



ULSTER
ARCHÆOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Survey Report

Reference: **Survey Report No. 62**

Author: **Harry Welsh and David Craig**

Location:

**Drumgath Graveyard
Drumgath
County Down**

In association with:

Drumgath Ladies Group



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Cover illustration: Graveyard survey 30 July 2017

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1. Summary

1.1 Location

A site survey was undertaken at a graveyard at Drumgath, County Down on Saturday 29 July 2017. This survey was undertaken to detail some of the many interesting headstones and other features that were visible within an early medieval enclosure, previously surveyed by the Ulster Archaeological Society (Stevenson and Scott 2017). The survey was the fifth in a series of planned surveys undertaken by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society during 2017.

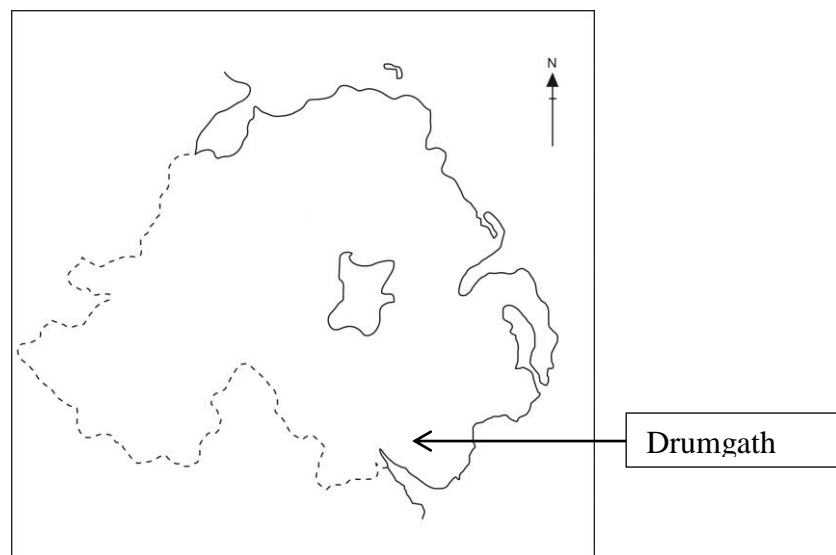


Figure 01: Location map for Drumgath

The site is located in the townland of Drumgath, approximately 5km south-west of Rathfriland, County Down, at Irish Grid reference J 1672 2959. It is scheduled under the terms of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and is recorded as *Church (site of) and Graveyard* in the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) as DOW 047:042.



Figure 02: Aerial view of the monument, looking south

1.2 Aims

In order to enhance the archaeological record of this site, the aims of this survey were to investigate and record the grave markers, headstones and other architectural features and carry out a photographic survey. This report is intended to compliment Stevenson, R. and Scott, R. *Early Ecclesiastical Site at Drumgath, County Down, Northern Ireland*, Survey Report No. 60, Belfast: Ulster Archaeological Society. The information obtained during the survey of 29 July 2017 was compiled into a report and copies submitted to the Drumgath Ladies Group and to the archives of the Ulster Archaeological Society.

1 2. Introduction

2.1 Background

The survey of the headstones, grave markers and other architectural features was undertaken on Saturday 29 July 2017. It was carried out by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society, in response to a decision taken by the committee of the society to extend an opportunity to members to participate in practical surveys of archaeological monuments that had not previously been recorded. This followed a bequest to the society from the late Dr Ann Hamlin, from which the items of survey equipment were purchased. The graveyard at Drumgath was subsequently chosen to be the sixty-second of these.

2.2 Previous archaeological surveys

As far as it is known, there has been no previous archaeological survey of the grave markers and headstones at this site.

2.4 Archiving

Copies of this report have been deposited with Drumgath Ladies Group and the Ulster Archaeological Society. All site records have been archived by the Ulster Archaeological Society.

