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ITM: 566763/717327

SMR Nos: Church (GA106-103001-); Graveyard (GA106-103003-); Round Tower (GA106-103004-); Children's burial ground (GA106-103005-); Settlement deserted-medieval (GA106-103002)

ÆGIS Ref.: 64-22

Conservation Management Plan for Kilmeen Church and Graveyard, Kilmeen townland, Co. Galway.



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This report has been presented by ÆGIS to:

Client— Galway County Council

Please note...

That the archaeological and other recommendations, mitigation proposals and methodology followed in this report are similar to those used on previous similar projects. The report follows most recent best practice in the compilation of Conservation and Management Plans and references are listed in section 8.

Any possible future intrusive works to the monument may require licences and other permissions.

Contributors

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Acknowledgements

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Cover Image

View of church, from SW.

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I. Executive Summary

This report is a conservation management plan and statement of heritage significance for Kilmeen Church and Graveyard, an example of a medieval parish church. It has several important elements including a possible base of a round tower adding to its regional significance. A record of the upstanding remains and a condition survey was carried out as part of this report, and a detailed inventory of the features and issues compiled. The church is completely overgrown with ivy, and loose stones are evident through the overgrowth. Mature ash trees are growing adjacent to the church ruins, and are suffering from ash die-back. This report sets out a plan of action to prevent further deterioration of the structure.



Frontispiece: Aerial view of Kilmeen Church and Graveyard (F. Coyne).

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III. Abbreviations and Terms Used

ASI	Archaeological Survey of Ireland, a division of the DHLGH.
Barony, Parish, Townland	These terms refer to land divisions in Ireland. The barony is the largest land division in a county, which is formed from a number of parishes. These parishes are in turn made up of several townlands, which are the smallest land division in the country. The origins of these divisions are believed to be in the Early Medieval/Christian period (AD500-AD1000), or may date earlier in the Iron Age (500BC-AD500).
CMP	Conservation and Management Plan.
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
E	East.
F	Feature.
First Edition	This relates to editions of the OS 6-inch maps for each county. The first edition map completed for the area dates to the early 1840s and this is referred to in the text as the 'First Edition'.
HEV	Historic Environment Viewer available at https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/ or through links on https://archaeology.ie/ .
KCC	Galway County Council.
Km	Kilometre(s).
M	Metres, all dimensions are given in metres or part of a metre, unless otherwise stated.
Monitoring	Archaeological Monitoring refers to the requirement to have an archaeologist(s) on site during the earth moving/construction works to undertake a watching brief in case archaeological material is revealed.
N	North.
NGR	National Grid Reference.
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, see www.buildingsofireland.ie .
NMI	National Museum of Ireland.
NMS	National Monuments Service. Regulatory body with responsibility for archaeological heritage. A division of the DHLGH.
NPM	Natural parent material (subsoil).
OD	Ordnance Datum (height above sea level).
OS	Ordnance Survey.
OSI	Ordnance Survey of Ireland.
Pers. Comm.	Personal Communication.
Plinth	The projecting base of a wall.
PO	Preservation Order.
PS	Protected Structure.
Quoin	The dressed stone at the corner of a building.
Recessed	Architectural term for a section of a wall or side of a building that is set back from the front.
Refs	References.
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places. A paper record on which all known archaeological sites at the time of the record are marked and listed in an accompanying list. The sites marked are afforded legal protection under the National Monuments Acts 1930–2014. The record is based on the 6-inch map series for the country and is recorded on a county basis. Each archaeological monument on the RMP has a unique code known as the RMP number prefixed by GA for Galway.
RMP Number	This code is the number of the site on the RMP constraint map. It begins with the county code, for example, KE, the 6-inch sheet number, followed by the number of the archaeological monument on that sheet.
RPS	Record of Protected Structures.
S	South.
Sheet	This relates to the 6-inch map for each county, which is divided into sheets.
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record. It relates to the archive files and on-line database relating to all currently known archaeological monuments, maintained by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI). It is regularly updated. It can be viewed at http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/ .
TB	Townland Boundary.
W	West. Width; where used with dimensions.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and Structure

The aims of this report are three-fold: first, a baseline description and record of the Church and Graveyard at Kilmeen, which can support potential future funding applications; second, a statement of heritage significance; and third, a conservation and management plan with policies for the church and graveyard. In addition to these main aims, an appraisal of options for the sustainable enhancement of the church and graveyard is also outlined.

The structure of this conservation and management plan report (CMP) is as follows: this section provides an introduction to the project including its genesis, scope, and purpose. An overview of the current statutory protections of the complex is provided, and guiding philosophical approaches are outlined. Methodologies used in the gathering of the data and the compilation of the report is provided. Section 2 provides background to the church in order to understand it and place it in its broader archaeological context. A brief cartographic review, which traces the place over time is included. The church as a monument and associated feature types represented, and chronology, are discussed. A summary of heritage assets of the location is provided. A description of the current remains is given. Section 3 includes an assessment of key heritage values leading to a statement of significance. Section 4 lists and defines the current management issues and vulnerabilities of the complex. Risks and opportunities for the ecclesiastical complex are outlined; while section 5 outlines future management policy aims that will assist in mitigating these vulnerabilities and includes an appraisal of options for future re-use. Section 6 is an action plan for the policies outlined in section 5. Section 7 provides a brief summary and concluding remarks. Section 8 is the bibliography, section 9 a signing-off statement, and section 10 includes supporting information set out in a series of appendices.

1.2 Statutory Protection and Policy

There is a range of existing statutory and regulatory policies upon which this report is based. Archaeological heritage is protected under the National Monuments (amendment) Act 1930–2014. Further protection is provided by the following legislation: Heritage Act, 1985; Architectural Heritage (national inventory) and Historic Monuments (miscellaneous provisions) Act, 1999; Planning and Development Act, 2000 (plus amendments); and Planning and Development Regulations, 2001. This legislation is endorsed by Galway County Council in its county development plan (Galway County Council 2022-2028). A summary of protections afforded to the church at Kilmeen is provided in Table 1.1. A list of pertinent international charters that apply to this study is in Table 1.2.

Table 1.1. Heritage asset information.

Common name	
Townland	Kilmeen
Civil Parish	Kilmeen
Barony	Leitrim
County	Galway
Six-inch map sheet	GA 106
Protected Structure	N/a
National Inventory of Architectural Heritage	N/a
Structural elements	Church and Graveyard
RMP/SMR Nos	GA106-103001- (Church); GA106-103003- (Graveyard); GA106-103004- (Round Tower); GA106-103005- (Children’s Burial ground located within GA106-103002- (Settlement-deserted).
Archaeological Classification	Church and Graveyard, Round Tower, Children’s Burial Ground; Settlement Deserted.
Development & Other Plans	N/a
Ownership	Galway County Council
Other designations	N/a

Table 1.2. List of pertinent international charters consulted in this study.

Common name	Date	Charter Title
-	1972	UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
Venice Charter	1964	International charter for the conservation and restoration of monuments and sites
-	1975	The Congress on European Architectural Heritage
Burra Charter	1979 (revised 1981, 1988, 1999 & 2013)	The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance
Granada	1985	Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe
Valetta Charter	1992	Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage

The philosophical approach underlying the understanding of conservation management plans is that an understanding of the monument and its significance is first established, followed by an assessment of how this significance might be threatened or impaired in the future. Once these issues have been clearly outlined a set of measures and policies can be adopted to avoid or mitigate these potential impairments and safeguard and enhance significance for future generations (e.g. Aygen, 2012; CPRE, 2004; Forsyth, 2007; Historic Scotland, 2000; Semple Kerr, 1996).

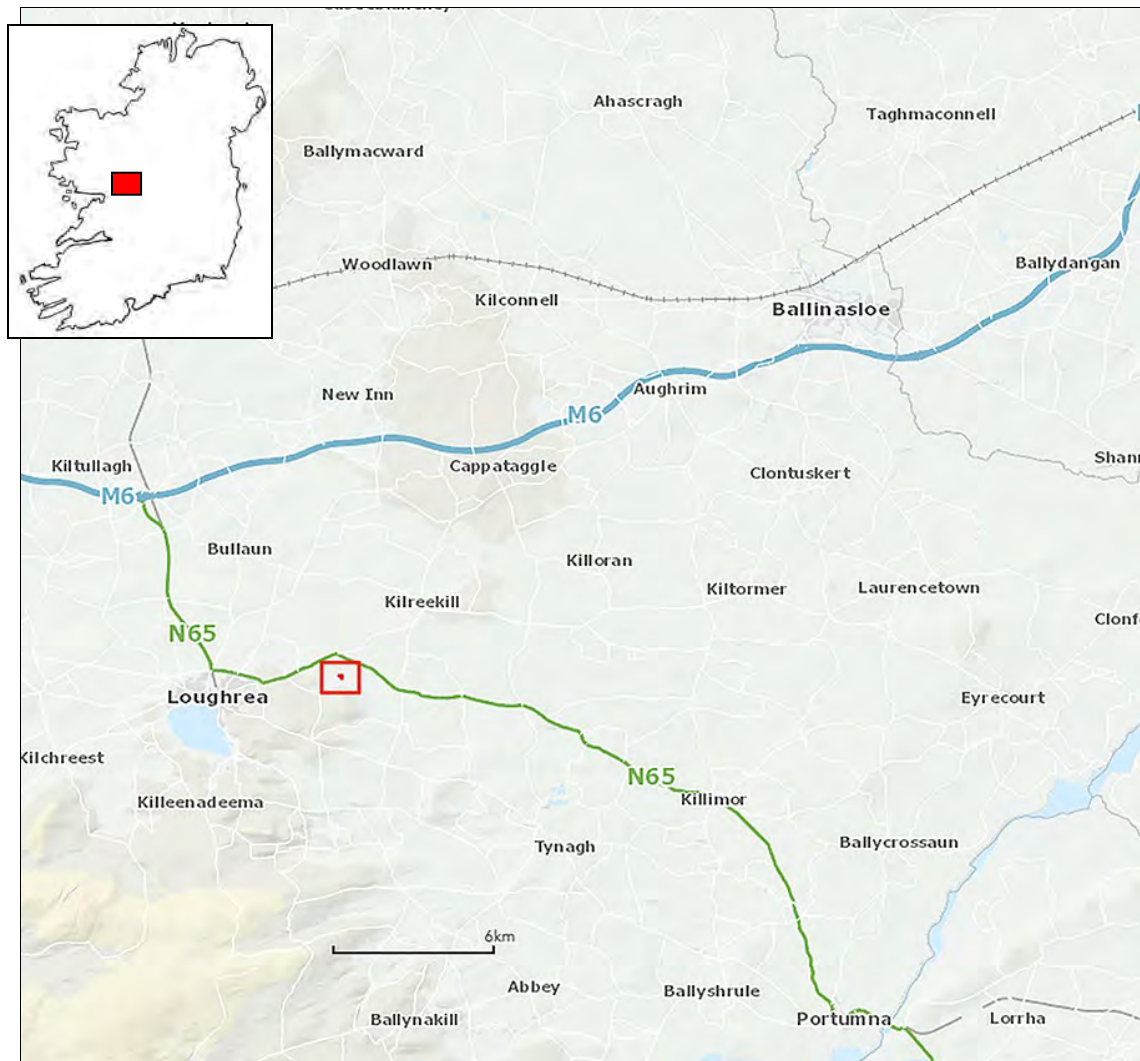


Figure 1.1. Location map, subject site indicated in red (www.osi.ie). North to top.



Figure 1.2. General location map, subject site indicated in red (www.osi.ie). North to top.

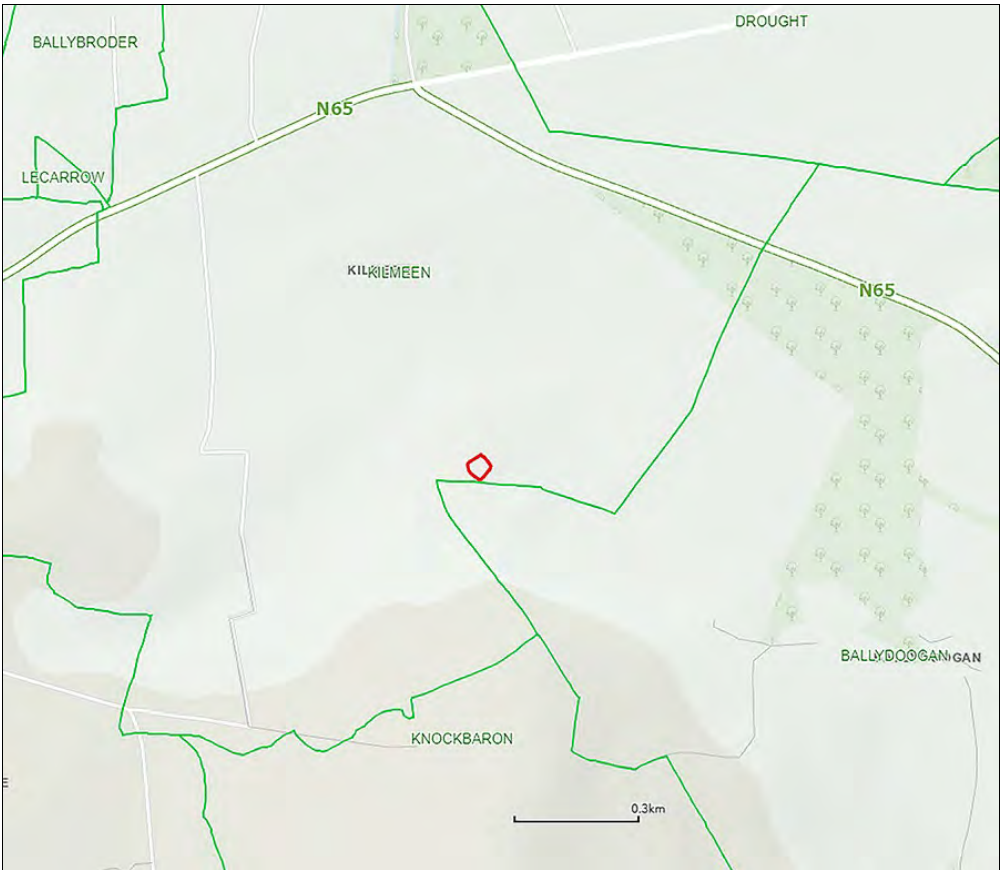


Figure 1.3. Location map in relation to townlands, subject site indicated in red (www.osi.ie). North to top.

1.3 Methodologies

The following resources and methods of establishing the status of the church monument at Kilmeen were used:

- The church was inspected, photographed, recorded and a condition assessment was made during several visits;
- The church and graveyard was surveyed (appendix);
- A baseline natural heritage survey was undertaken (section 2.5.1);
- Web-based assessment: Historic mapping and photographs (section 2); placename and folklore records (section 2.4.5);
- Desk-based assessment: A wide range of historical records relevant to the church monument its type and zone of influence; The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) constraint maps and list (section 2); The topographical files housed in the National Museum of Ireland ;

1.4 Limitations

The dense undergrowth and ivy prevented a proper structural assessment of the upstanding remains of the church. It was noted that the east window ope was in perilous condition, and is in danger of imminent collapse. It was decided that trimming the ivy without a resourced immediate remedial action plan would only further endanger the monument.

2. Understanding the Monument

2.1 Description of Place, Topography, and Setting

Kilmeen is an example of a medieval parish church, located in the south-Galway lowlands, approximately three kilometers to the east of the town of Loughrea (Figure 2.1). It is situated in the townland of Kilmeen, the civil parish of Kilmeen and the barony of Leitrim. The underlying geology is Walsortian Limestone (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/SEA>).

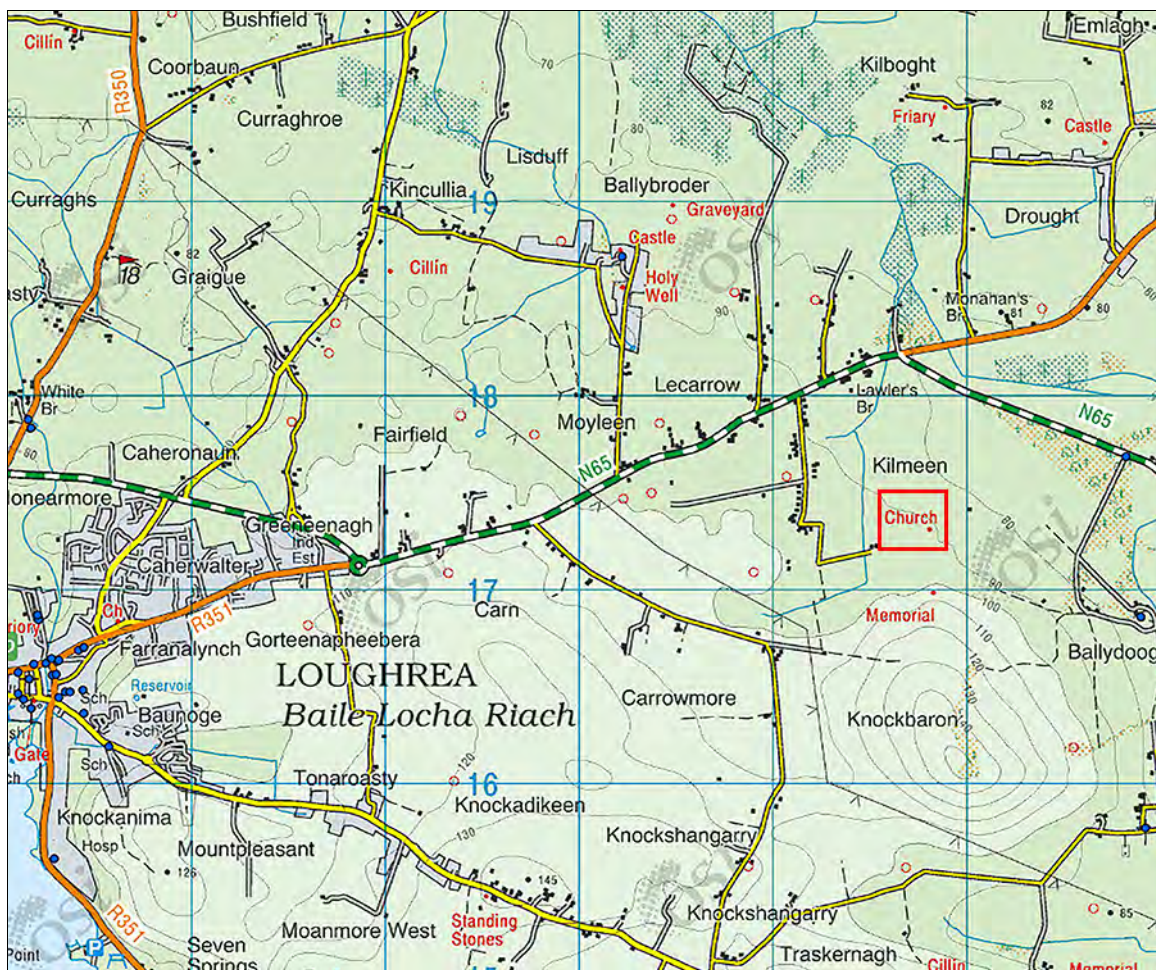


Figure 2.1. Discovery Series map (1 box = 1km). North to top. Sie indicated by red box.

