

Llandyrnog

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Introduction

Llandyrnog is one of several historic settlements that developed along the eastern flank of the Vale of Clwyd, with the river itself little more than one kilometre to the west and the Clwydians rearing up 2km to the east. The surface of the land here is relatively flat but the church is positioned almost equidistantly from two converging streams and the ground falls away gently on the south side of the settlement.

The B5429 runs through the settlement from north to south, and Denbigh lies to the west on the far side of the River Clwyd, about 5km away.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llandyrnog up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 document referring to the church of St Teyrnog (or Tyrnog) is the Norwich Taxation of 1254 which lists *Landernauc*. In 1291 it was *Llandurnok*, *Llandyrnok* in 1423 and it achieved its modern form in the middle of the 17th century. With only a single dedication to this saint in Wales, there can be no certainty as to the precise form of the name, though it has been suggested that the saint may have been of Irish origin.

Tradition has it that the church dedication commemorates a 6th-century saint and at least a part of the churchyard's shape is sufficiently curvilinear to suggest an early medieval origin.

The history of the church subsequent to its foundation and the origins of the settlement that now surround it are unclear.

By the mid-19th century a small nucleation had developed at the crossroads south of the church. The tithe map hints at a rather wider street south of the churchyard which at that time was being infilled, and its presence might in turn suggest a small market place. But there is no other evidence to collaborate this 'market area', and given the proximity of Denbigh only 5km away it seems unlikely. Furthermore there must be some doubts about the antiquity of the B5429. Its course in the vicinity of the village, cutting through the north-west/south-east axis of the former open fields implies a late insertion into an already existing layout. The minor lane running up from the river and passing on to Llangwyfan then takes the role of the major thoroughfare through the village.



Llandyrnog, photo 95-C-0158, © CPAT 2014

The heritage to 1750

St Tynog's church is a late 15th-century, double-naved building, which saw some restoration in the late 1870s. Of the sequence of construction nothing can be said because it is covered in a uniform coat of render. Two windows on the south side appear to retain Perpendicular stonework, but the remainder are Victorian replacements. There are fragments of a priest's(?) effigy in the sanctuary and some figured stained glass from around 1500, but otherwise little of medieval date remains.

A curvilinear churchyard is still apparent as a scarp within the north and east quadrants of the present rectilinear yard. Local information records that a segment of the churchyard was removed in the 20th century to widen the main road through the village, leading to the disinterment of skeletons. Records suggest this was done in 1931 and is clearly evident from a comparison of the modern Ordnance Survey map and its 19th-century predecessor. Apparently some 3m was shaved from the west side and at least 17 graves exposed.

Within the village core of Llandyrnog, 4 and 5 Church Square are cottages which could perhaps date back to the 17th century. They constitute the surviving part of a larger group of cottages which in 1839 were said to be cottages in the village occupied by 'paupers and others', suggesting that they could have functioned as almshouses.

As noted above, the pattern of the medieval open fields (though not the fields themselves) is retained to the present day in the layout of enclosures around the village. The pattern is even more obvious on 19th-century Ordnance Survey maps, emphasising the north-west/south-east axis of the medieval strips.



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