CPAT Report No 1266

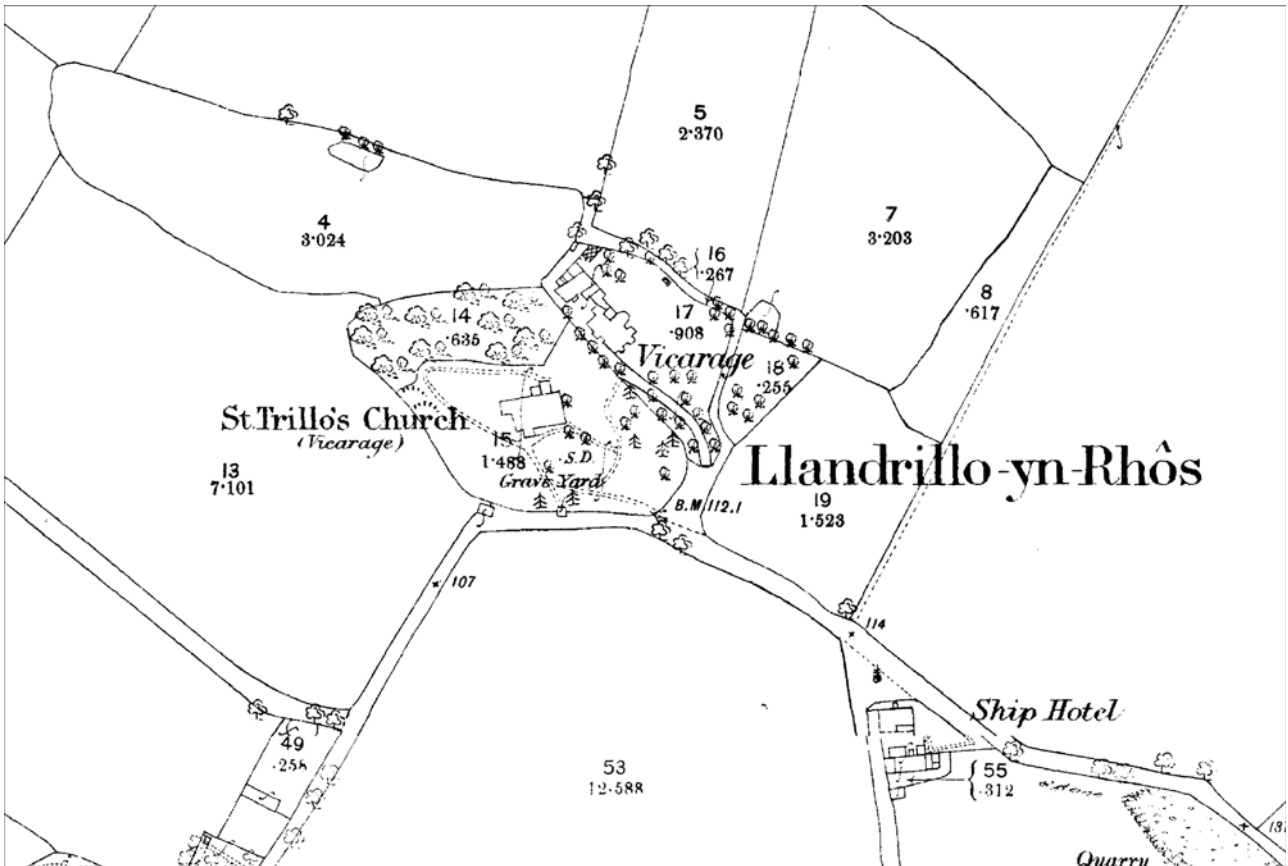# Historic settlements in Conwy

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

CPAT Report No 1266

Historic settlements in Conwy

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March 2014

Report for Cadw

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Background

Twenty years ago the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust compiled assessments of the historic settlements of what was then termed Colwyn Borough, one of the districts that made up the modern county of Clwyd, which was subsequently abolished in 1996. This was one of several such assessments undertaken on behalf of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments that covered the local authority areas of eastern and north-eastern Wales. Ultimately ten reports were completed between 1992 and 1995, embracing the entire region for which CPAT had and still retains a remit.

The imperative that underpinned these surveys was committed to paper when the first area of eastern Wales was assessed – Brecknock Borough – in 1993, being expressed in the following terms:

> It has long been recognised that development within town and village alike [might] disturb or obliterate significant information about the past, but a suitable response to a specific building development or other permanent land use change has usually been instigated, if at all, on an ad hoc basis. A more structured approach to the understanding of historic settlements and the preservation and management of this fragile resource is required. This has been given a greater urgency by the publication in 1991 of the Welsh version of the *Planning and Policy Guidance Note*: Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16 Wales). This emphasises the responsibilities of Local Planning Authorities in the conservation of the archaeological heritage and confirms that archaeological remains are a material consideration when determining planning applications (Martin and Walters 1993, 3).

Three principal objectives of the Brecknock Borough study were defined at that time, and these were considered to be equally applicable for the later studies:

> i) to produce a general picture of historic settlement in the area,
> ii) to identify, in as far as the evidence allows, those areas within the historic settlements that could be termed archaeologically sensitive, in order to assist in the day-to-day and long-term planning processes initiated by the local authority, and
> iii) to define areas of potential archaeological significance where developers might be required to undertake an archaeological evaluation as part of the planning process.

The individual village histories were never intended for publication, but their contents were absorbed into the Sites and Monuments Record (now re-titled the Historic Environment Record) where they could be accessed and recycled, often we have found without any acknowledgement to their source, in others' reports.

There is no need to stress that in the two decades since those reports on Colwyn Borough's towns and villages was circulated to a relatively small number of interested organisations, there have been changes, and we would hope improvements, to our collective perception of the emergence, development and in some instances collapse of historic settlements in the border counties and more specifically in eastern Conwy, the successor to Colwyn Borough for all of the settlements considered here.

Firstly, a series of Cadw-funded site-condition studies have appeared which directly or indirectly have had a bearing on settlement studies. The historic churches survey (1995-99),

the early medieval ecclesiastical sites survey (2001-04) and even the deserted medieval rural settlement survey (1996-2001) have all played a part in enhancing our understanding of settlement patterns and development in eastern Wales, as have some rather more specific and detailed ground surveys such as those of village earthworks in Brecknock (1993) and Radnorshire (1996), though none unfortunately for eastern Conwy.

Secondly, there are the results that have accrued from client-funded works on development sites – whether excavation, evaluation, watching brief or building recording – as a result of local authorities implementing PPG16 and, from 2002, the guidelines contained in *Planning Policy Wales*.

Thirdly, there are recently published studies which have transformed our thinking on certain topics. Most notable in this context are the place-name studies by Hywel Wyn Owen and Richard Morgan (2007), the three volumes of the early medieval inscribed stones corpus prepared by Nancy Edwards, Mark Redknap and John Lewis (2007 and 2013) and Richard Suggett's *Houses and History in the March of Wales. Radnorshire 1400-1800* published by the Welsh Royal Commission in 2005. The last of these is not directly pertinent to eastern Conwy but it illustrates the quality of some of the work that has recently been completed or is in progress in the Principality.

Finally though in some ways the least tangible of the inputs is the ever-improving perception and appreciation of settlement development and the patterns that are fostered in east Wales, as a result of accumulated expertise, and the accessing of research from both other regions of Wales and from England. This doesn't normally manifest itself in publications, although the writer's paper, co-authored with Wyn Evans (2009) on clas churches and their landscapes is an exception and focused, *inter alia*, on Abergele.

In 2010 CPAT felt that the time had come to re-examine the pictures of its historic settlements, fifteen to twenty years on from when the initial studies were completed. In a general sense, various questions had been raised. Had developer-funding in advance of the potential destruction or damage to the cultural heritage had much of an effect and if so where? Had our knowledge and appreciation of the historic settlements in the region markedly improved in the last fifteen to twenty years? And in a departure from the practice in the early 1990s when the Internet was little more than an unfulfilled dream, could we successfully disseminate that information authoritatively so that it could be accessed digitally to satisfy the increasing number of people who search our website? There are several hundred historic settlements in eastern Wales and it was not possible to examine them all in a single exercise. The former local authority areas of Brecknock Borough and Radnorshire were selected to initiate the programme in 2010-11 and this has been followed with studies of Montgomeryshire and Flintshire in 2011-12, Wrexham in 2013, and during the current year Denbighshire as well as Eastern Conwy.

Methodology and presentation

The 1994 report.
A pattern for each report was established with the first study in 1992, comprising a report which covered a minimum of one A4 page of text and in some instances, depending on the size and interest of the settlement involved, three or four pages. The report considered, under four sub-headings, the geographic location of the settlement, the known history of its origins and development, the buildings and archaeology that were integral elements of the settlement, and finally a set of recommendations for further work.

Accompanying each settlement study was an Ordnance Survey map-based depiction of the settlement showing scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, known archaeological

features and earthworks, areas which it was felt at the time should be preserved in situ, other areas that should be evaluated in advance of development, and a boundary line drawn around the historic settlement as it was then recognised, in other words the perceived historic core of the town or village.

Those early reports also contained as annexes a copy of the descriptive brief for the preparation of the study and another of a draft paper on archaeology and the planning process in Powys.

The 2014 report.

After various discussions the configuration of both the text layout and the accompanying map were altered when the first revisions took place, to take account of changing circumstances and current requirements.

The baseline information – the settlement name, the national gird reference and the primary record number that links the settlement (as well as its individual elements) to the Historic Environment Record – have necessarily remained the same, although the height above sea level and the prefix PRN have been dropped.

The geographic location has been retained, as has the section on history, now renamed 'history of development'. More change can be seen in the section formerly headed 'buildings and archaeology' which has been altered to 'the heritage to 1750'. This alteration results from two considerations. Firstly, it is becoming increasingly commonplace to refer to the cultural heritage and cultural heritage assets, convenient collective terms that embrace not only below and above-ground archaeology, and buildings, but also historic landscape (and townscape) elements that did not necessarily get the recognition that they warrant in the former terminology. Cultural heritage is seen as a useful shorthand descriptive term for everything that we are concerned with here. Secondly, a decision was taken to end the study at 1750, bringing it into line with Cadw's terminal date for the concurrent scoping programme of medieval and early post-medieval monument scheduling enhancement. 1750 to 1760 is often seen as a starting date for the Industrial Revolution, even if its full 'flowering' did not occur in Wales for another fifty years. Equally importantly, however, it was during the later 18th century and a little beyond that, some settlements saw marked development with a concomitant increase in the number of buildings, and the diminishing significance in the forms of evidence that are significant to the archaeologist. This is not to downplay the significance of the buildings that date from the later 18th and 19th centuries, nor to infer that settlements that contain large numbers of such structures are not historic, rather it is a commentary on the shift in the nature of the evidence that is available to us.

This report has also tried to adopt a more rigorous approach to the presentation of the data, whether it be on archaeological sites, buildings or the townscape. It would be easy to write protracted descriptions of some buildings such as churches or earthwork complexes, or even in some instances the discoveries from development-led evaluations. The regurgitation of much detail, it was felt, would not necessarily be particularly useful to the general reader, and indeed might act as a deterrent. The inclusion of PRN numbers will allow the researcher or enthusiast to follow up individual leads in the regional Historic Environment Record should they wish, but what is offered here is a concise text covering as many issues as are currently known without over-elaboration on any one of them.

The section of recommendations has been removed. This, it should be admitted, is in part a pragmatic decision based on the realisation that some of the original recommendations covering standard issues such as the importance of consultation with the archaeological curator, the need for watching briefs and evaluations, and the like were compiled at a time when PPG16 was new, consultation practice was yet to be regularised, and the importance of the cultural heritage resource in our towns and villages had in some areas yet to be

appreciated by at least some local authority planners. This situation has changed, and the importance of the cultural heritage is now largely accepted at local government level. It is pragmatic, however, for less satisfactory reasons. In an ideal world a recommendation say for a survey to be conducted to identify the relict earthworks of a former village would have been followed up and completed at some point over the last seventeen years. That such an aim may not have been achieved is less a comment on the validity of the recommendation, more on the limited resources that are available for surveying and research: it is unrealistic to assume that this is going to change in the foreseeable future.

There have also been some modifications to the plans that accompany the texts. The depiction of designated archaeological sites (scheduling) and buildings (listing) has been left out, for we are conscious of the fact that it is entirely the prerogative of Cadw and/or the local authority to define these sites in cartographic form, and that the reader requiring information on the extent of a designation should approach the appropriate authority for that information. Furthermore, the number and extent of designated sites within any given settlement will change through time, and assuming that these maps have a currency measured in years, there is the potential for misleading a reader because the situation could have changed.

The definition of the historic core has also been modified, taking more account of existing boundaries in order to lessen any potential contention over whether a particular spot lies inside or outside the historic core as we perceive it. We would stress that the core boundary as defined is not an immutable perimeter, but is simply an estimate and a guide based on an assessment of the existing evidence by the writer as to where earlier settlement may once have existed.

Dropped too is the zonation of areas for evaluation in advance of development. In 1992, defining such areas was a useful guide to planners as to where archaeological intervention was most needed, but there is a potential conflict between the depiction of one or two such areas on a map on the one hand and the definition of the historic core on the other. If for whatever reason, an area within an historic core envelope is not highlighted for evaluation, this could be taken as an indication that the area would not require further assessment in the event of a proposed development. Rather we must work on the assumption that any development within an historic core could be a candidate for an evaluation, depending of course on the nature of the development itself, but that it should be the development control officer at CPAT who makes that decision, based on his own professional judgment.

More contentious perhaps is the decision to omit the identification of blocks of land defined as 'areas for preservation in situ', another facet of the 1992 survey. Where such areas are already statutorily designated within an historic settlement, their preservation is a given and no problem arises. However, in some cases in the past a decision that an area ought to be preserved has been taken on the basis of a rather superficial assessment of its worth, rather than on a detailed analysis of what is there. If, then, at a planning level a field containing earthworks is going to be preserved it needs to be based on rigorously defined evidence that will stand up to objective scrutiny, and this requires a detailed record that is rarely accessible through a report of this nature.

One other aspect to clarify is that the historic core envelope now defines only those areas within which there is the likelihood of settlement, by which we mean dwellings and their curtilages. The setting of any settlement will have been the surrounding landscape that was farmed and utilised from it, and potentially could spread over several square kilometres. Defining its fields, its pastures and its woodlands will be a considerable task, and its success cannot be guaranteed. Vital though it is to an understanding of that settlement, the inclusion of the setting within the historic core cannot be advocated. It requires a different level of zoning.

