

Carrog (*Llansantffraid Glyn Dyfrdwy*)

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Introduction

Carrog, formerly known as Llansantffraid Glyn Dyfrdwy, lies on the north side of the River Dee. The church is set high above the river, the river-terrace edge only a few metres to the south and the steeply incised but shallow valley of Afon Morwynion just to the west. The village spreads eastwards descending gently towards Pont Carrog, the crossing of the Dee.

Llangollen is about 11km to the east, Corwen 3km to the west, both being on the main A5 trunk road. Carrog lies on the B5437 which links with the A5 on the far side of Pont Carrog. Until 1974, it was in Merionnydd when it was transferred to the now defunct county of Clwyd.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Carrog 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 earlier times the small ecclesiastical foundation was a chapelry attached to Corwen, its name recorded as *Ecclesia de Lansanfreyt* in 1254, with *villa* (= township) *de Lansanfreyt* in 1292-3.

As a given name for the settlement Carrog is relatively modern, one of three transferred from Corwen, to create the new parish of Glyndyfrdwy in 1866; it is claimed that the name Carrog was allotted about the same time to the railway station because it was easier to pronounce for travellers. The river of the same name goes back to the late 13th century when it was documented as *Carrau* and a century later, in 1292-3 as *Carrok*, a Welsh term meaning 'swift-flowing stream' or 'torrent', and the vill of Carrog appears in medieval documents from at least the end of the 13th century.

The medieval church at Llansantffraid, undoubtedly a minor structure which was valued at only £2 in 1291, originally stood on the bank of the Dee but was swept away by the river in the early 17th century; its precise location has not been established. Oak beams up to 9 yards long were found when stone was removed from the river sometime before 1893, the speculation being that these might have formed part of the old church washed down by the river. The lost church was replaced, though on a different spot, in 1611. The nature of the settlement that centred on the earlier church is unlikely ever to be determined.



Carrog, photo 95-C-0114 © CPAT, 2014

Lhuyd recorded 6 houses ‘scattered’ around the new church at the end of the 17th century. By the mid-19th century there was closer to a dozen dwellings, well spaced between the church and the bridge.

The heritage to 1750

The church (19772) is dedicated to St Bridget as was its predecessor. Of early 17th-century build, it consists of a nave and slightly narrower chancel with a south porch. Heavily renovated in 1852, a new chancel erected in 1867; some of the 17th-century fabric remains. The font is considered to be late 12th-century in date and presumably was salvaged from the earlier building, while all the other fittings and furnishings are post-Reformation; its roof is considered to be a good example of its type from the early 17th century.

The churchyard is an irregular rectilinear shape, virtually trapezoidal, its form dictated by the local topography.

According to Lewis in the first half of the 19th century, the village contained a small building, then a dwelling, which was known as 'Owain Glyndwr's Prison House', reportedly used to confine captives taken by Glyndwr. On the other hand RCAHMW report an article in the *Llangollen Advertiser* in 1906 that said that Glyndwr himself was imprisoned in the house, and tied to a property called Carchardy on the bank of the river.

Llan farm, a short distance to the north-west of the church has an interesting group of buildings. Llan House was built in the 17th century, but its external appearance betrays remodelling around the beginning of the 19th century. The separate Llan farmhouse seems to have been erected at about the same time. Completing the group is an L-shaped range of farm buildings, which are probably 17th or 18th century but represent several phases of construction.

A well, Fynnon Sanfraid, presumably considered a holy well, was mentioned by Lhuyd a quarter of a mile above the church. This is taken to mean higher up the Dee towards Rhagatt but no details of its precise position can now be found.

Pont Carrog (102561) with its five arch span and cutwaters lies at the east end of the village. Classed as an exceptionally good example of a late 17th-century masonry bridge, it has the date 1661 engraved on one of its stones.



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