

TRALLONG

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Introduction

Trallong lies in the Usk Valley, 8km west of Brecon. The settlement occupies gently shelving ground on the northern side of the valley, the church and secular buildings to the south of the road lying close to the lip of a river terrace where the ground falls steeply away to the Usk.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Trallong 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 need to be modified 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

The name of the village means 'a very muddy area', though the reasons for this are not readily obvious unless it reflects a crossing of Nant Sefin, a nearby stream feeding into the Usk. Around 1180 it was apparently known as *thrwlwng kynuyn* from which it has been inferred that the church might originally have been dedicated to a Cynfyn, an otherwise unknown saint. In the first decade of the 13th century it was simply termed *Tralan* and in 1283 it was documented as *Trallwng*. By the beginning of the 16th century variant forms such as *Trathllong* (1502) and *Trallonge* (1513) were in use.

The form of the churchyard, the location on the valley edge and perhaps the ogam-inscribed stone in the church (though it can only be an assumption that it originated in the enclosure) all point to an early medieval foundation here.

Trallong was a manor belonging to the Bishop of St David's and a collecting point for produce from the bishop's lands in the area, Giraldus Cambrensis mentioning it in the late 12th century. Bishop Thomas was granted the right to hold an annual fair and a weekly market here by Edward I in 1290/91, though whether this influenced the pattern of settlement at Trallong is unknown, and indeed whether the focus for the market was in the vicinity of the church or elsewhere in the parish.

Also impossible to gauge is whether there was a medieval nucleated settlement here. The late 19th-century picture of a church, school, vicarage and two cottages do nothing to convince that there was a nucleation here in earlier centuries.

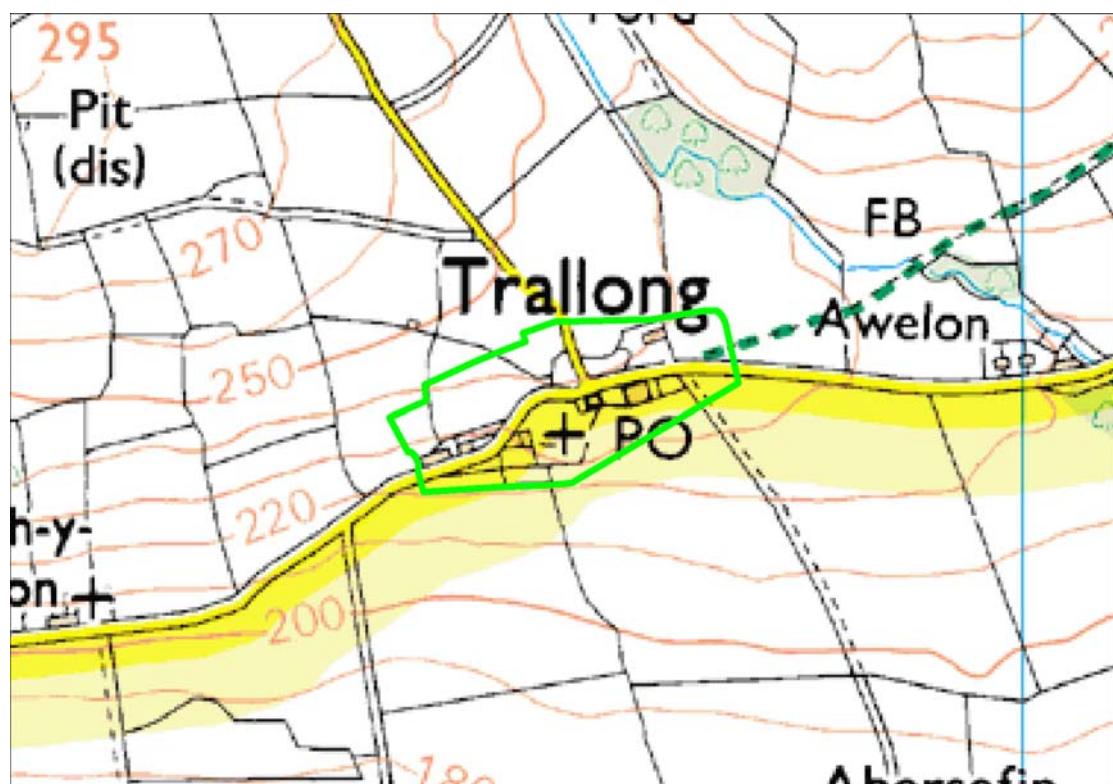
The heritage to 1750

St David's church consists of a single-celled nave and chancel, partially and perhaps even largely rebuilt in the 1860s. There are though Perpendicular survivals in the refurbished windows and the priest's door. A 13th-century font and a 6th-century ogam- and Latin-inscribed stone bearing a later ring cross are housed in the church, and there is too a Romanesque voussoir, presumably from an earlier church.

The curvilinear churchyard boundary on the north is distinctive, with the road through the village arcing around it well below the graveyard level. Linear boundaries form the other sides and it might be inferred that these have been modified over the centuries though no earthworks survive to confirm that this was the case.

The church apart there are no buildings of any significant interest in the settlement. Persondy on the churchyard's western edge reputedly has internal detail that could go back as far as the 16th century.

It seems likely that if there was any earlier settlement it clustered close to the church, on the natural shelf. There are, however, no obvious relict earthworks that might signal earlier dwellings, apart from a platform of uncertain origin and function to the east of the Church Hall.



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