

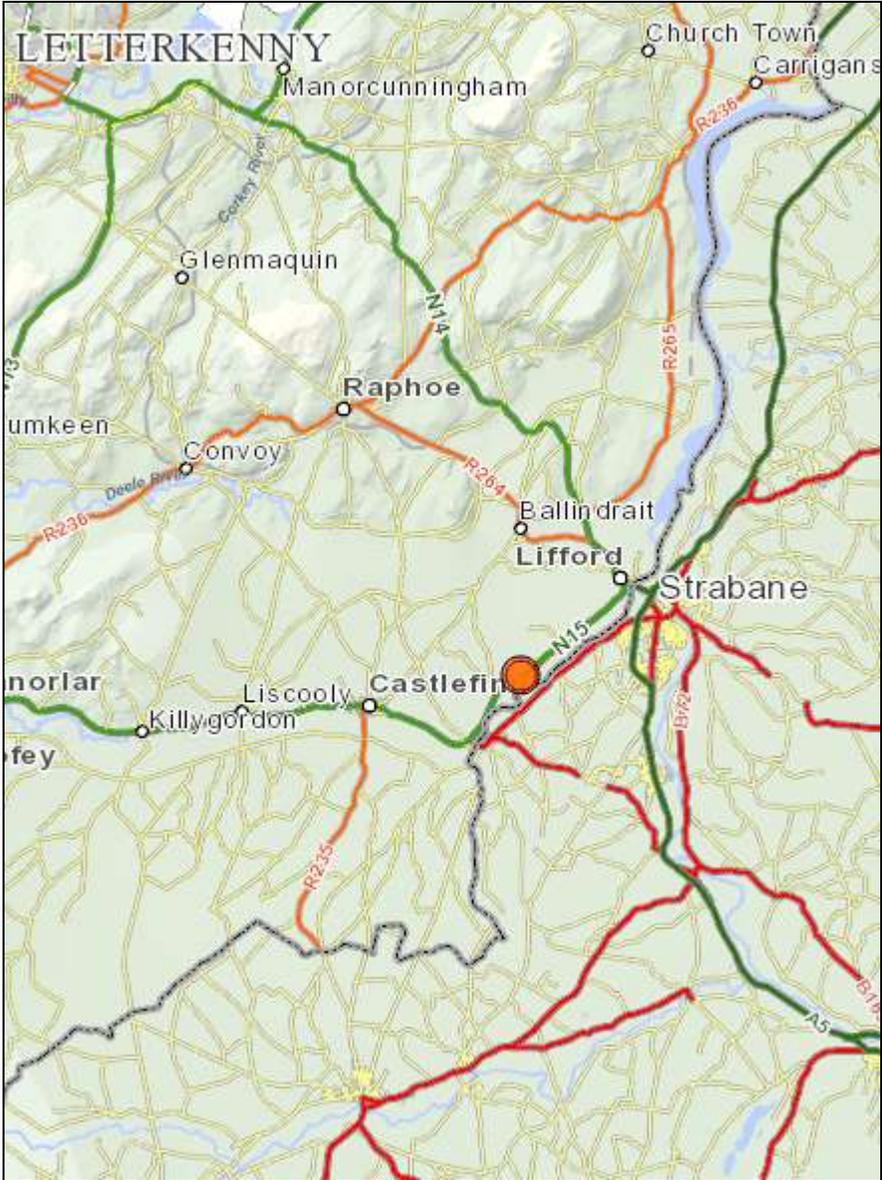
Asset Ref No.	Ecclesiastical site: Churchtown – Graveyard (DG079-009001); Stone Head (DG079-009002) and Church (DG079-009003)	
Heritage Type	Built	
Location	OS 6-inch map sheet	
	Townland	Lifford
	Parish	Clonleigh
	LCA	River Deelee - Lifford
	ITM Coordinates	630448/895832
	NG Coordinates	230503/395840
Protection Status	RMP	
Condition	Substantial remains	
Ownership (if known)	unknown	
Site Description	<p>DG079-009001: A small rectangular disused graveyard consisting of an overgrown mound with no discernible structures. Cemented onto the top of the N gatepost into the graveyard is a stone which seems to be the weathered remains of a carved stone head (DG079-009002-). It is .3m high and 0.25m x .25m. It is extremely defaced but the suggestions of two eyes and a nose can be seen. It is possible that this is another example of the type of head recorded in the Raphoe area by Rynne (1972, 86-88).</p> <p>Testing was carried out by Billy Quinn of Moore Archaeological & Environmental Services Ltd, under licence No. 07E0944 at Site No. 10, Churchtown, Co. Donegal, between 8 and 11 October 2007 for the Donegal National Roads Design Office, on behalf of the Donegal County Council. The proposed development is close to DG079-009001-, classified as a burial-ground and the former site of Ballybogan National School. The testing regime was informed by a geophysical survey that identified a number of subsurface anomalies, interpreted as representing derelict field boundaries and the remains of ploughing work. Furthermore, in the northern field a number of points of magnetic enhancement associated with isolated ferrous responses were noted on the external side of the graveyard wall, potentially indicating the presence of burials. A total of thirteen trenches were excavated throughout the subject area, with a cumulative length of c. 375m. Three of these trenches, numbers 4, 5 and 11, exposed features of archaeological significance. Excavation in Trench 11 to the south of the site near the banks of the River Finn exposed an amorphous burnt spread of fire-shattered stone in a charcoal-enriched silty matrix measuring c. 3.5m by 2.5m by 0.15m deep, with no evidence of an associated trough. This material is typical of deposits generally associated with fulachta fiadh. In Trenches 4 and 5, located in a field to the south-east of the enclosed graveyard, testing uncovered both loose and articulated human remains in association with grave-cuts. These remains extended over a minimum area of 30m east-west by 20m and constitute a cemetery associated with a church foundation (DG079-009003-) dating to at least the end of the 16th century. This interpretation is based on cartographic evidence as indicated on Mercator's <i>Irlandiae Regnum</i> map, dated 1620, which shows a site known as the 'Sanctuary' located to the east of Castlefinn. The existing enclosed cemetery with headstones dating to the 18th century</p>	