The original study of Colwyn Borough described 37 settlements. The current survey covers over 17, a reflection of the new criteria that govern the identification of what we have termed historic settlements. Gone are settlements such as Cefn Brith Rhydlydan and Trefnant that reflect developments and events that occurred only after 1750. As the reader will be aware, this report covers only one half – the eastern half – of a local authority area. For the historic environment, western Conwy falls within the remit of our sister organisation, the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, but unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge, they have not conducted similar settlement assessments so there is no prospect at least at present of a Conwy-wide overview of historic settlements being prepared.

A brief overview of eastern Conwy's historic settlements

The categorisation of towns, villages and settlements in any region is frequently a difficult and sometimes impossible task, based as it is on sparse and often sporadic evidence, incomplete and sporadic survival, and poor early documentation. On the positive side, form and shape, more correctly termed morphology, provide guidance on planned towns and villages, and the presence of older buildings can offer clues as to whether there was some level of nucleation in a settlement in the Tudor era, though rarely it should be stressed before that time. Both of these characteristics provide positive evidence that can usually be relied on as long as it is accurately interpreted. By contrast, negative evidence used to support a particular contention, may or may not be reliable, and there is always a risk that what commences as a tentative idea takes on the guise of a fact. There may be no immediate way of knowing. Overall, the number of settlements where we have positive evidence for their emergence and development is far outweighed by those underpinned by negative evidence alone, but eastern Conwy is hardly unique in this respect. It is a problem that is implicit with virtually every area of Wales. The categorisation that follows then is little more than provisional, and is likely to stay so for the foreseeable future.

Planned settlements

There is only one settlement which might reveal elements of deliberate planning – Abergele – and even this is far from certain; that burgages and a market are documented in 1311 signals a borough whether by charter, or by prescription, but does not automatically mean that the lord of Denbigh under whose control it fell deliberately introduced a planned layout, though it does seem reasonably likely. What is missing for Abergele are those pre-19th-century maps that might provide a little more insight into the town's topography prior to the general urban expansion that occurred after 1800.

Nucleated village settlements

A feature of most areas of eastern Wales is the sporadic presence in medieval times of admittedly small, nucleated settlements. In eastern Conwy as with neighbouring Denbighshire these are particularly difficult to pin down with any confidence; there are few written records that enable us to assume that groups of dwellings existed around long-established churches in the Middle Ages, no maps that go back that far and, unlike southern Powys, settlement earthworks are almost non-existent. A well-established and permanently positioned mother church, comparable with many English minsters, or after the initial Norman Conquest, a nearby castle, might act as a focus for settlement. In Llandrillo-yn-Rhos (as with Abergele) we have such a mother church and there are uncorroborated suggestions that Llangernyw could be another. But there is absolutely nothing that points to a nucleated settlement developing at Llandrillo. Castles are uncommon but the motte at Old Foelas might be considered, though only because the much later settlement of Pentrefoelas lies a relatively short distance away.

It is only at the end of the 17th century that we start to get an idea of the size of settlements that were emerging as villages from the returns provided by Edward Lhuyd's correspondents. At that time we can see that Betws-yn-Rhos (Betws Abergele) and Cerrigydrudion both had upwards of eight houses in association with their churches, pointing to established nucleated villages. Such nucleations need go back no further than the early to middle Stuart or perhaps the Tudor era and do not have to have originated in the Middle Ages. But it remains at least a probability, and must be seen as one of archaeology's grails to be sought in east Wales. At Betws-yn-Rhos, excavations a few years ago did uncover medieval occupation, so providing a start to resolving the issue.

Noted in Lhuyd's *Parochialia*, smaller numbers of houses lay around the churches of Llanddulas, Llanefydd, Llanelian, Llysfaen and St George, as well perhaps as Gwytherin, Llanfair Talhaiarn, Llangernyw and Llansannan where no details were provided by his correspondents.

Church settlements

Church settlements, where an isolated church is accompanied even today by only a single farm or inn, top the list of site types in numerical terms in some parts of east Wales. There are few obvious contenders in eastern Conwy. Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr is one, Llandrillo-yn-Rhos at present fits best here, and possibly though not convincingly, Llangwm. Rhos-on-Sea, with its chapel on the sea front and its traditions of an early monastery, and then a monastic estate, remains an enigma.

Final thoughts

In all of these the picture of nucleated villages that we have from the late 17th century where details are provided or from the early 19th century where such details are not available, may not reflect the situation in earlier centuries. A village could have developed in the Middle Ages, only to be largely erased during the mid-14th-century and early 15th-century tribulations, leaving only the church. Re-settlement in the Tudor era might create an entirely different pattern and density of housing. At present there is no way of knowing.

Abergele

SH 9464 7754
105485

Introduction

Abergele is situated a short distance inland from the coastline of North Wales, and is five and a half miles east of the coastal resort of Colwyn Bay and four and a half miles west of Rhyl. The A547 runs east to west through the town centre, and the A548 north to south, whilst the A55 expressway skirts around the north and east edges of it. Although situated near the coast, Abergele has remained a market town and has not developed into a resort.

The town centre is situated on flat land, west of the low-lying marshy area of Morfa Rhuddlan and below the limestone hills which rise to the south. The valley of the River Gele cuts through these hills, running northwards into the town; it now runs eastwards across Morfa Rhuddlan before entering the sea, but probably originally ran directly north to the sea.

The town expanded greatly during the 20th century and modern housing estates now stretch uphill from its historic centre to the south and west to the foot of the surrounding hills.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Abergele up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development

In English the name Abergele means the 'mouth of the Gele' and is descriptive of the location of this small town. It first appears as *Opergelei* in the 9th century AD, then, in the 1254 Norwich Taxation as *Abergel'* and as *Abergele* three years later.

Elfod, perhaps later to be referred to archbishop, seems to have been associated with Abergele, dying in AD 809, while Jonathal dying in 858 may also have been in charge of a religious community here. While the nature of these communities may have been different or they may represent different stages in the development of the same community, it seems certain that a mother church, probably with a *clas* community, existed at Abergele before the Conquest, forming the most important church in the region.

Part of the lordship of Denbigh, Abergele was credited with 24 burgesses, a market, a fair and a mill in 1311. This is clear evidence of the town being founded at some earlier date, though presumably not before Denbigh itself which can be attributed to the middle of the 13th century. And in the modern layout of the town it is difficult to detect clear signs of town

planning, although this might have been expected; possibly from the relatively straightness of Market Street leading down to the bridging of the Gele some linear planning might be inferred, with Water Street edging around a pre-existing large ecclesiastical precinct that lay north of Market Street. But this is all speculative and it is noticeable that Soulsby in his *Towns of Medieval Wales* (1983) unusually makes no attempt to define the extent of medieval Abergele.

In 1344 a description of the town refers to the church, a market place, a prison, a bake house, the stocks, a pigeon house and the Pil [the Mount], all close together. But as Soulsby points out there are generally few references to the town in documents from the later Middle Ages, and there is a sense from this of a town which was at best static and at worse in decline.

But renewed growth occurred late in the Tudor period, encouraged perhaps by the development of the local limestone industry and about the year 1699 Edward Lhuyd's correspondent reported that Abergele contained about forty houses, a reference probably to the town rather than to the parish as a whole. In 1808 Richard Fenton labelled it 'a small mean town' which 'of late years [has] become a bathing place, in consequence of the general mania prevailing all over the Kingdom, for quitting home and every comfort for three months every summer to experience all the miseries of contracted apartments and every species of imposition'.

A Gwrych Estate map of 1828 shows the church and Bee Inn, and buildings along the street frontages of Market Street and Bridge Street, but no buildings indicated on Chapel Street and High Street. The Tithe survey of 1839 gives a similar picture of a fairly small settlement, with buildings on both sides of Market Street and on the north side of Bridge Street. Chapel Street had buildings along its east side. There were buildings in the vicinity of the church and a few to the north of it. Now, in the modern era, the basic street plan remains, but housing now extends further along each road and further back from the street frontages.

The heritage to 1750

St Michael's church (100483) is a large Perpendicular double-naved church with a west tower that may be of later date, and as noted above was the site of a clas or mother church (100489). In addition a blocked south doorway formerly gave access to an ancillary chamber or room of an uncertain nature. There was some restoration in 1858, and 1861 when the tower was raised and new windows inserted. Internally the church retains its medieval roofs, and there are a number of 14th-century sepulchral slab fragments, a few fragments of medieval glass depicting heads, the lower parts of the rood screen and a font stem that is Perpendicular (the bowl is dated 1663). Later features include the 17th-century pulpit, an iron-bound chest, and a large range of wall monuments, the earliest from the 1670s.

The churchyard is of medium size and basically rectangular in shape, with obvious extensions over the last century and a half. A larger area, presumably the precinct of the early medieval mother church can be detected in the boundaries of other properties that lie at a distance, the road layout, and the presence of a field-name, *fynwent*.

With the exception of the church, there appears remarkably to be no surviving building earlier than the 19th century in the centre of Abergele, a phenomenon that has yet to be explained. Outside the town, to the south, south-east and south-west, are a number of farms of greater antiquity, one of them dating to the 16th century.

The Mount (100487), also known as the Peel or Pil, consists of the slight remains of a small square enclosure, now just a flat earthen platform 30m across and c. 1.2m high. A geophysical survey in 2008 proved fruitless. It is first mentioned in 1334. Its function is unknown, as is its date, and though almost certainly fitting in the Middle Ages, the suggestion that it belongs to

the period of the Danish intrusions in the 9th or 10th centuries should be treated with considerable scepticism.

Ffynnon Elwoc takes us to the east of both the town and the River Gele. Classed as an ancient well, now silted up, it was mentioned in Edward Lhuyd's *Parochialia* in about 1698, and appears to refer to that same ecclesiastic who was associated with Abergele in the 8th century.

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Betws-yn-Rhos

SH 9063 7353
105486

Introduction
The village of Betws-yn-Rhos is situated on an east to west route, the B5381, three and a half miles south-west of Abergele. It lies too at the junction of several minor lanes.

The settlement lies in and beside the small valley of a tributary of the River Dulas. Hills rise quite steeply to the south while the land falls away more gently to the north. The church is situated in a prominent position at the crest of the valley slope on the west side of the valley. The Wheatsheaf Inn and Ty Mawr occupy similar positions nearby. Some dwellings cover the small amount of flat land on the valley floor and extend up its sides. A considerable amount of housing has been added to the extremities of the village in the modern era along each of the roads leading from the village centre.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Betws-yn-Rhos up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development
Bettws is first recorded in Pope Nicholas' Taxation in 1291. In 1530 it was *le bethows* and exactly a century later, in 1630, as *Bettus in Rhos*. But it appeared also under other aliases. A reference to *Betus wyrion gwgon* in the years between 1545 and 1553 signals a relationship with the 'descendants of Gwgon' and it is tempting to see in this perhaps an indicator of the church's original founder. And *Bettus Abergeley* in 1652 and *Bettws Abergele* as recently as 1839 reveals that Abergele was its mother church. The term *bettws/betws* is usually taken to mean that a chapel was established as an oratory, probably at a relatively late date such as the 13th century (though archaeology favours an earlier date here, for which see below). 'Rhos' was the cantref in which the church and settlement lay.

Nothing is known of the origin and early history of this settlement, and it is not even feasible at this time to suggest whether the chapel was in existence before the later 11th-century Norman Conquest. Its development during the Middle Ages has yet to be charted, although excavations in 2006 confirmed the presence of at least one medieval building near the church.

At the very end of the 17th century it was revealed in Edward Lhuyd's *Parochialia* that there were nine houses in the village. In combination, the earliest Ordnance Survey maps and the 1840 Tithe survey allow us a preliminary attempt to analyse the village plan. The church had

obviously become the focus on which five roads or lanes converged. The St Asaph to Conwy road (now the B5381) east to west road swings round the churchyard. Whether it was as significant in communications term at the beginning of the 19th century as it is now is debatable, though it has been claimed that it lay on the 18th-century coach route from Chester to Conwy. The lane down from the north-east linking Bettws with Abergele was conversely rather more important than today, given the links between these two settlements. The lane coming in from the south (from the direction of Llansannan) may also have been more significant – its longstanding existence can be inferred from the fact that further south it was adopted for parish boundaries. It now adopts a sinuous curve to meet the B5381 beside the churchyard, but it appears that prior to the 19th century it entered a larger open space in front of the churchyard which was in the 19th century infilled by a house called Llaisafon. There is no evidence that Bettws ever hosted a market, but its annual fairs could have been held in this square. Finally another lane met the B5381 by the south-western side of the churchyard, but this has now been blocked by modern development.

The heritage to 1750

St Michael's church (105460) was built in its entirety in 1838-9, a small church with a distinctive west end. Nothing of its predecessor remains except perhaps for re-used masonry and a single wall monument from the early 19th century, although the Victorian fixtures and fittings include box pews and the Royal Arms.

The churchyard (105522) was formerly sub-circular. It still has a tall curved boundary wall retaining it on its south and west sides, at the foot of which lies the main road through the village. The graveyard has been extended considerably on its north-east side, where the land falls away, giving it now a very irregular shape.

The village itself appears to have no surviving buildings dating to earlier than the 18th century and many probably belong to the 19th century. The exception according to the Royal Commission appears to be Maesyrafon also known as Llaisafon (105478), formerly an inn which was originally a two-unit 17th-century stone building.

