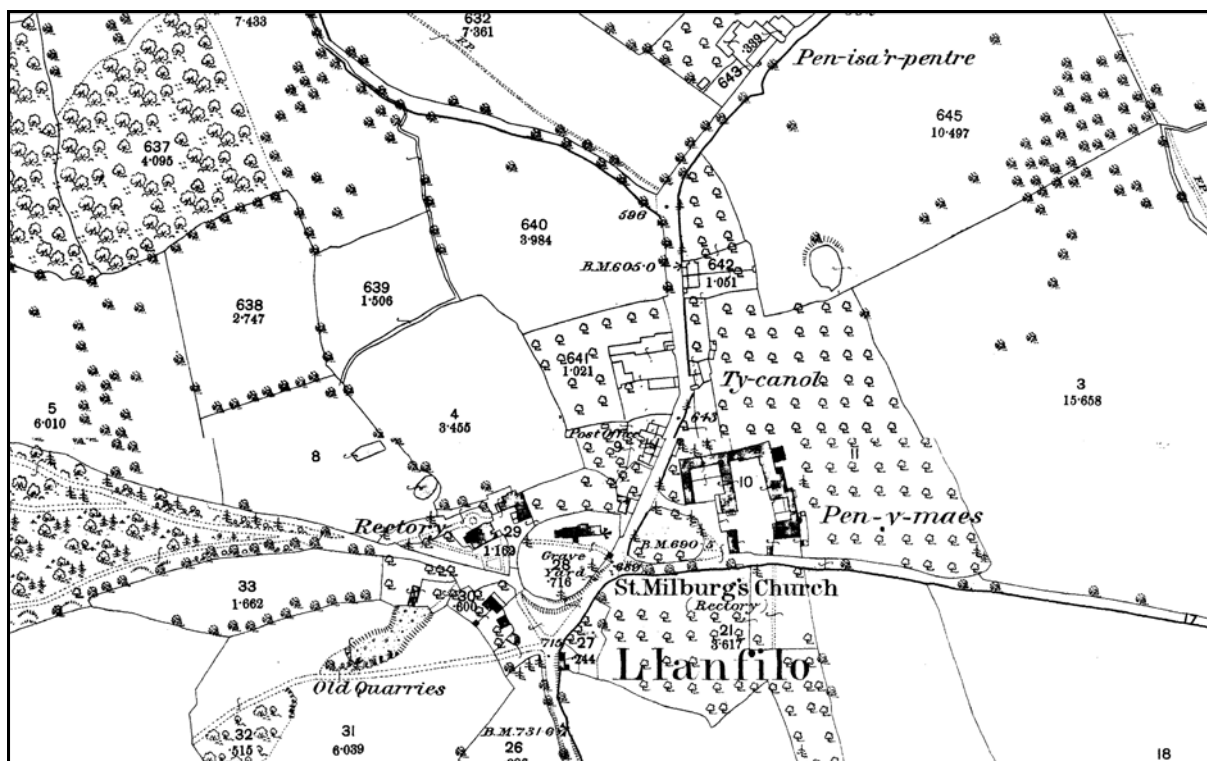**CPAT Report No 1056**

Historic settlements in the former Brecknock Borough

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

CPAT Report No 1056

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September 2010

Report for Cadw

CONTENTS

The Historic Settlements of the former Brecknock Borough

Background

In 1993, the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust compiled an assessment of the historic settlements of northern Brecknock on behalf of Cadw and the Brecknock Borough Council. It was one of the earliest such assessments for eastern Wales and ultimately ten such reports were completed between 1992 and 1995, embracing the entire region for which CPAT had a remit.

The imperative underpinning these surveys was laid out at the Brecknock Borough study in the following terms:

> It has long been recognised that development within town and village alike [might] disturb or obliterate significant information about the past, but a suitable response to a specific building development or other permanent land use change has usually been instigated, if at all, on an *ad hoc* basis. A more structured approach to the understanding of historic settlements and the preservation and management of this fragile resource is required. This has been given a greater urgency by the publication in 1991 of the Welsh version of the *Planning and Policy Guidance Note: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16 Wales). This emphasises the responsibilities of Local Planning Authorities in the conservation of the archaeological heritage and confirms that archaeological remains are a material consideration when determining planning applications (Martin and Walters 1993, 3).

Three principal objectives of the study were defined:

> i)   to produce a general picture of historic settlement in the area,
> ii) to identify, in as far as the evidence allows, those areas within the historic settlements that could be termed archaeologically sensitive, in order to assist in the day-to-day and long-term planning processes initiated by the local authority, and
> iii) to define areas of potential archaeological significance where developers might be required to undertake an archaeological evaluation as part of the planning process.

It hardly needs to be stressed that in the seventeen years since that report was circulated, there have been considerable changes, and we would hope improvements, in our perceptions of the emergence, development and collapse of settlements generally and in Brecknock more specifically.

Firstly, a series of Cadw-funded studies have appeared which directly or indirectly have had a bearing on settlement studies. The historic churches survey (1995-99), the early medieval ecclesiastical sites survey (2001-04) and even the deserted medieval rural settlement survey (1996-2001) all played a part in enhancing our understanding of settlement development in eastern Wales, as did some rather more specific and detailed ground surveys such as those of village earthworks in Brecknock and Radnorshire (1993 and 1996), and an analysis of one of the best deliberately planned villages in the country, New Radnor (1994).

Secondly, there are the results that have accrued from developer-funded works – whether excavation, evaluation, watching brief or building recording – as a result of local authorities implementing PPG16, Welsh Office Circulars 60/96 and 61/96 and the various editions of Planning Policy Wales.

Thirdly, there are recently published studies which have transformed our thinking on certain topics. Most notable in this context are the place-name investigations by Hywel Wyn Owen

and Richard Morgan (2007) and the first volume of the early medieval inscribed stones corpus prepared by Mark Redknap and John Lewis (2007).

And finally but in some ways the least tangible is the ever-improving perceptions and appreciation (or so we hope) of settlement in east Wales, as a result of accumulated expertise, and the accessing of research from other regions of Wales and England. This doesn't normally manifest itself in publications, although the writer's paper, co-authored with Wyn Evans (2009) on *clas* churches and their landscapes is an exception.

CPAT thus felt that it was an appropriate time to examine the picture of historic settlements, more than fifteen years after the initial study was completed. Various questions had been raised. Had developer funding in advance of the potential destruction or damage to the cultural heritage had much of an effect and if so where? Had our knowledge and appreciation of the historic settlements marked improved in the last fifteen years? And in a departure from the practice in the early 1990s when the Internet was little more than an unfulfilled dream, could we successfully disseminate that information authoritatively so that it could be accessed digitally to satisfy the increasing number of people who search our website? There are several hundred historic settlements in eastern Wales and it was not possible to examine them all in a single exercise. The former local authority areas of Brecknock Borough and Radnorshire were selected to start the programme and it is hoped to be able to follow with the other areas over the next two to three years.

Methodology and presentation

A pattern for each report had been established in 1993 through to 1995 comprising a report which covered a minimum of an A4 page of text and in some instances, depending on the size and interest of the settlement involved, three or four pages. The report considered, under four sub-headings, the geographic location of the settlement, the known history of its origins and development, the buildings and archaeology that were an integral element of the settlement, and finally a set of recommendations for further work.

Accompanying each settlement study was an Ordnance Survey map-based depiction of the settlement showing scheduled ancient monuments, known archaeological features and earthworks buildings or structures considered in the text, areas which it was felt at the time should be preserved in situ, areas that should be evaluated in advance of development, and a boundary line drawn around the historic settlement as it was then recognised, in other words the historic core.

The early reports also contained as annexes a copy of the descriptive brief for the preparation of the study and another of a draft paper on archaeology and the planning process in Powys

After various discussions the modelling of both the text layout and the accompanying map have been revised, to take account of changing circumstances and current requirements.

The baseline information – the settlement name, the national gird reference and the primary record number that links the settlement (as well as its individual elements) to the Historic Environment Record – have necessarily been retained, although the height above sea level and the prefix PRN have been dropped.

The geographic location has been retained, as has the section on history, now renamed 'history of development'. More change can be seen in the section formerly headed 'buildings and archaeology' which has been altered to 'the heritage to 1750'. This alteration results from two considerations. Firstly, it is becoming increasingly commonplace to refer to the cultural heritage and cultural heritage assets, convenient collective terms that embrace not only below and above-ground archaeology, and buildings, but also historic landscape (and townscape) elements that did not necessarily get the recognition that they warrant in the former

terminology. Cultural heritage is seen as a useful shorthand descriptive term for everything that we are concerned with here. Secondly, a decision was taken to end the study at 1750, bringing it into line with Cadw's terminal date for the concurrent scoping programme of medieval and early post-medieval monument scheduling enhancement. 1750 to 1760 is often seen as a starting date for the Industrial Revolution, even if its full 'flowering' did not occur in Wales for another fifty years. Equally importantly, however, it was during the later 18th century and a little beyond that some settlements saw marked development with a concomitant increase in the number of buildings, and the diminishing significance in the forms of evidence that are significant to the archaeologist. Ystradgynlais in this report offers an excellent example, and a comparison of this industrial town with say Llandefalle is instructive. This is not to downplay the significance of the buildings that date from the later 18th and 19th centuries, nor to infer that settlements that contain large numbers of such structures are not historic, rather it is a commentary on the shift in the nature of the evidence that is available to us.

This section of the report has also tried to adopt a more rigorous approach to the presentation of the data, whether it be on archaeological sites, buildings or the townscape or villagescape. It would be easy to write protracted descriptions of some buildings such as churches or earthwork complexes, or even in some instances the discoveries from development-led evaluations. The regurgitation of much detail, it was felt, would not necessarily be particularly useful to the general reader, and indeed might act as a deterrent. The inclusion of PRN numbers will allow the researcher or enthusiast to follow up individual leads should they wish, but what is offered here is a concise text covering as many issues as are currently known without over-elaboration on any one of them.

Finally, the section of recommendations has been removed. This, it should be admitted, is in part a pragmatic decision based on the realisation that some of the original recommendations covering standard issues such as the importance of consultation with the archaeological curator, the need for watching briefs and evaluations, and the like were compiled at a time when PPG16 was new, consultation practice was yet to be regularised, and the importance of the cultural heritage resource in our towns and villages had in some areas yet to be appreciated by at least some local authority planners. This situation has changed, and the importance of the cultural heritage is now largely accepted at local government level. It is pragmatic, however, for less satisfactory reasons. In an ideal world the recommendations for Crickadarn that the remnant earthworks in the churchyard and those in the field to the east should be 'surveyed and recorded at an appropriate level', or that at Llanafan Fechan the area of ridge and furrow to the north of the church should be 'recorded by aerial photography' would have been followed up and completed in the intervening seventeen years. That this has not happened is less a comment on the integrity of the recommendation, more on the limited resources that are available for surveying and aerial photography. It is unrealistic to assume that this is going to change, and perhaps equally unrealistic to assume that this is the best way to present a set of recommendations for future action. The writer would argue that it would be better to have a separate, prioritised 'hit list' combining all the survey or photographic targets, so that if resources were to be made available in Powys, decisions could be made on the basis of comparative need and significance.

There have also been some modifications to the plans that accompany the texts. The depiction of designated archaeological sites (scheduling) and buildings (listing) has been dropped, for we are conscious of the fact that it is the prerogative of Cadw to define these sites in cartographic form, and that the reader requiring information on the extent of a designation should approach the appropriate authorities. Furthermore, the number and extent of designated sites within any given settlement may change at any time, and assuming that the maps have a currency of several years, there is the potential for misleading a reader because the situation could have changed.

The definition of the historic core has also been modified, taking more account of existing boundaries in order to lessen any potential contention over whether a particular spot lies

inside or outside the historic core, whilst also stressing that the core boundary as defined is not an immutable perimeter, but is simply an estimate and a guide based on an assessment of the existing evidence by the writer as to where earlier settlement may once have existed.

Dropped to is the zonation of areas for evaluation in advance of development. In 1993, defining such areas was a useful guide to planners as to where archaeological intervention was most needed, but there is a potential conflict between the depiction of one or two such areas on a map on the one hand and the definition of the historic core on the other. If for whatever reason, an area within an historic core envelope is not highlighted for evaluation, this could be taken to mean that the area would not require further assessment in the event of a proposed development. Rather we should be working on the assumption that any development within an historic core should be a candidate for an evaluation, depending on the nature of the development itself.

More contentious perhaps is the decision to omit the identification of blocks of land defined as 'areas for preservation in situ', another facet of the 1993 survey. Where such areas are already designated within an historic settlement as for instance at Gwenddwr, there preservation is a given and no problem arises. However, in some cases in the past a decision that an area should be preserved has been taken on the basis of a rather superficial assessment of its worth, rather than on a detailed analysis of what is there. Yet if at a planning level a field containing earthworks is going to be preserved it has to be based on rigorously defined evidence that will stand up to scrutiny.

One final aspect to clarify is that the historic core envelope now defines only those areas within which there is the likelihood of settlement, by which we mean dwellings and their curtilages. The setting of any settlement will have been the surrounding landscape that was farmed and utilised from it, and potentially could spread over several square kilometres. Defining its fields, its pastures and its woodlands will be a considerable task, and its success cannot be guaranteed. Vital though it is to an understanding of that settlement, the inclusion of the setting within the historic core cannot be advocated. It requires a different level of zoning.

The original study listed 59 settlements, though this included several duplicates – as with Llanafan Fechan and Llanfechan, and Llandulas and Tirabad – which are alternative names for the same places. The current survey covers 43 settlements. Omitted are several settlements which reflect only post-1750 developments such as Llanwrtyd Wells and Beulah, and others such as Gwarafog where the nature of the settlement does not fit comfortably within the scope of this report.

An overview of historic settlements

The 1993 study provided a very thorough assessment of the settlements in what was Brecknock Borough. Attention was paid to the differing concepts of dispersal and nucleation, to the ideas of the late Glanville Jones on nucleated bond settlements, to the prevalence of settlements where 'llan' was incorporated in the name, to the primacy of sub-circular churchyards, to mottes with settlements, to those settlements displaying English (or more properly Anglo-Norman) influences and so on.

It is not proposed to repeat all of this here, but simply to look at the varying types of settlements to discern what patterns emerge.

Church settlements
In terms only of numbers, it is the church settlements that take precedence. The term 'church settlement' is a useful collective one, although it is one that probably doesn't figure in the classic texts on historic settlement. In that some degree of grouping or nucleation might be assumed in the definition of a settlement, the term is indeed almost a paradox. For the

morphology of a church settlement centres on the fact that the church appears to be positioned by itself or perhaps with no more than a single farm, an inn or a rectory for company. The church, then, is the settlement. In some instances it might be suspected that former dwellings have been abandoned or swept away leaving few if any visible traces. Putative bond settlements of earlier medieval date could be candidates. But some churches almost certainly never attracted more than a solitary dwelling around them, for they served a community dispersed in landholdings around the parish. Only in the most recent centuries have a few more dwellings aggregated around the church, and in places such as Llanynis on the bank of the Irfon, not even this has happened. Archaeology may demonstrate in due course that some of those in the list below were accompanied by dwellings in earlier centuries, but for the present in nuclear terms these occupy the bottom rung of the ladder.

Abergwesyn	Llandulas	Llanwrtyd
Crickadarn	Llanfihangel Brynpabuan	Llanynis
Llanafan Fechan	Llanfihangel Nant Bran	Lower Chapel
Llanddewi'r Cwm	Llanganten	Maesmynis
Llandefaelog Fach	Llangynog	Talachddu
Llandefaelog Tre'r-graig	Llanlleonfel	
Llandeilo'r Fan	Llanwrthwl	

A variant of the church settlement is what (at least for the present) we might call the common-side settlement. In a few instances churches and chapels (and there may be a bias towards chapels-of-ease rather than longer established parochial churches) lie beside what were once small patches of open land, perhaps where tracks met or some other good reason prevented the encroachment of enclosed fields. Only in recent centuries have dwellings tended to accumulate around or even on this common land, emphasising a relatively modern move to nucleation, while the common itself has gradually disappeared. How significant a trait this is remains to be established. So far four likely candidates have appeared.

Alexanderstone	Llan-y-wern
Battle	Upper Chapel

There are a few settlements where there is archaeological evidence for dwellings around the church but not concentrated in a true nucleation, but spread out, giving a non-nucleated pattern, but one that cannot be satisfactorily identified as a dispersed form of settlement. In reality it may be that our evidence is currently so imperfect that we simply cannot recognise the nucleated settlement that was once here, or alternatively that the evidence that we do have is open to other interpretations and these were church settlements of the sort noted above.

Alltmawr	Garthbrengy	Llanafan Fawr

Nucleated settlements are now well attested in this part of southern Powys, primarily because of the survival of earthworks that point to dwellings and their crofts. Indeed, in eastern Wales it is Brecknock that stands out because of its nucleations, for it is the Anglo-Norman takeover of the Usk and Wye valleys that set the region apart from areas further to the north.

Gwenddwr	Llandefalle	Llanfilo
Llanddew	Llanfihangel Talyllyn	

There are only two settlements which reveal elements of deliberate planning. Builth Wells has long been known as a market town and a case can be made for its original growth to have been organic, spreading westwards from the castle towards the location where the church was established. But in the 13th century when it acquired market rights, a new part of Builth

developed and this has the look of a planted addition. Bronllys has not previously been seen as a planned settlement. It was hinted at in the 1993 study, but further examination of the topography indicates that between the castle and the church, a settlement was laid out, terminating in a small market place.

Bronllys   Builth Wells

Finally there are some settlements that currently defy categorisation: the evidence that is available to us is insufficient to place them in any of the groups already discussed. It is unlikely that further documentary research or topographic analysis will resolve the problem; only archaeology may throw any light on the matter. Interestingly two if not three of these places were important *clas* churches in the early medieval era, while the scale of the well-attested open fields around Llyswen might suggest a thriving community on the banks of the Wye, but unfortunately one that cannot be distinguished directly.

Llangammarch Wells   Merthyr Cynog
Llyswen   Ystradgynlais

Finally, we might touch briefly on how useful developer-funded works have proved to be since the first study in 1993. The old local authority area of Brecknock Borough is an intensely rural one, containing only one historic town, Builth Wells, notwithstanding the claims of Llanwrtyd Wells to be the smallest town in Britain. Not surprisingly then, nearly thirty settlements have seen no developer-funded work of any sort in the last fifteen years. But there have been some notable successes. Medieval dwellings have been revealed at Llanddew and Llanfilo, other activity at Alltmawr, and positive work on the church and churchyard at Llandefaelog Tre'r-graig. And inevitably there have been some negative returns as at Gwenddwr and Builth Wells.

Abergwesyn
(Llanfihangel Abergwesyn and Llanddewi Abergwesyn)

SN 852526
2550

Introduction

The conjoined settlements of Llanfihangel Abergwesyn and Llanddewi Abergwesyn are sited in the narrow upper reaches of the Irfon valley, at its confluence with the Nant Bach-helyg system, close to the boundary between Dyfed and Powys. Llanfihangel, which is now the predominant settlement, lies between the rivers while Llanddewi is located on the west bank of the Irfon. Collectively they are known as Abergwesyn on modern maps and in recent records.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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).

History of development

Though now a single settlement, and treated as such for the purposes of this survey, Abergwesyn in fact comprises two settlements on opposite sides of the River Irfon. Each formerly had its own church and these gave their names to the settlements. Their close proximity, albeit separated by the river, implies an imperative for adjacent estates to have their own places of worship in the Middle Ages.

Llanfihangel Abergwesyn is centred on the ruins of St Michael's church on the eastern bank of the river. This church was a chapelry of Llanafan Fawr and at the Dissolution in the mid 16th century was in the possession of Strata Florida Abbey.

Llanddewi Abergwesyn lay to the west of the river, and was focused on the now ruined church of St David. This settlement has all but disappeared and only two houses now remain. St David's church was a chapelry of Llangammarch (according to Edward Lhuyd writing at the end of the 17th century), but also a possession of Strata Florida Abbey.

While the name *Abergweffyn* (meaning mouth of the river Gwesyn) first appears in 1273, the churches are referred to at a rather later date with *Llanyhangleabergwessen* referenced as late as 1578 and *ll. đewi A. gwesyn* about two years earlier.

Both settlements seem to have been depopulated by the 19th century, and their respective tithe surveys show them to have been much the same size as they are today. The two parishes were united in 1864 and St David's church was subsequently demolished.

The heritage to 1750

Llanfihangel Abergwesyn

The ruins of St Michael's Church (4424) are enclosed by the remains of an embanked polygonal churchyard some 75m across, standing above the west bank of the Bach-helyg. The church was built in 1870, replacing what was presumably a medieval structure, in order to serve the newly united parishes and was demolished in 1964. The site is arguably the earlier of the two Abergwesyn settlements, and perhaps early medieval (20123), but neither the church nor the churchyard show any outward signs of great antiquity. One of the few medieval furnishings, the font which is considered to be 13th-century, was removed to Beulah Church on rebuilding.

There are no buildings of any great age in the settlement. The Grouse Inn (2911) is a large stone building on the road-side to the north of the church. Now a private house, it is probably of 18th or 19th-century date. Pen-twyn Farm (2912) has a range of 19th-century farm buildings of local architectural interest.

A small enclosed earthwork platform (2913) survives to the south-east of the Grouse Inn. This appears to be the remains of a relatively recent house site.

Llanddewi Abergwesyn

The ruins of St David's Church (1188) stand within the remains of an elongated polygonal churchyard on the west bank of the Irfon river. The church was last used in 1865 and was partially demolished in 1886 against the wishes of the parishioners. The building was a simple, single-cell structure and was presumably of medieval date. It is said to have been the smallest church in the diocese. Its font, too, went to Beulah church, and is thought to be the earlier, perhaps 12th-century.

The churchyard (20122) is still contained on the west by a substantial bank and ditch, although this now lies outside the present churchyard wall. The eccentric position of the church suggests that the churchyard may once have been smaller but was enlarged upslope to the west.

It has also been suggested that the southern part of the original churchyard enclosure has been separated off by a trackway and a small dwelling cottage – Irfon Cottage – now occupies the isolated segment (the original bank and ditch still being used as the southern boundary of this property). This is said to have been built in or just before the 1840s. The north-eastern boundary of the churchyard is formed by a substantial river scarp, implying that there may have been some erosion on this side, although the river has now retreated from it.

Ffynnon Ddewi (3453), a holy well, is recorded as being close to Llanddewi Abergwesyn church. Thought to have been lost, it is probably the stone-surrounded spring emerging about 80m to the south-east of the church foundations.

In summary, nothing has yet emerged to suggest that either of these historical places was anything but a church settlement in the Middle Ages and more recently, *i.e* a historic church with perhaps a single dwelling, farm or inn adjacent.
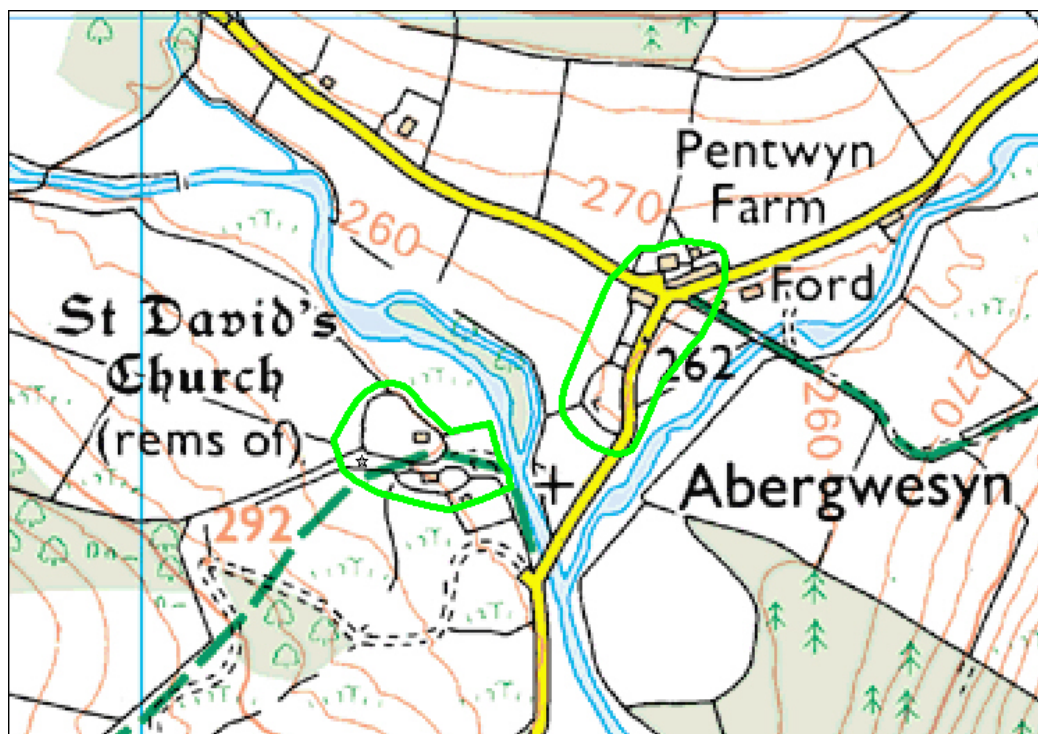
Aberllynfi

SO 172377
2551

Introduction

Aberllynfi is an elongated linear settlement sited within the flood plain of the Wye valley adjacent to its tributary, the Afon Llynfi. The modern settlement lies at the junction of the A438 and A4079 roads.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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).

History of development

There is evidence for both Iron Age and Roman settlement at Aberllynfi (centred on the hillfort of Aberllynfi Gaer), though neither is necessarily connected with the presumed area of medieval settlement (examined here) nor the modern village at Three Cocks.

The presence of medieval settlement here has yet to be established but could have been centred on the castle and church to the north-west of the present village, although both sites have long been abandoned and there is now no surviving evidence of habitation from that period.

The earliest reference is from 1234 when it is recorded as *Abberlenevy*, with the straightforward meaning of 'the mouth of the river Llynfi'. It was regularly mentioned in medieval documents with minor variations in the form of the name, and has been identified as one of the English knights fees during the 14th century.

The post-medieval focus of the settlement appears to have shifted slightly to the south-east to Three Cocks on the main A438 road. This was presumably during the 18th century, once Aberllynfi church fell into disuse, and as the Hay to Brecon road grew in importance. The first mention of the Three Cocks Inn was in 1754, and it is quite possible that this was the earliest building on the main road.

The heritage to 1750

Aberllynfi Gaer, a scheduled ancient monument (494; SAM B159) is a small multivallate earthwork enclosure; typical of Iron Age hillforts in the region. Small-scale excavations in 1951 indicated that this site had had a long use, with evidence of Neolithic activity (which

pre-dated the hillfort), and also Roman reuse of the site. Other signs of Roman activity have come from Gwernyfed Park to the south of the Gaer.

Aberllynfi castle, also a scheduled ancient monument (513; SAM B80), is a typical medieval motte and bailey, though the bailey has been all but destroyed. Aberllynfi is generally assumed to be the castle that changed hands several times in 1233.

The site of St Eigon's church (527) stands some 50m south-east of the castle and is now barely visible in an area of open low lying riverside pasture. The precise nature and plan of the building is not entirely clear, but it is a reasonable assumption that the stone-walled ruin (some 20m by 8m) standing on the traditional site is the church. If this is the case then the church was probably a simple, two-celled building, perhaps originally a chapel to the castle, and has subsequently assumed the role of a village church though there is no churchyard. Glasbury church register records marriages and baptisms at Aberllynfi up until 1695 and it appears to have gone out of use soon afterwards, though a date as late as 1731 has been proposed. There are antiquarian stories of monuments to the Williams' family of Gwernyfed in the church.

Possibly the area around the church and the castle contained some form of medieval settlement, although no obvious remains now survive. The most likely areas are probably to the south and west of the castle. Whether there was such settlement here, however, has yet to be determined.

Great House Farm (9266) is a ruinous building, lying south of the castle, which probably dates from the 18th century and is of considerable local architectural interest. It is sited within semi-landscaped grounds (now comprising neglected orchard and woodland), and it is possible that any trace of medieval settlement in this area may have been removed by these features.

The Three Cocks Hotel (20815) is stated to be a 16th or 17th-century coaching inn. Otherwise there are no buildings at Three Cocks obviously earlier than the 18th century, while the mill buildings (2988) and a barn (2989) adjacent to that building probably date from that century. These support the general contention that this part of Aberllynfi is merely the post-medieval re-location of the village.
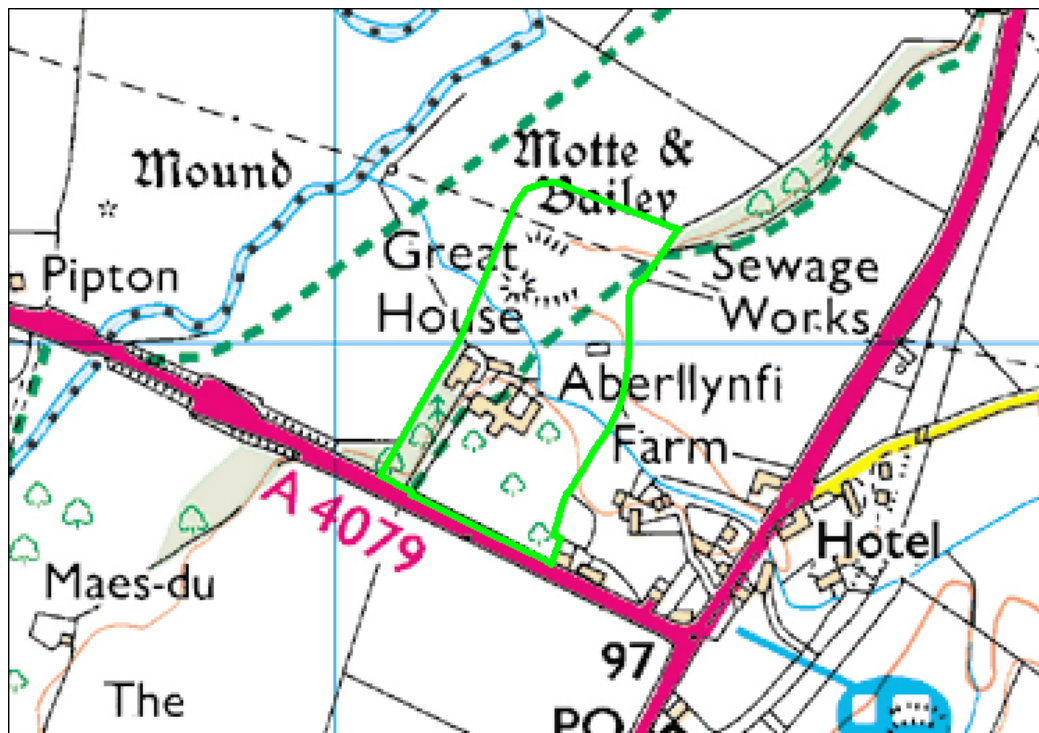
Alexanderstone

SO 073300
2552

Introduction

Alexanderstone consists of little more than a small group of houses lying at the western foot of Pen yr Allt hill, immediately above the A470 trunk road and some 1.5km to the north-east of Brecon.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Alexanderstone while having a tangible medieval presence, has little recorded history, and although the name is mentioned in medieval documents they shed little light on the settlement's past. It is focused on the medieval castle motte and the later farmhouse adjacent to it. As it has no known church it is unlikely to have an early medieval component, but instead is a settlement that emerged in the wake of the Norman Conquest. The earliest reference that has been identified is from 1373 when it was termed *Alisandreston*, meaning 'Alexander's farm or settlement', though this was probably more than two centuries after the construction of the castle.

