



Evaluation Report No. 234

Glynn Old Church
Glynn townland
Glynn
County Antrim

AE/11/111

Ruth Logue

Site Specific Information

Site location: Glynn Old Church, Glynn

Townland: Glynn

SMR number: ANT 040:010

State Care Scheduled Other

Grid reference: J4074699736

County: Antrim

Excavation licence number: AE/11/111

Planning reference number: not applicable

Date of evaluation: 13 and 14 October 2011

Archaeologist present: Ruth Logue

Brief summary:

Small scale excavation of two test pits by hand during restoration work on the monument. Nothing of archaeological significance found.

Size of area opened: Test Pit 1: 1.00m by 0.50m
Test Pit 2: 1.00m by 1.00m

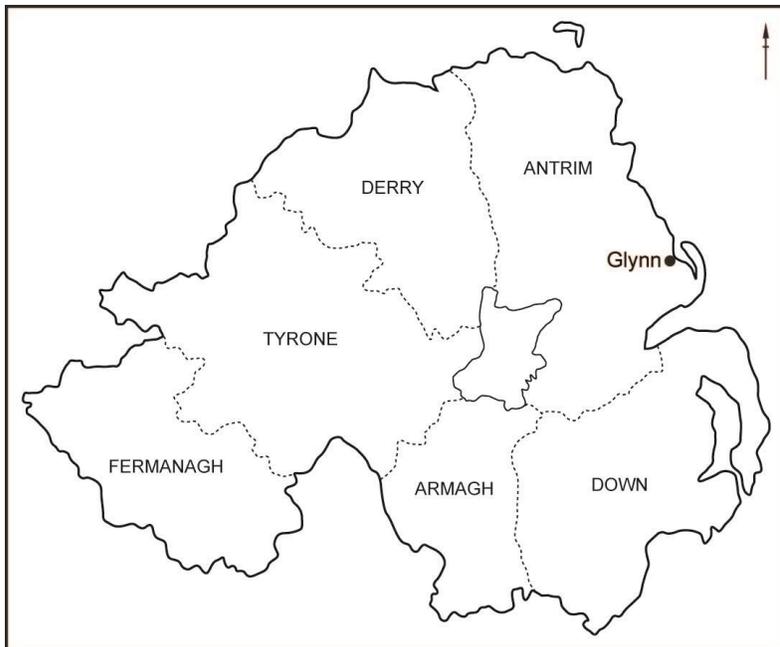


Figure 1: Outline map of Northern Ireland with counties showing location of Glynn.

Background

While restoration work was being undertaken at Glynn Old Church a request for archaeological intervention was made by Andrew Gault, Archaeological Inspector, NIEA. Missing stonework was to be replaced on an exterior corner and so the opportunity was taken to investigate the wall foundations in this area (Test Pit 1). In the interior of the church a test pit needed to be dug to accommodate a prop pad that was to be put in as part of the restoration (Test Pit 2). The site lies at the south of the village of Glynn situated on high ground to the south of the Glynn River. (Figures 1 to 3)

The site is owned by the Church of Ireland, the current Church of Ireland church stands to the south-west of the church ruin and the graveyard has recently been extended to the south. The ruinous church is medieval while the surrounding graveyard is post-medieval; headstones stand within both the nave and the chancel. The north side of the graveyard slopes steeply down to a laneway which runs along the river, and the ruin stands about 3.00m from the edge of this slope.

The *Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick* records that Patrick built a church in the valley of Gleann-indeachta and this is believed to have been the site. It belonged to the Abbey of Kells before the dissolution of the monasteries. The church is aligned east/west and consists of a nave (at the west) and a chancel (at the east). The church originally consisted only of a nave, the chancel is a later addition, as the nave and chancel are characterized by totally different styles of architecture.

Test Pit 1

Stonework missing from the exterior junction of the chancel and nave was to be replaced. Some of this part of the wall had had stones replaced by the DOE in the recent past, this is evident by/in the different coloured mortar in this part of the wall (eg Plates 2 and 4).

As soil would have had to be removed for this work to be carried out below current ground level it was requested that an archaeologist dig a small test pit at this corner to investigate the foundation levels of the wall. The initial remit was for this pit to go at least to the base of the wall, thus exposing any surviving foundation at this corner; if foundation cuts were present investigation of these was also proposed. This process would expose how much stone was missing from the wall at this corner below ground level.