Excavations on land opposite the Llaisafon Inn in 2006 produced evidence of a medieval building beside the road in the form of sill-beam slots and also a limekiln which provided a radiocarbon date of AD 892 – 1153; the kiln, it has been tentatively suggested, could have been linked to the construction of an earlier church.
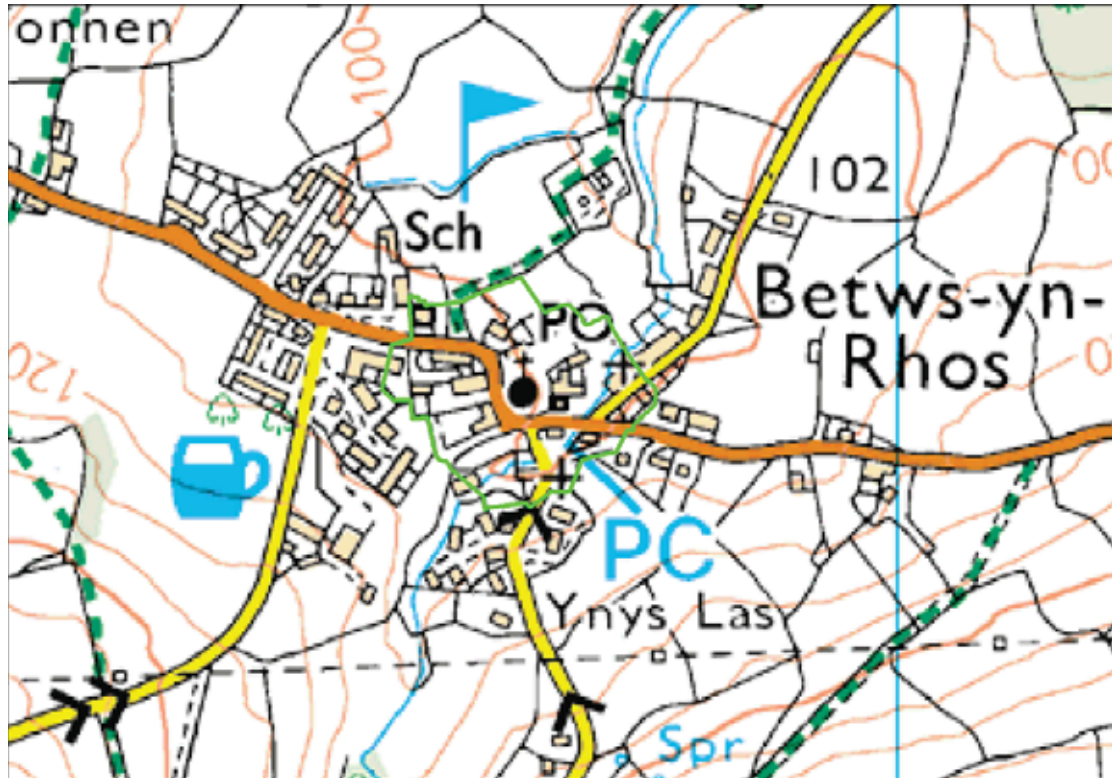
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Cerrigydrudion

SH 9535 4877
15494

Introduction

Cerrigydrudion lies on the A5, five miles south-east of Pentrefoelas and nine miles north-west of Corwen. A number of roads converge on the A5 at Cerrigydrudion: the B5105 Ruthin road from the east, the B450 Denbigh road from the north, and a minor road from the south. The village lies immediately to the south of the upland plateaux known as Mynydd Hiraethog or alternatively the Denbigh Moors uplands. It is situated on gently rising ground on the north side of the valley of the little Nug, a tributary of the River Ceirw.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Cerrigydrudion up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development

The earliest reference to the place is as *Kerricedrudeon* in 1199 (in a document of 1232). The Norwich Taxation of 1254 has *Kericdrudion* and Pope Nicholas' Taxation of 1291 corrupts it into *Kerrye Edrudeon*, both relating to the church. Minor variant forms appeared throughout the Middle Ages and in Tudor times, while the modern version of the name, as *Cerrig y Druidion* was recorded in 1673. Modern place-name authorities translate the name in English as 'stones of the heroes', and Samuel Lewis glossed this in 1833, claiming that the name was 'an allusion to a vast heap of stones which several persons now alive remember to have seen on the west side of the church...but now entirely dispersed.' Perhaps inevitably, too there was antiquarian speculation of a tie in with the druids, hence the spelling of 1673. Archdeacon Thomas at the end of the 19th century further claimed that the church had also called *Llanfair Faellen,* but no confirmation of this has subsequently come to light.

Thomas also mentions but without commenting on its historical accuracy, that an early annotation in the parish register stated that *Evan ap Llewellyn of Kinmeirch, syrnamed [sic] Gwas Patrige ...was the first founder of the church of Caerydruidion, the year of Our Lord 440, and dedicated it to Mary Magdalen.* It should probably go without saying that there is nothing that supports this antiquarian speculation.

Whether the presence of the church at Cerrigydrudion attracted settlement in the Middle Ages or even in the Tudor era has yet to be determined. But it is worth recalling that anyone wishing to travel from the valley of the Clwyd westwards to the Conwy had to avoid the wastes of Hiraethog, which probably meant having to follow either a coastal route or the

valley of the Ceirw, so Cerrigydrudion may not have been quite as remote as it initially appears. That the trackway along the valley looped to the north of Cerrigydrudion and continued on to Cefn Brith rather than going through the village itself, is probably not significant in terms of settlement development. In 1699 in a response to Edward Lhuyd it was reported that there were seven or eight houses around the church, a larger number than some other villages in the region at the end of the 17th century.

When Telford constructed the Holyhead Road in the early 19th century, he constructed a new section of road to the south of the village, an instance of an early by-pass. Samuel Lewis in 1833 recorded that the village was small and the inhabitants occupied themselves in the breeding of cattle and sheep, the digging of peat for fuel, the spinning of woollen yarn and the knitting of stockings. The village had a church, and a number of other places of worship, the Royal Commission recording four chapels.

At the time of the Tithe survey in 1848, the village was a small compact settlement, with most of the houses congregated around the junction of roads at the centre. Buildings included the church, Lion Inn and King's Head Inn. The plan of the roads has remained unchanged since that time. To the south of the village centre, in the valley bottom, was another cluster of buildings - houses, cottages and barns.

The heritage to 1750

St Mary Magdalene's church (100697), standing high above the surrounding fields and road is single chambered with a south transept (the Giler Chapel) at the east end, a double western bellcote and a large south porch which is of the 16th century. Repair and enlargement in 1503 are recorded, and some of the surviving fabric may be of the 16th century, but there is an earlier foundation course and a re-used 14th-century window. Inside, the roof is late medieval (from 1503?) and there is a limited range of fixtures and furnishings: a chest of 1730, a benefaction board of 1737 and a few wall memorials from the early 18th century.

The walled churchyard (105523) is polygonal, extended in 1883 on the north-western side. There are convincing signs that it was ever curvilinear.

At the centre of Cerrigydrudion is a triangular open space on which the various lanes and roads converge, with the church positioned on its western edge, and in the earlier 19th century virtually all the dwellings in the village set around its edge. There is no evidence that Cerrigydrudion ever boasted a market, though a small market place is what it looks like. An alternative, a village green or common, is a further possibility.

The Queen's Hotel building (105482) is claimed, rather unreliably, to date from 1417, though there is no suggestion of this from the external appearance of the standing building. It was apparently largely rebuilt in about 1900. The Hafan Prys almshouses (105565) are stone-built, dating to the 18th century, According to Samuel Lewis they were founded by Baron Price in 1716, or in 1717 according to a more recent assessment.

A former stone rectory of 1790 has now been replaced by a modern building. None of the remainder of the standing buildings in the village appears to date earlier than the 19th century. There may well have been earlier buildings accompanying the medieval church, the sites of which are now occupied by later buildings.

Ffynnon Fair (100696) lies close to the little stream known as Nant Hendre-bach a couple of hundred metres to the north of the church, and was recorded in Edward Lhuyd's *Parochialia* in about 1698. There appear to be no traditions that point to it having a reputation as a holy or healing well, other than the name. A former spring of water, enclosed on three sides by rough

masonry, and on the fourth by upright slabs, it appears now to be dry and filled with rubbish and leaf mould.

A grassy mound in the field opposite the school is not a natural landform, and may be dumped material, though there is no indication of its age.
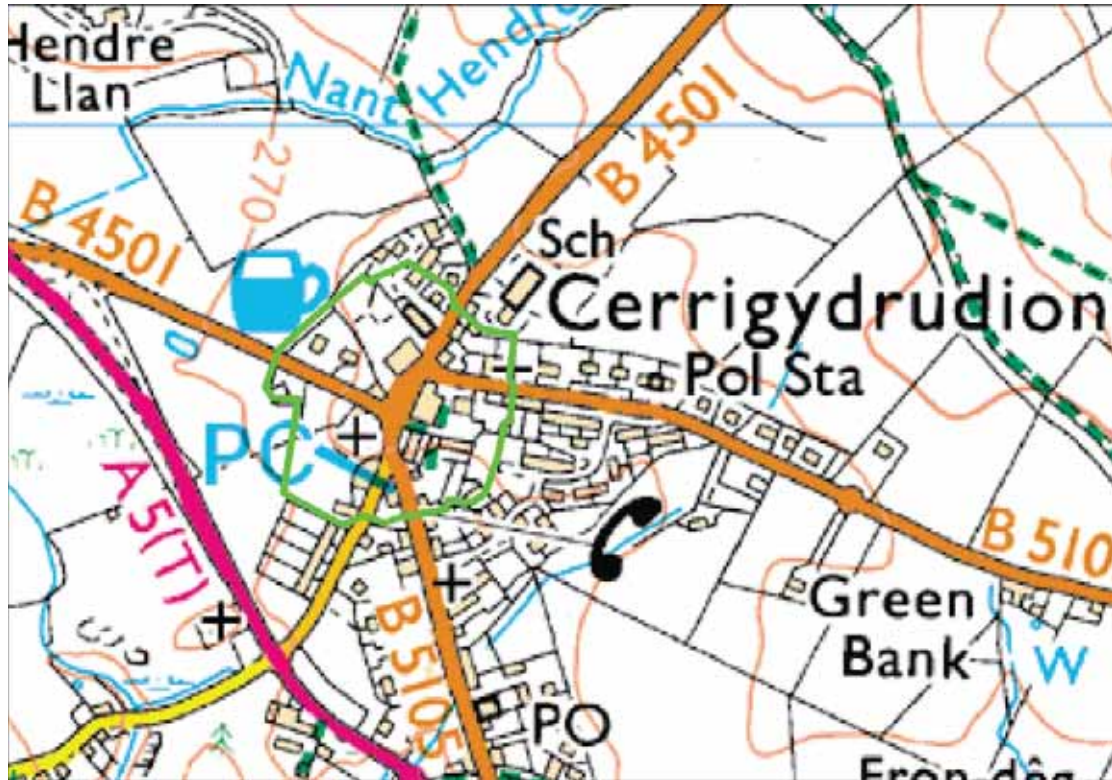
Gwytherin

SH 8766 6150
15498

Introduction

Gwytherin is situated five miles due east of Llanrwst, at the head of an isolated narrow river valley cut through an upland area. The B5384 runs through the village.

The village is a compact settlement lying in the base of the valley of the Cledwen, a river running roughly from south to north. The upper slopes of the valley sides are steep, but the village itself is situated on gently sloping pasture land just above the reach of any river floods, and in an unusually wide part of the valley. Immediately to the north of the village, the valley narrows and its sides are steep, thus adding to the sense of isolation of the village.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Gwytherin up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development

The earliest documentary reference, obviously to the church, is in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 which names *Guythrein*, but the name in its modern form appears in 1284 and in at least one other 13th-century source, though some later variants such as *Guytheryn*. Modern authorities see in this the personal name, Gwytherin, who was reputedly a 6th-century saint, and this is thus 'the place of Gwytherin'.

Thomas at the end of the 19th century claimed that Gwytherin was a place of very early ecclesiastical note, and famous for its *clas* of holy men and women. *Here St Cybi and St Sannan are said to have rested from their labours; and hither St Winifred, after leaving Holywell, was directed by St Sadwrn to seek a final retreat with St Eleri.....Possession of her (Winifred's) tomb secured for this place the establishment of a nunnery ... in a small field near the church called Penbryn Capel.* Satisfactorily disentangling history from tradition and legend is rarely possible but there can be no doubt that Gwytherin was an important ecclesiastical centre in the early medieval period and that the removal of Winefride's bones to Shrewsbury in 1137 can only have diminished its importance.

Given its ecclesiastical significance, it would not be surprising to learn that a small settlement developed in the valley of the Cledwen in medieval times, but there is no concrete evidence to support the idea. And it might be argued that as the Middle Ages progressed Gwytherin sank into obscurity. Edward Lhuyd received no comments on the place from his correspondents at

the end of the 17th century, Thomas Pennant and no doubt other travellers in the 18th century focussed on the story of St Winefride, and it is not until the detailed mapping of the 19th century that a picture of the settlement emerges.

The size and plan of the village have changed little since the time of the Tithe survey in about 1842, though modern houses now occupy some of the plots within the village. Only one road to the north-east of the rectory appears to have been added since then. Strip fields or quillets existed in the fields to the south-west of the village, perhaps pointing to medieval cultivation, but there is no evidence of these today.

The heritage to 1750
St Winifred's church (105464), now redundant, stands at the highest point of the churchyard. The present church was completely rebuilt between 1867-69 and like its predecessor is single-chambered. In the north wall is an early 14th-century sepulchral slab, with another set into the sanctuary steps. The present location of the medieval font bowl is uncertain.

Edward Lhuyd favoured Gwytherin in his *Parochialia* of 1699 by including a sketch of St Winifred's shrine, then in the church. In a very fragmentary state by the 19th century, it disappeared from view, but a fragment was found in the presbytery at Holywell in June 1991.

The churchyard is rectilinear in shape, but how original this form can only be guessed. The Tithe map – not always the most reliable of indicators – suggests a different shape to it on the south-western side. Within the churchyard and on the north side of the church are four upright pillar stones in a line, two of them first recorded in a visitation of 1710. The westernmost retains a 6th-century Latin inscription commemorating Vinnemaglus son of Senemaglus, while the other three are not carved.

A low rounded knoll south of the churchyard is the site of the small chapel of St Winifred, demolished in the early 18th century and also known as Penbryn Capel (100444). Geophysical survey in 1995 failed to identify any sub-surface traces. It was formerly (though not necessarily originally) set within its own enclosure, but by 1729 this had been integrated into the churchyard.

Formerly there was a corn mill on the opposite side of the Cledwen to the north-east of the village. The bridge across the river is still termed Pont y felin and the mill, its leat and a dam were all shown in a loop of the river on the first edition of the large-scale Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1875. Most though not all of the mill has now gone.