The heritage to 1750

The central feature of the settlement is the small medieval castle, which is a scheduled ancient monument (480/SAM B45), lying behind Alexanderstone farmhouse. This earthwork comprises a motte some 20m across and 4m high with what should be the remains of a rather small bailey enclosure attached to it on the north-west.

The field to the south of the castle is now occupied by Alexanderstone farmhouse (6949), a two-storied, 17th-century gentry house developed from a longhouse of putative medieval origin. Further medieval buildings may once have occupied this area. The adjacent barn dates to around 1700. The field immediately to the south of the farmhouse contains earthworks representing formal gardens associated with the house, and it has been suggested that the motte then served as a viewing platform.

The settlement that emerged around the motte can be seen to have been larger than today as the remains of two building platforms (6770) and associated plots survive in fields to the east of the castle; known locally as Lower Alexanderstone, a dwelling or farm under the name of Lower Alexander was still occupied there in the mid-19th century. These presumably

represent a now deserted part of the medieval settlement. Further to the north, Wern Cottage and Alexanderstone Cottage had long narrow plots behind them which are reminiscent of medieval holdings and they also fronted, in the 19th century, onto a small open 'green' or common, which might also signal a settlement focus.

Traces of possible ridge and furrow (2933) survive to the south of the castle, but signs of an associated open-field system are difficult to detect here.

In summary Alexanderstone appears to be a small settlement established around a motte and bailey castle. A gentry house emerged beside it at a later date, and there are traces, albeit it limited, of some associated settlement in the medieval period. The dwellings and their holdings, however, did not last into the modern era.
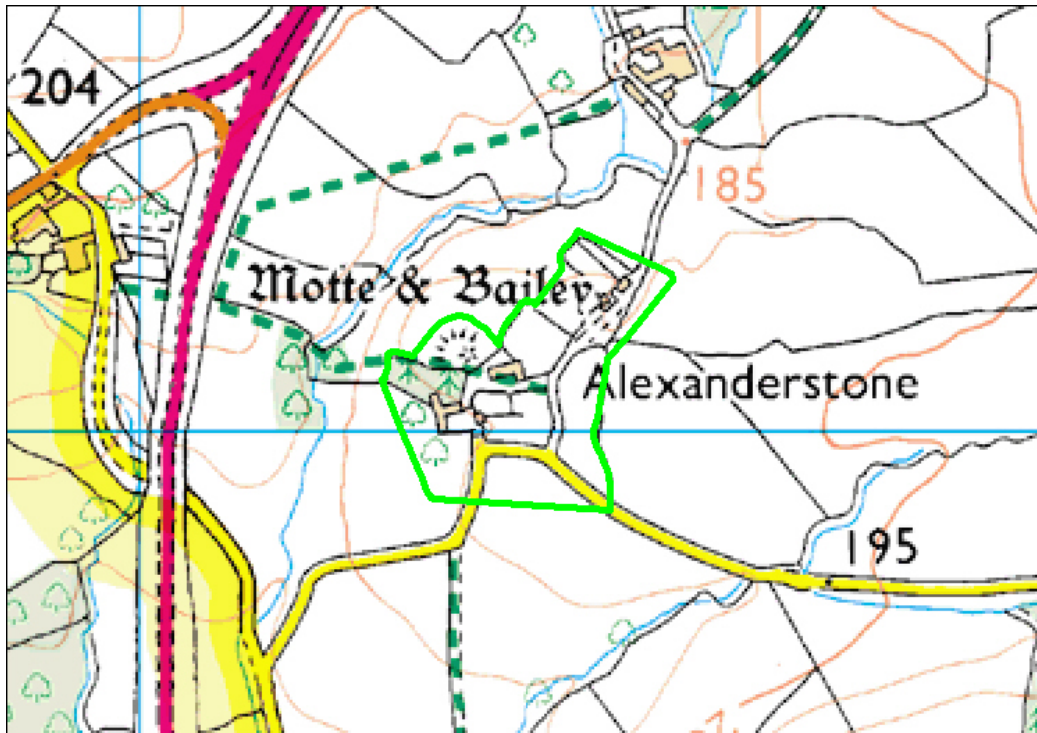
Alltmawr

SO073468
2553

Introduction

Alltmawr is a small church settlement sited on the western edge of the Wye flood plain, adjacent to the A470 trunk road. It is 5km to the south of Builth Wells.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Alltmawr is considered to be typical of the small, de-populated medieval parishes that surround Builth Wells. An early medieval origin is possible, but the settlement itself has little recorded history and comprises only the church and an adjacent gentry house, although there is some evidence that the village was formerly larger.

The earliest form of the name is as late as *c.*1566 when *gall-mawr* meaning 'big wooded slope' appeared in the records. Edward Lhuyd recorded Alltmawr as a chapelry of Llanafan Fawr at the end of the 17th century.

The heritage to 1750

St Maritius' Church (20152), with its nave, chancel and bellcote, is, at only 10.5m long, one of the smallest parish churches in Wales. The plan of the nave is basically medieval, although much of the fabric dates from a heavy restoration and rebuilding in the early 19th century.

The church occupies an irregular stone walled churchyard (2683) lying on a moderately steep east-facing slope. This enclosure is curvilinear on the north and east but straight on the west, where it abuts Chapel House Farm, and on the south, where it borders a modern garden. This sub-circularity, albeit truncated on two sides, may be indicative of an early medieval origin, though this cannot be verified.

A set of earthworks (2684) survive in the fields to the south of the church. These initially appeared to be the remains of building platforms located on either side of a trackway, leading south from the church, and were thought to represent a now deserted element of the medieval settlement, with the trackway being be the remains of the main road diverted by the building of Chapel House. Evaluation work in 2002 rejected these as platforms but did confirm industrial and perhaps occupation activity, albeit undated, at a slightly lower altitude in the field, establishing its archaeological potential.

The remainder of the land around the church is occupied by relatively modern building, and no other evidence of settlement survives. To the north and east are Chapel House (2685), a late 19th-century creation in the 'arts and crafts' style, and its heavily landscaped gardens. The small estate surrounding this house could have obscured earlier buildings around the church.

The only other surviving house in the settlement is Chapel House Farm (2686), which abuts the churchyard on the north. This is a post-medieval building, though possibly with earlier elements, which has been incorporated in to the Chapel House estate.

In summary this is a church settlement where there is little contributory evidence from cartographic and documentary sources for settlement before the 18th century, but where evaluation has demonstrated the potential of the area south of the church for past human activity.
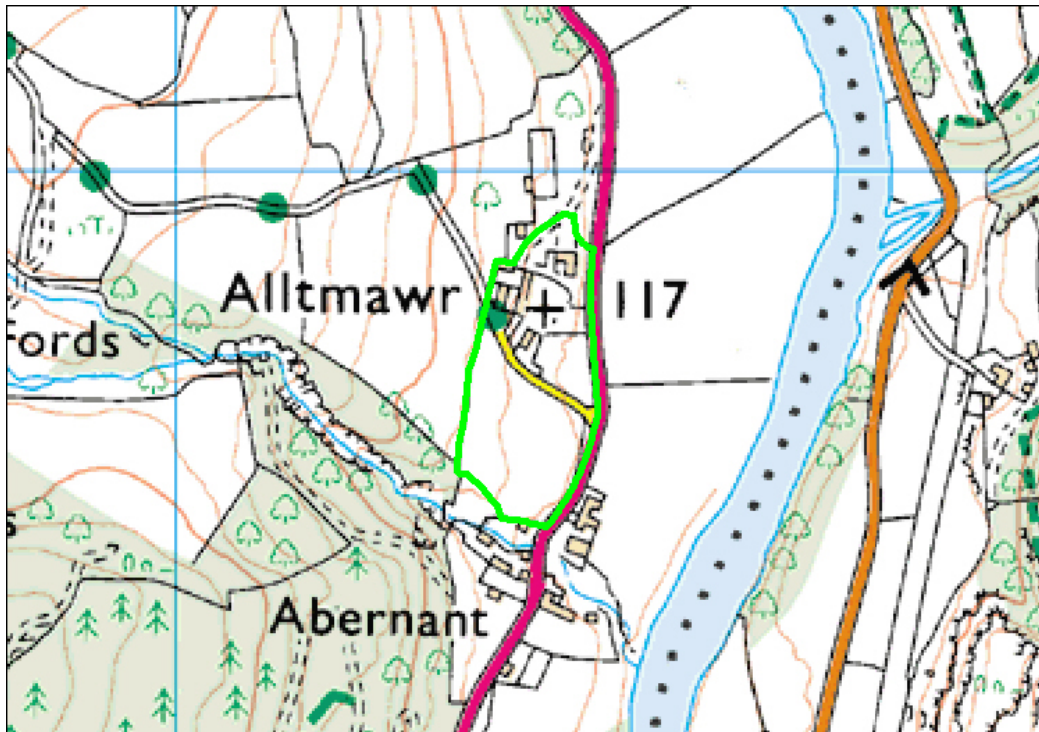
Battle

SO 009310
2554

Introduction

Battle is a linear, road-side settlement, running eastwards from its church. It is sited on the north-eastern lip of the steep sided Ysgir valley some 3km from Brecon.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

History and tradition suggest that this was the location of the decisive battle between the local forces of Bleddin ap Maenarch and the invading Norman forces of Bernard de Neufmarche in 1092. The latter's victory led to the subjugation of much of Brecknock. The exact site of the battle (474) is not known, although it is generally ascribed to an area south-west of Battle village, near the large standing stone (467) which local tradition holds to mark the burial of the slain. However, the more prosaic explanation of the name which first appeared as *Battle* in 1527, but was *Bello* in 1222-24 is that it was named after Battle Abbey in Sussex which held the advowson (or rights) of the church here after the Conquest.

The church dedication and the vestigial circular churchyard (see below) may indicate an early medieval origin for the church although the name of the village obviously derives from its later history. The parish of Battle was formerly an integral part of the parish of St John the Evangelist in Brecon.

Despite its medieval pedigree the village has the most modern character of any studied in the original survey of 1993, and is little more than a conglomerate of new housing.

The heritage to 1750

Battle Church (2952) is a single-chambered building, dedicated to St Cynog. Although largely rebuilt in 1880, it retains a barrel-vaulted roof of about 1500.

The church lies in a roughly rectangular churchyard (2953) perched on the edge of the Yscir valley. This yard appears to be a relatively modern creation, although it is depicted in this form on the tithe survey of 1847. However, the line of a former sub-circular enclosure survives as a low bank in the gardens of the adjoining Bryn yr Hal and Y Dderwen, as well as within the churchyard. This sub-circular churchyard (2954) would have been 60m across and

centred on the site of the present church, and this appears to be confirmed by an early estate map of the area.

The present village comprises little more than new bungalows set in large regular gardens. Nineteenth-century cartography reveals that Battle formerly comprised about eight buildings ranged around an open space to the east of the church, probably a small tract of unenclosed common land (2955). This landscape feature (which has now disappeared) comprised the field now occupied by Panteg, Crud y Arwel and Morwell, and was encompassed by a wide road occupying the area in front of School House, what is now Hoel y Garreg and the plot now occupied by Oakleigh. It originally extended north of the church (where it was still called Battle Common at the end of the 19th century), but even by the time of the tithe survey in the middle part of that century, parts of it had been enclosed as small fields.

Some of the dwellings shown on the map look to be on the common rather than around its perimeter and thus hint at later 18th-century squatters taken up residence, rather than earlier houses. Certainly there are no recognised early buildings in the settlement. The farm of Ty'r Pentre is 18th-century, though later in that century rather than earlier.

Battle is atypical of the settlements studied here, as it appears to be primarily a late development around the edge of a small common which remained unenclosed at the convergence of two trackways. In the medieval period it is entirely possible that there was only a wayside chapel here, though this will be demonstrated only by excavation.
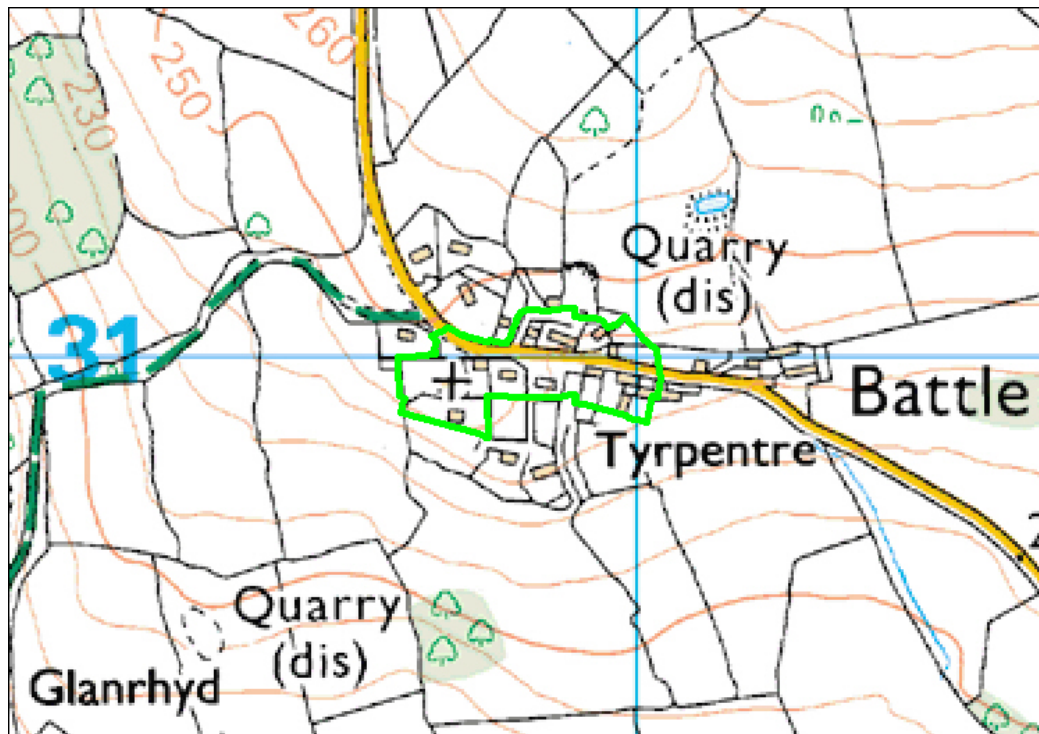
Bronllys

SO143349
2556

Introduction

Bronllys is one of the larger nucleated settlements in Brecknock, lying at the junction of the A479 and A438 roads, halfway between Brecon and Hay on Wye, and has recently been bypassed. The settlement occupies a slight spur on the gently sloping northern side of the valley the Afon Llynfi /Dulas river system.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

The settlement is first recorded as *Brendlais* around the year 1200, and could mean 'the court of Brwyn', who may perhaps be the *bruin o bricheinauc* (Brycheiniog) living in the 12th century. Whether the court that is referred to has any link with the moated site adjacent to the church has yet to be established. It is a characteristically 'English' settlement, despite its Welsh name, and looks to be one of the few settlements in the area which has no obvious 'Celtic' component.

The village today, although still centred around the church, is a linear development running east-west, for about half a kilometre, along the main Hay to Brecon road. It does not now spread as far as Bronllys Castle, which lies some 500m to the south-east, but this is perhaps misleading and a case can be made for a much closer connection during the Middle Ages.

The heritage to 1750

Bronllys Castle itself (539) is first recorded in the earlier 12th century and was perhaps founded in 1144. Throughout the 12th and 13th centuries it belonged to the Cifford family and was the principal seat in the lordship of Cantref Selyf (a Welsh administrative unit that covered the remoter areas east and north of Brecon). Cantref Selyf and Bronllys held their local political importance into the 15th century by which time it had come into the hands of the Crown. It seems to have fallen out of use by the end of the 15th century or soon after. The castle, in the guardianship of the Welsh Assembly Government, is sited on the western edge of the first river terrace of the Afon Llynfi. Its steep-sided motte is topped by a round, three-storied masonry tower and abutted by a rectangular embanked and stone-walled bailey beside the river to the north. The latter now contains the buildings of Castle House which may overlie the site of the medieval hall.

The church of St Mary (20184) which was largely rebuilt in 1887, probably conforms to its much earlier, 12th or 13th-century plan, retaining its original font and a 16th-century rood screen. The original church was probably established by the Clifford family and may well have been a new foundation following the building of Bronllys Castle, rather than a rebuilding of an existing structure. The church and much of its land were subsequently given to the Cluniac Priory at Clifford, in Herefordshire, and were still held by them at the Dissolution in the mid-16th century.

Set in a rectangular churchyard (2991), the church has a nave and chancel separate from the free-standing bell-tower or camponile which does not share the church's orientation. A decorated medieval tombstone (538), presumably from the church, was in use in the churchyard stile until the 1930s, but was then lost. Sherds of medieval pottery (5559) have been recovered from St Mary's churchyard.

Immediately to the west of the church lies a large moated site (546), a typical example of the small group of medieval moated enclosures east of Brecon. It comprises a raised rectangular platform surrounded by a single bank and partially water-filled ditch. Its date and any relationship remain undetermined.

The church and moat together form the core of the village of Bronllys. The village streets hint at a characteristically medieval arrangement, and the small triangular pattern formed by the main through roads and Church Street may enclose a former green or market area, though this remains to be confirmed. Apart from Bronllys Court (2992) on the north-eastern edge of the village, which is a substantial 18th-century building, Upper House (30463), on the north side of the main road, which is an L-plan 18th-century farm house (although a 17th-century date has been ascribed to the barn and perhaps the first phase of the byre, but this is unverified), and the outbuilding to the Anchorage Café (near Upper House) which is 17th-century, there are no domestic buildings of any great age apparent in the settlement.

An estate map probably from the 1770s suggests that there were fewer buildings alongside the main Brecon to Hay road in the 18th than in the 19th century, not altogether surprising in view of how post-medieval settlements grew along major thoroughfares. Of potentially more significance are the lines of small fields beside the Talgarth road, with continuous back boundaries, heading towards the castle, and a footpath following the edge of the boundary on the south side of the main road. In the mid-19th century, only one or two of these individual fields had dwellings in them, and the pattern of housing that we see today is a very modern one. The layout of fields, however, for which is their no obvious topographical explanation, is strongly redolent of planned medieval castle-gate settlements whereby the settlement lay between the castle at one end of the street, the church and perhaps the market place at the other and burgage plots or the like ran off the street at right-angles.

Documentary evidence confirms that Bronllys had an extensive medieval open-field system. Open-field strips fossilised by the introduction of earthwork banks survive to the south-west and north of the village. South of the church there are signs of relict ridge and furrow cultivation (5560), and to the west the 19th-century tithe map shows a system of medieval strip-fields (9254) in the area now occupied by a caravan park, an area termed the open fields of Bronllys (called "Small Field") on the Enclosure map of the 1860s. On the north side of the main street a group of three fields, surrounded by a closed circuit of lanes, contains similar areas of ridge and furrow (2994). Further strip-fields (2995) on the tithe map lie out to the east of Bronllys, although it is not clear whether or not these belonged to the village.

In summary, Bronllys is a settlement where its modern appearance does not mirror its potential medieval layout. A strong case can be made for the medieval settlement lying between the castle to the south-east and the church and moat to the north-west, to be replaced in the post-medieval era by ribbon development along the road from Hay to Brecon.
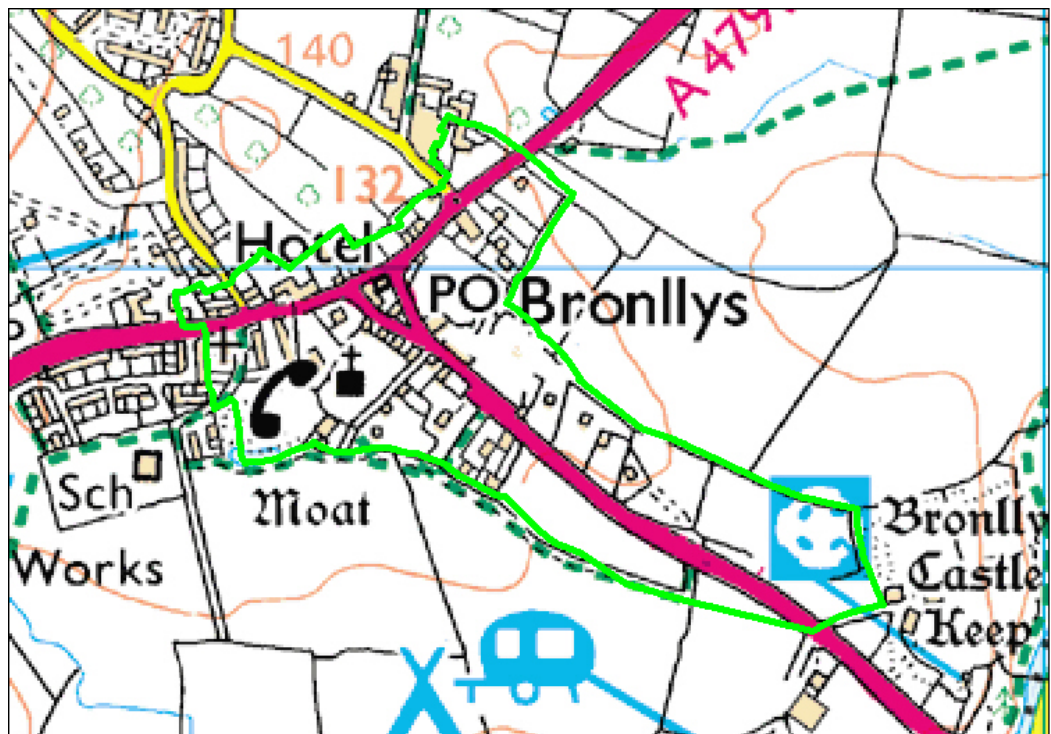
Builth Wells

SO 039510
2557

Introduction

Builth Wells is a small town that has grown up on the north side of the Mynydd Epynt range, at the confluence of the Wye and Irfon rivers.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

Although not large, Builth Wells is the only true town in western and northern Brecknock. It has a 13th-century charter and exhibits features typical of many small medieval market towns along the Welsh border. As such it is a characteristically English rather than Welsh settlement.

It takes its anglicised name, Builth, from the ancient cantref in which it is located, appearing as *buellt* in *c.*1100-03 and as *Buelth* soon after 1176, a name simply meaning 'cow pasture'. Ecclesiastical records from 1254 name it as *Lanveyr* and the parish was still officially Llanfair in Builth into the 19th century. The additional name of 'Wells' was incorporated into the name in the same century, acknowledging its mineral wells at Park Wells and Glannau Wells.

Builth Wells does not appear to have an early medieval (pre-Conquest) origin, and is probably a wholly medieval foundation. It is not known exactly when the town was founded, but the surrounding area was conquered by the Normans in the mid-1090s, and work on the first castle here probably began soon after 1100, presumably controlling a crossing point of the river. The settlement may well have started to develop around this time, though the first reference to a town here is from the year 1217 when Welsh forces seized it from Reginald de Braose.

During the medieval period the town was of some significance as the 'caput' of the lordship of Buellt. It received its borough charter in 1277, and while this is generally considered to be confirming existing privileges rather than establishing new ones it may also reflect a late 13th-century surge in the development and growth of the settlement.

The town was largely rebuilt following a serious fire on 27 December 1690 which destroyed nearly every building, and the majority of the present town dates from the 19th century. This reflects too its rise as a minor local 'spa' during this period.

Builth Wells remains a local market and service centre for much of northern Brecknock and as such has retained its historic function.

The heritage to 1750

Builth Castle, a scheduled ancient monument (1603/SAM B31) is a massive earthwork, a motte and bailey castle with later stone rebuilding and additions. The date of its foundation is not known, though it is assumed to have been built around 1100 by Philip de Braose. The choice of siting is strategic (to guard the Wye crossing), and it is possible that it was established on a virgin site where there was no pre-existing settlement.

Much of the original castle was destroyed by Llwellyn ap Gruffudd in 1260, although damage may already have been inflicted on it during the siege of the town in 1217, and the site may not have been fully refortified until 1276. Between 1277 and 1283 extensive rebuilding was undertaken by Edward I in support of his campaigns in Wales; the work possibly being supervised by his master mason, James of St George. A shell keep, a stone curtain wall with six towers, a defended drawbridge and outer wall were added during this period although the works were never completed, and little is visible of them today.

Much of the stone, lead and timberwork was removed, by the Wallcott family, during the mid-16th century to build White House (on the site now occupied by its 18th-century successor). However, a regular earthwork platform appears to be thrown up against the east side of the defences and this could be a Civil War gun emplacement, although there is no record of the castle having been defended or besieged at this time. Suggestions that it is the corner of a Roman fort can probably be dismissed.

St Mary's church (20160) is traditionally ascribed a Norman build although there is no direct evidence for this. While there would certainly have been a church in Builth during the Norman period its exact site is not known, and the religious needs of the early town might well have been met by the castle chapel (2687) which is recorded as being served by monks from Brecon well into the 13th century. A separate church certainly existed by 1283 when it is recorded as being in dispute with the castle chapel over the numbers of services held at each site, but at this time it appears to have been secondary to Llanddewi'r Cwm for in the *Taxatio* of 1291 it appeared as *Ecclesia de Londewycom and Lanveyr*. The oldest part of the present church is the battlemented tower dating from about 1300. The remainder of the church is the result of an extensive rebuild of 1873-5. This nave and chancel stand, unusually, to the west of the tower as the earlier structure was only demolished once building work was complete, allowing the church to remain in use during the construction period.

The church stands in a large sub-rectangular churchyard (2688) which reveals no signs of an early medieval origin.

The town reveals two distinct phases of medieval growth from its present topography. The castle occupies the eastern end of a narrow east-west shelf, on the west bank of the Wye. It is approached from the west by Market Street, which follows the natural contour of the land and is now lined with 19th and 20th-century terraced houses. This, it can be argued, is the line of the original medieval street which ran westwards from the castle and would have the earliest town dwellings along it. A second phase of growth is suggested by High Street, Broad Street and perhaps Castle Street. This runs diagonally across the contours, rising gently to meet Market Street where it terminates. It is relatively straight, though there are faint changes in alignment, usually where another lane runs into it, and most of the property boundaries run off it at right angles. There is a more organised layout in evidence here and it is obvious if only from the street names that this thoroughfare became the chief street in Builth: it was in fact a planned development. The town's charter, granted in 1277, may reflect this recent successful growth.

The triangle of land formed by the converging streets is now built over, though the open space of Bank Square edges it on the east. Mid-19th-century maps reveal a different picture, with a lane running northwards off the square, effectively isolating the triangle of land, and the

pattern of property boundaries within it display a different appearance from those running off the main streets in the town. This was the market area, an open space, subsequently encroached on in later centuries, but remembered in the name of the street running into it from the east.

Virtually no medieval or early post medieval building survived the 17th-century fire, and although the town was extensively rebuilt in 1691 most of this historic core was replaced in the 19th century, although many of these Victorian buildings are listed as being of architectural interest. However, the Old Hall on West Street is credited to the 18th century, the Bell Inn on Bank Square is late 18th-century, and it is reputed that only 13-15 High Street survive from before the 1691 fire.

Those areas of the town to the east of the castle and to the west of the church appear to comprise only modern building and are outside the medieval settlement.

The present road bridge across the Wye was constructed in 1779, though Ogilby's *Britannia* form the 1760s indicates an earlier bridge.

Isolated areas of ridge and furrow cultivation (2543) of generally unknown date occur to the south of the town.

In summary, Builth Wells, otherwise known as Llanfair in Builth, originated around the castle above the Wye. Urban growth ran westwards from the castle, but perhaps in the 13th century there was a new and planned phase of development which converged on an open market place. At what point the church was established is not known, but the size of the churchyard implies the settlement was well-established by that time. The historic core of Builth Wells thus comprises the castle to the east, the churchyard to the west and the built-up area between the two.

Crickadarn

SO 090423
2559

Introduction

Crickadarn is a small settlement, focused on its church. It is sited above the southern lip of the Wye valley some 10km south of Builth Wells.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Remarkably little is known about the past history of this small settlement, but there is no evidence that Crickadarn had a more extensive layout than is visible today. The earliest documentary reference is to *Crukadan* in 1443 and reflects the elements *crug* and *cadarn* meaning 'mighty mound'.

The sub-circular churchyard may indicate an early medieval origin for the church, though there is nothing to corroborate this idea.

The earthwork castle may have built here in the 12th century before the surrounding area was granted to Dore Abbey, though it is possible that the Clifford family maintained a stronghold at Crickadarn even after 1170. Crickadarn has, however, also been claimed as one of the marcher lords' demesnes (or manors reserved for the lord's own use) in the 14th century, and at present these conflicting views cannot be reconciled.

In the 18th century and probably earlier, Crickadarn lay on one of the main cattle drovers' routes, this one running from Cardiganshire over Epynt and into England.

The heritage to 1750

The church of St Mary (2923) probably dates from the 13th or 14th century, and comprises a large nave and chancel with a western tower and a separate stair turret. Interestingly and unusually, Crickadarn church is recorded in a 15th-century manual of daily offices now housed in Hereford Cathedral Library.

The church is set within a sub-circular churchyard (2924), only some 40m, across with a small modern extension on its north-west side.

Some 100m to the south-west of the church, on a hill overlooking the village, lies a small oval earthwork, which is a scheduled ancient monument (952/SAM B33). This is normally held to be some form of a medieval castle, but it is of atypical form, and the possibility that it is of a rather earlier date, perhaps a late prehistoric enclosure, cannot be dismissed entirely. There is now no obvious link between the village and this earthwork, despite their proximity, but if the earthwork is medieval, some form of settlement remains could potentially exist between them.

Llawr-llan farm (6987), two hundred metres to the east of the church, has an earlier 17th-century building, later modified, and then converted to a farm building when a new house was built in the 18th century. It is the oldest surviving domestic building in the village. The other buildings including what was, in the late 19th century, the Firtree Inn, are more recent.

The field lying between the church and Llawr-llan contains a set of low earthworks (4931), possibly the remains of a now almost vanished part of the settlement. There is one probable platform, though curiously it is not close to an existing lane, and the sparse remnants of a field system.

