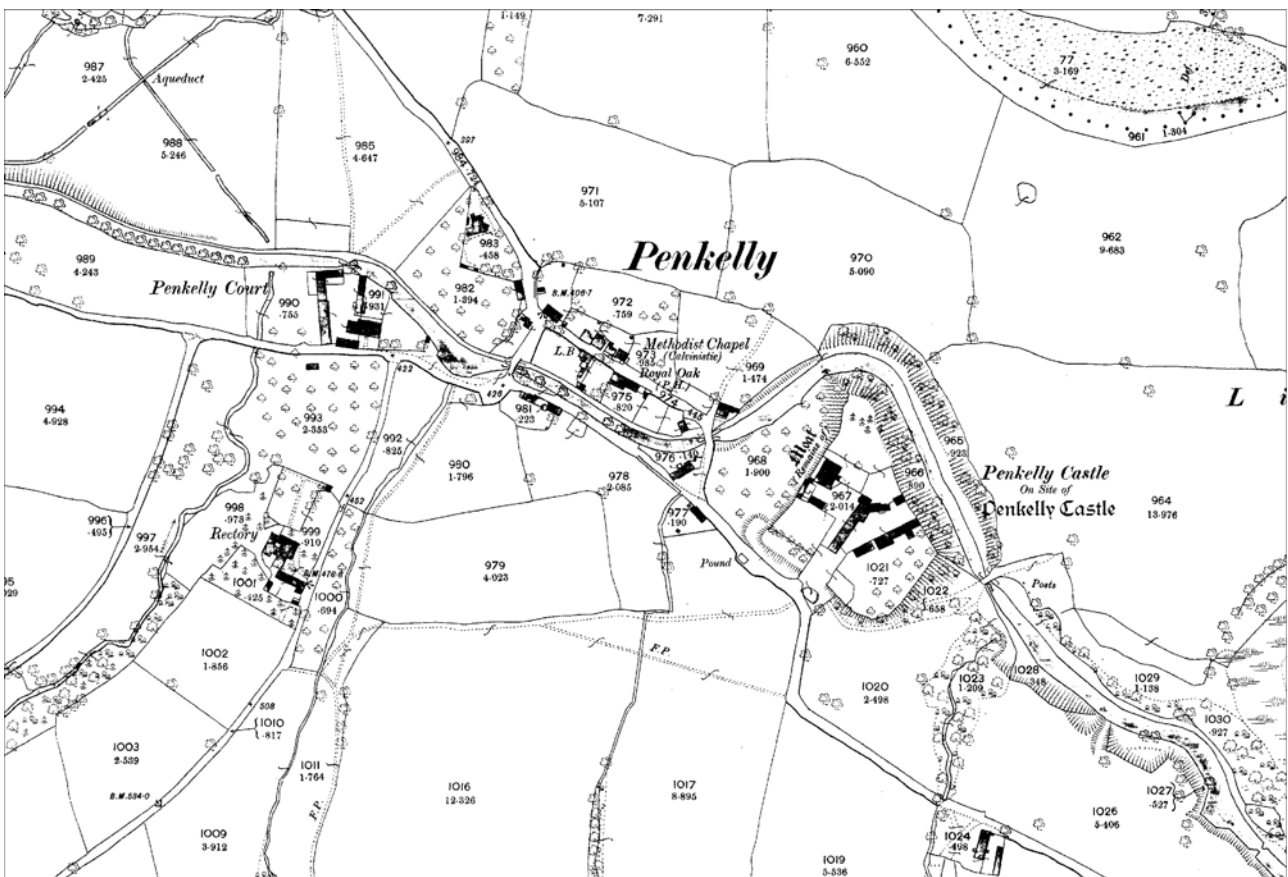


## CPAT Report No 1200

# Historic settlements in the Brecon Beacons National Park



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

**CPAT Report No 1200**

# **Historic settlements in the Brecon Beacons National Park**

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April 2013

Report for Cadw

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## **The historic settlements of the Brecon Beacons National Park in Powys**

### **An introduction**

#### ***Background***

Twenty years ago the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust compiled an assessment of the historic settlements within the Brecon Beacons National Park, one of the planning districts within the modern county of Powys and conducted on behalf of the Park authority and Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. This was one of the first such assessments for the local authority areas of eastern and north-eastern Wales and ultimately ten reports were completed between 1992 and 1995, embracing the entire region for which CPAT had and still has a remit.

The imperative that underpinned these surveys was committed to paper for the first time when Brecknock Borough was studied in 1992, it being expressed 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 Brecknock Borough study were defined at that time, and were equally applicable to all the later studies, the National Park included:

- 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.

The individual village histories that were compiled were never intended for publication, but their contents were absorbed into the Sites and Monuments Record (now the Historic Environment Record) where they could be accessed by all (and sometimes recycled, usually without any acknowledgement to their source, in others' reports).

There is no need to stress that in the two decades since those reports on The Brecon Beacons National Park's towns and villages were circulated to a relatively small number of interested organisations, there have been changes, and we would hope improvements, to our collective perception of the emergence, development and in some instances collapse of historic settlements in the border counties and more specifically in this southern part of Powys.

Firstly, a series of Cadw-funded site-condition 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) have all played a part in enhancing our understanding of settlement patterns and development in eastern Wales, as have some rather more specific and detailed ground

surveys such as those of village earthworks in Brecknock (1993) and Radnorshire (1996), though none unfortunately in the National Park.

Secondly, there are the results that have accrued from client-funded works on development sites – whether excavation, evaluation, watching brief or building recording – as a result of local authorities implementing PPG16 and, from 2002, the guidelines contained in 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 studies by Hywel Wyn Owen and Richard Morgan (2007), the first two volumes of *The Early Medieval Inscribed Stones* corpus prepared by Nancy Edwards, Mark Redknap and John Lewis (2007) and Richard Suggett's *Houses and History in the March of Wales. Radnorshire 1400-1800* published by the Welsh Royal Commission in 2005. The last of these is not directly pertinent to the Brecon Beacons but illustrates together with the others the quality of the work that has recently been completed or is in progress in the Principality.

Finally though in some ways the least tangible of the inputs is the ever-improving perception and appreciation of settlement development and the patterns that are fostered in east Wales, as a result of accumulated expertise, and the accessing of research from both other regions of Wales and from 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.

In 2010 CPAT felt that the time had come to re-examine the pictures of its historic settlements, fifteen to twenty years on from when the initial studies were completed. In a general sense, 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 in the region markedly improved in the last fifteen to twenty 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 initiate the programme in 2010-11 and this was followed with studies of Montgomeryshire and Flintshire in 2011-12, Wrexham County Borough in 2012-13 and now the Brecon Beacons National Park (2013). We anticipate completing the remaining areas – Denbighshire and eastern Conwy – during 2013-14.

### ***Methodology and presentation***

*The 1994/5 reports.* A pattern for each report was established in 1992 comprising a report which covered a minimum of one 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 integral elements 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, listed buildings, known archaeological features and earthworks, areas which it was felt at the time should be preserved in situ, other 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 perceived historic core of the town or village.

Those 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.

*The 2010-14 reports.* After various discussions the configuration 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 grid reference and the primary record number that links the settlement (as well as its individual elements) to the Historic Environment Record – have necessarily remained the same, 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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. This is not to downplay the significance of the buildings that date from the later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 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 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. 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 the Archwilio website address in each report will allow the researcher or enthusiast to follow up individual leads in the regional Historic Environment Record 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, was 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 recommendation for say the scheduled enclosure at Hanmer that a survey be conducted to identify the relict earthworks of the former village would have been followed up and completed at some point over the last twenty years. That this aim and many others has not been achieved is less a comment on the validity of the recommendation,

more on the limited resources that are available for surveying and research: it is unrealistic to assume that this is going to change in the foreseeable future.

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 left out, for we are conscious of the fact that it is entirely the prerogative of Cadw and/or the local authority to define these sites in cartographic form, and that the reader requiring information on the extent of a designation should approach the appropriate authority for that information. Furthermore, the number and extent of designated sites within any given settlement will change through time, and assuming that these maps have a currency measured in 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 as we perceive it. We would stress 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 too is the zonation of areas for evaluation in advance of development. In 1992, 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 as an indication that the area would not require further assessment in the event of a proposed development. Rather we must work on the assumption that any development within an historic core could be a candidate for an evaluation, depending of course on the nature of the development itself, but that it should be the development control officer at CPAT who makes that decision, based on his own professional judgment.

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 1992 survey. Where such areas are already statutorily designated within an historic settlement, their preservation is a given and no problem arises. However, in some cases in the past a decision that an area ought to 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. If, then, at a planning level a field containing earthworks is going to be preserved it needs to be based on rigorously defined evidence that will stand up to objective scrutiny, and this requires a detailed record that is rarely accessible through a report of this nature.

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 of the Brecon Beacons National Park listed 53 settlements, omitting Brecon itself because of its size and complexity (a separate study of the town was undertaken later in 1993). The current survey covers 34 settlements. It excludes the 14 National Park settlements which are outside Powys and included in that number are places such as Vaynor and Penderyn which were formerly in Breconshire; and also omitted are settlements such as Bwlch and Talybont which represent largely post-1750 developments. Two settlements – Llanfaes and Llechfaen – have been included for the first time.

## **A Brief Overview of Historic Settlements in the National Park**

The 1993 study provided a thorough assessment of the settlements in the National Park. Attention was paid to such differing concepts as distinguishing between dispersed and nucleated settlements, 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 associated 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 to look only at the varying types of settlements to discern what patterns emerge.

### ***Planned settlements***

At the apex of the hierarchy of historic settlements in most areas are the towns and in the National Park these have their origins in a deliberately laid out plantation or planned settlement, as they do in almost every part of Wales. The area has six when Brecon itself is included. Planning is most obvious in Crickhowell with its grid pattern of streets lying at right-angles to each other, not quite as regular as New Radnor in central Powys perhaps, but nevertheless so distinctive as to leave no doubt that the layout was planned in advance. The same is true of Hay-on-Wye where the topography prevented the most economical layout and instead there is a mix of grid-pattern streets in the south of the town and a converging street (Heol y Dwr) to the north (comparison with Brecon is not inappropriate here); and Talgarth where two or three streets run down from the church, and perhaps more importantly from the market place in front of it, but then town planning may have come late to the town.

Two other settlements reveal planning. Tretower with its early castle has short parallel streets which appear to show some degree of deliberate design, and surprisingly perhaps, Pencelli, not a town in the accepted sense, but like Crickhowell and Tretower the *caput* or chief place of a sub-lordship. The two parallel lanes below Pencelli castle, now complicated by the passage of the canal, have the appearance of a planned layout though clearly one that failed to thrive.

Other attributes of the historic town are restricted to Hay, Crickhowell and Talgarth. Hay had town walls (as of course does Brecon), all three places had market squares, though the word 'square' is misleading, and Talgarth and Crickhowell had by the standards of central Wales large 'urban' churches. The church of St Mary, outside the walls at Hay and not particularly impressive is an exception.

### ***Nucleated villages***

Nucleated settlements are now well attested in southern Powys, primarily because of the survival of earthworks that point to both the 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. That said, the phenomenon is considerably more pronounced in Brecknock Borough at places such as Llanddew, Llanfihangel Talyllyn and Llanfilo than in the National Park, and not one of the historic settlements in the Park has a convincing display for relict settlement earthworks.

Instead it is to the morphology of the settlements that we need to look. Llangattock with its narrow lanes and its location on the other side of the Usk to Crickhowell, Llangors with a possible row of tenement plots that give the appearance of an early concentration of dwellings, and Defynnog again with an interesting street pattern in the valley below the church are all obvious candidates, even if there is no solid evidence to corroborate the suggestions. Most interesting of all perhaps is Trecastle where two medieval villages lie side



by side, one in the ownership of the lord of Brecon, the other in the hands of the Bishop of St Davids, though today they constitute but a single settlement. Did they compete in trade and markets, or was it collaborative? – the former seems more likely, yet only eastern Trecastle seems to have a market place. Even the reasoning that lies beneath the establishment of two settlements adjacent to each other is obscure.

Then there are a group of modern farms or hamlets which show few physical traces of ever having been a village yet where documentary evidence or settlement morphology contradicts this assumption. Most are on the west side of the Llynfi Valley and therefore in Brecknock Borough, Tredustan, Tredomen and Court Llaca being examples. But one, Trefecca, is in the National Park and there may be others.

Finally, there are some modern villages where it remains impossible even to favour either the presence or the absence of a medieval nucleation. I would place in this category Llanfrynach, Llangynidr, Llanfaes, Llanspyddid and perhaps Llechfaen and Scethrog.

### ***Church settlements***

In terms only of numbers, church settlements head the list. The term ‘church settlement’ is a useful collective one, although it is one that does not figure in the classic texts on historic settlement. Indeed in that some degree of grouping or nucleation might be assumed from the use of the term ‘settlement’, the label is 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, and this is where Glanville Jones’ putative bond settlements of earlier medieval date could be candidates. But some churches and chapels almost certainly never attracted more than a solitary dwelling around them, for they served a community dispersed in landholdings around the parish, and in the Park, Llanilltyd is a classic case.

The list is potentially quite a long one: Aberyscir, Cantref, Cathedine, Llanfihangel Cwmdru, Llanbedr, Llanddety, Llanelieu, Llanfeugan, Llangasty Talyllyn, Llangenny, Llanhamlach, Llanigon, Llansantffraed, Llywel, Partrishow, Trallong and Ystradfellte. Archaeological research may demonstrate in due course that some of those listed above were accompanied by dwellings in earlier centuries, but for the present in nuclear terms these occupy the bottom rung of the ladder, even if they are the most common within the Park.

Finally we can touch briefly on how valuable developer-funded works have proved to be since the first study in 1993. The National Park is a largely rural area, even though it does contain several towns. It is not surprising then, of the 34 settlements in the study precisely half have seen no archaeological investigations of any sort in the last twenty years, and quite a few others have seen only one or two pieces of work (or interventions as they are sometimes known). At the opposite end of the spectrum is Crickhowell which has seen eleven interventions though several of these have been no more than unproductive watching briefs during developments, Talgarth where they have been only four pieces of work but two of them have been particularly informative, Tretower also with a high success rate from four works and at head of the list Hay on Wye which has seen more than fifteen interventions, many with considerable archaeological returns. It would in the not too distant future be worth considering an in-depth analysis of the archaeological investigations at Hay in the recent past to determine how much more has been learnt about the town, not something that could be attempted in this assessment.

## **ABERYSCIR**

**SO 0003 2967**

**15946**

### ***Introduction***

Aberyscir, 4km to the west of Brecon, lies on the north bank of the River Usk/Afon Wysg where its tributary Afon Ysgir descending from Mynydd Epynt, creates a flat-topped spur-like location that projects towards the Usk.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Aberyscir up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website ([www.archwilio.org.uk](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

### ***History of development***

The place-name signifies 'mouth of the Yscir', Afon Ysgir emptying into the Usk, 200m south of the church. The earliest reference to it comes in the period 1143 to 1154 when it was termed *Aberescir*. Later forms of the name show minor variations, all close to the modern form.

Theophilus Jones, the Brecknock historian of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century claimed that Bernard de Neufmarche, Lord of Brecon, granted land here to Hugh Surdwal in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, the motte below Aberyscir Court being the focus of his manor. Another source refers to a Bernard Fitz Unspac, a contemporary of William the Conqueror, and his successors the Waldeboefs. Regardless of the knights involved, there is little to indicate why the Aberyscir spur was selected for a manorial centre, other than its naturally strong position. But it may also be more than a simple coincidence that the ruins of Brecon Gaer, one of the best-known Roman forts in south Wales, lay opposite Abersycir on the east bank of the tributary river.

By the 14<sup>th</sup> century it is likely that the motte had been superseded by an unfortified manor house, the medieval predecessor of Aberyscir Court. This is at best speculation. Earthworks to the north of the church (see below) do suggest that a settlement may have developed at Aberyscir in the Middle Ages, but if so it dwindled and disappeared in later centuries.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

The church of Ss Mary and Cynidr was certainly erected in stone in the medieval era and some fabric and a doorway on the north side survive from those times, but it was largely rebuilt in 1860. It contains one pre-Reformation grave slab and a medieval stoup, but has relatively few furnishings and fittings of interest. Its surrounding churchyard is sub-oval,

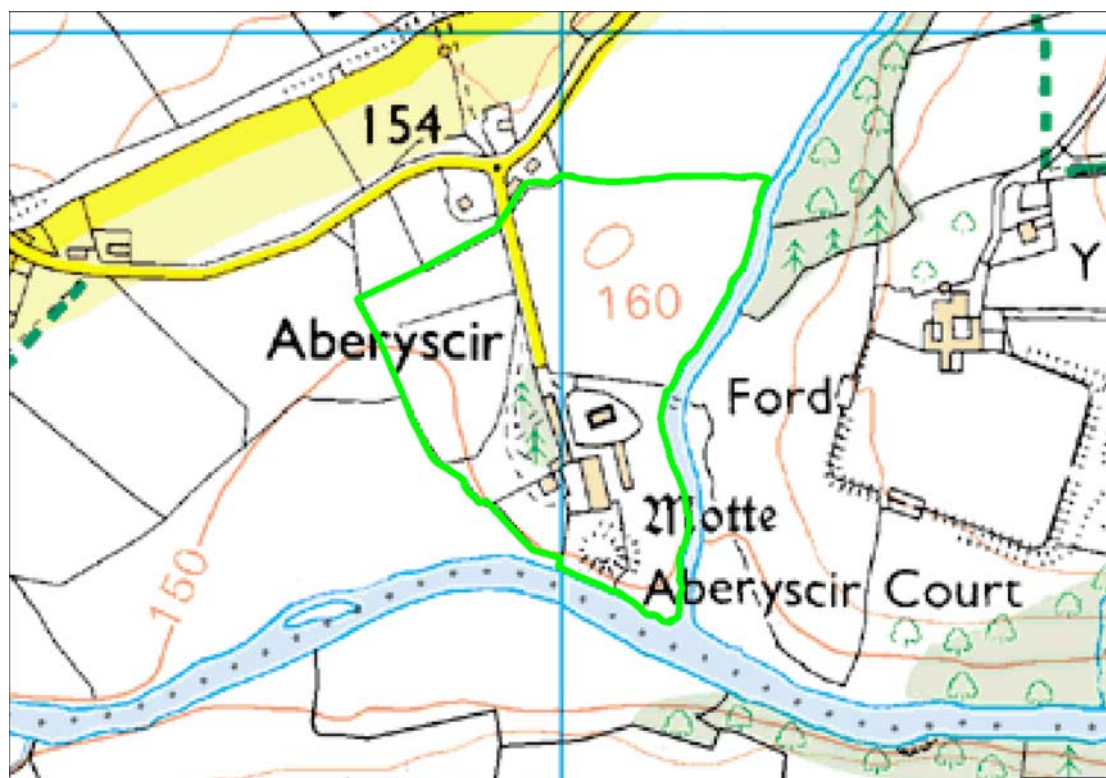
hinting at an early medieval (i.e pre-Conquest) origin, a theory strengthened by the British dedication, which is likely to have been supplemented by the Marian attribution only after the Norman Conquest. Certainly, Cynidr alone featured when the church was mentioned in 1490, with Mary not being named until c.1562, though the dual dedication is likely to be rather earlier than that.

Edging the churchyard on the north is a natural hollow that provides access to the ford across Afon Ysgir. A Roman road might have forded the Ysgir after leaving the west gate of Brecon Gaer, utilising the hollow and providing an access to the settlement long after the fort itself had fallen out of use. But this remains unproven. The layout of Roman roads in the vicinity of the Gaer is complex and not yet fully understood, and a definite stretch of a different road was found two to three hundred metres to the north when a gas pipeline was being built in 2007. At the time of writing, details of this are sparse as full publication is still awaited.

The Norman motte lacking an obvious bailey lies 100m to the south of the church and takes full advantage of the edge of the Usk's valley. A straight curtain wall has been suggested on the top of the mound on the basis of masonry remains, but there is a tradition, too, that a much later summer house was erected on the summit of the mound. It is evident that a modern survey is required here.

The third member of the group, Aberyscir Court, lies just to the south-west of the church, was built in 1837, occupying the position of an earlier house, and perhaps incorporating some of it in a rear wing.

The field to the north of the church contains earthworks including platforms, which have tentatively been identified as a deserted medieval settlement, though an alternative favours their interpretation as the marks of a formal garden. Suggestions that the earthworks could be a pre-Norman predecessor to Brecon are probably somewhat wide of the mark. Ridge and furrow has been identified in fields to the north-west of the church, though this has not yet been confirmed as being of medieval origin. There is a reference, too, to a Roman practice camp in this field and this has been authenticated in a recent definitive study on Roman camps in Wales.



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## **CANTREF**

**SO 0562 2541**

**15948**

### ***Introduction***

Cantref lies on the north bank of the Afon Cynrig, a small tributary of the Usk. It is served by a minor road from Brecon which lies around 3km to the north. The church, even today is accompanied only by a house which shares the name.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Cantref up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website ([www.archwilio.org.uk](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

### ***History of development***

The name, recalling the medieval administrative unit known as the cantref, derives its name from Cantref Tewdos, the second element being a personal name that distinguished it from Cantref Mawr which was much larger and lay to the north of the Usk. But there is an alternative name which surfaces in a document of 1404, Cantref al' Llankenedre, and refers to the church's earlier dedication to St Cynidr. Two years earlier it had simply been named as Cantref and in 1372, the earliest reference, as Cantr'.