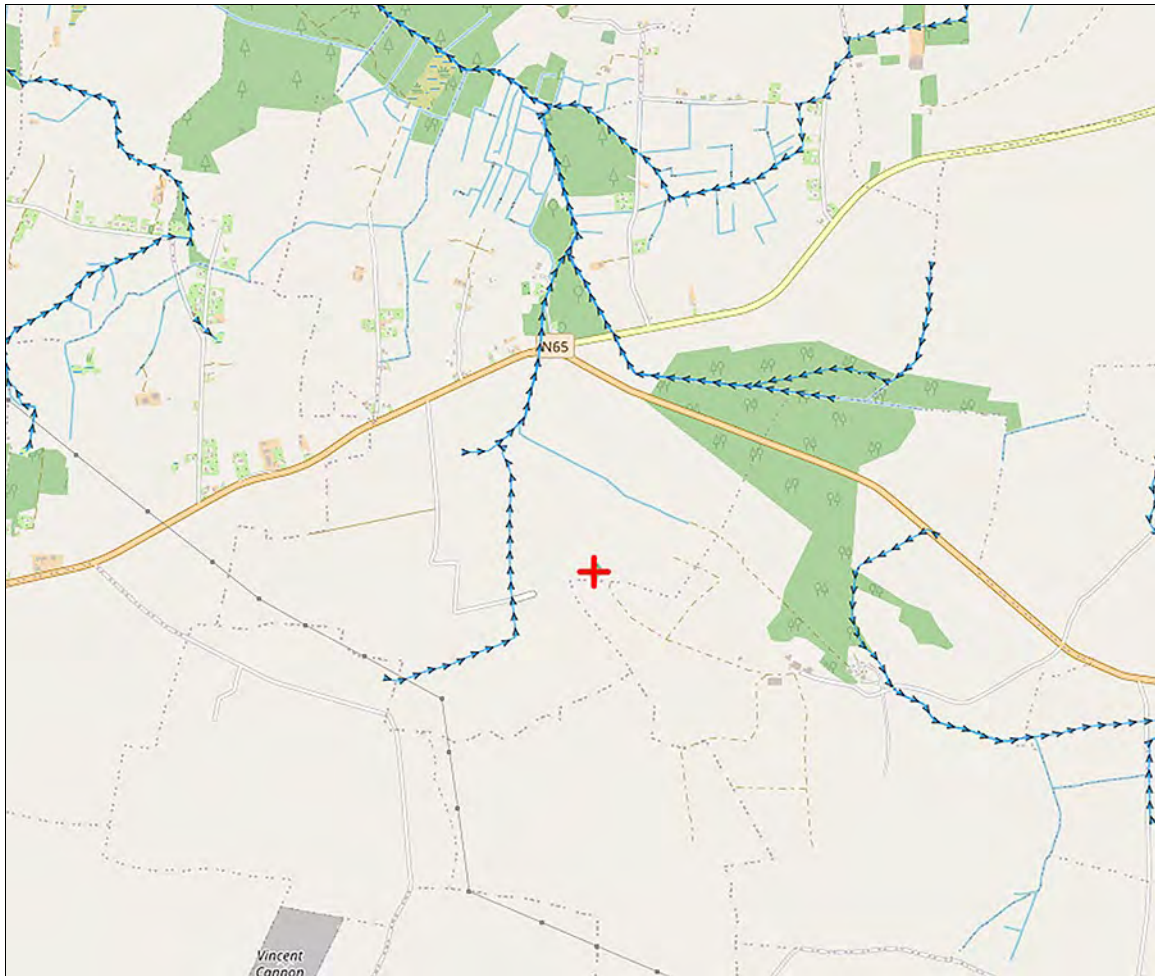


Figure 2.2. EPA map showing location of the subject site in relation to the nearby water courses. (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/SEA>). North to top. Site indicated by red cross.

Kilmeen Church and Graveyard itself (ITM 566763/717327) is situated level ground, approximately 90m above sea level, in an area of extensive grassland. The land rises towards Knockbaron at the south. The surrounding land is drained by several small water courses. There are excellent views from the site in all directions.

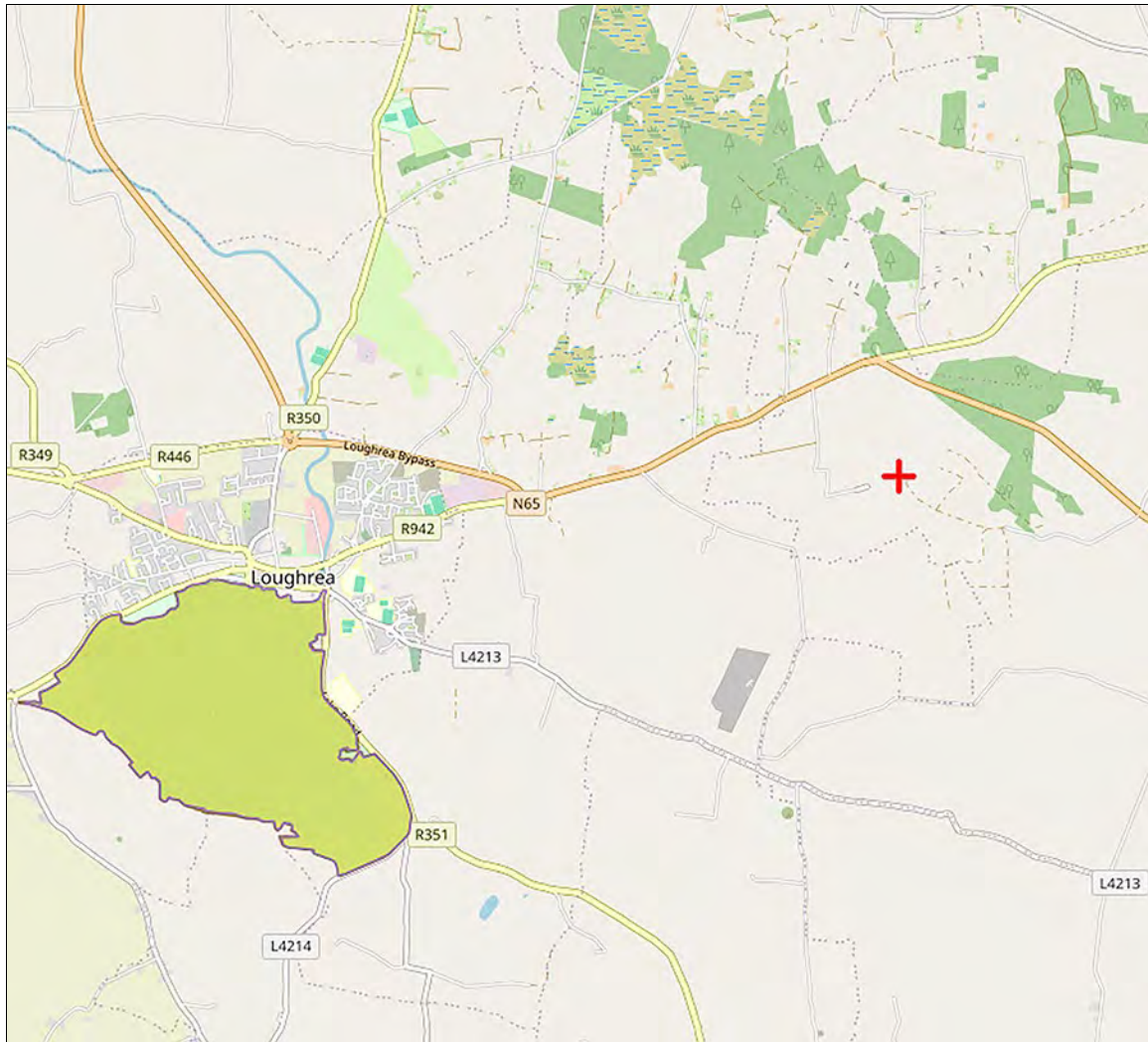


Figure 2.3. EPA map showing location of the subject site in relation to Lough Rea SPA, Lough Rea SAC and proposed Lough Rea Natural Heritage Area 000304, (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/SEA>). North to top. Site indicated by red cross.



Figure 2.3. Aerial view of site looking south (F. Coyne).

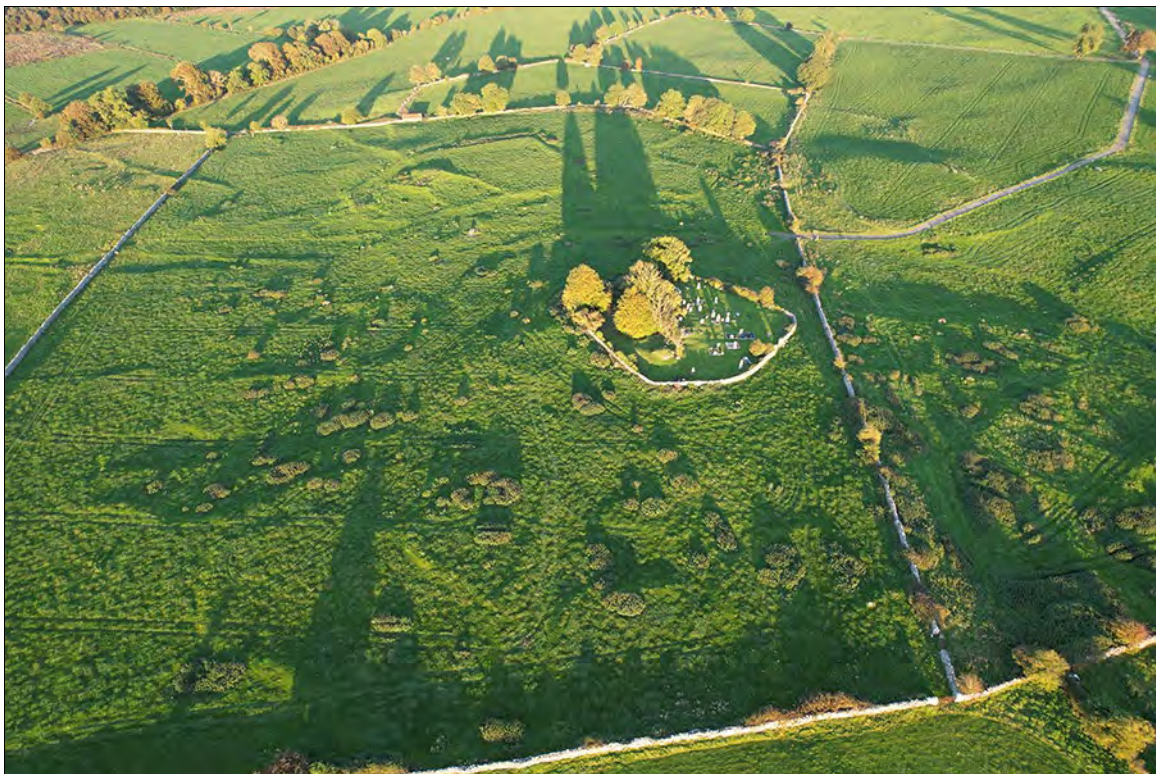


Figure 2.4. Aerial view of site looking W (F. Coyne).

2.2 Cartographic Review

A review of all available map material was undertaken for Kilmeen, the earliest of which is the Down Survey dating to the seventeenth century (Fig 2.5). The Down Survey was a national land survey, managed by Sir William Petty, then surgeon-general of the English army. Its purpose was to measure the land that was to be forfeited by Irish Catholics, so that it could be redistributed by the Crown as payment to adventurers and soldiers of the Protestant faith for services rendered. The survey was undertaken from 1656–1658. The Down Survey generated an all-island map, and more detailed maps on a county, barony, and civil parish basis. The Barony map for this area was destroyed in 1711. The church, annotated 'Kilmeany' is marked on the county map, as is a second annotation '@kilmeany', which presumably indicates the parish of the same name.

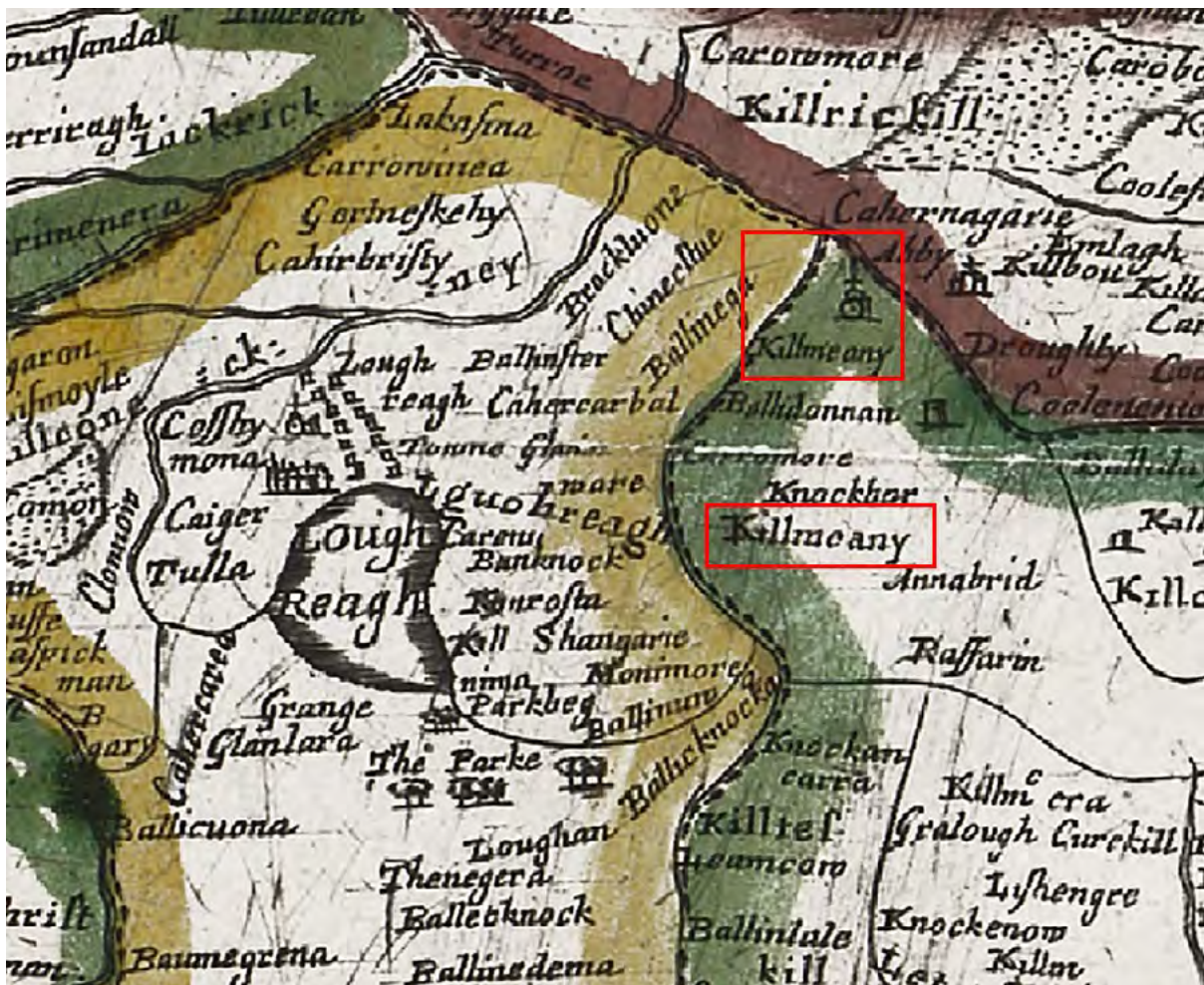


Figure 2.5. Extract from the Down Survey map of 'The County of Gallway' (<https://downsurvey.tchpc.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php#c=Galway>).

Kilmeen is marked on various subsequent county maps of Galway, but no additional detail is depicted. Kilmeen is depicted on the Grand Jury map for Galway, dated from 1760-1820 , (Fig. 2.6).In the 1837 Lewis Topographical Dictionary of Ireland map 'Kilmeen' is annotated, (Fig. 2.7), but no settlement is indicated.

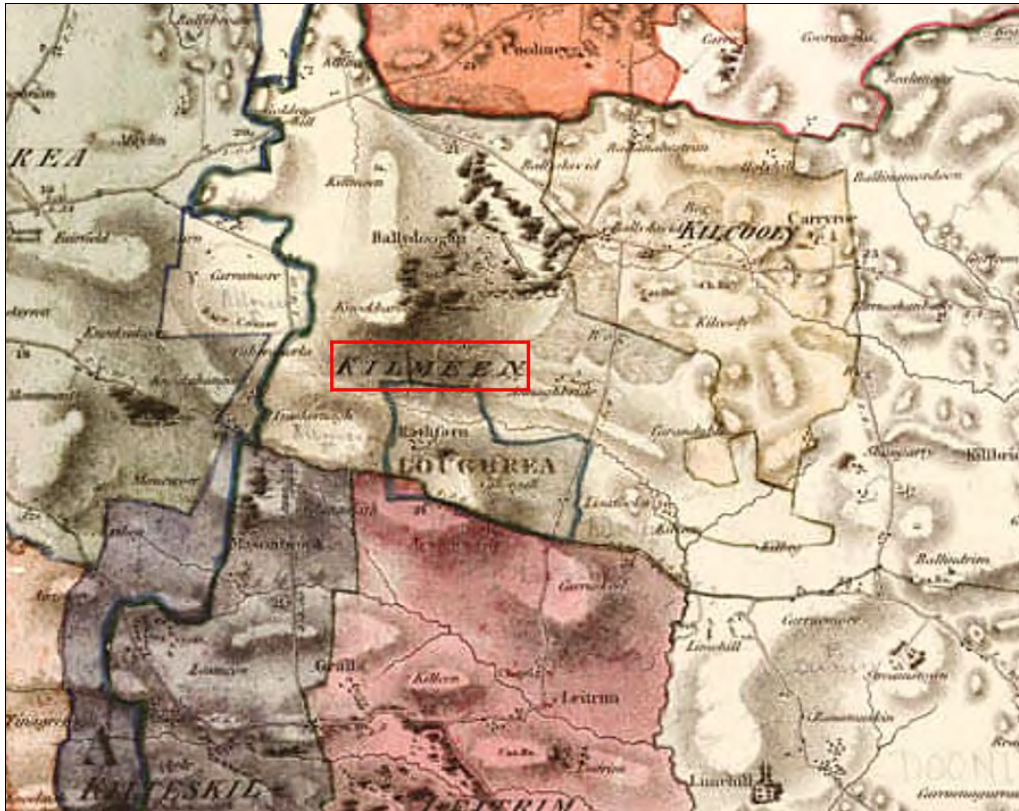


Figure 2.6. Grand Jury map for Galway, dated from 1760-1820 (<https://www.lbrowncollection.com/ireland-grand-jury-maps-galway/>).