2.5 Credits and Acknowledgements

The survey was led by Harry Welsh and included June Welsh, David Craig, Michael Catney, Lee Gordon, Colin Boyd, Hilary Boyd, George Rutherford, Randal Scott, Chris Stevenson, Janna McDonald Anne MacDermott, Leo Van Es and Paula Sandford. The Ulster Archaeological Society is particularly grateful to Mr Brendan Keenan, landowner, and the members of the Drumgath Ladies Group, who facilitated access to the site and provided refreshments, much appreciated by all. The group was joined during the survey by representatives from the Moybologue Historical Society, County Cavan. There, a very similar site has attracted archaeological investigation and it is hoped that future collaboration will assist in the fuller understanding of these two sites.

3. The 29 July 2017 UAS Survey

3.1 Methodology

It was decided that the survey would take the form of a drone survey, as well as the production of field notes and sketches, accompanied by a photographic survey. This

report was compiled using the information obtained from these sources, in addition to background documentary material.

3.2 Production of plan drawings

Plan drawings and elevations were completed, using data obtained from the drone and field surveys. Measurements were obtained by using the society's *Leica Sprinter 100* electronic measuring device. Sketch plans at 1:20 scale [or other] were completed on site by recording these measurements on drafting film secured to a plane table and backing up the data on a field notebook for subsequent reference. Field plans were later transferred to a computer-based format for printing. The site was also subject to a drone survey, data from which was stored in digital format and used to generate some of the images in this report.



Figure 03: Drone image of site, north to the top of the image.

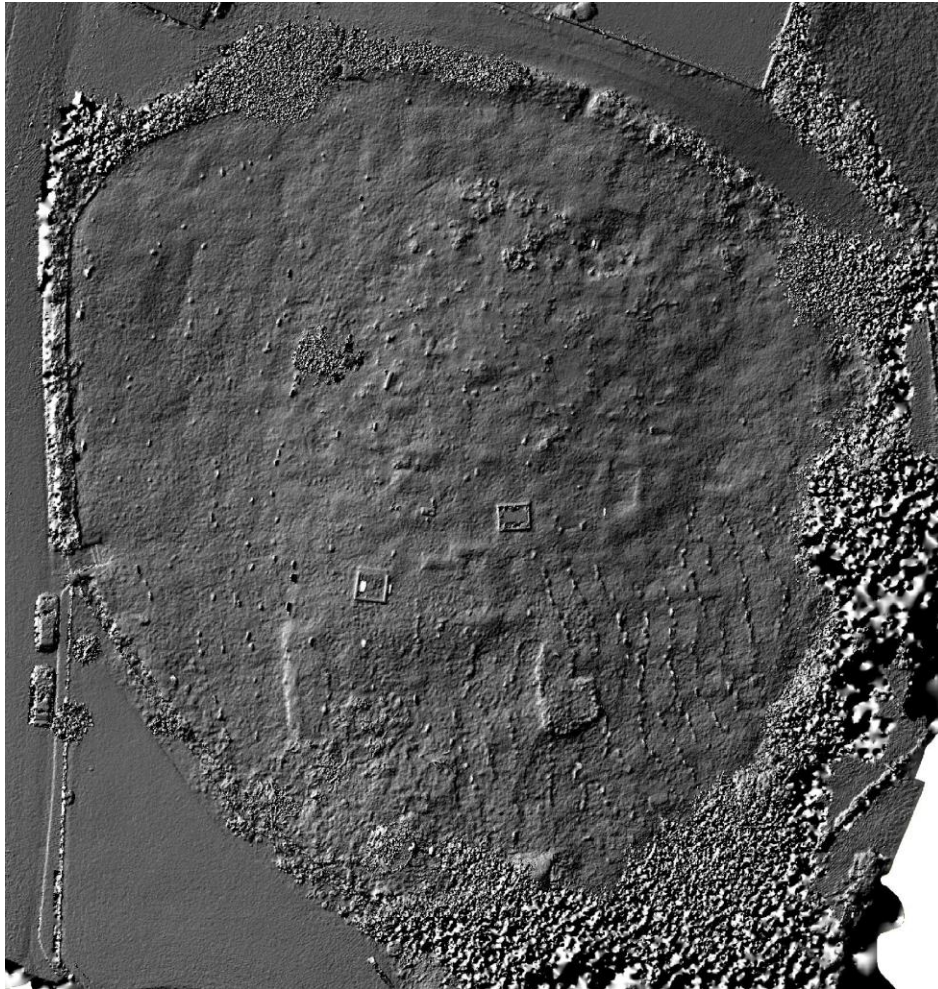


Figure 04: Drone image of site with hillshade applied, north to the top of the image.