An area 1.00m (along wall) by 0.50m (out from wall) was opened. Only one context was excavated, a graveyard soil of dark brown loam, which contained some bone. Stones became loose and fell from the wall below ground level as soil from round them was removed. During the second day of excavation Andrew Gault requested that work be discontinued due to health and safety concerns and concerns about the undermining of the walls. An average depth of 0.60m had been reached in the test pit.

Test Pit 2

Test Pit 2 was located in the interior of the nave, it measured 1.00m by 1.00m and was an average depth of 0.15m to 0.20m. A structural engineer's report stated that the prop pad would have to be set 0.15m into the ground and would have dimensions of 0.90m square. This test pit was required to hold a prop pad, the prop would lean against the interior of the longest south wall of the nave to help support it. Removed from this test pit was soil that had built up inside the church containing some bone (30 pieces, probably human), stone and modern waste (plastic). No articulated human remains were encountered.

The pieces of human remains/bone which had been found in the test pits were bagged together and placed in Test Pit 1 so they could be reburied when it was being backfilled after the restoration work has been completed.

Bibliography

Hennessy, W.M. 1870 *The Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick*. In Cusack M.F. *Life of Saint Patrick*. London



Figure 2: 1:50 000 map showing location of Glynn and surrounding area. The two crosses at the south of the village denote the positions of Glynn Old Church (larger cross) and the current church (smaller cross).

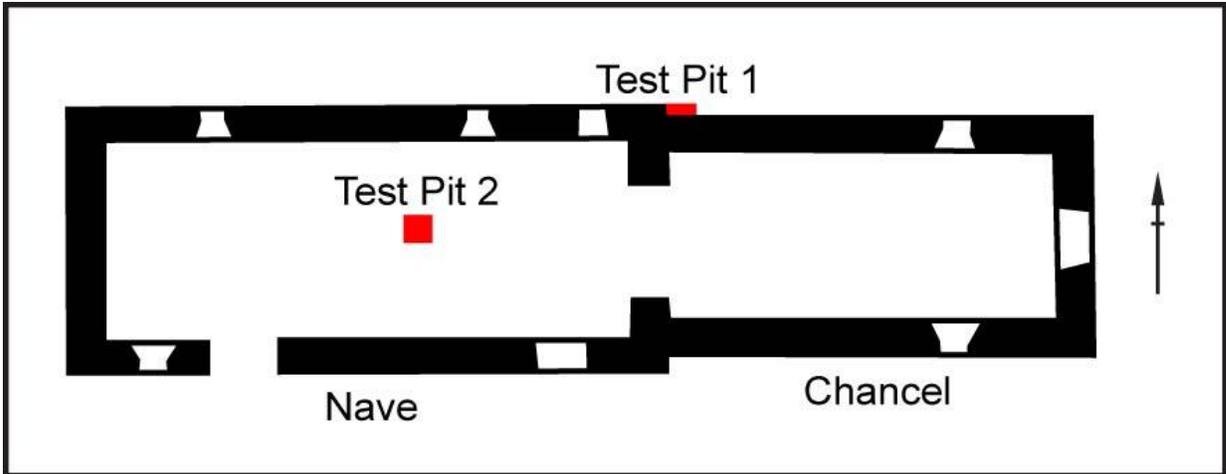


Figure 3: Plan of Glynn Old Church showing test pits. (not to scale)



Plate 1: Exterior north wall of chancel where it meets exterior north-east corner of nave, and location of Test Pit 1; looking west.



Plate 2: Exterior north walls of chancel and nave, showing corner where the two meet; looking south-west. Areas of lighter mortar show where work was done by the DOE in recent years.



Plate 3: Test Pit 1, fully excavated; looking west. (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Corner of chancel and nave, and Test Pit 1; recent work on the wall is indicated by the lighter mortar; looking south-west. (scale 1m)



Plate 5: Stones of exterior corner of nave exposed below surface level, and lowest level of recent mortar, in Test Pit 1; looking west. (scale 1m)



Plate 6: Stones below surface level exposed in Test Pit 1 in wall of chancel, and lowest level of recent mortar; looking south. (scale 1m)



Plate 7: Test Pit 1 fully excavated; looking west. (scale 1m)



Plate 8: Stones exposed below ground level in Test Pit 1, at corner of chancel and nave; looking south-west.



Plate 9: Interior of church, looking east from west end of nave to east wall of chancel (behind scaffolding), with Test Pit 2 pre-excavation in foreground. (scale 1m)



Plate 10: Interior of nave looking west to west wall of nave, with Test Pit 2 post-excitation in foreground.



Plate 11: Interior of church looking north-east from south-west end of nave, with Test Pit 2 post-excitation in left foreground and wall to be propped in right foreground.