There are no known buildings of any age within the village of Gwytherin.
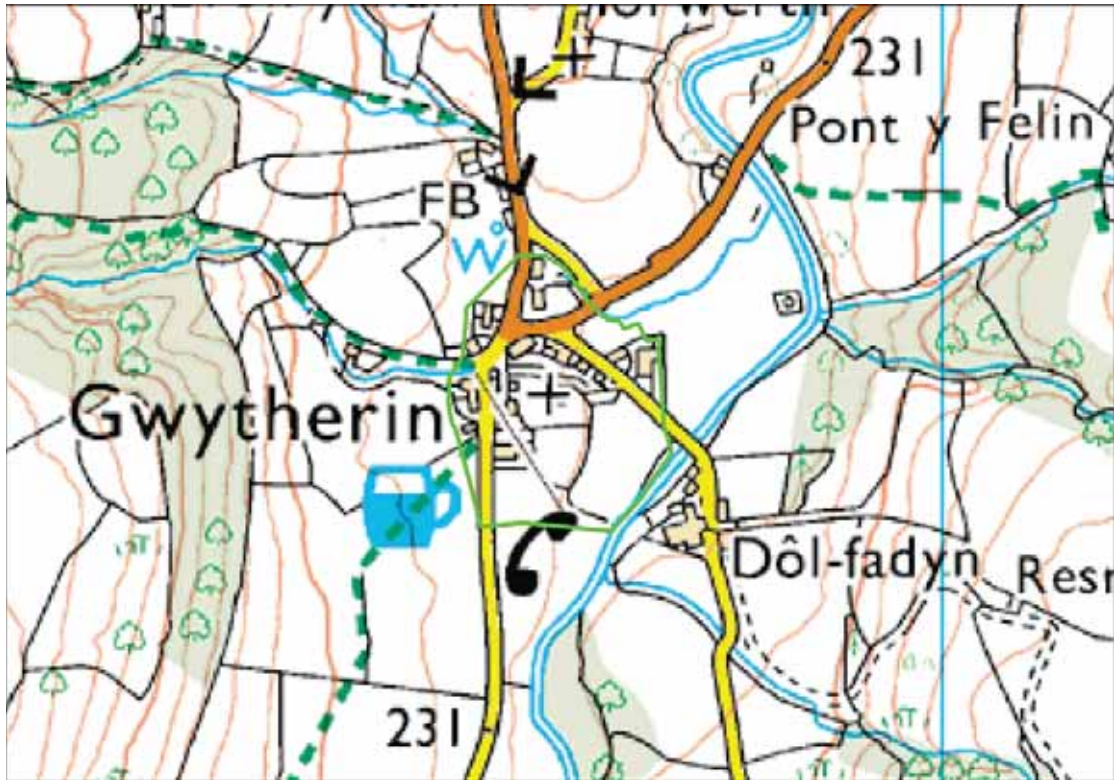
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Llanddulas

SH 9064 7812
105499

Introduction

Llanddulas lies close to the North Wales coastline, on the south side of the A55 expressway, two and a half miles west of Abergele, and three and a half miles east of the coastal resort of Colwyn Bay. The core of the old village lies towards the base of the valley of the River Dulas (which has its mouth here), on the west bank of the river. The deep river valley cuts through limestone hills and has extremely steep sides. The village has grown immensely in the 20th century, as extra housing was needed for the increasing workforce at the huge limestone quarries nearby. Modern housing now extends up to the top of the western side of the valley.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanddulas up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development

The name translates as the 'church on the River Dulas'; it has been claimed that the proper ecclesiastical name is *Llangynbryd*, from Cynbryd the dedicatee of the church, but though this term appears occasionally, it has been said that it was a purely literary term and not one used to describe the settlement or its church. The first written record, which almost inevitably relates to the church is in the 1254 Norwich Taxation and exhibits a form not so very different from today, *Llanndulas*. Later in the century there are some curious variations as with *Thlantheles* in 1287 and *Landuglas* in 1291. It is conceivable that the original name was *Nant Dulas* derived from the nearby stream, particularly as *Nandulas* was referred to in 1284.

Any early history of Llanddulas is now lost to us, but at the end of the 17th century there were five or six cottages in the settlement according to Edward Lhuyd's informant, while in 1781 Thomas Pennant simply described Llanddulas as a small village and church.

At the time of the Tithe schedule in 1839, Llanddulas village consisted of little more than a church, a vicarage, Ty Ucha House, the mill and the houses on Mill Street. Beyond this small nucleus, houses were very few and scattered. The main road through the village today was labelled the "Great road from Chester to Holyhead" on the Tithe map, but Minffordd Road is apparently older, being labelled "Old line of road". To the north-west of the church were a number of long narrow fields, or quillets, now lying beneath Station road and modern housing. The church lay in a circular churchyard, a little to the south of its present position. A road to the vicarage ran around its west and north sides.

The heritage to 1750

The present church, dedicated to St Cynbryd (105465) and built on flat low-lying land at the side of the river, is the third church at Llanddulas within the last two centuries. The date of the first of these churches is unknown, but it was rebuilt in 1732 (105558), when it apparently stood around 18m to the south of the present church. It was taken down in 1867 and the present church was built in 1868-9. It consists of a nave, chancel and south aisle with a south porch and north-east vestry. It has an octagonal-spired bellcote. A small square font bowl, though superseded in use by a remarkable one of 1926, a piscina, and a datestone of 1732 are the only pre-Victorian survivals.

The churchyard (105524) is highly irregular in shape, but its circular origins can be seen on the south side, as well as being clearly depicted on the mid-19th-century Tithe map. The later Victorian church occupies a rectangular extension further north.

Ty Ucha on the opposite side of Mill Street to the church and lying back from it is a storeyed lobby-entry house, probably of 17th-century origin to which a three storey, three-bay range was added in the following century; it now appears to have been converted into several cottages. The Rectory adjacent to the church was built in about 1814. Llanddulas mill which has given its name to the street and is set diagonally across the street from the churchyard is now ruinous. Its date of origin remains unknown.
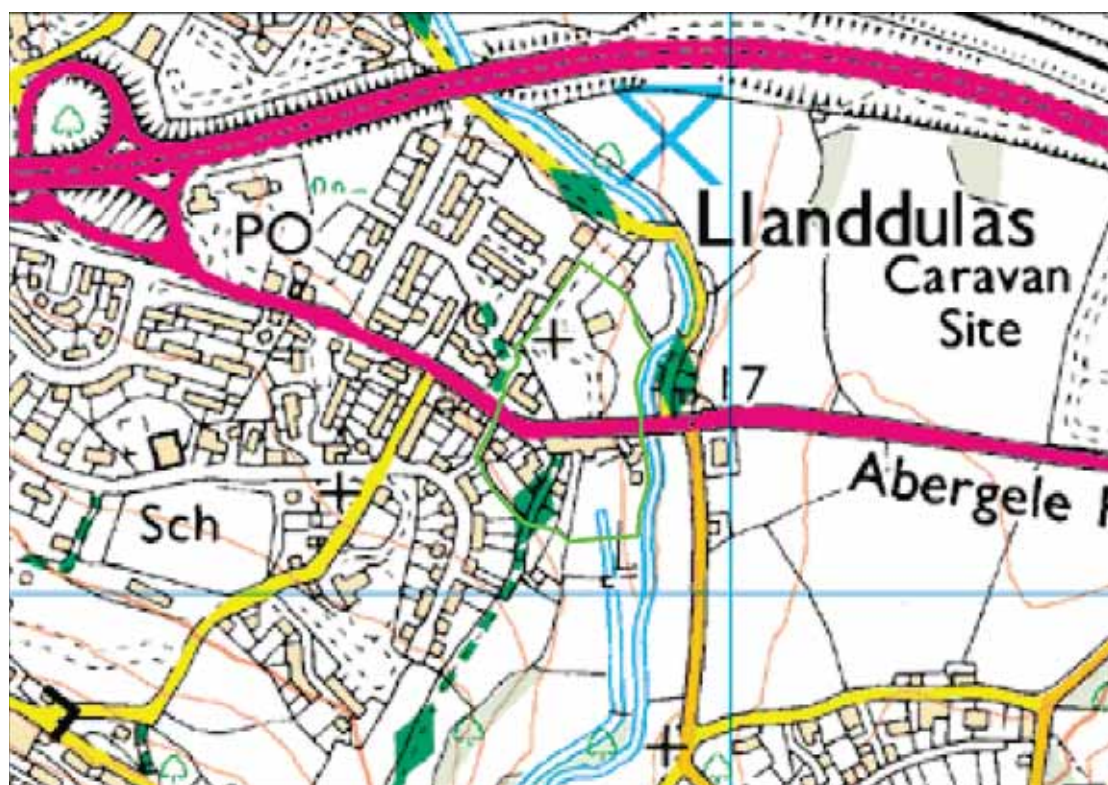
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Llandrillo-yn-Rhos

SH 8321 8063
105500

Introduction

The extensive modern settlement of Llandrillo-yn-Rhos merging with Rhos-on-Sea is situated on the North Wales coast a short distance to the west of the better known coastal resort of Colwyn Bay. Within the last century it has spread outwards from its original historic core around the church, and now the whole of the area from Colwyn Bay to Rhos-on-Sea has been developed to the point where the built-up areas of each have effectively coalesced into one. The older nucleus of the settlement of Llandrillo-yn-Rhos, which would probably go unrecognised by many, is situated a short distance inland and is built around a limestone spur projecting from the more prominent hill of Bryn Euryn. The church itself stands in a very prominent position on a knoll, though now completely encompassed by modern housing. To the west is low-lying land behind Penrhyn Bay which would in the past have been prone to flooding, and through which flows the Afon Ganol, little more than a stream.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llandrillo up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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History of development

The earliest record is of *Lantreullo* in the Taxation of 1254, and *Llandrillo* puts in its first appearance in 1538. The incorporation of the cantref suffix is first attested in the time of Elizabeth I. There was, however, also a secular name, Dinerth or Dineirth, which is found as *Dynardh* in 1270 and *Dynerth'* in 1291. The English translation of the modern name is straightforward: 'the church of Trillo in Rhos'.

Llandrillo was originally the mother church of one of the most ancient and extensive *parochiae* in North Wales. Originally known as Dinerth (and referred to by this name in the Norwich taxation of 1254), the parish (as opposed to the church) acquired its present name in the reign of Henry VIII. There is a tradition, which seems incapable of being proved, that the original church stood in that part of the township of Dinerth which was later overwhelmed by the sea; Archdeacon Thomas reported this tradition at the end of the 19th century, but was doubtful of its validity.

The Tithe survey in 1847 provides a sense of a very small settlement indeed, consisting of a church and a couple of adjacent buildings and a small number of farms or houses along Tanybryn Road, which ran around the base of Bryn Euryn. Samuel Lewis more than a decade

earlier in 1833 had remarked that 'the village of Llandrillo is composed of two houses only, one of which is the vicarage'. It could have been a larger settlement in earlier times, if indeed it was on the same spot and not drowned at a different location, but the only way this is likely to be clarified is through extensive archaeological excavation.

The heritage to 1750

St Trillo's church (100504) is a double-naved church, with a west tower against the north one. The north aisle is the earlier, the south aisle being added in the 16th century, while a blocked 13th-century arcade at the west end of the north wall belonged to a former aisle or chapel now gone. Within the church there is a simple arch-braced roof to the south nave, a font of the 13th century and a sepulchral slab in the porch of the early 14th century.

The level of the ground within the churchyard (105525) is raised above the level of the road; the graveyard has been extended considerably towards the west (in 1923 and 1940) creating a large rhomboidal area. A curved boundary on the south-east side might argue for a smaller sub-oval enclosure with the church near its eastern corner, and this in turn would strengthen the argument for an early medieval establishment on this spot. The stone-built lychgate (105564) is dated to 1677.

Llys Euryn (100507) is situated at the north end of Bryn Euryn. The ruins of an elaborate winged hallhouse of 15th-century date, was altered and added to in the 16th century, went into decline in the 17th century and was partially demolished in the 18th century. Previously, in the 13th century, Ednyfed Fychan, seneschal or chief minister of Llewellyn the Great, is said to have had a court here which was reputedly burnt by Owain Glyndŵr, though it should be said that there is no physical evidence of its existence at this spot. The term *llys* was, it is thought, only added in the 19th century for previously it had been termed *Bryn Euryn.* Bryn Euryn itself may have been fortified in the 5th or 6th century AD, a stronghold in the cantref of Rhos and a centre of power and status.

There are no historic buildings of any great age other than the church. The general loss, assuming that there were once more dwellings, is exemplified by the disappearance of the Ship Inn which was built by the entrance to the churchyard in 1736 and demolished in 1874. The old vicarage to the west of the church was built in 1762 and enlarged at least twice subsequently.
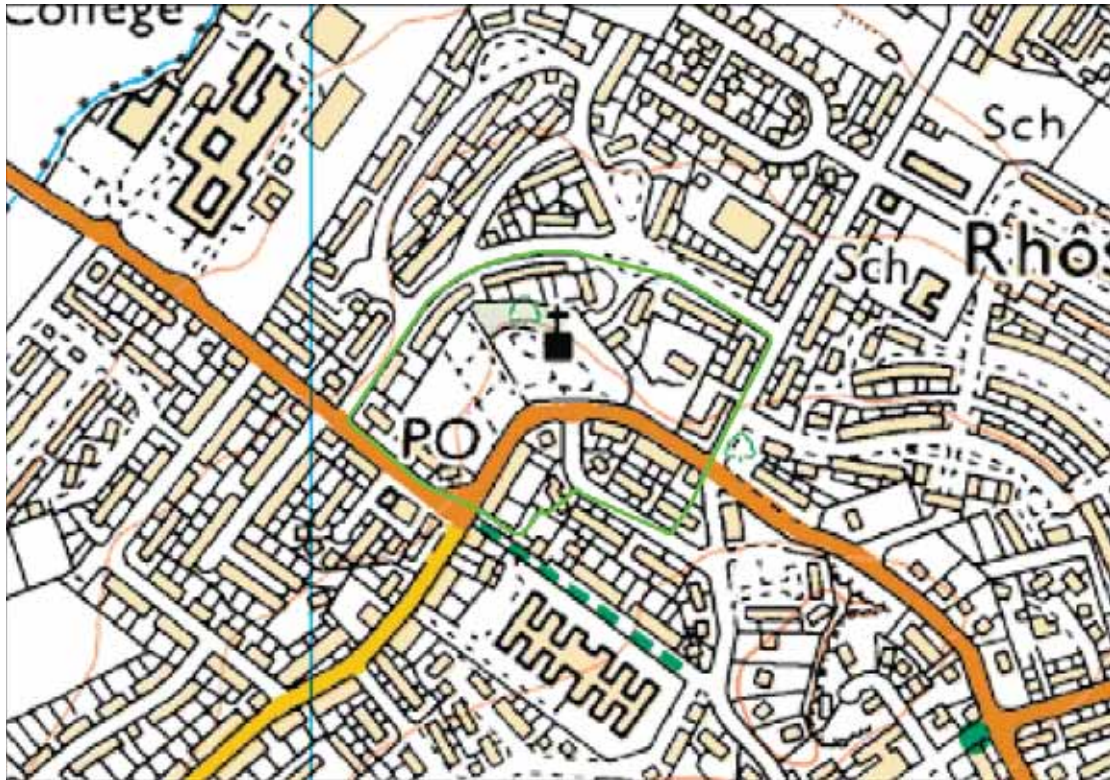
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Llanefydd

SH 9816 7006
105506

Introduction

Llanefydd (and also Llannefydd as given by the Ordnance Survey) lies at the junction of a number of minor roads four miles south-west of St Asaph. The village is situated on a north-facing gentle slope in an upland area to the south of the River Elwy. It is overlooked by Mynydd y Gaer hillfort to the north-west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanefydd up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development

Interpreted as the 'church of Ufydd', Llanefydd is first recorded as *Llanuvyth* in 1256, *Lanvddud* in 1329, *Llanyvydd* in 1511 and *Llanefidd* in 1704-5, but as *Llannefydd* in 1679.