Figure 05: Profile drawing of the enclosure (south-west/north-east)

3.3 Photographic archive

A photographic record of the site was taken by using a *Ricoh G600* 8 megapixel digital camera and a photographic record sheet was employed, corresponding to photographs taken during the site survey on 29 July 2017 and on previous visits to the site on 28 May and 30 July 2016. The archive has been compiled in jpeg format and saved to compact disc.



Figure 06: UAS Survey Group members at work at Drumgath

4. Discussion

The early ecclesiastical enclosure at Drumgath is almost circular in plan, approximately 70m in diameter and is partly truncated at the west due to the widening of the main road (B7) connecting Rathfriland and Mayobridge at some point prior to the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1833, as it is visible on this. The enclosure is approximately 2m above the surrounding ground level at the south-west and slopes down towards the north-east, where it is approximately 1.8m above surrounding ground level. The enclosure is defined throughout by a wall of unmortared stone averaging 1.8m in height, with an entrance at the west, 1.8m in width, which is provided with well-made granite steps connecting the interior of the enclosure to road level. Another smaller entrance is located at the north, where the interior of the enclosure connects with a farm lane. Outcrops of bedrock are visible at the north and north-east of the enclosure.

A total of 194 grave markers and headstones were recorded during the survey. Only 26 of these bore any inscription and were recognisable as headstones. One stone, with a circular hole present centrally in the upper part, was considered to be the remains of a sun dial, probably connected with the early monastic site. Nine grave markers were found to be architectural features, such as window mullions and lintels, which were considered to be survivors from an earlier church building, possibly dating to 1407 (Stevenson and Scott 2017, 17). Four small stone crosses were present (Figure 08) and it is thought these may be either partially buried early stone crosses associated with the monastic site, or perhaps wayside crosses associated with a pilgrim trail connecting the early medieval sites at Kilbroney (Saint Bronagh) and Maghera (Saint Donard).