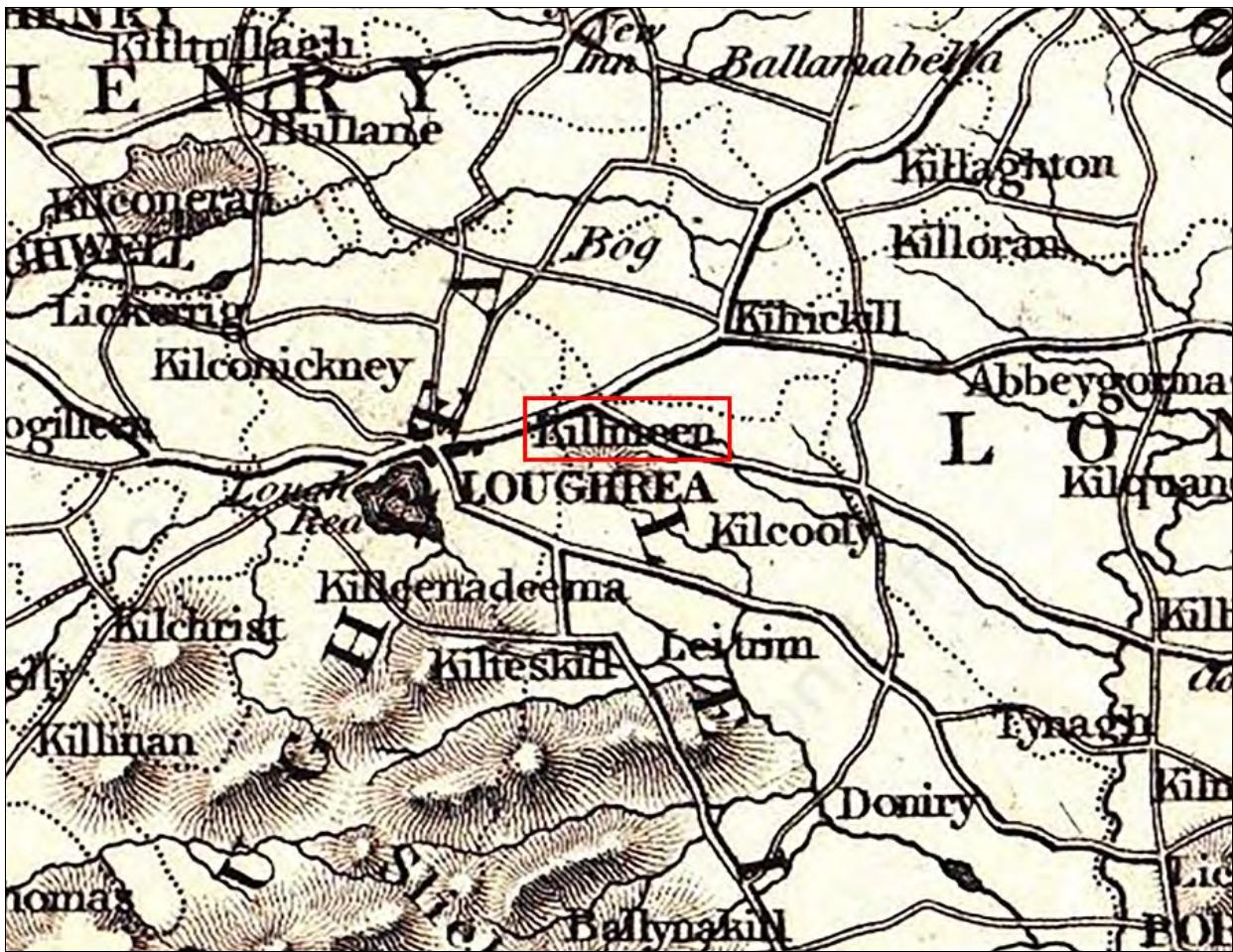


Figure 2.7. Lewis Topographical Dictionary 1837 (<https://www.swilson.info/lewismaps37.php?coid=11>).

The first detailed map of Kilmeen Church is the Ordnance Survey first edition six-inch map which dates to c. 1840 (Fig. 2.8). It depicts the site, and is annotated 'Church-in ruins' and also 'Grave Yard'. A mound, perhaps relating to the site of the possible round tower is depicted at the western side of the church. At the east, two walls run from the north and south corners of the church to the boundary wall. This may indicate the location of the children's burial ground.

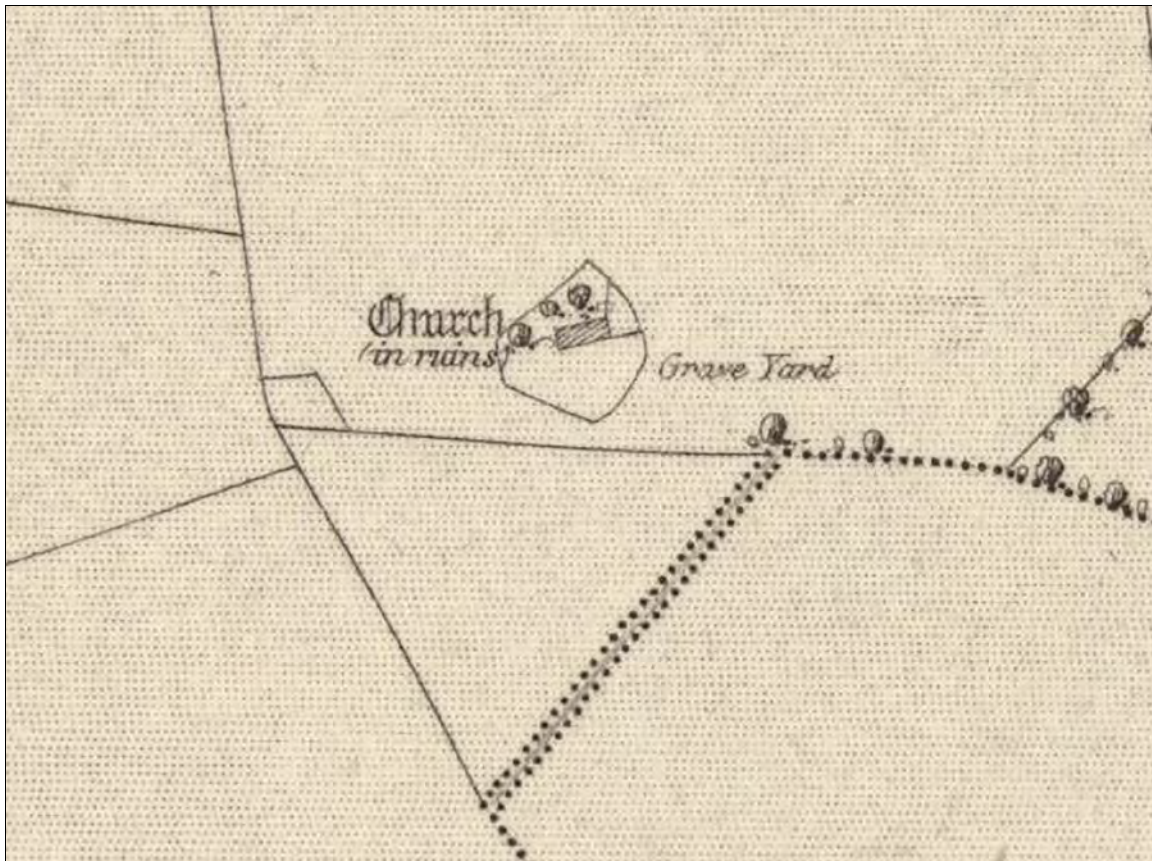


Figure 2.8. Extract of the first edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map surveyed 1838, published 1841 (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland).

The One inch map dated to 1863 (figure 2.9) shows the enclosed graveyard, which is similar to that on the 1895 twenty-five inch map (Fig. 2.11) The church is annotated simply as 'Church', and the current graveyard boundary is shown.

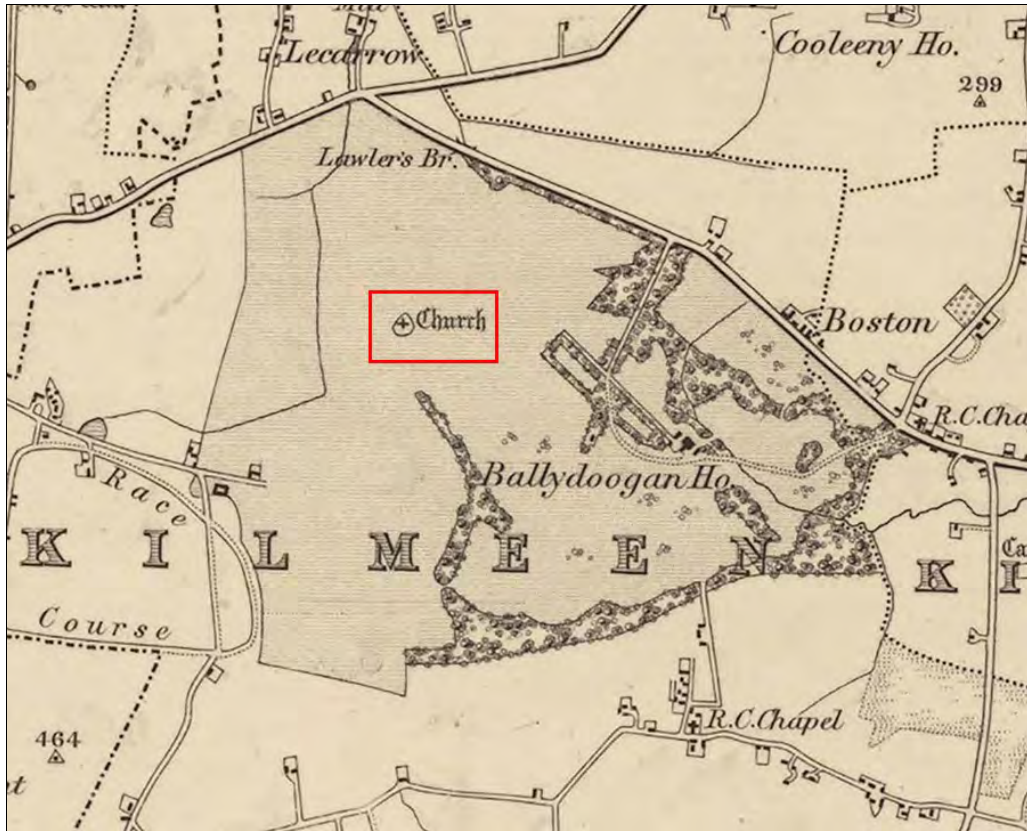


Figure 2.9. Sheet 107 One inch map, surveyed 1839, printed 1863, (<https://maps.nls.uk/view/247943373>). Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

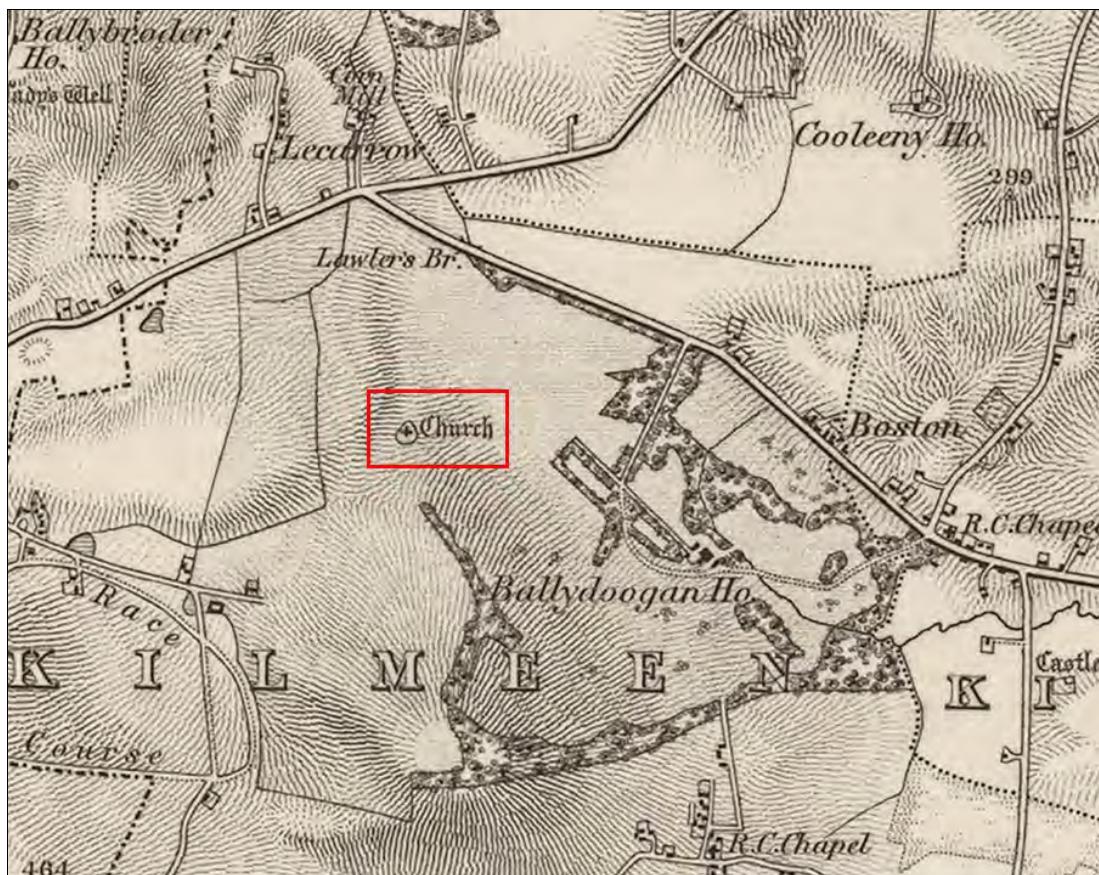


Figure 2.10. Sheet 116 1st Edition (Hills Edition), surveyed 1839-40, published 1877, (<https://maps.nls.uk/view/247943376>). Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

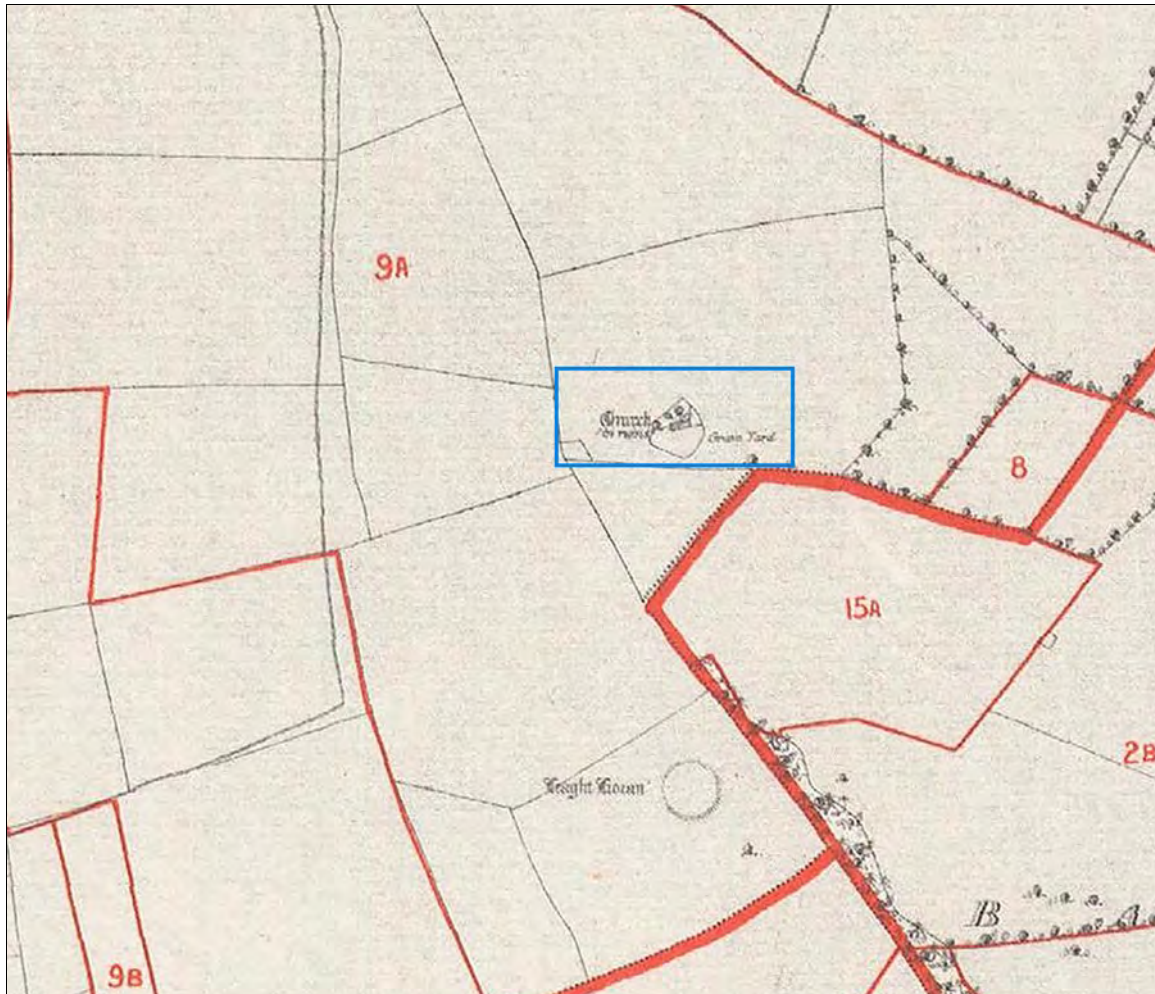


Figure 2.11. Griffith's Valuation mapping showing the land holdings in the general area (<https://griffiths.askaboutireland.ie>).

The landowner of the time of the Griffith's Valuation in the mid-1800s (figure 2.14) is listed as the Rev. Michael Burke, who is renting the land around the graveyard (plot 9a) to James Galbraith and James Burke. The graveyard is exempted.

It was part of the Ballydoogan estate at this time. In 1786 Wilson refers to Ballydugan as the seat of William Burke. Rev. Michael Burke was the owner of Ballydugan at the time of Griffith's Valuation, when it was valued at £24. In 1906 Michael H. Burke owned the mansion house at Ballydoogan then valued at almost £27. It was burnt in 1922 but rebuilt, with modifications, in 1929. Much of the family and estate archives were destroyed in the fire of 1922. Ballydugan is still extant and occupied (<https://landedestates.ie/property/801>).