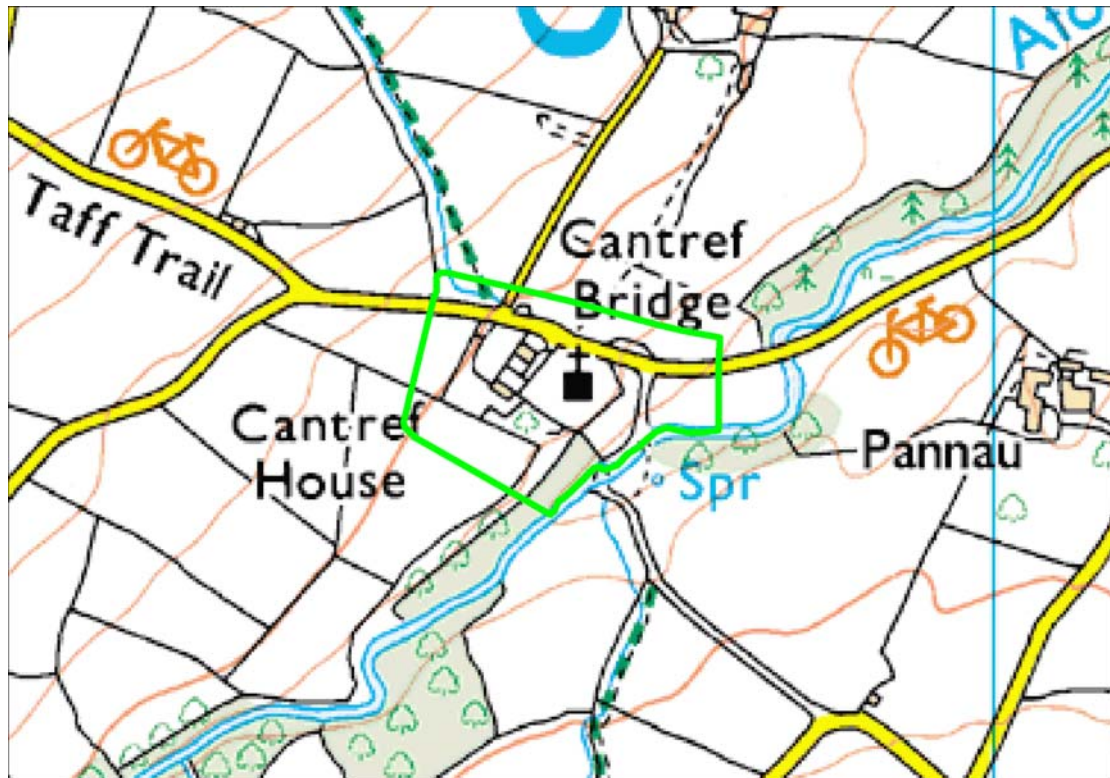
There is no evidence of a settlement developing around the church in the medieval era or after the Reformation. In this respect Cantref appears to be a reasonably typical church settlement.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

St Mary's church is thought to have been largely rebuilt in 1829, the sole survivor of its predecessor being the tower which though architecturally undistinguished, is believed to date to around 1600. Possibly large parts of it were further replaced when the church was renovated in 1867. As with many churches in the region, only the font was retained from the earlier building, this one of simple design but probably of 12<sup>th</sup>-century origin. 18<sup>th</sup>-century gravestones in the tower floor and the porch are the only other survivals.

The churchyard is polygonal in shape and there is nothing within its boundary to suggest that it was originally circular. However, Cantref House (below) has a curving edge to its garden which was originally longer and is matched by a similar boundary on the east against the river. A semi-circular enclosure, similar to that proposed for Llanspyddid, might be suggested.

The house now known as Cantref House lying to the west of the church was the vicarage which is believed to have been rebuilt in the 1790s. From this it can be assumed that there was an earlier vicarage on the site though its date has not been recorded.



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## **CATHEDINE**

**SO 1437 2518**  
**15949**

### ***Introduction***

Cathedine is located just beyond the south tip of Llangorse Lake, some 10km to the south-east of Brecon. It lies on the eastern slopes of the valley containing the Afon Llynfi, adjacent to the B4560, a modern number attached to a routeway which probably originated in the Middle Ages if not earlier.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Cathedine up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website ([www.archwilio.org.uk](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

### ***History of development***

The place-name is obscure. There could be a personal name – Cathed or Cethed – evoked here; but an alternative is that the elements are cath (pl. cathau) and din signifying ‘cats’ fort’. As Kethedin it first appears in the years between 1143 and 1154. Later the church’s dedication was included as in Mygahaleschurch in Kethedyn (1382) and Llanuihengle Kethedine (1536-9), but neither version was widely used.

Nothing is known of the settlement's early history and an early medieval origin for the church cannot be assumed. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that during the Middle Ages a settlement developed here, though this possibility cannot be ruled out. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the time when the first maps of the area were being prepared, Cathedine consisted of little more than the church and the farm that lay immediately adjacent, while Cathedine House was sited nearly one kilometre to the north.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

St Michael's church was certainly a medieval foundation, perhaps earlier, but some fabric apart there is structurally nothing that survived the rebuilding of the tower and chancel in 1868 and the nave in 1894. Inside is a 13<sup>th</sup>-century font, and two later 18<sup>th</sup>-century mural tablets.

The churchyard is rectilinear in shape, with nothing to suggest that it has had a more curvilinear form in the past.

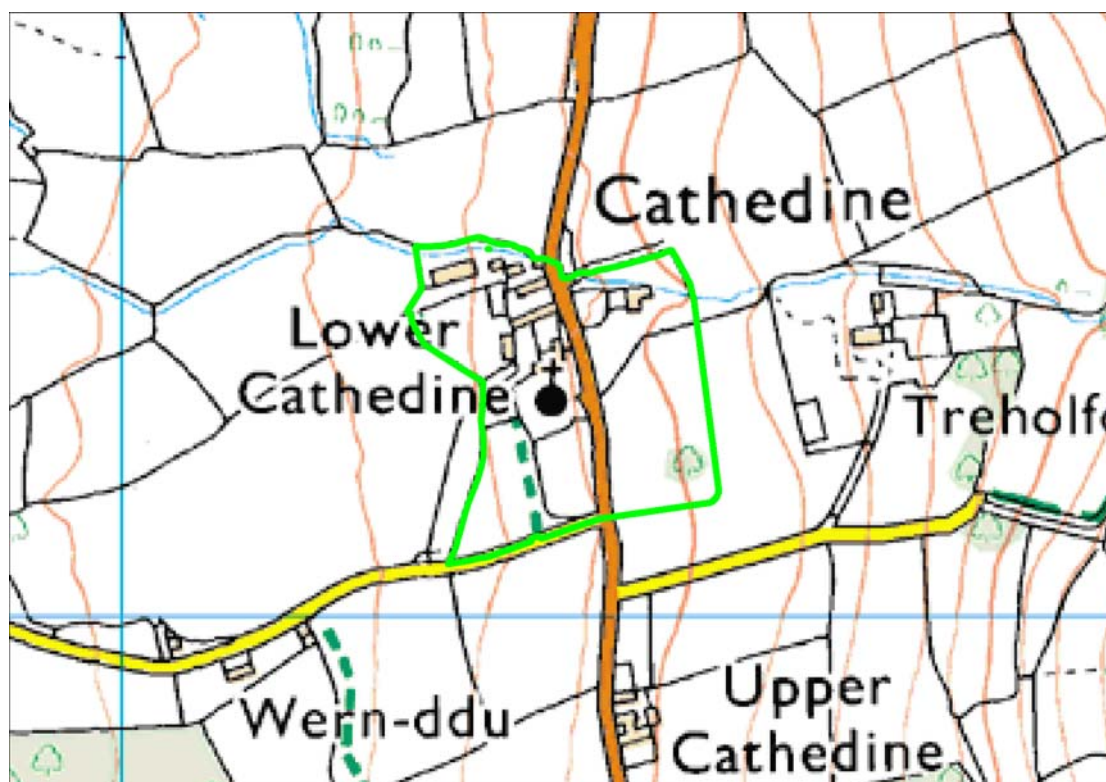


Lower Cathedine farm immediately to the north of the church has a house built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to which a new range was added in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The other elements in this group around the church, the cottages, appear to be of more recent date.

Faint ridge and furrow – sometimes an indicator of medieval cultivation – is visible in some of the fields around the church, but its date is unclear. Indeed, it is possible that it overlies and is thus later than strip fields of medieval date below the farm.

Two other contexts for settlement within the parish should be mentioned. The first, Castell Blaenllynfi, lies just over 2km to the south of the church. This was the principal stronghold or caput of a large lordship spreading over eastern Breconshire in the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, though the castle itself had been abandoned, though perhaps only temporarily in 1403. Today a few stone walls and buttresses accompany the impressive earthworks. John Leland, the king's antiquary, travelled through the district in the 1530s and recorded a tradition that beside the castle was a 'borow (borough) town now in decay'. No convincing traces of a settlement can now be recognised in the vicinity of the castle, although earthworks said to represent platforms and a trackway were visible in the 1980s.

Cathedine Common (also known as Werndu Common) is an irregularly shaped patch of low-lying ground in the valley bottom some 400m to the south-west of the church. In common with many such unenclosed areas in Wales it attracted encroachment cottages in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and perhaps in earlier centuries.



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## **CRICKHOWELL**

**SO 2175 1833**

**15951**

### ***Introduction***

Crickhowell lies on the north bank of the River Usk, 22km south-east of Brecon. The castle occupies a spur where the Cwmbeth Brook converges on the Usk, the ground dropping quickly to the river just to the south of the bailey. Much of the town is set on a gentle slope beyond the castle, except to the south and west of the church where the houses are set on the steeper slopes above the brook.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Crickhowell up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website ([www.archwilio.org.uk](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

### ***History of development***

The Welsh place-name, Crucywel, and thus its better known anglicized form of Crickhowell, is derived from Crug Hywel meaning 'the mound of Hywel'. This may be a reference to the prehistoric fort on Table Mountain above the town which now carries the name, though this appears to be a modern appellation for in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century it was simply 'Beacon'. A more convincing alternative is that it refers to the Norman castle mound, now known as Alisby's Castle, a name for which we have been unable to find an explanation. The town name is first given as Crickhoel in 1263, later Crukehowell in 1283, and as Cerrig Howell in 1584.

There are two elements to take into account in unravelling Crickhowell's development. Lying 1.5km to the north-west of the town is Maescelyn, with its small motte said to have been in existence in 1121 and adjacent to it St Mary's Chapel of which nothing now survives above ground. Some would have it that this is where Crickhowell began, the focus of the sub-lordship being moved closer to the Usk at some later date. This introduces the second element, Crickhowell as it is today, and in particular the period when Alisby's Castle was constructed. It is conceivable that this was a successor to Maescelyn, set in a more strategically useful location, but conceivable too that the two mottes were in use concurrently. Probably only extensive excavations will provide a satisfactory answer.

A new town was planned around Alisby's Castle, with a regular layout of streets. This is not likely to have happened immediately the castle was thrown up, more likely that there was a lapse of decades between the two, although less regulated, piecemeal settlement could have occurred outside the defences, soon after the castle's establishment. It was certainly in

existence by 1281 when the inhabitants received a grant of murage, and in the same year Edward I confirmed its existing markets and fairs, but this provides only a date before which the town was laid out. Two years later, it acquired borough status, although no charter is known.

St Edmund's Church was built at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and it was at this time or perhaps later that the parish of Crickhowell was carved from the much older parish of Llangattock in order to support it. Its construction perhaps obviated the need of the townspeople to travel to St Mary's Chapel for worship, a belief supported by the fact that Gerald of Wales around the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century referred to his visit to the capella Sanctae Mariae de Crucohel.

The castle and town passed to the Mortimers during the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but were restored to the Pauncefote family in 1402. Sir John refortified the castle in the face of the Glyndŵr threat, but it failed to hold out and was left in ruins. It can be assumed too that the town is unlikely to have remained unscathed. There is no evidence to suggest any further refurbishment of the defences, and it is known that the keep was uninhabitable in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.

The town declined in the later Middle Ages, Leland referred to it as a 'preati tounlet' in the 1530s, and by 1610 it was no longer listed as a market town. In 1675, it was said to have about one hundred houses and one indifferent inn, The White Lion. Richard Fenton passing by at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century applauded it as 'the most cheerful looking town I ever saw', by which time it was beginning to thrive again, witnessing the re-establishment of its market early in the century.

Crickhowell is fortunate in its fine series of estate maps depicting parts of the town. Both the bridge and the castle are shown on maps of 1587, and incomplete plans of the town in c.1760 and 1776, supplemented by the large-scale tithe plan of c.1844.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

The large 15m-high motte, thrown up during the 12<sup>th</sup> or even 13<sup>th</sup> century though documented only from the 1280s, supports the remains of a shell keep. Just to the east are the remains of two abutting towers, one circular, the other rectangular which originally were presumably tied in with a curtain wall. South of the motte a single tower marks the position of a gatehouse that had twin D-shaped towers, the second of these now no more than a set of foundations. All these are thought to be of late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup>-century date, though a more precise date of 1272 has been offered. The Bucks' engraving of 1741, the accuracy of which cannot be confirmed, shows a curtain wall in addition to the drum-towers on the southern side and it has been suggested that the curtain wall lay just to the north of Castle Road, though this remains to be confirmed by excavation.

A pair of small, supposedly 14<sup>th</sup>-century drum-towers in Church Street (known as the Ivy Tower) were formerly considered to be an outer gateway to the castle, and are still authenticated as such in Cadw's listed building description. However, survey work by the RCAHMW in the 1990s indicated a more complex story, the tower being an 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup>-century folly, with traces of a 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>-century house behind.

In addition to the motte and the standing masonry there are earthwork traces of a large bailey on the south incorporated into the Recreation Ground. An oral report indicates that other earthworks were levelled out on the adjacent cricket ground early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The church of St Edmund, set in its large rectangular churchyard, was built on a cruciform plan prior to 1303 by Lady Sibyl Pauncefote. Aisles were introduced at a later date, perhaps in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the broach spire was added after the Reformation. The 19<sup>th</sup> century

witnessed various phases of rebuilding and restoration, and many of the fittings date to that century. The only medieval survivals are the effigies of Grimbald and Sybil Pauncefote and from the post-Reformation centuries the font (dated 1668) and further memorials.

No traces of the town walls survive, and as far as can be judged no sign of them has emerged during developments around the town. Despite the 1281 murage grant (see above) it is possible that they were never built. However, Lamb Street and its continuation to the west of New Road (which was imposed on the existing street layout in about 1830, though 18<sup>th</sup>-century maps suggest it had a predecessor following a somewhat different line) may define an original western perimeter of the town, whatever form it took, the line then running north-eastwards with New Road picking up its line near Porth Mawr. Definition of the medieval town boundary on the north and east is not possible, although perhaps on the east and certainly on the south, the castle defences fulfilled that function.

The street pattern is of some interest. It is centred on High Street, widens as it runs northwards, bifurcating around the town hall (as shown on later 18<sup>th</sup>-century maps) as it reached the road that ran from Brecon to Abergavenny which itself is presumed to be of some considerable antiquity. This widening must signal where the market place was. To either side of High Street were burgage plots, and even modern maps show an almost continuous run down the entire western side of the street, but only some on the east where the castle defences took up much of the street frontage. A surviving boundary line suggests that a back lane may originally have served the burgage plots on the west side of High Street, and a narrow lane, Church Street, provided access to the church, the layout suggesting that the tenements had already been planned when the church was built. A slight shift in alignment of High Street as it runs southward suggests that the road swung out to avoid the pre-existing earthworks of the castle. At its southern end High Street divided with Castle Road running eastwards and Bridge Street running west and then south to the crossing of the Usk (significant perhaps is the fact that the southern arm of Bridge Street lines up with the putative back lane lying to the west of High Street). From the 1587 map it can be inferred that in Tudor times dwellings lay down the hill as far as the bridge, although it is curious that not a single pre-19<sup>th</sup> house is now to be found along Bridge Street. And by the 18<sup>th</sup> century houses were spreading from the core area along the roads to Brecon, Abergavenny and along Standard Street which took traffic to Hereford. Tower Street was added in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Crickhowell has a large number of historic buildings, the vast majority of them 17<sup>th</sup>-century and later. Thus the Dragon Hotel in High Street is considered to be early Georgian in date, the Bear Hotel is claimed to go back perhaps to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and certainly the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the White Hart Inn on the western edge of the town is said to have 15<sup>th</sup>-century origins though its appearance now is 19<sup>th</sup>-century. On Standard Street the former Rumsey Place mansion includes the granary to the Malt House which was erected in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and is now a furniture workshop. The Malt House itself is thought to go back to c.1540 and has 17<sup>th</sup>-century work, the adjacent Little Malt House which was at one time part of a coach house originated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and Upper House farmhouse in the same complex is also from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and has a contemporary barn (now used as a warehouse), a granary and a pigsty, while its gazebo is attributed to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Also of 17<sup>th</sup>-century origin are no 1 Beaufort Street, the sub-medieval house in the form of its vaulted basement which was incorporated into Ivy Tower and is known as the Wardens House, though another part of Ivy Tower dates to 1719, 44 High Street and probably the Bridgend Inn. Nos 24 and 25 High Street, Dan-y-castell on Castle Road are of 18<sup>th</sup>-century origin, though the last of these may have earlier features.

Porth Mawr on the north side of the town occupies the site of Cwrt-y-Carw, the late-medieval home of the Herbert family which was demolished after a fire in 1810. Porth Mawr Gatehouse is of 15<sup>th</sup>-century build, a relatively rare Welsh example of a late-medieval secular gateway.

The adjacent boundary walls should be contemporary, though the consensus is that they have been reconstructed, probably in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A bridge across the Usk was supposedly mentioned in 1558 and the present structure with its 13 arches is of 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>-century type, although it was rebuilt in 1706, widened in 1810 and has also seen other repairs over the years.

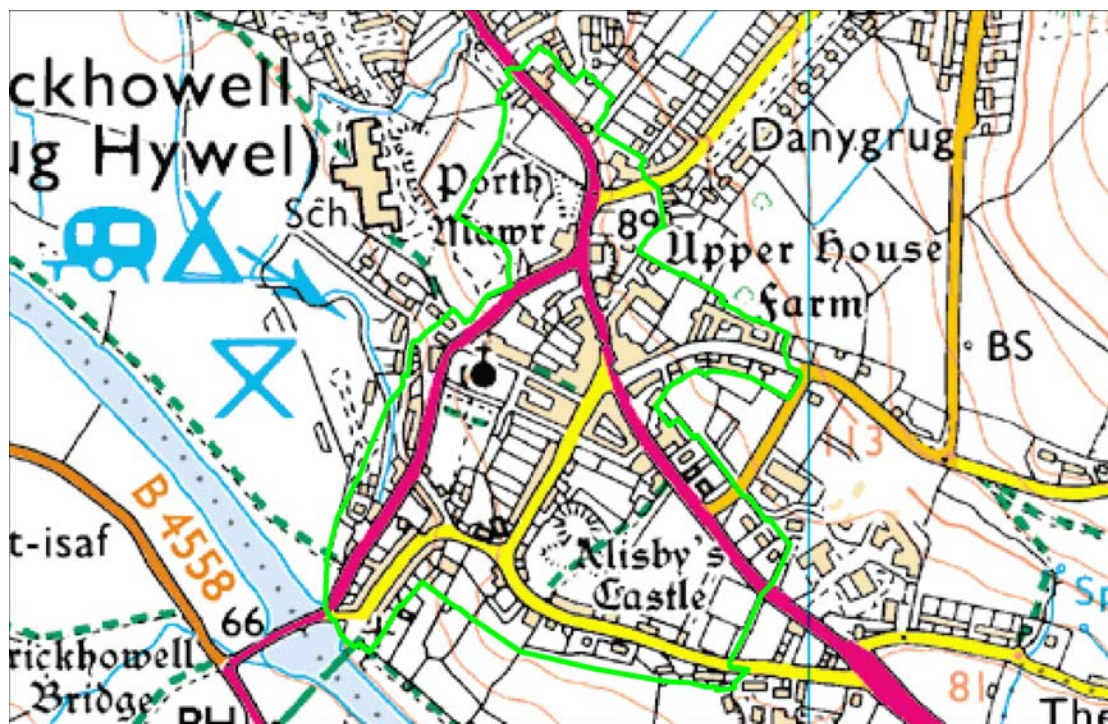
A mill is shown on a late 18<sup>th</sup>-century map of Crickhowell, and was undoubtedly established at a much earlier date. It lay to the west of the planned town and the Cwmbeth brook flowed past it down to the river. Its precise position is unknown, but large-scale Ordnance Survey maps from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century appear to show a mill pond with leats feeding in and out of it.

Medieval open fields to the north and west of the town survived into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, depicted on contemporary maps as narrow strips opposite Porth Mawr and to the west of Mill Street.

Aerial photography together with modern Ordnance Survey maps indicate that significant garden features may survive behind Porth Mawr. The date of these and their relation to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Porth Mawr or the earlier Cwrt-y-Carw remain to be established, but it is likely that they relate to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century house.

Further away, the motte at Maescelyn has traces of a square tower on its crest and it is reported that there are also the remains of a small bailey to the east of the mound. It is generally assumed that the motte was thrown up by the Turbervilles early in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

St Mary's Chapel at Maescelyn, first documented in 1303, was described as being in ruins on an estate map of 1776, and is believed to have been demolished early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nothing of the building is now visible. It is tempting to see this as a baronial chapel lying within the bailey of the nearby castle, but the possibility that it was in existence before the castle was built cannot be entirely dismissed.



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## **CWMDU**

**SO 1809 2382**  
**15952**

### ***Introduction***

Cwmdu is located beside the A479 trunk road as it descends the valley of the Rhiangoll, 10km south of Talgarth and 6km north-west of Crickhowell. The church occupies a spur projecting westwards into the valley, while the modern settlement lies at a lower level just to the south.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Cwmdu up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

Cwmdu means 'dark valley', but it is the church that first appears in documentary sources, with Sancti Michaelis in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and Miheleschurche in 1331. Cwmdu is encountered for the first time fifty years later in 1383. Cwmdu is a descriptive term, but there was another – Stradewi (or Estratau in 1130) which incorporates ystrad (valley) and possibly the personal name Dewi or yw meaning 'yew-tree' – the use of which was particularly prevalent in the Middle Ages in relation to the sub-lordship centred on nearby Tretower. Further complexity is provided by the possibility evinced by place-name authorities that this should be the documented Lann mihacgel meibion gratlaun and Lann Michacgel trefceriav, referred to in the book of charters known as the Liber Landeensis in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The earliest reference to Cwmdu, in Liber Llandavensis, concerns the consecration of the church by Herewald in or around 1060. Taken at face value this would imply that the church was a new foundation immediately prior to the arrival of the Normans, but an alternative view, preferred here, would be that Herewald was establishing a new church on an older ecclesiastical site, the case almost certainly with the three others – Llanbedr, Llangenny and Partrishow – that he consecrated at the same time.

As with so many of these small villages it is impossible to determine on the basis of presently available evidence whether a nucleated settlement developed here in the Middle Ages.

Theophilus Jones called the parish the granary of Brecknockshire, a reflection of the arable capability of the vale of Rhiangoll.