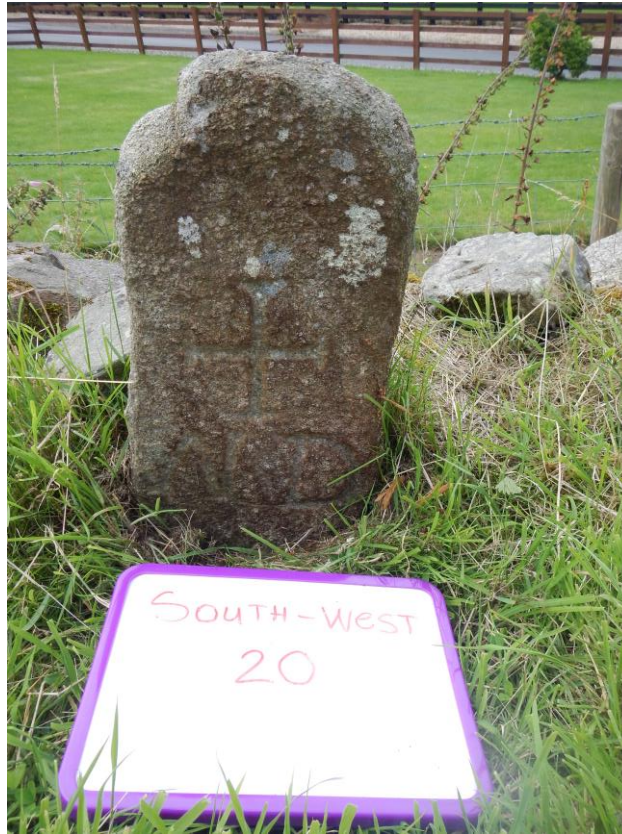


Figure 07: Headstone with cross inscription



Figure 08: Cross-shaped grave marker or possible wayside cross

One of the most impressive features in the enclosure lies at the southern boundary. This is a barrel-vaulted structure, 3.4m east/west by 3m north/south, constructed of rough mortared stone. Parts of this structure show signs of collapse at the east and west. Under the central part of the vaulted roof, there is evidence of wicker centering in the mortar, confirming the construction method. On an earlier visit to the site, Dr Finbar McCormick of Queen's University, suggested the feature could be best described as a mausoleum for a Bishop of the church, or a local tribal chieftain.

The remainder of the grave markers in the enclosure are simple granite blocks, without any visible inscription. These are all aligned north/south, suggesting that they are probably grave markers (with the associated graves aligned east/west). The neat rows of these granite blocks are predominant in the southern half of the enclosure and cross both the large rectangular church site and smaller church site, suggesting that any burials associated with these granite markers must be later than the period of use of the later of these buildings, currently thought to date to the fifteenth century. There are granite grave markers present in the northern part of the enclosure, but these are less formally arranged and therefore probably earlier (see Mulvenna et al. 2008).

The earliest visible date on any headstone is 1729 (Fegan) and the most recent is 1865 (Lennon). The members of the Drumgath Ladies Group confirmed that several of the family names recorded on the gravestones in the enclosure are still present in the area today.



Figure 09: Typical granite block grave marker

There are two notable burials in the interior, those of the Barnmeen Martyrs and the solicitor who unsuccessfully defended them. The term Barnmeen Martyrs was given to a group of twelve local men, who were tried in 1820 for the sectarian murder of a Rathfriland man, Samuel Duncan. Five of the accused were subsequently found guilty of murder and hanged at Downpatrick Gaol. Unusually, their bodies were not buried in an unmarked grave, but brought instead to Drumgath, where they remain to this day.

5. Recommendations for further work

The limited number of legible headstones at Drumgath provides a small, but important resource for genealogical research. Further, there are many unusual grave markers, of unusual shape (small pointed top) with various designs of cross inscription. If these could be dated, they could possibly be associated with the periods of occupation suggested by Stevenson and Scott 2017.

It is recommended that a detailed graveyard plan be prepared, with an associated inventory of grave markers and headstones, in order to facilitate further research at this intriguing site.

6. Bibliography

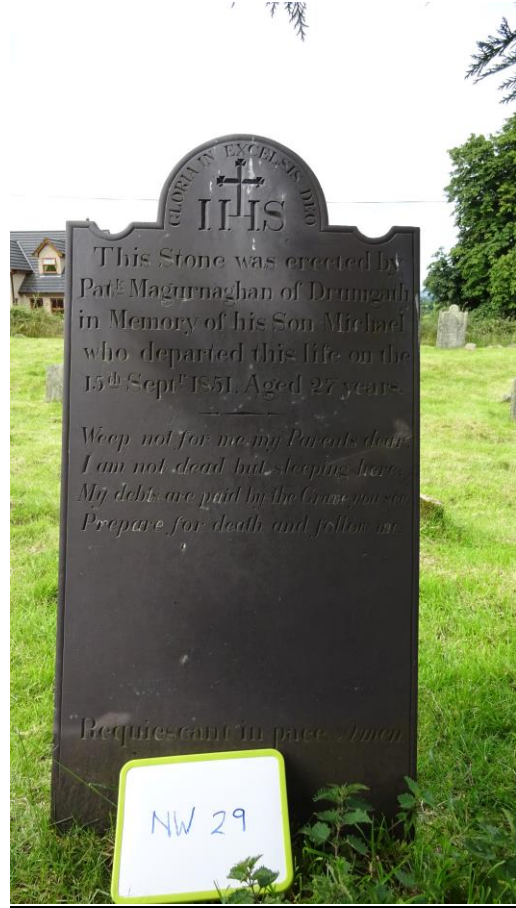
Mulvenna, M., Rutherford, G. AND Welsh, H. 2008. *Graveyard Survey, Supplement to Survey Report No. 4, Survey of St Mary's Church, Ballaghanery Upper, County Down*, Belfast: Ulster Archaeological Society.