In summary, there is little convincing evidence of a nucleated settlement here before perhaps the 18th century. This could perhaps be a fairly typical church-settlement where the church was accompanied by just one or two houses and even these might not have had their origins as far back as the medieval era.
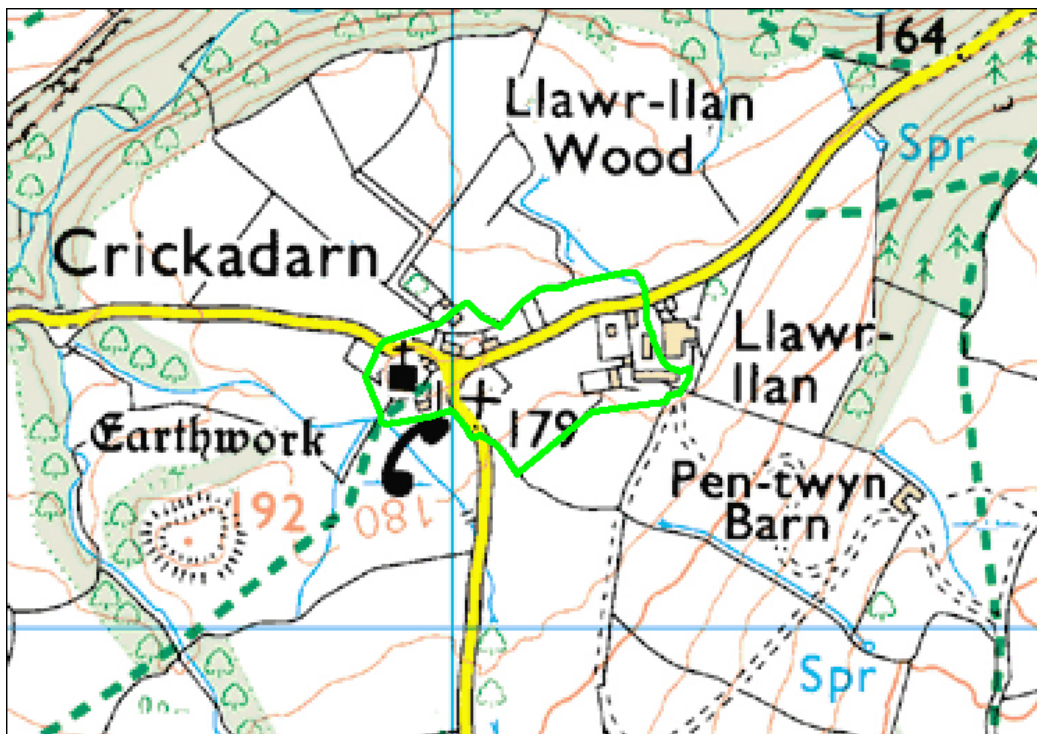
Garthbrengy

SO 045335
2563

Introduction

Garthbrengy is an isolated settlement comprising a church, a farm and a cottage. It is sited on high ground to the east of the Afon Honddu, 5km to the north of Brecon.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

The early history of Garthbrengy is obscure, though the sub-circular churchyard and perhaps the Garth element of the place-name (usually taken to mean an enclosure) may indicate an early medieval origin. Theophilus Jones, the 19th-century Brecknock antiquary, suggested that the name was formerly 'Gallt y bryn gu - the woody ascent to Mount Pleasant', but this seems most unlikely. Around 1180 it was referred to as *Garth bryngi brynn dewi* and a century later as *Carthprengy*. The standard translation of these forms would be the 'hill belonging to Brengi'.

The settlement now comprises a church and two houses, though the medieval, or early post-medieval, village appears to have been somewhat larger.

The heritage to 1750

St David's Church (2962) was heavily restored during the 19th century and its origins are uncertain, although parts of it have been claimed, without substantiation, as 12th century, perhaps because there is a stoup supposedly of that date within the church. The present building comprises a separated nave and chancel and a massive (possible 17th-century) west tower with a pyramidal roof.

The church is set in a raised, sub-circular, churchyard (2963) perhaps originally 60m in diameter, which has been extended on the north. The present circuit is defined by a stone retaining wall. The northern extension is walled and appears to be of some antiquity (it is shown on the tithe survey of 1841), but the line of the former churchyard is still clearly visible, surmounted by yew trees. Also the church appears to be set on a slight circular platform about 50m in diameter the edge of which is marked by mature yew trees. This platform may be a former smaller churchyard (2964) although the difference in areas between the 'old' and the 'new' is relatively small.

The only surviving domestic building in the village is Dan yr Eglwys farmhouse (2965), which is perhaps of 18th-century date.

There is, however, clear evidence that the settlement was formerly larger than at present. A group of four building platforms and connecting banks (5524) lie in the field immediately to the south of the church, and represent a now deserted part of the larger medieval settlement. A trackway (2541) runs westwards from these earthworks into adjacent fields. The field to the east is devoid of surface signs of habitation. However, it too may have contained buildings at one time as the tithe map from the mid-19th century survey shows an apparently blind access road protruding into this field which may have served dwellings in it. The next field to the east appears to have an isolated building platform (6702) within it.

Areas of ridge and furrow cultivation (5521) survive in the fields to the north of the church. A small earth and stone mound (6781) lies to the north-east of the village, outside the historic core. Though probably a prehistoric burial feature unrelated to the present settlement, it is well placed to be a medieval windmill mound.

It should also be noted here that a dozen long thin parallel fields, half of which still survive, are shown on the tithe survey surrounding the neighbouring hamlet of Llechach (now called Pentynt). These are the remains of medieval strip fields (2966), lying on the eastern edge of medieval Garthbrengy and could have been an open field system for the settlement. There are the fossilised remains of another open-field system 200m or so the south-east of the church.

In summary Garthbrengy gives the appearance of being a small church-settlement, but there is archaeological evidence to indicate that there was a nucleated settlement here in the medieval era. Its size and extent is unknown, as is its relationship with the open-field system around Pentynt to the east.
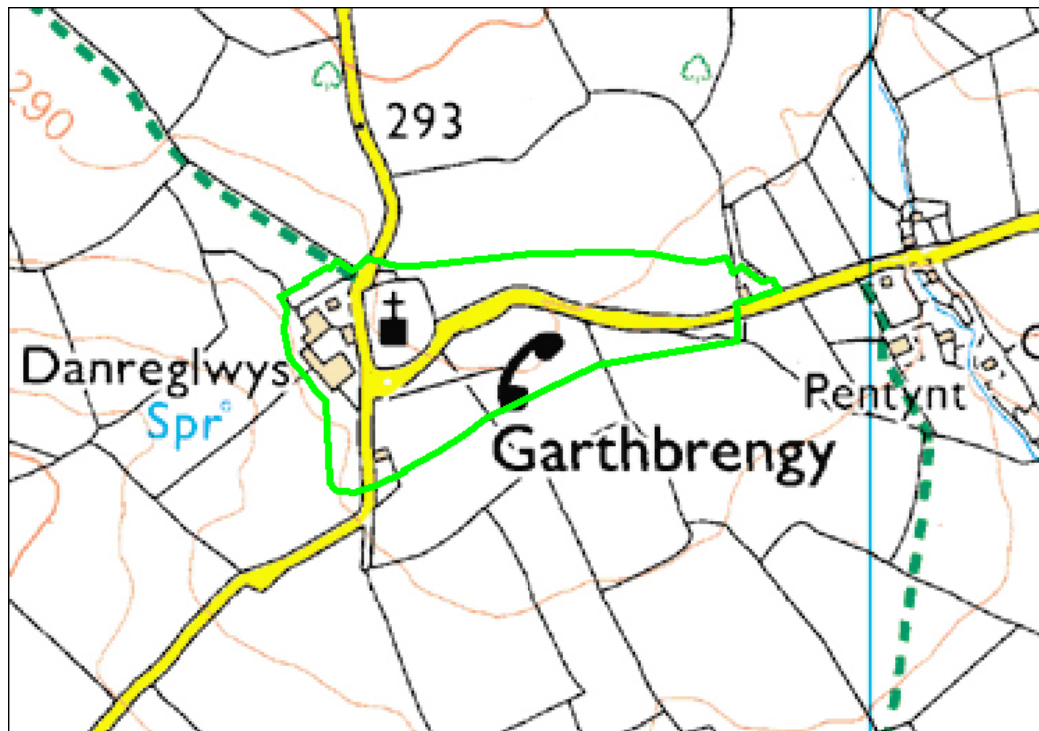
Glasbury

SO177385
2564

Introduction

Glasbury lies to either side of the River Wye a short distance up river from Hay-on-Wye. This report considers settlement only on the south bank of the river.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

The historic core of Glasbury lies to the north of the river Wye and is thus in the former county of Radnorshire. The more modern part of the village is to be found on the south bank of the river, in the former Brecknock Borough, the two being linked by the modern A438 road bridge across the river. This dispersed settlement is focused on the modern parish church of St Peters overlooking the site of its abandoned predecessor which is also confusingly on the south side of the river but only because the latter's course has altered over the centuries.

There is no definable historic core on the south side. A new parish church for Glasbury (20176) was built in 1664 and consecrated in 1665. It was later replaced by a new church on the same spot in 1837/8. Today it forms the core of a small modern settlement on the southern banks of the Llynfi which is characterised by a number of later 19th-century buildings, though there are earlier structures. A barn to the south-east of and above the church, (and now converted), is believed to be late medieval in date, perhaps 15th-century; while Aberllynfi House is 18th-century in origin. However, these are elements in a dispersed settlement, typical of the borderland, and it was not until the 19th century that a nucleated settlement emerged here alongside the road and tramway.

Gwenddwr

SO 064433
2566

Introduction

Gwenddwr is a remote and rather amorphous settlement on the eastern fringes of Mynydd Epynt. It occupies the southern side of the steep-sided Nant Gwenddwr, a minor tributary of the Wye.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

The settlement appears to have taken its name from the stream that flows below it, Gwenddwr being the Welsh for 'white water'. Its earliest appearance is as *Wendor* in 1241, and *Gwentur* is documented in 1513.

Gwenddwr was traditionally founded in the 6th century by St Dubricius, to whom the church is dedicated, and who is said to have had a 'seminary named after him on the banks of the Wye in the parish of Gwenddwr'. It is not clear if this seminary was within the modern settlement at Gwenddwr. This original church could have been a *clas* foundation, functioning as a mother church for the region, but there is no later evidence to confirm that this was the case.

Documentary evidence points to a grange (or farm) here in the 14th century, belonging to the Cistercian Dore Abbey in Herefordshire, but not a daughter priory as has been suggested in the past. The exact location of the grange is unknown, and it is little more than speculation that St Dubricius' church was a chapel for it. The abbey's lands are recorded as being purchased by a David Williams at the Dissolution.

The heritage to 1750

The single cell church of St. Dubricius (20157) was extensively restored and reopened in 1886 after a fire in 1875, although some 14th-century fabric survives. It remains unknown and probably unknowable as to whether the present church had its origins in a monastic building.

The present churchyard (20158) is small and sub-rectangular, less than 0.2ha in area, though this may represent a substantial reduction from its former extent. The southern churchyard boundary is curvilinear and adjoining property boundaries continue this line to form an almost complete circuit enclosing around 1.43ha. This larger sub-circular enclosure (2918) arguably

would be in keeping with traditional 6th-century foundations and the early monastic associations of the site. If this 'enclosure' is an early ecclesiastical site, however, it occupies an extremely steep slope and the 14th-century church occupies an unusually eccentric position within it.

The site of the medieval grange (2917) has not been identified but it could have been close to the present church. Its mill, too, has tentatively been located by the stream about 100m to the north-west of the church, again without any supporting evidence. A better case can be made for a set of earthworks further downstream which are associated with a leat.

The field immediately to the east of the present churchyard (but wholly within the 'larger' enclosure) contains a number of building platforms (2919) which could be associated with a secular settlement around the church.

Two fields facing the church on the north side of Nant Gwenddwr contain extensive earthworks which are now a scheduled ancient monument (3913/SAM B168). At least ten platforms create a nucleated group of house sites indicative of a deserted village settlement, and are accompanied by tracks and lynchets. On this evidence, Gwenddwr was considerably larger in the medieval period than it is today. Locally these earthworks are believed to be the site of the 'priory', but this seems unlikely.

Traces of ridge and furrow cultivation can be seen to the east (2920) and the west (2921 and 2922) of Gwenddwr and could represent the remains of a medieval or later field system for the village, though the date of ridge and furrow cultivation is difficult to determine.

In summary, the historic settlement core of Gwenddwr comprises two elements, a putative oval church enclosure straddling the stream and a nucleated group of earthworks representing deserted settlement immediately to the north. There is as yet no evidence of medieval activity adjacent to the oval enclosure, though this will only emerge from archaeological excavation, and the location of the medieval grange also remains hypothetical.
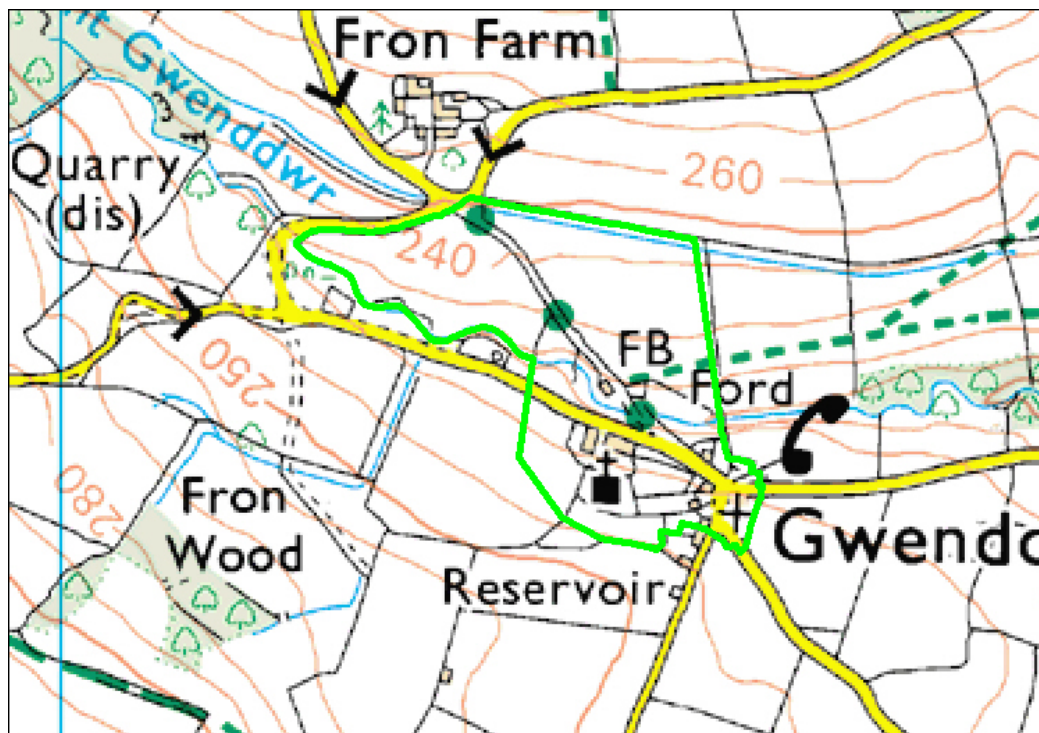
Llanafan Fawr

SN 968557
2567

Introduction

Llanafan Fawr is a small settlement clustered to the west of its church. It is sited on a slight spur on the western side of the Chwefri valley, overlooking its crossing by the B4358 Newbridge to Beulah road.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Llanafan Fawr means literally 'the greater St Afan's Church', and is presumably thus called to distinguish it from Llanafan Fechan near Builth Wells. The earliest reference is as *Llanauan Vaur* between 1198 and 1214, and around 1200 there was mention of *Sancti Avani quae Britannice Lanavan*.

It is documented as an early monastic site. The church was traditionally founded by St Afan, who is believed to have been a bishop at Llanbadarn Fawr (in what is now Ceredigion) in the 7th century, though it has also been claimed that Afan was murdered near here which could have established a link. Several associated features that might have originated in early times have been recorded around the settlement, including *Ffynnnon Afan* (see below) and *Derwen Afan* (or Afan's oak-tree). More tenuously, two local place-names, Gwern-y-mynach and Lle'r Prior, might also attest this monastic past.

Llanafan Fawr does not appear to be recorded as a *clas* church in later documentary sources, but is nevertheless a strong candidate. It has a large circular churchyard sometimes associated with such sites, and was certainly the mother church for a number of smaller churches and chapels in the surrounding area.

Saint Afan's tomb lies in churchyard, and the ecclesiastical centre, for a time, may have become an important local centre for pilgrimage.

Now is little more than the church, a farm, an inn and a couple of houses.

The heritage to 1750

The massive single-cell church of St.Afan (20136) was substantially rebuilt in 1887 (by which time it was virtually ruinous), although the tower dates from 1765. The church formerly possessed a square chancel at the east end which was removed as part of the rebuilding, though its platform can still clearly be seen. The present church contains a medieval stoup which presumably belongs to the present building's predecessor, but otherwise few furnishings and fittings of medieval origin.

The church does contain a number of fragmentary decorated stones from the early medieval period. Within the church is a single pillar stone (3005) incised with a Latin ring cross dating from the 9th or 10th century, and built into the inside wall faces of the porch wall are three fragments of other decorated stones (5882, 5883 and 5884) which are probably of similar date.

The present churchyard (4079) is large and though now reduced has clearly been a sub-circular enclosure in excess of 130m across. The church stands eccentrically on a raised oval platform about 70m long which is probably the remains of an inner enclosure or possibly an earlier graveyard (2695). On the west and south the present churchyard has been squared off in modern times. To the west the enclosure has clearly been lost though road improvement, though its former line is probably reflected by the alignment of the Red Lion Inn. On the south a minor road has sliced through the churchyard, but the line of the original enclosing bank and ditch is still clearly visible as an earthwork (2905) in the field to the south of the lane. A well-defined holloway (2906) runs around the outside of the earthwork in this field and presumably represents the former course of the minor road. Based on existing and relict boundaries, an even larger, outer enclosure has been postulated beyond the south and east sides of the churchyard, but its authenticity has yet to be substantiated.

Within the churchyard lies St Afan's tomb (3007), now a substantial alter tomb topped by a single decorated slab 0.1m thick. The slab is inscribed in Lombardic script and is said to be of the 14th century. At the beginning of the 19th century the tomb was recorded as standing 7ft high and being surrounded by a dry stone wall, suggesting that its present appearance is of relatively recent design, and indeed it has been argued that even the inscribed slab could be a 19th-century creation.

A small ringwork called Ller'r Prior, which is a scheduled ancient monument (3008/SAM B89), lies to the south-west of the village. It comprises a circular area with an inner ditch and outer bank about 45m across and with an entrance on the south. Held to be the remains of a small castle by some, it is an unusual form of earthwork. It is possible that it could even be prehistoric or an early medieval enclosure associated with the church. Whatever its origins, it has a long history, however, and was used by the local community for games and events including cock-fighting into the early 20th century.

Llanafan Fawr was said to have possessed two holy wells: Ffynnon Afan (5886) which Edward Lhuyd mentioned in 1699 and Fynnon Dduw (5887). The site of one of these appears to survive as a small marshy hollow (6388) to the south of Brynafan and adjacent to the trackway noted above.

The Red Lion Inn (21182) opposite the church is a cruck-framed former hall-house of late 15th/early 16th-century date which was clad in stone in the 17th century. Although much altered, it is by far the oldest surviving domestic building in the settlement, and indeed at the time of the mid-19th-century tithe survey, it was the only dwelling accompanying the church.

A small, square, embanked earthwork (2907) survives in the field to the south of the church close to the former circuit of the churchyard. Its date and purpose are unknown, though it might perhaps have functioned as an animal pound.

The ringwork is surrounded by the remains of a complex field system (2908). This comprises a number of intersecting banks, ditches and trackways, all of which appear to radiate from the ringwork and would appear to be associated with it. This field system has not been dated.

The field system and ringwork are approached by the remains a terraced trackway (2909) which originates to the east of churchyard and then circles round it to the south, crossing the road near Brynafan, and then merging into the field system to the north of the ringwork.

The field immediately to the west of the Llanafan Farm appears to contain traces of ridge and furrow cultivation (2910). Inherently undatable, these earthworks are presumably part of a medieval or later field system associated with the settlement. Relict field boundaries also remain in the field to the south of the church. A range of metal-detected finds of medieval and early post-medieval date in fields to the east of the churchyard reveal further activity of an uncertain nature.

In summary, the appearance of Llanafan Fawr as a simple church settlement is belied by its past history. Although there is presently little evidence of a significant nucleated settlement around the church, the potential for other features, some perhaps reflecting the higher status that attaches to a *clas* community, signals one of the most interesting places in the region.
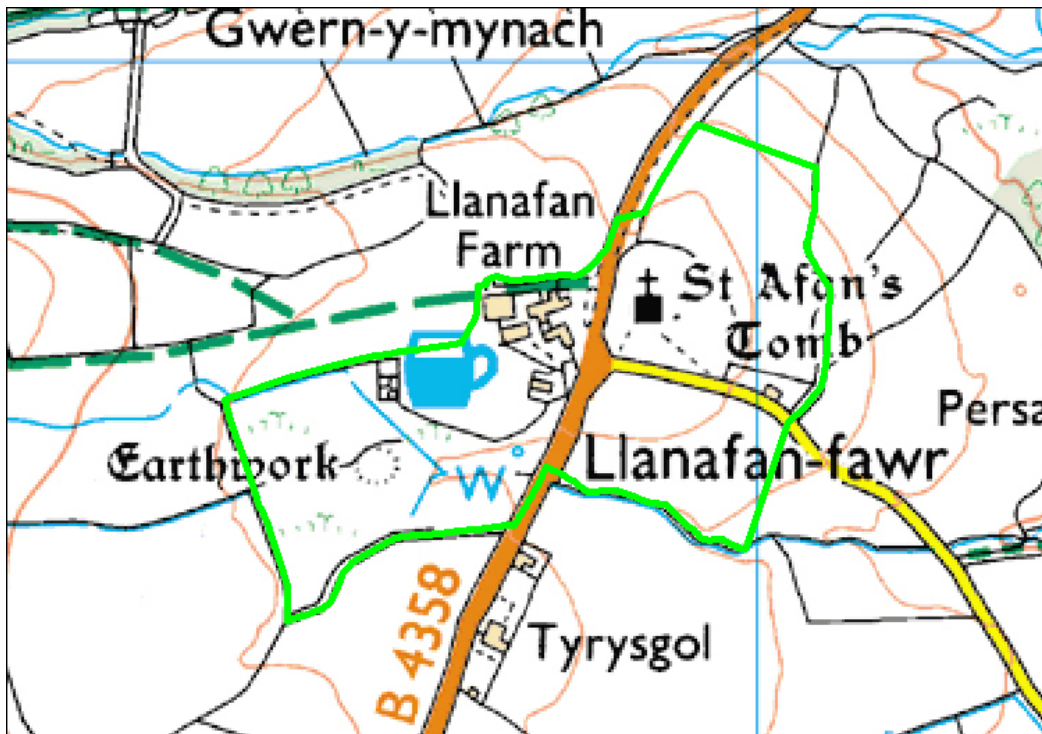
Llanafan Fechan

SN 973503
2568

Introduction

Llanafan Fechan, the name now more commonly contracted to Llanfechan, is a minor settlement comprising a church and a farm lying beside the A483 road on the north side of the Irfon valley. It lies 7km to the west of Builth Wells.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Llanafan Fechan is a typical isolated church settlement, comprising a church and a single farmstead. It has probably never been significantly larger than it appears today, and has certainly not altered since the time of the 1840 tithe survey.

Documented references to it are late in date. In 1543 it was *Llanavon vechan*, which serves to emphasize its comparatively unimportant status.

The church is dedicated to St Afan and was formerly dependent as a chapelry on one of the mother churches in the area, either Llanafan Fawr or Llangammarch Wells, the former being the more likely. Although there is no positive dating evidence for the founding of the settlement, the sub-circular churchyard and the putative associations with Llanafan Fawr may point to an early medieval origin.

The heritage to 1750

The small church of St. Afan (20138) was completely rebuilt in 1866. The present building comprises an undivided nave and chancel with a northern vestry, southern porch and a small west bellcote. Despite its modern fabric the church is a typical medieval size and plan and probably reflects the footprint of its predecessor. The 14th-century font, within, presumably comes from this earlier building.

The church stands on a distinctive mound (2972), assumed to be the piled debris of its predecessor, and within a raised, stone-revetted, curvilinear churchyard (2973), perhaps originally some 45m across. The churchyard has been truncated on the west, and the bank defining the isolated segment can still be traced in the adjoining derelict plot. The line of the churchyard bank may also have been straightened on its north side, though no obvious signs of its former line survive in the field bounding the enclosure here.

The church is accompanied by a range of farm buildings and a farmhouse (2974), none of which appears to be earlier than the late 18th century. Some other elements of the earlier settlement pattern, if they existed, are likely to have been removed by the works for the road and railway.

The remains of undated ridge and furrow cultivation (2975) survive in the field immediately north-west of the church and presumably once formed part of a field system for the settlement.

Three isolated house platforms (8357, 8358 and 8359) lie some 150m to the east of Llanafan Fechan. However, these are too far distant to be considered as part of this settlement and presumably represent an isolated farm.

In summary, Llanafan Fechan (otherwise Llanfechan) is a small historic church settlement without any obvious medieval settlement growth around it.
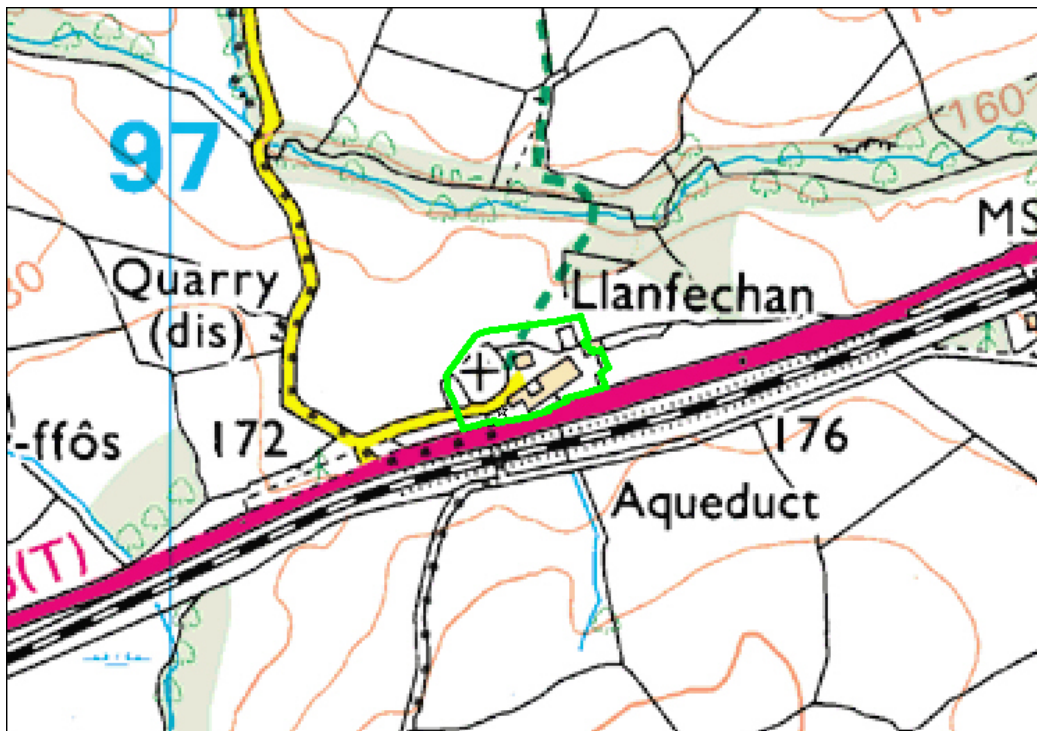
Llanddew

SO056307
2569

Introduction

Llanddew is a small and reasonably compact village focused on a church and castle at the junction of a number of minor roads to the north of Brecon. It is sited on a slight saddle of land on the eastern side of the Honddu valley, some 2km to the north-east of the county town.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Although there is no direct evidence (and the significance of its cruciform shape in this context is questionable), it is generally assumed that the church at Llanddew originated as a *clas* foundation in the early medieval era and was a mother church for the surrounding region. Tradition has it that Aled (also called Eluned), daughter of Brychan, took refuge in Llanddew church in AD 500, which would be in keeping with a *clas* origin. However, the earliest reference to the place comes from the period 1150 to 1175 when it was termed *Llando*, meaning 'church of God'. By 1249 this had been transmuted to *Llandew*.

The bishop's palace, immediately to the north-east of the churchyard was built during the 12th century, its most famous inhabitant being Giraldus Cambrensis who, as archdeacon of Brecon, occupied it from 1175 to 1203. The manor of Llanddew in the hands of the bishop of St Davids was granted a weekly market by Edward I in 1290-1, and this appears to confirm the importance of the settlement which was probably more extensive during the medieval period than in later centuries until the emergence of new settlement growth during the 20th century.

The heritage to 1750

St David's Church (20151) is a large cruciform-shaped building with a central tower. Parts of the tower and chancel date from the 13th century, although most of the surviving church is the result of 15th-century and 16th-century rebuilding and also 19th-century refurbishment. Two carved lintel stones (2598 and 2597), of 12th-century Romanesque date, are amongst the earliest elements in the church, though neither is in its original position, but even earlier is a stone decorated with an incised cross and fragmented inscription (484) in the vestry. This 8th- or 9th-century stone was found built into the wall of the south transept during the 19th-dentury restoration.

The surrounding churchyard (2663) retains a basic oval plan despite being encroached upon, on the south and east. Even allowing for the fact that both Ty Gwyn and Church House appear to have been built inside the early churchyard, the present boundaries of the site suggest an original enclosure no more than 65m across which is small when compared with some other *clas* enclosures in mid-Wales, and is unlikely to reflect the size of the *clas* assuming it to have existed.

Llanddew castle was built by the bishops of St Davids as a fortified residence, presumably though probably not exclusively for the archdeacons of Brecon. A stone building is thought to have existed on the site even before Geraldus Cambrensis became archdeacon in 1175. The original palace appears to have been rebuilt, perhaps during the 1340s, by Archbishop Gower who extensively remodelled the bishop's palaces at St David's and Lamphey. It did not survive the Dissolution and was described as a 'ruine' by Leland in the period 1536-1543. Parts of a large rectangular building, probably a hall, and surrounding curtain walls (including a semi-circular bastion) do survive today. Much of the original plan has been lost to 19th-century construction and landscaping and may now be difficult to recover. Recording work commissioned by Cadw in 2003 has been reported on, but only in a cursory fashion.

An elaborate well (2664), traditionally ascribed to Archbishop Gower in the 14th century, is encompassed in an arched recess in the south-west curtain wall. It was designed to allow access to water from both inside and outside the fortified residence, although the internal access is now blocked. The well is now fronted by a fine 19th-century cast-iron hand pump (2665).

The modern village looks largely to have retained its medieval plan, with the main street running south-east from the castle and the church. The 1841 tithe map shows a small open triangular area, still surviving as a garden plot between the castle, the church and Tyisha and this might have been the site of the 13th-century market (2667). There has been much modern re-development within the proposed older core of the village and few early buildings remain. Few undeveloped plots now survive on this street frontage.

Its historic buildings include Ty Gwyn (2671) against the southern side of the churchyard, Llanddew Court (6948), a long house derivative, and Tyisha (2672), probably of 17th-century origin though recently modernised. Both the latter are outliers on the edge of the historic core, and all are post-medieval, the only domestic buildings of any age surviving in the village.