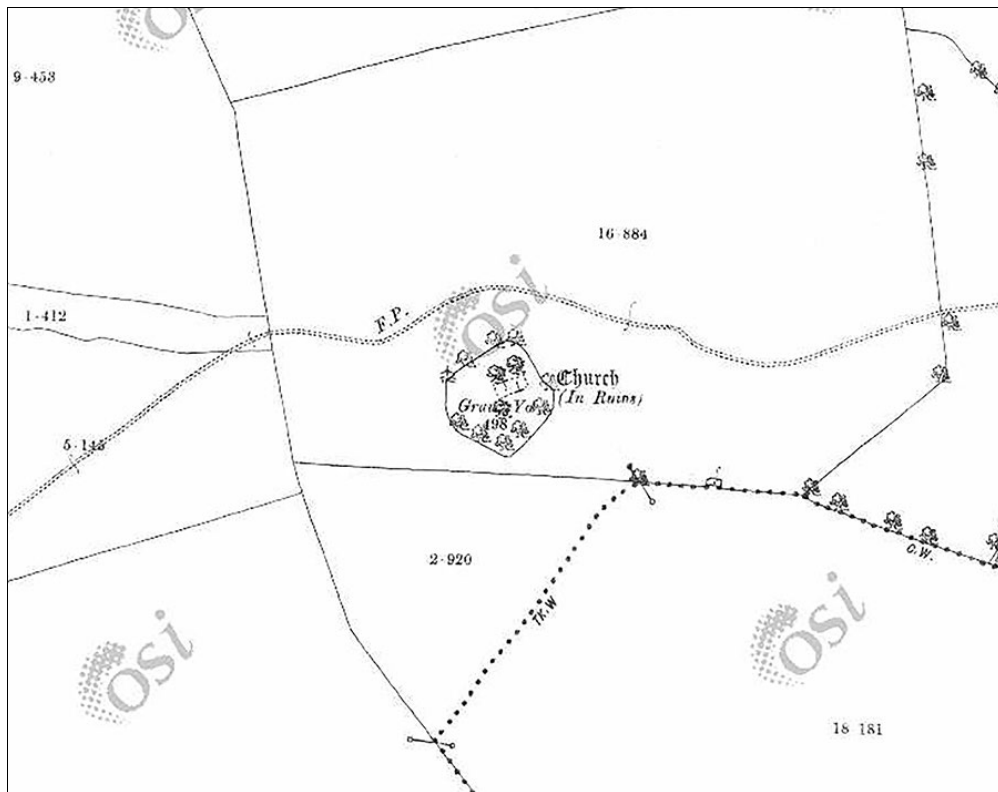


Figure 2.12. Extract of the twenty-five-inch Ordnance Survey map surveyed 1892, published 1894 (after www.archaeology.ie).

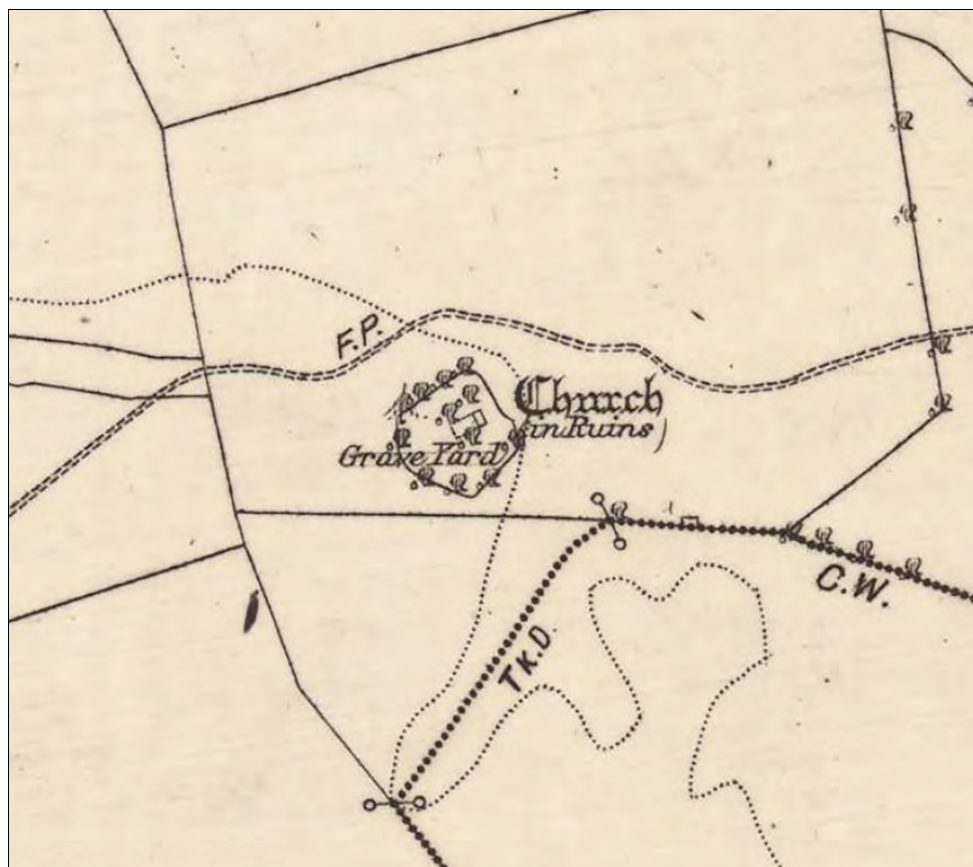


Figure 2.13. Extract of the first edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map re-surveyed 1892, published 1895 (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland).

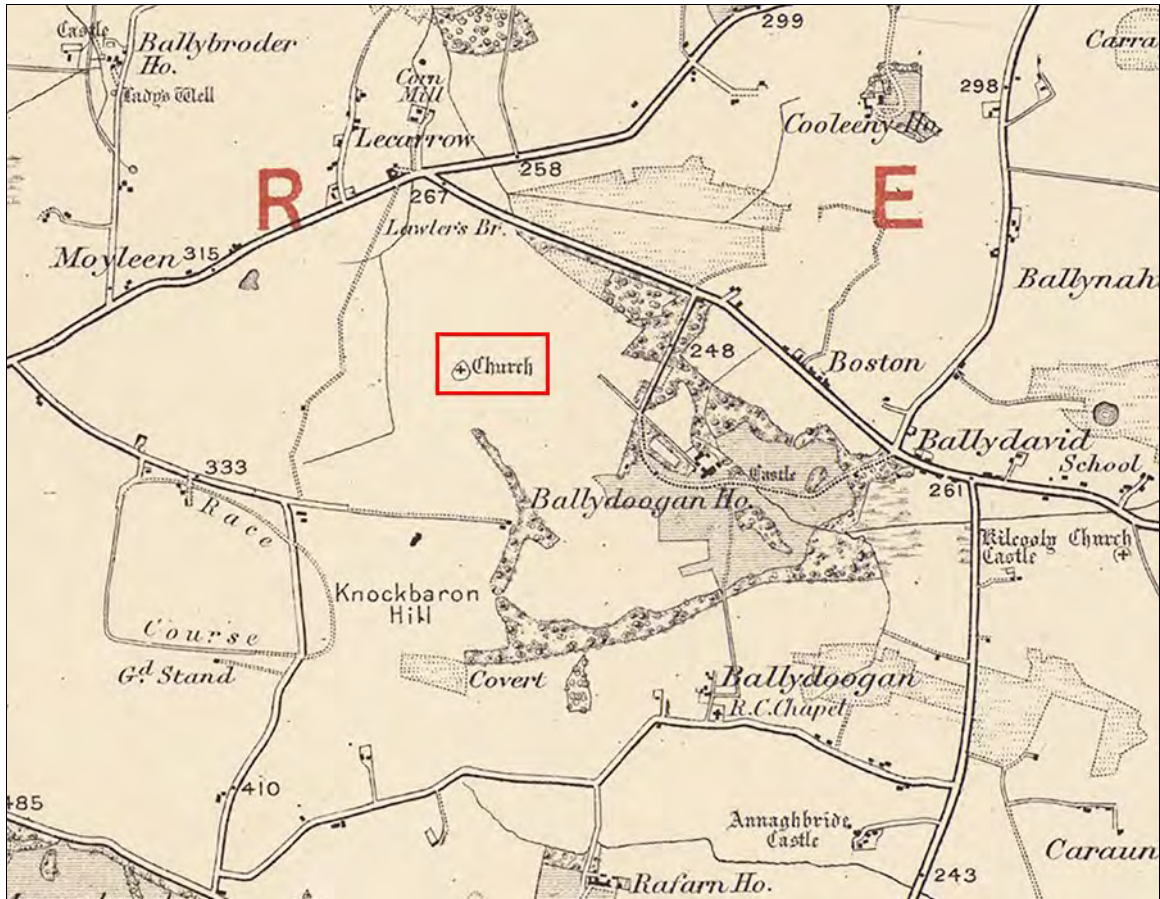


Figure 2.13. Sheet 116, one inch map revised 1898-99, published 1901 (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland).

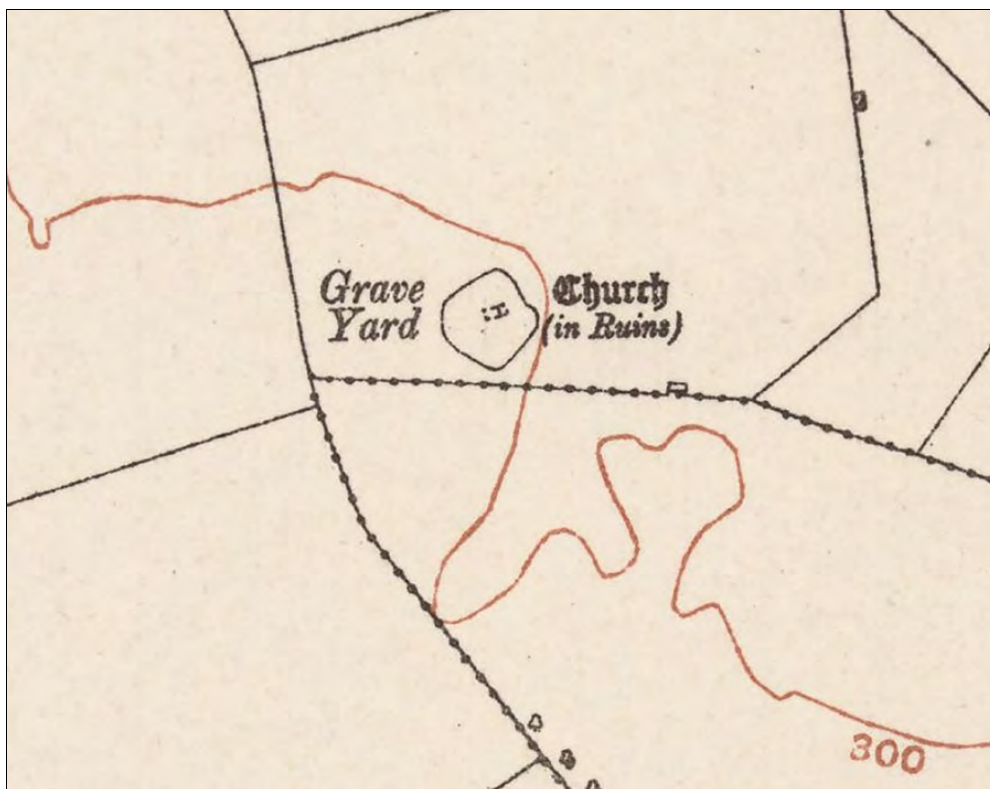


Figure 2.13. Extract of the first edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map revised 1914, published 1919 (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland).

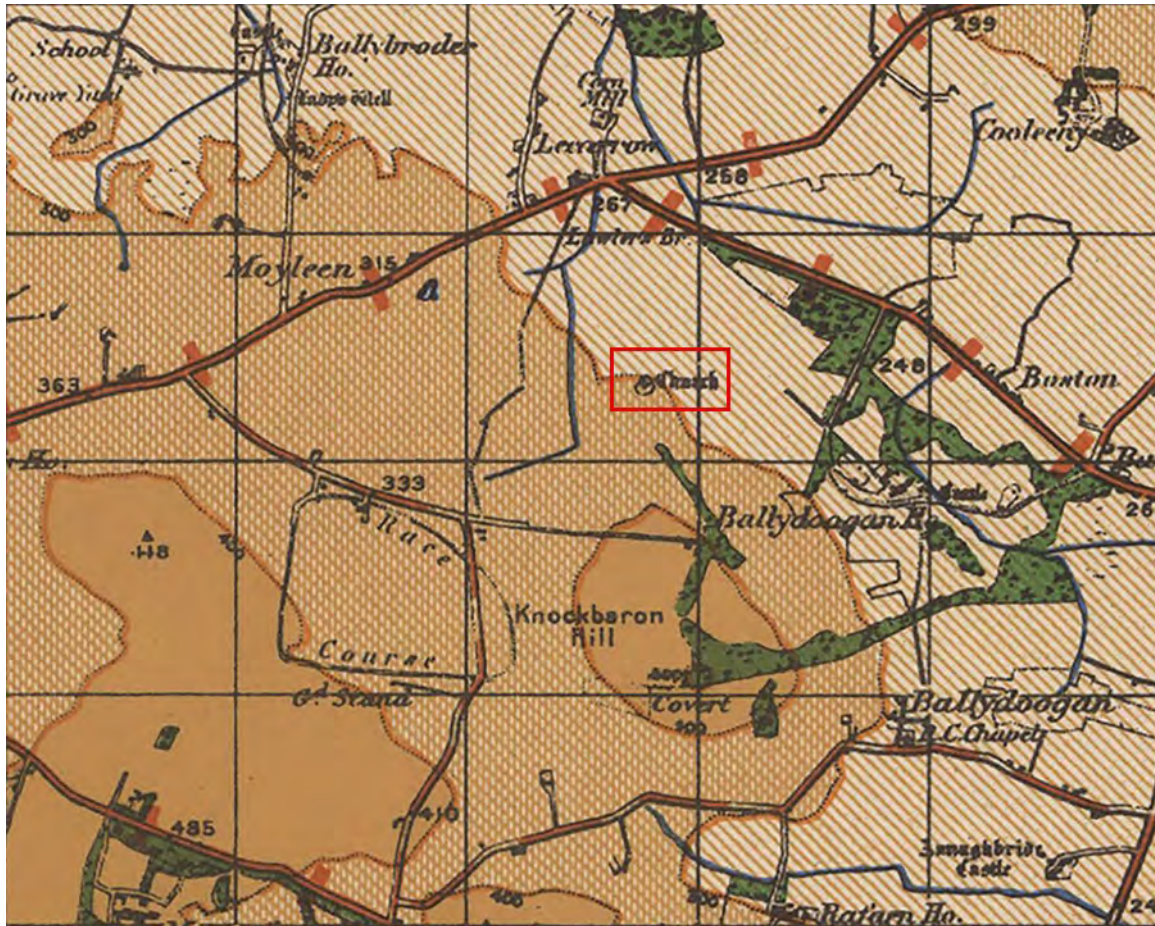


Figure 2.14. Extract Sheet from War Office map 342, 3rd Edition – surveyed 1942 published 1942 (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland).

2.3 Monument Type, Elements, and Chronology

Kilmeen church and graveyard is a ruinous example of a parish church of probable twelfth/thirteenth date, as attested to by the monolithic rounded arch for a window now lying in the graveyard.

It is presumed that there was a later phase of work in the fifteenth/sixteenth century, as evidenced in several other churches in the area. However, it was not possible to ascertain a definitive phasing due to the impenetrable overgrowth on the site.

The graveyard also contains many fine examples of graveslabs, headstones, a table tomb and a box tomb. There is also a possible base for a round tower, and several architectural fragments. The children's burial ground could not be identified on the ground. Some earth-fast stones were noted in the suggested area of the children's burial ground (NW of the church), but none that could be positively identified as a grave marker.

Table 2.1. List of element types comprising the church and graveyard at Kilmeen.

Section	Element type
2.3.1	Church GA106-103001-
2.3.2	Settlement deserted GA106-103002-
2.3.3	Graveyard GA106-103003-
2.3.4	Round Tower GA106-103004-
2.3.5	Childrens Burial Ground GA106-103005-

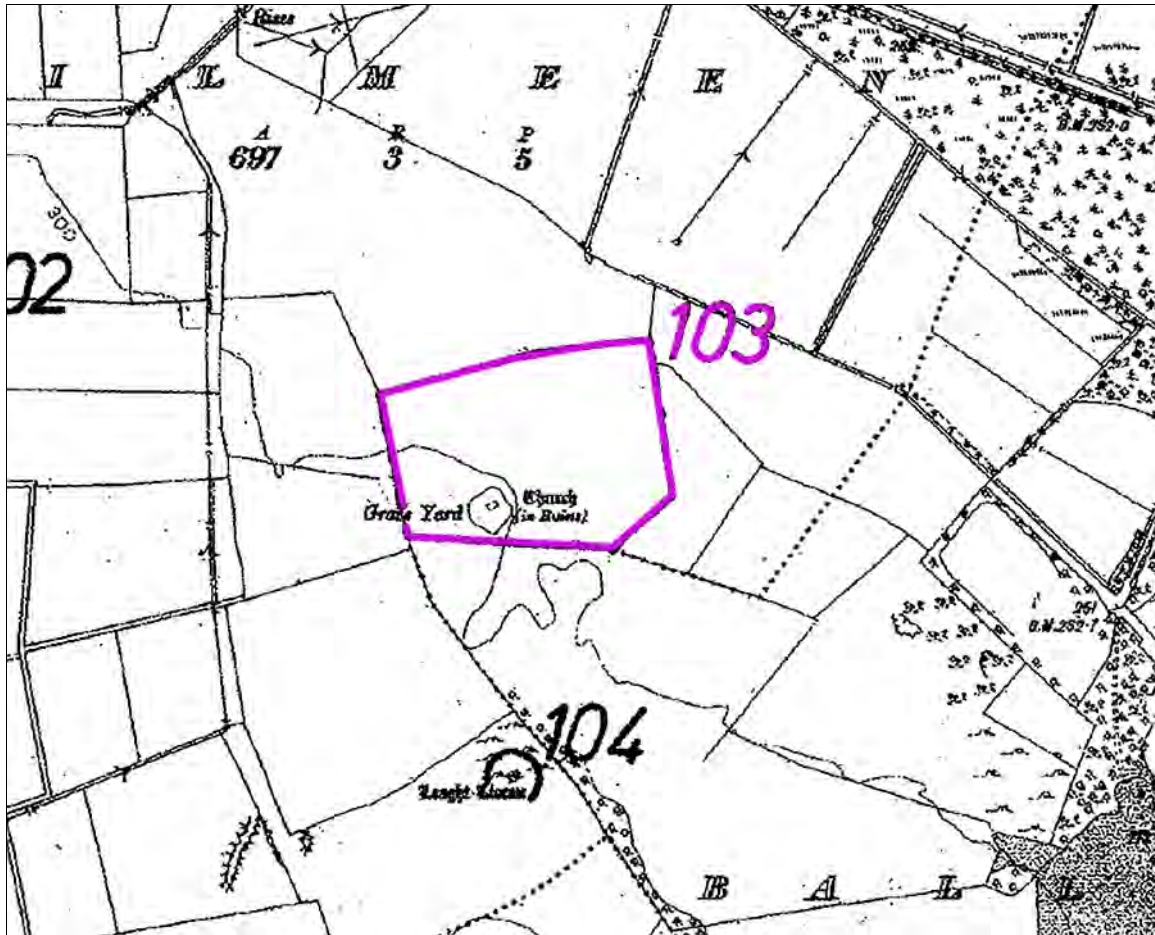


Figure 2.16. RMP Sheet 106 SMR detail 1997 on 1933 Ed (Archaeological Survey of Ireland 1997). It is described in the accompanying manual as 'Church and Graveyard'

