

Llandrillo-yn-Rhos

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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.

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

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.



Llandrillo-yn-Rhos church, photo CS03-037-0025 © CPAT 2014

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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