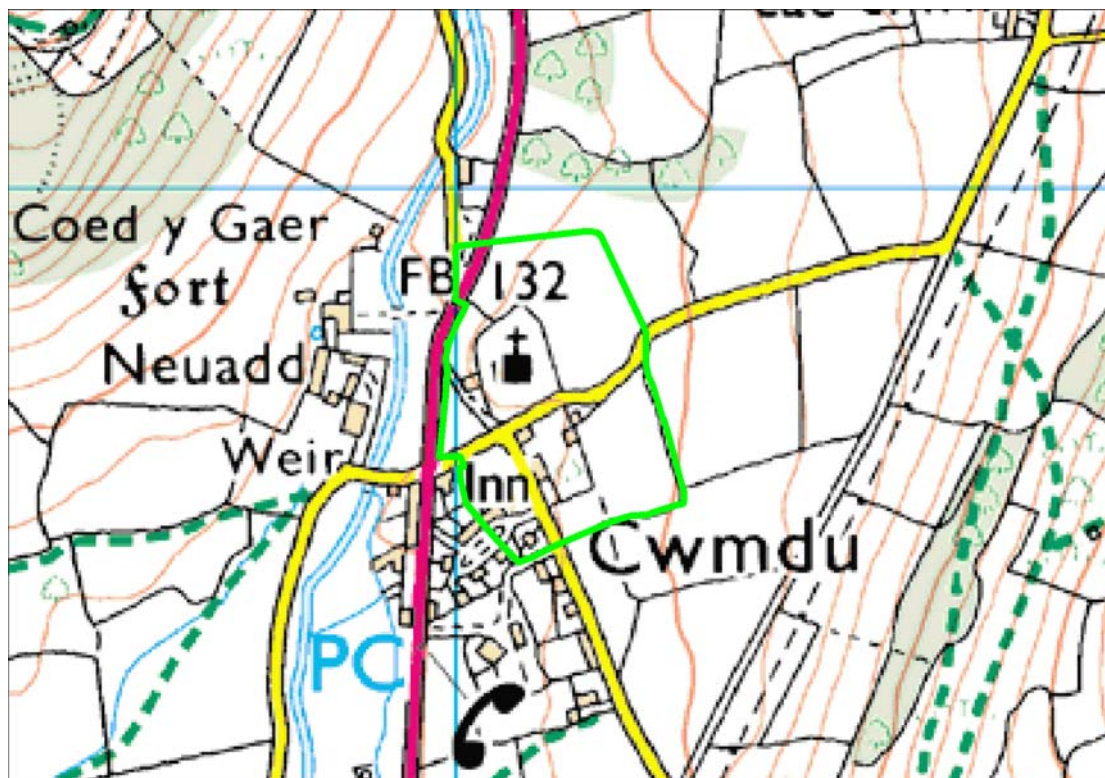
***The heritage to 1750***

St Michael's Church is largely of 15<sup>th</sup>-century date, though some writers have suggested that earlier masonry dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century could be encased in the existing structure. Extensive rebuilding occurred in 1831-33 and again in 1907. A pillar stone with Latin and Ogam inscriptions and of late 6th-early 7th century date was built into a buttress on the south side of the church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, having been found a mile away; and fragments of two 11-12<sup>th</sup> century crosses are stored in the priest's porch. There is no evidence in the building itself or in the layout of the churchyard to suggest an origin earlier than the 11th century.

There are no other buildings of significance in its immediate neighbourhood.

The modern A479 is almost certainly a replacement for an earlier road which wandered along the valley side and is apparent in the lane which passes just to the west of the church and continues on southwards.

No tangible evidence survives of early settlement around the church, although the field to the east contains at least two terraces or platforms whose function and date are unknown.



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## **DEFYNNOG**

**SN 9260 2790**

**15953**

### ***Introduction***

Defynnog lies on the A4067, less than 1km south of Sennybridge and 12km to the west of Brecon. Even today it has twin foci, with the church and accompanying buildings on the hill, and at a lower level to the south further buildings grouped beside the bridge over the Senni. The present road follows a modern course, but the earlier road is apparent in the surviving street pattern.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Defynnog up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will require modification as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

The earliest version of this name is Deuannoc which appeared in the years between 1202 and 1214. In the ecclesiastical taxation of 1254 it is given as Devennoc and later versions all show generally slight deviations in spelling. Combining a personal name Dyfwn and the suffix og the name means 'the territory belonging to Dyfwn'. Antiquarian speculation that the name somehow derives from the church dedication to Cynog appears now to be wide of the mark.

A church almost certainly emerged here in the early medieval era (as evidenced by the dedication, two inscribed stones and its topographical location), and it is not impossible that Defynnog was the mother church for the area although a strong case for this has yet to be made.

The Little Forest, a hunting preserve in the Middle Ages contiguous with the great forest of Brecknock that extended over much of the western Brecon Beacons, was known on occasions as the forest of Defynnog; and it has been claimed too that Defynnog was a small borough in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. But while the former is irrefutable, the latter belief has yet to be substantiated and indeed may be little more than a myth. Thus the idea of a nucleated settlement developing at Defynnog in the Middle Ages though attractive has as yet little to support it.

The earliest map of Defynnog (other than Ogilby's road map of 1675 which simply depicted the church) was prepared by Edward Thomas in 1780, and may be less an accurate portrayal, more a stylistic depiction of the village. In addition to the church, parsonage and churchyard cross (now gone), it showed nine houses and at least seems to confirm that even in the 18<sup>th</sup>

century there were two foci, one around the church, the other down by the river, though the gap between them was perhaps blurred on Thomas' map.

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century it was reported as one of only thirteen nucleated settlements in Breconshire.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

St Cynog's church dates in the main from 1500 with the tower attributable to the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, though there are uncertainties about the sequence of development. It has also been argued in the past that the north wall of the nave contains masonry and a window that may have survived from a pre-Norman church, but this is not convincing. An 11<sup>th</sup>-century date was formerly attributed to the font which it was claimed carried a Runic inscription, but this has now been authoritatively dismissed as a confection, a post-medieval bowl, perhaps from the time of Charles II's restoration, set on top of a medieval font. The stoup in the church is crude and could be Norman. There is also a good range of 18<sup>th</sup>-century memorials. Most significantly for the origins of the church, a 5<sup>th</sup>- or early 6<sup>th</sup>-century pillar stone is housed in the porch with a later but still early-medieval ring cross incised on it, and another early stone with a ring cross (of 9<sup>th</sup>- or 10<sup>th</sup>-century date) is built into the tower.

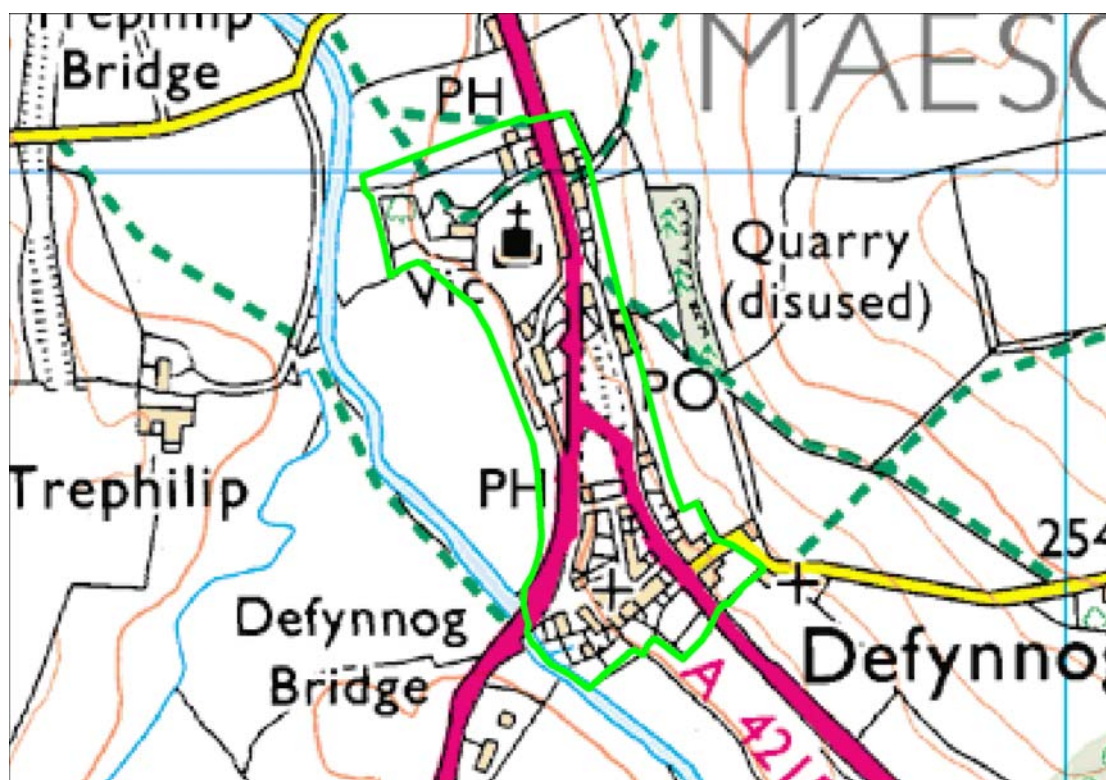
The present form of the churchyard is a polygon influenced only in part by the topography. But the southernmost portion is evidently a 19<sup>th</sup>-century extension and a more curvilinear shape around the southern perimeter is discernible on the mid-century tithe map.

Defynnog as noted above has two obvious foci, around the church and 200m to the south on the east bank of Afon Senni. Though the majority of listed buildings clustered around the church are not of any age, it is likely on topographical grounds that this was the original focus of Defynnog. The irregular pattern of streets by the bridge is curious and elsewhere might have elicited a belief in a medieval origin. It was classed as the village in 1838 and lies on ground of regular slope above the river. Consisting of a distinctive and attractive network of small lanes, some still cobbled, on the face of it there is nothing to point to a date earlier than the post-medieval era, particularly with street names so redolent of development during the Industrial Age.

Lying on the edge of this lower complex, Defynnog Mill, which is presumed to be on the site of the corn mill shown on late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ordnance Survey maps, was one of six documented seigneurial mills established around the margins of the Great Forest of Brecknock by the 14<sup>th</sup> century. A document of 1651 recorded it as being near the church.

The listed vernacular buildings are, almost without exception, of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century origin. But it should be noted that under the will of a London alderman five almshouses and a school room were erected in Defynnog in 1626. It had initially been assumed that these were rebuilt in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as the row of eight dwellings known as Church Row abutting the churchyard, but the modern listing description classes the latter as Tudor-style estate cottages dating from around 1840, and there a further group of three known as Bull Terrace to the south-east of the churchyard. Instead the almshouses are to be found in lower Defynnog on the High Street and were named as such on early Ordnance Survey maps. They were however rebuilt in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Old Vicarage beyond the church was built or perhaps rebuilt in 1721.





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## **HAY-ON-WYE**

**SO 2293 4246**

**15956**

### ***Introduction***

Hay-on-Wye occupies the most northerly corner of the Brecon Beacons National Park with the historic counties of Radnorshire and Herefordshire virtually contiguous with it to the north and east respectively. The B4350 runs through the town and the B4351 linking it with the main A438 from Brecon to Hereford on the far side of the River Wye.

The settlement divides naturally into two parts. Facing each other across the deeply incised Login Brook, the castle motte and St Mary's church lie to the south-west of the later walled town and occupy flattish ground above steep slopes that pitch down to the flood plain of the Wye. The later town lies on a spur of land at the confluence of the Dulas Brook and the Wye. The town boundary as defined by the walls follows the steep sides of these watercourses and the only easy approach from the south was dominated by the castle.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Hay up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

Hay appears to have been a wholly new foundation of the post-Conquest era. As a settlement it is first referred to in the years between 1135 and 1147 as Haya, while in 1299 it was called La Haye and by the 16<sup>th</sup> century simply as Hay. The inclusion of the river as a suffix is a late addition. There was also a Welsh name, Gelli, which was recorded in 1215 and as Gelli gandrell in 1614, the two names being cited together in 1625. Hay is derived from Old English (ge)haeg which can mean an 'area within a fence' and is used in late Saxon and Norman times to denote an enclosure in a forest. Gelli has a range of meanings including a 'grove' or 'copse' and more generally 'woodland'.

There is currently no evidence to allow the contention that there was a pre-Conquest church or settlement here. The earliest reference to a stronghold appears to be to the castell de haia in 1121 and it is generally assumed that this refers to the motte lying south-west of the town centre and close to the church of St Mary, itself recorded about the same time and lying outside the later town walls. That it was quickly superseded by the greater castle two hundred metres to the north-east is a reasonable assumption, yet it is possible that as much as a century separates the emergence of church and motte and the construction of the castle and town so it is conceivable that during that period, settlement started to spread around the earlier focus.

It has been suggested that the Norman parish of Hay was carved out of the earlier Welsh parish of Llanigon in around 1130.

The town was in existence in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century for it was burnt in 1216. It achieved borough status by prescription, for no charter is recorded. In 1232, the inhabitants were given a grant of murage by the king, allowing them to build the town walls, but in practice these may not have been constructed until after 1237 when a second grant was made.

In 1298, more than 183 burgages were recorded in the town implying a substantial population. But Hay undoubtedly suffered during Glyndŵr's rebellion at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and in keeping with other border towns, it appears to have declined in the late medieval period, not assisted by the decline in importance of the castle. Leland recorded that 'within the waulles [was] wonderfully decaied' in the 1530s though the market still functioned, and excavations on Heol y Dwr in 1990 appeared to confirm the absence of post-medieval buildings in that part of the town. Nevertheless, it gradually emerged as an important service centre with the development of such processing industries as tanning, woollen manufacture and milling, and a market that was important for grain and provisions, and livestock particularly cattle and horses but also sheep.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

On the basis of what is known about the Norman advance into Brycheiniog, it is probable that the motte was constructed in the 1090s or perhaps slightly before. However, another authority has argued, perhaps rather less plausibly, that this motte was constructed towards the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century as the centre of a manor separate from Hay itself. Assuming that the motte was originally accompanied by a bailey, the fact that the mound lies back from the valley edge might indicate that the intervening gap was occupied by the bailey, though when and why the bailey defences were levelled out remains unclear.

Hay's stone castle is thought to have been built around 1200 and was almost certainly constructed on a previously defended site, for a large ringwork with a stone tower attributed by some to the late 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> century appears to precede the stone castle. Hay Castle, the caput or chief place of a Norman sub-lordship, has had a long and involved history passing between the English and the Welsh and more frequently between different English factions. It is known to have been rebuilt in 1231, and suffered extensive damage in 1265 and again in 1460, but these are only a few of the key events in a long history – its detailed story has yet to be written. Castle House within its enceinte is of later 17<sup>th</sup>-century date, a stone-built mansion from the 1660s.

St Mary's church was dedicated between 1115 and 1135, but only the 15<sup>th</sup>-century tower survived a building collapse at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Much of what now exists is from c.1833 with the chancel enlarged in 1866. Where the religious of Hay worshipped in the period between c.1700 and 1834 is not clear. The only survivals of the earlier churches on the site are a much damaged 14<sup>th</sup>-century effigy and a couple of memorials, one of which is certainly 18<sup>th</sup>-century.

The churchyard shows signs of enlargement for inside the present boundary a scarp bank can be traced around two sides, suggesting that the present triangular churchyard had a smaller predecessor, probably also triangular.

Little of the town walls survive above ground. Most parts were destroyed in piecemeal fashion between the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is generally considered that even the listed section of wall beside Newport Street on the east side is basically a rebuild of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but on the south-west side of the town a short length of

wall foundation can still be recognised in an alley way. Nevertheless, their line can be traced for almost the complete perimeter, and it remains to be established whether sub-surface traces of the medieval wall remain on the south and east sides. On the north-west the construction of the railway in 1864 necessitated the demolition or replacement of the original walls. Of the three town gates nothing is known other than their positions and the likelihood is that they were demolished in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Leland also mentioned the existence of a postern gate.

The town layout displays some degree of planning though hardly to a classic pattern, for there were topographical constraints. Three main thoroughfares provide the framework of the street system in Hay. Broad Street and its continuation ran from the Water Gate in the north to the West Gate in the south-west, while Lion Street and Heol y Dwr ran eastwards and south-eastwards respectively from Broad Street to the East Gate. Originally, a large market-place lay in front of the castle, but this is now occupied by buildings off Market Street and High Town. The present market hall dates from 1835 but its predecessor was a structure of 17<sup>th</sup>-century date.

Patterns of narrow burgage plots are readily apparent running off several of the medieval streets within the walls. There is also a possibility based solely on cartographic evidence that burgage plots existed outside the West Gate adjacent to the main road.

The chapel of St John in Lion Street may have been established in 1254 and was used not only by the Guild of Tradesmen in Hay, but also by the castle's inhabitants. In ruins in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was restored in 1930, a rare Welsh example of an urban chapel. There may have been a second chapel outside the walls for Leland mentions taking mass there.

Hay has a wealth of old houses and inns, many of them 18<sup>th</sup>-century in date and it is not feasible to list every one of them here.

On Broad Street, the timber-framed Cafe Royal is said to have been built in 1623, while no 5 next to it is also thought to be from the same century; West House on the opposite side of the road originated as a 17<sup>th</sup>-century timber-framed house and Montpelier immediately to the south of it also has 17<sup>th</sup>-century origins; and The Bear Inn on the other side of the Bridge Street turn has 16<sup>th</sup>-century foundations; no 12 has 17<sup>th</sup>-century origins, no 13, 18<sup>th</sup>-century; while part of the Crown Hotel is 17<sup>th</sup>-century.

On Lion Street, no.41 is early 17<sup>th</sup>-century but most houses seem to be 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century, although the western extension of this street where it merges with The Pavement has 17<sup>th</sup>-century buildings fronting it.

Bear Street has the Kilvert Country Hotel which has an embedded 17<sup>th</sup>-century structure and Pemberton Cottage has timber-framing from the same century. The Bear on the south side of the street appears to have 16<sup>th</sup>-century origins; and the Old Black Lion opposite is reputed to have a 13<sup>th</sup>-century origin, though what is visible is no earlier than the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

On Church Street, Radnor House is either late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup>-century; and there is a string of 18<sup>th</sup>-century properties on the west side of the street.

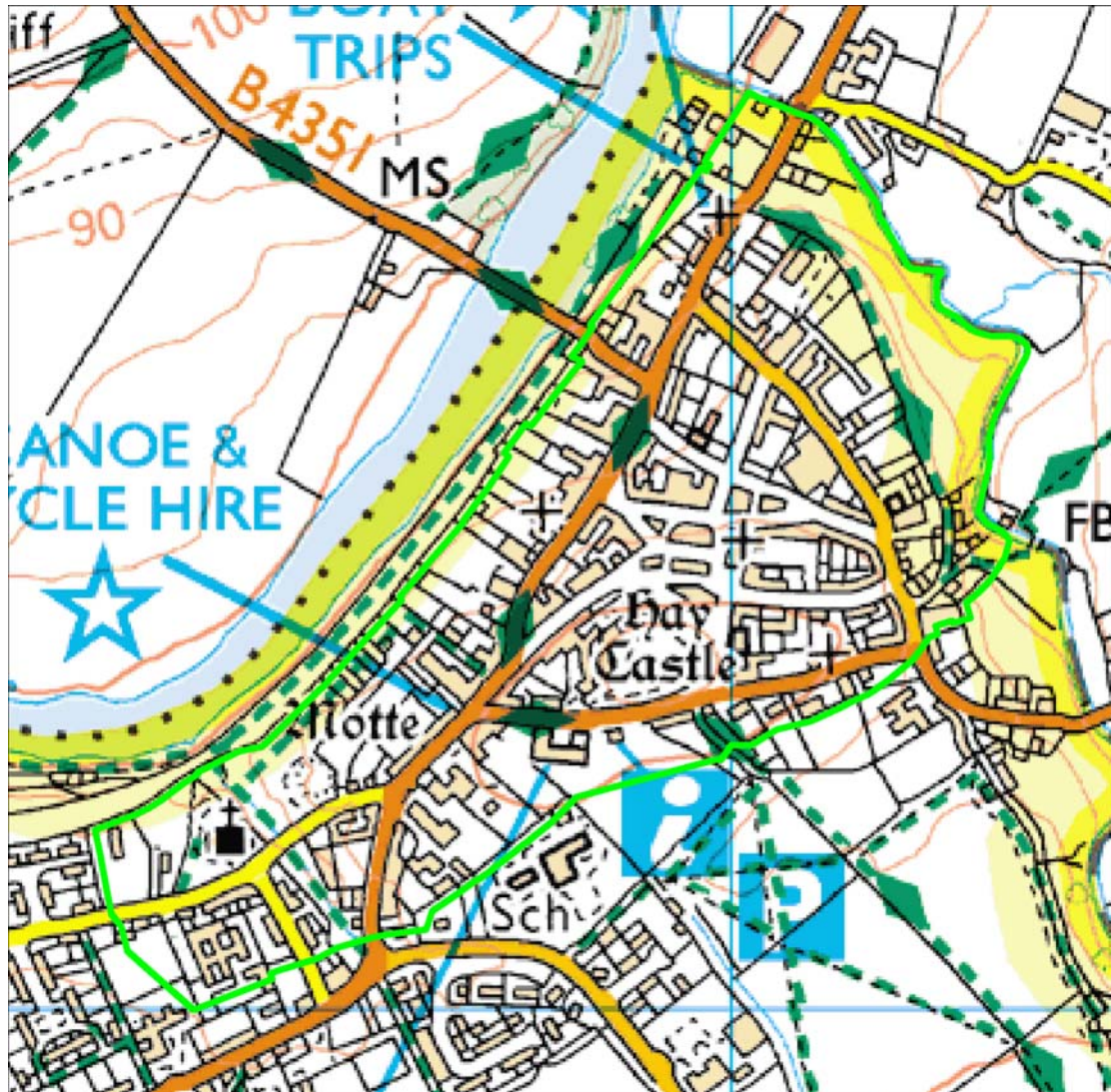
Bridge Street has one early to mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century dwelling, Oakhurst. There are 18<sup>th</sup>-century properties on Belmont Street, and Brookfield House on Brook Street has 17<sup>th</sup>-century origins.

Archaeological excavations have in recent years filled in further detail to the picture of Hay: excavations on Belmont Street in 1992 uncovered traces of medieval stone buildings, a cess pit and an oven of pre-15<sup>th</sup>-century origin, and foundations of a post-medieval building used for leather-working; a medieval building of stone-foundations was found on Heol-y-dwr in 1990 and a bank of five stone-built corn-drying kilns attributed to the period 1250-1350 and



various medieval pits were found elsewhere on this street in 2005, while work in the previous year uncovered traces of the town wall, as had work in Castle Street in 1998 and on the eastern wall in 2004; evidence of a post-medieval building came to light on Broad Street in 2008.

Extensive open fields were laid out around the town, some elements of them still apparent, fossilised in the field boundaries to the south-west of the town.



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## **LLANBEDR**

**SO 2380 2040**

**15957**

### ***Introduction***

Llanbedr lies in the eastern part of the Brecon Beacons National Park beyond the southern edge of the Black Mountains, some 3km north-east of Crickhowell. The church and its surrounding habitations occupy gently sloping ground on the western edge of the steep-sided valley of Grwyne Fechan.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanbedr up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website ([www.archwilio.org.uk](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

### ***History of development***

Translated into English, the full name of the parish, Llanbedr Ystradwy (or Ystrad Yw) which was not frequently used after 1600 means 'St Peter's church in the vale of Yews', the second name referring back to the old commote of Ystrad Yw. The place-name first appears in the period 1160 to 1185 as *llanpetyr* and at the time of the ecclesiastical taxation of 1291 we read of *Lanpetr*.

The church is recorded in the *Liber Landavensis* as having been consecrated about 1060 by Herewald, the Bishop of Llandaf, together with Cwmdy, Llangenny and Partrishow, but it is highly unlikely that this was the first church on the spot.

