

Llandulas

SN879413
2576

Introduction

Llandulas is a remote settlement, close to the border between Powys and Dyfed, and sheltering below the escarpment of Mynydd Epynt. It is positioned at a crossing of the river running down the small Afon Dulas valley, and is bounded on three sides by the Crychan Forest which has had a fairly dramatic effect on its appearance since the second world war.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers used in the HER to provide information that is specific to individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).



Llandulas (now known as Tirabad) village, photo 95-C-0629 © CPAT 2011

History of development

The settlement is now commonly termed Tirabad, a name which goes back to at least 1619 when *Tyr yr abate* or the 'abbot's land' referred to the land in the area which have formerly belonged to the monastery of Strata Florida. In the late 1690s Edward Lhuyd referred to the parish of *Tyr Abat* and in 1821 it was *Newchurch Tyr Abbott* reflecting the small church built

on a new site in 1716. The alternative, Llandulas, has no known pedigree, and looks like a back-formation from the river and/or Glandulas nearby.

This suggests that the settlement itself may not have had a history prior to the early 18th century, and that the church and nearby farm existed in isolation for many years.

The heritage to 1750

It was suggested in the original report that this remote village was typical of other isolated church settlements comprising the church and a single farmhouse, but that it was unusual because of the wooden 'forestry-workers' houses that had been erected to the west of the church since the war.

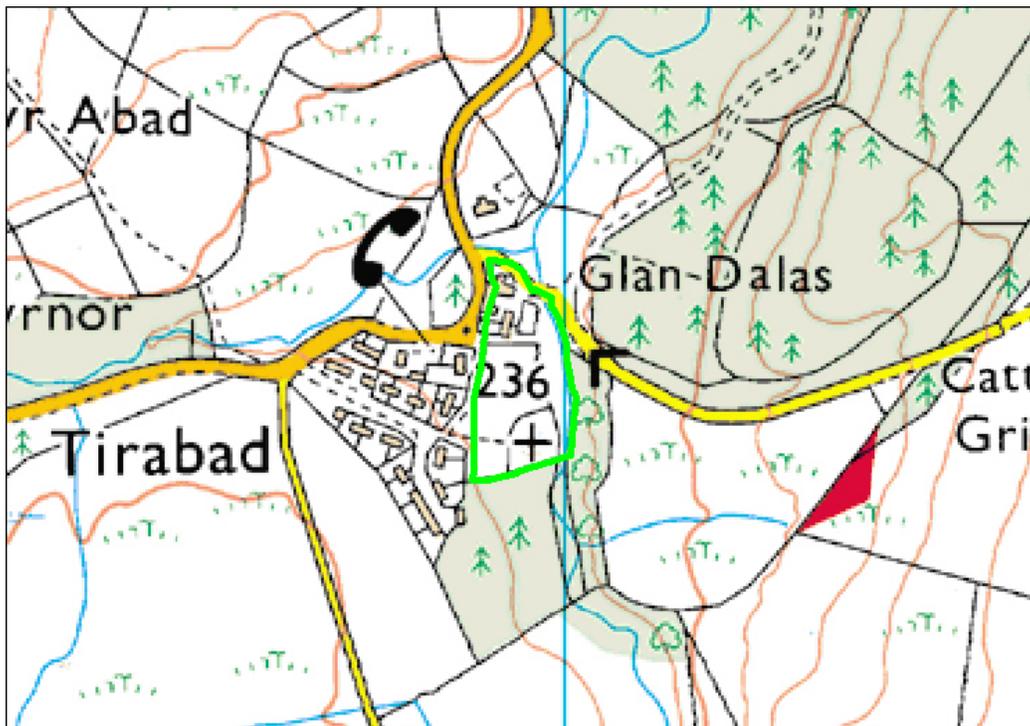
Llandulas church (20121) is a small, single-celled, white-washed building of the 18th century, as attested by a plaque inside it. It was refurbished or altered in 1871. The surrounding churchyard contains a large number of 18th-century memorials. If there was a medieval (or even early medieval) predecessor here, and this seems unlikely, nothing is known of it.

The church is set within an embanked, polygonal churchyard (2979), only 35m across, lying on the west bank of Nant Crysan, and the rectangular enclosure around the church shown on the 1840s' tithe survey, is almost certainly a result of cartographic licence.

An inscribed, early medieval cross-carved stone (3034) of the 9th or 10th century, now in the National Museum is recorded as coming from Pen-lan-wen, some 1500m to the east of Llandulas. Rather than originating at an early church here, as has been suggested in the past, it has been recently been noted that it was found on Mynydd Epynt in about 1873, and was later removed to Pen-lan-wen.

Glandulas farm (21110) is some 100m north of the church and is the only other building of any age in the village. The house is probably 17th-century and contains a good example of a post-and-panel partition. In the 19th century the main route through the settlement ran from east to west and separated Glandulas from the church. At some point, and perhaps as a result of the forestry activity, the route coming in from the north became more important and led to modifications to the road pattern that resulted in the road division between the two buildings disappearing.

The field between Glandulas and the church would be a likely location for earlier settlement, but there is absolutely no substantive evidence that strengthens any such contention. As a settlement Tirabad/Llandulas thus remains enigmatic.



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2009.
All rights reserved. Welsh Assembly Government. Licence number 100017916