West of the church and adjacent to the churchyard, scheduled earthworks (2666) comprise the remains of three ponds, probably medieval fishponds, and at least one associated house platform. Ponds are occasionally associated with ecclesiastical sites, and it seems likely that these served the bishop's palace. On the opposite (south-eastern) side of the road, a number of possible house platforms (2668) are visible, although poorly defined. Evaluation followed by excavation here in 2005 identified successive dwellings, the earlier with an attached outbuilding, probably spanning the 12th-15th centuries, and with the pottery of 12th-century date being unusually early for a rural village context.

Further house platforms lie back from the lane that runs south-eastwards from the village centre to Llanddew Court and were evaluated in 2003 when drystone building foundations were found on them.

New housing to the north-east of the castle occupies a 'greenfield' site but fortunately, has probably not destroyed significant archaeological material. Indeed it is probable that the lane coming in from the north-east is of relatively modern origin and that the original approach to the settlement from the north-east was along the fine holloway that runs past Llanddew Court.

In summary the main areas of medieval settlement look to have been along routes running south-westwards and south-eastwards from the centre, and to a lesser degree perhaps to the north-west.

An extensive earthwork field system (5580) and a substantial holloway occupy the field between the centre of the village and Llanddew Court. These are the remains of a medieval

strip-field system and of some importance. Further field system earthworks (2669) are visible west of Tyisha which lies to the north-west of the church. A number of banks again delimit strip fields. Isolated patches of ridge and furrow (2670) can be seen to the north of the settlement. Collectively these are remnants of the open fields that surrounded the settlement at Llanddew. Standell to the south of the village had fossilised strips beside it in the mid-19th century, and the predominant axes of the modern fields to the south-west of the village also point to fossilised open fields.
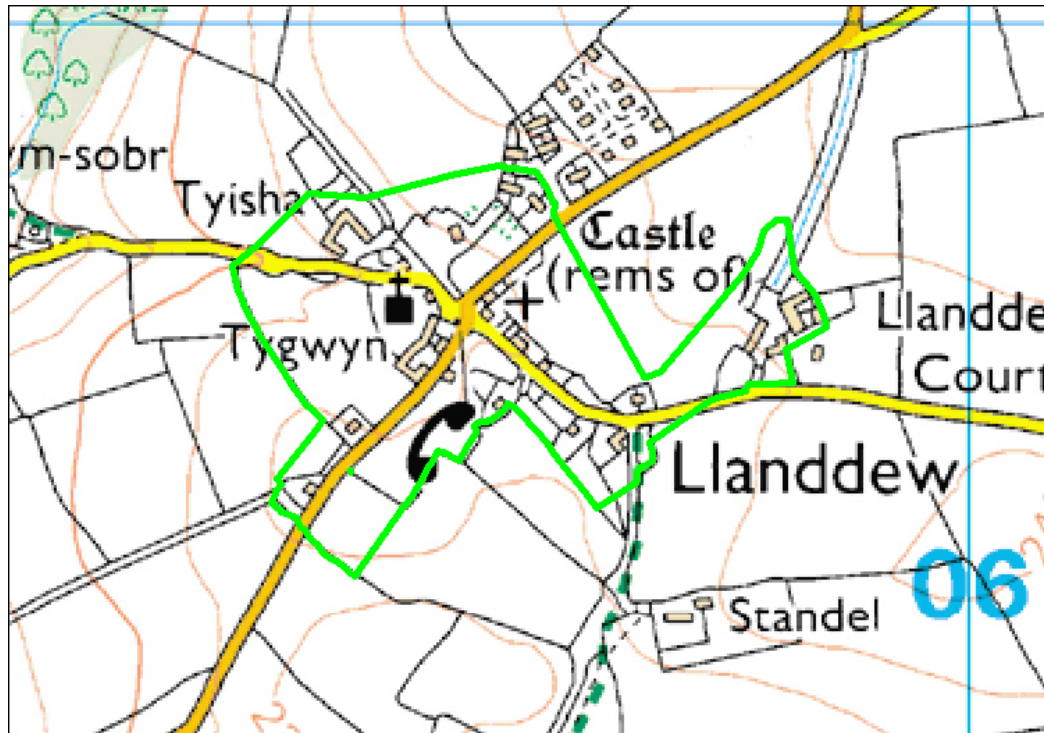
Llandefaelog Fach

SO 034324
2572

Introduction

Llandefaelog Fach (or Llandyfaelog) is a small valley-floor settlement focused on its church. It is located at the confluence of the Afon Honddu and a minor tributary, on the B4520 Builth to Brecon road some 3km to the north of Brecon.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

Llandefaelog Fach (lesser St Tyfaelog's) is presumably so named to distinguish it from the equally small (by modern standards) Llandefaelog Tre'r-graig. It is first referenced about 1200 as both *Landeuailac* and *Landemayloc*, and both forms seem to have been in use in the 11th century.

The present church, though medieval, possesses a dedication to a British saint, two early medieval decorated stones and is set within the remains of a sub-circular churchyard on the banks of a river, all of which point to it being an early medieval foundation.

Nothing is known of the medieval history of Llandefaelog Fach, but in more recent times the settlement has been closely associated with the local estate of Llandefaelog House and from a distance by that of Penoyre.

The heritage to 1750

The oldest surviving part of St Maelog's Church (2956) is the 16th-century tower, the nave and separate chancel having been rebuilt at different times during the 19th century. The church contains a 13th-century font which was retained from its predecessor. The church has yielded two early medieval inscribed stones, one (475) highly ornamented and displaying an incised figure is of the late 10th century, and the other (465) inscribed 'CATVC'. The former is now fixed inside the north wall of the tower, while the latter has disappeared but is reputedly concealed in the tower arch.

The church stands in the remains of a sub-circular churchyard (2957), originally some 50m across, which although much altered, can still clearly be traced in places within the present sub-rectangular enclosure (2958), and is picked out by a curving line of yews. The churchyard has been extended on the south to accommodate the remarkable mausoleum (2959) of the

Penoyre estate. Encircled by a substantial wall built in Egyptianate style and dated 1816, this consists of a low square building with a single door on the west and a grill covered window on the east, containing a number of vandalized lead coffins. The feature is quite unique in the region.

A motte lies to the west of the church, in the grounds of Llandefaelog House. The mound, a scheduled ancient monument (473/SAM B191), lies close against the house, and while there is now no sign of a bailey there could easily have been one where the house and its gardens now stand. The motte may also have functioned as a garden viewing-platform of post-medieval date, assuming of course that there were formal gardens on this side of Llandefaelog House.

There is little evidence of earlier domestic settlement here. The church is virtually surrounded by steeply sloping ground and the most suitable area for any sort of building is closer to the motte, where Llandefaelog House now stands. Speculatively, this house might have replaced earlier settlement. The house itself has 17th-century origins (with a datestone of 1639 still in evidence) but was rebuilt, probably at the end of the 18th century.

An area of faint earthwork undulations (2960) to the west of Llandefaelog House may be residual earthworks representing an area of former settlement, but they could equally well be natural features. Ridge and furrow cultivation of unknown date (2961) survives to the north of the church.
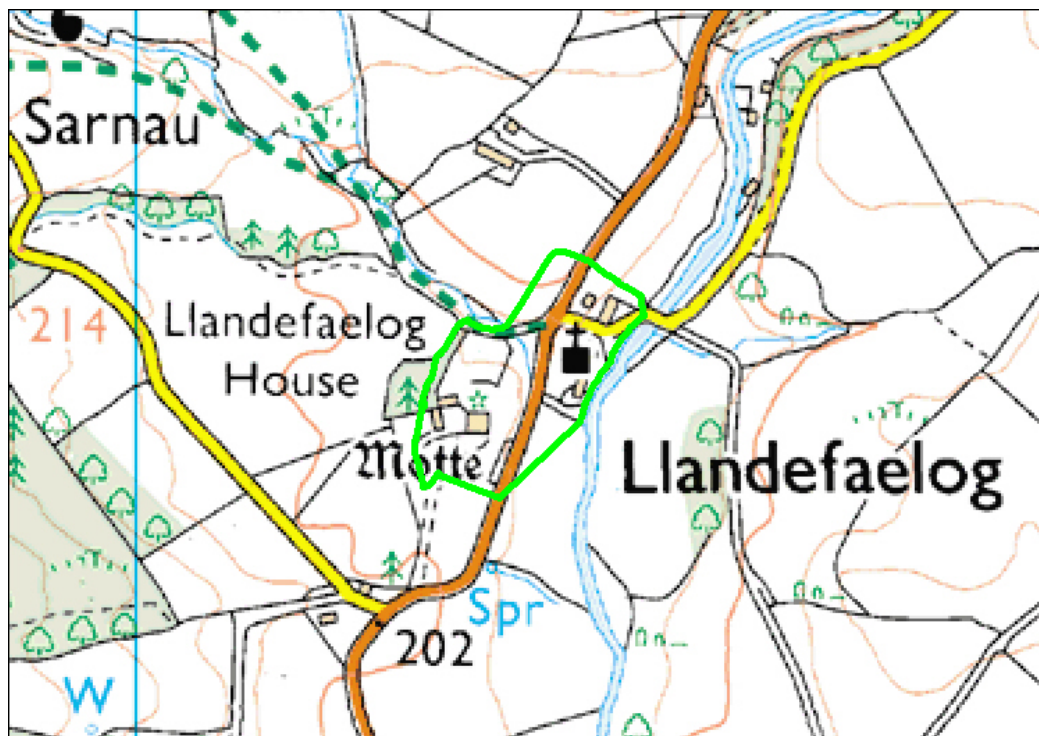
Llandefaelog Tre'r Graig

SO 127298
2573

Introduction

Llandefaelog Tre'r Graig is a small settlement consisting today of no more than a former church and a couple of farms. It is sited on the northern lip of the steep-sided upper Llynfi valley some 4km to the south of Talgarth.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

The name Llandefaelog Tre'r Graig means St Maelog's on the rock, so called from its positioning beside a precipice that forms one bank of the Llynfi. Its earliest unequivocal appearance in documents is as late as 1535 when it was termed *Llandevaylok Tref Crayg*, for earlier records do not permit the differentiation of this from Llandefaelog Fach. However, it has been suggested that a reference to *Sepulchrum Rein filii Brachan* (= the grave of Rhain son of Brychan) *in Landeuailac* around about 1200 could relate to this site.

Today the settlement comprises a church and two farms, and although little is known of the history it seems likely that it has never been significantly larger. The settlement appears typical of the isolated church settlements in Brecknock. The circularity of the churchyard and the church's British dedication points to an early medieval origin.

The neighbouring hamlet of Trewalter (lying opposite Llandefaelog Tre'r-graig on the eastern edge of the Llynfi valley and outside the current area of study) may represent an Anglo-Norman settlement, more likely to have emerged as a nucleation, with a number of houses and a mill.

The heritage to 1750

The church of St. Maelog (2940) is a single-celled building, the core of it probably of 13th-century date, though there is evidence of rebuilding and refurbishment in several later centuries. The font, though simple, is considered to be Romanesque, which takes the church back to an earlier century. Declared redundant some years ago, it has now been turned into a dwelling, but excavation and recording work before and during the conversion have added considerable detail to what was already known.

The church is set within a slightly raised, rectilinear, walled churchyard some 50m across (2941), which is perched spectacularly above the precipitous Llynfi valley. It is no more than speculation that this was not its original shape, and that parts of its circuit have been shaved off to create the present form.

Llandefaelog-tre'r-graig (31235), the name of a house, as well as the settlement, is a gentry house of the mid to late 17th century, at the northern end of this settlement group. The 18th-century house attached at the rear reveals a good example of the 'unit system' of conjoined but separate houses. Llandefaelog Tre'r-graig farmhouse (21016) further south is a regional longhouse with a large lateral chimney and an internal cross-passage. It is stone-built and initially from the 17th century. The barn on the opposite side of the lane from the farmhouse is said to contain a stable of c.1600. Apart from the outbuildings associated with the farm, there are no other buildings within the settlement.

Vague earthworks (2697) to the north of the farm may represent areas of former field system associated with the settlement.

In summary, the church is accompanied by two houses of post-medieval date. Whether there was any medieval settlement around the church has yet to be established.
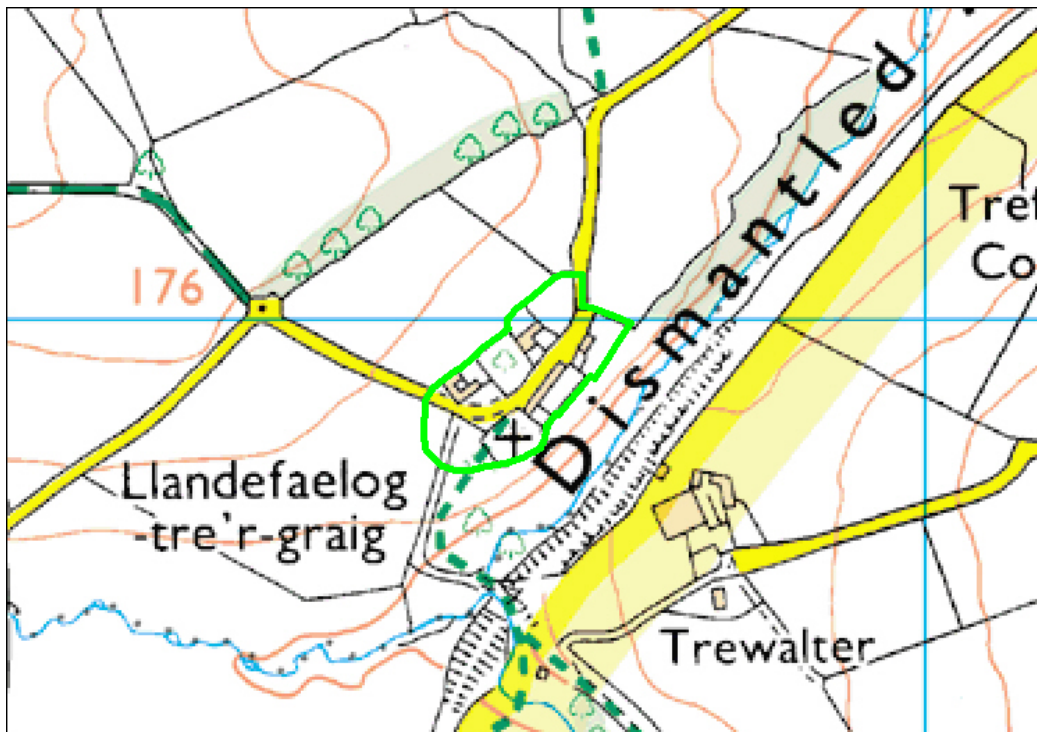
Llandefalle

SO 107355
2574

Introduction

Llandefalle is a small isolated settlement, focused on its church. It has grown up on a south-facing slope above the Afon Dulas river system some 5km north of Brecon.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

According to some early authorities, Llandefalle was the *Llangurnart* noted in the *Liber Landavensis* which was 'restored to God' in AD 566 by Aust, King of Brecknock, one of the witnesses being Bishop Cadoceus. While the integrity of this place-name association does not now appear watertight (with Llandeilo'r Fan being the preferred candidate), the formerly oval churchyard is in accord with an early medieval origin.

The earliest reference to this place is in 1241 when *Landewathlan* appears to testify to an otherwise unrecorded saint called *Tyfathan* or *Tywathan*. It is thought that the present dedication to St Matthew may have emerged as a confused rendering of the original. There is also an uncorroborated belief that the church could have been dedicated to St Maelog, but the source of this idea has yet to be established and for the present can be dismissed.

Today the village is little more than an isolated medieval church, its former rectory, and a few houses.

The Heritage to 1750

Llandefalle Church, which was at one time a possession of Clifford Priory in Herefordshire lies within an embanked circular churchyard set on a south-facing slope. The present building as visible (20178) probably originated in the 14th century, if not earlier (though most of the surviving work is 15th-century) and exhibits a complicated structural sequence that has yet to be fully elucidated. It contains a fine rood screen (dating from about 1500) and several medieval and later wall paintings. Taking into account its furnishings and the absence of wide-ranging Victorian restoration, this is one of the more important medieval churches in the region.

The churchyard (20196) although now squared off on the south was perhaps of a more curvilinear shape in the past. However, possibly there was a much larger enclosure here in the

early centuries. An abandoned holloway (9243) runs around the northern side of the present churchyard and, on the evidence of the tithe survey map, formerly connected with the curving lane that serves the Old Rectory. Beyond the lane on the eastern side of the modern churchyard a continuous boundary still arcs around Church House, dropping down to the stream, and continues the line adopted by the holloway. Within it, small field boundaries run up to it and abut it, indicating its primacy. All this could be a set of coincidences, but the putative presence of a larger enclosure of nearly 3ha in area and abutting the stream cannot be lightly dismissed.

Local records maintain that the churchyard once had a fives court (2925) against the north wall of the nave. Hinges for external shutters, designed to protect the church windows are still visible, though these may be associated with the use of the yard as the school playground in the 19th century.

The northern part of the churchyard contains the remains of a well (4485) – presumably viewed as a holy well though it is not listed by Francis Jones in his standard work on the subject – which takes the form of a square stone-lined basin. The segment of the churchyard that contains it is divided from the main enclosure by a bank and ditch and is presently much overgrown. The purpose of this bank and ditch are obscure.

The Old Rectory, the only secular building known to be of any age in the settlement, is of the earlier 18th century for it was recorded in 1717, though there are also indications that its origins go back into the 16th century. Church House, however, was the Llandefalle Inn in the middle of the 19th century.

The former medieval street pattern is still perhaps visible encircling the church and two fields to the south, suggesting Llandefalle was rather larger than it is now. In the field south of the church and below it are earthworks (4486) comprising at least two and possibly three house platforms and adjacent terrace plots. The adjacent area now occupied by the Old Rectory and its gardens may well have once contained similar remains which have disappeared under modern landscaping.

It is possible that the other areas of the village also once contained medieval settlement. To the east of the church around the site of Llandefalle Inn (Church House) and the sloping ground to the south, is a likely situation though no traces now survive. To the west of the church a disturbed area may represent further but as yet uncorroborated medieval house platforms (2926). A single building platform (PAR2927) survives to the north of the churchyard.

Significant tracts of apparently medieval field systems associated with the settlement survive on the slopes to the north-east of the church (2928), where there are a series of embanked fields which might contain further settlement, and areas of ridge and furrow lie to the north-west though these are likely to be of post-medieval origin (2929).

In summary, Llandefalle was almost certainly a more extensive settlement in the past than it is today. The morphology or layout of that settlement, of medieval or earlier post-medieval date, is less evident, but more discoveries and analysis would clarify the picture.
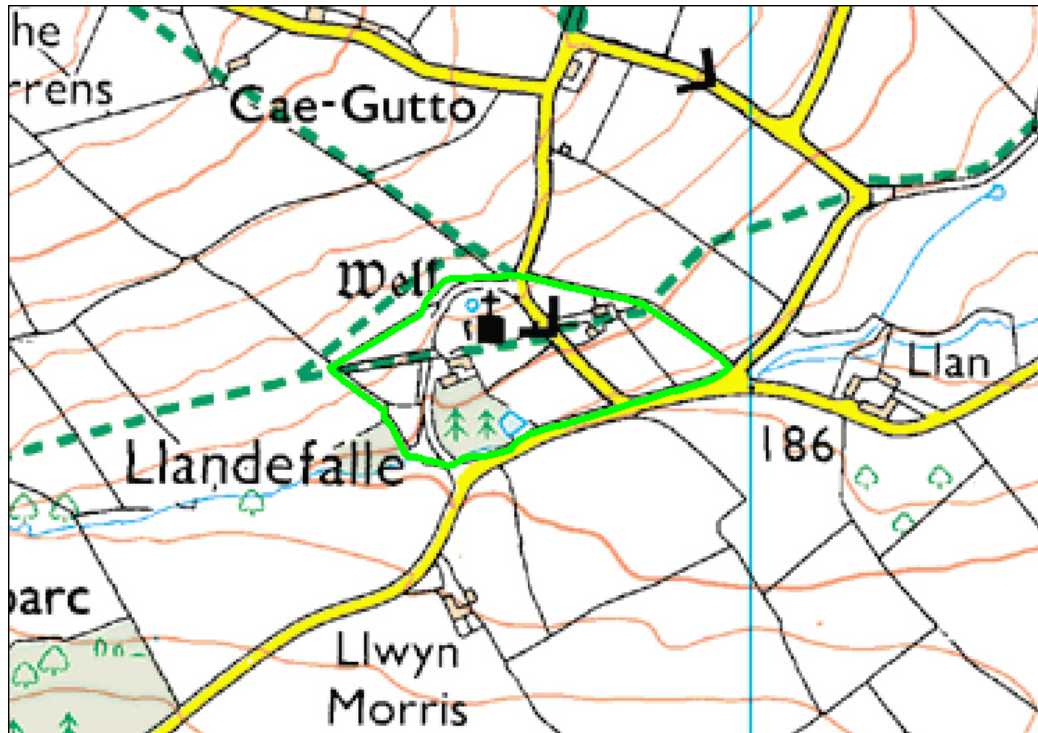
Llandeilo'r Fan

SN897346
2575

Introduction

Llandeilo'r Fan is a small, isolated nuclear settlement focused on its church on the south-western edge of Mynydd Epynt. It lies on the floor of the Nant Mawen valley where the stream converges on Nant Eithrim. There is a minor road junction here, and Brecon is 15km to the south-east.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

The name Llandeilo'r Fan has been translated as the church of Teilo on the Mawen brook. In its earliest form it has been identified as the *Lann Guruaet* in the 12th-century Llandaff charters, but as a place-name this is clearly reflects a much earlier tradition. It is not readily explained but could be an otherwise unattested personal name, *Gurmaet*. In 1503 the church was recorded as *Llantilio* and around 1566 as *ll[an] deilo ar faen*.

The sub-circular churchyard and the British dedication of the church point to an early medieval foundation for the settlement. So too does the appearance of *Lann Guruaet* which may have had currency as early as the 8th century, although this might reflect an estate with its *territorium* rather than a settlement or church.

Morphologically the village is typical of many small Welsh nucleated medieval settlements of the Brecknock uplands.

The Heritage to 1750

The church of St Teilo (20119) appears to have been largely, if not wholly, rebuilt in 1873. The present building comprises an undivided nave and chancel without a tower, and contains an assortment of older woodwork including a late medieval roof and portions of a screen, as well as a 14th-century font. A 'ruined chapel' is recorded at Llandeilo'r Fan in 1836, and it may be that the church was in a very poor state before the late 19th-century rebuilding.

The church stands within a raised sub-circular, and possibly early medieval, churchyard (2950), originally some 60m across and now defined by a stone revetment wall. The circuit has been altered on the north-east where the perimeter now follows modern property

boundaries, and there is a recent extension to the enclosure on the north, although in both places the original line of the circular bank can still clearly be seen.

A small stone walled circular enclosure (2951) survives in front of Upper Mill which may be the remains of a village pound, though it could alternatively be perhaps an embanked pond associated with the mill. The feature is now a garden, but may have an archaeological potential.

Two large building platforms (2952) survive on the steep slopes to the east of the church. Both appear to be fairly modern and one is marked as a standing building on the 1972 Ordnance Survey map. Generally though there are no records of any historic buildings in the village, and little obvious surface evidence of settlement activity.

In summary, Llandeilo'r Fan could be another of Brecknock's church settlements, and as yet there is no evidence to indicate the contrary.
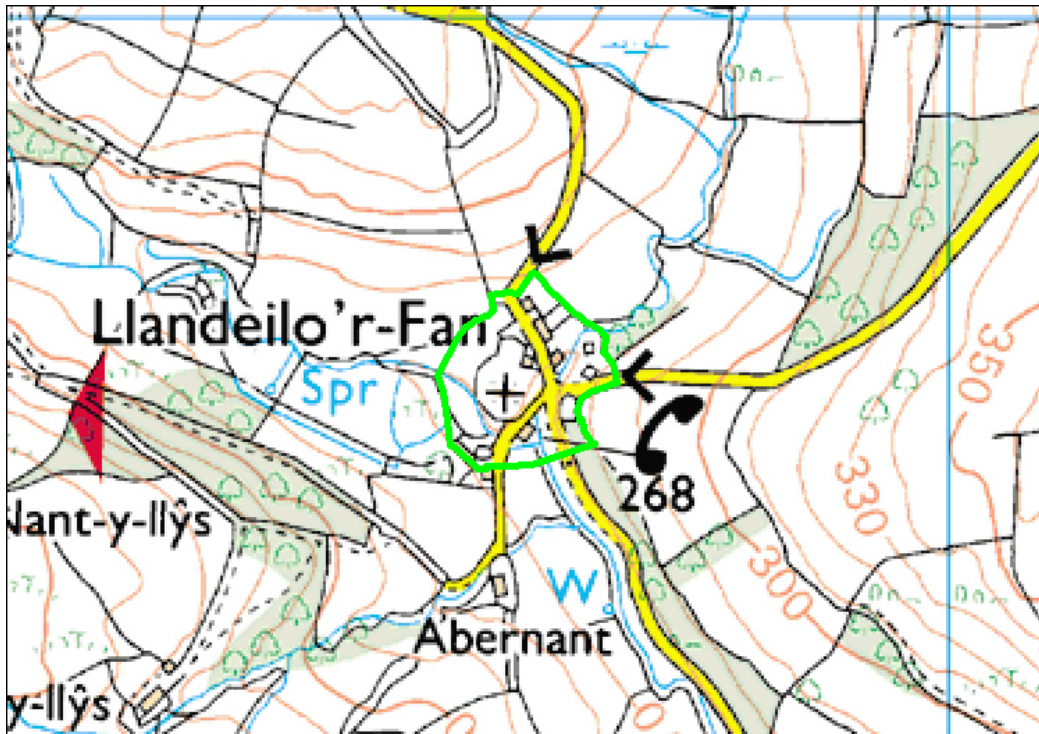
Llanddewi'r Cwm

SO 034486
2571

Introduction

Llanddewi'r Cwm is a small settlement, focused on its church, by the side of the B4520 Builth Wells to Brecon road, some 2km from Builth. It is sited on the tip of a steep interfluvial spur between the Afon Dunhonw and Nant Gwyn valleys.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

The name Llandewi'r Cwm literally means St David's church in the cwm (or valley). It first appears in documentary records in the period 1176-1198 as *Sancti David de Cum in Buelt* and in the Taxatio of 1154 it was *Landewycum*, but the sub-circular churchyard in which it sits places its probable origin in the early medieval period.

The settlement consists of no more than the church, a farm and a house or two, and it has probably never been significantly larger.

The heritage to 1750

St.David's church (20156) retains its simple medieval plan of nave and chancel with an undistinguished tower, and is probably originally a 12th- or 13th-century building. It appears to have been heavily restored in the 19th century (substantial repairs are recorded in 1847 which may have amounted to a partial rebuild). The church houses a 12th-century font, but little else in the way of early furnishings and fittings.

The present sub-rectangular churchyard (2540) is contained by a wall, but within this an earlier churchyard bank, though discontinuous, defines a smaller, oval enclosure.

New Hall (6966) is of local architectural interest and is a two-storied 18th-century building.

The field to the west of the church contains the remains of a small field system (2914) comprising low banks and a trackway which runs down towards the site of a small house, (2915), now gone, on the bank of Nant Gwyn. These are all probably post-medieval in date.

An area of undated ridge and furrow (2916) cultivation survives further to the west, and this may represent the medieval or later field system for the settlement.

In summary, Llanddewi'r Cwm is a small church settlement for which there is presently no substantive evidence of a nucleated community around it in the medieval or early post-medieval centuries.
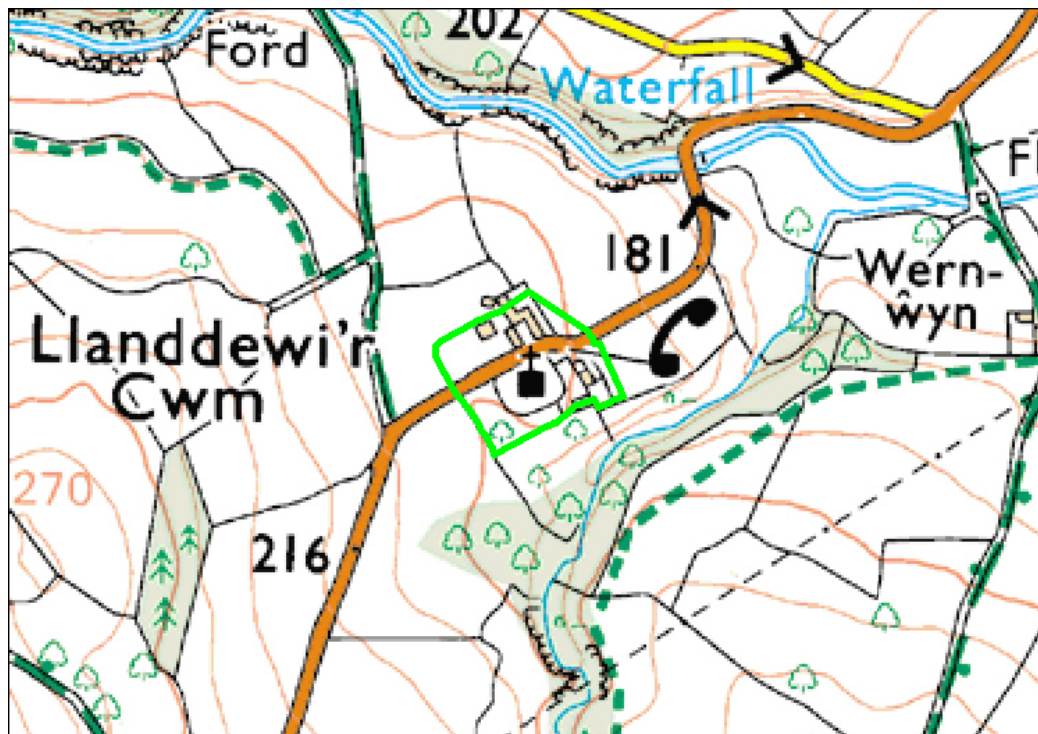
Llandulas

SN879413
2576

Introduction

Llandulas is a remote settlement, close to the border between Powys and Dyfed, and sheltering below the escarpment of Mynydd Epynt. It is positioned at a crossing of the river running down the small Afon Dulas valley, and is bounded on three sides by the Crychan Forest which has had a fairly dramatic effect on its appearance since the second world war.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

The settlement is now commonly termed Tirabad, a name which goes back to at least 1619 when *Tyr yr abate* or the 'abbot's land' referred to the land in the area which have formerly belonged to the monastery of Strata Florida. In the late 1690s Edward Lhuyd referred to the parish of *Tŷr Abat* and in 1821 it was *Newchurch Tyr Abbott* reflecting the small church built on a new site in 1716. The alternative, Llandulas, has no known pedigree, and looks like a back-formation from the river and/or Glandulas nearby.