The development of the settlement during the Middle Ages is unchronicled, but there is no reason to think that there was a nucleated group of dwellings here, and indeed the negative results from an evaluation by the village hall in 1999 tends to support such a view. The earliest map of Llanbedr which dates to 1760 shows the church, the rectory and eight other dwellings including a mill beside the Grwyne Fechan, reasonably well spaced out along the road from Crickhowell to Partrishow. In passing it can be noted that only three or perhaps four of these remain to the present day.

Llanbedr was the home in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries of the Brutes, a family of masons whose memorial stones create a distinctive feature in many churches in the district. Also the ecclesiastical historian, Archdeacon Thomas Payne, resided at the rectory in the 1790s.

### *The heritage to 1750*

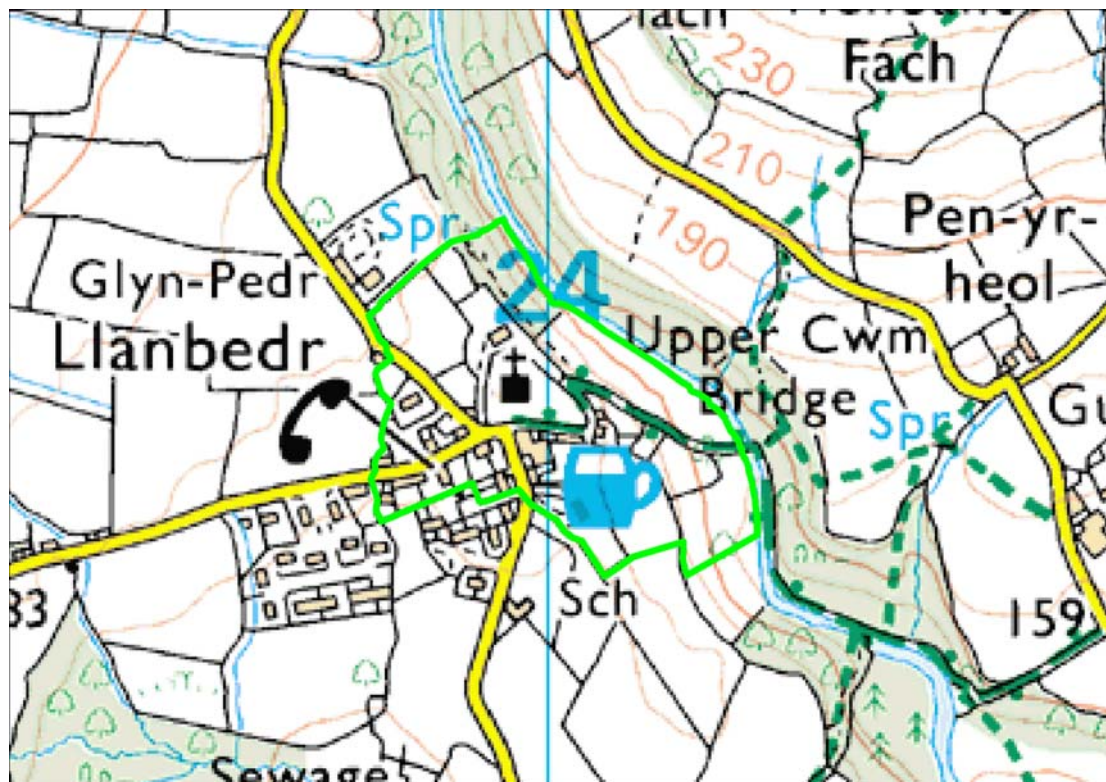
The church dedicated to St Peter appears largely to be of late 15<sup>th</sup>- or early 16<sup>th</sup>-century build on the basis of the south aisle and its accompanying chapel, though it is possible that the nave and chancel are earlier. The tower, too, could be earlier, perhaps 14<sup>th</sup>-century, although there is no architectural detail to confirm this. There was some rebuilding in 1897, following restorations in 1868 and 1883.

The churchyard is of a curious triangular shape, certainly modified on its eastern side where the rectory (now Llanbedr House) incorporated a slice of the old graveyard to facilitate access, probably prior to 1760. And Richard Fenton writing in 1804 noted that 'the [rectory], situated in the church yard, the north side of which is close shaven and made a lawn of, with a walk all round'. Other, undocumented alterations to its layout can only be presumed.

Small cottages lie close to the churchyard on the south in as far as the topography allows, and perhaps reflect the initial pattern of settlement, particularly as the lane running into Llanbedr from the west and then snaking down the valley side on the east probably represents the original means of access to Llanbedr. The south to north lane is a more local route winding up the valley of the Grwyne Fechan.

Glebe Farm immediately to the south of the church was built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and enlarged early in the following one. Llanbedr House (the former rectory) is of 18<sup>th</sup>-century date, as is the Red Lion Inn.

Just to the south-west of the churchyard and east of Penuel Chapel on the road to Crickhowell is a spring with a stone surround, built into a wall, a metal tap has a bowl beneath, but contrary to some suggestions it seems unlikely that this is medieval. Its absence from the early large-scale Ordnance Survey maps implies an absence of local traditions associated with the spring.



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## LLANDETTY

SO 1279 2016

15958

### *Introduction*

Llandetty lies beside the B4558 on the southern bank of the Usk, 12km to the south-east of Brecon. The church occupies ground sloping gently to the river edge, overshadowed by the steeper slopes of Tor y Foel to the south-west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llandetty up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### *History of development*

The earliest reference to this place is in the ecclesiastical taxation of 1291 where its name is given as *Landetten*. Only in 1513 do we read of *Llandettuy*. Experts have suggested that the saint represented here was 'Dedyw', who may be the same as *Detiu*, one of three clerks of the better known St Cadog, and perhaps even a grandson of Brychan.

The dedication, river-side setting, the pillar stone within the church and the curiously elongated yet curvilinear appearance of the original churchyard collectively point to an early medieval origin for the church. Whether its presence encouraged the growth of settlement around it is, though, impossible to determine. There is no visible nor documentary evidence (as far as we are aware) that this was the case. It seems likely that as with other places in Powys, it remained a church settlement where the church was accompanied by no more than one or two houses.

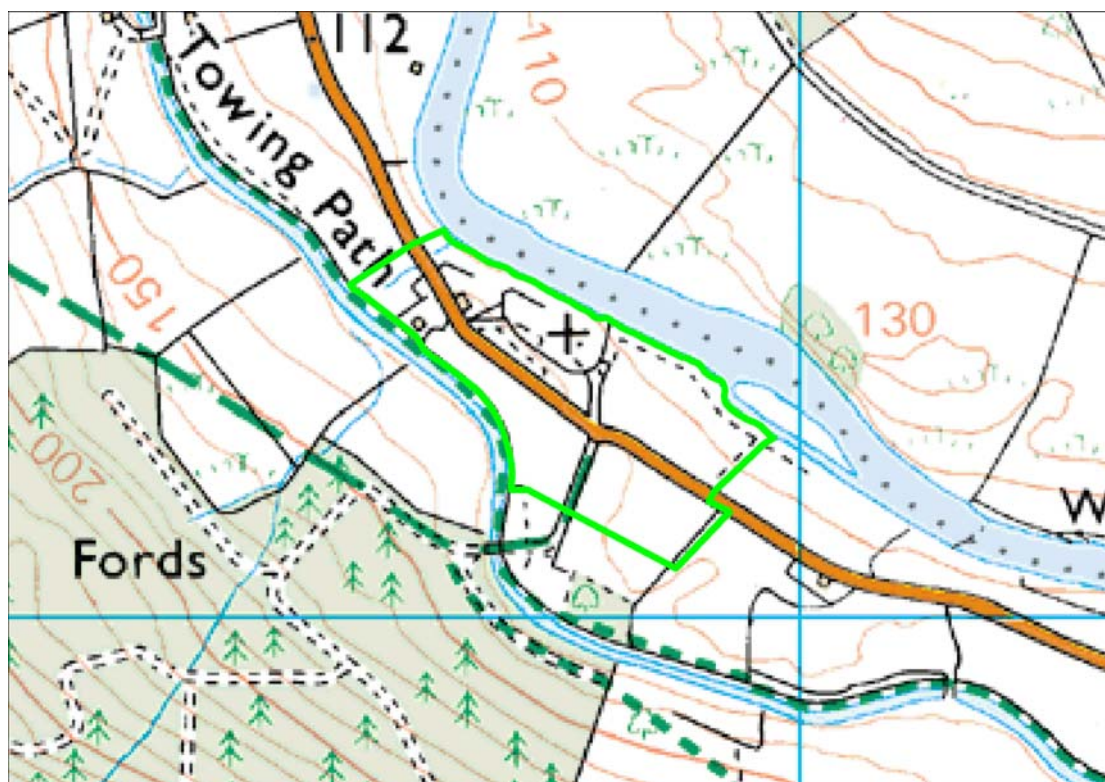
### *The heritage to 1750*

The small, simply designed church of St Tetti (or Tetta) has a nave and chancel in one and a south porch. Its masonry shell could be early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the same holds true for the west door, but the other architectural embellishments are likely to be of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Restoration occurred in 1878. It has an early font, perhaps 13<sup>th</sup>-century, the Hanoverian Royal Arms painted on to the north wall, and a 9<sup>th</sup>-century inscribed pillar stone set up in the chancel which formerly provided two of the quoins in one of the church walls, implying perhaps that it probably originated here. Another early medieval stone, this one inscribed and cross-carved, but now lost, was set beside the road to Talybont in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.



The churchyard is best described as semi-elliptical in shape. Its terminals butt against the drop down to the slope of the Usk, and it is conceivable that there has been some erosion of this face in the past.

One hundred and seventy years ago a single cottage (now Llanddetty cottage) accompanied the church. A second group of buildings including the parsonage but all now gone lay beside the lane leading southwards from the church, just before it bridged the canal. None of these buildings appears to be of any great antiquity, and a more significant one, Llanddetty Hall of 17<sup>th</sup>-century origin, is nearly 500m to the north-west. It is perhaps the road itself, the B4558, which has a longer history for this appears to be a contour-hugging routeway typical of Welsh valleys which certainly goes back to the Middle Ages and probably much further back in time.



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## **LLANELIEU**

**SO 1846 3416**  
**15959**

### ***Introduction***

Though only 3km to the east of Talgarth, Llanelieu occupies a remote location approached by minor lanes on the north-western slopes of the Black Mountains. The church lies in the loop of a stream that runs off the lower slopes of the Black Mountains, with a second smaller stream converging on it from the east. The churchyard is on a slight slope yet the church appears to occupy a platform which is unlikely to be completely natural.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanelieu up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

Llangelen is the first form of the name, recorded sometime in the years between 1148 and 1155. In 1210 it was termed Langeleu but by 1406 it had become Llanellewyth and in 1482 Llaneliw. The English translation of the name is an obvious one ‘the church of St Elyw’ to whom it is still dedicated, and apparently a grand-daughter of Brychan. However, recent authorities have questioned whether ‘Gelyw could be a stream name rather than a personal name and that St Elyw who only put in appearance around 1400 was a back formation.

The church dedication and the morphology of the churchyard, though hardly regular, point to an early medieval foundation, reinforced by the presence of two pillar stones of early date.

Nothing is known of the past history of this settlement. Even at the time of the Tithe Survey in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, it consisted of nothing more than the church, the court and Ty-du cottage. It was hemmed in by two expanses of open land, Rhos Fach Common on the south and Rhos Fawr Common to the east. On this very restricted evidence it seems unlikely that Llanelieu was ever anything more than a church settlement.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

The supposedly 13<sup>th</sup>-century church of St Elyw has seen minor changes in subsequent centuries including the insertion of a 15<sup>th</sup>- or 16<sup>th</sup>-century west window. Some of the eastern end was rebuilt after 1869 when Sir Stephen Glynne recorded single-light square-headed windows that have now gone, and there was limited restoration work in 1905. Two cross-carved stones, incised sometime between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, reside just outside the

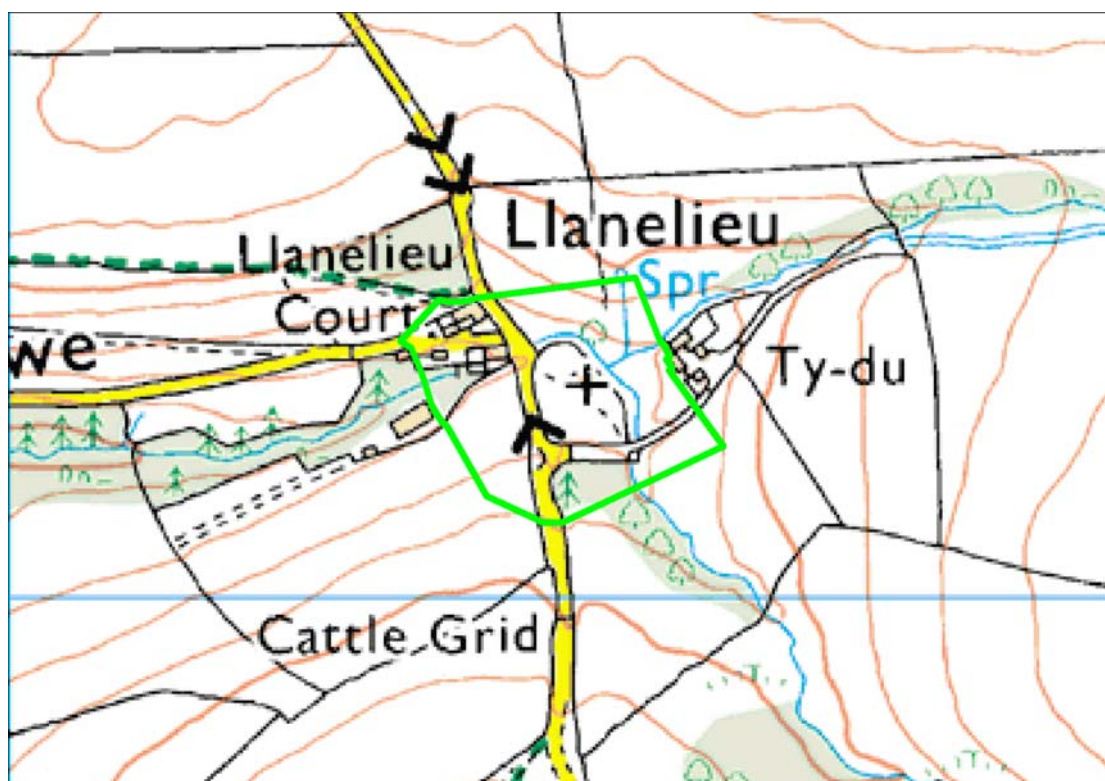
porch, and it seems very likely that these have been relocated from elsewhere in the churchyard. Inside, parts of an elaborate 14<sup>th</sup>- or 15<sup>th</sup>-century screen survive, there is a font, altar rails and a pulpit all post-Reformation, wall paintings of various types including a fragmentary late 17<sup>th</sup>-century Royal Arms, and an interesting range of 18<sup>th</sup>-century wall monuments.

The churchyard itself is a large enclosure with a vaguely sub-circular 'feel' to it even if in plan it appears as an irregular outline, and is of a size seemingly out of proportion to the number of marked burials that it holds.

Llanelieu Court less than 60m to the north-west of the church raises intriguing issues. The house itself is thought to be of 15<sup>th</sup>- or 16<sup>th</sup>-century details with 19<sup>th</sup>-century additions. It incorporates two late medieval pointed arches which have been claimed as the remains of a monastic cell belonging to Llanthony Abbey – and there is nothing to suggest that these arches have been imported from elsewhere. Inscribed stone voussoirs give a date of 1676 and the initials of the Aubrey brothers, owner of the court in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The old pound for holding stray stock was still in place between the church and the court at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but has now been demolished. The stocks, too, which were positioned immediately to the south of the churchyard and were depicted on early editions of the Ordnance Survey map have gone, while the theme of punishment was also continued by a yew tree by the churchyard which doubled as a whipping post, the felon's hands inserted into holes bored in the wood and held in place by a bar.

Despite the lack of modern settlement around the church, no traces of earlier house sites have been observed. However, at least one building, presumably a cottage, existed to the south of the lane leading to Ty-du, less than 40m from the churchyard. It appears on an estate map attributable to the 1460s.



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## **LLANFAES**

**SO 0378 2830**

**128176**

### ***Introduction***

Llanfaes is now a suburb of Brecon on the B4601 running westwards out of the town and to the south of the Usk. Geographically it is in the river valley and occupies level ground.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanfaes up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

Llanfaes can boast one of the earliest place-names in the county. In 817 (recorded in a document of c.1000 we read of (Gueith) Lannmaes, in c.1100 of Landmais and of Launvays by Bregnogh in 1280. The church dedication makes an appearance as St David juxta Brecon in 1535. Modern place-name authorities translate the name as the ‘church in open country’, and perhaps this is preferable to an alternative reading for maes of ‘open-field’ which would be an extremely early occurrence of this agricultural practice.

The place-name does however appear to point to the early medieval foundation of a church in this place, but one that cannot be confirmed by any other means.

The scale of medieval settlement around the church in the Middle Ages is unknown, though its proximity to Brecon encourages the assumption that the church will have acted as a focus for settlement at an early date, and the road past it was the main highway to Carmarthen for many centuries. In the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the borough of Brecon appears to have been extended to take in the parish of St Davids. By the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century continuous housing edged the road as far as Llanfaes church and probably beyond, inferred from Ogilby’s road map. This is borne out by Edward Thomas’ estate map of 1780 and several slightly earlier manuscript maps which show a similar pattern, with on Thomas’ map dwellings well to the east of the church being classed as in ‘Llanvaes’ as indeed was Christ College. What also is also evident is that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and probably earlier there was little in the way of housing beside the lane that ran south past the church.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

Of the medieval church at Llanfaes nothing survives, other than a sketch of c.1700. A new building was erected, apparently next to the old one, in 1859, and this in turn was replaced in



1923-5. The only medieval survival is the font and this has been refashioned, and there are some 18<sup>th</sup>-century memorials.

The churchyard is rectangular with nothing to suggest an earlier boundary.

There are no buildings of any great age in the immediate vicinity of the church, the earliest perhaps being the Drovers' Arms further down Newgate Street which could have originated in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and Old Castle Farmhouse, formerly Penypentref, in Llandaff Row which is thought to be 18<sup>th</sup>-century but could have earlier features. The location of Llanfaes watermill mentioned on several occasions during the 15<sup>th</sup> century is not known.



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## **LLANFEUGAN**

**SO 0865 2453**

**15960**

### ***Introduction***

Llanfeugan lies about 1km to the south of the River Usk and 6km south-east of Brecon. The church lies on a spur formed by converging streams, that to the north set in a deeply cut valley running towards the Usk. Topographically, it is a distinctive location.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanfeugan up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

Llanfeugan (or Llanfigan) signifies the ‘church of St Meugan’, and was known as St Meugan in 1251 and Llan Migan in 1522. St Meugan is relatively obscure but could be the saint to whom there are also dedications on Anglesey and in Pembrokeshire.

The dedication and the location together suggest that this was an early medieval foundation, and when around 1272 the Lord of Pencelli built a new church, the centre of worship was not moved to Pencelli Castle less than one kilometre to the north-east but remained here, a clear sign of a pre-existing ecclesiastical focus.

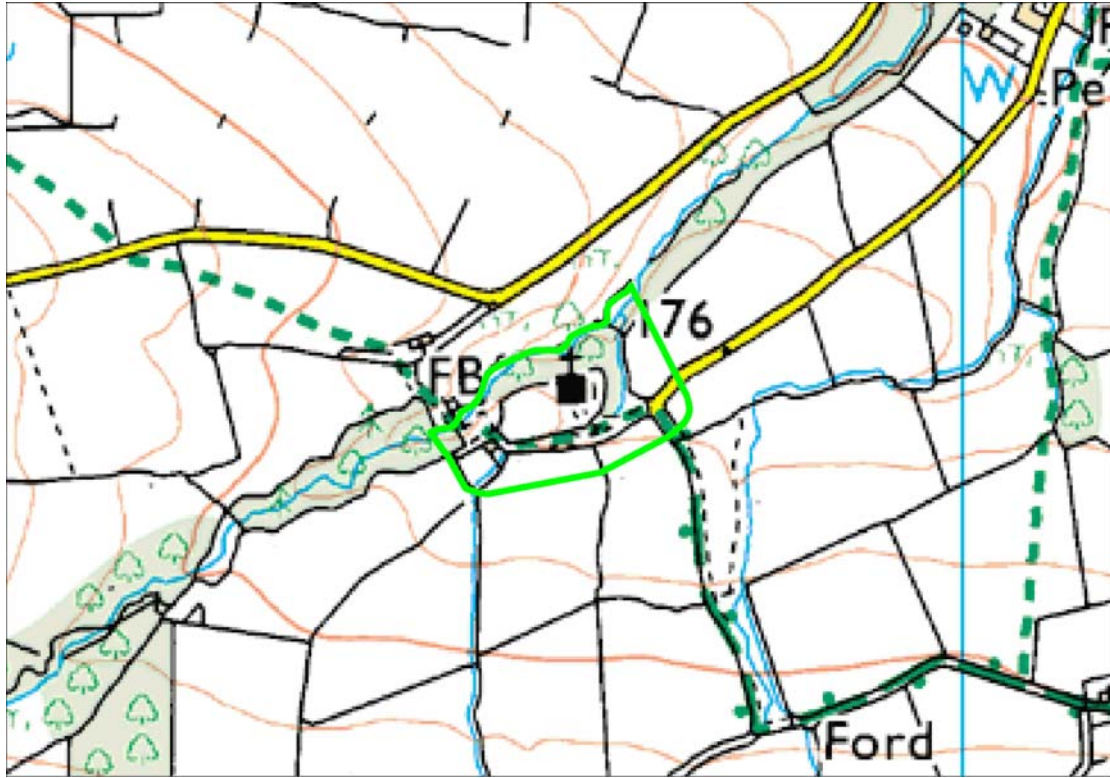
Nothing is known of any settlement in and around the church, and when the first maps of the area appeared at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the picture of the church and one house beside the churchyard was much the same as it is today. The overall impression is one of isolation, of a church set at the end of a lane and bounded on the north by a valley deeply etched. It is another of Brecknock’s church settlements.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

The build of this little church is potentially complex, and the term ‘rustic’ has been applied to it. There is agreement that there could be 13<sup>th</sup>-century Early English work here, but no accord as to whether the north aisle pre-dates or post-dates the present nave and chancel. Some rebuilding occurred in the 15<sup>th</sup> century or a little later and the tower was added at this time. Further rebuilding occurred in 1891. The font is considered to be late 13<sup>th</sup>-century, that part of the screen to survive has been attributed to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the choir stalls, pulpit and altar rails include 17<sup>th</sup>-century work, and there are a few 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century monuments.

The churchyard's shape, an irregular quadrilateral, is dictated by the spur on which it sits. The base and shaft of the churchyard cross remain, and the faint traces of a supposed cockpit, west of the church.