Stevenson, C. and Scott, R. *Early Ecclesiastical Site at Drumgath, County Down, Northern Ireland*, Survey Report No. 60, Belfast: Ulster Archaeological Society.

Welsh, H., Craig, D. and Dickson, B. 2016. 'An Early Ecclesiastical Site Investigated at Drumgath, Co Down', *Archaeology Ireland*, Vol.30, No. 3, 17-20.

APPENDIX A: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD









APPENDIX B: HEADSTONES DATA

Quadrant	Height (cm)	Width (cm)	Thickness (cm)	Material	Date	Name	Inscription
NE	154.00	71.50	7.00	Slate	1820	O Hagan	Here lyeth the body of Peter O Hagan who departed this life the 16th March 1820 Aged 29 years
NE	179.00	76.00	16.00	Granite			
NE	16.00	32.00	13.00	Granite			
NE	46.00	45.00	17.00	Granite			
NE	24.00	38.00	34.00	Granite			
NE	15.00	17.00	15.00	Granite			
NE	28.00	30.00	19.00				
NE	45.00	58.00	34.00	Granite			
NE	30.00	36.00	31.00	Granite			
NE	42.00	31.00	24.00	Granite			
NE	35.00	30.00	12.00				
NE	30.00	36.00	12.00	Granite			
NE	25.00	26.00	15.00	Granite			
NE	25.00	40.00	25.00	Granite			
NE	32.00	35.00	18.00	Granite			
NE	32.00	70.00	26.00	Granite			
NE	93.00	61.00	10.00	Granite	1820	Toman	Here Lyeth the body of Hugh Toman of Rathfriland who departed this life March 27 1820 Aged 21 years
NE	17.00	17.00	25.00	Granite			
NE	21.00	17.00	17.00	Granite			
NE	153.00	97.00	40.00	Slate	1846	McFadden	Erected by David McFadden Drumnagreenagh In memory of his father John who died 25th March 1846 aged 82 years
NE	52.00	19.00	25.00	Granite			
NE	12.00	40.00	36.00	Granite			
NE	36.00	30.00	21.00	Granite			
NE	38.00	16.00	23.00				
NE	15.00	37.00	46.00	Granite			
NE	37.00	42.00	24.00	Granite			
NE	30.00	38.00	33.00	Granite			
NE	27.00	27.00	21.00	Granite			
NE	14.00	25.00	15.00	Granite			
NE							Christian's Place
NW	76.00	56.00	12.00	Granite			
NW	63.00	60.00	12.00	Granite			
NW	2.00	31.00	8.00	Granite			
NW	24.00	24.00	10.00	Granite			
NW	70.00	61.00	13.00	Granite			
NW	27.00	20.00	21.00				
NW	130.00	76.00	13.00	Granite			M?JEM[---]C 319 aged 56
NW	20.00	22.00	10.00	Granite			
NW	30.00	6.00	5.00	Granite			
NW	33.00	26.00	10.00				
NW	25.00	18.00	10.00	Granite			