The village is named after St Nefydd. Traditionally the church was founded by Nefydd in the 5th century, but according to Archdeacon Thomas the St Asaph diocesan historian writing at the end of the 19th century, it was later re-built on a spot further south and re-dedicated in the name of St Mary the Virgin. However, Owen and Morgan, the modern place-name specialists have pointed out that the association with Nefydd is a relatively modern one, as revealed by the name variants given above, and they also cite the fact that Ffynnon Nefydd (for which see below) was termed *Fynnon Yvydh* by Edward Lhuyd's respondent at the end of the 17th century. It should be pointed out, too, that Thomas' argument for the existence of an original chapel further to the north and close to the holy well (see below) was based solely on the field name *Pant yr Hen Eglwys* which cannot be traced in the main mid-19th-century source, the tithe schedule; the suggestion then cannot be disproved, but the existing evidence is slight.

Of the village's original size and form nothing is known, but by the end of the 17th century there were six houses around the church according to Edward Lhuyd's respondent. A more vivid impression is provided by an estate map of 1734, a relatively rare occurrence in this region at this time. This shows a near D-shaped churchyard (which may be a reasonably accurate representation), a dwelling in its own enclosure that was attached to the north side of the churchyard (still there but probably derelict by the time of the first large-scale Ordnance Survey map in 1874/5) and beyond this a small common with a few other houses around it, the remnants of which were still apparent in the 19th century though in a less cohesive form.

There were also several houses and ancillary buildings to the east of the church and beside the lane heading up from the south.

Modern housing has been added to the north-west end of the village, but other than this, the village has hardly changed since the Tithe survey of 1844.

The heritage to 1750
St Mary's Church (101993), dedicated to St Nefydd and St Mary, is double-naved and of Perpendicular design. The northern nave is perhaps the earlier of the two. The south porch has a cyclopean inner doorway reconstructed in the early 18th century. There is a double western bellcote on the south nave, apparently renewed in the 1859 restoration. The roofs remain from the late medieval period, there are sepulchral slab fragments from the earlier 14th century, stained glass fragments of late medieval appearance, a small font bearing the date 1668, a 17th-century altar table and an 18th-century poor box, and various wall memorials from the early 17th century onwards.

The raised churchyard (105537) is relatively small and polygonal in shape, but its curving wall on the north-east side might indicate an early circular churchyard. It contains the base and shaft of a medieval cross, which has travelled around the village, having been in the centre of the village at the junction of the Llansannan and Denbigh roads before migrating to the grounds of the vicarage in 1871 and then moving to the churchyard in the 20th century. It is not clear whether it was a churchyard or a village cross when it was first erected in the Middle Ages.

A feature known as *Bedd Ffrymden* or 'Ffrymder's Grave' is described in the church history pamphlet as a circular ditch, with stones set on their ends around the grave. The site was said to have been cleared in the 1890s, but was located at 'the back of the churchyard'. No surface traces are now evident. The antiquary Richard Fenton at the beginning of the 19th century claimed it was 'near' the churchyard and surrounded by yews, and that Frymder was reputed to be a saint. Almost all of this information first surfaced in the Edward Lhuyd's *Parochialia* which was compiled in the two to three years of the 17th century.

In the village centre the majority of the houses are stone-built, and of 18th or 19th-century date, though there is every likelihood that they occupy the sites of earlier buildings.

Ffynnon Nefydd (101436), potentially to be considered as a holy well is a spring less than 300m to the north of the church. Even in 1912 it was considered 'neglected' and despite its name it appears to have attracted little attention since. When visited in 2003 the site had been grassed over and there was no visible trace of it, although a local source suggests that it once took the form of a bath and had a wall built around it by the vicar in 1604.

In the pasture field between the churchyard and Tynrhwyl is a possible building platform (105536), close to the churchyard wall. One platform is insufficient to signal a shrunken settlement but it is an unusual presence in eastern Conwy.

Llanelian

SH 8635 7639
105501

Introduction

Llanelian-yn-Rhos, usually shortened to Llanelian, is situated at the crossing of two minor roads, a mile and a quarter to the south of Old Colwyn, and just inland from the coast. The settlement lies on a hilltop with small stream valleys to the east and west. The present-day village, dominated by the White Lion public house, has a small nucleus of dwellings about the crossroads, though new housing has extended the village along the roads to the south-east and to the south-west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanelian up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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History of development

For the 'church of Elian in the cantref of Rhos', early forms of the name are rare and in the 13th century, the parish was originally known by the name of *Bodlenyn*, the township in which the church stands. This name was superseded sometime after 1291 by that of the church's dedicatee, St Elian, so that in the period 1556 to 1564 it is recorded as *Ll. elian* and in 1590 as *Llanelian*.

Archdeacon Thomas claimed that the church was founded in the 6th century by a pilgrim Elian Geimiad. There is no means by which this tradition might be confirmed, yet equally there is no doubt that Llanelian as the site of a chapel or church originated before the Norman Conquest. Whether a settlement grew up around it during the Middle Ages is also obscure, and it is not until the end of the 17th century, when Edward Lhuyd was collecting information that we learn that there were five or six houses in the village.

The village has altered very little in size since the time of the Tithe survey of the mid-19th century, when there were just a few houses at the crossroads, with dispersed farms across the neighbourhood.

The heritage to 1750

St Elian or, in English, St Hilary's church (100461), is a double-naved building, the northern portion earlier, perhaps 13th- or 14th-century, to which the southern nave was added in the 15th century, a time when it was a pilgrimage centre. The surviving medieval windows are

Perpendicular, but the doorways of massive limestone blocks are inherently undateable. Inside the roofs are late medieval and that over the southern sanctuary has significant surviving paintings. Lower portions of the medieval rood screen survive, together with some painted panels from the rood loft, and the rood beam has recently been dated to 1489 by dendrochronology. Fuller details of both cane be found on the Royal Commission's Coflein website. There is a now disused medieval font bowl and some 18th-century wooden furnishings. The wall monument sequence starts at the very beginning of the 18th century.

The churchyard is rectilinear in shape and relatively small, but on its south and east sides significantly elevated above its surroundings. If there was a circular churchyard here originally, all trace of it has disappeared. A late 18th-century or perhaps later sundial is set in the extreme south-eastern corner of the churchyard.

The White Lion public house immediately to the south-west of the church is largely 19th-century but has 17th-century origins as a lateral chimney, storeyed house.

Llan Farm (105466), immediately to the south of the crossroads in the village is a three-unit, four-bay, cruck-framed hall-house, its outer walls rebuilt in stone in the late 15th or early 16th century, and originally had an open two-bay hall in the late medieval period. Lateral chimneys and a wing have been added, and the house has been modernised, though many early features remain. At a greater distance Ysgubor Newydd building (102833), three hundred metres to the south-east of the village centre, is reputed to be a cruck-framed building, but this has not been confirmed.

Ffynnon Elian (100460) became known as 'The Cursing Well' in the 18th century, but prior to that it had a reputation as a healing well. Situated a quarter of a mile north of the parish church, it is now covered over. Rather more is known about this well, or at least its more recent history, than many comparable wells.

Distinctive ridge and furrow cultivation ridges in two fields to the west and north-west of the church (105473 and 105474) were visible in the 1990s, but their period of formation cannot be established: they could be of medieval origin, but a later date is perhaps more likely.

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Llanfair Talhaiarn

SH 9278 7009
105502

Introduction

Llanfair Talhaiarn is situated close to the A548 – the Abergele to Llanrwst road – and its junction with the A544. The village lies inland from the coast, about five miles south of Abergele. The village occupies the bottom of the valley of the River Elwy, on the south side of the river, where a tributary of the Elwy runs northwards through a steep-sided valley to join it. The older part of the village nestles in this valley, with houses extending up the steep sides. The waters of the tributary stream are conduited below Water Street, the main street of the village. The church is prominently sited at the top of the western slope of the valley, where it also overlooks the Elwy. Modern housing estates have been added on higher ground to the east of this river valley.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanfair Talhaiarn up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development

Modern authorities translate this name into English as 'the church of Mary associated with Talhaiarn', explaining the latter as perhaps an early lay patron of the church. It is recorded as *Llannber* in 1254, as *Lanveyr'dalhaearn* and *Lanveyr' Dalhaeyn* in different copies of Pope Nicholas' Taxation and as *Llanvair Talhayarne* in 1632. The first use of the modern name comes in 1839.

Nothing is known of the origin and early history of the settlement, though we can perhaps assume that the church itself was established in the early medieval era, even if the evidence from the churchyard morphology is not wholly convincing. The story of the settlement throughout the Middle Ages is obscure, and Pennant in 1781 in describing Llanfair Talhaiarn as 'a village and a church at a small distance above the confluence of the Elwy and Aled' tells us little.

The 1842 Tithe map appears to show a fairly compact settlement entirely on the south side of the River Elwy, with all the buildings lying to the east of the church. Only one bridge over the Elwy is shown. Roads run out of the village centre to the east (now Denbigh Road) and west (now Church St) and also to the south (now Allt y Powls). But neither this map nor the smaller-scale maps of the Ordnance Survey (1819) or of John Evans (1795) offer a clear view of the form of Llanfair in the 19th century and this is only provided in the large-scale mapping

by the Ordnance Survey in the mid-1870s. The modern village has since spread much further to the east and a little to the south.

The heritage to 1750

St Mary's church (100513) probably has some fabric dating back to the 15th century but there was considerable rebuilding in 1876 and all the windows date from that time. It is a double-naved structure, but not architecturally distinguished. The sole surviving late medieval features are a few of the beams in the arched-braced roofs, and there are two disused font bowls. A range of funerary monuments memorialise the Wynnes of Garthewin, dating from 1692 to 1842. An unusual feature is a 19th-century tank for adult baptism set into the floor.

The boundary of the churchyard (105527) on the north and east sides is dictated by the very steep slopes here, but on the south side, the boundary is slightly curved, hinting at an early curvilinear graveyard. There is a large western extension to the graveyard from 1879.

The Old Harp Inn has not been dated in the records that refer to it, but looks to be of post-1750 origin. This holds true for other buildings in the village. The Old School for instance dates to 1836, and adjacent Glandwr was the schoolmaster's house and contemporary with the school. Plas-yn-llan on the opposite side of the road is broadly of the same period, while the former village hall, now known as Neuadd Elwy is mid 19th-century.

Talhaiarn Farm, also termed Dolhaiaran Farm (105528), is on the east side of the village. The stone building, dating to the early 17th century is re-fronted and also has 18th- and 19th-century features. An associated stone barn dates to 1694.

Llanfair bridge (105458), built of rubble masonry, has three elliptical arches and cutwaters. It has generally been believed to be of 18th-century origin and recent work on the Quarter Sessions Records suggest that it was rebuilt in 1766.

Melin Dolhaiarn on a tributary of the Elwy and beyond the eastern limits of the village was a stone-built corn mill, possibly dating from the 18th century, and was in use until about 1950.

There are no recognised archaeological sites represented by earthworks in the vicinity of the village.
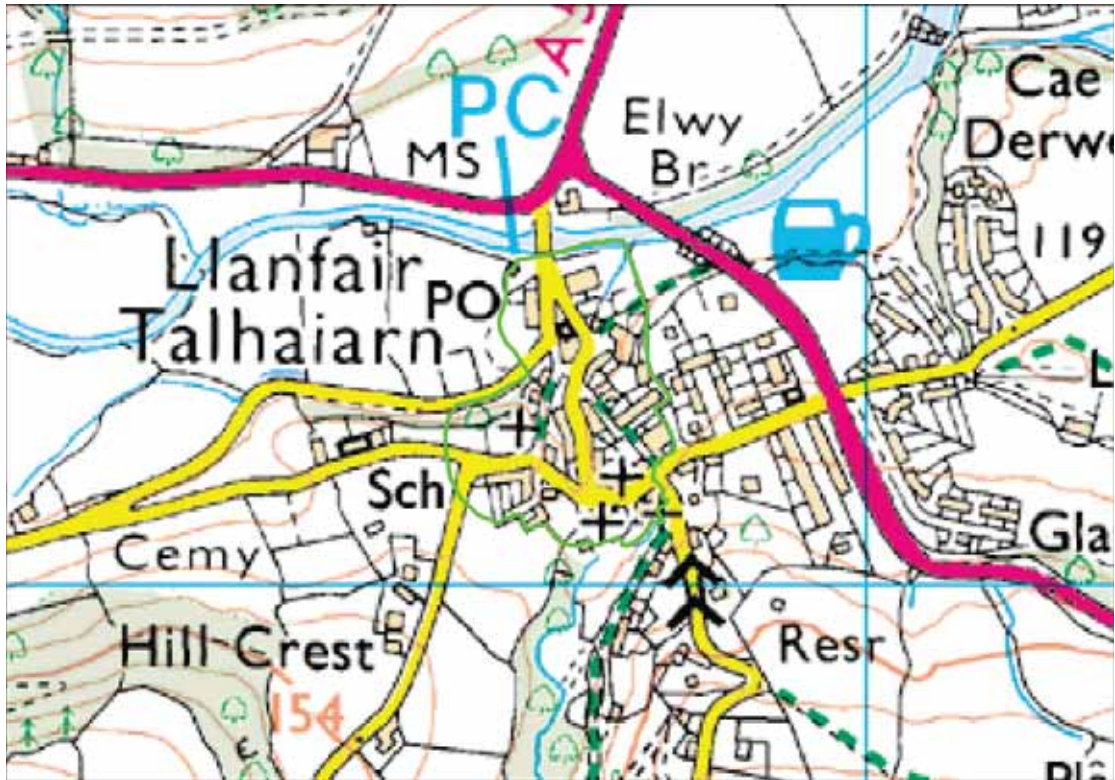
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Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr

SH 9896 4940
105503

Introduction

Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr is situated on the B5105, three and three quarter miles east of Cerrigydrudion, a small settlement amongst high hills covered in rough pasture. The modern village which appears to go by the name of Bro Alwen is situated on rising ground on the western flank of the River Alwen. The river here flows through a steep-sided narrow valley, wooded and craggy on its north bank, a high bridge spanning the river below Bro Alwen and accompanied by the Crown Inn. The church, together with one or two old houses, lies beside the river amongst flat low-lying pasture fields, a couple of hundred metres upstream of the bridge.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development

The English translation is the 'church of Michael in the valley of Myfyr'. In the Norwich Taxation of 1254, the church was recorded as *Llanwihagel* and in the 1290s as *Lamyangel*. *Llanvyhangel Llenmyvyr* is documented in 1388 but in 1614 it is *Llanvihangell llyn Myver*, the 'llyn' element supposedly reflecting the pool formed by the river downstream of the bridge, as explained in a document of around 1700. Subsequently, 'llyn' changed to 'glyn' as the need for a qualifier, to distinguish this from other Llanfihangels in the region.