This suggests that the settlement itself may not have had a history prior to the early 18th century, and that the church and nearby farm existed in isolation for many years.

The heritage to 1750

It was suggested in the original report that this remote village was typical of other isolated church settlements comprising the church and a single farmhouse, but that it was unusual because of the wooden 'forestry-workers' houses that had been erected to the west of the church since the war.

Llandulas church (20121) is a small, single-celled, white-washed building of the 18th century, as attested by a plaque inside it. It was refurbished or altered in 1871. The surrounding churchyard contains a large number of 18th-century memorials. If there was a medieval (or even early medieval) predecessor here, and this seems unlikely, nothing is known of it.

The church is set within an embanked, polygonal churchyard (2979), only 35m across, lying on the west bank of Nant Crysan, and the rectangular enclosure around the church shown on the 1840s' tithe survey, is almost certainly a result of cartographic licence.

An inscribed, early medieval cross-carved stone (3034) of the 9th or 10th century, now in the National Museum is recorded as coming from Pen-lan-wen, some 1500m to the east of Llandulas. Rather than originating at an early church here, as has been suggested in the past, it has been recently been noted that it was found on Mynydd Epynt in about 1873, and was later removed to Pen-lan-wen.

Glandulas farm (21110) is some 100m north of the church and is the only other building of any age in the village. The house is probably 17th-century and contains a good example of a post-and-panel partition. In the 19th century the main route through the settlement ran from east to west and separated Glandulas from the church. At some point, and perhaps as a result of the forestry activity, the route coming in from the north became more important and led to modifications to the road pattern that resulted in the road division between the two buildings disappearing.

The field between Glandulas and the church would be a likely location for earlier settlement, but there is absolutely no substantive evidence that strengthens any such contention. As a settlement Tirabad/Llandulas thus remains enigmatic.
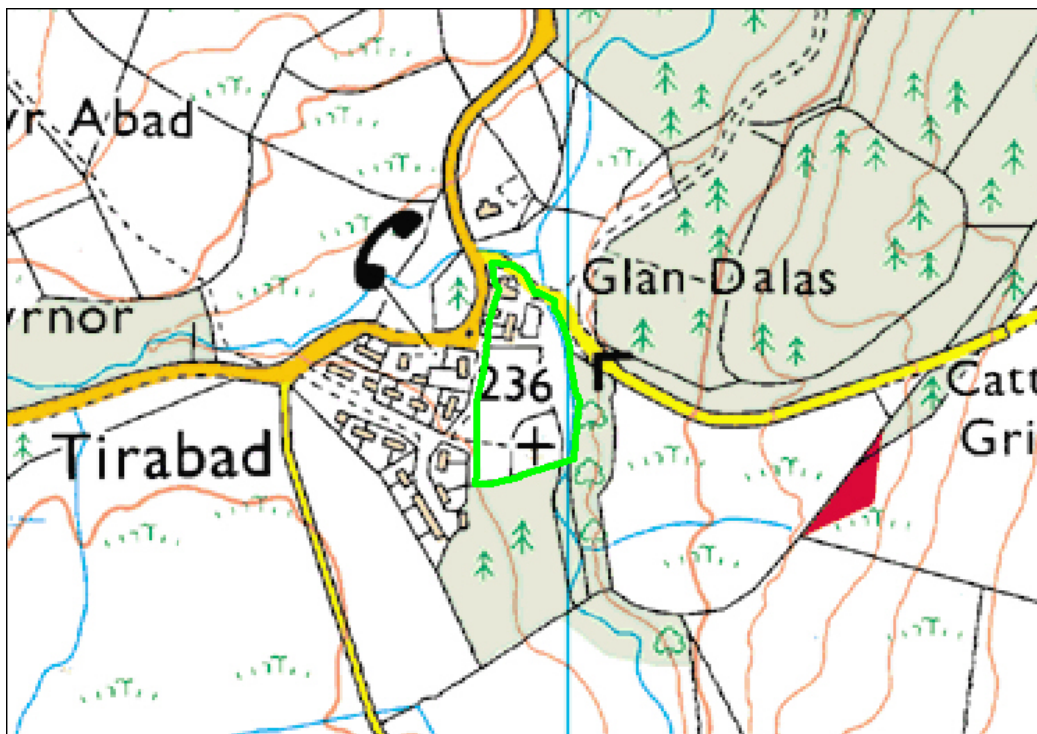
Llanfihangel Bryn Pabuan

SN 984566
2578

Introduction

Llanfihangel Bryn Pabuan is little more than an isolated church and an accompanying house, located in a slight saddle of the large interfluvial spur between the Chewfri and Hirnant rivers. The settlement lies beside the B4358 Newbridge-on-Wye to Beulah road.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

The derivation of the name Llanfihangel Bryn Pabuan is obscure, but the most likely is 'St Michael's on Pabuan's hill', though the personal name is a very unusual one. In 1299 it was simply referred to as *Laivyhangel*, appearing as *Llanvehangyll Brympabean* in 1543.

Llanfihangel Bryn Pabuan is traditionally held to be a daughter church, or chapelry, of the major ecclesiastical site or mother church at neighbouring Llanafan Fawr. This would also reinforce the view that Llanfihangel could have an early medieval origin.

Little is known of the history of the settlement, but it is likely that the village has never been significantly larger than it is today.

The heritage to 1750

The present church of St Michael (20137) is generally assumed to be of 13th-century build (and the existing font may be of this period), though it has been restored during the past two centuries. It remains a simple, singled-celled church, and architecturally is unexceptional, though its roof may be of the early 16th century. The south wall is pierced by a small trefoil window set close to ground level which has been variously explained as a 'lepers window' and a 'confessional opening', and at the turn of the century it was cited as evidence, seemingly uncorroborated, that the churchyard once contained an anchorite's cell (or hermitage).

The church lies within an irregularly polygonal churchyard (2904) and the tithe survey shows that the churchyard in the 19th century was little different.

Ty Gwilim (9841) is the only other building now surviving in the settlement. It is a modest timber and stone building probably dating from the 18th century, but it may occupy the site of an earlier building. The house is shown on the tithe survey. A large number of the Gwilim

family are buried in the churchyard and it is from them that the house presumably derives its name.

The tithe survey shows only one other building in the village, located in the triangular sliver of land, abutting the eastern edge of the churchyard. This cottage was depicted in the mid 19th century but had gone by the end of the century. Its remnants (20740) can still be traced on the ground.

The fields to the south of the road appear to contain the remnants of a field system (2903) which probably served the settlement. These remains comprise a series of earthwork banks and trackways and one possible building platform. If this settlement has been significantly larger at any time in the past then this area is the most likely one to have been occupied, the areas to the north and west being too steep to support settlement.

In summary, there is nothing as yet to suggest that this was anything other than a church settlement, the church itself accompanied by perhaps a single house only. Only further archaeological research is likely to alter this view.
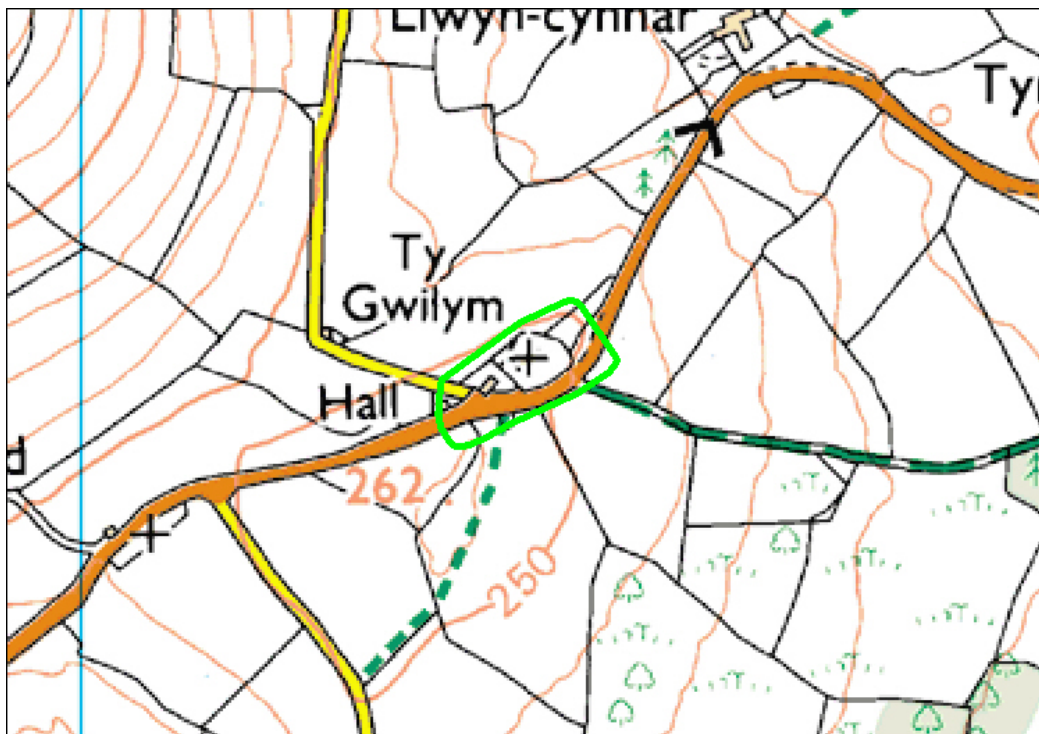
Llanfihangel Nant Bran

SN 944343
5279

Introduction

Llanfihangel Nant Bran is a small linearly laid out settlement adjacent to its church. It is sited on a slight spur on the north-eastern side of the Nant Bran valley on the southern edge of Mynydd Epynt.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

The name of this settlement literally translates as 'St Michael's on the Bran brook'. The first documented reference to it is a late one, *Sancti Michaelis de Nantbrane* appearing in 1503, though the Bran stream puts in an appearance in documents as early as 1326.

As with many of the smaller settlements in the region, the early history of Llanfihangel Nant Bran is obscure. The village plan looks typical, comprising a simple linear development running eastwards from the church, but the period that this occurred is open to discussion.

The heritage to 1750

St Michael's Church (20133) is perhaps originally a 14th-century building, but appears to have been largely restored in 1882. It comprises a simple undivided nave and chancel with a western tower which is almost certainly 16th-century.

The present churchyard (2945) is sub-rectangular and almost polygonal, though there is a hint of a curve to its southern perimeter. A case has also been made for an arcuate scarp circling the church on the south and these slight traces may be the remains of a former sub-circular churchyard (2946) about 50m diameter.

The possible site of a building survives as a small square raised platform (2947) within the churchyard, adjacent to the north gate. To judge from the absence of marked burials in the plot this building has been removed relatively recently.

A series of possible building platforms and associated earthworks (2948) are visible in the field to the south of Gwarllan Farm. If authentic, they presumably represent a now deserted part of the medieval settlement, which might be assumed to have once occupied both sides of the lane between the church and the road junction east of Gwarllan.

A further isolated platform (2949) is visible in an elongated field to the south-east of the churchyard. Topographically the area immediately to the east of the church would have been suitable for medieval settlement. While no remains are visible this plot may have archaeological potential.

The surviving buildings in Llanfihangel Nant Bran are all of post-medieval character, and as many have recently been renovated the settlement now has a modern air to it.

In summary, the nature of the historic settlement at Llanfihangel Nant Bran remains obscure. It could be no more than a church settlement on the edge of Epynt, or a more nucleated settlement whose slight traces have yet to be tested.
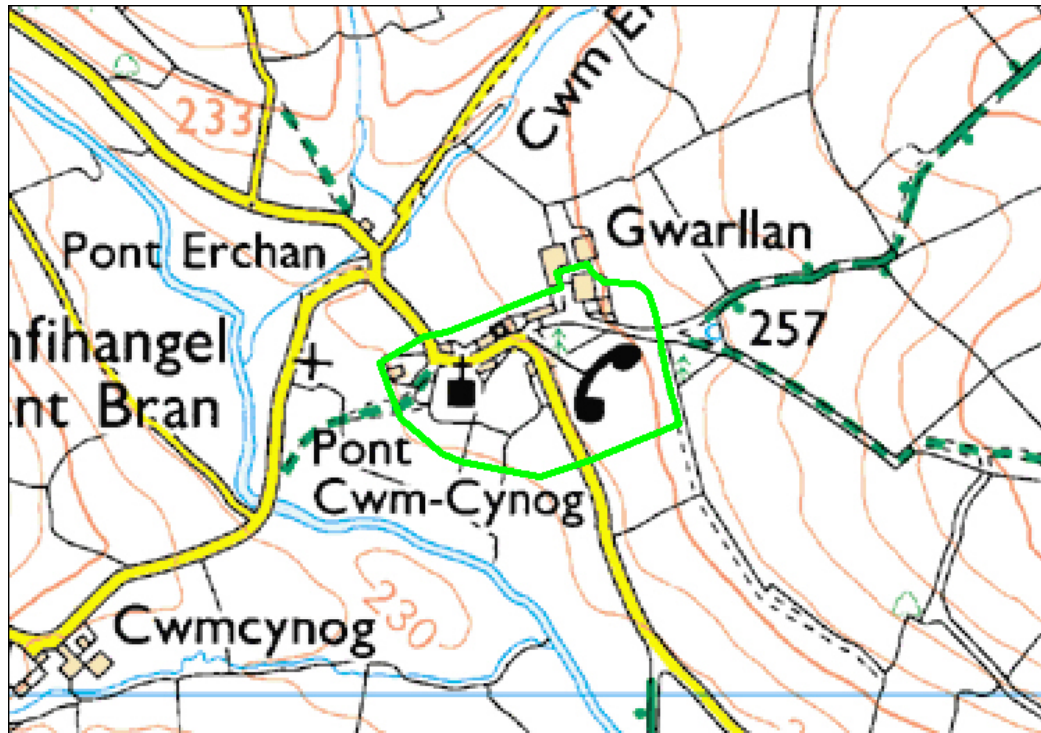
Llanfihangel Tal-y-llyn

SO 114284
2580

Introduction

Llanfihangel Tal-y-llyn is a nucleated village, straddling the B4560 between Brecon and Bwlch. It lies on the north-western slopes of the Llangors basin overlooking the lake of the same name.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

The name Llanfihangel Tal-y-llyn means 'The church of St Michael's at the head of the lake', which in turn references its location near Llyn Llangors. As *Lan Mihangel* it first appears around 1100, and *(villa) Sancti Michael* is mentioned in the early 12th century.

Little is known of the settlement's early history, though the church may be an early medieval foundation, based on its relatively early dedication, its valley-side position and the curvilinearity of its churchyard.

Llanfihangel Tal-y-llyn is one of the larger villages studied in this survey, and has what might be called an English rather than a Welsh character. Although it is now of medium size by local standards, it has clearly been larger. Nucleated settlements such as this are a common element of the settlement of the richer lowland areas to the east of Brecon and probably reflect the strong 'English' influence to be found here after the Norman conquest. This influence can also be seen in the medieval street pattern which is typical of many small villages in England.

The heritage to 1750

The church of St Michael (20165) was heavily restored in 1870, but the tower and porch of the 15th century building were retained, and the nave has even earlier fabric, 14th-century or even 13th-century perhaps. The church still houses a 12th-century font, but there are few other medieval fittings and furnishings.

A roughly cylindrical stone (2375), some 1.5m high, with a square socket in its top surface, stands in the church porch. The origin and purpose of this stone is obscure, though it has generally been thought of as some form of early medieval monument, perhaps an unusual form of cross shaft. The stone stood in the churchyard until 1921.

The church is set within what may be remnants of a sub-oval churchyard up to 50m across (2936), with encroachments on the west and south; this shape strengthens the case for an early medieval origin.

The village appears to have been almost twice its present size in the medieval period. A significant group of building platforms (2937) survives in a field to the north-east of the Tawel Brook which now marks the northern extent of the village. A pronounced holloway drops down the hillside directly towards the church and was still used as a footpath in living memory. Secondary holloways on parallel course lie out to the north-west. At least thirteen building platforms can be identified, most of them adjacent to the main holloway. These platforms are evidently the remains of a deserted part of the former medieval settlement linking the present village to the now outlying farms at Neuadd and Hemley Hall. It is one of the largest areas of deserted medieval settlement in the region.

The village contains a number of post-medieval buildings some of which are of local architectural interest. Neuadd house, for instance, is early 18th-century in date, although some earlier 17th-century windows at the rear of the house indicate an earlier building. The stone-built Hemley Hall Cottage is a two-roomed 16th-century dwelling which retains much of its original plan and fabric.

There is circumstantial evidence that suggests the layout of the village has been altered in the not-too-distant past, probably when Nant Tawel was properly bridged. The main holloway dropping down towards the stream from the north-east and the footpaths shown in the late 19th century all converge on a stream crossing about 60m upstream of the present one. This implies that the original lane passed to the north of the churchyard to meet up the modern lane running westwards towards Brecon where the latter suggestively alters its alignment on the edge of the village. On the other hand the main road through the village running south of the church is extremely straight (as is the last section of its counterpart running down the hill from Neuadd), giving the appearance of an insertion in this landscape. The southern edge of the churchyard has been cut back to allow buildings to be inserted between the church and the new road, in one case a school. As to when these changes took place is presently unclear, but a reasonable guess would be in the later 18th century or earlier 19th century.

An area of ridge and furrow (2938) survives to the south-west of the village, and a possible further area to the north (2939), although the latter may alternatively be the earthworks of a former orchard.

In summary, Llanfihangel Tal-y-llyn is a significant example of a nucleated settlement in the region, with surviving evidence of medieval dwelling sites on the north-east side of the stream, the church on the south-west side, and the possibility that further settlement occurred on the same bank of the stream as the church, but close to the original lane which passed to the north of the church, rather than to the south which is a more recent creation.
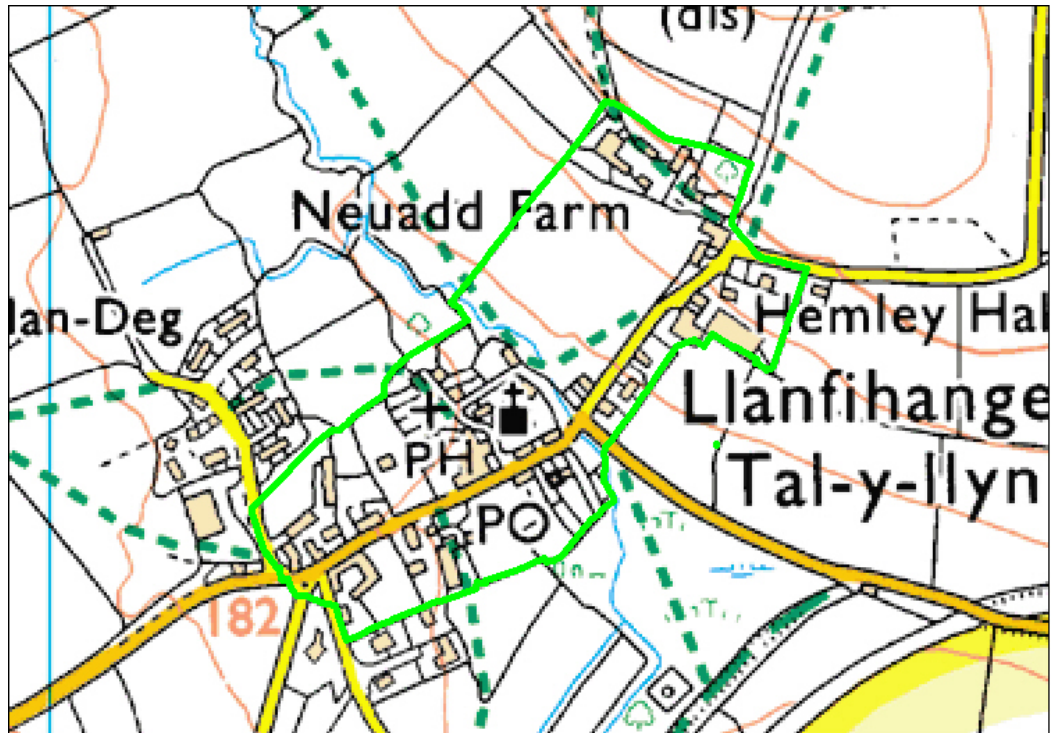
Llanfilo

SO119332
2581

Introduction

Llanfilo is a small, nucleated village occupying the steeply sloping southern side of Dulas valley, some 10km to the east of Brecon.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

The origin of Llanfilo is not documented but the sub-circular churchyard and British dedication of the church indicate that the village has its roots in the early medieval period. The church is dedicated to St Beilo, perhaps the daughter of the legendary Brychan. Formerly, the dedication had been to St Milburga, the Abbess of Wenlock, but although this was used until quite recently it appears to have been an error based on a misleading reference of 1503, as the original dedication to Beilo is clearly recorded in 13th and 14th-century documents. This erroneous dedication to Milburga, a 7th-century English saint, led to considerable antiquarian speculation about a Saxon origin for the village. There is, however, no evidence for such an origin, even though the village, like many of its immediate neighbours, reflects some Anglo-Norman influence during the medieval period (in the level and type of settlement). Its beginnings are firmly in the Welsh tradition.

Llanfilo is not mentioned by name until the beginning of the 13th century when it appeared as *Lanbilio*, but inhabitants of the village were named as witnesses in 12th-century documents (including Robert de Llanfilo, Constable of Brecon). The village appears regularly in documents from the 14th century onwards, implying that it may have been a relatively important and populous settlement. Certainly the archaeological evidence confirms that it was larger during the medieval period than it is today.

The heritage to 1750

St Beilo's Church (20183) has a separated nave and chancel, with a squat western tower and southern porch. The tower was completely rebuilt in 1881, while the body of the church retains its medieval fabric, perhaps 13th-century. It was extensively restored in 1913. Two Romanesque lintels, neither in their original position, are the earliest furnishings, from the 12th century. There are also two rare stone altar slabs, an elaborate rood screen from about 1500, an impressive 15th-century vaulted roof, and what is believed to be the oldest surviving bell in the county, supposedly cast at Worcester between 1380 and 1400.

The church is set eccentrically within a roughly oval stone walled churchyard some 50m by 75m (2644). The topography would allow the yard to have extended under the present road (making a more circular enclosure 75m across), and while there is now no evidence to support such a theory, detailed late 19th-century mapping appears to confirm that a portion of the churchyard has been sliced off by the development of the lane network. The churchyard occupies a shelf on a very steep north-facing slope and this may explain why the church is squashed into the northern end of the enclosure, even though it is not noticeably more level than the wider southern end.

St Filo's well (4492), sited outside the churchyard and a reputed holy well, now only survives as a concrete and brick capped cistern. The well was formerly used as the village water supply.

Opposite the church are the substantial earthwork remains of a moated site, enclosing an area some 24m by 15m (4494/SAM B195). Though on an unusually steep slope, it is fairly typical of the small group of moats in this area. It could well be the site of the forerunner of Penmaes Farm which was formerly the local 'manor house'.

To the west of Penmaes farm a small oval field survives, encircled by roads, between the farm and the church and in front of the moated site. This feature (2654), which is now semi-derelict and used for storage by the farm, might be the remains of a small village green, though the identification of a substantial medieval building on it in 1994 argues against this interpretation. .

The street pattern within the village is characteristically medieval, being a linear development extending north (downhill) from the church, and perhaps originally beyond Penishapentre Farm. The character of the surviving buildings is mixed although there are some examples of late medieval/early post-medieval forms, with St Anthony's (2997) and Penmaes Farm (2998) perhaps being the oldest. Though the latter cannot demonstrably be taken back before the 18th century, the presence of both a dovecote and a walled garden reveals that this originated as a gentry house.

On the west of this main street are several vacant plots (and one derelict farm building - 6729), all of which are probably on the medieval street frontage and might contain significant archaeological remains. Evaluations in 1994 produced little of significance on this side suggesting that medieval housing along the west side of the road was not continuous. Either side of Penishapentre Farm the earthwork remains of building platforms and trackways (2999, 2650, 2651) are clearly visible.

The east side of the street has fewer building traces, but between Penmaes Farm and St Anthony's has been heavily landscaped by gardens. North of St Anthony's a clear earthwork platform (37024) marks the site of a former house, of similar shape and size to its neighbour. Behind this single platform, in the field opposite Penishapentre, are the substantial earthwork remains of what appears to be a deserted part of the former medieval settlement (2652). These comprise a holloway, running north-west across the field to join the existing road opposite Pentishapentre, with a number of building platforms lying to either side of it.

North of the moated site the remains of a building, perhaps 15m long and 8.5m wide, were recorded in excavation in 1994, and dated by sparse pottery to the medieval period (15935). Whether this was part of the manorial complex focused on the moat, or a normal medieval dwelling within the settlement is unclear. A watching brief behind Rosary Cottage to the north of the church did not record any medieval features.

These deserted village remains may have extended further south of the village, into the fields behind Penmaes, but these have been heavily improved and no obvious evidence survives, other than immediately to the south of the moat where there is a platform adjacent to the road (9957).

More certain is the spread of open fields associated with the settlement both to the north and particularly the east.

On the crest of the east-west ridge, at the eastern end of this field, there is a small circular earth and stone mound (2653). While this might be the remains of a Bronze Age barrow, it is more likely that it is the site of a medieval windmill.

Outside Penmaes Farm is circular sectional stone a cider press (2617). While this press does not appear to be in situ (it is neither level nor properly assembled) it presumably attests a local cider making tradition.

North-west of the village lies a small abandoned quarry (2996) which may had provided stone for many of its present (and past) buildings.

What emerges at Llanfilo is a small medieval nucleated settlement with church and manor at its southern, higher end and accessed by a lane running up the hill with a straggle of dwellings lying beside it. Some other dwellings may have lain to the west and south-west of the churchyard, and south of the moated site.
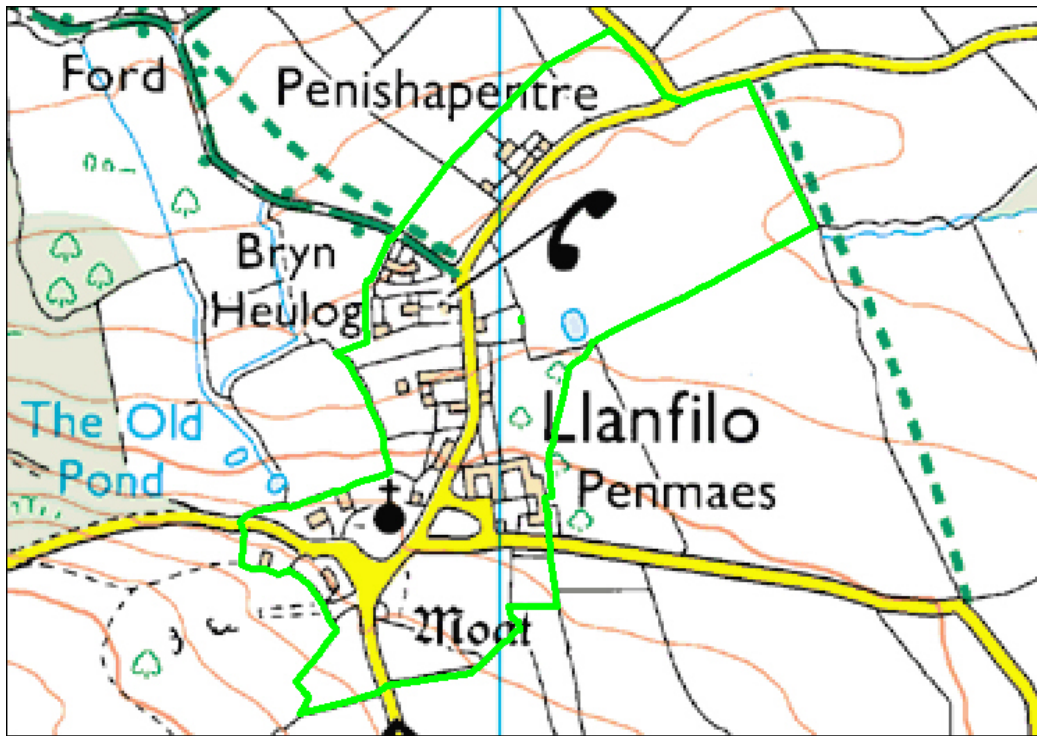
Llangammarch Wells

SN 935474
2582

Introduction

Llangammarch Wells is a sprawling linear settlement spanning the River Irfon at its confluence with the Afon Cammarch, below the north-western slopes of Mynydd Epynt.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

The early history of Llangammarch Wells is sketchy, but it is likely that there has been a church here since the early medieval period. The present church is dedicated to a supposed St Cammarch, a grandson of Brychan a legendary king of Brecheiniog, and the earliest ecclesiastical establishment here, perhaps with a 6th-century foundation date, may have been a *clas* community, although the evidence for this is far from conclusive. There is, however, no evidence that St Cammarch ever existed, and another authority believes that the church was originally dedicated to St Tysilio, as the poet Cynddelw (*c*.1155-1200) attributed the church to him in his *Cân Tysilio* (song to Tysilio).

It is first referred to as *Langamarch* in 1249, although there is a 12th-century mention of *llan gamarch* copied into a later source. The meaning is the obvious one of 'the church by the river Camarch'. The doubling of the 'm' in the name is an Anglicisation, while the addition of 'Wells' results from its development as a spar in recent centuries.

It seems probable that there was a settlement here in the medieval period, lying between the Rivers Irfon and Cammarch and centred on the church, although no buildings survive from this date. The exact extent of this medieval settlement is not known, but may be reflected by the tithe survey of 1843, which shows six buildings around the southern side of the churchyard.

During the 19th century Llangammarch held an annual horse fair, though it is not known whether this is a medieval survival or a later innovation.

The modern village, to the south of the Irfon, is largely a modern creation and owes its existence, at least to some degree, to the discovery of barium chloride wells in the area at the end of 18th century. The exploitation of these was masterminded by Theophilus Evans, the vicar of Llangammarch and the 'creator' of neighbouring Llanwrtyd Wells. The spa survived into the 20th century, when changing fashion forced its decline, and although relatively successful it never seriously rivalled its neighbour. At its height the spa was exporting bottled

water by rail all over Britain and marketing its own branded cigarettes, while the village boasted a pump room, three hotels, and a golf course.

The heritage to 1750

A Roman coin hoard (854) was found in peaty ground close to the station in 1871; while this might signify some local activity in the area, there is nothing as yet to suggest a Roman settlement here.

St Cammarch's Church (20134) is an entirely modern structure, having been re-built in 1915-6 by W. D. Caroe, and the tower was added in 1927. This building replaced an earlier church of 1850, which was in a different sector of the churchyard, and in turn this had replaced a medieval building, the construction date of which is unknown but which was ruinous by 1800. Though there is no direct evidence for the church's early medieval beginnings, a cross-carved stone (3046), built into the porch of the present building, belongs to the 9th or 10th century, and almost certainly was associated with the early foundation on this site.

The church is sited in a wedge-shaped churchyard (2674), on the end of an interfluvial spur at the confluence of the Cammarch and Irfon rivers. The earlier churchyard was more an elongated oval shape, and its western edge is marked by the modern path leading past the doorway of the 20th-century church.