There are no signs of earlier dwellings in the vicinity and at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ty'r-Eglwys was the only habitation. On the far side of the valley (but linked by a footbridge in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) are the ruins of a 17<sup>th</sup>- or 18<sup>th</sup>-century barn.



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## **LLANFRYNACH**

**SO 0751 2574**

**15961**

### ***Introduction***

Llanfrynach has grown up beside Nant Menasgin, an east-flowing tributary of the Usk. The river itself is 1.5km away to the north and Brecon lies 4km to the north-west. The village lies on a flattish plain between streams that run down from the steeper foothills of the Brecon Beacons. A gentle ridge separates the spot from the River Usk.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanfrynach up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

The attractiveness of the locality is emphasised by the discovery in 1775 of coins and a Roman bath-house with mosaics by Maesderwen, less than one kilometre to the west of the village, perhaps the only known Roman villa site in the county. Samuel Lewis recorded, too, ancient smelting works in this locality, popularly deemed to be Roman and this has been confirmed by modern investigations.

The 'church of Brynach' referred to in the modern place-name appears first as Lanbernach in 1291, and as Sci Brenaci juxta Brechon in 1408/9. The modern form is more immediately identifiable in the Tudor era when around 1566 we read of ll. Frynach.

The church's dedication, its location beside Nant Menasgin, and several early medieval slabs collectively suggest that this was a pre-Conquest ecclesiastical foundation. As to whether a settlement developed around it in the Middle Ages is a very different matter. At present there is no evidence one way or the other.

The first maps of the area are no earlier than the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and only confirm that there was a small amount of housing to the north-west and south-west of the churchyard and that it was already spreading to the south of the stream. The historic core of the village is perhaps more likely to lie to the south of the church where the houses are tightly concentrated, and those to the north are more likely to reflect later infilling.



### *The heritage to 1750*

St Brynach's church has a tower that is generally attributed to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, while the rest of the building dates from 1885. Within the church is a decorated pillar stone of 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup>-century origin; it is the only extant stone of three that were discovered during the demolition of the earlier building, one of the others being buried in the foundations of the new church. The only other survival, other than some 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century memorials and two stained glass windows is the font which is also believed to have been made during the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

St Brynach's church is set centrally in a large sub-square churchyard. It gives the impression of having originally been more circular with sections shaved off the south-west and south-east sides. The north-east side has been modified too for the earlier boundary can be seen in the grounds of Ty-mawr.

East of the church is the gentry house of Ty-mawr, with walling and a blocked archway possibly of 15<sup>th</sup>-century origin to the east of the house and a masonry gateway incorporated into the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Gothic Revival house. Linked to the 14<sup>th</sup>-century uchelwyr Howell Gam, this may originally have been a fortified medieval manor house.

Ty Fry to the west of the church is an early 17<sup>th</sup>-century gentry house that was enlarged later in the century. Now a farm its ancillary buildings are late 18<sup>th</sup>- or early 19<sup>th</sup>-century in date.

The road pattern implies that the church has long been a focal point where routeways met or crossed. The dwellings in Church Row may mark an early expansion of houses along the southern edge of the churchyard. The extension of the road north-eastwards to the B4558, however, could perhaps be more recent, serving only Ty-mawr. This might account for the curious masonry-edged constriction of the road close to the east corner of the churchyard.



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## LLANGASTY-TALYLLYN

**SO 1333 2615**  
**15962**

### *Introduction*

Llangasty-talyllyn lies on the southern edge of Llangorse lake, nearly 9km east-south-east of Brecon. The church occupies ground that slopes gently down to the lake shore little more than 100m away, and is perhaps no more than two metres above the present water level.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangasty-talyllyn up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### *History of development*

The name signifies the church of St Casten (or Casteu) at the end (or edge) of the lake and incorporates a dedication that is unique. The earlier forms of the name are various. In 1643, it was recognisable if misspelt as *Llangastey Talyllym*, and before this in 1513 it was *Llangasten*. The year after Henry VII's accession the church was termed *Sci Castani juxta marā*, while in 1321/2 it was linked to neighbouring Llan-y-wern as the [lands of] *Londeworne, altera Costinio*.

The origin of the church as an early medieval foundation seems incontestable, though it is only the obscure dedication that is convincing. There is however no evidence that a settlement developed around the site, either before the Conquest or during the Middle Ages. The earliest available maps – from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – show the church as a solitary structure on the edge of the lake.

### *The heritage to 1750*

The 'dark, ancient and decaying edifice' that was the church in 1838 was rebuilt in the years after 1848. Of the earlier nothing remains and there is little known of it, though an unverified report suggests that it was of mid-16<sup>th</sup>-century date with a tower appended in 1670. The exception could be the lower stages of the tower – these might have been retained from the earlier building. The removal of earlier furnishings and fittings by the Victorians was thorough. Only fragments of the medieval screen were utilised in the new chancel screen, 'a good example of the unintelligent use of medieval material, jumbled together without knowledge or understanding' as Crossley and Ridgeway put in their definitive work on Breconshire screens. Three bells of 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century date were also saved.

The shape of the churchyard is polygonal, but with its curving west side, it gives the impression of originally having been more curvilinear, though time has shaved off its other curves. This seems too borne out by geophysical survey in 1993 which reportedly identified a curvilinear feature beneath the eastern churchyard wall which excavation demonstrated to be a ditch.

The adjacent school was constructed at broadly the same time as the church (c.1850) and in similar style. At a greater distance is Llan, a farm where the house appears to be a long-house derivative though undated.

No traces of earlier settlement can be detected in the fields surrounding the church, though geophysical survey in 1993 did reveal unexplained features to the east of the church.



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## **LLANGATTOCK**

**SO 2107 1778**

**15963**

### ***Introduction***

Llangatock (Llangatwg) lies on the south side of the River Usk facing Crickhowell, and beside one of the river's tributaries, Nant Onnau. The church and the older part of the settlement nestle on the valley floor below the heights of Ffawyddog to the west, while modern growth has fundamentally changed the appearance of the village, extending it southwards, although the beginnings of this were already apparent at the time of the Tithe survey in 1845.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangatock up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

The name refers to the church of St Cadog, Catwg being a variant form for the same holy man who was a grandson of Brychan, the eponymous founder of Brechienig. The name appears first as llangadawc in about 1180 and as Llangadok in 1291. Over a century later in 1412 a document referred to Llangattok.

Little can be ascertained of the settlement history of Llangatock, but some speculation may be admissible. The church is undoubtedly an early medieval foundation – its dedication, curvilinear churchyard and location all suggest this. However, there is further evidence to suggest that this was the mother church in the region and thus the most important. The parish of Crickhowell appears to have been carved from the territory of Llangatock, and Llangenny is said to have been a dependant chapelry, added to which was the high annual value of £20 at the time of the 1291 taxation.

As to whether settlement grew up around the church in pre-Conquest times is open to debate, but the small settlement that is visible on early 19<sup>th</sup> century maps between the church and the bridge over the Onneu could well have had its origin in the Middle Ages. On the opposite side of the stream further housing grew up along the road back into Crickhowell. This shows on the same 19<sup>th</sup>-century maps and it may be an entirely post-medieval phenomenon, but the 1587 Badminton Manorial atlas which depicts the presumably medieval park of Killelan (now Llangatock Park) and whose entire western boundary ran with the road has at least six dwellings beside it. There will have been other dwellings on the west side of the road, so it is evident that the settlement was spreading by the later 16<sup>th</sup> century and probably before this

time. As a final point, it is surely the proximity of Crickhowell which will have encouraged this growth.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

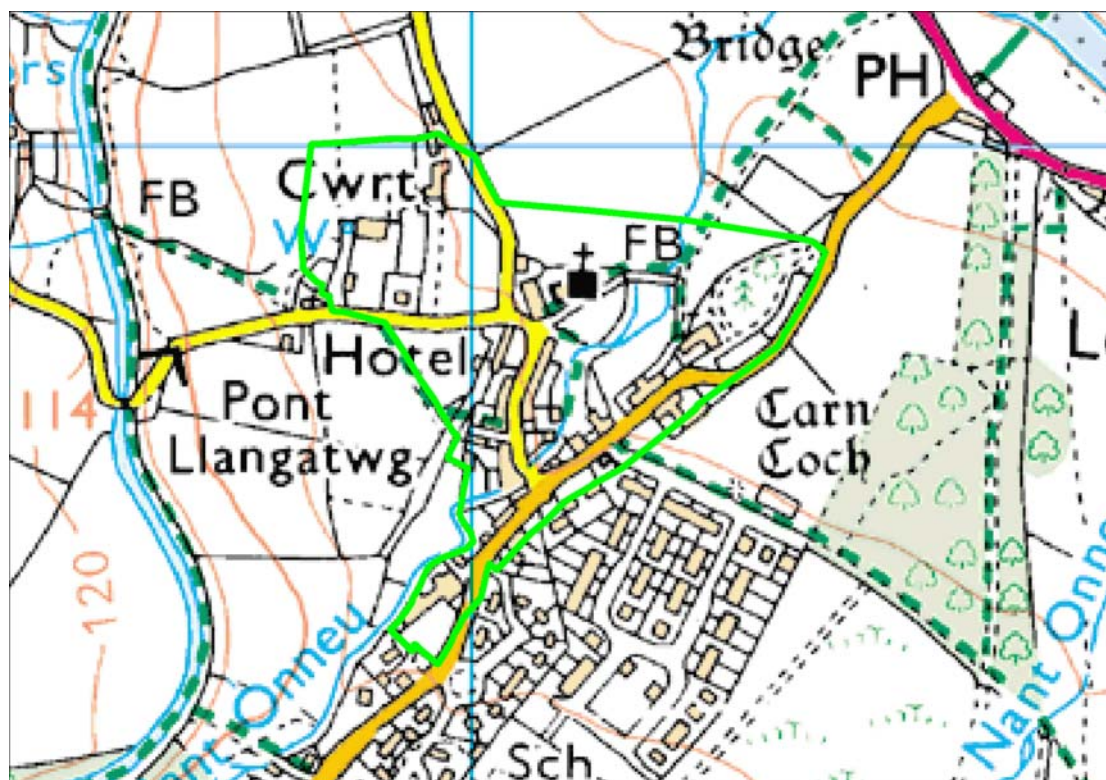
Basically 14<sup>th</sup>-century with 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>-century additions (though the nave has been claimed as 13<sup>th</sup>-century), St Catwg's church comprises a nave and chancel, with a north aisle and north chapel of equal length, a west tower, and porches added in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has seen restoration works on several occasions, most notably in 1886, when one suspects most of the pre-Victorian furnishings and fittings were discarded. Now there are only a fine series of wall memorials, a set of bells some of which are dated to 1719, and the village stocks and whipping post which have been preserved in the north aisle.

The churchyard displays a degree of curvilinearity on its eastern side, though even in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this part curiously was fenced off from the north-western area in which the church stands. As it now appears it does look as though the north side has been cut back at some point in the past, and previously it was suggested that an earlier course of the churchyard boundary was discernible as an earthwork north of the churchyard wall, an observation that has not been verified. Certainly, however, the church appears a disproportionate size to the churchyard in which it stands.

It is reasonable to assume that the winding street with its packed cottages leading from the church to the bridge over Nant Onneu forms the earliest recognisable focus of settlement. Few of the buildings along it confirm this, though the Old Six Bells, a former inn has internal 17<sup>th</sup>-century features at its southern end, and Village Farm is late 17<sup>th</sup>-century to early 18<sup>th</sup>-century. West of the church the Old Rectory is thought to have originated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, while the Court is reported to be of 18<sup>th</sup>-century design.

Plas Llangatwg, opposite the church and on the other side of Nant Onneu, has an early 18<sup>th</sup>-century front, but features from an earlier, Tudor house are said to survive within the fabric. It was remodelled late in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The layout of its gardens has caused the diversion of the road around its edge, and this is something that appears to have occurred since the Ordnance Surveyors were at work in 1813. Further south Glanonney which is largely of early to mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century date, has a wing, now much altered, that was constructed in the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century.





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## **LLANGENNY**

**SO 2396 1808**

**15964**

### ***Introduction***

Llangenny lies beside the small river known as the Grwyne Fawr, some 2km to the east of Crickhowell. Grwyne Fawr passes within a few metres of the church and the settlement thus occupies a valley floor position. Only in the last one hundred and fifty years has the settlement begun to develop and spread up the valley sides.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangenny up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

The name alludes to the church of St Cenau, but the settlement is not documented until Edward VI's reign when it was known by its present name. The absence of earlier, medieval forms has been attributed to the fact that Llangenny was a chapelry of Llangattock and thus did not warrant its own name. However, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Liber Landavensis referred to a Lann Cetguinn (possibly Cedwyn?) and it has been cautiously proposed that this could be an earlier form from which Llangenny was derived.

It has been further suggested that if Llangenny is Lann Cetguinn it falls in with a group of three other churches – Cwmdru, Llangenny and Partrishow – recorded in the Liber Landavensis as having been consecrated about 1060 by Bishop Herewald of Llandaf. It is highly unlikely however, that this event marked the first appearance of a church at Llangenny, for it marks an episode of one-upmanship over the diocese of St Davids in the expansion of Llandaf's ecclesiastical control over the border region.

It has yet to be determined whether a settlement grew up around the chapel in the Middle Ages. On the evidence of an estate map from around 1800 which showed only three buildings on the lane approaching the church from the south, it seems unlikely, though Breconshire does have a number of settlements where the medieval population was greater than its modern counterpart.

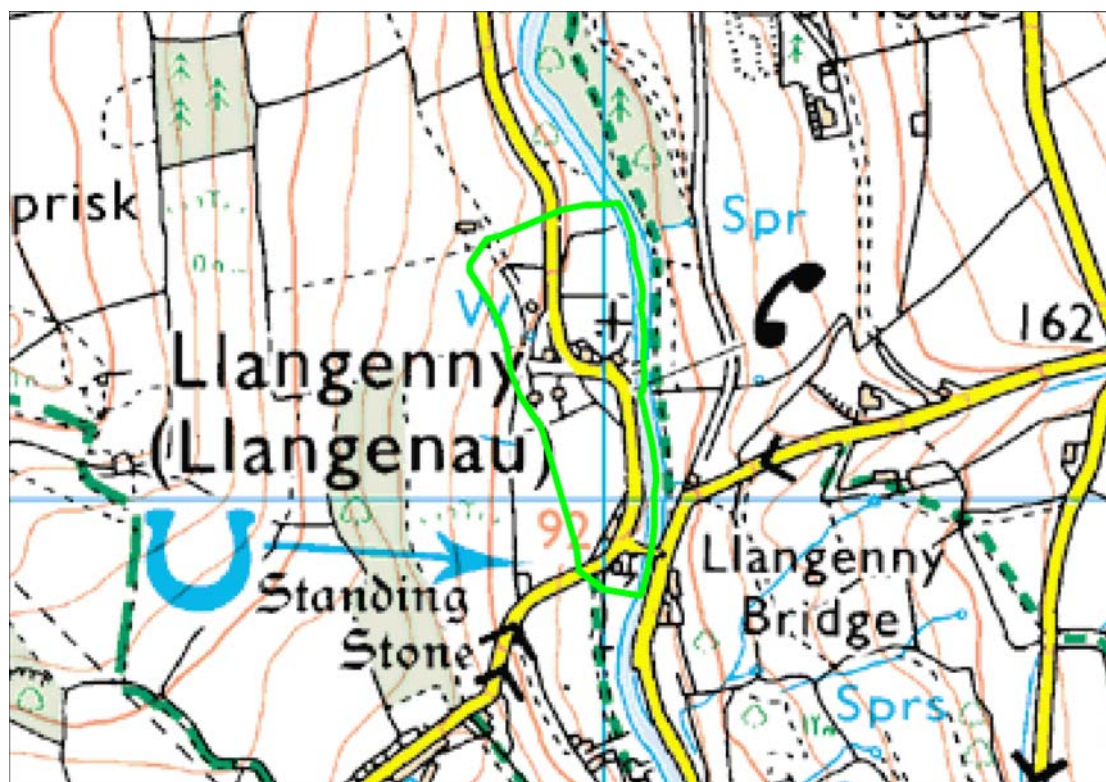


St Cenau's church has a complicated history that can be read to some degree in its fabric. With a medieval core, it was extended probably in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century by the addition of a new nave and chancel. Restoration occurred in 1864 and again in 1894. The font is of 12<sup>th</sup>-century date, and the few other medieval furnishings include a stoup and piscina.

Ffynnon Ceneu (St Ceneu's Well), in reality a spring, lies in woodland on the east side of the river, opposite the church. Traditionally it is supposed to have been associated with St Ceneu's oratory, and according to a 19<sup>th</sup>-century antiquary was supposed to have been of considerable repute in earlier times. The demolition of the putative oratory in 1790 led to the discovery of an early medieval iron bell, now in the National Museum, Wales.

Church Cottages set beside the churchyard wall are considered to be 18<sup>th</sup>-century in date. The only listed structure (other than the church) is Llangenny Bridge erected in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, 200m to the south of the church. Houses forming a nucleation, as noted above, are few even today, but dispersed along the lanes leading to and from the village are older dwellings such as Druid's Altar (which takes its name from a nearby prehistoric standing stone) and Golden Grove.

The configuration of lanes at the heart of Llangenny has been modified in recent times. The road edging the west side of the churchyard is recent: previously the only lane running up the valley wound past the church and west of School House and Yew Tree Cottage where only a farm lane now exists. In addition the lane beside the river leading to the church may itself be a replacement of one lying some 25m further west where a ridge is now visible under pasture.



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## **LLAN-GORS**

**SO 1343 2777**

**15965**

### ***Introduction***

Llan-gors lies on the B4560 from Talgarth to Bwlch and the Usk Valley, 9km to the east of Brecon. The church lies in the bottom of a valley adjacent to the stream known as Nant Cwy, with the valley sides rising quite gently to the south-east and rather more sharply to the north-west, but with the houses of the village on both of them.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llan-gors up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

The name (Llangorse in Ordnance Survey English, Llan-gors in Welsh), reflects the presence of Llan-gors Lake and its marshy periphery, Welsh ‘cors’ meaning marsh. Llan Cors appears in the years between 1136 and 1154 and the church as Sancti Paulini de Lancors between 1147 and 1176. Llangors is documented in 1543. There was too an alternative name, now obsolete. Mara, a latinized form of Old English mere meaning ‘lake’ or ‘pool’ was used in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century and La Mare, as is found in 1331. The two names were linked as late as 1739 in Mara...otherwise Llangorse, and this last spelling is the anglicized form used by the Ordnance Survey. Less certain is an association of Llan-gors with the Lann-beulin of the Llandaf Charters.

An early monastic establishment, referred to in the Llandaf charters and supposedly dedicated to St Paulinus, is believed to have functioned in Llan-gors from the 8<sup>th</sup> century perhaps until the Norman Conquest. Recent research has opined that this was the literary centre of Brycheiniog before the Conquest, and may even have been a clas centre. The site of this monastic settlement is not known – it was presumably somewhere close to the lake edge but not necessarily on the site of the present village, though this possibility would be accepted without question by some authorities.

Notwithstanding this, from the morphology of the churchyard and its location adjacent to a stream it can be inferred that the church was an early medieval foundation, a view reinforced by the three incised stones, two of which certainly had been incorporated in the medieval masonry of the church or had been dug up from the churchyard. The dedication, it appears, could commemorate a holy man who was St David’s teacher.

Llan-gors has been claimed as the former borough of 'Mara'. But whether there was a nucleated settlement here in the Middle Ages and this is now reflected in the layout of the present village is not clear.

The earliest accurate map that is available, the Ordnance Survey surveyor's small-scale depiction of 1814, is really too late in date to be informative, while an estate map of 1738 in the National Library displays an incomplete picture of the settlement.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

The church of St Paulinus retains some 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>-century fabric together with a tower believed to be of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. But much of the church was rebuilt in 1874. The font may be from around 1300, but most other early furnishings and fittings have been removed. There are three early stones, one with a Latin inscription that places it in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century, another, a fragment from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century, and a cross-carved stone of the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century, and from a much later era – the 18<sup>th</sup> century – a good range of wall memorials.

The outline of the churchyard is distinctive curvilinear, reinforced by the fact that a segment of it became detached on the west side when the road was straightened out at some unspecified point in the past (this was subjected to an uninformative geophysical survey in 1993). Furthermore an existing boundary and the line of the lane suggest that the Castle Inn and the adjacent old school occupy the southern segment of the original enclosure.

Faintly sinuous and continuous property boundaries, most noticeable south of the road leading south-eastwards out of the village and north of the church to the west of the road may have some significance. For the former there is some 19<sup>th</sup>-century map evidence to confirm ribbon development with houses accompanied by crofts at the rear, conceivably reflecting the presence of tenement plots of medieval origin, and indeed on this evidence one authority has suggested that the village was deliberately planned.

Pendre Uchaf on the northern fringe of the village is believed to have a mid-17<sup>th</sup>-century house at its core, while Lower Pendre is earlier 17<sup>th</sup>-century. Neuadd, closer to the village centre has some 17<sup>th</sup>-century detailing, but is notable for its mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century antiquarian Gothic Revival architecture structured around the former farmhouse and well displayed in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century barn. The old mill to the east of the churchyard may be on the site of the one mentioned in a parliamentary survey of 1651. Powis Terrace opposite Ty Mawr on the lane running eastwards from the village is a 17<sup>th</sup>-century long-house derivative. Together these farms on the outer fringes of the village indicate a thriving community at Llan-gors in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and from this it can probably be inferred that the nucleated core of the village was in place.



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## **LLANGYNIDR**

**SO 1544 1931**

**15966**

### ***Introduction***

Llangynidr lies just over 6km west of Crickhowell, beside the B4558. Its church occupies flattish ground which slopes very gently down to Nant Cleisfer, about 100m to the south-east. The stream empties into the River Usk, and the village has developed on the southern side of the river valley, overlooked by the Brecon Beacons to the south.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangynidr up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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### ***History of development***

The earliest reference to Llangynidr is as Llangenedire in 1398 and by 1535 this had become Llangeneder, the name obviously referring to the church of St Cynidr. However, the appearance of Llangenyder Eglosyell in 1561 highlights another name, Eglwys Iail, which seems to signal a church built of wattle and daub, first documented as Egglesseil in 1263.

That there was an early medieval ecclesiastical foundation here cannot be doubted. The churchyard shape, the Cynidr dedication and the proximity to Nant Cleisfer all signal an early origin.