NW	13.00	52.00	18.00	Granite			
NW	60.00	43.00	18.00	Granite			
NW	26.00	22.00	20.00	Granite			
NW	18.00	32.00	17.00	Granite			
NW	78.00	63.00	9.00	Granite			
NW	12.00	33.00	18.00	Granite			
NW	65.00	53.00	13.00	Granite			
NW	55.00	36.00	14.00	Sandstone			
NW	19.00	34.00	4.00	Sandstone			
NW	72.00	47.00	9.00	Granite			
NW	12.00	30.00	6.00	Sandstone			
NW	15.00	24.00	10.00	Granite			
NW	22.00	26.00	17.00	Granite			
NW	28.00	32.00	8.00	Granite			
NW	26.00	34.00	8.00	Granite			
NW	146.00	64.00	11.00		1810		[...] aged
NW	62.00	57.00	16.00				
NW	126.00	64.00	4.00	Slate		Magurnaghan	This stone was erected by Pat ^k Magurnaghan
NW	78.00	57.00	10.00	Granite			
NW	26.00	44.00	18.00	Granite			
NW	50.00	44.00	13.00	Granite			
NW	115.00	60.00	17.00	Granite	1777	Doyle	[...] Doyle [...] departed this life Dec 1777 aged [--] years
NW	88.00	42.00	6.00				HIS with cross
NW	36.00	50.00	9.00	Granite			
NW	45.00	38.00	5.00	Granite			
NW	33.00	32.00	18.00				
NW	32.00	50.00	15.00	Granite			
NW	36.00	40.00	5.00	Granite			
NW	55.00	31.00	12.00	Granite			
NW	34.00	28.00	10.00	Granite			
NW	61.00	34.00	17.00	Granite			
NW	20.00	32.00	12.00	Granite			
NW	43.00	46.00	19.00	Granite			
NW	30.00	145.00	23.00	Granite			Possible structural stone
NW	103.00	67.00	7.00				
NW	73.00	35.00	6.00	Granite			[...] AD[...]
NW	77.00	38.00	11.00	Slate			
NW	20.00	33.00	3.00	Granite			
NW	37.00	23.00	5.00	Slate			
NW	82.00	34.00	9.00	Granite			Possible structural stone
SE	28.00	40.00	23.00	Granite			
SE	35.00	35.00	16.00	Granite			
SE	32.00	34.00	20.00	Granite			
SE	29.00	54.00	16.00	Granite			

SE	35.00	28.00	21.00	Granite			
SE	31.00	35.00	12.00	Granite			
SE	39.00	38.00	10.00	Granite			13[--]H
SE	18.00	35.00	17.00	Granite			
SE	34.00	52.00	18.00	Granite			
SE	34.00	36.00	20.00	Granite			
SE	47.00	26.00	22.00	Granite			
SE	34.00	16.00		Granite			
SE	44.00	33.00	30.00	Granite			
SE	51.00	33.00	12.00	Granite			
SE	33.00	43.00	17.00	Granite			
SE	13.00	39.00	20.00	Granite			
SE	18.00	35.00	14.00	Granite			
SE	14.00	34.00	43.00	Granite			
SE	22.00	28.00	12.00	Granite			
SE	30.00	46.00	40.00	Granite			
SE	30.00	32.00	24.00	Granite			
SE	38.00	21.00	20.00	Granite			
SE	50.00	23.00	30.00	Granite			
SE	40.00	15.00		Granite			
SE	32.00	62.00	34.00	Granite			
SE	22.00	29.00	14.00	Granite			
SE	28.00	42.00	26.00				
SE	39.00	36.00	35.00	Granite			
SE	28.00	30.00	15.00				
SE	87.00	66.00	12.00	Granite	1798		
SE	74.00	60.00	7.00	Granite			
SE	92.00	65.00	24.00	Granite			Possible wayside cross
SE	77.00	64.00	16.00	Granite			[---7---
SE	20.00	25.00	32.00	Granite			
SE	14.00	39.00	33.00	Granite			
SE	12.00	30.00	37.00	Granite			
SE	36.00	42.00	30.00	Granite			
SE	48.00	28.00		Granite			Possible structural stone
SE	25.00	18.00	21.00	Granite			Possible structural stone
SE	35.00	33.00	17.00	Granite			Possible structural stone
SE	17.00	34.00	17.00	Granite			Possible structural stone
SE	21.00	41.00	26.00	Granite			
SE	20.00	24.00	20.00	Granite			Possible structural stone
SE	20.00	30.00	22.00	Granite			
SE		46.00	12.00	Granite			
SE	12.00	42.00	24.00	Granite			
SE	24.00	32.00	23.00	Granite			Possible structural stone
SE	45.00	58.00	32.00	Granite			