2.3.1 The 'parish' in medieval Ireland

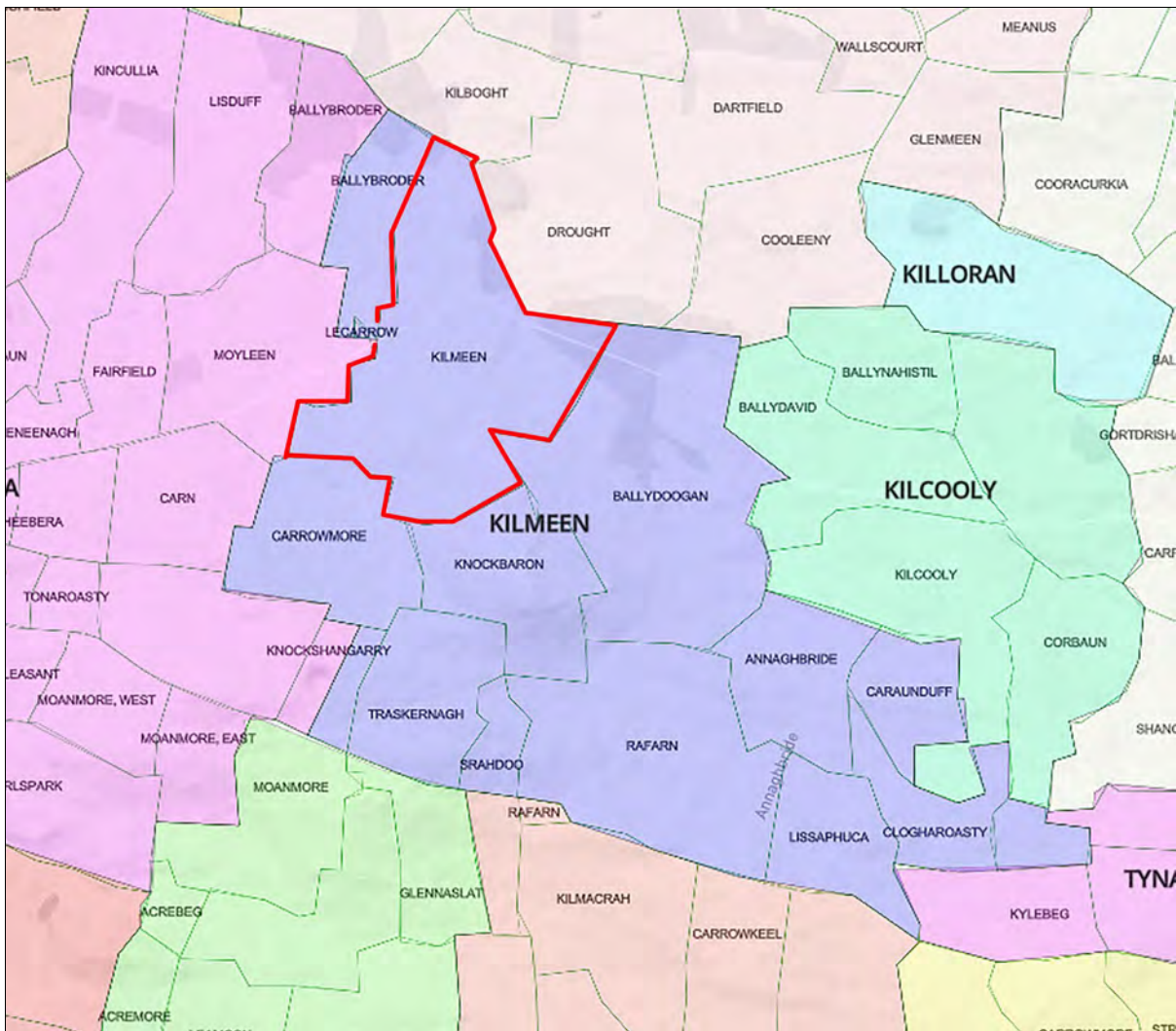


Figure 2.17. The Civil Parish of Kilmeen in purple. Note that Kilmeen townland is at the northern side of the parish in red.

The church at Kilmeen gives its name to the Civil Parish of Kilmeen. The traditional belief was that there was nothing like the Gregorian reform parish in existence in Ireland before the arrival of the Normans in 1169 and that parish reform only took place after the invasion. However, it is now proposed that there is a clear relationship between pre-invasion territorial structures and Gregorian reform parishes. The secular priest lived within the community or túath under the authority of a bishop, administered the sacraments and acted as one of the community judges. The priest's income comprised labour dues and voluntary tithes (McCotter 2019, 37-39). By the early twelfth century most non-ecclesiastical burial grounds were abandoned, and some lesser churches, which led to the growth of catchment in other churches. By the twelfth century some of these sites had acquired mortared stone churches, designed to accommodate substantial congregations (O'Carragain in McCotter 2019). Early Ireland appears to have had many churches of varying size, and the Irish material mainly of eighth century date suggests a multi-layered church hierarchy, with a proto-parish

network in existence prior to the twelfth century reforms. The Irish version of this unit is best described as 'local-túatha', ubiquitous in eleventh and twelfth century Ireland. The term túatha means 'people', 'community' or 'laity'. The local-túatha was a unit of society comprising a number of taxable estates (bailte), with a leader (taíseach) or steward (maor), and represents the earliest example of the local community and may be the remote ancestor of the secular elements of the modern rural parish. In areas where the Anglo-Normans did not settle, the *túath* system partially survived for centuries after the invasion (McCotter 2019, 58).

The reform period in the twelfth century had its origin in the efforts of the Uí Brian dynasty in the later eleventh century to forge links with the English Church, and indirectly with the Roman Church. By 1111 there are efforts at regulating the existing territorial episcopal structures, and it is unlikely that these reforms were enacted without a pre-existing system of pastoral care. Opponents of this view that parish-like structures were already in existence in Ireland in the pre-reform period is the absence of a compulsory tithe payment system. However, it appears that there was a system on non-compulsory tithe payment in Ireland from at least the eighth century, which continued into the twelfth century (McCotter 2019, 45-49). At the Council of Cashel in 1172 the Irish bishops agreed to apply the customs of the English church to Ireland. At this time, various ecclesiastical hierarchies had been in existence in neighbouring regions of Europe, many of these three layered, consisting of chapels under mother churches under episcopal seats. This conformity with England took the form of the creation of a parish system along English lines. Most English parishes conformed to lay estates. The parish priest was known as the rector (one who has rights) or parson. Lay ownership of churches was phased out in England was opposed by Rome and phased out after 1100. This was the system that was imported into Ireland after 1170. Many of the colonists may have come from a background where lords and landowners had influence over church income, with appointment of family members to rectories, and so a large number of clerics were among the settlers who came to Ireland after the Anglo-Norman invasion. A problem for the English church arose in the early twelfth century, which saw many vicars become absentee, substituting vicars or chaplains, often with no formal education and paid a pittance and no security of tenure, which led to general neglect. In order to counteract this, the office of perpetual vicar was created, who could only be appointed or removed by a bishop. This system was then exported to Ireland, and was adopted by the Irish bishops, who erected perpetual vicarages in places where there were absentee vicars.

Therefore, by the early twelfth century the development of the túatha church structure had become part of the reform agenda, as well as territorial reforms and enforcement of the tithe payment. The

process of the Gregorian reform was a complex one, with assumed ownership of church benefices by the new landowners, who erected rectories on their new landholdings, and whose estates were erected on pre-invasion territorial units. A new relationship was also created by the erections on manors on the bounds of bailte, accounting for the relationship between parish and baile. The difficulties in the deliverance of pastoral care led to the creation of perpetual vicarages, resulting in a new wave of parish formation based on demographics and not land ownership. In many cases it was the vicarage which became the geographical template for the parish, and not the rectory (McCotter 2019 57-67).

There is a growing consensus about the evolution of pastoral care, understanding the significance of churches and their accompanying territories. To understand the parish, three strands must be recognised;

- The historic parish which emerged from the middle ages.
- The Roman Catholic parish.
- The Church of Ireland parish.

These latter two evolved from that older structure. It is the first example which we are concerned with. The common antecedent of the Catholic and Church of Ireland parishes was the late medieval parish. The parish became the earliest convenient administrative unit, and the seventeenth century parish may be taken as a reliable representation of the late medieval parish. Civil parish linkages can be established back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in documents related to Papal taxation lists. There are broad regional contrasts in parish geography, with an evident relationship between the small parishes of the manorial regions in the areas colonised by the Anglo-Normans, and the larger parishes in the Gaelic, predominantly western regions (Duffy 2005, 33-41).

For much of the medieval period it is likely that there was more emphasis on property than pastoral duties as a defining factor of the parish. The genesis of the historic parishes has been traced back to the twelfth century reform of the Church in Ireland, especially in the decades after the Anglo-Norman invasion. As elsewhere in Europe, the development of parish territorial structures was closely associated with secular territorial structures. Therefore, the twelfth century reforms in Ireland aimed at introducing mainstream European standards to the Irish church by constructing dioceses which were synchronised with political order, and parish formation in Ireland was most closely associated with Anglo-Norman manors. (Duffy 2005, 43).

The Norman manor was an economic, political and judicial unit, which became the basic unit of the Domesday survey. These were often based on pre-existing Anglo-Saxon estates. The manor was controlled by a 'lord', which might be the King, a baron, a bishop or religious house. Manors varied in size, ranging from just a couple of farms to vast estates (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday/world-of-domesday/order.htm>). The Domesday Book (Originally known by the Latin name *Liber de Wintonia*, meaning "Book of Winchester", where it was originally kept in the royal treasury) is a manuscript record of the "Great Survey" of much of England and parts of Wales completed in 1086 at the behest of King William I, known as William the Conqueror.

On what were these Anglo-Norman manors in Ireland based? There was a strong driving force for territorial inertia, and continuity within parochial structures which were meshed in a web of local privilege, entitlement and duties of pastoral care (Duffy 2005, 46). Before the twelfth century reforms, many of the smaller local churches and their pastoral territories had been abandoned and were in ruins (Duffy 2005, 48). It is within the territorial hierarchy of the *túatha* that the parish inserted itself (Duffy 2005, 56).

2.3.2 Parish churches

The Archaeological Survey of Ireland has served to highlight the regional identities of groups of parish churches. The ruinous condition of some of the churches and the poor survival of items that may indicate parish status are an obstacle to identification of whether a church was a parish church. The primary indicators of parish church status are a baptismal font and a fenced graveyard. Other items may hint at parish status, such as a defined liturgical space, such as chancel and a nave, evidence for a rood screen, a bell tower, priest's quarters, a piscina, a stoup and an aumbry, although these features may also be found in a chapel (Fitzpatrick 2005, 62-3).

The parish church was the most significant buildings in the medieval community. The parish church, with an enclosed churchyard formed the heart of the parish. Adjacent to the church was the glebe, a small piece of land with grazing and tillage for the priest. Larger parishes might have smaller dependant chapels to serve outlying areas. These differed from parish churches in that neither burial nor baptism could be performed within them.

Little is known for certain about the endowment of the earliest parish churches. By the 13th century the situation is clearer when legislation made the priest responsible for the upkeep of the chancel,

while the congregation maintained the nave, belfry and churchyard, and ensured that the church had plate, vestments, mass book and font. The primary role of the church was to provide a space for communal worship, but also functioned as a space for parishioners to store their precious goods. The psychological scars left by the Black Death in 1348 led to a renewed fixation on morality, and a renewed focus on the parish church. Church naves were expanded, and regular prayers for the souls of the departed were secured in the fifteenth century. Traditionally the main entrance to the church in Ireland was through a door in the west gable, but by the thirteenth century southern doorways had become common, and frequently contain a holy water stoop on the inner eastern jambs to facilitate blessing with the right hand when entering the church. Burials took place within the church and in its surrounding cemetery. The medieval parish churches became the property of the established Protestant church following the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and many churches, particularly in rural areas contracted in size or gradually fell into decay (Moss 2014, 172-175).

2.3.3 Priest's Residences

The definitive article of priest's residences has been written by Helen Bermingham (2006, 168-185) Priests residences are integral to the study of the late medieval parish church. In Ireland studies have tended to concentrate on the architecture of the churches themselves rather than the quarters occupied by the priest. Harold Leask was among the first scholars to identify priestly accommodation, Occasionally, architectural some feature, directly indicating the presence of a priest's residence have been misidentified or not recognised as such. As the parish system developed, accommodation for the incumbent priest, close to the church was a necessity, who may also be apportioned glebe land to cultivate his own crops.

Birmingham proposes a working classification for priests residences;

- Accommodation inserted into the body of the church at the west gable end. The nave or the chancel was occasionally lengthened to accommodate the priest's quarters. ;
- Accommodation attached to one side or gable end of the church;
- Residential tower attached to the (usually) west end of the church;
- A free standing priest's house, which is less common.

At Kilmeen, there is no upstanding evidence for a priest's residence. However, an 'apartment' is mentioned in OS Letters as being attached to the E gable. A short stretch of wall is still visible here, which corresponds to a wall marked on the Ordnance survey 1st Edition map (surveyed 1838).

2.3.4 Round Towers

The round towers found in Ireland range in height from about 17 to 40 metres. The round tower at Kilmacduagh in Galway is the highest in the country. The towers usually have a single door raised two to three metres above the ground. The windows are narrow slits located high up in the tower. The roof is usually made from stone and is generally cone shaped. The doorway gave access to a series of about seven or sometimes eight wooden floors, presumably joined by wooden stairs, a significant fire hazard in the chimney-like structure. Window openings distributed along the way provided light and allowed a glimpse of the countryside. On the top floor, four windows were set at the cardinal points.

Round towers are generally encountered at the locations of ancient Irish monasteries. Round towers did not appear until the late ninth century and the building of such towers continued until about the twelfth century. They were by far the tallest buildings in the Irish landscape at the time of their construction. As to their function, The simplest explanation is to be found in the term *cloigtheach* (literally 'bell-house') by which these towers were known in Irish texts. Generations of schoolchildren learned that round towers were built as places of refuge for monks during Viking raids. A less romantic variation on this suggests that the towers functioned as buildings in which precious liturgical vessels, valuable manuscripts and other monastic treasures were stored for normal safekeeping irrespective of organised raids. Earlier round towers were built of rough masonry but later ones involved finely dressed blocks and lime mortar (O'Sullivan & Downey, 2020, 40-43).

2.3.5 Deserted Medieval Settlements

in the United Kingdom, a deserted medieval village (DMV) is a former settlement which was abandoned during the Middle Ages, typically leaving no trace apart from earthworks or cropmarks. Many were thought to have been abandoned due to the deaths of their inhabitants from the Black Death in the mid-14th century. While the plague must often have greatly hastened the population decline, in England most DMVs actually seem to have become deserted during the 15th century. At this time. Enclosure Acts and other policies allowed land traditionally cultivated for cereals and vegetables to be transformed into pastures for sheep. This change of land use by landowners, which was to take advantage of the profitable wool trade, led to hundreds of villages being deserted in England.

Ireland's pattern of rural settlement in the Middle Ages is very different from that of her nearest neighbour, Britain because the main impetus behind nucleation there, the Roman conquest and settlement, never impacted upon us. Even as late as the tenth century, apart from the major monasteries such as Glendalough in County Wicklow or Clonmacnoise, County Offaly, and the large Hiberno-Norse ports such as Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, and Cork mainly concentrated along the east coast, there is no certain evidence for large numbers of nucleated settlements (Barry 1994, 28-36).

During the early part of the thirteenth century the Anglo-Normans founded cities, towns, villages and hamlets throughout that part of Ireland that was under their control. There must also have been many smaller settlements that have still to be located, as they did not feature in the surviving documents of the period (Graham 1993, 82-3). In more remote hills, bogland or forested areas within the Anglo-Norman Lordship there were probably many dispersed settlements.

2.3.6 Key church elements

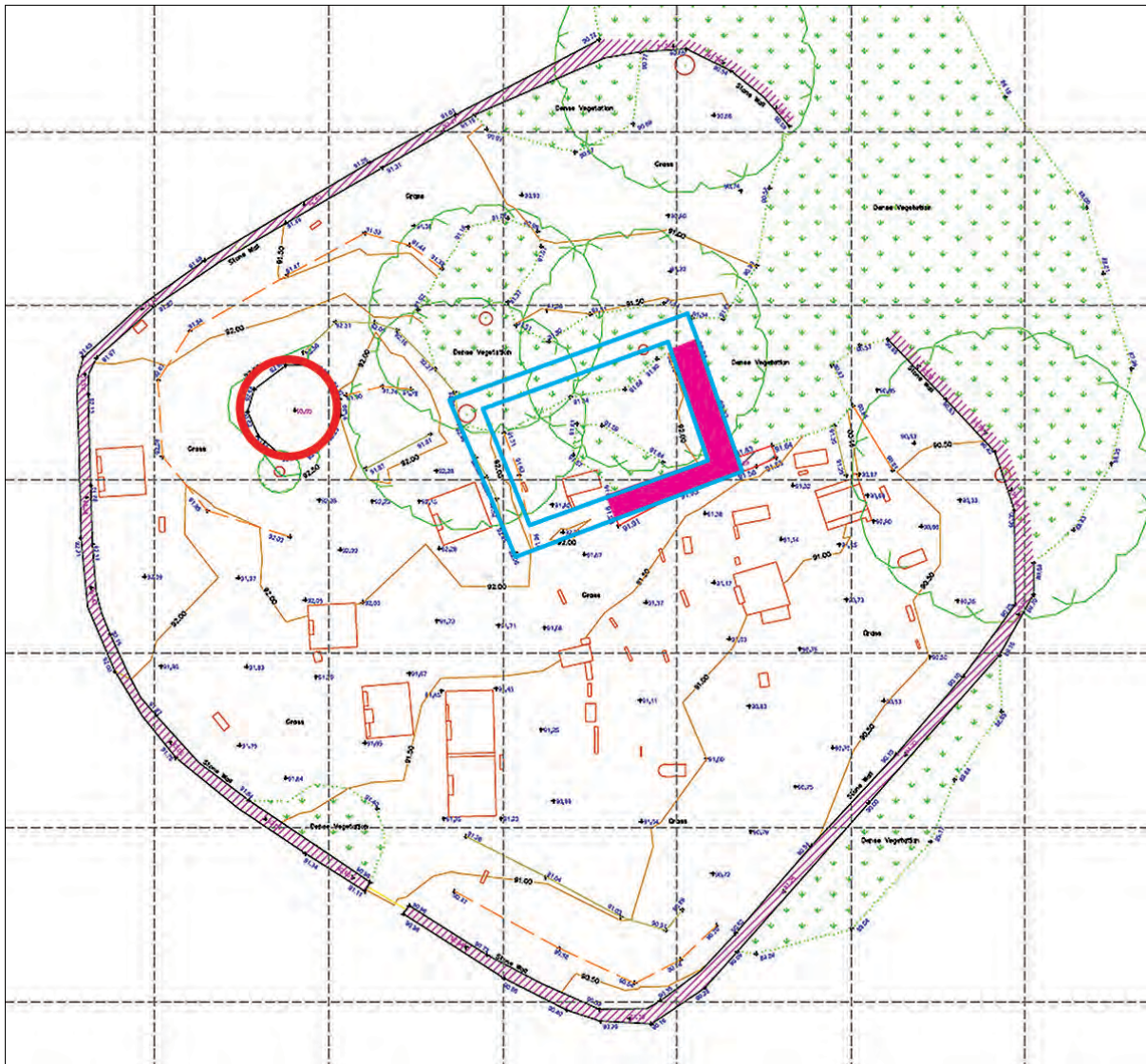


Figure 2.17. topographical survey of church and graveyard (after KGSS). (F. Coyne).

