

Llanasa

SJ 1060 8150
19940

Introduction

Llanasa shelters in the bottom of a narrow U-shaped valley that runs eastwards to the Dee estuary coastline about 3km away, with higher ground to the north and south. The settlement has grown up near the head of a stream known as Afon y Garth, with some houses on the valley floor, others together with the church on the lower northern slope above the stream. It is served only by minor lanes. Prestatyn is about 5km to the north-east, Holwyell 10km to the south-east.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanasa 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. 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).



Church of St Asaph and St Kentigern, photo Llanasa 01, © CPAT, 2012

History of development

Nothing is known of the early history of Llanasa. The dedication to Asaph, said to have been a pupil of the more famous St Kentigern, and the position of the church in the valley seem to confirm that the church was an early medieval foundation. Even less certain is the period when dwellings started to collect around the church. What is unusual is that the church was established on a township boundary, with the church itself in Picton and the land to the south of the stream (including a small part of the churchyard after 1845) in Axton.

The Norwich Taxation of 1254 discloses the first occasion when Llanasa appeared in print, as *Llanassa*. Subsequently *Lanasaph* appeared in 1291 in the second of the great taxation records of the 13th century, and in about 1700 the variations were summed in the reference to *Llanassa alii Lhan Asaph et Hassa*.

Its later history remains a mystery like so many other small settlements in the region. Some medieval nucleation might be anticipated but there is nothing to corroborate what is no more than speculation. Lhuyd at the end of the 17th century revealed that there were six houses close to the church.

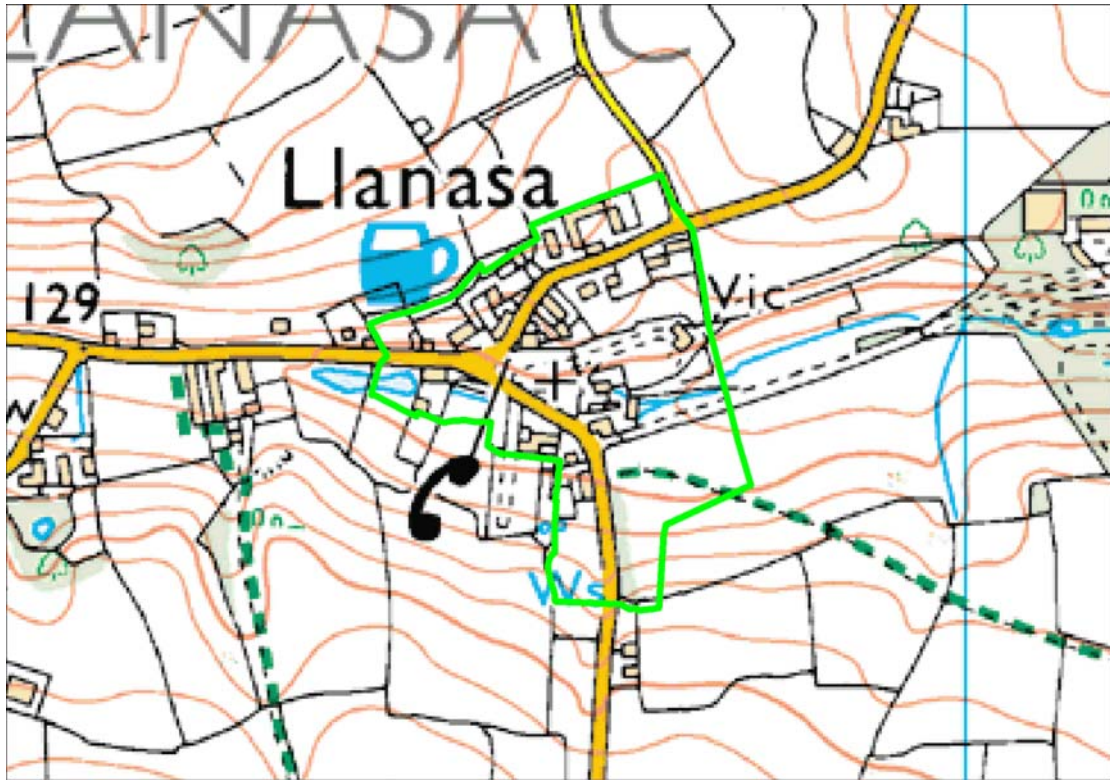
The heritage to 1750

The church of St Asaph and St Kentigern (19910) is double-naved and in the Perpendicular style, with some reconstruction in 1739 and restoration on several occasions during the 18th and 19th centuries up to 1874-7. There is a Perpendicular font, the east window contains early 16th century stained glass, there are early 14th century sepulchral slabs within the building, and externally the tombstone of Sir Peter Mostyn who died in 1605. The lychgate is dated to 1735.

The churchyard (19923) has a quadrilateral shape, and there is no trace of an earlier curvilinear enclosure. It is set on a slope and because of this the church itself has been terraced into the hillside.

The oldest recorded vernacular building in the village is Henblas (102522), to the north of the church, a three-storied stone building with mullioned windows of 1645, but very much modernised. An associated dovecote shown on 19th century Ordnance Survey maps has been demolished. Groes Cottages (102785) just to the north-east of the village has a date of 1674, the Old Gyrn Arms (60704) is dated to 1675, while both Henblas Lodge (60710) and the Old Post Office (60703) are also accredited with 17th century origins.

The parkland associated with Gyrn Castle, more than 500m to the east, stretches as far as the village edge. This has been given a Grade II listing in the non-statutory Cadw/ICOMOS register. Within this parkland and close to the built up area is a large terraced platform, clearly artificial (19924), though its purpose is unknown. It is adjacent to the track that now leads to the castle, though originally this was probably the main route down the valley.



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