But nothing is known of its history and Theophilus Jones writing at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century referred somewhat disparagingly to: 'the parish church of Llangynidr ... near a few houses called a village'. Nevertheless Llangynidr was mapped from an early date and the church's appearance in the Badminton Manorial atlas of 1587 makes it one of the earliest church depictions in Wales. Sadly, Johnson's map and its successors show little of the village, because it fell outside the Badminton land holdings, so determining the extent of the settlement in Tudor times, let alone in the Middle Ages, is impossible.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

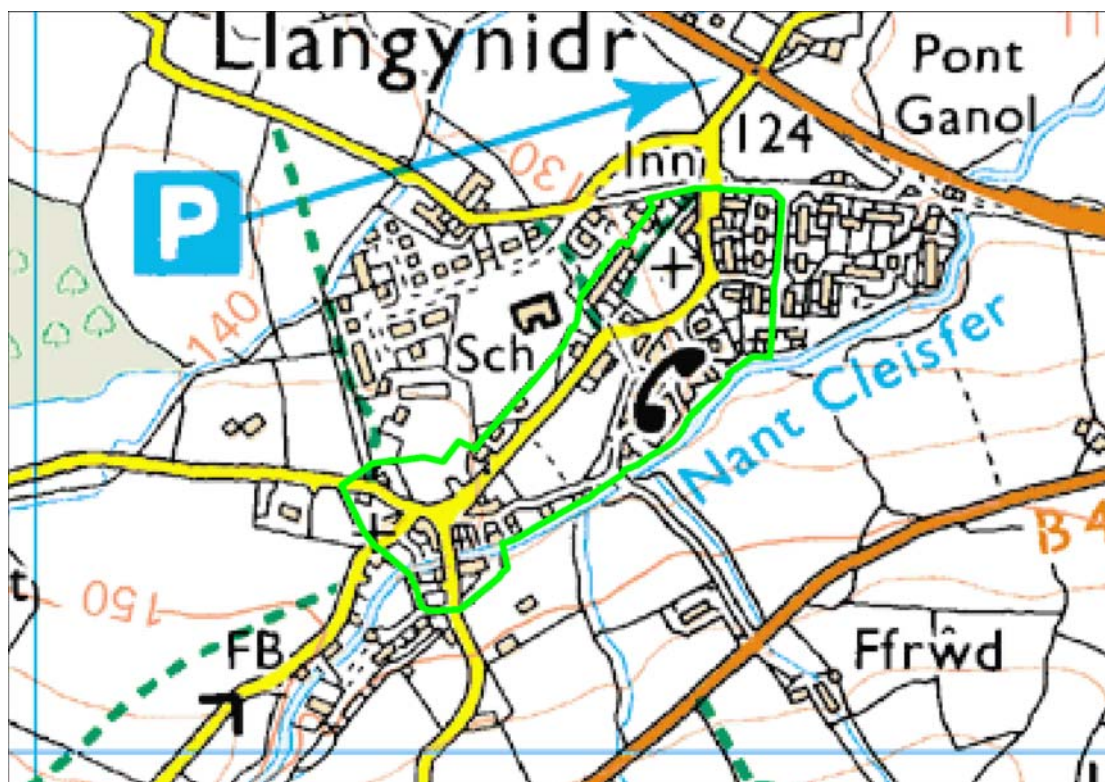
The medieval church of St Mary and St Cynidr was totally destroyed by fire in 1928 and completely rebuilt though some of the old stone was re-used. Only a broken (13<sup>th</sup>-century?) font, a stoup, a decorated stone plaque and a 17<sup>th</sup>-century grave slab survive from the earlier building.



The remnants of a curvilinear boundary exist on the east side of the churchyard. Elsewhere the boundary appears to have been severely modified in past centuries and the Red Lion to the north-east and 'By-ways' (formerly the Post Office) to the south-west have been inserted into what was at one time the churchyard.

There are few historic buildings in the village. Lilac Cottage on Mardy Lane was supposedly built in 1769, though its appearance is largely 19<sup>th</sup>-century; the Red Lion by the churchyard could be 18<sup>th</sup>-century, with its plan based on a longhouse; and Penyrheol saw its beginnings as a farmhouse in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

A network of small lanes covers the ground between church and stream as far south as the bridge that carries Mill Road over the stream. The road running directly from Ash Cottage to the church appears to be a relatively modern creation and Mardy Lane is more likely to be the original thoroughfare through the village. The network of lanes is thus likely to represent the historic core of Llangynidr. However, a tract of pasture abutting Mardy Lane on its north side contains the earthworks of building platforms and adjacent plots (now scheduled), which were presumed to be of medieval date when first identified. Excavation in 2002-3 revealed traces of what was considered to be post-medieval parsonage, while the earthwork remains at the southern end of the field are thought to mark the home or maedy of a reeve (a manorial administrator), on the somewhat tenuous basis of the name of the neighbouring Mardy Lane.



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## **LLANHAMLACH**

**SO 0890 2656**

**15967**

### ***Introduction***

Llanhamlach lies on the A40 trunk road linking Abergavenny and Brecon, 5km south-east of the latter. The church and Peterstone Court lie on the edge of a river terrace above the Usk with the main settlement lying back from the river but on level ground beside the main road.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanhamlach up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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### ***History of development***

The name is first recorded in 1188 as Lanhamelach and as a range of names with very minor variations thereafter. More difficult is the meaning. Recent authorities have favoured 'the church of Anlach' whilst admitting that no such person is known from other sources to have existed around the time that the church is likely to have been founded.

The church is certainly an early medieval foundation with its curvilinear churchyard, dedication and its position on the bank of the Wye. To that can be added the likelihood that the cross-carved Moridic stone (see below) once stood upright within the enclosure. The church was established close to the Roman road that linked the forts at Abergavenny and Brecon – a Roman milestone was built into one of the Millbrook Farm buildings less than one kilometre to the north-west – and this was probably still usable in the early medieval era. Of its twin dedications that to St Peter could be late – it was first recorded in 1486 – while that to St Illtyd may reflect the belief, recorded in c.1191, that the holy man had utilised a chambered tomb in the parish for a hermitage.

The history of the settlement remains obscure. It was termed a 'small village' in 1675, but when the earliest estate map displaying the village was prepared in 1796, the layout it illustrated was not very different from today, with a few buildings including the rectory around the churchyard and a number of houses aligned along the main road opposite the turn to Peterstone Court. It is not possible to determine whether there was a medieval settlement around the church.

***The heritage to 1750***

The church, dedicated to St Peter and St Illtyd has a 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup>-century tower and a 15<sup>th</sup>-century entrance to a porch that in line with the rest of the edifice was largely rebuilt in 1887. Housed within the building is an inscribed 10<sup>th</sup>- to 11<sup>th</sup>-century cross-carved stone known as the Moridic Stone, an early 14<sup>th</sup>-century stone effigy and a font of Perpendicular design, while 17<sup>th</sup>-century grave slabs are displayed in the porch, and another early medieval stone with decoration and of broadly the same date as the Moridic stone incorporated into the fabric of the tower.

The curvilinearity of the churchyard is discernible in the line of the surrounding wall on the south and east sides, reinforced by the internal embanking which is a feature of the enclosure. Whether portions of the churchyard have been shaved of the north and west sides in the distant past is unclear.

The Moridic Stone now in the church was recovered sometime after 1852 from the ruins of an earlier rectory where it had served as a window lintel. A suggestion that this was of medieval build are not convincing, though it was remarked by Samuel Lewis in 1833 that the Old Rectory contained re-used Norman architectural fragments (doorways, windows and decorated stonework). Another stone set on the verge of the A40, 300m north of the church, supposedly influenced the naming of Peterstone Court and is believed to have been erected during the Bronze Age. It may subsequently have been refashioned but any belief that it was another early medieval inscribed stone is misguided.

Peterstone Court, 200m north-west of the church, has a long history which supposedly goes back almost to the Norman Conquest. But the present building dates from 1741, and while its predecessor had been owned by the Walbeoffe family whose ancestor is believed to have been a follower of Bernard de Neufmarché, there is little to be said on what might have been here in the medieval era. Some of the earthworks around the court are considered to be relatively recent garden features, but there are others which from the air look to be of earlier date.

The Court and the Old Rectory apart, Llanhamlach church sits in isolation, although at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there were a few cottages close by. Fields to the east and west of the church both contain surface irregularities though on cursory examination these appear to be natural rather than manmade. At what date dwellings started to emerge beside the main road is unclear, but a link with its development as a turnpike road in the 18<sup>th</sup> century seems plausible. As far as can be established, none of the houses have architectural elements that could be attributed an earlier 18<sup>th</sup>-century date. Further away from the settlement centre, Greenway House is a longhouse derivative of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

A range of cropmarks around the village has been identified from various aerial photographic sources over the last few years. It has not been possible to determine whether these relate to the historic settlement at Llanhamlach or represent earlier or perhaps minor agricultural features.



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## **LLANIGON**

**SO 2135 3987**  
**15968**

### ***Introduction***

Llanigon lies on a by-road 3km south of Hay-on-Wye and within 200m of the boundary of the Brecon Beacons National Park. The churchyard is set on a spur on the western edge of the small valley containing the Digedi Brook which empties into the River Wye just under 2km to the north-west. Southwards the ground rises towards the Black Mountains.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanigon up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website ([www.archwilio.org.uk](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

### ***History of development***

Sancto Egynon referring to St Eigon's church first appears between 1148 and 1155. By the time of Pope Nicholas' Taxation in 1291 we read of Llaneygan. Llanigon represents the anglicized spelling of the place-name.

The church dedication, the morphology of the churchyard and its location beside the Digedi Brook all point to an early medieval foundation here.

But nothing is known of the settlement's history, though some relationship with the motte at Llanthomas 700m down the Digedi Brook seems assured. It is possible that for centuries there was nothing more than the church here, but equally a small community may have developed of which no traces can be detected. Certainly Llanigon functioned within the Englishry of Hay and small blocks of strip fields existed nearby, suggesting medieval open-field agriculture and perhaps signifying the existence of a nucleated community here in the Middle Ages.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

The present church sits on a slight mound. Much of the building fabric may date to the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century, but only one medieval window survives. A curiosity is the bell chamber over the porch, almost certainly from 1670. The church was restored in 1857 when the east end was rebuilt and there was significant restoration after damage during the second world war. In the porch is a 13<sup>th</sup>-century font, and the three bells above are dated to 1670. But otherwise little in the way of furnishing and fittings has remained from the pre-Victorian m, era.

The churchyard may originally have been more circular than it is today, but only the north-east side now has a curve to it; on the Tithe Map of 1844 both north and east sides are arced, but this may be no more than a cartographic convention.

St Eigon's well lies on the opposite side of the Digedi Brook to the church. Nothing is known of its past history and unlike many holy wells it was not recorded on early Ordnance Survey maps, nor was it mentioned by Lewis in 1833.

The layout of Llanigon is intriguing. It seems likely that the lane passing south-east of the church and fording the brook by Ty-mawr marks an original thoroughfare through the village. It passed what in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the specialist part of the village – the church, vicarage, inn, school and major farm – and then curved back up the hill beside the Digedi Brook where there were ordinary dwellings, more between the lane and the stream than there are today (and in passing it appears too that the stream's course was altered in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the old channel being converted to a leat to feed the mill at Ty Mawr and a new channel being cut for the brook which must have destroyed some of the buildings mentioned above). The buildings terminated with a mill (now the Old Mill) but the lane carried on up the valley. William Rees recorded a mill here in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but considerably more work would be required to demonstrate that it was at this spot.

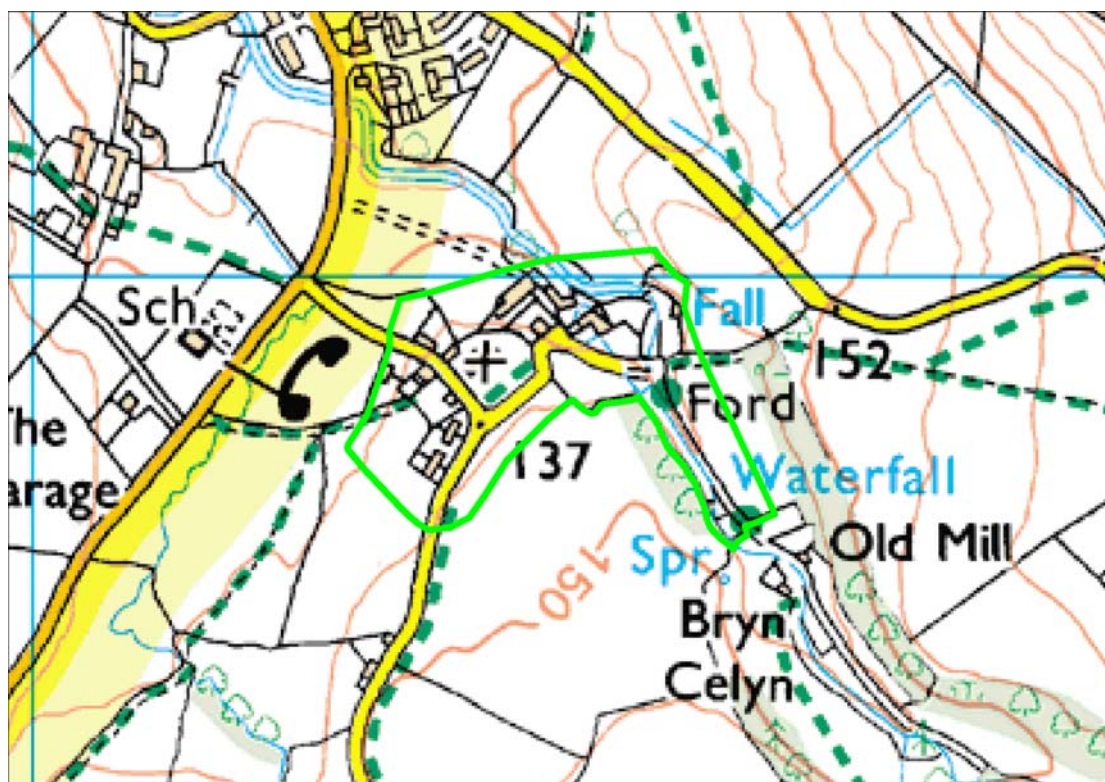
Another lane ran down the hill towards Llanthomas linking the village with Hay by means of an old road from Talgarth and Hay that ran along the base of the higher ground.

On the buildings referred to above, there is information only on those around the church. Ty-mawr to the east of the church is half-timbered and of late 16<sup>th</sup>- or early 17<sup>th</sup>-century date. The Old Post Office west of the churchyard dates to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, while the adjacent house carries a datestone of 1692.

A watching brief at Church House immediately to the north-west of the churchyard in 1997 recovered late medieval pottery sherds, indicating some level of activity in the area around the church at that time.

There are few traces of any settlement earthworks in the fields south and west of the church. A small platform of uncertain function survives in the field next to St Eigon's Villas.

Llanthomas lies at some distance but is mentioned here because of its significance. Not only does it have a motte from the early days of the Norman Conquest, but in the Tudor era its 'ancient mansion' (as Samuel Lewis called it in 1833) was owned by Walter Deveraux, the Lord Chief Justice of South Wales.



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## **LLANILLTYD**

**SN 9713 2610**

**15969**

### ***Introduction***

Llanilltyd lies on Mynydd Illtyd, about 8km to the south-west of Brecon. It is located within the parish of Defynnog. The church occupies a remote spot on an undulating ridge between the valleys of the Usk and Afon Tarell, with boggy moorland to the west and the major peaks of the Brecon Beacons forming a backdrop to the south.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanilltyd up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

The name refers to the church of St Illtyd, for there is nothing else other than a farm here. It was apparently recorded as Eglwysceyll in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and as Capel ylldyt on Christopher Saxton's map of 1579. An estate map of c.1781 shows it as Illtid Chapel.

Tradition has it that this was the site where the 5<sup>th</sup>-century saint was martyred and then buried. There is no means of substantiating the tradition, and similarly it is impossible to demonstrate that this was an early medieval foundation, likely as it seems.

Its history through the Middle Ages is likely to be that of a remote chapel on an isolated upland above the Usk valley, but one traversed by a Roman road still in use which may have made access easier for it was no more than 500m away. That settlement ever developed around it seems unlikely.

Its status as a chapel was never enhanced to that of a parish church and it remained as a chapel-of-ease in the parish of Defynnog until 1887 when the parish of Llanilltyd came into existence.

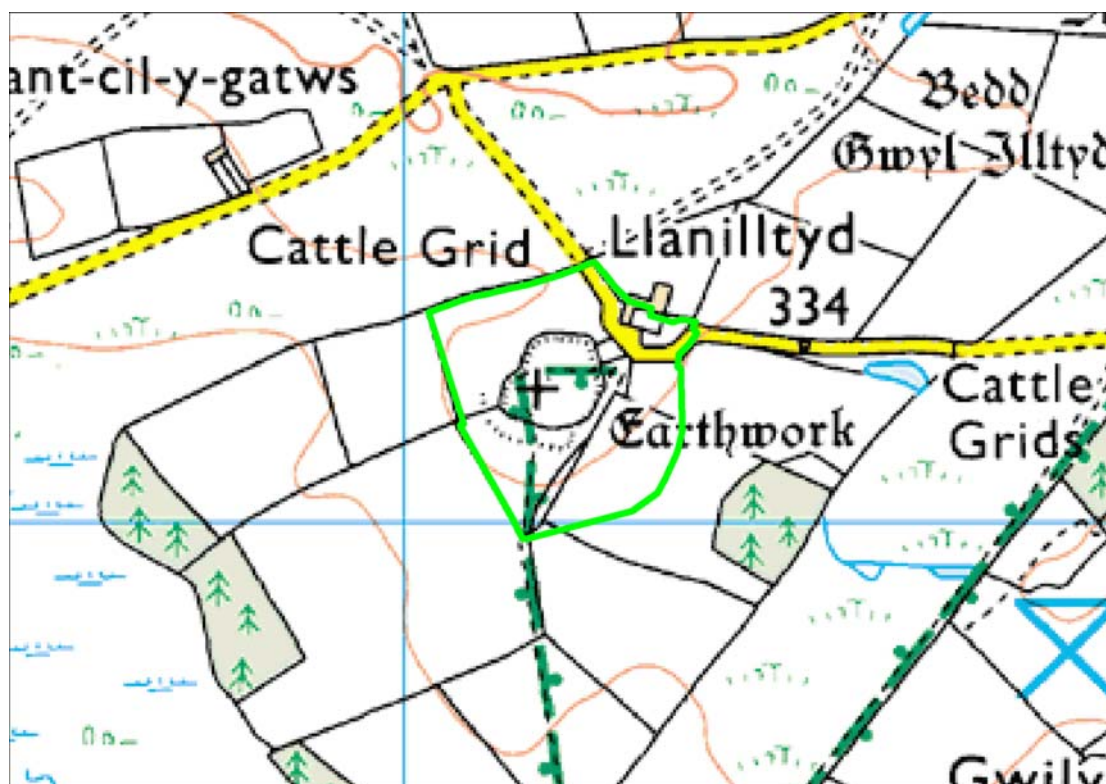
### ***The heritage to 1750***

St Illtyd's church was rebuilt in 1858 and nothing of its predecessor remains, although a medieval date seems likely. In the 1990s, its deteriorating condition led to it being demolished to wall-stub height, so that now only the outline remains.

The churchyard, sub-circular in outline, displays a complex pattern of earthworks which are almost certainly late prehistoric in origin. Llanilltyd is thus a good example of the early medieval re-use of a pre-existing enclosure as a church enclosure and presumably burial ground, a labour-saving approach well-evidenced in south-west England, less so in Wales.

The farm of Llanilltyd, the only companion to the church, is a late 18<sup>th</sup>- or 19<sup>th</sup>-century addition to the landscape. An estate map of 1781 shows the church without the neighbouring farm which must have originated as an encroachment on the surrounding common. The situation is confused, however, by the Royal Commission's record which claims that the barn is earlier, dated to 1761, while the adjacent byre is from 1830.

Llanilltyd represents one of the best examples in the Brecon Beacons National Park of an isolated chapel serving a dispersed farming community.



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## **LLANSANTFFRAED**

**SO 1223 2350**

**15970**

### ***Introduction***

Llansantffraed is located beside the A40 trunk road, on the eastern edge of the Usk valley, just over 9km south-east of Brecon. Beyond the main road the ground drops abruptly to the valley floor, while the church is set into the lower slopes of a hill that rises increasingly steeply to the ridge of Allt yr Esgair above.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llansantffraed up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

The settlement is first encountered as Lansefred in c.1100, as Lan San Friad in the years between 1140 and 1150, as Llansanffreit in 1215 to 1222, as Sancta Brigida in the church taxation of 1254, as Brydechurch in 1310-11 and as St Mary de Sancto Brigida in 1476. It can reasonably be assumed that all of these references are specific to the church rather than the place. The dedicatee is the Irish St Brigid, who also appears as St Bride and in Welsh as Ffraid and Ffrêd. There seem to have been several saints of this name and there are no less than seventeen dedications to them in Wales. While Llansantffraed is the name given by the Ordnance Survey, Llansanffraid is the preferred Welsh rendering.

That this was an early medieval foundation seems certain, based on the dedication, the form of the churchyard and the location on the edge of a river valley. But nothing is known of its settlement history, and though it was termed a small village in 1675, the modern appearance and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century maps offer no evidence that might suggest that this was ever a nucleated community.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

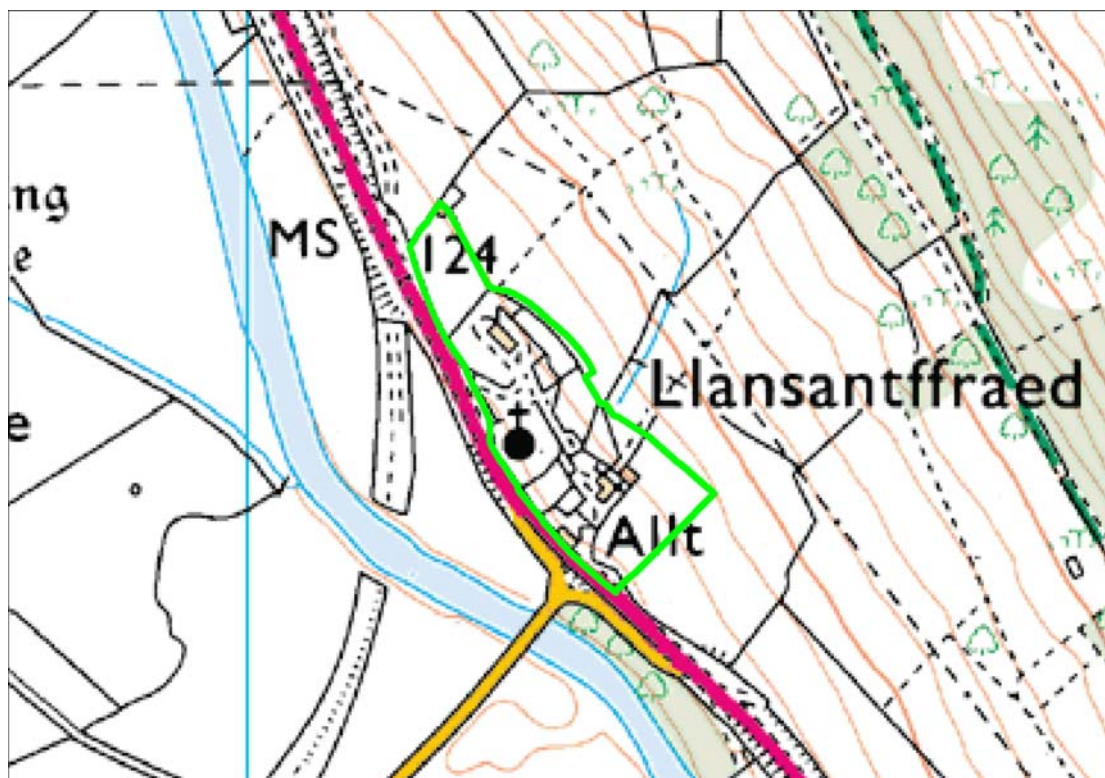
St Ffraed's church was completely rebuilt in 1884-85, though its predecessor (from 1690) with a curious domed cap or cupola to its bell turret and a chancel roof higher than its nave counterpart is permanently recorded in a drawing prepared by the architect Stephen Williams before its demolition. Inside there are earlier funerary monuments from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards and a late 13<sup>th</sup>-century font, as well as a weathered stoup in the porch.