The Ordnance Survey Letters (1839, 492-3) records the church as following;

The East gable of Kilmeen Church, remains. On it is a quadrangular window of cut stones, seven feet from the ground, three feet high, and ten inches broad. There was an apartment attached to this East gable. Six feet of the South side wall of this apartment, are visible, with the traces of the west side of a window (place) on it. A portion of the North side wall of the Church, remains, detached from the East gable; annexed to which (gable) is to be seen a portion of the South one. The northwest corner, which is now reduced to the same height with the side wall, is still standing.

The remains of church now comprise part of the overgrown eastern gable, and part of the southern wall where it adjoins the east gable. The remainder of the wall is a low grass-covered mound, c. 0.40m high and averaging 1m wide. This is visible at the southwest corner and the location of the west gable. The location of the north wall of the church is overgrown with mature trees and scrub.

A circular feature, 5m in overall dimension, and a maximum of 1.5m high is situated in the NW side of the graveyard. The circular mound is defined by large undressed boulders, up to 4 courses high.

A possible children's burial ground is mentioned in

2.3.7 Phasing

Due to the dense undergrowth, trees and ivy cover it is impossible to phase the monument. However, there are architectural fragments in the graveyard, such as the rounded monolithic arch, moulded stone of Romanesque date and a holy water stoop that would suggest that the earliest church here may have dated from the 12th/13th century, with later additions in the 15th century.

If the circular area of stones is indeed the base of a round tower, this would suggest that the site was used from around the 11th to 12th centuries, with the round tower being contemporary with the early church.

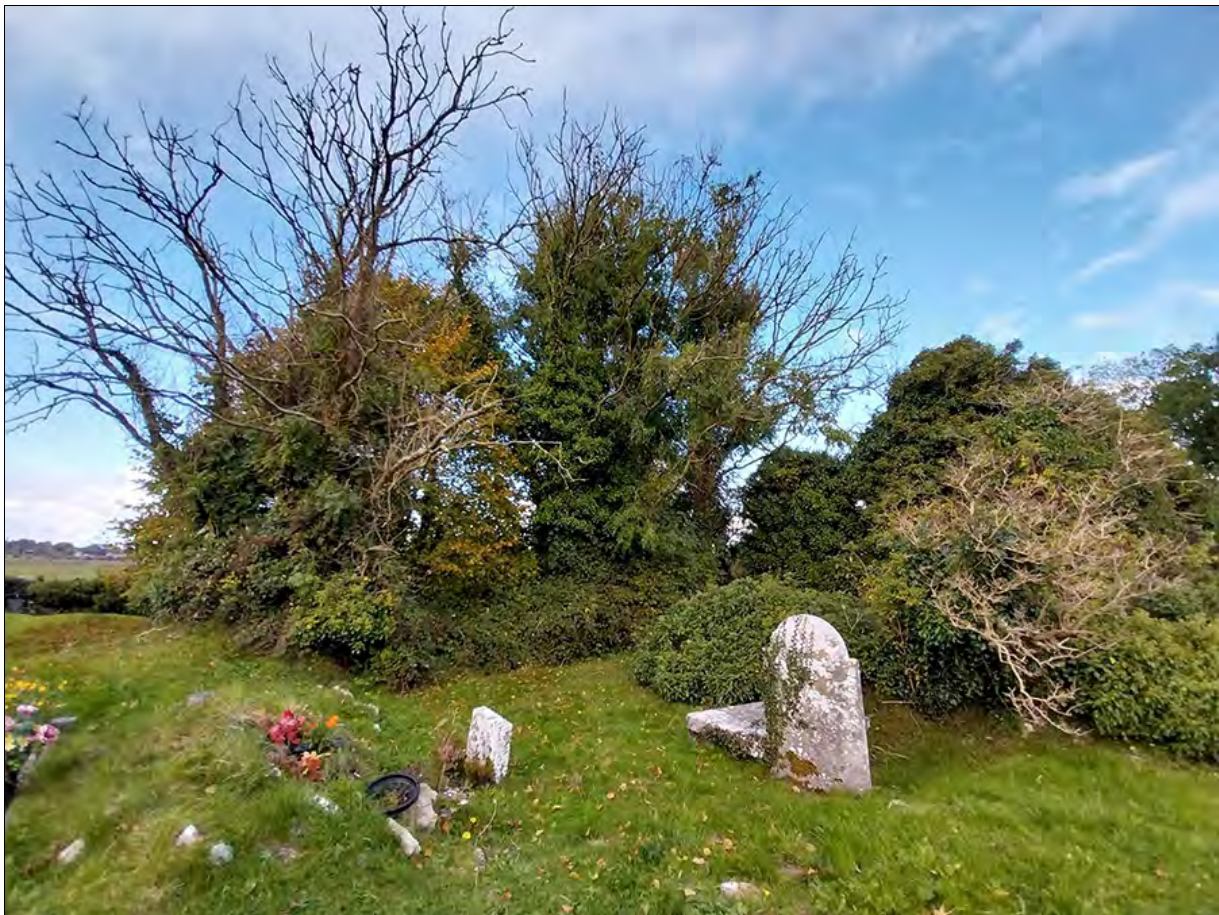


Figure 2.19. Remains of church, from SW (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.20. Headstone in E end of church, from N, from E (F. Coyne).

2.3.8 Differentiation of Interior space

It is not possible to draw any conclusions as to how the interior space was differentiated. The only recognisable feature is the almost completely collapsed ope for an east window. One head stone stands against the S wall in the NE corner of the church.



Figure 2.23. Branch trimmings and undergrowth at the E end of the church, from W (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.23. Burials at the W end of the church, from W (F. Coyne).

2.3.9 Burials

A variety of burial markers are visible in the interior of the church and the graveyard.



Figure 2.25. Vault (no date) with cast iron door, from W. The headstone on top is dated 1935 (F. Coyne).

There are also a number of table tombs, a box tomb and nineteenth and twentieth century headstones.



Figure 2.26. Nineteenth century table tomb, from E (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.27. Box tomb, from SW, from SW (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.28. Selection of headstones, from SE

The graveyard contains a few architectural fragments, including a holy water stoop, a window fragment and a red sandstone Romanesque monolithic arch from a window..



Figure 2.29. Holy water stoop (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.30. Rounded monolithic window arch (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.31. Architectural fragment, part of Romanesque door(F. Coyne).

2.4 Associated archives and collections

At the time of writing there are no known archives associated with the monument at Kilmeen. The National Museum of Ireland Topographical File Collection was consulted for artefact finds in the townland of Kilmeen and the immediate locality.

2.5 Placename evidence and dedication

The Placenames Database of Ireland contains the following information on the place name Kilmeen. Kilmeen is a townland in east Galway, in the barony of Leitrim and the civil parish of Kilmeen (<https://www.logainm.ie/en/20031/> accessed 8 October 2024). The townland name is translated from the Irish *Chill Mhian*, usually taken as meaning *Cill* (church). There is no translation for *Mhian* on www.logainm.ie. Presumably Mian is the name of the now forgotten founder of the church.

The following historical references for Kilmeen are listed on www.logainm.ie.

Table 2.2. Historical references to the placename Kilmeen listed by the Placenames Database of Ireland (<https://www.logainm.ie/en/974/>).

Date	Placename	Abbreviated Reference provided in Placenames Database of Ireland
1587	Cell Mian	Rental of Kilmacduagh
1584?	Kilvin	F 4545
1585?	Killamyan	F 4698
1586?	Kilmena	F 4856
1585	Kilmeanmore?	Inq. Co. Gal. Vol 1 p. 77 Inq. 31
1586	Kylmean	Inq. Co. Gal. Vol 1 p. 139 Inq. 62
1574	Kilvean	JGAMS p. 111
	Cill Mion (OD) St Mídhna's church	
	Cill Míón	Larkin's map
	Kilmeene	Inq. Gul. III
	Kilmeany	Engr. Map from DS
	Kilmeene or Kilvine	Carlisle's top. Dictionary
1825, 1826	Kilvine	Trytha Comp. Returns

The earliest reference to Kilmeen appears in 1587 written as 'Cell Mian' (see table 2.2).

The Ordnance survey Letters (1838) records that *Cill Míon* is the Irish name of Kilmeen parish and asks 'is there a Saint of the name of Mian {Mían} in the old Irish lists of Saints (1838 494).

2.6 Folklore

A search was made in www.Duchas.ie for any folklore relating to Kilmeen. The following entries were returned.

Kilmeen Church

I live in Kilmeen (1 1/2 miles east of Danesfort school) and I was told by my uncle - James Monaghan that there was an old thatched church in Kilmeen long ago. It is said that there were three churches in a line - Kilmeen, Kilboct and Kilteskil, and if the monks caught hands they would reach from Kilboct to Kilteskil. The monks owned all the lands around the churches and the people used to pay rent to them. There was a market held in a field near the church, and the monks used to sell all the vegetables to the people who lived around. When Cromwell came in the year 1649 he knocked it, and its ruins are there to the present day. There is a cross and holy-water font made of stone there also..

The Schools' Collection, Volume 0060, Page 0009.

Graveyards

I live in the parish of Leitrim and there are a few old grave-yards in it. There are two very old grave-yards in the townland of Kilmeen, namely Kilmeen and Kilboct. The churches are built since the monks were there. They were supposed to be thatched. There is a wall around them. There is one tomb in Kilmeen. A man named Daly is buried in it.....There is a lot of people buried in Kilmeen. All the head-stones are faced to the east, and they are two priests buried there and their head-stones are faced to the west. They are facing the people like they would be on the altar. There are a lot of trees growing in it - namely - beech, ash, poplar, lime-tree and dropping-ash. There is a cross and a font made of stones in the old church. The cross is all figured. There is a piece of an old wooden cross there also.

The Schools' Collection, Volume 0060 Page 0073.

Local Roads

The roads in this district are - The bog road, The New road, Kilboct Road, Lecarrow boreen, Ballybroder Road, and Boreen na nGhadaidhe. The bog road road passes the bog. It is made a long time but it is tarred about 20 years now. Kilboct Road leads to

Kilboct graveyard and it is made about 100 years now. The New road leads to Kilmeen graveyard. It is made about 24 years. The funerals used to pass the fields before that road was made. Lecarrow boreen leads to Lecarrow bog. Boreen na nGadhaidhe was made in the time of the Danes.

The Schools' Collection, Volum 0060, Page 0114.

Buying and Selling

There used to be a market held in a field near Kilmeen church where the monks were living there. That was about 200 years ago.

The Schools' Collection, Volume 0060, Page 0059

2.7 Surviving Remains



Figure 2.35. Annotated vertical view of church and graveyard (F. Coyne).

Table 2.3. List of recorded features and labelled as part of this study

Label	SMR number	Element
A	GA106-103001-	Church
B	GA106-103003-	Graveyard
C	GA106-103004-	Round Tower
D	GA106-103005-	Children's Burial ground
E	N/a	Graveyard wall
F	N/a	Gate
G	GA106-103002-	Settlement deserted - medieval

The site descriptions below first provide those on the Historic Environment Viewer(HEV) available at www.archaeology.ie. This report supplements the earlier descriptions where required with up-to-date written and photographic record of the elements on the site (Fig. 2.X; Table 2.3; Appendix 10.3 for site record sheets).

2.7.1 Description

Kilmeen church and graveyard site are located on flat pasture land in the south Galway lowlands. The land rises to the southwest, but is level on all other sides..



Figure 2.36. Plan of church and graveyard. Elements numbered as per descriptions below. (after KGSS survey, annotated by writer).

Element A: Church GA106-103001-

HEV

Description: On the summit of a low hill in grassland. According to Gwynn and Hadcock (1970, 394), this is the site of an early monastery. The remains of a round tower (GA106-103005-) survive in the surrounding graveyard (GA106-103003-). On inspection in April 1983 the rectangular church (18.6m E-W; 7.7m N-S) was very poorly preserved. A possible internal dividing wall formed a small annexe (7.15m N-S; 5.9m E-W) at its E end. This was probably the 'apartment' noted in the OS Letters (O'Flanagan 1927a, Vol. 1, 492-3). The internal wall was the best preserved wall; only short sections of the N and S side-walls extending off it survived. Grassed-over foundations indicated the line of the W gable, the W end of the N wall and the outer E gable. A large amount of collapse marked the E end of the latter wall. The only surviving architectural feature was a single-light rectangular window which was centrally placed in the internal wall, indicating that the annexe was a later addition and that the internal wall was probably the original E gable. Numerous architectural fragments, many bearing Romanesque ornament, were scattered around the graveyard. On re-inspection in July 2011, it was noted that the window in the internal wall had collapsed. An earth fast piece of worked granite (Wth 0.36m; H 0.34m; T 0.27m), roughly square in plan, noted at the SE corner of the church may possibly be an unfinished font or pedestal. A settlement cluster (GA106-103002-) surrounds the monument.

Compiled by: Galway Archaeological Survey, UCG Date of upload: 10 March 2020.

Six-Inch First edition: 'Church (in ruins)'

Six-Inch Latest edition: 'Church (in Ruins)'

2024 fieldwork

All that survives is the completely overgrown E gable and part of the S wall of the church. The undergrowth is almost completely impenetrable, and the ivy is dense and well established. The walls, where they can be viewed are built of coursed, mortared limestone rubble. The wall stands to a height of approximately 3 m. The opening for the E window is barely visible. The arch has almost completely collapsed, and is now only held together by a couple of slim stones/voussoirs. The main architectural features of the window are not visible, and have probably collapsed.

The remainder of the church plan can be identified as a low grass-covered mound, c. 0.40m high and averaging 1m wide. This is visible at the southwest corner and the location of the west gable. Graves have been inserted into the location of the wall at the W end of the church. The location of the north wall of the church is overgrown with mature trees and scrub.



Figure 2.37. Kilmeen Church overgrown with ivy and bushes, from SW (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.37. Kilmeen Church, from S (F. coyne).



Figure 2.37. Kilmeen Church, internal SE corner, from NW (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.37. E window, from W (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.37. Graves at W side of church, from SE (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.37. Graves in interior of church, from W (F. Coyne).

Element B: Graveyard
GA106-103003-

HEV

Description: On a slight rise in grassland. This rectilinear graveyard (c. 55m NNE-SSW; c. 53m E-W) is defined by a stone wall. Access is via a gateway at SW. The ruins of a church (GA106-103001-) occupy its NE sector and the remains of a round tower (GA106-103005) stand in its NW sector. The headstones date from the 18th century. Numerous architectural fragments from the church, many bearing Romanesque decoration, are scattered around the graveyard. According to local information, there is a children's burial ground (GA106-103004-) immediately to the N of the E end of the church.

Compiled by: Paul Walsh Date of upload: 10 January 2014

2024 fieldwork

The graveyard is in good condition and well maintained. The graves are accessible, although there are no dedicated footpaths around the graveyard.



Figure 2.38. Shouldered graveslab, 19th century, from E (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.38. Ledger slab, from E (F. Coyne).

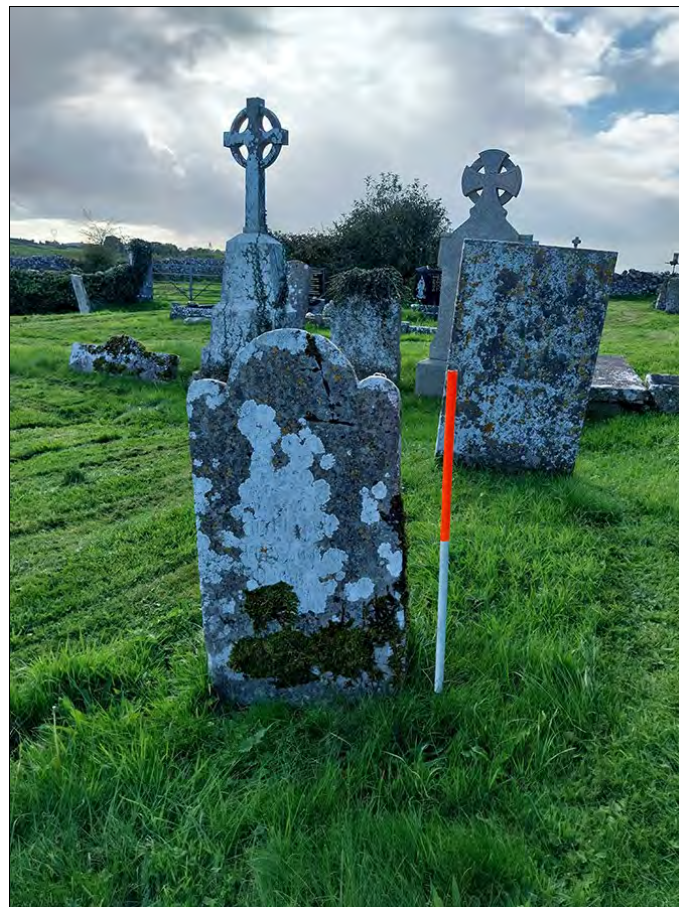


Figure 2.38. variety of 19th and 20th century headstones, from E (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.38. Box tomb, from SW (F. Coyne).