A medieval holy well (3414), Ffynnon Gadferth, was recorded by the late 17th-century antiquary Edward Lhuyd in the parish. Although its site has not been precisely located, Lhuyd's vague description suggests it was outside the village.

No other evidence for medieval settlement survives at Llangammarch, although it seems plausible to assume that one developed at the river confluence. Slight earthworks (2675) are visible to the west of the village and these may represent some form of field system for the village, though they could easily post-date the medieval era. Also undated is an area of possible ridge and furrow cultivation (2655) surviving to the east of the village.
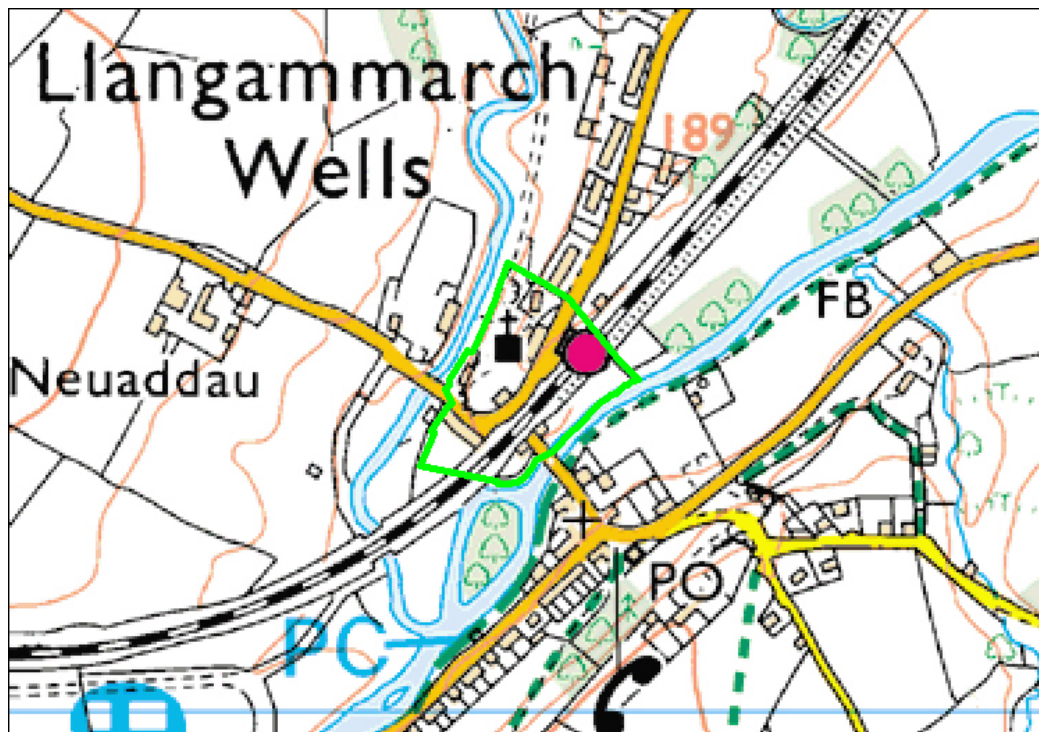
Llanganten

SO 009517
2583

Introduction

Llanganten is a minor settlement comprising a church and an adjacent house, lying on the south bank of the Chewfri river some 2km to the west of Builth Wells. Although theoretically a settlement in its own right, the church is now commonly thought of as Cilmeri.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

The early history of Llanganten is obscure, and today the settlement survives only as an isolated church and vicarage. The name is first recorded as *Langantein* in 1280 and as *Langanten* a decade later. The meaning would seem to be 'the church of St Canten', an obscure saint who was allegedly a grandson of Brychan Brycheiniog.

The church was the centre of a parish until the 1880s, but primarily appears to have served the village of Cilmeri some 500m to the south-west, and it may never have been a significant focus for settlement itself.

The heritage to 1750

The structure of St Cannen's Church (20159) is 19th-century. It was re-built in 1880 but the present plan, comprising a nave and separate chancel, may reflect that of the building it replaced, and indeed there is some surviving masonry that may be medieval. The only medieval furnishing in the church is the 12th-century font.

The church is sited eccentrically within a large sub-rectangular churchyard (2969) immediately above the south bank of the Afon Chwefru. The river has eroded the enclosure on the north to such an extent that the church now perches precariously on the edge of the river cliff. Within the confines of the present yard is a slight curving earthwork bank, running closely around the south-west front of the church. This could represent the remains of an earlier sub-circular churchyard (2970), though the physical traces are vague and not wholly convincing.

A series of faint earthworks (2971) exist in the field on the north bank of the Chwefri, opposite the church, and may perhaps be related to the settlement. Though these features resemble disjointed banks and a possible holloway, and so could be the remains of a field

system associated with the settlement, their low-lying riverside location might point to a more natural origin.

In summary, Llanganten presents an appearance as a church settlement which served a dispersed community without ever becoming the focus of a developing settlement beside the river.
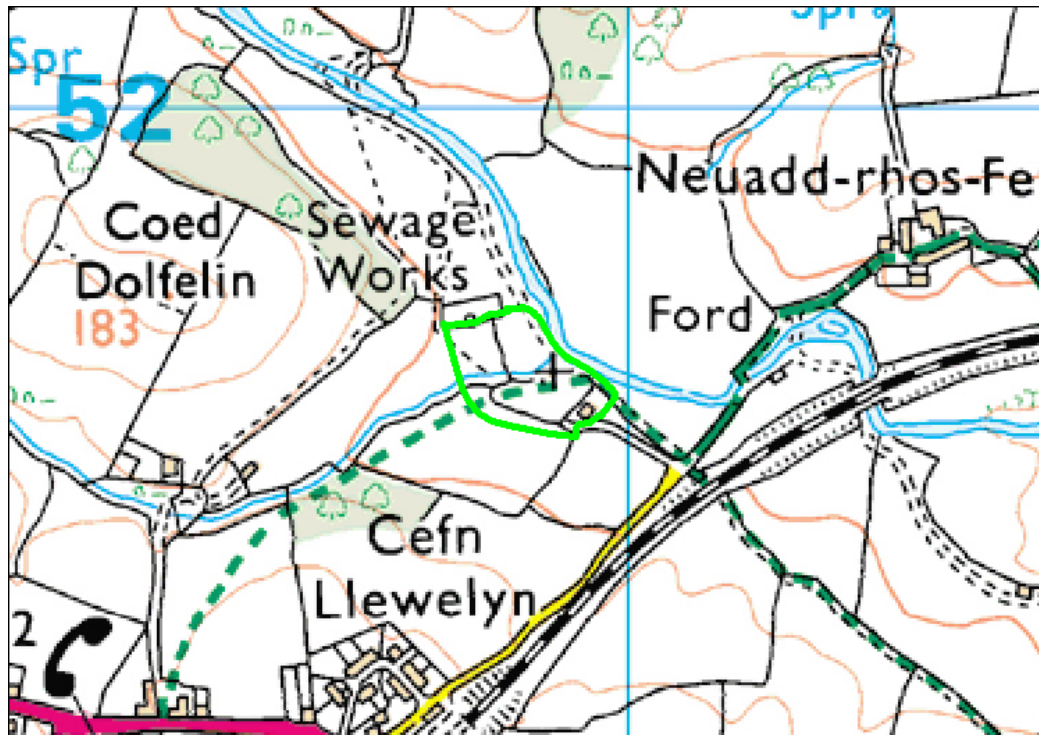
Llangynog

SO 024459
2584

Introduction

An isolated ruined church with no obvious signs of associated settlement is all that remains of Llangynog. Sited on the western bank of the upper reaches of the Nant Gwyn, adjacent to the B4520 Builth Wells to Brecon road, it is some 6km to the south of Builth.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Llangynog was formerly the focus of a small ecclesiastical parish to the south of Builth Wells. It is the only obvious, entirely deserted, church settlement in the region, and thus has a high archaeological potential. It has, however, left little impression in the documentary record, and its first appearance seems to be in 1578 as *Capel Cunok*. Nevertheless, it lies within a few hundred metres of the old road from Builth Wells to Brecon, almost certainly a more important routeway in past times than today.

The church was certainly a medieval foundation if not earlier (see below) but was only a chapel-of-ease to Llanganten. It was little used throughout the 19th century, because of the parish's small population, and last saw worship in October 1956, although elsewhere it is claimed that it was closed for divine service in 1916. It was deconsecrated in 1963 (after which the roof beams, bell and font were removed to Maesmynis church to be used in its refurbishment), and it was subsequently demolished.

The churchyard has a 'characteristically' early medieval form, small and verging on the curvilinear, and it is possible that Llangynog might have emerged as a settlement after this time. There is, though, no direct evidence for medieval or earlier secular settlement around the church, and it is possible that it has always been an isolated structure.

The tithe survey of 1847, which can provide hints of past medieval activity, shows only a single house – Ty-capel – next to the church.

The heritage to 1750

St Cynog's Church (20153) was apparently a small, singled-celled structure of medieval type, although mainly of 17th-century and 18th-century build according tom existing records. It was largely rebuilt in 1882. The building does not figure in medieval records and its earliest

documented date is 1717, although it is possible that it was of early medieval origin (see below).

The church sits within the remains of a raised sub-circular churchyard (5483), no more than 35m across and contained by a dry-stone revetment wall. This is a characteristically early medieval shape, although there is no corroborative evidence to support such an early origin.

The church lies in what are now improved pasture fields showing no obvious signs of habitation, though three conjoining holloways may hint at a possible focus. One (2679), runs east from the churchyard to a ford across Nant Gwyn, where it joins another (2680) running south-east from the modern road. The third (2681) runs north from the church towards the modern road, and with the other two forms the third side of a rough triangle. While none of these features need necessarily be of any great age (all could be merely field lanes), they could represent the road network of some now vanished former settlement centred on the church. Topographically this area would be well suited for settlement.

Ty-capel (2682), the only building anywhere near the church, was demolished in the second half of the 20th century. It probably dated from the 18th century, as a date of 1753 was incised on the fireplace lintel.

In the absence of any substantive evidence to the contrary, Llangynog may be seen as a church settlement serving the dispersed community in the area, though future work might modify this view.
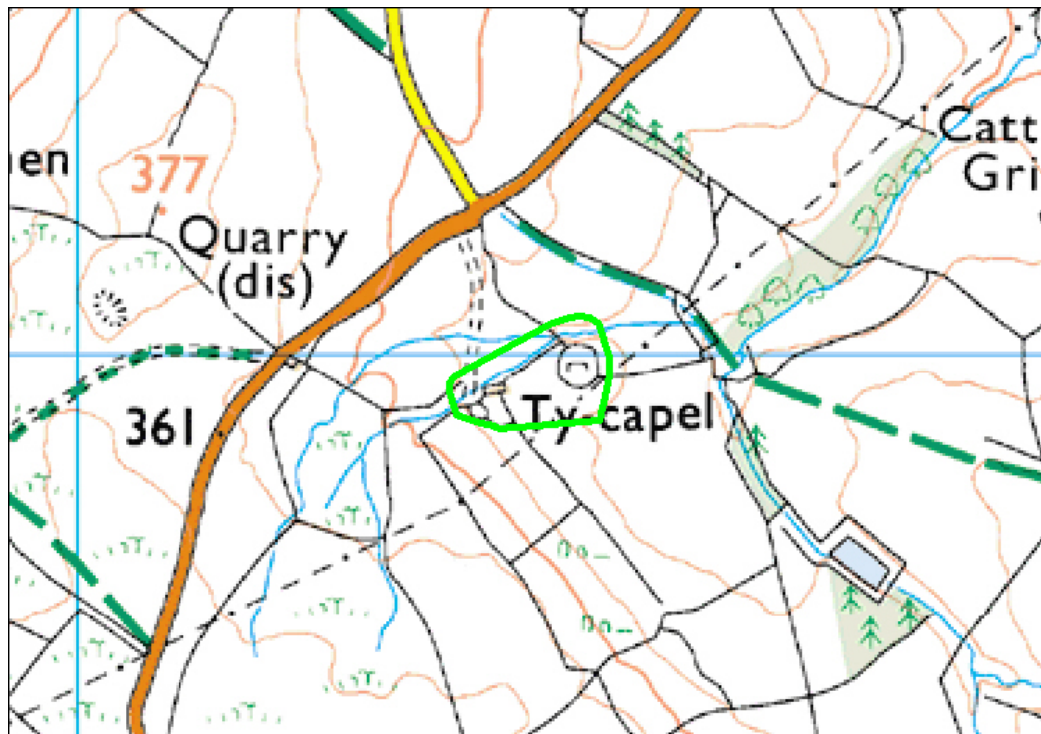
Llanlleonfel

SN93874993
2585

Introduction

Llanlleonfel is a very small settlement, comprising no more than an isolated church accompanied by a pair of cottages. It lies on the western slopes of the Dulas valley some 10km to the west of Builth Wells.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

Today, Llanlleonfel comprises a church and a single pair of modern cottages though a series earthworks lying to the east show that the settlement could have been larger at one time.

The curvilinearity of the churchyard and the presence of an important inscribed stone in the church should indicate an early medieval establishment for the church and thus the settlement. This is reinforced by the earliest form of the name – *Lanloeluayl* (in 1280) and later *Llanllewenvoyl* from between 1360 and 1367. These forms incorporate the personal name *Llywenfel*, presumably an otherwise unattested saint.

Llanlleonfel has never been an important historical focus, though it might be argued that it was less remote in former times than today, for less than one kilometre to the north, the Roman road approaching the fort at Caerau could have been accessible long after Roman military abandoned their stronghold. In the 18th century the church came under the patronage of the Gwynne family who reputedly purchased the neighbouring manor of Garth at the end of the previous century. They became associated with the Wesleys, Sally Gwynne marrying Charles Wesley in Llanlleonfel church in 1749.

The heritage to 1750

While it can be speculated that there was a church on the spot in the early medieval as well as the medieval centuries, the present structure (20135) was a complete rebuild in 1876, replacing the previous church, which may have been of the 16th century. Progressively restored by the Gwynne family from about 1712 and used by them until the end of the 18th century, the church was recorded by Francis Kilvert in 1873 as ruinous, '..the only occupants being several white owls'.

The church contains a massive, early medieval stone (3048), carrying a Latin inscription. It stood in the churchyard until about 1938/39. Whether it was originally associated with this church cannot be determined, but it seems highly likely. A second stone (3415) was mentioned in 1699 by Edward Lhuyd, standing eight feet from the first, and this may be one of the two stones still visible outside the east end of the church, a detailed case being made by Charles Thomas in 1999.

The church stands within a roughly polygonal churchyard enclosure which hints at former curvilinearity (2976) and is some 75m across. The circuit of the enclosure is defined by a bank and shallow ditch. Its perimeter is virtually intact although it appears to have been flattened out on the north-west to accommodate a trackway.

The western end of a univallate, rectangular enclosure, c.30m by 55m to the west of the church was photographed from the air in 2006. On present evidence it is not possible to determine whether this represents a later prehistoric defended enclosure or is part of an early medieval graveyard.

A spring or well, now capped in brick and concrete (3418) lies to the south-east of the church, and was approached by a track in the 19th century. This is reputedly a holy well, noted by the Breconshire historian, Theophilus Jones at the beginning of the 19th century, though not mentioned by Francis Jones in his standard work on the holy wells of Wales.

A series of earthworks (2977) occupy the field east of the church. These comprise linear banks and possible platforms and may represent the remains of a now deserted part of the former medieval settlement. To the south-east of the church there is a sunken trackway and further settlement may have once existed in this area. The tithe survey of 1844 shows that this sunken trackway was the main approach to the settlement from the valley. It is possible therefore that the track could have acted a focus for settlement.

An adjacent area of ridge and furrow (2978) presumably represents part of the settlement's field system.

In summary, this is a church settlement, comprising the church itself and a pair of cottages whose date of origin remains uncertain. While it is possible that Llanlleonfel has never been any larger than this, the sunken trackway ascending the hill may have been a focus for other dwellings and there are earthworks on the east side of the church and its enclosure which have yet to be properly assessed.
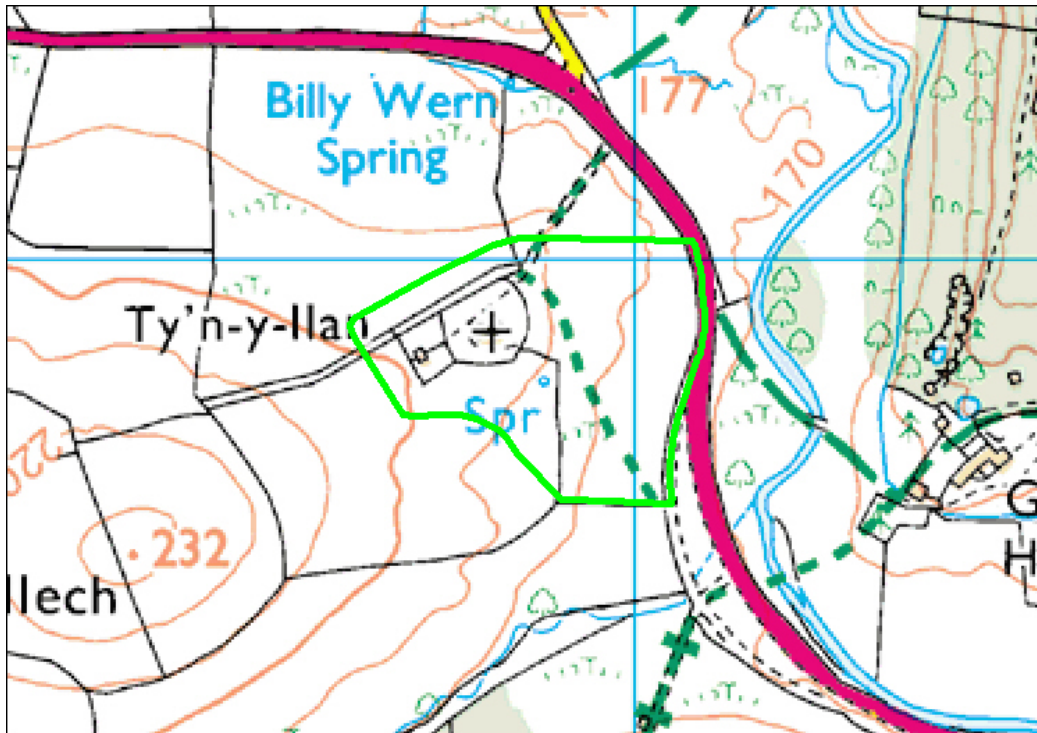
Llanwrthwl

SN 976637
2587

Introduction

Llanwrthwl is a small, modern nucleation focused on a church of much greater antiquity. It lies on the west bank of the River Wye, at the mouth of a short tributary valley of the Dulas system, some 4km to the south of Rhayader. The village has grown up on the edge of the first river terrace at the junction of three minor roads.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Little is known of the early history of the settlement although it has been suggested that there was a 'pre-Christian' focus here, this assertion being based on the presence of a large, supposedly prehistoric, standing stone erected in the churchyard. The 'church of Gwrthwl' is first documented as *Lannochul* in 1280 and *Llanwthwl* in 1283, but St Gwrthwl is otherwise unattested in the literature.

The church dedication, the riverine location and the vestigial circularity of the churchyard points to an early medieval date for the ecclesiastical presence here. There is, though, no surviving evidence as to the nature of any settlement that might have accompanied the early church, or its medieval successor.

While the modern village extends north of the church as far as the Old Rectory, the assumed historic core of Llanwrthwl was more tightly focused. At the time of the 1847 tithe survey only three houses lay around the churchyard.

The heritage to 1750

St Gwrthwl's Church (20142), a simple two-celled plan with a projecting vestry, appears to be entirely the result of 19th-century rebuilding. It contains an impressive Romanesque font, a survivor of the earlier, medieval structure on the site, but no other real signs of antiquity

The church stands centrally in a raised churchyard (2900), which although altered and enlarged on the south and west, appears to have once been sub-circular. The large irregular stone block (883) standing outside the south porch of the church has been said to be a prehistoric standing stone, leading to speculation about its relationship with the early

Christian centre. Samuel Lewis's view in the 19th century that it is the remains of a cross shaft seems highly improbable.

Apart from the church the only pre-modern buildings are the 'Old Post Office' and 'Rose Cottage', though neither appears to be of any great age. Rose Cottage is shown on the tithe map of 1847, and is probably 18th-century. This map also depicts a building where the Old Post Office now stands, although the plan is somewhat different and it is probably the present building's predecessor, named as the Bell Inn on Ordnance Survey maps of the late 19th century. School House to the north of the church, is a 19th-century school building now converted into dwelling.

The remains of a single earthwork platform (2901), presumably the site of a building, survive on the north of the village. There is no evidence as to the date of this feature, and it is perhaps post-medieval rather than earlier.

The fields immediately to the north of the village are generally smaller than those to the south, and are contained by large earth and stone banks. They might represent a medieval or early post-medieval field system (2902), though firm dating evidence is absent.

In summary, Llanwrthwl appears to be a church settlement and there is currently no evidence for a community developing around the church until the 20th century.

Llanwrtyd

SN878467
2589

Introduction

Llanwrtyd is an isolated church accompanied by a few scattered houses. It lies on the western slopes of the Irfon valley, at the base of the steep Pen Y Ddinas hill, and is some 5km from Llanwrtyd Wells and higher up the valley.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Llanwrtyd is a typical isolated church settlement from which the parish derives its name and which in the 19th century also provided the name for the new spa development of Llanwrtyd Wells. The name Llanwrtyd combines the term for church and an otherwise undocumented personal name Gwrtud or Gwrtyd, but the earliest reference to it is a late one: *Llanworted* appears only in 1543. Speculatively, we may wonder whether the original dedication of the church has been replaced by the present one to the more famous saint in whose diocese it was during the Middle Ages.

Traditionally the church was founded by St David in the 6th century, and the curving boundary around the west side of the churchyard and its location beside the river would certainly support the contention that it was established well before the Norman Conquest. Later it was classed as a chapel attached to Llangammarch.

Its development throughout the Middle Ages and into the post-medieval era is largely undocumented.

The heritage to 1750

St David's Church (20120) comprises a nave and separate chancel, a large southern porch and a bellcote. The present building is mainly 14th-century and 16th-century, although parts were restored in 1861/2 and 1935. The church formerly had a rood screen and loft as is evidenced by the surviving mural stair in the south wall of the nave. The only medieval furnishing in the church is the 14th or 15th-century font.

The church contains a cross-carved grave-marker, probably of the 8th or 9th century (3029). This was discovered in 1897 amongst stone from a demolished cottage at Ystafell-fach (Llawdref farm), and erected at the end of Berthddu bridge, before being brought to the

church in 1902 or 1903. There is thus no direct link between the early medieval memorial and the church, but curiously Edward Lhuyd at the end of the 17th century referred to a stone in the church whose incisions were by then obliterated. This is hardly likely to be the Llawdref but could conceivably signal another early medieval inscribed stone which has now been lost.

Today the church stands within an irregularly elongated churchyard (2980) but the remains of a former sub-circular churchyard (2981) can clearly be seen. The older enclosure, which is some 60m across is followed by the modern boundary around the west and south sides of the church and survives as a substantial bank and ditch around the east and north within the present yard.

The only other building surviving in the settlement is Dinas Mill (2982) some 200m south of the church, which takes its name from Dinas, the sub-medieval gentry house 300m to the west.

The area between the church and the mill would be the most suitable place for further settlement, though this is pure conjecture for no traces of any earthworks now remain. The road connecting these two sites formerly continued south as the main road to Llanwrtyd Wells (Pontrhydyferrau) and other lanes converge on the church from east and west. The 'main' road was only moved to the eastern bank of the river with the building of the Dolycoed Hotel in the late 19th century.

At present Llanwrtyd gives the appearance of a church settlement without any sign of a nucleated community developing around it.
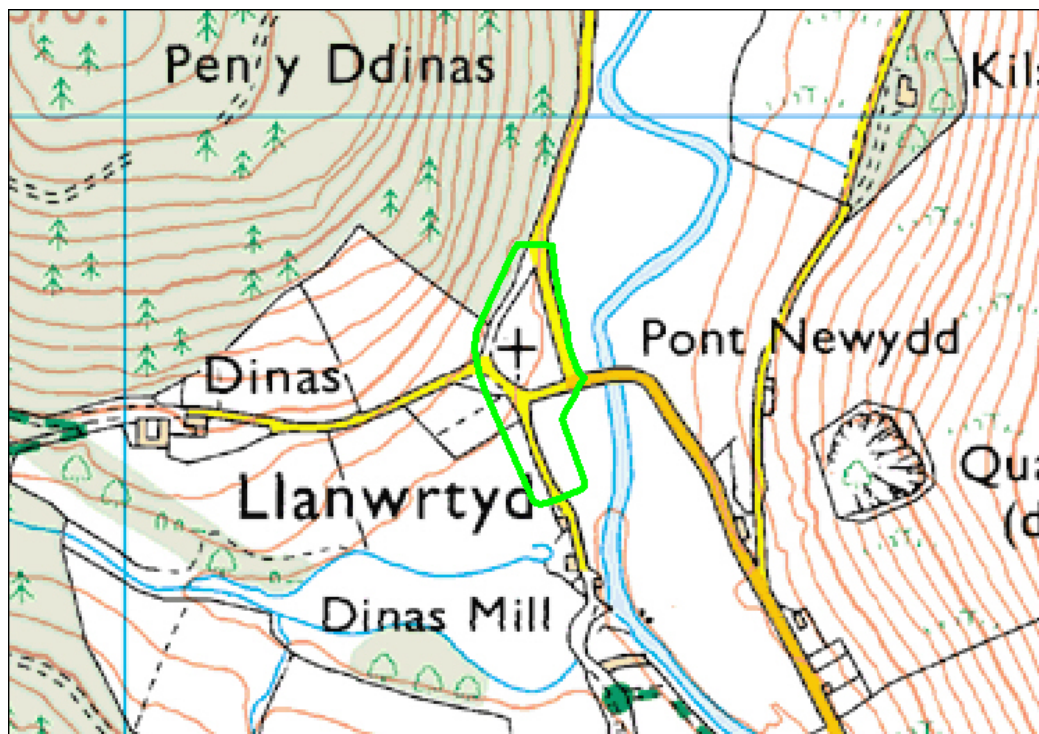
Llanynis

SN 998508
2590

Introduction

Llanynis is now an isolated church with no associated settlement, lying on the southern bank of the River Irfon some 4km to the west of Builth Wells. The site is not even accessible on a public road.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Llanynis is now an isolated church with no associated settlement, lying on the southern bank of the River Irfon some 4km to the west of Builth Wells. The site is not even accessible on a public road.

The early history of Llanynis is unknown. However, the sub-circular churchyard and the former British dedication of the church may indicate an early medieval date for the foundation.

As *Lanenus*, it is first documented in about 1291 and as *Lanynys* in 1374. The element 'ynys' here is taken by modern authorities to mean a river-meadow rather than its usual connotation of an island.

The present settlement has comprised no more than the church since at least the 1840s, and if there was any adjoining settlement at some distant point in the past it may never have been more than a few dwellings.

The heritage to 1750

St David's Church (20139), which was formerly dedicated to St Llyr, is a simple, double-celled building with a southern porch and a bellcote, and is largely the product of successive rebuildings and restorations in 1687, 1778 and 1894, though there is the possibility that some medieval fabric remains. Simply furnished, it has altar rails from the 17th century and a font of 14th-century origin.

At one time the church appears to have stood within a sub-circular churchyard (2983) some 50m across. This now only survives as a slightly raised platform within the modern sub-rectangular enclosure (2984), although part of the present eastern and southern boundary is

common to both. A clearance and renovation scheme in the early 1970s, which saved the church from permanent closure, apparently removed more substantial earthwork remains from the churchyard.

The 18th-century buildings of Hendre farm (2985), which lie 400m to the south of the church, are the nearest surviving habitation. The name (literally - 'old *tref* or settlement') could be significant and perhaps indicates that a larger settlement once existed here. It could be argued that the most likely area for such settlement is along the causeway linking the two sites, but there is no evidence that this is of any antiquity, and in truth anywhere in this large loop of the river valley could have accommodated a nucleated community. Any remains here may be relatively undisturbed, due to the absence of re-development, and therefore of a high archaeological potential.

Two blocks of ridge and furrow survive to the west (2986) and to the south (2987) of the church, and these presumably represent parts of the settlement's field system.