Nothing is known of the origin and early history of the settlement: we may assume an early medieval church here based on both the dedication and the form and location of the churchyard but there is nothing to convince us that a settlement developed around it. And Edward Lhuyd's respondent claimed that there were only two houses by the church in 1699.

At the time of the 1841 Tithe schedule, the settlement was considerably smaller, consisting of the church and a few homesteads north-west of the bridge, one or two buildings (presumably the Crown Inn) at the north end of the bridge, and a further couple (including the chapel) along the roads south of the bridge. The whole of the area of Bro Alwen was undeveloped. Dolhyfryd, some distance east of the bridge, may be the site of a mill: it was described as 'Cae du factory' and the field between it and the bridge was 'Dol y felin'.

Collectively the evidence of the few historic maps available reveals a changing landscape. The B5105 as it nears Llanfihangel is a 19th-century creation, emphasising that Bro Alwen is essentially a modern creation. The original lane (shown on Evans' map of 1795) was the green lane running off the modern road, west of Ty-isa, south-eastwards towards Ty-ucha and Ty-celyn before swinging to the north-east and picking up the minor lane dropping down the hill to the earlier bridging point of the Alwen. In doing so it also emphasises the isolation of Llanfihangel church. There is a further point, focusing on the Alwen itself. The river between the bridge and the church and beyond is remarkably straight in a watercourse that meanders so much in this area – its deliberate canalisation, though, seems unlikely, if only because it is difficult to conceive of a reason why it should have been undertaken. An earlier course or courses lay further south for a substantial river terrace is followed by a sinuous linear corridor immediately to the north of Bryn-hîr Farm. The period when the Alwen created this terrace could have been thousands of years ago, yet it could also have been in historic times, leaving the possibility, which can be no more than speculation, that the church originally lay on the north side of the river.

The heritage to 1750
St Michael's church (105459) is single-chambered, with a long history which on the basis of two blocked windows could have commenced in the 13th century. An eastern extension to the building is probably contemporary with the 15th or early 16th-century arched-braced trusses of its roof. The church was apparently extended slightly westwards at the beginning of the 20th century. The west gallery remains, incorporating re-used 17th-century altar rails, but apart from one or two other furnishings there is little of any age that has survived.

The churchyard (105529) is rounded at its western end and together with the river on its north-eastern side creates a D-shaped enclosure, sufficient to suggest an early medieval origin for Llanfihangel.

Tan Llan (105530) beside the church is built of whitewashed rubble stone and is probably of 17th-century origin, although it shows later alterations from the 20th century. The Crown Inn (105531), down river, is stone-built and whitewashed and of late 18th- or early 19th-century construction, though not sufficiently architecturally distinctive to determine which. It boasts a detached stable building.

The bridge over the Alwen adjacent to which the Crown Inn stands, was constructed very late in the 18th century, probably in 1797 or soon after, replacing a bridge that was slightly downstream. It has a single arch and is considered to be a fine example of its type.

The oldest of the buildings in the centre of the village appear to be 18th- and 19th-century whitewashed stone dwellings, entirely in keeping with the evidence of road changes presented above.

Llangernyw

SH 8752 6744
105504

Introduction

Llangernyw lies on the A548, six miles north-east of Llanrwst and eight miles south-west of Abergele. The majority of the houses in the settlement are clustered about a crossroads on the west side of the valley of the River Elwy, a short distance away from the river, where the land begins to rise. The Elwy is joined here by the Afon Gallen from the south-west, and another small stream, the Afon Collen, from the west. The church stands on higher ground above a tributary of the River Elwy, and the old road through the village winds around it and down to cross the river; the modern village has extended beyond its original small nucleus, with new housing estates to the south and west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangernyw up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development

The 'church of Cernyw' is first recorded in 1261, its name form then being exactly the same as today. Minor variations appeared on later occasions as with *Nangernew* in 1284, an example of the not infrequent interchange of *llan* and *nant* in Welsh place-names, and *Llan Gernyw* in the 16th century.

Archdeacon Thomas, historian of the diocese of St Asaph, claimed that the church was founded by Digain, a saint of the fifth century, and there are even hints that it could have had a more important status, as the mother church or *clas* for the area. At what point a settlement developed around the church is unknown.

No evidence is available as to the appearance of Llangernyw in the centuries before the beginning of the 19th century. One or two points can be made about the village's topography. The causeway from the Bridge Inn northwards to the churchyard is clearly an addition, and probably one that had been introduced early in the 19th century or perhaps a little before, its predecessor still visible on both sides of the stream. The Stag Hotel was probably erected on the triangle of open space at the lane junction; there is though no evidence to suggest that Llangernyw ever had a market.

The centre of the village does not appear to have changed much since the time of the Tithe survey in 1841. Houses then were strung along both sides of the north-south road, but there

were very few along the roads running east and west out of the village. The only crossing of the tributary of the River Elwy was just downhill and south of the church (where the present day footbridge is, east of the A458).

The heritage to 1750
St Digain's church (100432) is not thought to be earlier than the 13th or even the 14th century, even though its site has been in use for ecclesiastical purposes for a lot longer. An initial single-chambered structure was extended in the late medieval period, creating the distinct cruciform building now visible. In contrast, the interior is something of a disappointment, apart from the arched-braced roof of the 16th century; the font is Perpendicular, there is a stoup traditionally thought to be 14th-century, altar rails of the 17th century, benefaction boards of the 18th, and a number of 17th-century ledgers around the walls.

The elongated churchyard (105532) was enlarged to the east in 1854 and again in 1884, but there is an overall curvilinearity to its core which points to a former circular outline. Two cross-carved stones (100433) are positioned in the churchyard in the angle between the nave and the south transept, one dating from the 7th to 9th century, the other probably from the 9th to the 11th century. It is reasonably likely that they were originally positioned in what was to become the churchyard, it is rather less likely that they are in their original positions. The churchyard also contains an ancient yew, classed as one of 50 Great British Trees by the Tree Council; whether in reality it is 4000 years old is a moot point.

The lychgate (105533) is an 18th-century structure. Elias Owen at the end of the 19th century recounted how the annual fairs at Llangernyw were held in the churchyard until 1750, the lychgate (or churchyard porch) being favoured by the butchers to display their produce.

Pont Faen (105562), to the east of the village, bridges the Elwy. It is an 18th-century structure, perhaps late in that century, and is in stone, with three segmental arches the middle of which is the largest.

The majority of the houses standing in the village centre do not appear to be any earlier than the late 18th or even the 19th century. Neither the Royal Commission nor Cadw have identified any of great age (other than the church) within the village.

Hafodunos, (100439) lying half a mile west-south-west of the village centre, was rebuilt between 1861-6 by Sir George Gilbert Scott. The earliest reference to a mansion here was in 1615. It suffered a disastrous fire in 2004, but is reputedly now being restored.

Llangwm

SH 9664 4459
105505

Introduction

Llangwm has grown up in a remote location on a minor road almost a mile to the south of the A5, and almost three miles south-south-east of Cerrigydrudion. The village lies on the south side of the valley of the River Medrad, a minor tributary of the River Ceirw. Houses are situated on the valley floor and the lower slopes. A small stream runs through the centre of the village before joining the River Medrad, further north.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangwm up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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History of development

Simply meaning 'the church in the valley', the first documented appearance of Llangwm was in the 1291 Taxation as *Landegoin. Landegumme* was noted in 1303, *Landecombe* in 1376, *Llangome* in 1539 and finally *Llangwm* at end of the 16th century.

The church is the oldest standing building in the village. Archdeacon Thomas at the end of the 19th century believed that the church had been re-built in the year 1747, but not necessarily on at its original location and that there was a tradition that the earlier church was on the other side of the valley, near the mill. He noted that in the *Genealogy of the British Saints,* the 18th-century antiquary Lewis Morris stated that the chapels of Gwynog and his brother Noethon, near the church of Llangwm Dinmael, had been converted to a mill and a kiln, but Thomas entered a caveat: 'the improbability, however, of so complete a removal of a parish church within so recent a period, and yet no records to attest it, as well as the age of some of the yew trees, argue in favour of the present site, to which the others were capellae..'.

Any development of a settlement at Llangwm during the Middle Ages is unrecorded, but in 1699 the village (if this is the right term) at Llangwm comprised only three houses by the church according to Edward Lhuyd's records. Its layout and its road pattern have remained unchanged since the Tithe survey of 1841, though the number of dwellings has increased.

The heritage to 1750

St Jerome's church (105467) has been redundant for some years. The present church is structurally a single chamber, rebuilt or remodelled in 1747 and restored and refurnished in 1874, though the round-headed south windows must be of the earlier date. Set over the north

porch is the shield of a 14th-century heraldic sepulchral slab. Inside all the fittings had been stripped out, when last visited, leaving only one or two dismantled wall memorials on the floor and two benefaction boards in the porch.

The churchyard, of medium size and sub-rectangular in shape, is still used for burial. There is no evidence of curvilinearity, except perhaps in the south-west corner where the visible arc might suggest that some of the rest of the yard reflects a later enlargement.

Ffynnon Wnnod (100711) consists of a modern brick chamber and has been built over a formerly unprotected spring.

Ty Uchaf (105534) and The Old Vicarage (105535) with its outbuildings are both considered to be of 18th-century build. Few details, however, are available about their precise dating or design. Ty Newydd (105561), to the south of the church, a stone-built house and outbuildings, was formerly an old inn, but like the other houses mentioned above information is sparse.

Melin Llangwm (100709), lying some 350m to the north of the church, is thought to be the on or close to the site of the chapel of Saints Gwnnod and Neithon. The mill was called *Melin y capel* in Edward Lhuyd's *Parochialia* compilation of 1698. And as noted above Archdeacon Thomas, the historian of St Asaph diocese, went further and suggested that there were two chapels, one to each of the saints, and that one had been converted into the mill, the other into a kiln. This cannot be verified.

The remains of a stone building at the roadside opposite the old vicarage may well have been a smithy. Adjacent houses are "erw refail".

The placename "Tyn y groes" (100714) may possibly indicate the site of a cross, but is perhaps more likely to be connected with the roads. The name Capel y Groes to the east may have a similar derivation.

There are no recorded archaeological sites in the vicinity of the village.
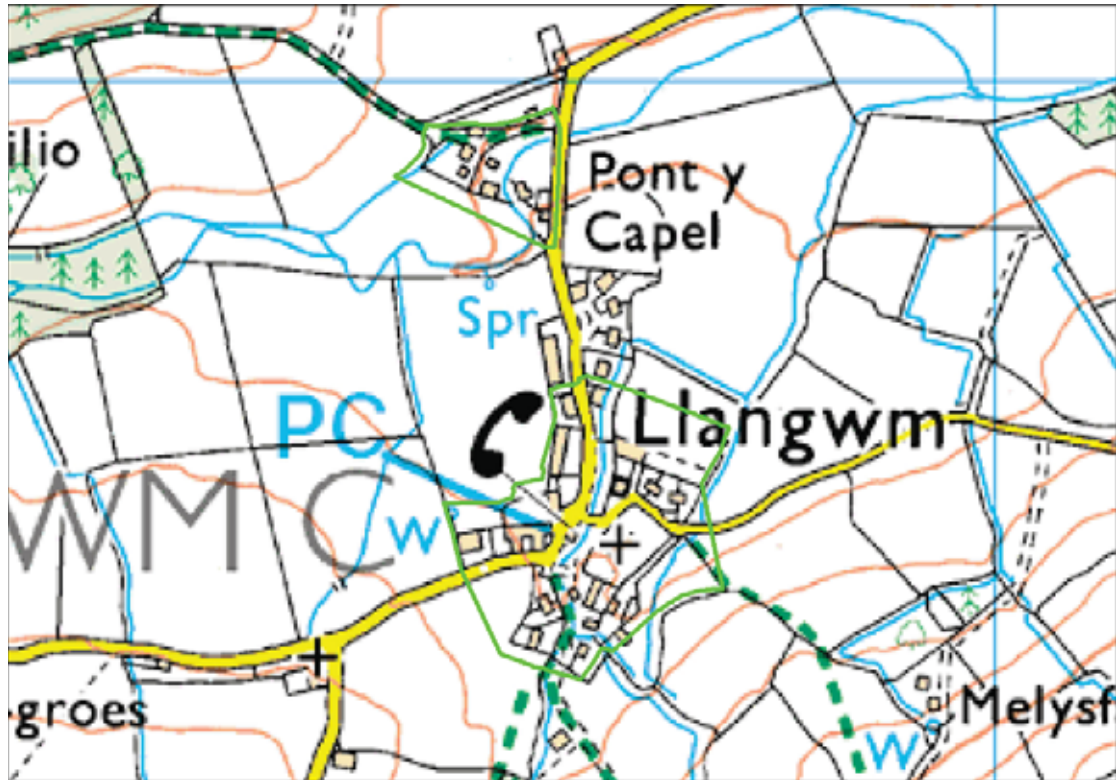
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Llansannan

SH 9342 6584
105507

Introduction

Llansannan is situated on the A544 between Llanfair Talhaiarn to Bylchau, seven and a half miles to the south of Abergele and the same distance to the west of Denbigh. The village lies on the floor of the valley of the River Aled. The church and most of the settlement are positioned on slightly raised ground above the west bank of the river, where it makes a sharp bend towards the north-east. To the north and west of the village, the valley sides rise steeply. A small stream, the Afon Bach, enters the village from the west and marked the southern extent of the village prior to recent expansion.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llansannan up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development

Like so many other settlements, the village is named after the holy man to whom the church was dedicated, in this instance, St Sannan. It is recorded as *Llannsannan* in the Norwich Taxation of 1254, as *Lansaman* in the 1291 Taxation and in its modern form in 1458.