The churchyard today has a broadly rectangular shape except for its curving south-easterly boundary. This has been modified in recent times for the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ordnance Survey map shows more of a curve to the north-eastern side and a map of 1817 implies more curvature on the north-west. Originally then, Llansantffraed had a relatively circular churchyard. It should also be noted that the churchyard contains the tomb of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century metaphysical poet, Henry Vaughan.

Llansantffraed House is thought to have had an 18<sup>th</sup>-century origin, but was extensively remodelled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

No obvious earthworks can be detected on the land adjacent to the church for much of the area has been landscaped or covered with buildings. In fields behind Llansantffraed House, further north, there are terraces that might repay more detailed examination in the future.

An archaeological assessment in 2007 linked to the improvement of the road junction immediately to the south of the church identified nothing of significance likely to be related to the settlement at Llansantffraed.



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## **LLANSPYDDID**

**SO 0127 2824**

**15971**

### ***Introduction***

Llanspyddid lies beside the A40 trunk road, 3km west of Brecon. The settlement has developed on the southern edge of the Usk valley, with the land behind it continuing to rise gently upwards towards the foothills of the Brecon Beacons. On the far side of the main road from the church, the ground dips sharply to the floor of river valley.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanspyddid up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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### ***History of development***

If there was a St Ysbyddyd he (or she) is otherwise unknown in early literature, although the recent authoritative volume on Welsh place-names does point out that a giant with the name Ysbyddaden appears in a medieval Welsh tale. Lannspitit is referenced as early as 1100, and even earlier from the 11<sup>th</sup> century could be Lanespetit though this the document in which it appears is later, from c. 1200. Lamdespidic is given in 1127. Tradition has it that Llanspyddid was the burial place of Anlach, Brychan's father.

The early history of Llanspyddid is as obscure as virtually every other small village in Brecknock. The Llandaff charters refer to a church or perhaps even a monastery here in the pre-Conquest period. Collectively the dedication, the early medieval stone in the churchyard, the churchyard's morphology and the riparian location combine to confirm the pre-Conquest establishment of the church at Llanspyddid. One other authority has gone further, suggesting that it was a royal burial ground in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

The emergence of a settlement here could be a medieval phenomenon but at present there is no evidence to corroborate this suggestion. Equally, it could have happened long after the Reformation and may even have been boosted by the upgrading of the Brecon to Carmarthen road as a turnpike road in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, though prior to that in 1675 it was classed as a 'small village'.



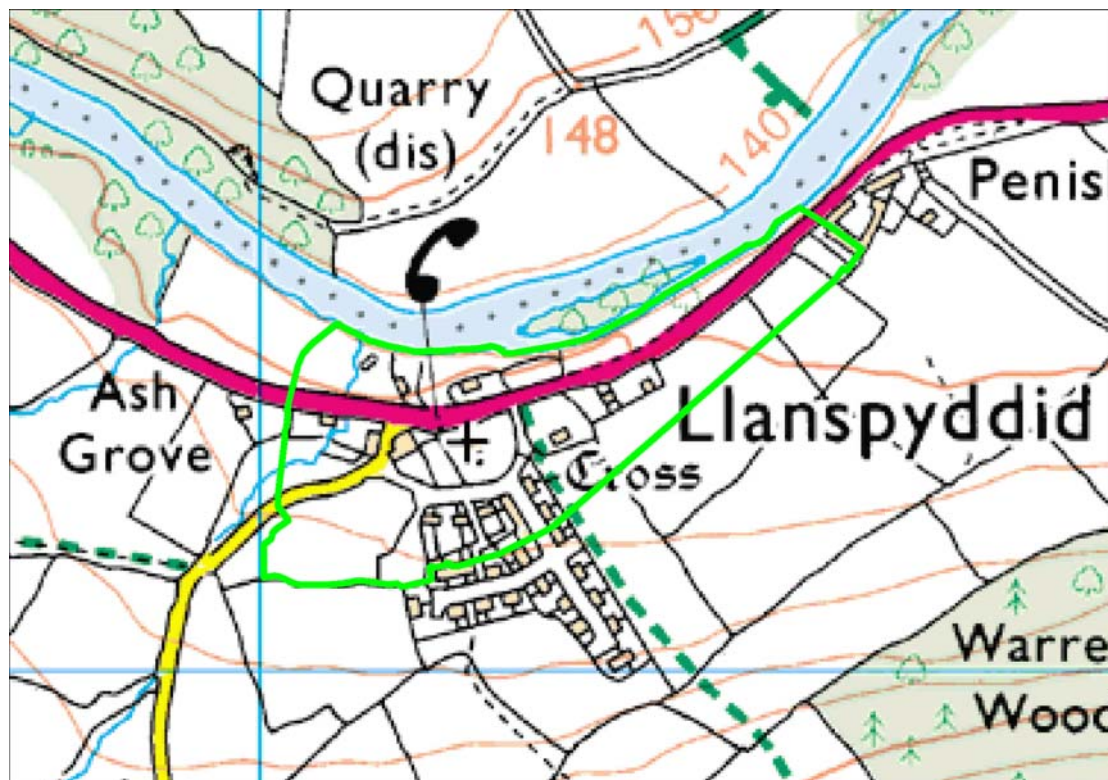
### ***The heritage to 1750***

The church of St Cadog (Cattwg) comprises a simple nave and chancel in one, probably of 14<sup>th</sup>-century date. To this a porch with interesting decoration was added in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The church was restored in 1880 and some rebuilding appears to have taken place at this time. Inside is a 13<sup>th</sup>-century font and a Romanesque stoup, while the Victorian pulpit utilises fragments of a late medieval screen. There is also a good range of 18<sup>th</sup>-century mural tablets.

The churchyard boundary curving around the east and south sides is interrupted on the west by a straight boundary wall, clearly a later insertion that truncated the original graveyard. From the course of the lane running around the southern side of the church, it can be inferred that the churchyard was once considerably larger, incorporating the ground which Llanspyddid Farm now occupies; and this has been confirmed to some degree by archaeological evaluation in 1994. Possibly too it extended closer to the river before being cut through by the turnpike road, in which case the old vicarage lies in what was formerly the churchyard. The existing churchyard contains a cross-carved stone of the 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> century.

Llanspyddid Farm, stone-built is late 17<sup>th</sup>- or early 18<sup>th</sup>-century in origin. The range behind, now Copper Beech Barn, is probably slightly earlier.

Earthwork platforms have in the past been identified in the field to the south-west of the church, and lynchets resulting from cultivation and one such platform were built over in 1992. The tithe map of c.1839 and aerial photography hint at a slightly more complex picture that may or may not have some bearing on the nature of the structure of the earlier settlement here. To the east of the churchyard narrow but short enclosures on the south side of the road could be residual open-field strips of medieval date and these were certainly present further to the east beyond Penishapentre. They could also, however mark, tenement plots, and one, now lost, property mapped in 1839, shows as earthworks to the east of Maesyrhaf. On the north side of the road a series of small plots ran down to the river.



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## **LLECHFAEN**

**SO 0795 2858**  
**128177**

### ***Introduction***

Llechfaen is a hamlet in what was the parish of Llanhamlach, about 3km to the east of Brecon and one kilometre north of the Usk. It occupies a south-facing hillside below what Lewis in the 19<sup>th</sup> century termed Allt Ronwy and is served only by meandering lanes though the Brecon by-pass sweeps past less than 700m away.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llechfaen up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

The earliest version of the name yet to be traced comes towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, when in 1593 Leghvaine is recorded. In 1776 the surveyor Edward Thomas termed it Llechfane, and the only significant variation came in 1813 when it was referred to as Llanhamlach-fan. With llech signifying 'slate' or 'slab' and maen a stone, an obvious meaning would be a 'flat or recumbent stone', but other meanings are possible.

That there was a medieval nucleated settlement here is irrefutable. As late as the final quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were still unenclosed open-field strips functioning around the hamlet and the chapel (see below) is also likely to have been of medieval origin. William Rees drawing on source material not readily available to us today felt able to name it and show the chapel on his great map of south Wales in the 14<sup>th</sup> century which he compiled in the early 1930s.

The estate map of 1776 shows around a dozen dwellings together with the ruins of the chapel.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

Nothing remains of the chapel at Llechfaen. It was a chapel of ease to Llanhamlach and is likely to have been founded in the Middle Ages, but by 1700 a part of it had collapsed and as noted above it was in ruins in 1776. A round-headed doorway in Upper Farm, adjacent to the chapel site, could have come from the building.

In earlier centuries the dwellings in the settlement lay along a single lane with the chapel and Upper Farm towards the northern end.

In 1776 there were the remnants of open fields to the north-east, east and south-east, and hints of enclosed strips to the west.



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## **LLYWEL**

**SN 8695 3008**  
**15972**

### ***Introduction***

Llywel lies close to the A40 trunk road, 18km to the west of Brecon. The National Park boundary follows the northern edge of the churchyard so that all but a small part of the modern settlement lies within the park. The settlement occupies flat ground beside Nant Gwydderig, a tributary of the River Tywi. Low-lying and potentially marshy ground lies to the south while northward the land rises to the heights of Mynydd Epynt.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llywel up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

In 1239 this was described as the ‘church of the three saints’, known to be Dewi, Teilo and Llywel (though Samuel Lewis claimed the third was Padarn). The last of these appears to have been a 6<sup>th</sup>-century disciple of Dyfrig and Teilo, who is also remembered in a church in Monmouthshire. Early versions of the place-name recall this individual who supposedly founded a church in the 6<sup>th</sup> century close to the Roman road connecting the vale of Tywi and the Usk valley. The name is recorded as Luhil in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, as Luel in c.1200 and most recognisably as llan yn llywel in about 1180 (though the document in which the source was copied was from around 1400).

An early medieval foundation date for the church seems to be reasonably certain. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the church passed to the bishops of St Davids and it presumably acquired its present dedication at that time. According to Giraldus Cambrensis, who at one stage was archdeacon of Brecon, the church was burnt down in an enemy raid, presumably in the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The nature of any earlier settlement at Llywel prior to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century has yet to be established. But by that time there were several dwellings on the east and north sides of the churchyard, not dissimilar to today, but perhaps one or two more.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

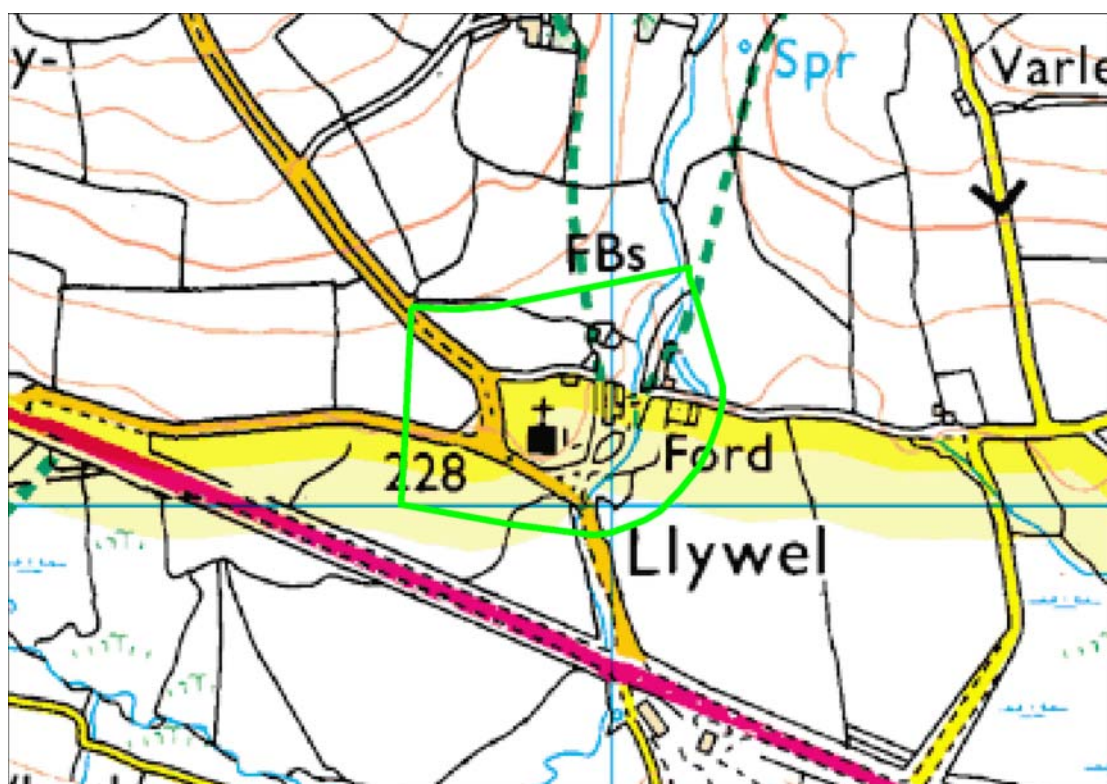
The present church of St David was constructed towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, though the tower may be at least a century earlier, and the chancel may be a little later than the nave.

Repairs were undertaken in 1869, with further work to the tower in 1877. The church contains a Latin and ogam-inscribed stone of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries which was moved into the church sometime after its discovery in 1954 a couple of kilometres to the south near the Usk. A second stone, the so-called 6<sup>th</sup>-century Llywel Stone is represented by a plaster replica, the original being in the British Museum. There is also a now-disused font which has been attributed to the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century, re-used decorative woodwork from a 16<sup>th</sup>-century screen and a 17<sup>th</sup>-century vestry table.

The churchyard is D-shaped, though a little less so now than it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Minor modifications to its layout have disguised the original sub-circular design.

It is evident from a cursory examination of the modern map that the original road from the west passed around the southern edge of the churchyard and then swung southwards, but it does not appear that there was a direct route to Trecastle until the turnpike road – now the A40 – was constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In front of the churchyard was a small green or common and the village pound there was still shown on modern maps until its accidental demolition by the water authority. The bridge across Nant Gwydderig approaching the village was replaced in 1813, the date of its predecessor unknown though it was repaired in 1772.

A few cottages surround the churchyard, the residue of a larger number depicted on earlier maps and still recalled in folk memory. None of them are known to be of any great age. Earthworks of Trehowell cottages survive in pasture to the south-east of the church and a group of small closes north and east of the church point to other properties. Three hundred metres to the east beside Nant Logyn is Twyn-y-felin, thought to be on the site of one of the water mills that were established around the margins of the Great Forest of Brecknock by the 14<sup>th</sup> century.



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## **PARTRISHOW**

**SO 2785 2243**

**15973**

### ***Introduction***

Partrishow lies in a remote valley in the Black Mountains, 8km north of Abergavenny. The church is terraced into a moderately steep, south-facing slope above the valley of Nant Mair at 300m above sea level, with the rising ground of a spur running off Crug Mawr behind it.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Partrishow up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website ([www.archwilio.org.uk](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

### ***History of development***

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century Partrishow was known as Merthyr Issui, but it was not until the Tudor period that references became common, with pertrissw (in c.1566), Patryssowe (1556-8) and even Llanysho (1555). The name means the grave or shrine (merthyr) of St Isio (or Ishaw, Isho, Isw, etc), the 'M' perhaps transmuting into a 'P' over the centuries by accident rather than design. St Isio (Ishow) was reputedly murdered close by.

Merthyr Issui was consecrated by Herewald, Bishop of Llandaf (1056-1104) soon after his consecration. It is unlikely, however, that the consecration signalled the arrival of a new church on a new site, instead marking one episode in a dispute between the dioceses of St Davids and Llandaf over the ecclesiastical control of the border region. An early medieval origin for the church at Partrishow cannot be doubted.

There is no historic evidence to suggest that a settlement ever developed around the church, just as today the nearest dwelling (Ty'n-y-llwyn) is around 200m away, although the earliest map of the area, an estate map from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century does reveal that there was a cottage lower down the lane which has now disappeared.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

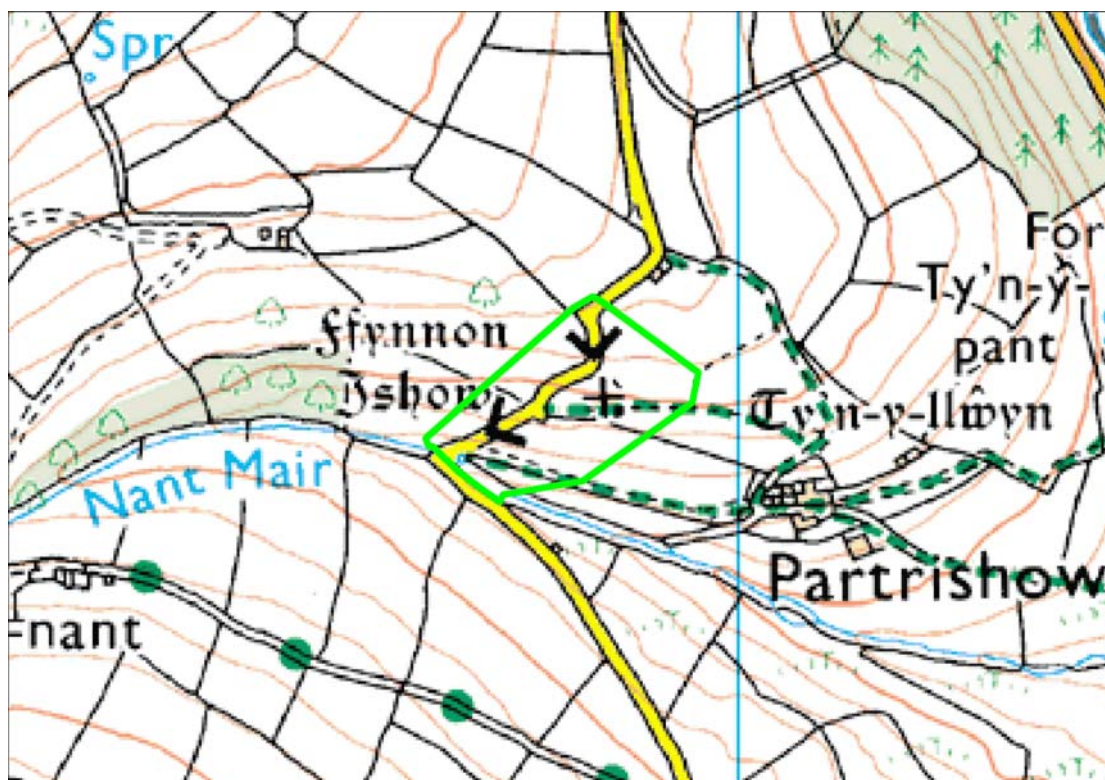
The church has a supposedly Norman nave and a 16<sup>th</sup>-century chancel, together with an eglwys-y-bedd with 13<sup>th</sup>- and 14<sup>th</sup>-century architectural features and a 15<sup>th</sup>-century porch. The church contains a fine range of furnishings and fittings including a superb screen and rood loft of c.1500, a font with an inscription which dates to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. c.1100 (though an alternative of c.1060 has also been proposed), two early stone mensae (altar tops), altar rails and a pulpit from the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and a range of decorated mural tablets.



The churchyard in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was small and sub-oval with a strong curve to its western side. It has now been extended westwards as far as the lane, giving it an elongated, almost elliptical shape. Within its confines is a medieval preaching cross.

A holy well called Ffynnon Ishow lies in the valley below where the lane turns back on itself and is traditionally the site of the saint's oratory. A stone with an incised cross, perhaps 9<sup>th</sup>- to 13<sup>th</sup>-century, has recently been relocated close to it.

The church is deeply terraced into the hillside and it is likely that had there been any dwellings in and around the church in past centuries, their platforms would still be recognisable.



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## **PENCELLI**

**SO 0943 2494**

**15974**

### ***Introduction***

About 6km south-east of Brecon, Pencelli lies on the B4558 which runs along the south side of the Usk valley, the castle occupying a triangular shelf of higher ground that projects into the valley and which the canal swings around. To the south the ground rises gently and then more steeply into the Brecon Beacons.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Pencelli up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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### ***History of development***

The name means the 'end or head of a grove'. Kastell peñ kelli is documented for the year 1215 (in a later copy of c.1400). Other versions such as Penkelly (1233) and Penkethly (1310-11) could refer to the lordship of the same name rather than the castle and any associated settlement.

There is no church here – it lay within the ecclesiastical parish of Llanfeugn – and it is the castle that appears to have been the sole stimulus for settlement. Pencelli Castle is documented from 1215, but this is simply because it was recorded as being captured (by the English at this time). An earlier earth and timber fortification from the late 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> century seems likely, its builder, a Baskerville, being one of the nobles who supported Bernard de Neumarché in his drive into Brycheiniog. Ralph de Mortimer may have been responsible for a major phase of construction in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and in between these dates it seems to have passed from English hands to Welsh ones and back again. It was the centre of a sub-lordship, functioning too as a manorial centre.

Of the surrounding settlement which lay within the ecclesiastical parish of Llanfeugan, little is known but it appears to have been termed 'Castro' in 1675 when it was classed as a 'small village'.