	<p>appears on the first-edition OS map, and OS Memoirs record that it was in use until the 1830s. It is likely, based on the poor preservation of the bone, that the remains uncovered to the south-east of this area were associated with a much earlier foundation. This contention is further supported by Lacy (2006), citing medieval texts referring to a ‘church in Mag nitha, known as Tech na Comairce’ meaning ‘house of sanctuary’. Archbishop Colton’s visitation to the area in 1397 as recorded in Reeves’s 1850 publication pushes the dates back further to the late 14th century. Based on the above evidence, it is likely that there was an ecclesiastical community active in the area until at least the late medieval period. The human remains exposed in Trenches 4 and 5, buried in the Christian tradition in close proximity to the recorded site at Churchtown, would seem to confirm the subject area as the site of Mercator’s ‘Sanctuary’ (Bennett 2010, 76-7).</p> <p>References</p> <p>Reeves 1850 Acts of Archbishop Colton in his metropolitan visitation of the diocese of Derry, 69–71.</p> <p>Lacy, B. 2006 Cenél Conaill and the Donegal kingdoms ad 500–800. Dublin.</p> <p>DG079-0009002: A small rectangular disused graveyard (DG079-009001-) consisting of an overgrown mound with no discernible structures. Cemented onto the top of the N gatepost into the graveyard is a stone which seems to be the weathered remains of a carved stone head. It is .3m high and 0.25m x .25m. It is extremely defaced but the suggestions of two eyes and a nose can be seen. It is possible that this is another example of the type of head recorded in the Raphoe area by Rynne (1972, 86-88).</p> <p>DG079-0009003: A small rectangular disused graveyard (DG079-009001-) consisting of an overgrown mound with no discernible structures. Cemented onto the top of the N gatepost into the graveyard is a stone which seems to be the weathered remains of a carved stone head (DG079-009002-). It is .3m high and 0.25m x .25m. It is extremely defaced but the suggestions of two eyes and a nose can be seen. It is possible that this is another example of the type of head recorded in the Raphoe area by Rynne (1972, 86-88). There are no surface remains of a medieval church site which may have been located inside this graveyard or located in the field to the S or SE of the graveyard.</p>
Landscape Context (setting)	Located on the south side of the N15 road, approximately 3.5km southwest of Lifford and 3km east of Castlefin, north of the River Finn
Site Appraisal	The sites are very accessible although very overgrown.
Sensitivity	Archaeological sites are always sensitive to human interference, though this site is unlikely to attract very many visitors.
Associations	This site may be associated with Clonleigh parish Church (DG071-008001) located