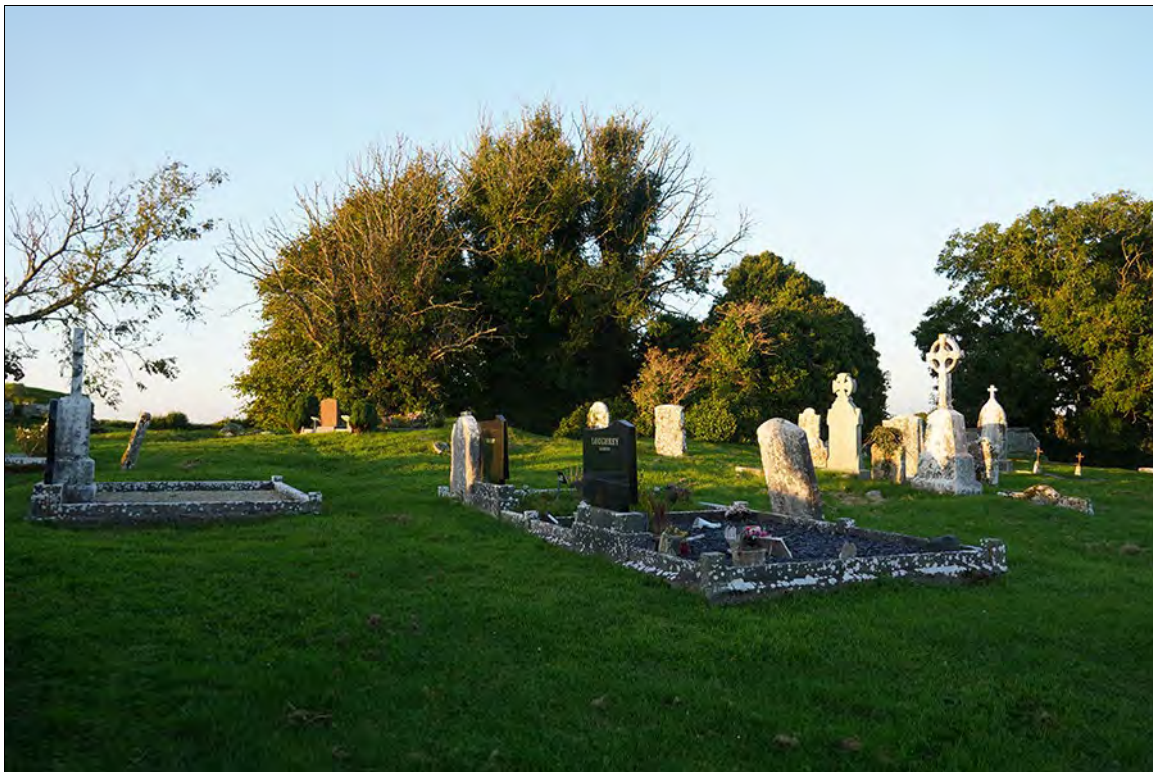


Figure 2.38. Graveyard, from SW (F. Coyne).

Element C: Round Tower
GA106-103004-

HEV

No description on www.archaeology.ie.

2024 fieldwork

A circular feature, 5m in overall dimension, and a maximum of 1.5m high is situated in the NW side of the graveyard. The circular mound is defined by large undressed boulders, up to 4 courses high. This is most visible on its S side. The boulders average 0.7m to 0.8m in length and 0.5m thick. Elsewhere, at E they are grass covered and not as defined as elsewhere. One boulder has become detached at SW and has rolled a couple of metres to the S. The immediate area to the E measures c. 10m by 10m, defined by an earthen bank, c. 0.7m above interior ground level, and 1.5m wide, area enclosing a slight hollow. This bank is most visible at N, is ill defined as W and visible as a scarp at S. The area of the supposed round tower is 5m in diameter, which makes it very small to be the base of a round tower. The base usually averages 15m in diameter. If there was a round tower here, then perhaps the bank area to the E may have originally incorporated the base, and the current 5m diameter mound represents a later tidying up of the loose stone. However, in this report, the site will be referred to as a round tower. An ash tree, suffering from ash die back stands on the SW side.



Figure 2.38. Round tower, from NE (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.39. Round tower, from NE (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.39. Vertical view of round tower, from NE (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.39. Possible earthwork at E side of round tower, from NE (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.39. Possible earthwork at E side of round tower, from S.

Element D: Children's Burial Ground
GA106-103005-

HEV

Description: On a slight rise, immediately outside the NE end of the church (GA106-103001-), and within the N area of a graveyard (GA106-103003-). A roughly rectangular area (5m E-W; 3m N-S) is marked by a scatter of overgrown rough rubble set stones. According to local information, the area marks the site of a children's burial ground. The stones are barely above ground level.

Compiled by: Olive Alcock

Date of upload: 10 March 2020

Six-Inch First edition: Not indicated

Six-Inch Latest edition: Not indicated

2024 fieldwork

The area indicated as the location of the children's burial ground is located at the NE side of the church. The only possible grave markers were a few stone with barely any above ground register.



Figure 2.41. Possible location of children's burial ground, from SW (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.42. Possible grave marker, from W (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.42. Possible grave marker, from NW (F. Coyne).

Element E: Graveyard Wall

2024 fieldwork

The graveyard is enclosed by a drystone wall, averaging 1m in height and constructed of limestone rubble. It is in good condition generally, with occasionally collapse stones noted externally.. From NW to SW the wall is clearly visible, and from SE to NW is covered in varying degrees of overgrowth. Occasional red sandstones were noted, which may indicated early architectural fragments.



Figure 2.44. Graveyard wall from , from N (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.45. View of graveyard wall externally, from SE. Note red sandstone in wall (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.45. Overgrown graveyard wall at E, from SW, (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.45. Overgrown graveyard wall at N, from SE (F. Coyne).

Element F: Gate

2024 fieldwork

The graveyard is accessed at SW through a gateway. The gate is a modern steel gate, hanging from two earlier pillars. These are of dressed ashlar blocks with dress scoping stones. They appear to be of 19th century date.



Figure 2.46. gate, from SW (F. Coyne).

Element G: Settlement deserted - medieval
GA106-103002-

HEV

No description on www.archaeology.ie

2024 fieldwork

The area described as settlement deserted-medieval extends for at least 23.5 hectares around the church and graveyard at Kilmeen.



Figure 2.53. Extent of GA106-103002- (settlement deserted -medieval) around the church and graveyard at Kilmeen (after www.archaeology.ie).



Figure 2.54. Extent of deserted medieval settlement extends to 23.5 hectares when measured on www.archaeology.ie



Figure 2.45. Earthworks in the immediate vicinity of graveyard, from NE (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.45. Earthworks in the immediate vicinity of graveyard, vertical view(F. Coyne).



Figure 2.45. Extent of earthworks to N of graveyard. (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.45. Rectangular earth (possible moated site) at extreme N side of earthworks, vertical view (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.45. GA106-102---- (ringfort-unclassified) in foreground. Note earthwork/roadway leading to Kilmeen Church, from W (F. Coyne).

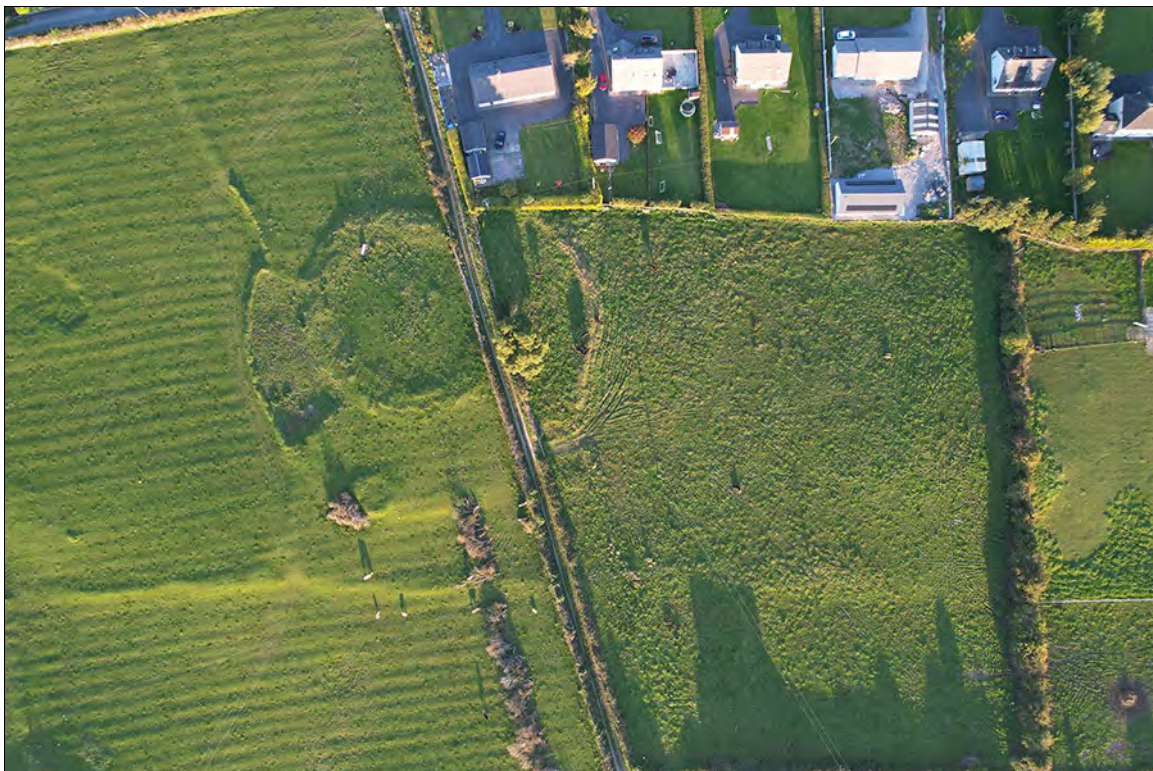


Figure 2.45. Vertical view of ringfort GA106-102---- (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.45. View of earthwork/roadway between GA106-102---- (ringfort-unclassified) and Kilmeen Church, from W (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.45. Kilmeen church at centre, surrounded by earthworks, from SW (F. Coyne).

2.8.2 Current management information

The site is in the ownership of Galway County Council.

2.8.3 Condition survey

During the recording of the site a detailed condition survey was undertaken on various dates between August and September 2024.

The church is in ruinous condition, and completely obscured by impenetrable scrub and a heavy coating of ivy. The stand of trees at the N side of the church contain several ash trees, suffering from ash die back. These are an immediate danger to the adjacent church ruins.

The main issue with the site is that any attempt to trim the ivy will result in stone loss at the vulnerable remains of the E window.

The boundary wall of the graveyard is in very good condition although is overgrown from N to E to SE. The gate is new and in good condition.

The graveyard itself is in excellent condition, with a variety of grave markers being utilised.

An information sign identifying the graves is very useful. A general information sign, with historical and archaeological information would be very beneficial also, and add to the visitor experience. A QR code could be included to allow access to an external app, which could be updated.

2.9 Zone of Influence

Kilmeen is located in the parish of Kilmeen. Kilmeen as an area of 15.6 km² / 3,864.8 acres / 6.0 square miles (<https://www.townlands.ie/galway/kilmeen1/>). While the focus of this report is the church and graveyard at Kilmeen, based on the fact that it is the parish church of Kilmeen, its zone of influence can be said to extend to all the townlands in the parish. There are 15 townlands in the parish of Kilmeen.

Table 2.4. List of townlands in the parish of Kilmeen.

Townland name English	Irish translation
Ballybroder	<i>Bhaile Uí Bhruadair</i>
Ballydoogan	<i>Bhéal Átha Dúgáin</i>
Caraunduff	<i>An Carn Dubh</i>
Carrowmore	<i>An Cheathrú Mhór</i>
Kilmeen	<i>Cill Mhian</i>
Clogharoasty	<i>Cloch an Róistigh</i>
Cloghbrack	<i>An Chloch Bhreac</i>
Knockshangarry	<i>Cnoc an tSeangharraí</i>
Knockbaron	<i>Cnoc Barúin</i>
Annaghbride	<i>Eanach Bhríde</i>
Lecarrow	<i>An Leithcheathrú</i>
Lissaphuca	<i>Lios an Phúca</i>
Rafarn	<i>Ráth Bhairinn</i>
Srahdoe	<i>An tSraith Dhubh</i>
Traskernagh	<i>An Treascarnach</i>

Of the 35 discrete monuments in the parish, there are 13 ringforts, and 5 enclosures recorded. Assuming that these may date to the Early Medieval period, a total of 18 monuments may date to this period, so the overwhelming character of the parish is Early Medieval. The settlement deserted around the church and graveyard, another church and tow castles represent settlement in the parish in the medieval period.

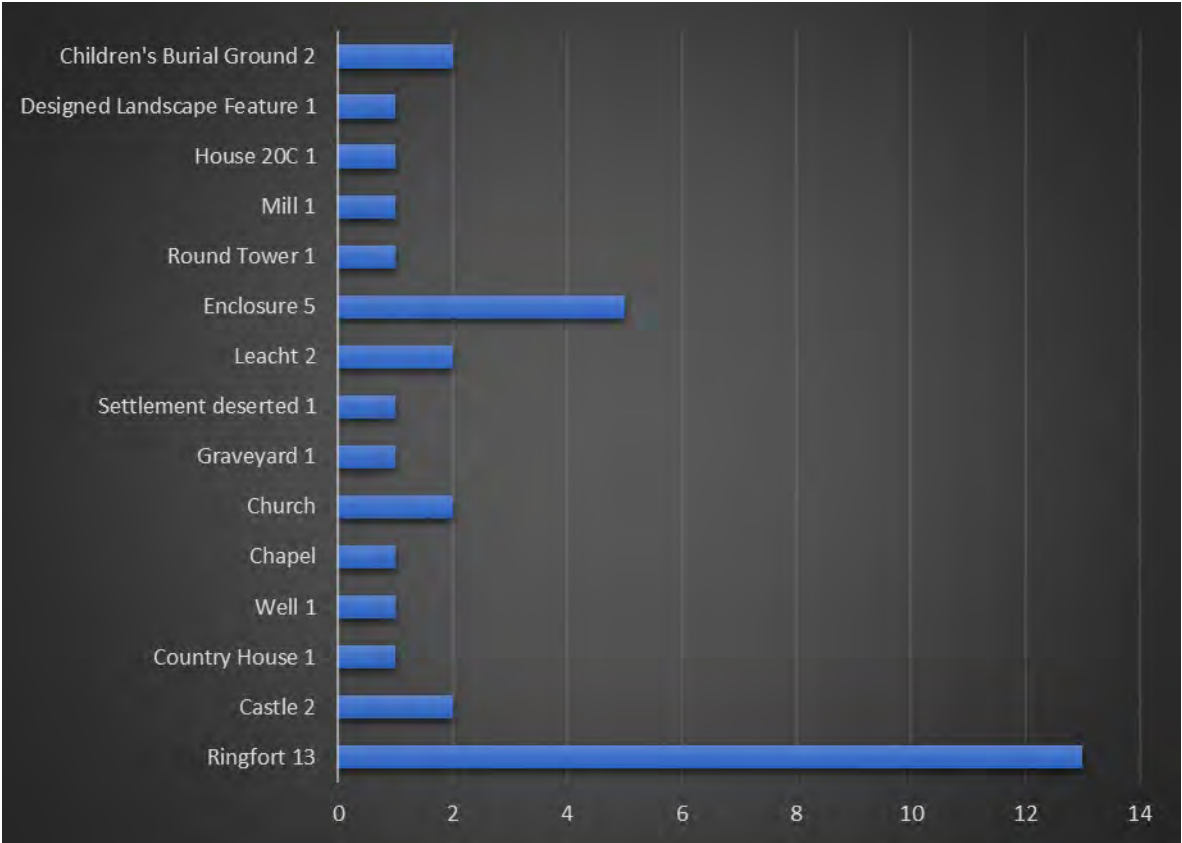


Figure 2.59. Pie chart showing numbers of monuments by type in Kilmeen parish

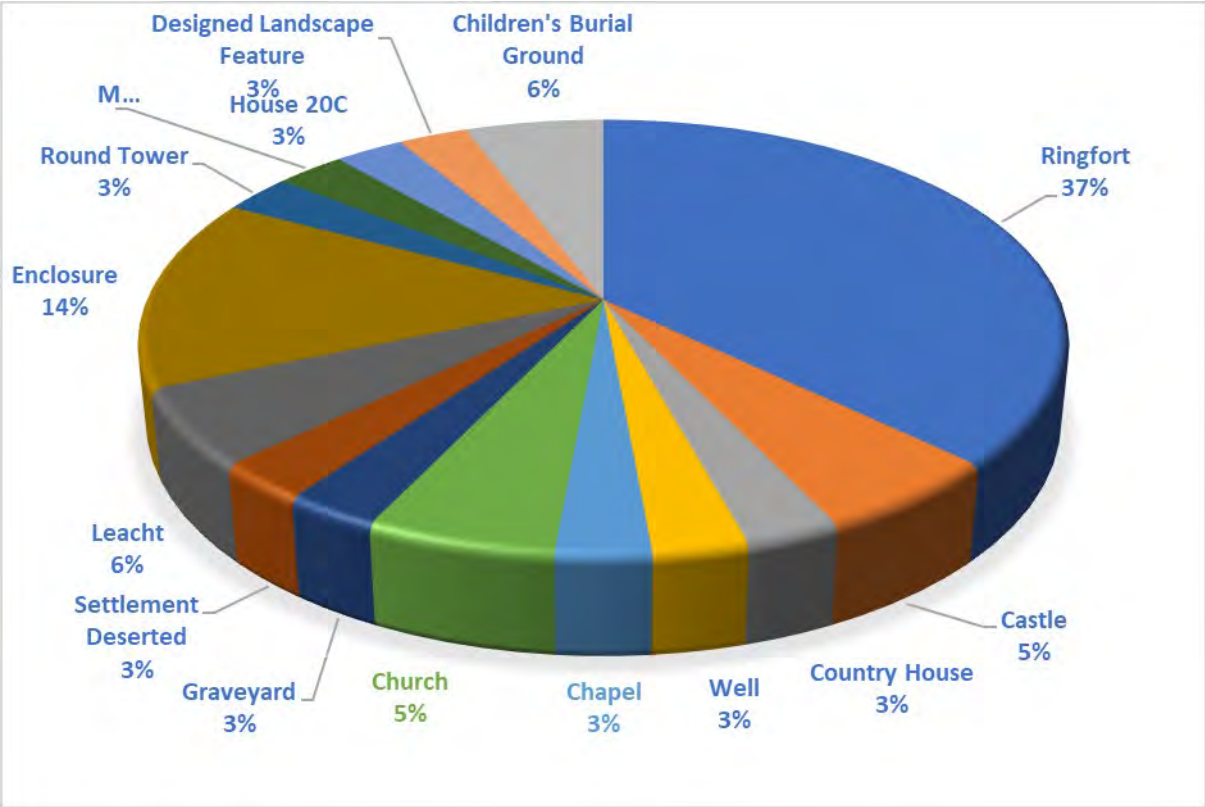


Figure 2.60. Pie chart showing types of monuments by percentage in Kilmeen parish.