SE	74.00	45.00	17.00	Granite			
SE	36.00	46.00	21.00	Granite			
SE	40.00	26.00	10.00	Granite			HIS Cross-inscribed
SE	23.00	20.00	35.00	Granite			
SE	50.00	43.00	32.00	Granite			
SE	27.00	29.00	22.00	Granite			
SE	58.00	40.00	9.00	Granite			
SE	9.00	25.00	28.00	Granite			
SE	20.00	33.00	26.00	Granite			
SE	40.00	26.00	24.00	Granite			Possible structural stone
SW	180.00	92.50	7.00	Slate	1843	O' Hare	Erected to the memory of Charles O'Hare of Ballydoo 21 Nov 1845 aged 84 years. His wife Bridget 6 Feb 1843 aged 78 years. May they rest in peace Amen
SW	113.00	72.00	12.00	Sandstone	1806	McConver	Departed this life 20 th August 1813 aged 30 yrs. His mother Alice McConver died June 28 th 1806 aged 46
SW	30.00	60.00	28.00	Granite			
SW	25.00	54.00	37.00	Granite			
SW	56.00	50.00	20.00	Granite			
SW	140.00	65.00	16.00	Granite	1812	Morgan	Erected to memory of Conhwan the [---] Morgan of Candidne who departed this life 20 th March 1820 aged 67 Also wife Catherine Morgan 20 th January 1812 aged 17
SW	89.00	71.00	10.50	Granite			
SW	40.00	39.00	18.00	Granite			
SW	52.00	38.00	14.50	Granite			
SW	17.00	39.00	27.00	Granite			
SW	35.00	47.00	24.00	Granite			
SW	81.00	48.50	12.50	Granite			
SW	69.00	90.00	40.00				
SW	10.80	62.50	14.50	Granite	1793		
SW	33.00	49.00	23.00	Granite			
SW	29.00	27.00	13.50	Granite			
SW	19.00	32.50	24.50	Granite			
SW	79.00	46.00	14.50	Granite			[--BLAMB]
SW	18.00	45.00	26.00	Granite			
SW	49.00	25.50	16.00	Granite			
SW	71.00	42.00	26.00	Granite			
SW	32.00	32.00	27.00	Granite			
SW	50.00	38.00	20.00	Granite			
SW	35.00	40.00	16.00	Granite			
SW	65.00	60.00	16.00	Granite			
SW	19.50	32.00	34.00	Granite			
SW	19.00	31.00	20.00				
SW	16.00	46.00	27.00	Granite			
SW	33.00	35.00	20.00	Granite			
SW	38.00	37.00	21.00	Granite			
SW	37.00	31.00	14.00	Granite			
SW	55.00	33.00	16.00				IHS
SW	104.00	54.00	13.00	Granite			Body of [--] McG who died on the 4th of [--] aged 77
SW							

SW	32.00	53.00	15.00				
SW	25.00	23.00	23.00				
SW	25.00	22.00		Granite			
SW	148.00	89.00	55.00	Slate	1865	Lenno n	IHS Gloria in Excelsis Deo Michael Lennon, Ballydoo. In memory of his daughter Mary 28 April 1865 26 years RIP AMEN
SW	26.00	40.00	14.00				
SW	95.00	59.00	15.20		1810		Mc IHS Died Dec 23 rd 1810 The story of Pat Mo[--] age 82 years 1810 also and his wife Alice April 12 th 1822 age 80
SW	124.00	74.00	17.00				Erected
SW	54.50	67.00	12.00				
SW	32.00	50.50	14.00				
SW	45.50	60.00	19.00				
SW	132.00	58.00	11.00				Aged 21[or 81]
SW	124.50	65.50	14.00	Granite	1795	Megan n	Daniel Megann who died 11 th of May aged 64 1795
SW	64.00	48.00	24.00				
SW	72.50	56.50	15.00				
SW	45.00	25.00	17.50				Possible sundial
SW	106.50	69.00	11.00				
SW							IHS Possible wayside cross
SW	91.00	61.00	13.00				
SW	69.00	53.00	11.00		1729	Fegan	CO OF -- 1729 Age 6 2 bodys 1753 Oin Fegan 1753
SW	59.00	21.00	8.00		1763		N M H O DI FEB 1763 AG 63