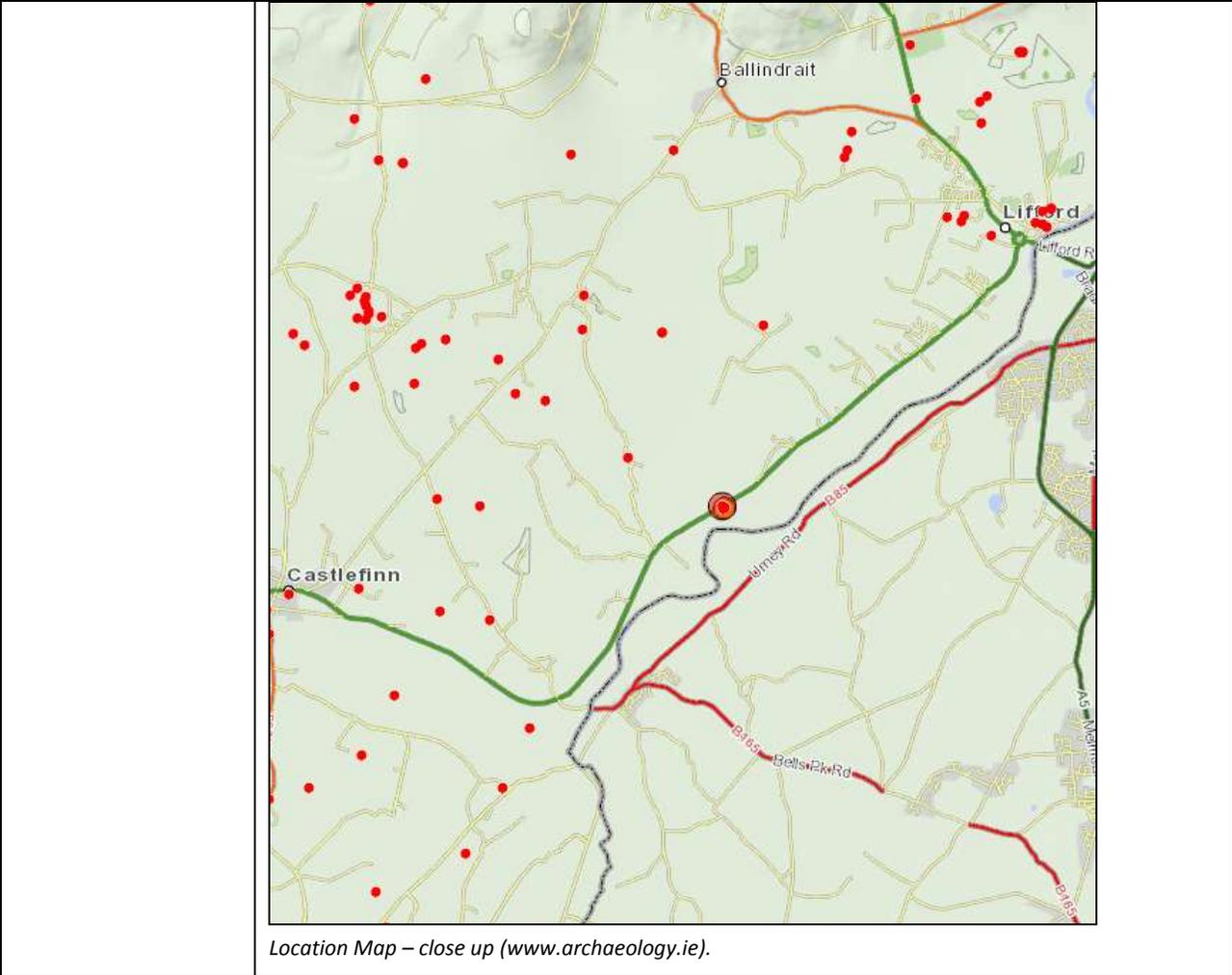
approximately 3.5km northeast in Lifford and Donaghmore (DG079-017001 & DG079-017002) located approximately 6km west along the N15 road

