

Cwm

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Introduction

The village enjoys a secluded location and if the 19th-century chorographer, Samuel Lewis, were to be believed its name is derived from its situation in a 'sequestered hollow, enclosed by lofty hills', otherwise a small side valley on the eastern slopes of the Vale of Clwyd.

Cwm lies 2km south-south-east of Dyserth, and 2.5km north of Rhuallt. A minor road, running north/south along the slopes of the Vale of Clwyd, passes to the west of the village centre, and from this another winds through the village centre and onwards up to Marian Cwm. It is now in the local authority area of Denbighshire but was formerly in the historic county of Flintshire.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Cwm 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 church at Cwm was included in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 as *Cum* and later in the Lincoln taxation of 1291. *Kwm* appeared in a document of 1284, *Combe* in 1608 and in its present form of *Cwm* in 1795. The name as Lewis pointed out somewhat poetically means 'valley'.

The emergence of the village here has not been recorded. There may have been medieval dwellings around the church, but in 1699, only four houses lay by the church according to Edward Lhuyd's correspondent.

In 1833 much of the land in the parish was composed of mountainous tracts of common, and very little was enclosed and cultivated. The only industry mentioned within the parish at this time was corn milling and a forge and foundry to make use of the local iron stone.

The village today consists of the church and vicarage, the old school, a public house, and a few 19th-century limestone cottages. Bod Hamer is a 20th-century addition to the village.

The heritage to 1750

The church (102077), dedicated to St Mael and St Sulien, is a listed building built on a hilly site with the nave on two levels and the chancel yet higher. The walls of the church are built of limestone of the type found at the south end of Moel Hiraddug, and the arch in the south

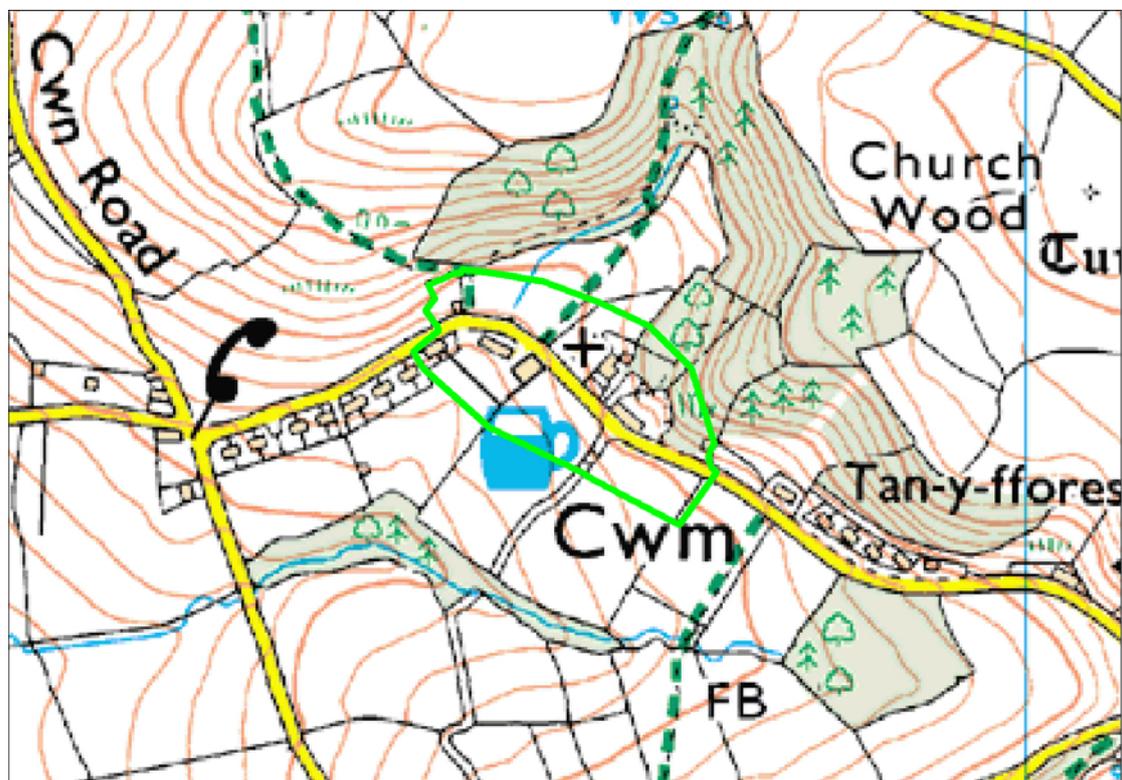
porch is matched by the limestone in a small quarry near the road between Cwm and Dyserth, but when it was seen in 1839 the church was whitewashed. The church has a double western bellcote. The east window, containing fragments of late medieval stained glass, is Perpendicular. Two south windows and the west and south doorways are of a similar date, but the south porch and the north windows are later. The western gallery and high pews were removed in 1843. There are several 14th-century sepulchral slabs, and in the chancel is a tomb recess of reused stones with 14th-century floral motifs in the soffit. A portion of the head of the churchyard cross with crucifixions on either side still survives. In the churchyard is an elaborate hooded tomb of 1642. There is an old and unsubstantiated tradition that the original church stood on the top of Mynydd y Cwm.

The churchyard (105822) is surrounded by a much-repaired stone wall, and seems to have been extended to the east, for it no longer displays the square boundary which appears on the Tithe map. There is no evidence, however, of the graveyard ever having had the circular outline associated with very early churches.

In the vicarage garden is a spring 'Ffynnon Fael a Sulien' (102078), which is possibly one of the many springs and wells mentioned by Lhuyd in 1699. A pipe brings water, presumably from this spring, to a roadside trough in front of the vicarage. Until fairly recent times the village was supplied with water from the covered wells in the woodland to the north.

There are, it would appear, no buildings of any age around the church. Ty Cerrig for instance was built as the vicarage as late as 1847 though there was an earlier vicarage (105824) on the plot, positioned further back from the road. The stables at the rear of the property are earlier, a date stone recording that they were built by the Reverend John Edwards in 1772.

In the Tithe schedule are found the names *erw*, *cefn*, *dryll*, *quillet* and *accar*, indicative of a former open field system. To the south of the village, the Tithe map shows a number of long narrow plots adjacent to a now disused and impassable lane.



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