Archdeacon Thomas, the St Asaph diocesan historian, no doubt borrowing from earlier books on the lives of the saints, claimed that the founder of the church is said to have lived here in religious seclusion and was one amongst several of the religious to have been buried in Gwytherin.

There is little information available on the size and growth of the settlement in the Middle Ages and in the centuries immediately following the Reformation. The earliest visual source is an estate map form the years 1772 to 1774. It is disappointingly inaccurate – the churchyard for instance is shown abutting the River Aled unless we are to envisage a significant reduction in its size around the turn of the 19th century – but one detail that does seem to be correct is that the direct line of the A544 eastwards to the river crossing is a 19th-century creation. Previously the lane to the north of Aled Terrace had taken the Llanrwst road on a more circuitous route to the river and then along its side southwards to the bridge.

The centre of the village appears to have changed little since the Tithe survey of 1841. The village had a very compact centre, with the church and almost all the houses lying to the west of the river. The vicarage lay east of the river. A short distance to the west of the village were

a few outlying buildings at Dalar-bach, Fron-bugad and Hendre-llan. Apart from the enhancement of the A544, the roads have not really altered. Long narrow fields (crofts) are indicated to the south-west of the village near Bro Aled school.

The heritage to 1750

St Sannan's church (105468) is built in a prominent position on a terrace high above the river. The church is double-naved. Although it dates from the 15th century, it was rebuilt or remodelled in 1777-8 and Victorianised in 1879, and it is not clear how much medieval fabric has survived. A round-headed south window dates to the earlier rebuild, but the western bellcote, timber porch, geometrical windows and boarded ceilings are all Victorian. Internally, there is nothing medieval; a churchwarden's bench dated to 1634, a chest of 1683, an 18th-century font and a pulpit of around 1700 imported from a church in Liverpool constitute the furniture from a pre-Victorian era.

The churchyard (105475) may originally have been circular, but has since been modified. It now has a curving outline on its western side, while the eastern boundary is dictated by the sheer drop down to the riverside. The Saracen's Head may have encroached on the south side of the churchyard. The ground level inside appears slightly raised.

Neither the Royal Commission nor Cadw have identified any buildings of pre-1750 date in the village other than the church.

A mound recorded at Llansannan (100521) was largely destroyed to make a flat area for a car park for Capel Coffa Henry Rees. The upper layers of a mound were still visible in the 1990s, preserved in the hedgebank; the top one metre looked artificially made up with layers of soil and rubble. Its significance is unknown, however, and its artificiality is in question; the HER considered that it was probably a natural feature.
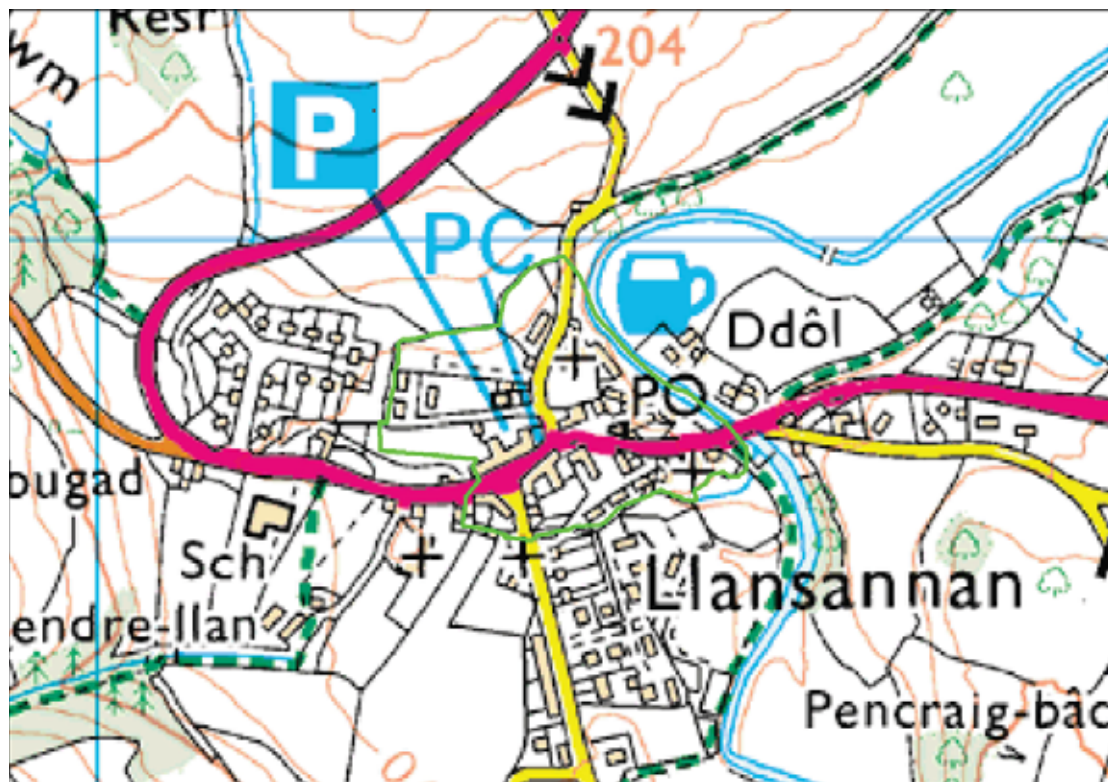
Llysfaen

SH 8932 7745
105508

Introduction

Llysfaen lies less than a mile from the North Wales coast, and approximately a mile and a half south-east of Old Colwyn. The older part of the settlement, with houses strung out at intervals, is located around the fringes of Mynydd Marian, a limestone hill with an old Telegraph station on its summit. The church and the centre of the present-day village lie at the north-east corner of Mynydd Marian, just below its summit. Large estates of more modern housing extend eastwards towards Llanddulas. To the north and north-east of Llysfaen are huge areas of limestone quarries.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llysfaen up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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History of development

The place-name can be translated as 'stone court', with the earliest reference in 1254 being to *Lleswaen*. *Lisnaen* is given in 1291, *Lessemeyr* in 1316 and *Lesmaen* in 1334. 1737 sees the appearance of the modern name. An alias reflects the church dedication. In 1545 or soon after, there is a reference to *ll. Gynfran ne llysvaen* and in 1559 *Llysvaen in Llangenvrayn*.

The development of Llysfaen through the Middle Ages and into the Tudor era remains obscure. There are no hints that a nucleated village emerged during these times and in the Survey of the Honour of Denbigh of 1334, Llysfaen is mentioned only in reference to a mill. Considerably later, in 1699, Edward Lhuyd's respondent revealed that there were only two or three houses near the church, and by Samuel Lewis' time (1833) only five.

The 1839 Tithe map shows a sizeable area of unenclosed common land on the top of Mynydd Marian and leading from this, three roads to the north, two to the south, one to the east and one out to the west towards Ty Mawr. Along the north edge of the common stand the church, vicarage and several other buildings. To the north of these were a strikingly large number of long narrow strip fields running north-west to south-east, described as quillets in the apportionment. These no longer exist. On the south edge of the common were a number of farms and cottages. Fields were small and irregular in shape. Two smaller areas of common formerly existed south of Mynydd Marian.

The heritage to 1750

St Cynfran's church (100466) lies just below the summit of Mynydd Marian, at the junction of the road up from Llanddulas and that from Penmaen Rhos and Old Colwyn. Like so many other churches in the area, it is a double-naved structure, the northern nave being the earlier, possibly 13th-century, with a narrower east end that may represent an intermediate extension, before the construction of the south nave in the 14th century. There is a cyclopean south doorway. The church was drastically restored in 1870. The south porch, west bellcote and all the windows belong to this restoration. Inside some late medieval roof timbers have been re-used, and a few panels from the rood screen have been preserved. Otherwise of a pre-Victorian age there are only a few wall memorials of 17th- and early 18th-century origin.

There is the possibility of a former circular churchyard (105538) at Llysfaen, with a scarp bank forming a platform around the northern side of the church. The present graveyard is rectilinear and of moderate size, and contains a sundial dated to 1731.

The oldest secular buildings lie at some distance from the centre of the settlement. Ty Mawr (105539) out to the west of the church by about 900m, is an end-chimney house, uncharacteristic of the locality, which can be attributed to the second half of the 16th century, with 17th-century alterations that included the sub-division of an open upper hall. Plas yn Llysfaen (105540) 800m to the south-east is mainly early 19th-century in date, but has a 17th-century north-west wing.

In the village itself, none of the standing houses looks to be any earlier than 19th-century in date, though they may occupy the sites of earlier houses.

Ffynnon Cynfran (100465) lies about 90m to the north of church and is 2.2m in diameter and when seen in the 1980s it was filled with sludge to ground level. It is still partly surrounded by a semi-circular dry-stone wall, and in 2011 could be seen to contain water though it was vegetation covered. This might be thought to be a holy well, but it was ignored by Francis Jones, the leading authority on Welsh wells in the second half of the 20th century. Archdeacon Thomas at the end of the 19th century, however, detailed how local people resorted to the well to seek a blessing for their cattle on the saint's day.

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Pentrefoelas

SH 8726 5152
105513

Introduction

Pentrefoelas lies on the A5, eight miles south-east of Llanrwst in the Conwy Valley. From Pentrefoelas, roads run north-east to Denbigh (A543), south-west to Ysbyty Ifan and north-west to Llanrwst (B5113), in addition to the A5 running east to west. The village is situated in the valley of the little River Merddwr, to the south of the Mynydd Hiraethog uplands. The village centre and most of the older buildings, dating from the late 18th century, lie on the north side of the river.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Pentrefoelas up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development

Meaning the village or settlement near Foelas (for which see below), all of the place-name variations for Pentrefoelas are of post-Reformation origin. The earliest is *Pentre vidog chapel* in 1680, a reference to the nearby chapel of ease and not one that can be taken to indicate a settlement. In 1801 the focus instead was on Foelas with *Capel Voelas* and in 1838 it was known as *Pentre Foelas*.

There are a number of references to the chapel pre-dating the 1772 parish church, its site marked by a yew tree in the playing fields south of the bridge. Archdeacon Thomas at the end of the 19th century noted that '..a small chapel, variously known as 'Capel y Fidog', 'Capel y Foelas' or 'Capel y Pentre' was built....about 200 yards from the Pentrefoelas Bridge, but within the bounds of Yspytty parish....The last lay reader died in 1769'. Another writer in 1974 claimed that the chapel existed without a burial ground. Owing to the inadequacy of the old chapelry, and with an expanding population in the area, a new church was built in the settlement.

Pentrefoelas village centre, containing estate housing, remains essentially unchanged from its origins in the late 18th century as a small manorial estate village, relating to Voelas. The Tithe survey of the 1840s shows a church, mill, the Voelas Arms and a few houses on the north side of the river, but no buildings to the south of it.

The heritage to 1750

The village appears to take its name from the 'Foel Las', a motte (100416) which lies a short distance to the north of the village. Possibly thrown up by Owain Gwynedd in about 1164, the mound is around 7.5m high, and was created by scarping a natural hillock. A possible bailey lies to the south. On top of the motte, foundations for a square stone tower were found in 1882, while Cathcart King, one of the leading experts on castles in the later 20th century referred to a possible ring wall exposed by land slippage.

The motte could possibly have been the focus for a settlement which pre-dates the present village, but there is no evidence to strengthen what is really no more than a speculative comment.

Old Voelas, half a mile north-north-west of the village centre and lying below the motte, was demolished in 1819, though some window tracery, panelling and painted heraldry were retained and incorporated into other buildings. Otherwise one small cottage remains, and that is much altered. The stone barns and house presently standing at Hen Voelas probably occupy the site of the demolished buildings. According to Edward Hubbard (1986), it was the principal house of the Pentrefoelas uplands from 1545 until its demolition. It consisted of a large unit-system group of rectangular 16th and 17th-century buildings.

Pentrefoelas parish church (105469) was built in 1857-9, replacing a church of 1766 (the first on this site) which had a south transept of 1774. It has virtually nothing of architectural distinction. The only survivals from the earlier church are two wall memorials and a disused font. The churchyard is virtually rectangular.

With the Voelas Arms (105547), there is a belief – but unsubstantiated – that an inn could have occupied the spot from an early date on the important route westwards to Ireland. However, the first recorded license is only from 1762. The southern part of the building is 18th-century in origin, but it was re-fronted in 1839-1840 and also extended to the rear at that date. Nant y creuau (105546), to the east of the village, is an 18th-century stone building. Most of the stone-built houses in the village centre were built in the 1850s.

The mill (105548), on the eastern edge of the village has an overshot wheel fed from a millpond. It is known to have a date of 1815 on it, referring to a rebuilding at that time, so it must be 18th-century if not earlier in origin. Adjacent was a corn-drying kiln, still largely intact in 2000.

The bridge carrying the B5113 over a small stream, a short distance to the west of the church has a single arch and carries a date of 1782.

The site of Capel Pentre Fidog (105556), the medieval chapel, is as noted above located in the playing field south of the bridge, its position marked by a yew tree. The only description of it is by the last survivor of the congregation, who died in 1847, and who told of a clay floor covered with rushes.