2.10 Associated Heritage Assets.

2.10.1.6 Ecology recommendations

XXXX

3. Statement of Significance

This section shows the assessment and statement of heritage significance which is an essential aspect of the plan. It sets out why Kilmeen Church and Graveyard is important, which encompasses a variety of reasons of equal merit.

3.1 Key Values: Assessment of Significance

A variety of guidance informs this assessment (Bond and Worthing, 2016; Clark, 2001; CPRE, 2004; DAHG, 2011; DCHG, 2017; English Heritage, 2000; 2008; Historic England, 2019; Lithgow and Thackray, 2009: 17; Semple Kerr, 2013). Kilmeen was assessed using a number of stated criteria ‘a family of heritage values’ (Fig. 3.1; see English Heritage, 2000 for context; English Heritage, 2008: 23; Historic England, 2019: 16).

‘Value’ and ‘significance’ are loaded terms, embodying different things to different groups. In this report it is defined as ‘an aspect of worth or importance, ascribed by people to qualities of places or monuments’. Value is categorised: aesthetic, communal, evidential or historical. These valuations are subjective, and are thus defined as an assessment

that reflects the values of the person or group making that assessment. Significance is defined as the *sum* of the cultural and natural heritage values (English Heritage 2008, 24, 60). This assessment has

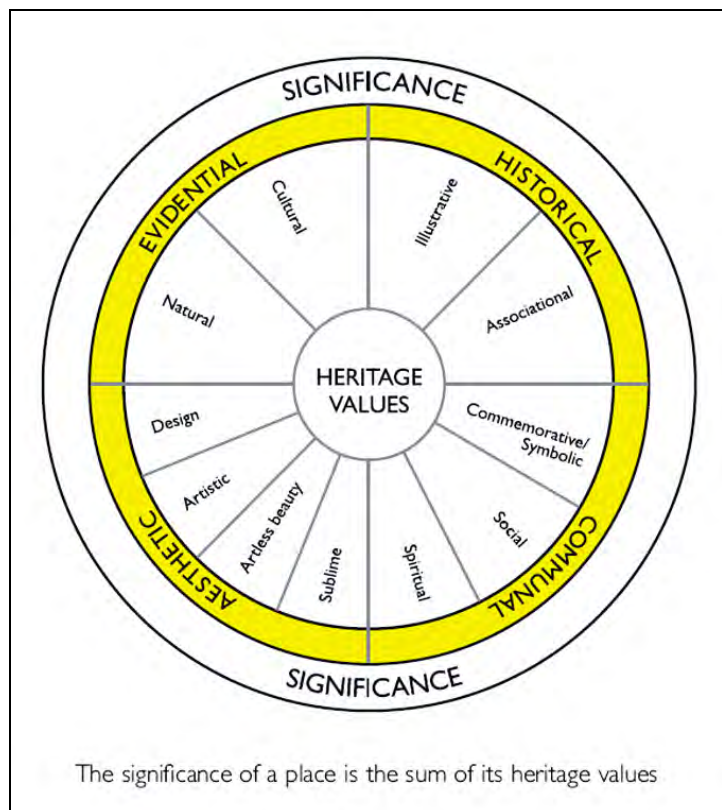


Figure 3.1. Chart illustrating values in an assessment of significance (after English Heritage 2007).

been compiled with consultation and is tabularised in Table 3.1. It has used English Heritage's heritage values (2008) and more recent heritage interest guidance (Historic England 2019, 16).

Table 3.1. Assessment of significance of Kilmeen Church and Graveyard.

Value Category	Heritage Value (interest)	Assessment
Evidential	Archaeological and Cultural	Kilmeen Church and Graveyard has a high evidential value as it is an excellent example of the remains (albeit ruinous) example of a late medieval church situated within an extensive deserted medieval settlement. It also contains a possible round tower.
	Natural	Kilmeen has some potential for supporting research in disciplines such as wildlife species (bats) and their habitats. It has the potential to become a site for increased biodiversity in a landscape increasingly dominated by dominated by grazing.
	Architectural (architectural)	Kilmeen Church has an architectural value as it contains It has evidence of two phases of construction. The graveyard also contains a variety of headstones, graveslabs and tomb types, as well as a large quantity of reused architectural fragments.
Historical	Illustrative (historic)	Kilmeen Church and Graveyard is considered to be of some historical
	Associational (historic)	The church is situated within a field system, which indicates that this church was located at the heart of a settlement going back to at least the Early Medieval period.
Communal	Commemorative/Symbolic	The site is well known in the locality due to its long use as a burial ground.
	Social	It currently has a relatively low social value but has the potential to raise its social value, significantly, through increased awareness such as the dissemination of information and improvements in access.
	Spiritual	The monument has a significant spiritual value having several elements associated with late medieval parish church,
	Landscape and amenity	The landscape and amenity value of the Kilmeen Church and Graveyard is high. It is set in a beautiful flat countryside of south Galway It has potential for amenity in the form of a destination point for visitors interested in the architecture of late medieval Ireland.
Aesthetic	Sublime (artistic)	Kilmeen church and graveyard is considered as being of 'sublime' aesthetic value, as its architectural design and surrounding graveyard are fine examples of late medieval ecclesiastical archaeology.
	Artless Beauty, Artistic and Art Historical	Kilmeen Church and Graveyard is not considered as having an 'artless beauty', in itself but in its local setting is regionally important.
	Design (architectural and artistic)	Kilmeen Church and Graveyard is in a pleasing location, and with work the remains of the church can be presented.

3.2 Statement of Significance

Kilmeen Church and Graveyard is of regional significance due to the number of elements of which it is one part. There is a possible round tower in the graveyard, and it is situated within one of the largest deserted medieval settlements in Galway. The church and graveyard also contains fine examples of nineteenth century headstones, graveslabs and a box tomb. The church is situated within an extensive deserted settlement and field system, which indicates that this church was located at the heart of a settlement going back to at least the Early Medieval period.

4. Risk: Defining Management Issues and Assessing Vulnerability

There are some factors that are either already risks or are potential risks to Kilmeen Church and Graveyard that make the monument vulnerable (Table 4.1). There are also a number of opportunities that would improve the overall condition and environment of the monument which would protect it for future generations to enjoy (Table 4.2). This section assesses those risks and lists potential opportunities, while the following section 5 makes suggestions to mitigate risks and presents options for stabilisation or re-use of the monument.

Table 4.1. List of risks and vulnerabilities to Kilmeen Church and Graveyard (relative risks: Low; Medium; High).

Risks and vulnerabilities No.	Sub-risks	Commentary	Relative risk level
1. Fabric Condition	Current condition Future deterioration Issues and lessons learned	Structurally, the fabric of the church is in a poor state, particularly the east and south walls. It is important that any programme of vegetation removal also includes to immediate remedial works to address any instability cause to the fabric. The main threat to the structures is from the structural instability caused by the trimming of ivy. The dying ash trees will need to be removed by qualified personnel.	M
2. Use levels: changes and appropriateness	Levels of use over time and changes to use Access Vandalism Antisocial behaviour	There is no evidence of antisocial behaviour (littering, graffiti) or vandalism. This is publicly accessible graveyard.	L
3. Site constraints	Resources Statutory controls Boundaries Other legal constraints	Funding is intermittent and ad hoc, being available in emergencies. Statutory controls are beneficial and serve to protect monument as an archaeological monument. Local authority policies are supportive. Boundaries are unclear on ground, the complex is in private ownership, though access is freely permitted. There is no formal management plan for maintenance in place	L
4 Wider context issues	Siting Proper knowledge, understanding and appreciation of monument Other external factors	The siting of the monument is good. While the site is very well known locally and perhaps regionally; few know the detail of its archaeology or architectural features.	H

4.1 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

As part of this assessment, a SWOT analysis was undertaken in an attempt to tease out strengths and opportunities for the monument in order to capitalise on these aspects, while acknowledging the inherent weaknesses and threats to the monument—which fed into the risks considered in Table 4.1. Strengths and weaknesses relate to internal forces, while opportunities and threats are external forces to the monument, some of which, it must be acknowledged may not be easily controlled or mitigated for in the future (see section 5). In some cases, forces might be considered both a strength and also a threat.

Table 4.2. Results of SWOT analysis.

	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
<i>Internal forces</i>	S1. Ruinous example of a late medieval church, situated at the heart of a deserted medieval settlement..	W1. The location of the graveyard and church is at the end of a small local road, and there is no dedicated parking.
	S2. Generally, in very poor condition and vegetation trimming/possible subsequent repairs required to the east gable and south wall.	W2. There is no maintenance regime.
	S3. Within a short drive from the main roads and the Wild Atlantic Way	W3. It is not connected to known waymarked walking routes.
	S5. Many tourists visit the Wild Atlantic Way, Kilmeen Church and Graveyard site presents an opportunity to visit a medieval parish church, and also a wider deserted medieval settlement	W4. There is no overall information board. .The deserted settlement can be identified on the ground, but the scale of the earthworks can only be appreciated when seen from the air. Aerial views should be included on an information board.
	Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
<i>External forces</i>	O1. Many local authority policy objectives in both the Development Plan and local authority initiatives encourage the re-use of heritage sites.	T1. Future climate changes may see monument inundated. Strong winds/gales have a detrimental effect on structural fabric.
	O2. There are increasing opportunities for new novel tourism products Galway and its hinterland, such as walking tours and looped walks.	T2. The surviving walls are completely covered in ivy, and further deterioration to the fabric is inevitable. The ash trees which are suffering from die back also present an immediate threat. There is no point carrying out work on the church only for these trees to fall on it.
	O3. Community Monument Funding or Heritage Council funding for conservation, a plan and maintenance into the future and other funding opportunities.	
	O4. Opportunities for research projects. The site is situated within a deserted medieval settlement, and presents an excellent opportunity for any researcher carry out work on these settlements, of which relatively little is known.	

4.2 Gap Analysis

The surviving walls of the church are completely covered in ivy, and impenetrable scrub covers the ground around the church walls. Further deterioration to the fabric is inevitable, with the remains of the ope for the E window particularly vulnerable. The ash trees which are suffering from die back also present an immediate threat. There is no point carrying out work on the church only for these trees to fall on it. It is important that an holistic approach is take to any future works, which might be deemed emergency works.

The ash trees must be removed, the undergrowth cu back the ivy trimmed to within 5cm of the wall. This work must be carried out by heritage specialists, who have extensive experience of working on medieval structures, as any masonry that may become dislodged, or found to be in imminent danger of collapse can be repaired immediately.

5. Conservation Management Policy Aims

5.1 Policy Context

Conservation policies for Kilmeen Church and Graveyard are based on the statement of significance assigned in section 3.2, the relative levels of significance in section 3.3, and identified vulnerabilities outlined in section 4. This in turn informs positive strategic aims that can be achieved through the conservation policies below. The implementation of these policies is ideally via a future agreed action plan between all the stakeholders (section 6). The process is informed by a vision statement formulated after the statement of significance. These policies are aligned to the objectives set out in local authority documentation (appendix 8.6).

5.2 Vision

Kilmeen church and Graveyard shall be conserved, maintained and introduced to a new generation of visitors. Its ultimate conservation and repair as an archaeological monument, shall maintain its integrity, authenticity, and significance for future generations. Its conservation and ongoing maintenance shall be sensitive to its original use as a medieval parish church. Measures shall be taken to ensure the continued protection of character of the monument.

5.3 Future Options and Appraisal

Following consultation and research on similar projects as a benchmarking exercise, the following options were suggested. It is important to note that (excepting the “do-nothing” option required for comparison; EPA 2017) only options that respect the statement of significance and embody the vision for the monument were listed (table 5.1). All options are in keeping with local authority objectives and national regulation (appendices 8.6; 8.7). A major advantage is that there is already an electricity supply to the lighthouse cottage and a new fuse board installed. A general heritage impact assessment for capital works has been undertaken as part of this study (appendix 8.5).

Table 5.1. Options and individual appraisal matrix.

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Outline of Extent of Works Required
1. Do Nothing	No cost implications	Monument will rapidly become ruinous	N/a
2. Stabilisation	Lower cost implications Considerations such as visitor welfare and access do not need addressing.	Monument will in time become more ruinous and unsafe	Minor repairs. Establish a programme of regular maintenance.
3. Repair	Maintaining the church for future generations to enjoy. Improve access for visitors	Cost implications; Schedule of future maintenance required to keep building sound; Future cost implications	Major repairs to structure , particularly the east gable and south wall near the door ope.
4. Re-purpose for public presentation as part of looped walk or trail.:	In addition to 3. above public access (physical and intellectual) will be promoted.	Increased footfall and insertion of information boards etc. may lead to increased erosion on site.	Information panel to be added.

5.4 Management Policies

Overarching conservation policies are recommended for the conservation of Kilmeen Church and Graveyard regardless of the preferred option from table 5.1. They are in no particular order. The themes are deliberately broad and there is some overlap where policies straddle a number of topics:

Table 5.2 Conservation management plan policies.

Policy Number	Policy	Description
CMPP1	Protection	<p>There will be the presumption in favour of retaining and conserving all <i>in situ</i> portions of the monument of all periods whether they are extant or sub-surface as important contributions to the character development of the monument. The levels of significance in this document will be adhered to.</p> <p>Ensure the protection of the monument as an architectural/archaeological resource by allowing architectural/archaeological investigations only where it is deemed necessary, justifiable and appropriate and where such work will contribute to a better understanding of the monument. Any work should be in accordance to an agreed research framework.</p> <p>No interventions for conservation or architectural/archaeological purposes shall be permitted without agreed and approved provision for research, recording, analysis, publication and archiving. Under the current legislation at the time of writing, consents are required for such works.</p>
CMPP2	Future conservation, prioritisation of repairs, inspection and maintenance	<p>To conserve the monument and to provide an effective and continuous maintenance programme thereafter for conservation and repair through a programme of works (see section 6 below). The following policies are adopted for repair and conservation works:</p> <p>To be done on a phased basis, in a sustainable way;</p> <p>Archival quality photographic record to be undertaken prior to conservation works;</p> <p>To provide a suitable environment in which conservation workers and visitors are accommodated to ensure safety;</p> <p>To save money in the longer term through effective maintenance;</p> <p>No damp proof courses to be inserted in structures that did not have one previously;</p> <p>That lead should be repaired. If possible, all lead should be replaced with a lead alternative. There are several new materials available which, apart from the environmental benefits, would also prevent future vandalism and theft as it would have no re-sale value;</p> <p>During these works, information and interpretation will be provided to explain what is happening and to increase public awareness and understanding.</p> <p>A regular programme of inspection should commence for the monument by a designated person, which could include for safety, structural and conservational issues. It is recommended that this take place on a regular basis for the purposes of monitoring the stability of the monument.</p> <p>Appropriate craftspeople and professionals will be utilised for all work where feasible. Training will be provided for continued maintenance personnel. Advice from regulatory bodies such as the NMS architectural division should be sought in this regard. The Heritage Officer to approve all specialist contractors and conservation specialists.</p> <p>There is a presumption against removal of material from a historic location. Consideration in favour of repair rather than replacement should always be applied in the first instance.</p> <p>Where materials cannot be salvaged from the monument and re-used, new local materials may be sourced, with appropriate regulation followed.</p>
CMPP3	Understanding, Education and Research, Access	<p>The known recorded history and archaeology have been recorded in this document. An oral history project was beyond the remit of this plan but there may be a wealth of local oral history and tradition associated with the</p>

		<p>monument that has yet to be recorded. An oral history project could collect this information in order to increase public awareness and to provide opportunities for increased awareness.</p> <p>Encourage research and understanding, for all, including 1st and 2nd level curriculum development and through a variety of media. For example, interpretive tools which would include but not be limited to maps, guides, trails, videos, DVD, posters, an information board, an educational pack, which are publicly accessible.</p> <p>Develop ideas to provide for both physical and intellectual access of the monument. This should take into account disability and other pertinent legislation, and might include signage in Braille, or access to support those with limited mobility.</p> <p>The interpretation of the monument will be as holistic as is possible to include histories, natural, cultural, social history and archaeology in the context of the wider landscape of south Galway.</p>
CMPP4	Management	A graveyard committee should undertake ongoing decision-making and conflict resolution where it may occur. The committee should take responsibility for funding support and ongoing budgeting.
CMPP5	Archive management (paper archive; collections, contents)	Steering committee to oversee the creation of an ongoing archive of records of conservation work as it proceeds and the ongoing collection of material of relevance.
CMPP6	Environment and wider landscape context	<p>Cognisance to be taken of the ecology of the monument and its surroundings. An ecology survey should be considered in advance of any conservation/re-purposing work and undertaken at the correct time of year.</p> <p>Care should be taken to preserve the current landscape setting of the monument in so far as is practicable.</p>

6. Action Plan: Future Implementation

Table 6.1 outlines a plan of action in order to achieve the management policies and vision for Kilmeen Church and Graveyard while strictly adhering to its statement of heritage significance. It is suggested that a steering committee be formed of stakeholders to take responsibility for the actioning of this plan (CMPP4).

Table 6.1 Conservation management plan actions (short within 1 year; medium 2-3 years; long 4-5 years).

Action No.	Description	Management policy reference	Action duration (short, medium, long term)
1	Triming of ivy, removal of undergrowth and removal of ash trees. Consolidation and repair of loose masonry	2	Short (Urgent)
2	Display panels should be erected with information in relation to the site and its history.	3	Short

6.2 Indicative Costs

Table 6.2. Indicative costs.

Task	Net (Euro)	Vat 13.5%	Vat 23%	Total

7. Conclusion

The surviving walls of the church are completely covered in ivy, and impenetrable scrub covers the ground around the church walls. Further deterioration to the fabric is inevitable, with the remains of the ope for the E window particularly vulnerable. The ash trees which are suffering from die back also present an immediate threat. The ash trees must be removed, the undergrowth cut back the ivy trimmed to within 5cm of the wall. This work must be carried out by heritage specialists, who have extensive experience of working on medieval structures, as any masonry that may become dislodged, or found to be in imminent danger of collapse can be repaired immediately. The repair works should be carried out in the short term as the condition of the walls are hazardous.

The condition survey has identified a number of access issues and has made recommendations as to how to remedy these issues. However, the overarching conclusion is that, with appropriate intervention, Kilmeen Church and Graveyard can become a stop for visitors to south Galway, who have an interest in church archaeology, graveyards and medieval settlement.

Kilmeen Church and Graveyard has been part of the landscape south Galway since at least the thirteenth century, and with care and attention will continue well into the twenty-first century and beyond.

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9. Signing-Off Statement

Archaeological Firm: ÆGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

Writer: Frank Coyne MA MIAI,
Aegis Archaeology Ltd.

Client: Galway County Council

Signed:



For ÆGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

Report status: Draft

Dated: 19 October 2024

10. Appendices

10.1 Ecology Report *by Ruth Minogue*

10.2 Structural Engineers report *by Martin English, ACP*

10.3 Arborist's report *by Noel Lane*

10.3 Survey drawings and images *by KGSS Surveys*



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