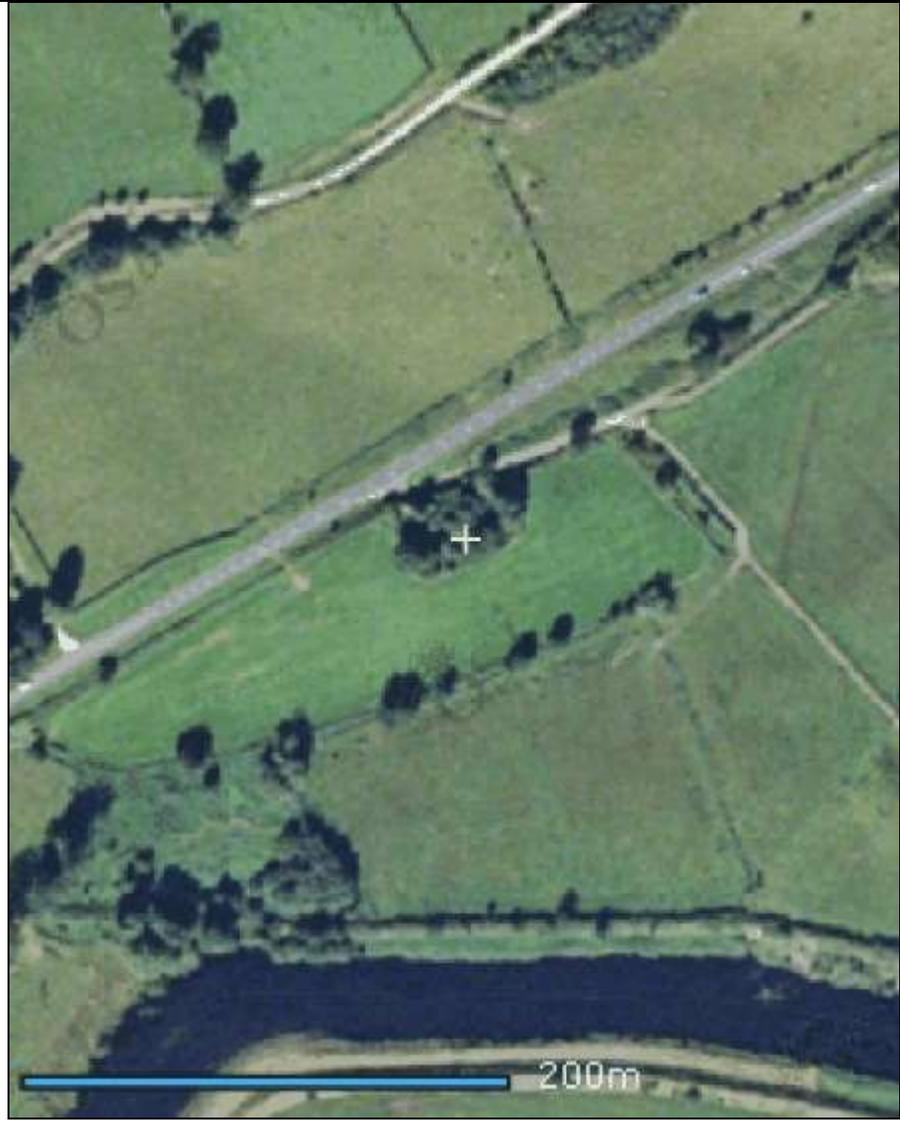
Recommendations

Mapping

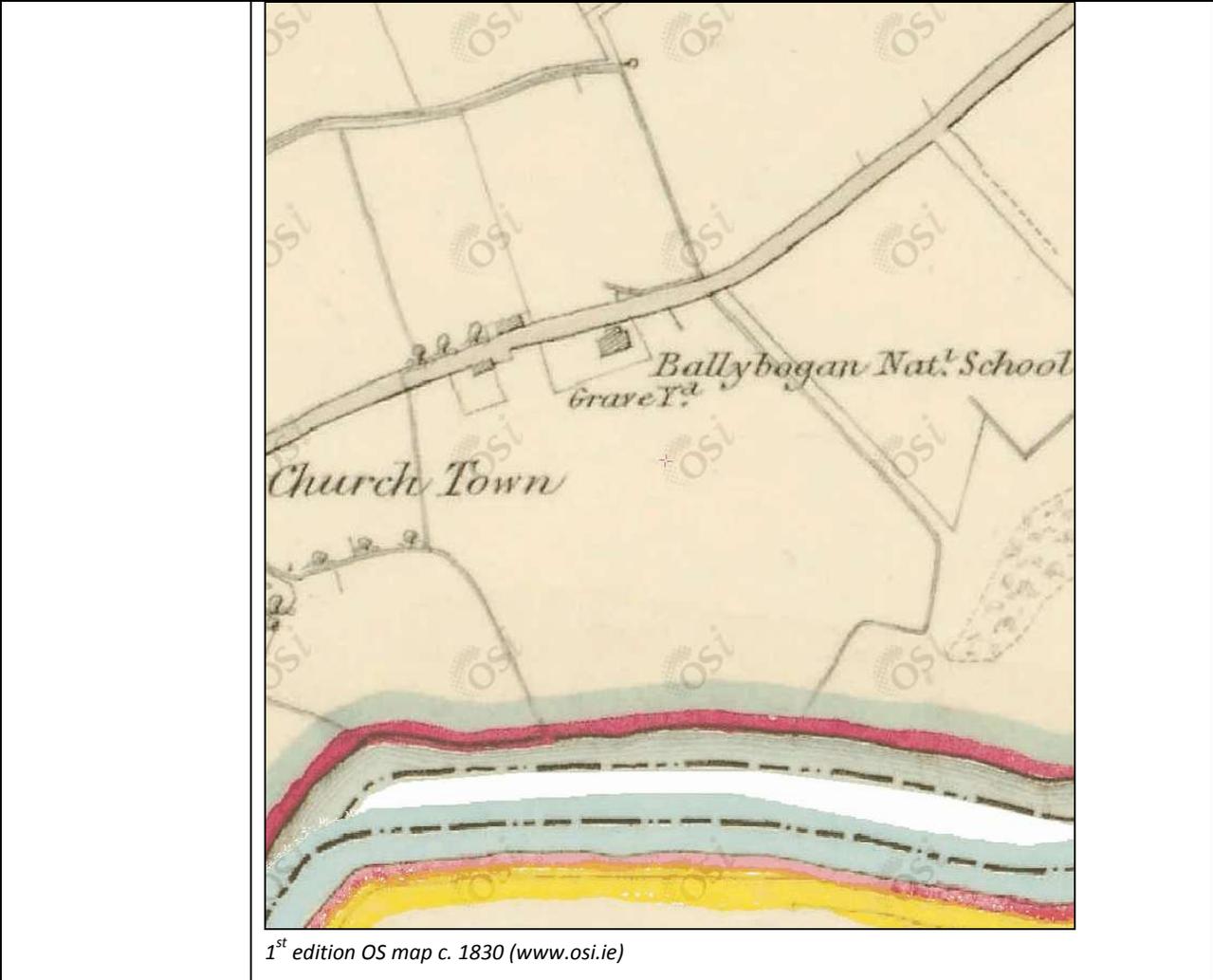


Location Map (www.archaeology.ie)





Location Map – close up (www.archaeology.ie)



	<p>2nd edition OS map c. 1905 (www.osi.ie)</p>	
<p>References</p>	<p>Lacey, B. (1983) Archaeological Survey of County Donegal.</p>	
<p>Plates</p>		
<p>Additional Notes</p>		