

LLANDETTY

SO 1279 2016

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Introduction

Llandetty lies beside the B4558 on the southern bank of the Usk, 12km to the south-east of Brecon. The church occupies ground sloping gently to the river edge, overshadowed by the steeper slopes of Tor y Foel to the south-west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llandetty 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 earliest reference to this place is in the ecclesiastical taxation of 1291 where its name is given as *Landetten*. Only in 1513 do we read of *Llandettuy*. Experts have suggested that the saint represented here was ‘Dedyw’, who may be the same as *Detiu*, one of three clerks of the better known St Cadog, and perhaps even a grandson of Brychan.

The dedication, river-side setting, the pillar stone within the church and the curiously elongated yet curvilinear appearance of the original churchyard collectively point to an early medieval origin for the church. Whether its presence encouraged the growth of settlement around it is, though, impossible to determine. There is no visible nor documentary evidence (as far as we are aware) that this was the case. It seems likely that as with other places in Powys, it remained a church settlement where the church was accompanied by no more than one or two houses.

The heritage to 1750

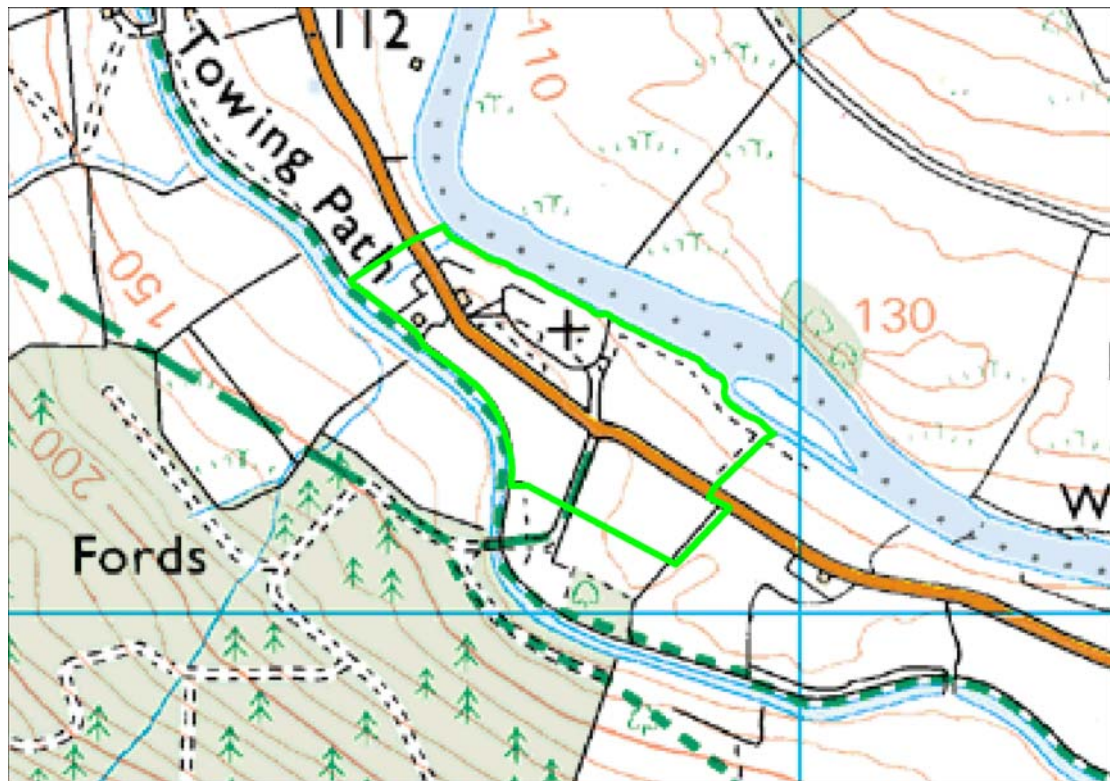
The small, simply designed church of St Tetti (or Tetta) has a nave and chancel in one and a south porch. Its masonry shell could be early as the 13th century and the same holds true for the west door, but the other architectural embellishments are likely to be of the 15th century. Restoration occurred in 1878. It has an early font, perhaps 13th-century, the Hanoverian Royal Arms painted on to the north wall, and a 9th-century inscribed pillar stone set up in the chancel which formerly provided two of the quoins in one of the church walls, implying perhaps that it probably originated here. Another early medieval stone, this one inscribed and cross-carved, but now lost, was set beside the road to Talybont in the 17th century.



Inscribed pillar stone in the Church of St Tetti, photo cs03-029-0015 © CPAT, 2013

The churchyard is best described as semi-elliptical in shape. Its terminals butt against the drop down to the slope of the Usk, and it is conceivable that there has been some erosion of this face in the past.

One hundred and seventy years ago a single cottage (now Llanddetty cottage) accompanied the church. A second group of buildings including the parsonage but all now gone lay beside the lane leading southwards from the church, just before it bridged the canal. None of these buildings appears to be of any great antiquity, and a more significant one, Llanddetty Hall of 17th-century origin, is nearly 500m to the north-west. It is perhaps the road itself, the B4558, which has a longer history for this appears to be a contour-hugging routeway typical of Welsh valleys which certainly goes back to the Middle Ages and probably much further back in time.



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