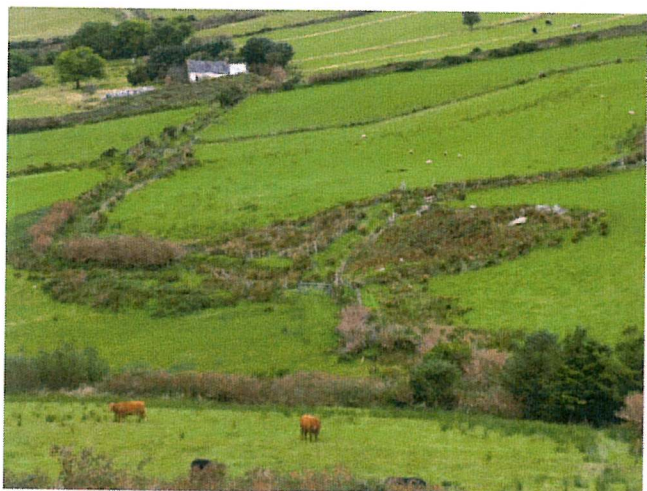


Plate 01 - View of site from southeast.jpg



Plate 02 - Enclosing embankment to south from west.jpg



Plate 03 - Area of collapsed wall from west.jpg



Plate 04 - Traversing trackway from southeast.jpg



Plate 05 - Trackway to west of burial ground.jpg



Plate 06 - Field boundary from southwest.jpg



Plate 07 - Grave no. 002.jpg



Plate 08 - Grave no. 003.jpg



Plate 09 - Possible ruin from east.jpg



Plate 10 - Cross slab from northeast.jpg



Plate 11 - Cross slab from southwest.jpg

Appendix 1 - Unnamed Headstones and Gravemarkers

Grave Number	Type	Notes	Photo Numbers
002	Grave	possible headstone, however south of burial ground	027
003	Grave	Big chunk of quartz	039

Appendix 2 - Architectural features and Cross Slab

Grave No	001
Surname	Cross slab
Photo No	001-002
Photo	