In summary, Llanynis appears to be an atypical church settlement, with the church not even accompanied by an adjacent farm or inn. However, the presence of Hendre nearby might suggest the presence of a nucleated, medieval bond settlement in the vicinity.
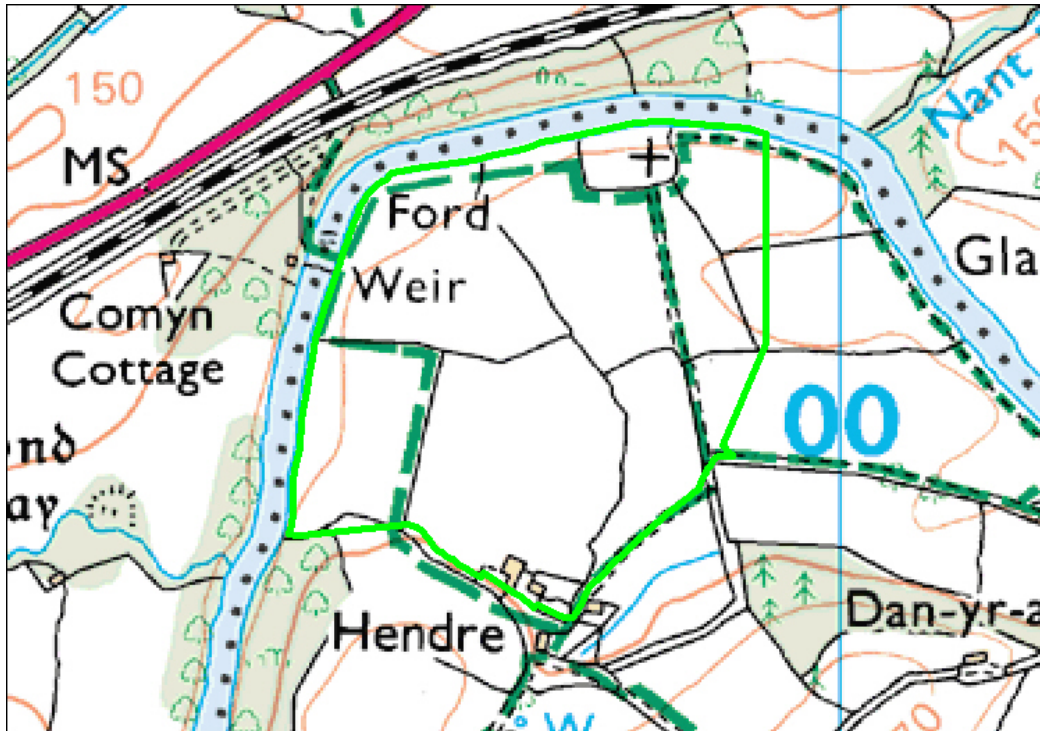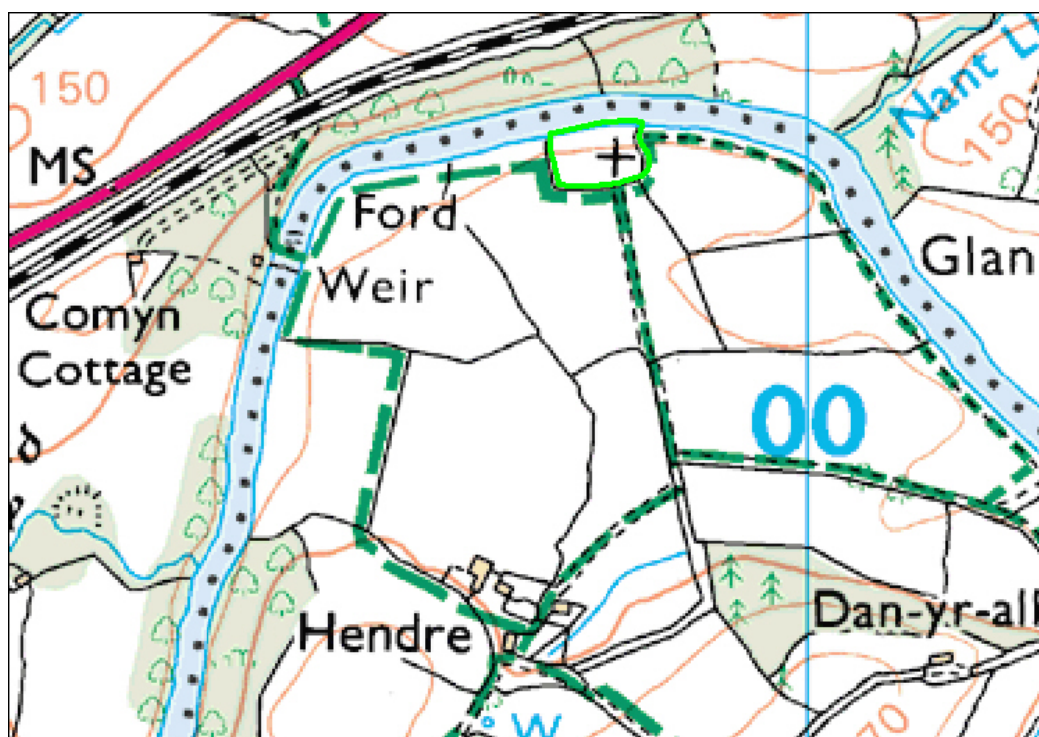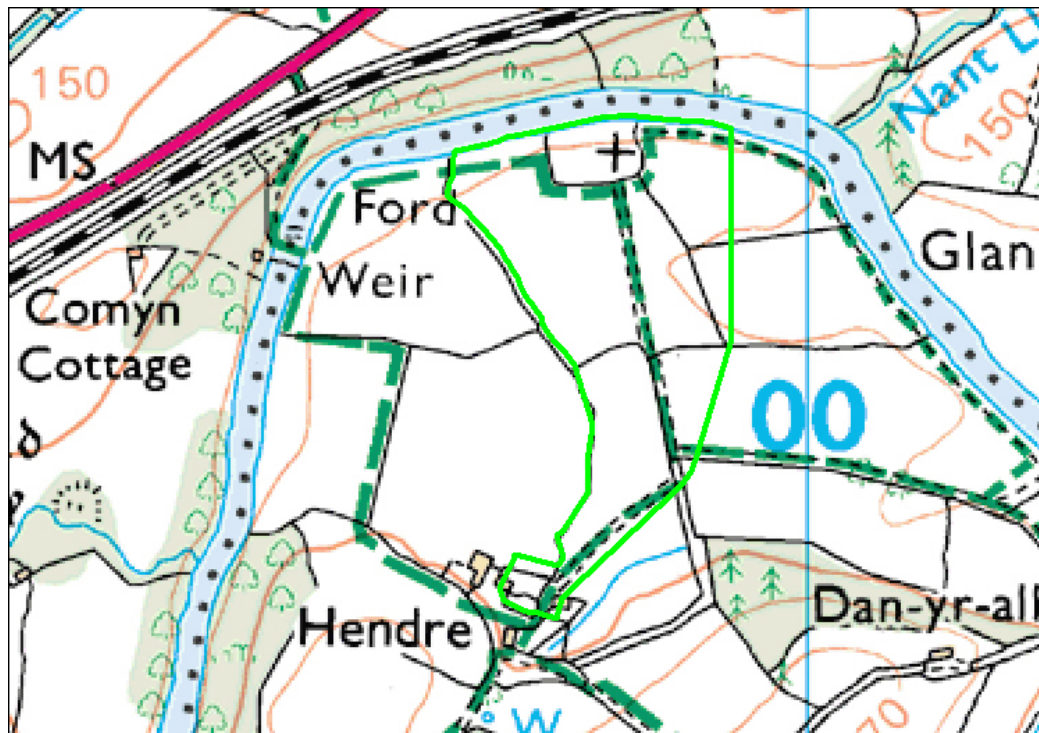
Llan-y-wern

SO 102286
2591

Introduction

Llan-y-wern is a small linear settlement straddling a minor road. It is sited above the northern fringe of the Usk valley some 5km to the east of Brecon and 2 to 3km north-west of Llangorse Lake.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

There is a tradition that the first church here was founded in the 6th century. The oval churchyard strengthens the contention for an early medieval origin for the church if not for the rest of the settlement.

The earliest reference to it seems to be around 1100 AD when it was termed *Landwern altera costinio*. This could mean a 'place where alder trees grow' but in the present context probably carried the meaning of 'church near a marsh'. An important reference from *c.*1566 – *ll. y wern mair a chynydr* – allows us to postulate an earlier, pre-Marian dedication (see below). And Theophilus Jones, the early 19th-century Brecknock antiquary claimed that this was the *Monkton* that appeared in documents in the 1520s, an idea formulated because it belonged to Brecon Priory.

The settlement's archaeology has some English rather than Welsh characteristics, reflecting its development in the Anglo-Norman portion of the region during the Middle Ages, but relatively little is known about its growth.

The heritage to 1750

The church of St Mary (20164) is a simple, single-celled 14th-century building; there was some rebuilding in the 17th century, but relatively little restoration in the 19th century. It retains a bare stone-flagged interior, and apart from some 18th-century monuments, the only furnishing of any age is the font which is probably 13th-century. Traditionally the first foundation here was in the 6th century and was dedicated to St Cynidr, the present dedication only appearing in the 12th century. The church, so it is said, was formerly a chapel maintained by St John's Priory in Brecon.

The church stands in a largely oval, slightly raised, walled churchyard up to 40m across (2934), the shape, if not the fabric, of which may be early medieval. The straight south-western side is anomalous and is redolent of a later modification.

The tithe map of 1844 reveals that the churchyard fronted on to an open tract of ground on the south-west (2935). Elongated with the other buildings in the settlement around it, this was enclosed, common land, which had already been encroached on by the mid-19th century. Most of this common was reputedly turned into a village pond in the 1960s, but today survives only as a boggy hollow.

The oldest surviving domestic building in the village is Ty Mawr (31104) which appears to be a 16th or 17th-century stone longhouse, later remodelled. Other buildings are generally no earlier than the 19th century.

An area of earthworks can be identified to the south (6774) of the church. There may be a platform for a structure here which could represent an area of deserted medieval settlement. Other potential house sites have been identified in the past to the south and west of the church but none has yet been properly authenticated. Earthworks (6779) to the east of the church are believed to be water meadows and as such may be 19th-century in date.

A possible moated site (5593) has been recorded to the north of the church. However, local enquiry indicates that what had appeared to be a partly stone-revetted platform surrounded by a water-filled ditch is in fact a squared-off modern spoil-heap, resulting from the creation of the village pond (see above), dumped against an existing wall in an area of bog. It is possible that further medieval settlement may have existed in the area between this apparently fictitious moat and the church but no trace now survives. The area is now occupied by a modern bungalow and by a scrap yard.

Areas of ridge and furrow cultivation survive to the north (5594; 5595), west (5596) and south-east (5597) of the village, and fossilised open fields showing as strips lie some 200m to the south-west of the church. Some if not all of these reflect a medieval or later field system for the settlement.

In summary Llan-y-wern has in the past been considered as a nucleated settlement reflecting Anglo-Norman concepts of development. Until some of the putative house sites are authenticated, it is perhaps more reasonable to see it as a church settlement that developed beside a small common in a relatively low-lying and damp position, with a farm emerging at one end. Nucleation has yet to be confirmed.
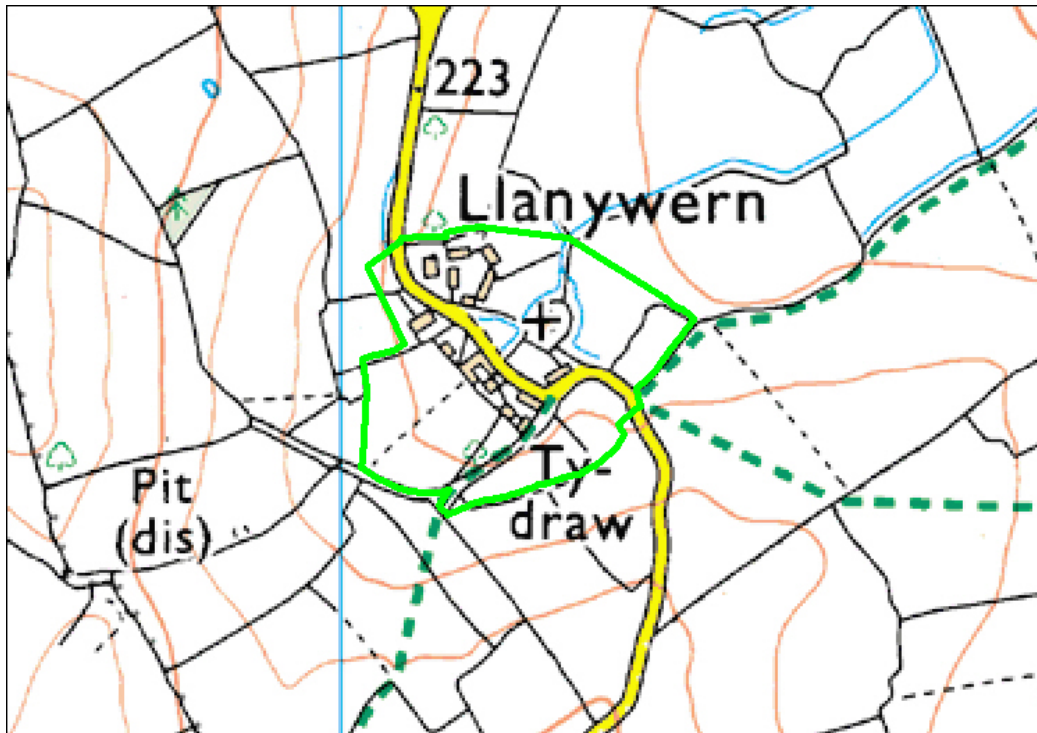
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Llysdinam

SO 009585
2592

Introduction

Llysdinam, now known as a gentry house, lies on the west bank of the Wye opposite Newbridge on Wye to the north-west of Builth Wells.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Llysdinam now lies in the community of Cilmeri, although it survived as a community it its own right until the mid-1980s. It was termed in the 19th century a hamlet within the ecclesiastical parish of Llanafan Fawr (and was recorded as a chapelry to that church, which William Rees depicted on his map that reconstructed 14th-century South Wales). What the implications of the word 'hamlet' are in settlement terms is unclear.

Llysdinam is now the site of a large country house and there is no clear indication as to the nature or type of settlement that might previously have existed in the vicinity. There is also much uncertainty about the chapel-of-ease. Shown on Saxton's small-scale map of the 1570s, it was according to Theophilus Jones in a dilapidated state at the beginning of the 19th century. Its location is not known.

But if the built heritage is obscure, the place-name is suggestive. *Listinan* is first referenced in 1299 and *Lystynan* nine years earlier (Llysdinam appears only in 1672). The elements of the name are *llys* meaning 'court' or 'palace' and *dinam*, a 'stronghold'. It is thought that Llysdinam was the administrative centre of Swydd Ddinam, one of the four sub-divisions of Buellt. Llysdinam was the home of Dafydd ap Maredudd, praised by the famous poet Lewis Glyn Cothi in the 15th century. This opens up a range of possibilities, including perhaps an early nucleated bond settlement associated with a *maerdref* in this locality.

The heritage to 1750

Apart from Llysdinam Hall, which was built in 1829 and remodelled in 1934, no settlement has been identified for Llysdinam.

Llyswen

SO133380
2593

Introduction

Llyswen is a small but expanding nucleated settlement surrounding its church at the junction of the A470 and A479 trunk roads. The village lies on the south bank of a large meander in the river Wye to the north-west of Talgarth.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

Llyswen is reputedly focused on a *clas* church founded in the 6th century, and it was claimed by Theophilus Jones, the early 19th-century Brecknock antiquary, that a religious site here was granted to the see of Llandaff in about AD 560. Both of these claims need to be treated with circumspection. The site of this early centre is not known but the present sub-circular churchyard, of St Gwendoline (a local 9th-century saint who is reputedly buried at Talgarth), is almost certainly early medieval in date.

The name Llyswen (literally 'white court') was first recorded around 1127 as *Lisewan*. It reputedly derives from the palace of Rhodri Mawr, one of the great 9th-century princes of south Wales, which is said to have existed here. The site of the palace is not recorded, though local tradition has it that it was in the *warren field* near Dderw to the south-east of the village. Rhodri Mawr's will requested the 're-edification and adornment' of the area's religious houses and it is believed locally that Llyswen church was substantially rebuilt as a result of this, a belief that is entirely uncorroborated.

Little is known about the medieval history of Llyswen, although it reputedly had a 'Norman' castle and has been identified as one of the marcher lords' demenses in the 14th century. No visible remains of this period survive within the village today.

The heritage to 1750

St Gwendoline's Church (20179) was wholly rebuilt in 1863, and no fabric of the putative Norman church that it replaced now survives, although the simple font may be of this period. The present church retaining a medieval plan, may reflect that of its predecessor. Early prints and photographs show that the previous church comprised a simple divided chancel and nave with a barrel vaulted roof, a southern porch and a bellcote.

The church lies within a raised and embanked sub-circular churchyard (2549) some 45m across. This is much smaller than other alleged *clas* churches, but there is no clear indication that it was ever any larger, though the mid-19th-century tithe map does hint at a larger curvilinear enclosure around the village.

The area surrounding the church where older settlement might be expected is partially clear, and comprises the extensive gardens of Tymawr. Modern infill has encroached on the south-west and east. It is not possible to say that medieval or earlier, settlement definitely existed in this area, but appropriate archaeological investigation may give some indication.

With the exception of the church, the Griffin Inn (20814), Upper House Farm (2539) and the Tymawr (2931), the last three all 18th-century, there are very few buildings of any age surviving in Llyswen, and the village now has a very modern character. This is presumably due to Llyswen's location at the junction of two main roads and reflects the increasing importance of road transport in the 19th century. A watching brief at Cross House identified some ambiguous evidence for medieval building, but at present neither the building stock in Llyswen nor archaeological interventions have shed any light on the origins and development of a medieval settlement here.

An alleged motte, which is a scheduled ancient monument (506; SAM B48), lies some 400m to the south-west, on the fringe of the village, just beyond Upper Danyllan. This has been claimed as Llyswen's castle, but authorities differ as to its significance and authenticity. Unsubstantiated is the belief that the present Llangoed Castle, nearly two miles to the north, marks the position of a Norman castle which in its turn had been placed where Rhodri Mawr's court was situated.

An extensive and complex area of strip fields is depicted on the tithe survey to the east (5552) of the village, with further, smaller areas to the north (5553) and west (2932). It is claimed that there are surviving patches of ridge and furrow cultivation. These strip fields were the remnants of an extensive open field system belonging to the medieval settlement.

In summary, little is known about the origins and development of the settlement of Llyswen. The extensive open field systems to the east and to a lesser extent the north-west must have related to the settlement and therefore suggest a reasonably sized community which was presumably focused around the church and perhaps along the thoroughfare running along the edge of the river valley on a north-west to south-east axis. Now adopted by the A470 and the A479, this was surely the main routeway, with other tracks of subsidiary importance.
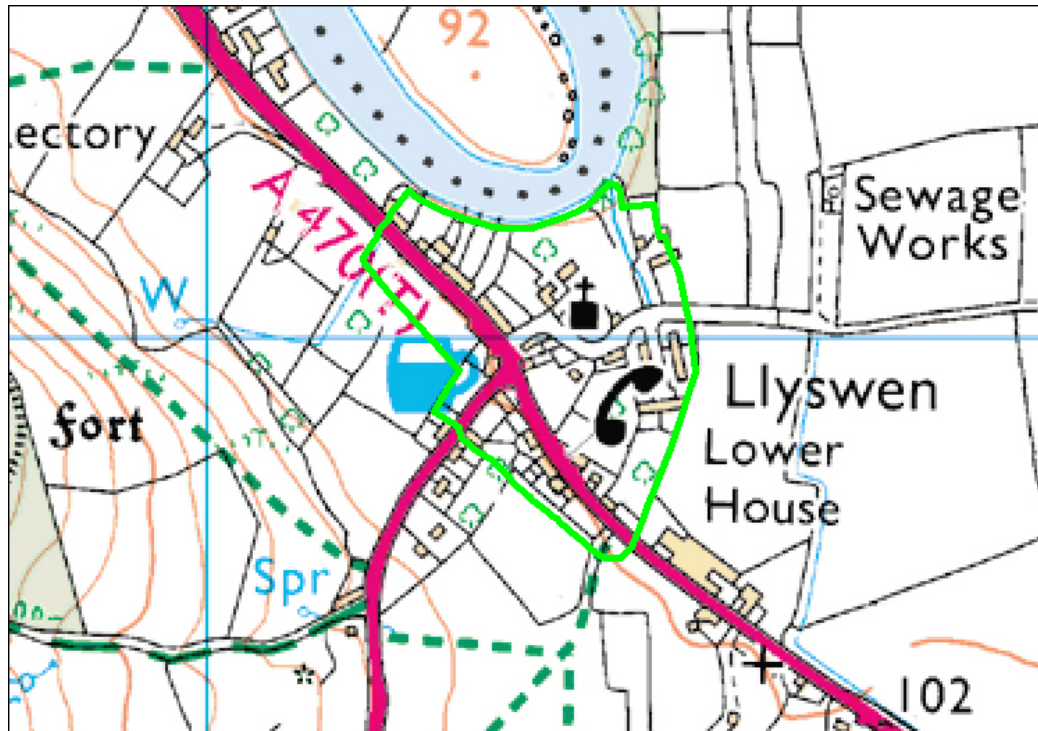
Lower Chapel

SO 028358
2594

Introduction

Lower Chapel is a small, nucleated, valley-floor settlement, surrounding its church. Sited on the east bank of the Afon Honddu, and straddling the B4520 Builth Wells to Brecon road, it is some 7km to the north of Brecon.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

The history of Lower Chapel, as with its close neighbour Upper Chapel, is largely unrecorded. The settlement stands within the parish of Llandefaelog Fach to which it was a chapel-of-ease, although there have been suggestions that it once had its own parish. There appears to be a consensus that there could have been a medieval chapel at Lower Chapel, though no incontrovertible evidence to prove it.

Llanfihangel Fechan was referred to as *parochia Sancti Michaelis Parvi* in 1503, Llanivihangell in the *Valor* of 1535, and *Llanyhangle uachan* in 1578, meaning 'little Llanfihangel'. In 1798 came the most telling evidence with a reference to *Llanvihangel Vechan or Lower Chapel*.

The heritage to 1750

St Michael's Church (2660) is said, by one authority, to have been recorded as being founded in about 1790, and re-built by Thomas Nicholson in 1863/4. The present building is single-celled with north and south aisles and an apsidal east end. While the fabric is entirely modern the effect is markedly Romanesque and it may be that the re-build reflects an original plan. The apsidal east end and the proliferation of elaborately reproduced dog-tooth moulding is presumably a product of 19th-century architectural fashion. This then begs the question as to where was the predecessor which is clearly indicated in the earlier place names? In the absence of an alternative site, it might be wondered whether the authority cited above was incorrect.

The church may have lain in a sub-circular churchyard, which has been internally reduced to produce the present small square enclosure, although this is by no means certain. Vague earthworks are just visible on the east and south of the present yard and they may outline a former enclosure (2662).

There are no other buildings of any age known in the village.

In summary, there is a reasonable chance that a chapel was established here in the Honddu valley in the Middle Ages. As to whether it attracted settlement around it before the 17th century is unknown.
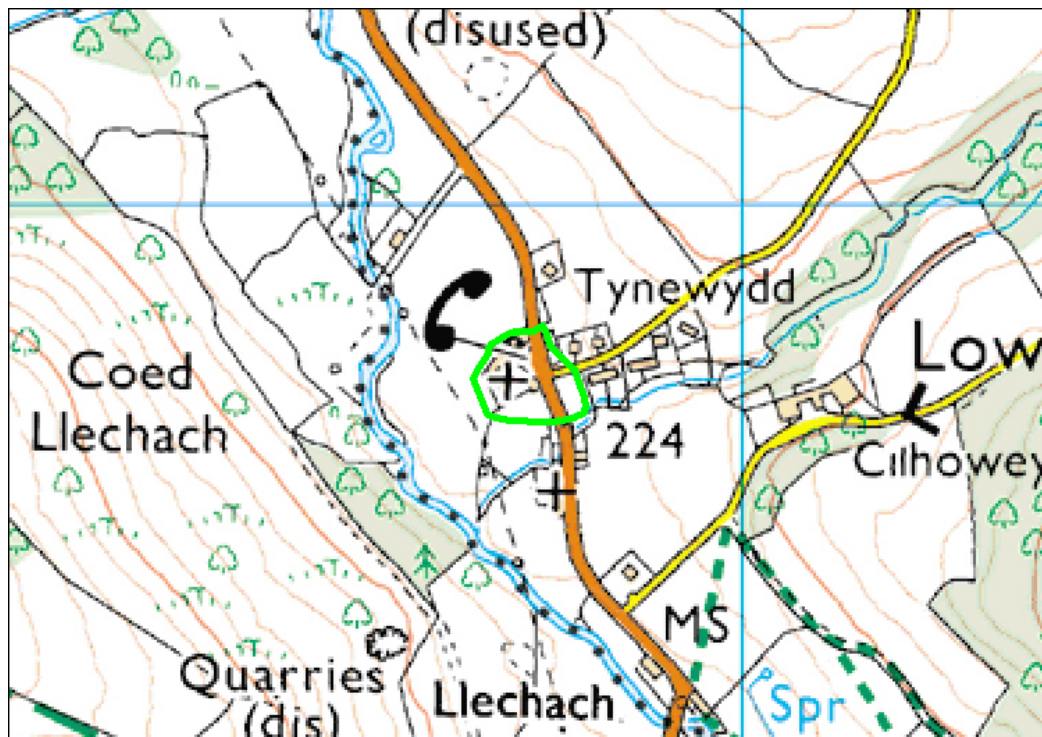
Maesmynis

SO 017476
2595

Introduction

Maesmynis is a small, scattered settlement comprising a church and few houses. It is sited on a minor road on the fringe of the Wye valley 2km to the south-west of Builth Wells.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Historically, Maesmynis is the centre of a rural parish, which with Llanynis, Langanten, Rhosferig and Llanddewi'r Cwm formed a cordon of similar parishes around the south and west of Builth Wells, each having a small, scattered population and none appearing to have had large focal settlements.

The present settlement comprises no more than a church and a handful of buildings, most of which appear to be no older than the late 19th century.

The name appears for the first time in 1280 as *Maisminuth* which authorities translate as '[the] open country of Mynys', though nothing is known as to who or what Mynys was. It might also be noted here that in other contexts the term *maes* is often taken to refer to open or common-field agriculture. A solitary record of around 1566 offers the more formal *ll. đewi maes mynys* or Llanddewi Maesmynis.

The heritage to 1750

St David's Church (20155), was wholly re-built in 1878 and refurbished in 1963 (using materials from nearby Llangynog Church). It contains no surviving structure of earlier periods, although there are a number of 18th-century memorials within the church, which come from an earlier building. This earlier church was reputedly medieval but no information exists as to its precise date.

The church stands within a rectangular, embanked and ostensibly modern, churchyard (2677). The tithe survey of 1842 depicts the north-eastern boundary of the enclosure as curvilinear, and while it is tempting to accept this as evidence of a former sub-circular enclosure there is no independent evidence to corroborate this mapped anomaly.

There are no buildings within 100m of the church, and although the topography is suitable for dwellings there is nothing to show that a significant settlement ever existed here. The Rectory (now Ty-Gwyn) and Neuadd Isaf which are the nearest buildings, are both 19th-century in date, though Garthyfelin which appears to be the original Neuadd Isaf is reportedly 17th-century.

There is a distinctive area of ridge and furrow, reflecting a field system (2538) to the north of the church that may be medieval and associated with a settlement here.

In summary there is nothing currently known that suggests that Maesmynis had nucleated dwellings and that there was anything other than a church settlement here.
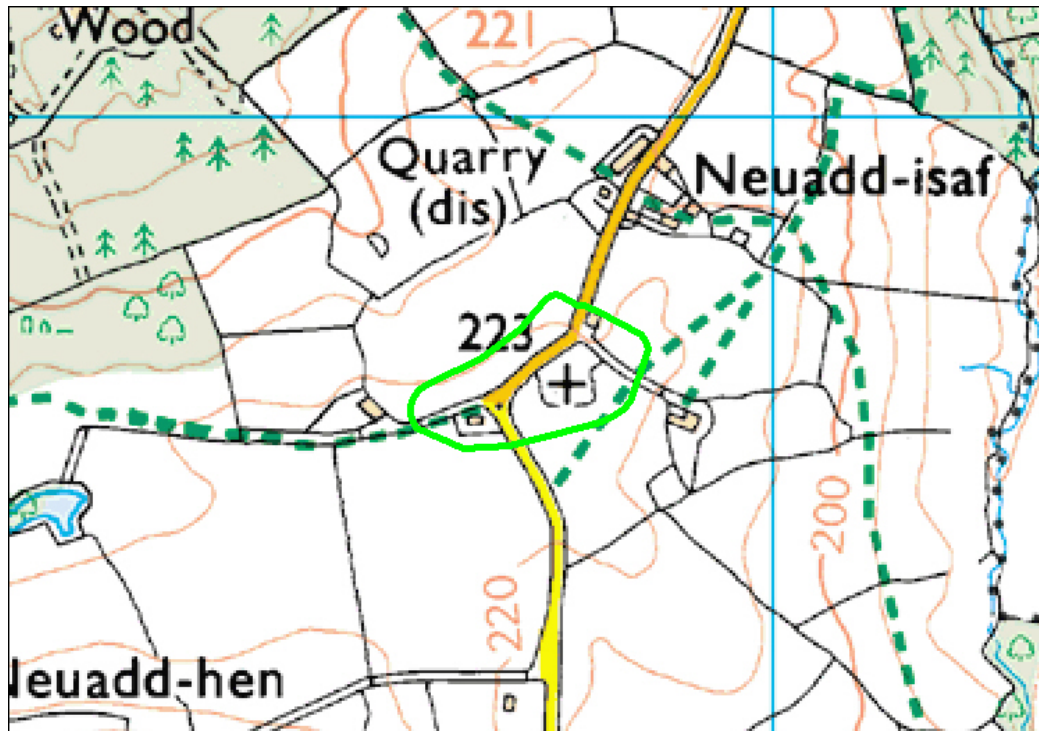
Merthyr Cynog

SN 985 375
2596

Introduction

Merthyr Cynog is an isolated settlement in the lower hills below Mynydd Epynt, 15km to the south-west of Builth Wells. It lies on the interfluvial ridge formed by the Ysgir Fechan and Ysgir Fawr rivers and now comprises only a large church surrounded by houses.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Merthyr Cynog is traditionally the site of an early medieval monastic church named after, or perhaps founded by, St Cynog in the 5th century. Cynog was one of the numerous 'sons' of the legendary Brychan Brecheiniog. The saint is said to have been killed here by invading Saxons and is supposedly buried in the churchyard. Modern expert opinion favours the interpretation of the term *merthyr* as an indicator that a place possessed the physical remains of a martyr. The size and shape of the churchyard might arguably support the tradition that this was originally a *clas* church and was thus of more than local importance, yet it is difficult to identify the basis for the tradition of it being the home of a *clas* community, and was perhaps a *monasterium*. Certainly though, it became a place of pilgrimage during the Middle Ages because the church possessed Cynog's torque or collar, a 'potent relic' as described by Gerald of Wales at the end of the 12th century.

The earliest forms of the name come from the 13th century with *Kynauc in Merthyr Kynauc* being referred to sometime during that century, and *Merthir* in about 1291.

Today the village comprises only a few houses clustered around the church, but is typical of the small nucleated settlements found in the upland north-western parts of the region and may never have been significantly larger.

The heritage before 1750

The church of St. Cynog (20132) is basically 14th-century, though parts reputedly date back to the 12th century. It was partially rebuilt in 1862 and 1866. The building is unusually large, comprising an undivided nave and chancel and a massive battlemented square tower set on a plinth. The church contains a 14th-century rood screen, and a font and a stoup both considered to be 12th or 13th-century. The church formerly contained two undated, incised slabs which

might be early medieval. These, it was claimed by one commentator, came from Mynachdy in the same parish, but the evidence is not conclusive.

The church is centrally set within a raised oval churchyard (748) some 100m across, the majority of the circuit being defined by a low bank behind a revetment wall. The fabric of this wall is relatively modern (perhaps dating from the 1862 restorations) but it may reflect the line of an enclosing ditch. It was suggested in the 19th century that the enclosure might have originated as a defended settlement rather than as a church, a view that cannot be sustained on the evidence as we presently have it. A modern breach in the churchyard bank, associated with building work at its south-west corner, was examined during the original study of historic settlements in 1993.

The church is a clear focus for the small modern nucleated settlement encircling it. Originally, a thoroughfare completely ringed the churchyard, and even in the mid-19th century there were more dwellings around the perimeter than was normal in the church settlements of Breconshire. The possibility, then, that there was some form of nucleated settlement in earlier centuries cannot be dismissed, but there are no surviving buildings or earthworks of late medieval or even early post-medieval date to give credence to the theory.

A group of low earthworks (2943) survive in the fields to the east of the church and these may represent the sites of former buildings, although for the most part they appear more likely to be the remnants of a field system. Areas of ridge and furrow cultivation (2944; 2678) survive in the fields immediately north of the village, and these too may represent a medieval field system, but equally could be of rather later date.