Finally mention should be made of the Levelinus stone (100403), inscribed in Latin and Welsh and attributable to the period 1198-1230. Now in the National Museum Wales, its find spot is not known precisely, though it came from the township of Tir yr Abad and lauds Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's grant of an estate to the abbey of Aberconwy.
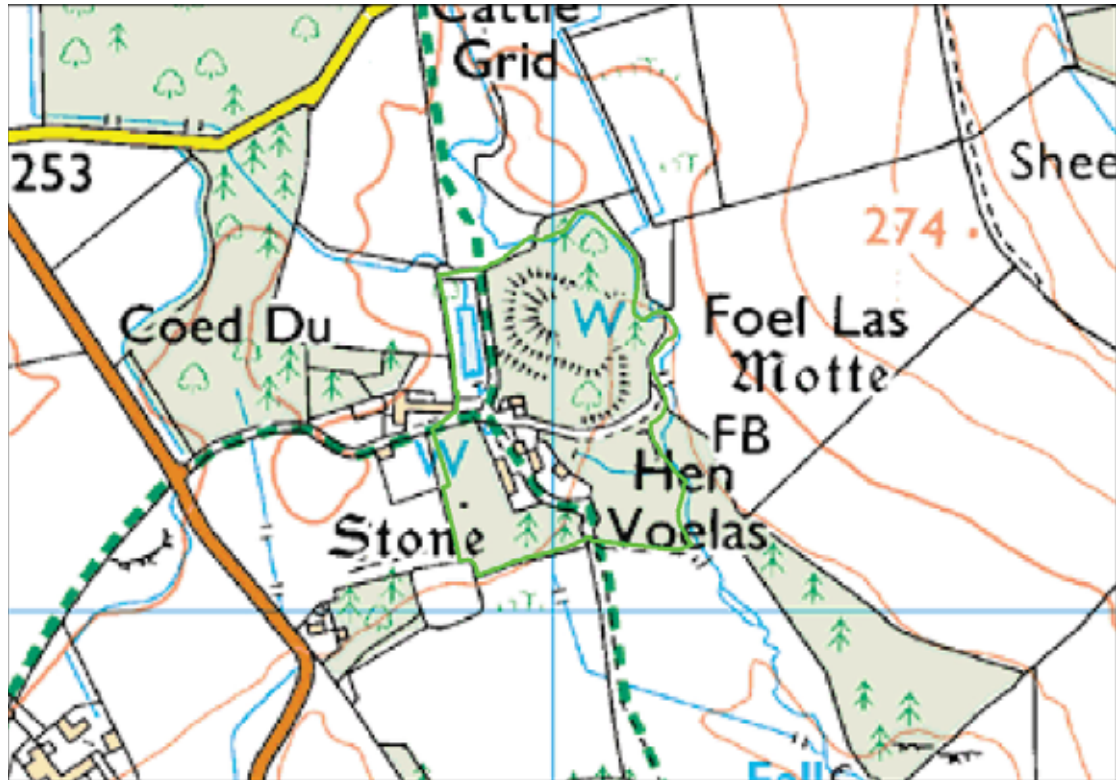
Rhos-on-Sea

SH 8422 8082
105514

Introduction
The modern settlement of Rhos-on-Sea is situated on the North Wales coast a short distance to the west of Colwyn Bay. In the early 19th century there was nothing here but a few isolated farms and cottages. Since then, with the appearance of the railway and the consequent development of Colwyn Bay as a resort, housing developments have spread to cover the whole of the area from Colwyn Bay and Llandrillo-yn-Rhos to Rhos-on-Sea and the settlements have effectively merged. Rhos-on-Sea is spread over land sloping gently north-eastwards below the limestone hill of Bryn Euryn. The land edging the coast rises slightly to form a small promontory at the north end of the resort.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Rhos-on-Sea up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development
Rhos-on-Sea is a name created in the 19th century to highlight this as a resort. There are no early place-name forms, those that do exist referring to nearby Llandrillo-yn-Rhos.

There is a tradition of an early monastery here, a community of canons under an abbot, founded probably in the 9th century and dissolved sometime after 1137. This is believed to have been established at Rhos Fynach, but the source of the information is elusive and the reliability of the evidence remains to be assessed. The earliest known mention of Rhos Fynach occurs in a recital dated 1230 by Llewelyn ap Iorwerth: it states that Ednyfed Fychan, his seneschal, had purchased all rights in the land of *Ros Veneych*, with all easements, etc, on sea and land. This was land that was later to be transferred to the monks of Aberconwy, an abbey that Llewelyn had founded some years previously.

Many centuries separate this putative activity and the appearance of the place on mid-19th-century maps. At the time of the 1847 Tithe survey the whole of the area of the modern settlement was arable and pasture fields with a few scattered farms and cottages. Rhos Farm, now Rhos Fynach, and a small cluster of dwellings by the seashore at the end of Rhos Road still survive to the present day. Rhos appears to have functioned as a small port in the past; a plan survives showing Rhos Quay as it was in 1855.

The heritage to 1750

St Trillo's chapel (100500) is situated at the base of a small promontory, on the foreshore below Rhos promenade. The tiny chapel, architecturally undistinctive, is built of boulders over a spring. Past estimates of its age have ranged from the 6th to the 16th century, but it is now generally accepted that the present structure is not much earlier than the start of the 16th century, built by the monks of Aberconwy Abbey. It is probably, though, built on the spot where there was an earlier, perhaps much earlier chapel. It was restored and re-consecrated in 1935.

Rhos Fynach fishing weir (100501) is an A-shaped structure, consisting of stone banks standing up to 0.7m in height, in which were set wooden posts, with wattling between. The main arm, constructed of compacted cobles, begins at the high tide line on the foreshore and extends in a north-easterly direction, terminating at the low tide line. The banks comprising the arms of the 'A' point shoreward. The main arm is approximately 440m length and 30m in width. The earliest documentary reference to the Rhos Fynach Weir, is in a 1230 charter, identifying fisheries that were said to have been subsequently transferred to the Abbey of Aberconwy, a view dismissed by Rhŷs Hays who made a detailed study of Aberconwy. In 1550 the fish trap had fallen into disrepair and its wooden posts had been removed to render it unusable. A document of 1767 refers to two weirs. Excavation provided a radiocarbon date centred on AD 1660.

Rhos Fynach (105549) was a single-storeyed building with attic. While a date of 1717 has been given to it, it probably originated at an earlier date, perhaps in the 15th century, and reputedly a grange of Maenan Abbey, the successor to Aberconwy. Traditionally, it has been known as Rhos monastery, presumably a link back to the putative history mentioned above.
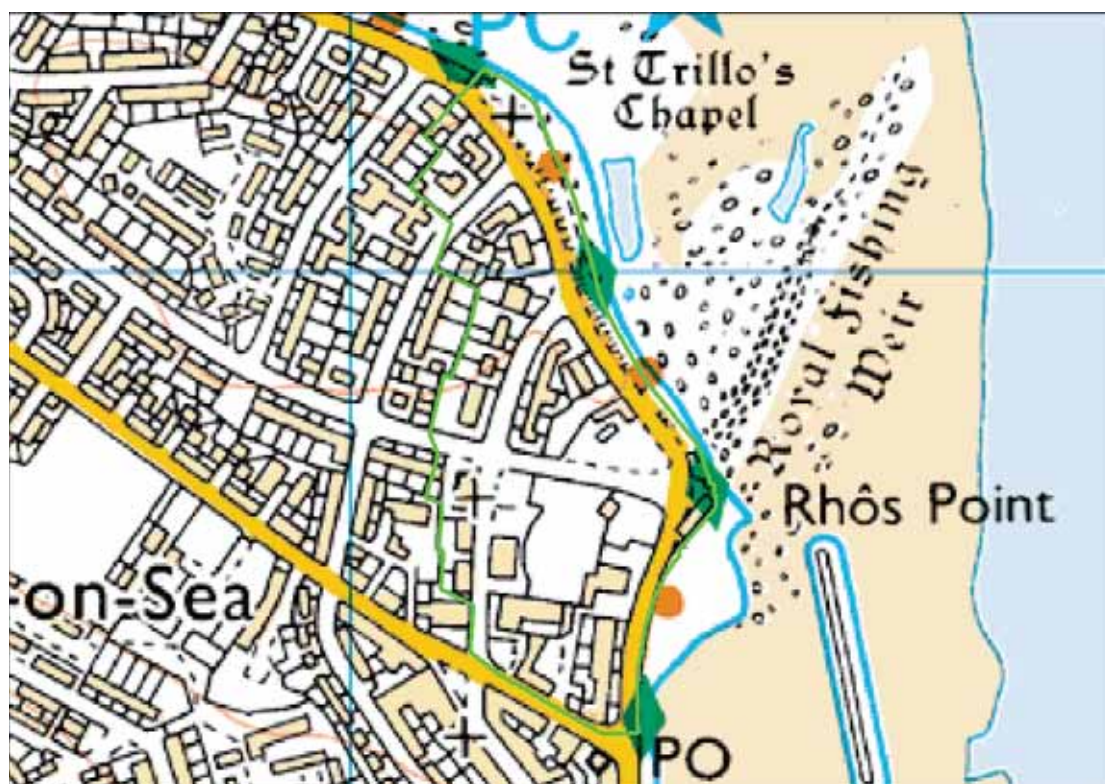
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St George

SH 9737 7577
105517

Introduction

St George lies just to the south of the A55, two miles south-east of Abergele. The small village is situated on a steep north-facing slope at the edge of the limestone hills which lie to the south of the low-lying marshy area of Morfa Rhuddlan. Most of the houses lie on St George's Road, which follows the contour of the slope. From the village centre, Primrose Hill Road runs steeply downhill to the north-east.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of St George up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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History of development

Known also as Llan Sain Siôr, St George is first recorded as *Lan S. George* in the years between 1536 and 1539 and refers to the church dedication. In 1566 it appears as *ll. sain sior* and in 1607 as *St Georhe al's Llansansior*. Around about 1700 the name of the township, Cegidog, was added as *kegidog* and it is this name that appears in medieval records, even being applied to the church that was here as in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 which referred to *Kegidauc*.

Claims locally that the church or at least its site as an ecclesiastical foundation go back over 800 years and have yet to be substantiated. There is nothing as yet to signal an early medieval origin, and the most that can be said is that there was a church here in the late Middle Ages (see below). Whether a settlement had developed around the church by this time is not clear but Edward Lhuyd's respondent at the very end of the 17th century reported that there were seven houses around the church.

The Tithe map of 1839 shows a small village with houses spread out along the lane with Bryn Iolo at the eastern end and the Dinorben Arms at the eastern. Primrose Hill rather than adopting its present line ran almost due south and joined the main street east of the inn. This provides a slightly different perspective on maps of the village, offering greater coherency to the settlement.

St George was the Kinmel estate village and its origins and development may therefore be closely linked to those of the estate. Old Kinmel, dating to the 17th century and now in ruins,

is the earliest known residence of the owners of the Kinmel estate, although the estate itself could be earlier.

The heritage to 1750

St George's church (105553) was rebuilt in 1887-94. Its predecessor was reportedly a Perpendicular double-naved church, as noted by Richard Fenton amongst others. The present building has a south transept and a big south porch with bellcote. Some of the furnishings from the earlier church were transferred: a Royal Arms in plaster from 1618, several hatchments from 1815 onwards, and a number of monuments, the earliest from 1699.

The site of the earlier church (102011), lies about 40m west of the present church, and is shown on modern maps, though there are now no obvious visible remains other than a level area with scarped sides and stone blocks at the angles, and a font, presumably positioned as it was formerly. Beside it is a fine mausoleum built in the late 19th century for the family of Lord Dinorben.
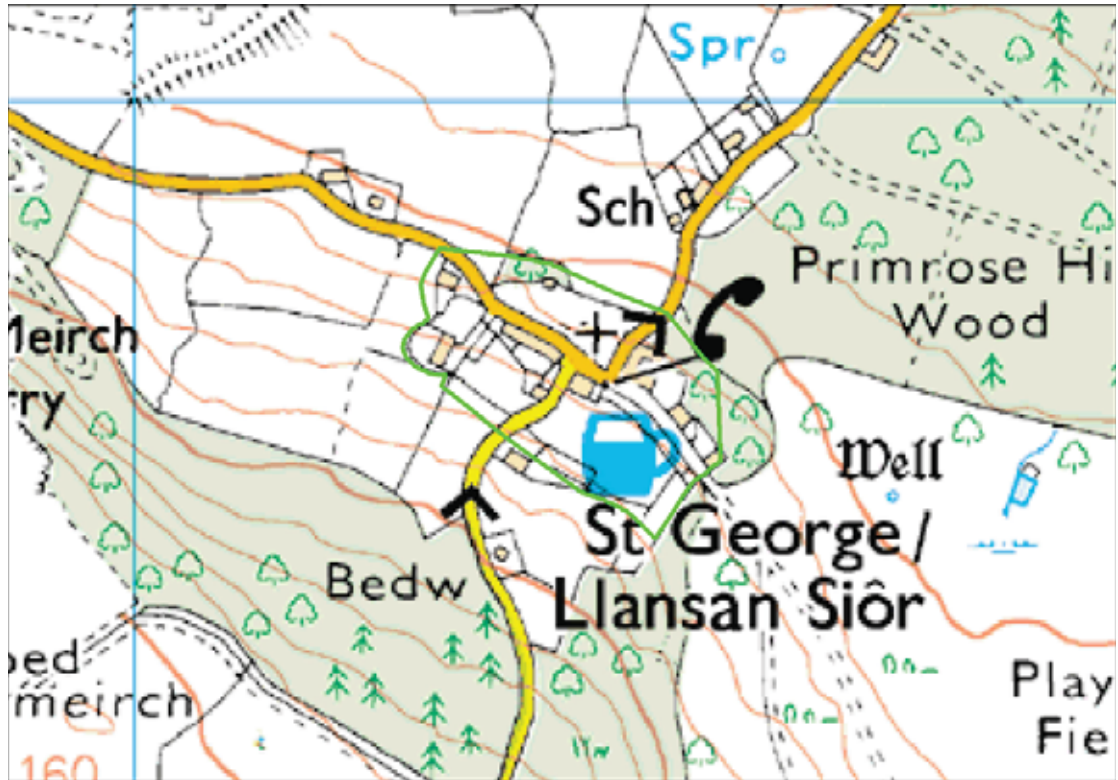
The churchyard is rectilinear and elongated, an original and irregular core at the west end with a more regular extension containing the newer church to the east.

Church Street has a row of cottages which are probably of 18th-century origin, though they were altered considerably in 1857 when they became estate dwellings for the Kinmel Estate.

The sloping field south of the Kinmel Arms appears to have two terraces (105552) at its eastern end. It is not clear whether these are natural or man-made, but the possibility remains that they were building platforms.

St George's Well, also known as Ffynnon Gegidog, lies 300m to the south-east of the church, in Kinmel Park. The spring fed into two basins one irregular in shape containing the spring itself, and a rectangular pool with masonry walls, both now enclosed within iron railings. How long it has been in existence is unknown though it was mentioned by Edward Lhuyd in his *Parochialia* in 1698.

Kinmel Manor (105554) lies south-east of the village. The Estate was bought in 1786 by Rev. Edward Hughes, and a new house built 1791-1802. There was much rebuilding in the 19th century, partly as a result of fires. A quarter of a mile south-east of the mansion, in the kitchen garden are the ruins of the previous house, Old Kinmel (105555), dating to the 17th century, with mullioned and transomed windows, storeyed porch and lateral chimney.

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