In summary Merthyr Cynog has a strong ecclesiastical history from early medieval times onwards and it is possible that a settlement developed around it in the Middle Ages. This, however, has yet to be convincingly demonstrated.
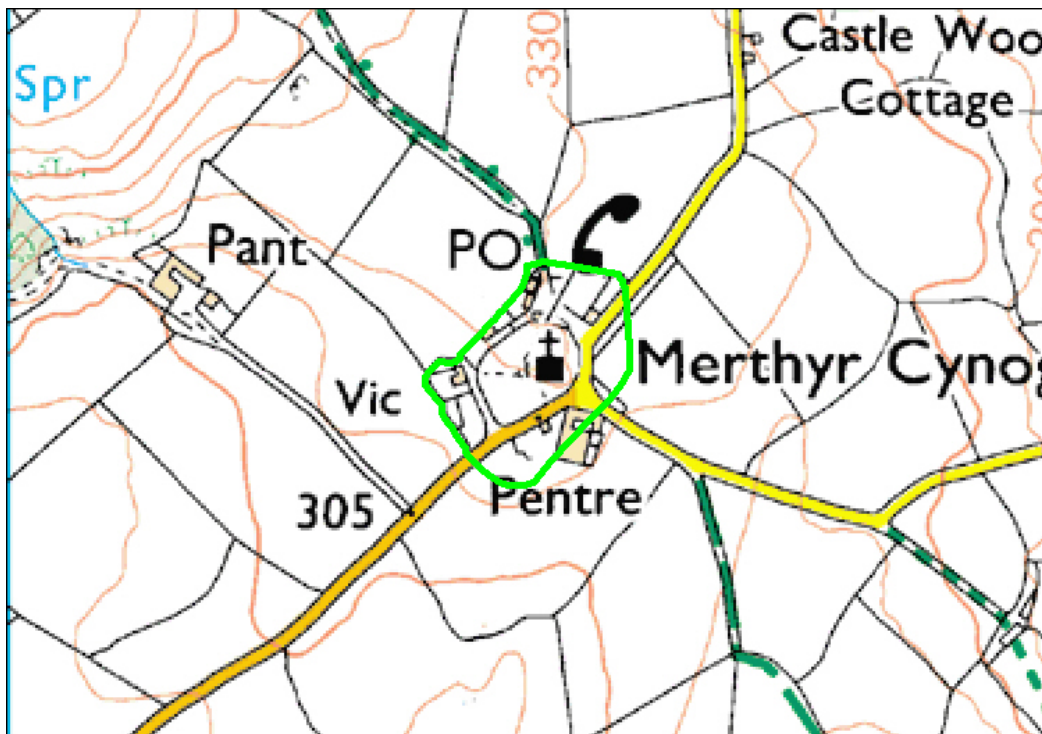
Pipton

SO 166380
2600

Introduction

Pipton, which now comprises a single farm and house, is sited on the western bank of the Afon Llynfi where it is crossed by the A4079, and is close to that river's confluence with the Wye.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Modern Pipton comprises only two houses and some farm buildings sited on the west bank of the Llynfi and is now little more than an extension of Aberllynfi (some 200m to the east). Until relatively recently it was the eponymous focus for a parish which has now been merged with Bronllys. It is possible that any settlement here was never significantly larger than it appears today.

The early, and indeed later, history of the settlement remains obscure. It is unusual in the context of the present survey, in as much as it has no obvious 'British' component and could be of wholly medieval origin. But though its name contains an Old English element that might be a personal name, or could be synonymous with 'piper', this could have been introduced at the time of the Norman takeover of the region at the end of the 11th century.

Pipton (or *Piperton* as it was known in the late 12th century) has been equated with the *Periton* noted in 1233 - when the Calendar of Close Rolls mention the re-fortification of an 'ecclesiastical site'. The exact whereabouts of this fortified site is not known but it may be that the tower and church sites next to Pipton Farm represent its remains (see below).

In 1265 Prince Llewelyn negotiated a settlement with Henry III and Simon de Montford "in castra juxta Pyperton" and it possible that this tower is the castle mentioned in the record.

Pipton has been identified as one of the English knights' fees during the 14th century.

The heritage to 1750

The alleged site of Pipton Chapel (521) is no longer visible, though it is supposed to lie 'on the Common' immediately to the east of Pipton Farm and on the flat low-lying flood plain of the Afon Llynfi. It was one of the chapels belonging to Glasbury's *clas* church recorded in a

grant of 1088 to St Peter's Abbey in Gloucester. Later Pipton frequently appeared in the Gloucester Cartulary.

It is not clear whether this chapel acted as a parish church or as a chapel-of-ease, though there is no other likely candidate in the parish. It appears to have fallen into disuse, like the neighbouring Aberllynfi church, soon after 1665, when Glasbury Church was rebuilt, yet it was still mentioned in 1754 and 1798.

A low mound of earth and building rubble appears to mark the site of a small medieval round tower, which is a scheduled ancient monument (522; SAM B79), some 50m to the north of the chapel site. Together these may form the 'fortified ecclesiastical site' mentioned in 1233. Isolated defensive towers are not common in mid-Wales but south-east Brecknockshire does contain a small group of other such sites, albeit square rather than round, that includes Talgarth and Scethrog.

To the west of the tower and chapel, on land next to Pipton Farm, are what may be the remains of a small area of now deserted settlement (2990). Two fields contain a series of low earthworks, some of which may be house sites, although the whole could be no more than a complex field system or garden layout.
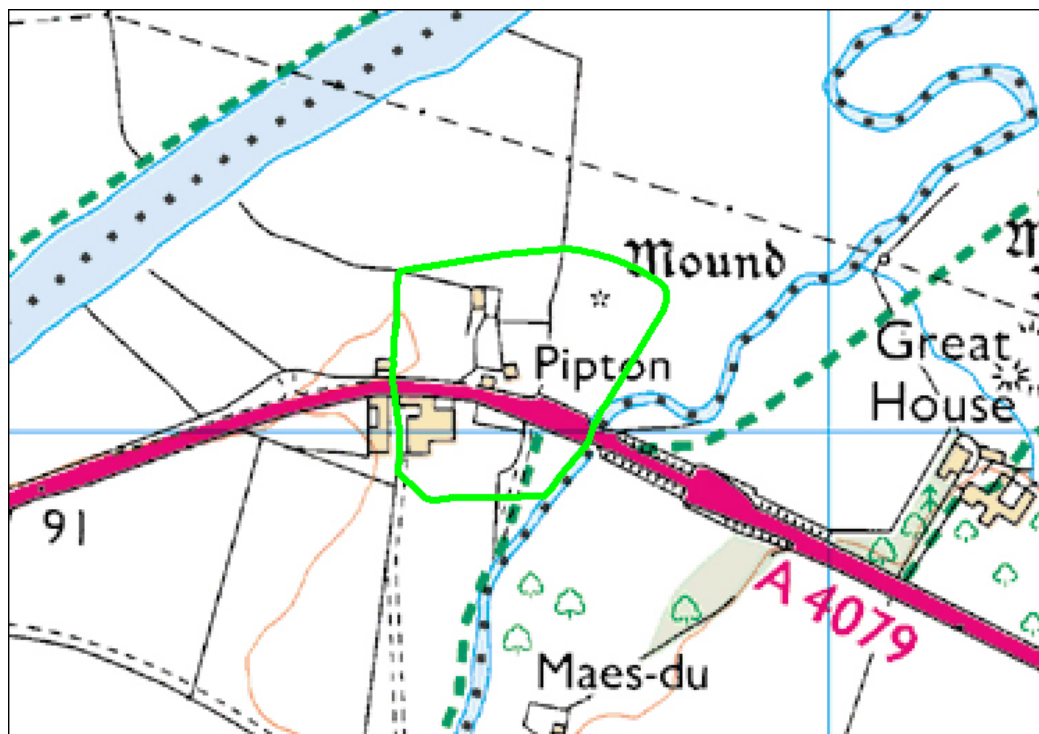
Talachddu

SO 082331
2602

Introduction

Talachddu is a small settlement, surrounding its church, sited on a low spur between the Achddu and Dulas valleys. It was established at the juncture of two lanes and lies some 5km to the north-east of Brecon.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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 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 may 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.

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History of development

Talachddu is apparently named after the stream to the north, and one possibility is that the meaning is 'the end (of the stream) Achddu' with the last element indicating 'dark' or 'black'. As *Talachtu* (or *Tallauctu*) it was referred to in 1263 and *Talaugh'duy* was noted in 1400.

Its churchyard has signs of curvilinearity which might indicate an early medieval origin.

Today the village comprises only a church and four houses, and there is no evidence to suppose that it was ever significantly larger.


The heritage to 1750

St Mary's Church (2967) appears to have been at least partially re-built in the 19th century, although the building looks to have retained some of its medieval walling, perhaps from the 13th century. The present building comprises a separated chancel and a nave surmounted by a large wooden bellcote, and medieval survivals could include the porch roof and the south door of the church, as well as the 13th-century font.

The church is set within a raised, stone-revetted, irregularly shaped churchyard (2968) which may have been up to 60m across. There are signs that this enclosure has been squared off at the south-east corner where a curving bank within the present churchyard shows the former line.

Talachddu House (6962) to the west of the church is reputedly 17th-century in origin, and is probably the oldest surviving domestic building in the settlement. This house was formerly the Rectory and the surrounding ground is named as glebe on the 1846 tithe survey.

No earthworks have been recognised here and the settlement today is little larger than it was in the mid-19th century.

In summary Talachddu appears to be a simple isolated church settlement associated with one or more farmsteads.
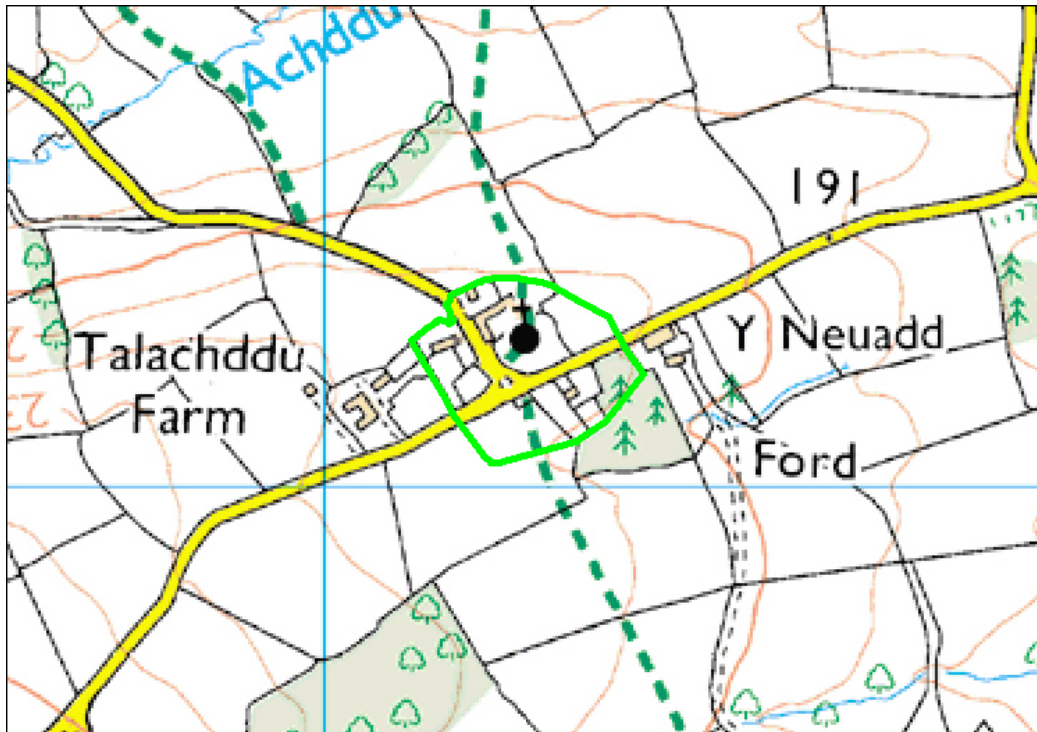
Tredomen

SO 121316
2603

Introduction

Tredomen is distinguished as an isolated group of houses surrounding Tredomen Court (now a farm). It is sited in a tributary valley to the north of the river Gwlithen, just over 2km to the west of Talgarth.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

Tredomen is atypical of the settlements in the region in as much as it has no church nor indeed any obvious historical focus. It was, however, included in the 1993 study and for that reason has been considered here.

The name should signify the presence of a mound, but the earliest source is from 1595 when *Tredomen* appeared in its present form. The 'domen' element is commonly found associated with medieval mottes in Welsh place-names, but there is now no evidence of such a feature here. The nearest mound of any description surviving today is a small prehistoric barrow (3480) some 750m to the east, which is seemingly unrelated to the settlement and hardly likely to be a candidate.

In the later 16th century, Tredomen was the home of Sir Edward Awbrey, high sheriff of the county in 1583, 1589 and 1599.

Morphologically, the settlement is akin to nearby Tredustan and perhaps illustrates a similar pattern of development.

The heritage to 1750

The absence of a motte here is surprising, given both the name and the fact that other, similarly termed settlements in the Talgarth area, reflect early Anglo-Norman foundations. The possibility that the motte has been largely destroyed cannot be dismissed.

Only post-medieval buildings are apparent in Tredomen. Middle House (21043), possibly the oldest surviving building, has a house and byre range which is probably of 16th-century origin and reputedly also carries a date of 1620. The original Upper House (2942), now used as a

barn, contains elements of 17th- and 18th-century date, and Tredomen Court (5611) which is 17th-century in character, may also retain 16th-century features.

Two earthwork platforms (9955 and 9956) are visible to the north of Upper House Farm and to either side of the lane. Both show what appears to be modern building rubble and foundations and probably supported cottages or subsidiary buildings that were mapped in the 19th century.

The settlement plan as shown on the tithe survey of 1847(?) reveals a slightly more suggestive layout. The buildings cluster around a T-junction with Tredomen Court at the focal point where the lanes converge, as befits a manorial centre, and it might be questioned as to whether the widening of the road in front of the court is entirely incidental. The other houses lie to either side of the lane approaching from the north, and on the east side there are several thin narrow strips reminiscent of tenement plots. It is a pattern which points to a manorial complex at the head of a village street.

Three areas of ridge and furrow cultivation (5613, 5614 and 5615) survive in the fields around Tredomen, albeit at some distance. This is a relatively common component of the local landscape but could well be related to this settlement.

In summary, there was a small group of houses here in the 16th and 17th centuries, but the place-name infers that there was a manorial complex here in the Middle Ages. It is not clear whether this comprised a single manor house or had expanded to a small nucleated community with the lord's manor at its heart.
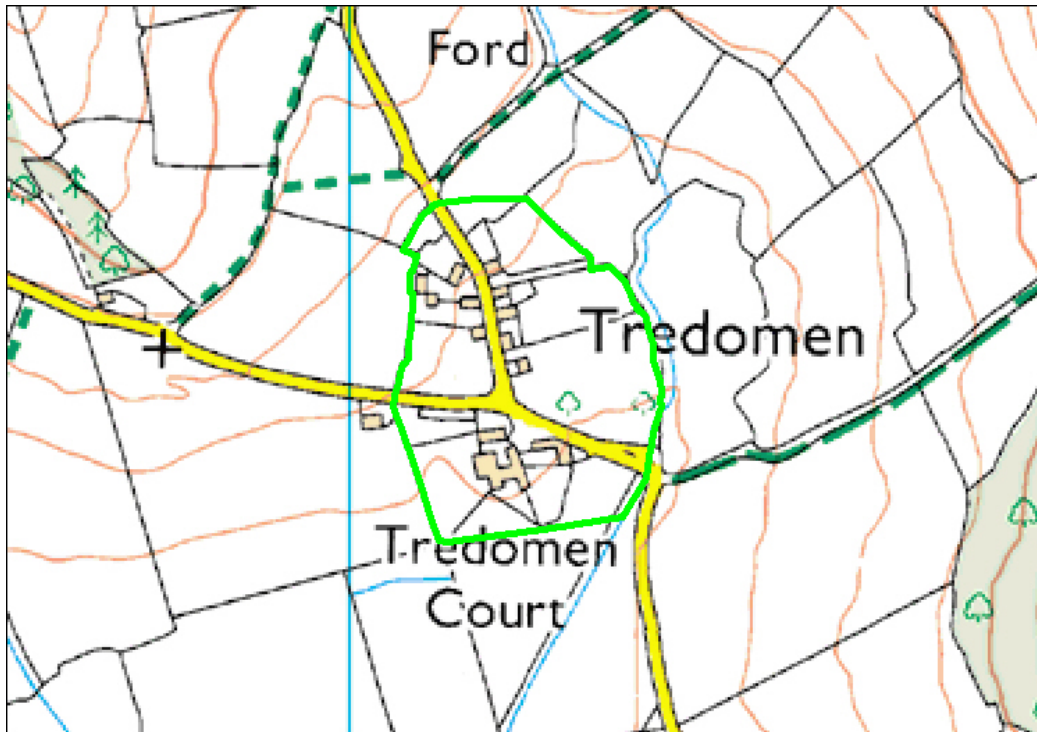
Tredustan

SO 139324
2604

Introduction

Tredustan is a dispersed linear settlement on the western edge of the steep sided Afon Llynfi valley some 10km to the east of Brecon. It lies opposite the slightly larger settlement of Trefecca with which it is historically associated, although there is no obvious physical link between the two.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

In many respects Tredustan is atypical of the settlements under study, in that it has no church and is not an obvious modern settlement focus.

The settlement comprises three houses, and associated farm buildings clustered around an isolated medieval motte, and may even represent the gradual shift of a single dwelling.

The earliest record of the place is as *Dorstonstone* in 1303, and there is a further 14th-century reference to *Turstenston*. *Trefdurston otherwise Durstans Town* surfaces in 1595. It has been suggested that the personal name reveals Turstan Bret who was in Brycheiniog in the late 12th century. The meaning is 'the village or *tref* of Durstan.


The heritage to 1750

The medieval motte, which is a scheduled ancient monument (536; SAM B87), has been cut into on the west and north by Pentwyn and later farm buildings. The present mound is about 14m across and 5m high. There is no adjoining bailey, although there are aerial photographs of vague earthworks on the flat ground to the east, which may be the vestigial remains of one.

Pentwyn (21042) is a single-storied longhouse derivative. Parts of the house were re-built in stone in the 18th century, but the original structure is cruck-framed and is probably the settlement's oldest surviving building. Tredustan Court (2673) is a large late 17th-century, stone-built, gentry house sited some 150m north of the motte, and also has a 17th-century timber-framed barn. Tredustan Hall (31114) is a large, stone-built, storied house with a lateral chimney and an internal cross-passage. It dates from the late 17th century and may be a replacement for Pentwyn.

It seems probable that the lane between Pentwyn in the south and Tredustan Court developed during the medieval period. To either side, the field patterns hint at a layout of tenement plots that on the west side of the lane terminated in a continuous back boundary. Earlier maps point to a higher number of dwellings than today, and overall it seems likely that there was a small nucleated village here in the Middle Ages. There is also the possibility, to the south of the castle mound, of a 'small green' with the mill at the far end of it, and other tenement plots running off it.

Former open fields, presumably associated with this settlement, lie a few hundred metres out to the west.
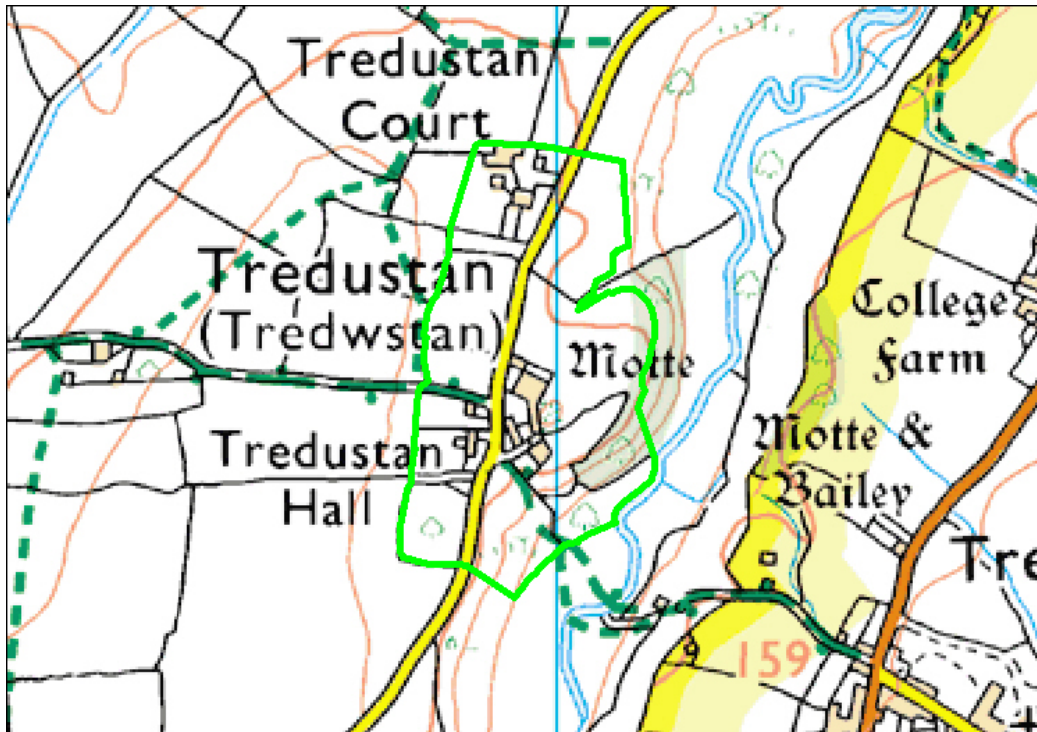
Upper Chapel

SO 007405
2606

Introduction

Upper Chapel is a small settlement, focused on its church at a minor crossroads on the B4520 Builth Wells to Brecon road. Sited on a slight spur on the eastern side of the Afon Honddu valley it is some 10km to the south of Builth Wells.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

The history of Upper Chapel has gone largely unrecorded. Like its neighbour Lower Chapel, further down the Honddu valley, it does not appear to have been a significant parish centre and was rather a chapel-of-ease within Merthyr Cynog parish than a parish church in its own right. It is clearly documented as a chapel in the 16th and 17th centuries and therefore is likely to have been in existence in the Middle Ages.

It is conceivable that the settlement may have an early medieval origin (a circular churchyard might be postulated), but there is now no definite indication of any great age to the village.

Presumably the English name merely distinguishes it from its neighbour Lower Chapel; the Welsh name being Capel Dyffryn Honddu. *Capel defrune honthye* was recorded in 1578 and its link to this settlement is confirmed by the 1798 reference to *Capel Dyffrin Honddu or Upper Chapel.*

The heritage to 1750

The church at Upper Chapel (20106), which appears to have been re-built in relatively recent times, perhaps in the 18th or early 19th century, is a simple single-celled building and, although the plan is typically medieval, there are no outward signs of any surviving structure from this period. Nor are there any furnishings or fittings that pre-date the 19th century.

The church is now set in a roughly square churchyard (2656) with memorials that are almost entirely of the 20th century. However, within this, the position of a number of large yew trees, follow the line of a faint bank, revealing a more oval enclosure which was flattened out only on its east side against the road (2657). The tithe survey of 1840 reveals that roads once passed around all sides of the churchyard and both this map and the later large-scale

Ordnance Survey maps confirm the oval shape. It is tempting to suggest that this curvilinearity signals an early medieval date.

Of the other buildings in Upper Chapel there is none which appears to be significantly older than the 18th or even the 19th century. Whether Penybont Farm (2658) or the Plough and Harrow public house (2659) opposite the church contain any earlier elements has not been established. These were the only secular buildings shown on the tithe map. The same maps hint at the possibility but do not confirm that a small common may have existed beside the chapel.
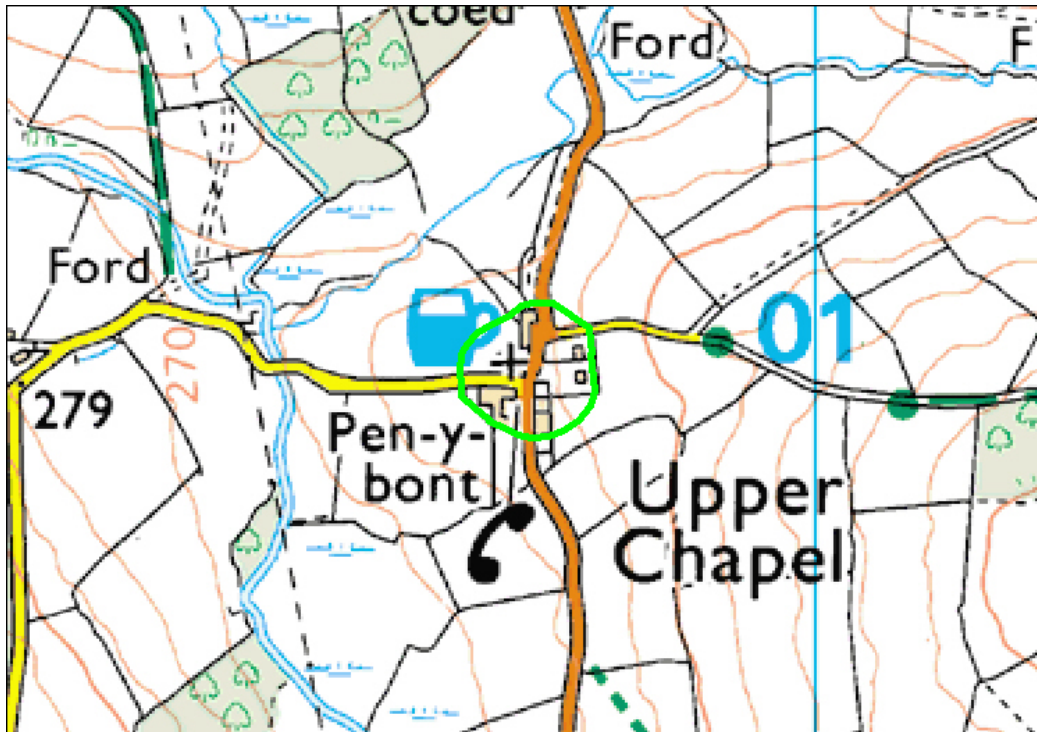
Ystradgynlais

SN 787100
2530

Introduction

Ystradgynlais is a substantial village in the extreme south-western tip of modern Powys. It lies on the east bank of the Tawe river, its church surrounded by modern housing.

This brief report examines its emergence and development up to 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.

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History of development

As seen today, Ystradgynlais is ostensibly a modern creation arising from the rapid increase in mining and iron working in the area in the 18th and 19th centuries and in this respect it is typical of many such settlements on the fringes of the south Wales valleys. It is less typical of the settlements in this study as it is the only one to have any significant degree of industrialisation.

There is a tradition, courtesy of Theophilus Jones at the beginning of the 18th century, that the village derives its name from Gunleus ap Glewissig, an otherwise fictitious prince of Gwent. However, the meaning is the 'vale of the river Cynlais', though it has been suggested that Cynlais could also be a personal name. The stream itself is evidenced as *Cingleis* as early as 1129, while the settlement appears as *Stradgenles* in 1372, and *Estradgynles* in 1493.

The church contains two early medieval inscribed stones which are supposed to have originated locally. The present church is modern, but it had a medieval and perhaps even a Norman predecessor, and it is possible that medieval settlement underlies the modern village.

The heritage to 1750

Parts of two inscribed pillar stones (2689; 3223) survive in the boiler room walling on the south side of the church. One is attributed to the 5th century, the other to the second half of the 6th century. Both were recovered from the east wall of the old church when it was demolished, and presumably came from an early medieval ecclesiastical site or graveyard on this site.
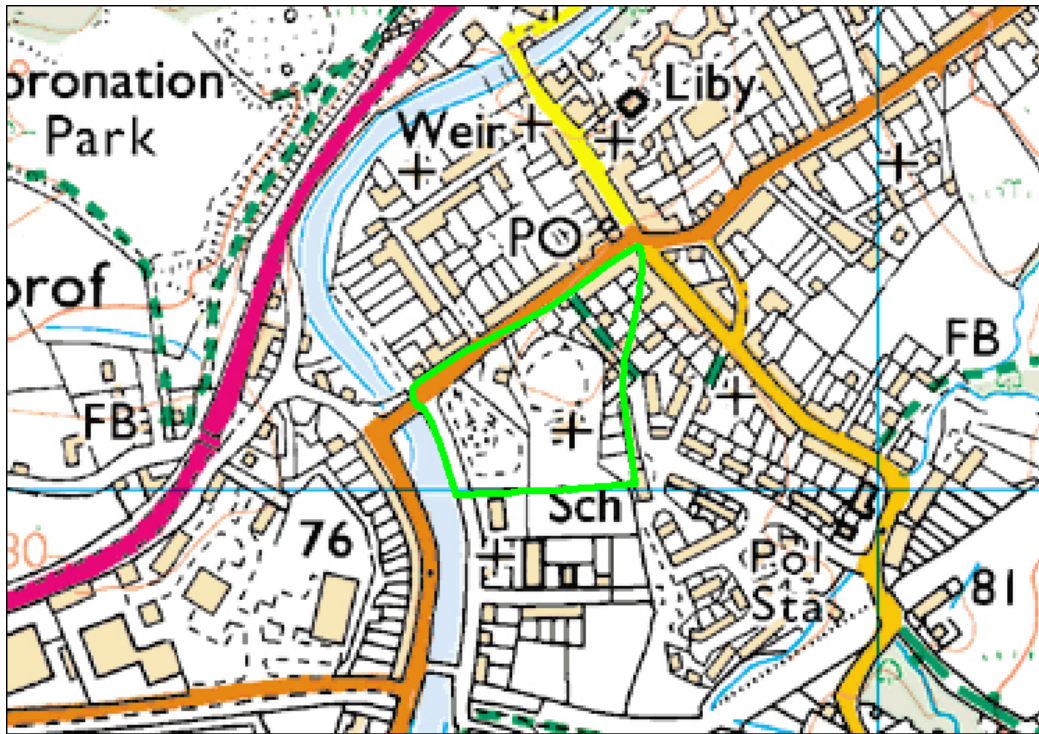
St Cynog's Church (20113) was built on its present site in 1861, to replace a smaller church (2691) of the same name. The foundations of this earlier church, which is locally held to have been a Norman structure, occupy a raised platform some 50m to the north of the present one. Its dimensions were recorded by Theophilus Jones. Little from the earlier church was re-

housed in the Victorian church: there is one 17th-century memorial inside the latter and some undated hatchments.

Both church sites lie within what has become a 'keyhole-shaped' churchyard which is filled with 18th and 19th-century memorials and is bounded by modern walls and fences. This unusual shape is composed of a modern rectangular extension joined on the north to an older sub-circular enclosure (2692). The sub-circular enclosure is centred on the raised platform containing the foundations of the old church and it is likely that these are the remains of an early medieval churchyard.

Without exception the buildings of Ystradgynlais appear to date from the 19th and 20th centuries, the earlier parts being typical of the terraced brick housing found in most industrial settlement, while the later parts are equally typical modern brick estates.

However, in view of the potentially early church it is possible that there was medieval settlement at Ystradgynlais. The most likely place for this would probably be in the level area to the north of the church bounded by the river Tawe, though there is no corroborative evidence for this belief. The street pattern of Ystradgynlais is typical of many small medieval towns, having a focal cross roads and a regular grid of side-streets, although it could equally well be the product of 19th-century planning and thus falls outside the remit of this study.

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