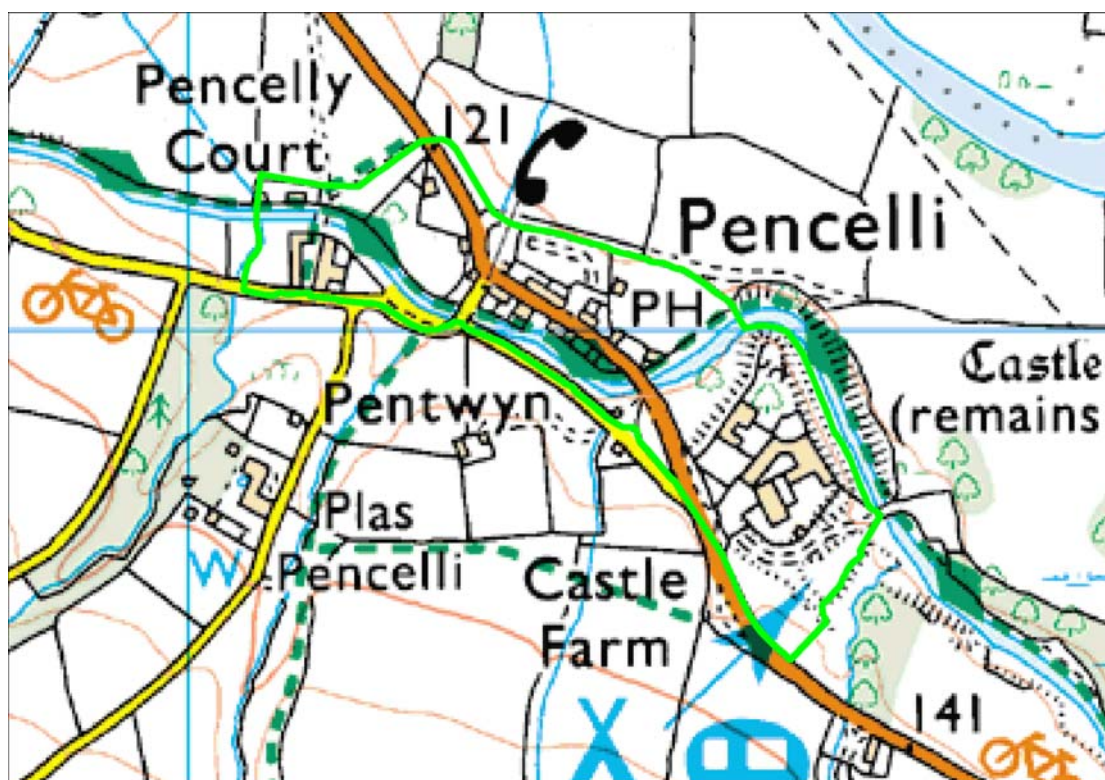
### ***The heritage to 1750***

Pencelli Castle consists of an earthwork complex and a few masonry remains. Considerable destruction of the castle appears to have occurred since 1741 when the Bucks produced an illustration of the ruins. A mound of material exists in the northern corner which is considered

to be a rectangular keep (rather than a motte as suggested in the past) and there was a twin-towered gatehouse set in a curtain wall though all this has now gone. The earthworks indicate two baileys or wards. Within the perimeter the listed farmhouse has a datestone of 1583 and evidence of the re-use of architectural elements from the castle. There is a record of a free chapel dedicated to St Leonard within the walls. What is absent for the castle is an interpretative plan.

A settlement developed below the castle on level ground to the north-west. Its time of origin cannot be established with any certainty, yet with two parallel streets running on a north-west to south-east alignment, two more closing their ends, and the interior of the rectangle so formed being divided into strips (as shown on 19<sup>th</sup>-century maps and interrupted only by the canal) this has all the hallmarks of a small plantation, a deliberately created settlement of medieval date. Within it the only building of any antiquity is the Royal Oak, an inn thought to be from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The presence too of a gentry home, Pencelly Court, beyond the western end of the planned settlement, has parallels elsewhere in Brecknock, its barn of two periods, from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the byre from the same general time, while the house itself is of 17<sup>th</sup>-century date and carries a datestone of 1691 on a chimney.

No obvious earthworks have been recorded in and around Pencelli but the pasture field south of Menascin might repay closer examination, though the ridge and furrow within it recorded from aerial photography is more likely to relate to the orchard that was present in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



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## **SCETHROG**

**SO 1062 2517**  
**15975**

### ***Introduction***

Scethrog lies beside the A40 trunk road in the community of Llansantffraed, 7km south-east of Brecon. It has grown up on the north side of the Usk, the Tower, its most well-known building occupying a knoll projecting from the flood plain. The rest of the houses straggle up the south-facing hillside that forms the edge of the valley

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Scethrog up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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### ***History of development***

The name has been taken to mean a 'rough' or 'rocky' settlement derived from the Welsh sgathrog. In the early 13<sup>th</sup> century it was committed to paper as Skathrok and there is a steady flow of references throughout the medieval era and into Tudor times with Skethrog appearing in 1578 and skatherogg in 1583.

The nature of the settlement remains uncertain. That there was something here in the Middle Ages is indicated by the occurrence of the place-names noted above but these could refer only to a manorial centre. It has also been suggested that this could have been the centre of an early sub-lordship centred on the Llansantffraed area. Speed at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and presumably Saxton before him, included Scethrog on his county map implying that settlement was sufficiently distinctive to merit recording, yet perhaps significantly Ogilby in 1675 failed to mention it on his road map, even though the Abergavenny to Brecon road passed close by it. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Ordnance Survey were able to record a concentration of dwellings beside the lane leading northwards from the turnpike road with just a couple of dwellings beside the main road itself, and this is a pattern that has not changed that much up to the present day.

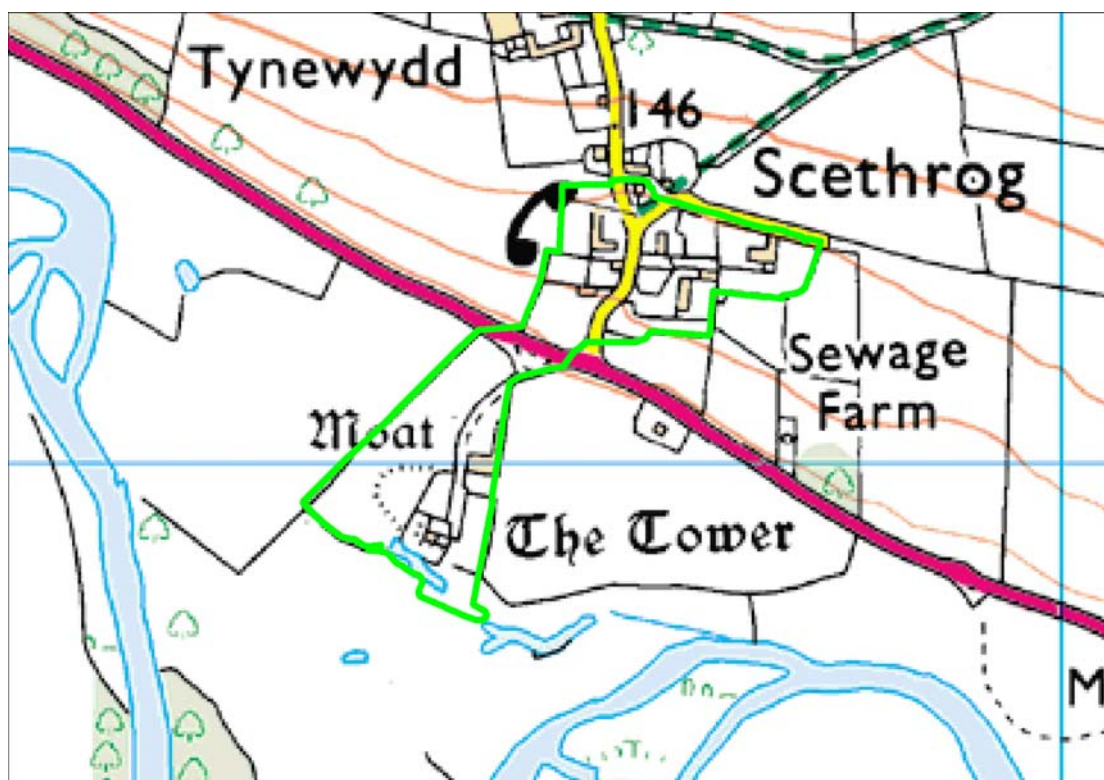
### ***The heritage to 1750***

Scethrog Tower to the south of the main road is one of only two confirmed tower houses in Breconshire. On the basis of some of the stonework, it may have originated in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, although much of the structure is of 16<sup>th</sup>-century date and there were further alterations in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is set on a mound, probably natural, and within what appears to have been an embanked polygonal enclosure referred to as a moat on Ordnance Survey

maps, though an alternative view is that the earthwork represent flood defence features. A barn to the north is considered to have been first erected in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Hen Bersondy, also known as the Old Rectory was probably built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century but was substantially altered in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Scethrog House retains a datestone of 1619 (which is thought to be an error for 1691) and some late 17<sup>th</sup>-century windows even though most of the structure appears to be of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, while Neuadd, a longhouse derivative, has yet to have a suggested late 17<sup>th</sup>-century date corroborated.

Scethrog is not an historic settlement in the conventional sense, lacking a clear focus. The Tower and those dwellings beside the lane to the north are not closely linked either geographically or functionally. Nevertheless the history of the tower house goes back into the Middle Ages, and its is conceivable that this loosely knit group of buildings does have a more complex story to tell than is presently obvious.



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## **TALGARTH**

**SO 1562 3381**

**15977**

### ***Introduction***

Talgarth lies on the east side of the River Llynfi some 14km to the north-east of Brecon. The church sits on a gently sloping spur formed by the small River Ennig, a tributary of the Llynfi, on the west and a smaller tributary to the south. Close to these watercourses the natural slopes become steeper, and in the case of the properties on the south side of the street known as The Bank they occupy the edge of the break of slope. To the north of the church the ground drops away gently but elsewhere the land is fairly level in this direction.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Talgarth up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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### ***History of development***

The name means 'the end of a ridge or hill', an appropriate toponym for the church though not the village. It appears as Talgart in 1121, as Talgard after 1130, and in its present form in the years between 1203 and 1208.

That Talgarth was reputedly a major royal residence in Brycheiniog before the Norman Conquest pervades the literature, yet this is probably apocryphal based on a single comment in the 12<sup>th</sup>-century life of a saint. A rather better case can be made for Talgarth emerging as a mother church during the early medieval era, run probably by a clas community.

Talgarth was the centre of a commote of the same name, and subsequently of a hundred, both administrative units and probably indicative of its status before and after the Norman Conquest.

The church (dedicated to a daughter of Brychan who was supposedly martyred at Talgarth) was already well established by the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century when it was granted to the new priory at Brecon.

At the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century the new lordship of Blaenllynfi was carved out of the vast lordship of Brecon. Though its caput was at Castell Blaenllynfi below Bwlch, Talgarth developed into the premier town in the new lordship, and occasionally it was the lordship of Talgarth that was referred to. A borough at Talgarth was first mentioned in 1286, and it was granted rights in 1291/2 to hold a market and fair. Though there is a general assumption,

backed by further references in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, that it was regarded as having borough status, there is no record of its ever having received a charter. In an extent of 1309 there were 73 burgage plots in the town, 60 of which were occupied, and in the same document reference was made to the hamlet of Niweton (Newtown) which may have been physically contiguous with the borough.

Of its subsequent development (or lack of it) little is known, though the fact that in 1309 thirteen burgage plots were unoccupied may suggest that the borough was already exhibiting signs of decline. National commentators had little to say about Talgarth in later centuries, though there is evidence that its market was still held. Lewis termed it a 'decayed borough', intimating that by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century only its fairs continued, but there is evidence for a market well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

Features of St Gwendoline's church may reveal a cruciform church of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a plan-form commonly associated with a mother church foundation of the pre-Conquest era. It now consists of a nave and chancel in one, thought to date to around 1400 though with some earlier fabric surviving, together with a west tower and a porch from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a north vestry which may originally have been a transept, and a south aisle added at the time the nave and chancel were constructed. Extensive restoration work was completed in 1873. Remarkably few medieval furnishings and fittings remain. There is a late 13<sup>th</sup>-century cross-slab and fragments of the rood screen, to which can be added more recent furnishings such as a group of 18<sup>th</sup>-century wall memorials and a single hatchment.

The churchyard is of irregular shape, curvilinear only on the south where Church Street arcs around it. There is no indication that it evolved from an originally circular plan. However, in this vein the concave western boundary of the churchyard created by the curve of School Street should be noted. From close to Tower Farm it was continued (before the area was built over) by a field boundary that ran to a cottage called Grigws from where a track ran downhill to the river. With the Bank as a southern edge and the river on the west this creates a large, curvilinear enclosure of around 10 to 11 hectares, a possible precinct to the mother church at Talgarth.

It is generally accepted that parts of Talgarth reflect a planned settlement with three parallel streets – The Bank, Chapel Street (now Back Lane) and Tower Lane – running eastwards downhill from the church, though some doubt exists as to whether Tower Lane is a medieval creation. A market place, now built up and its triangular area edged by irregular and narrow streets, lay immediately outside the west gate of the churchyard. It is logical to assume that this settlement spread downhill from the area around the church forming the historic core of Talgarth, and that the west bank of the Ennig was settled in more recent times. However, excavations to the east of the church in the late 1990s (for which see below) also revealed medieval activity beyond the confines of the planned town – it would be convenient but perhaps simplistic to assume that what was unearthed represented an earlier focus of settlement around the church which continued in use when the plantation was added to the townscape of Talgarth, being supplemented rather than replaced.

The picture of burgage plots running north to south from the south side of The Bank shown on late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ordnance Survey maps is belied by earlier tithe and estate maps, but others north of Chapel Street and south of Church Street look to be more likely survivals.

A vernacular building of major significance is the Tower House on the east bank of the River Ennig. This may be of 14<sup>th</sup>-century origin, and traditionally is seen as fulfilling a defensive role and probably guarding the crossing of the river. It was used subsequently as the borough prison, but by Samuel Lewis' time was part of a farm. One authority, however, sees it more as



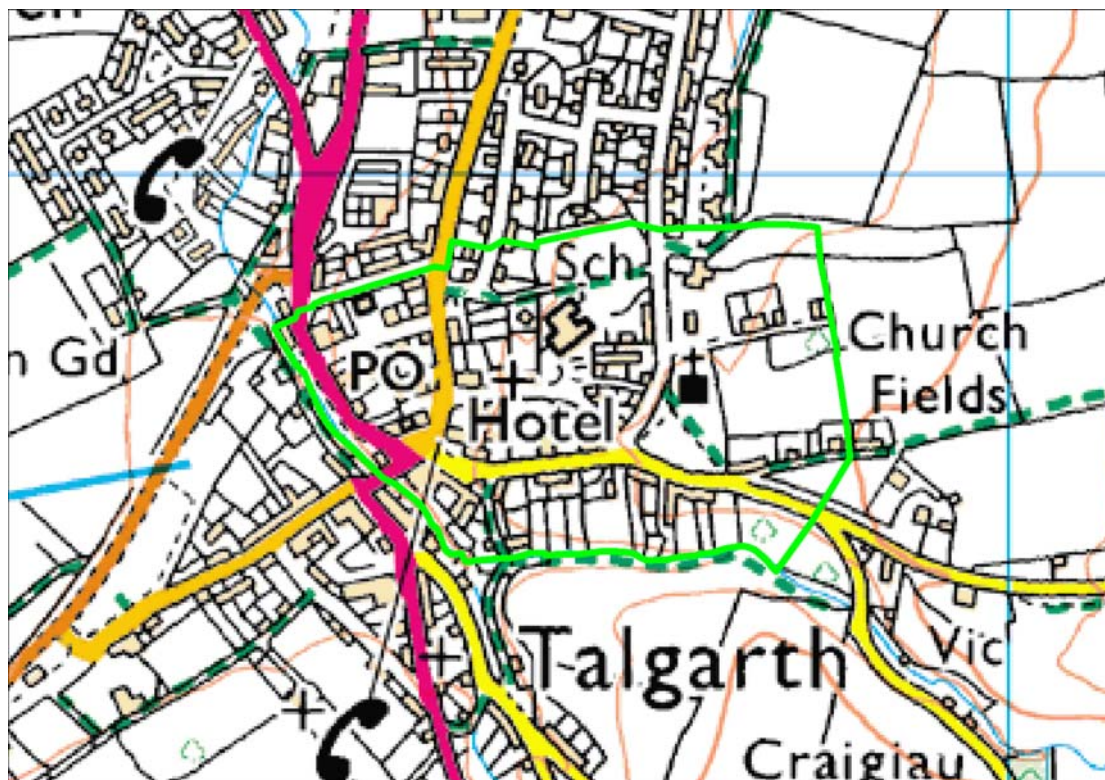
a status symbol built by a Welsh family on the rise, perhaps Rhys ap Hywel or one of his descendants.

But the tower house (and church) aside, Talgarth has surprisingly few buildings of any great age. The Elms on the northern side of the town is a long house derivative of the late 16<sup>th</sup>- or early 17<sup>th</sup> century and appears to be the only dwelling recorded as pre-dating the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Great House by the river was erected in about 1750, while on the road out of town to the south-west the Radnor Arms originated as a late medieval house and later became an inn; its external appearance comes from an early 19<sup>th</sup>- century remodelling. The bridge beside the Tower House may have been first erected in the late medieval period, though it has been reconstructed since.

The town mill lay at the bottom of The Bank and it is possible that the site has been used for milling since the Middle Ages. However, the mill presently occupying the spot dates from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, and there is no positive evidence that points to a predecessor.

Evaluation in 1991 in the open ground between The Bank and Back Lane near Neuadd Felin revealed traces of a medieval building, a cobbled surface and various pits; pottery suggested a 12<sup>th</sup>- to 13<sup>th</sup>-century date. Even more significant were the excavations in 1997-98 in the field behind (to the east of) the churchyard which revealed three phases of occupation between the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries (based on broadly dated pottery types), though with the emphasis on the earlier part of the period. Crop-processing appears to have occurred on site and metalworking was undertaken close by.

The open fields of Talgarth - Brier Common Field and Lowest Common Field - lay on the west side of the Ennig, while Red Common Field was laid out to the north of the church. Some open field strips or selions survived into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, appearing on estate maps of the area.



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## **TRALLONG**

**SN 9657 2959**  
**15979**

### ***Introduction***

Trallong lies in the Usk Valley, 8km west of Brecon. The settlement occupies gently shelving ground on the northern side of the valley, the church and secular buildings to the south of the road lying close to the lip of a river terrace where the ground falls steeply away to the Usk.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Trallong up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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### ***History of development***

The name of the village means 'a very muddy area', though the reasons for this are not readily obvious unless it reflects a crossing of Nant Sefin, a nearby stream feeding into the Usk. Around 1180 it was apparently known as thralwng kynuyn from which it has been inferred that the church might originally have been dedicated to a Cynfyn, an otherwise unknown saint. In the first decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century it was simply termed Tralan and in 1283 it was documented as Trallwng. By the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century variant forms such as Trathllong (1502) and Trallonge (1513) were in use.

The form of the churchyard, the location on the valley edge and perhaps the ogam-inscribed stone in the church (though it can only be an assumption that it originated in the enclosure) all point to an early medieval foundation here.

Trallong was a manor belonging to the Bishop of St David's and a collecting point for produce from the bishop's lands in the area, Giraldus Cambrensis mentioning it in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. Bishop Thomas was granted the right to hold an annual fair and a weekly market here by Edward I in 1290/91, though whether this influenced the pattern of settlement at Trallong is unknown, and indeed whether the focus for the market was in the vicinity of the church or elsewhere in the parish.

Also impossible to gauge is whether there was a medieval nucleated settlement here. The late 19<sup>th</sup>-century picture of a church, school, vicarage and two cottages do nothing to convince that there was a nucleation here in earlier centuries.

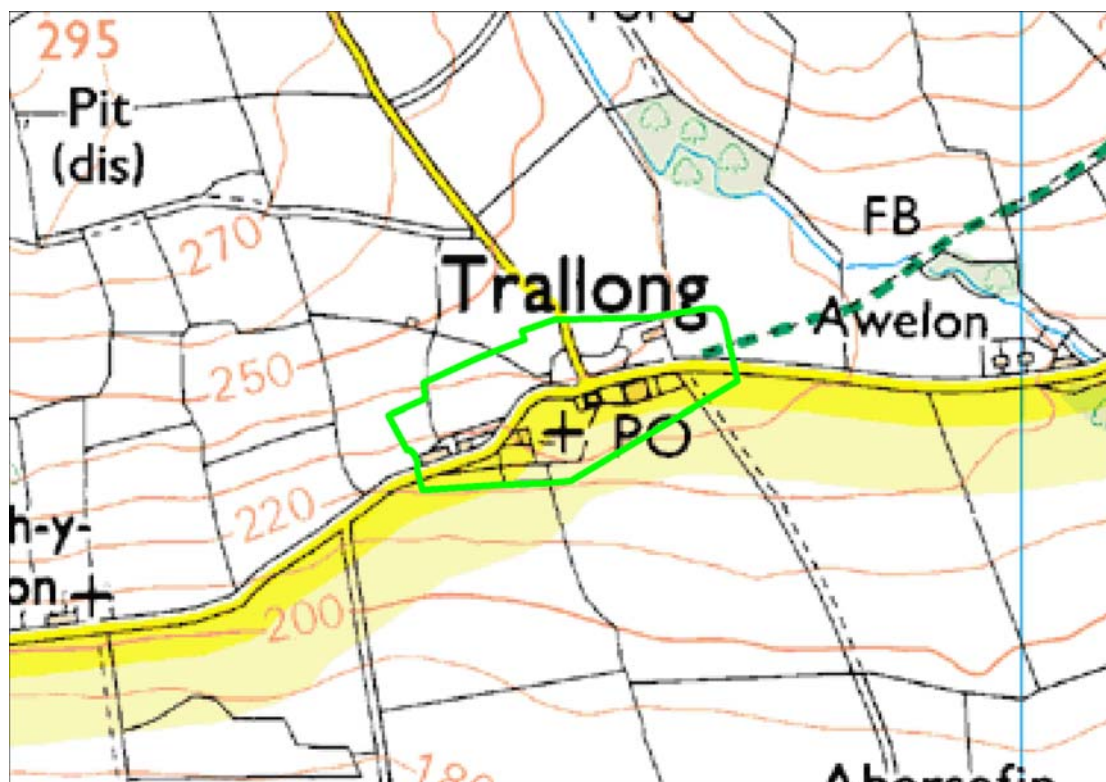
***The heritage to 1750***

St David's church consists of a single-celled nave and chancel, partially and perhaps even largely rebuilt in the 1860s. There are though Perpendicular survivals in the refurbished windows and the priest's door. A 13<sup>th</sup>-century font and a 6<sup>th</sup>-century ogam- and Latin-inscribed stone bearing a later ring cross are housed in the church, and there is too a Romanesque voussoir, presumably from an earlier church.

The curvilinear churchyard boundary on the north is distinctive, with the road through the village arcing around it well below the graveyard level. Linear boundaries form the other sides and it might be inferred that these have been modified over the centuries though no earthworks survive to confirm that this was the case.

The church apart there are no buildings of any significant interest in the settlement. Persondy on the churchyard's western edge reputedly has internal detail that could go back as far as the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

It seems likely that if there was any earlier settlement it clustered close to the church, on the natural shelf. There are, however, no obvious relict earthworks that might signal earlier dwellings, apart from a platform of uncertain origin and function to the east of the Church Hall.



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## **TRECASTLE**

**SN 8805 2914**  
**15890**

### ***Introduction***

Trecastle (in Welsh, Trecastell) sits beside the A40 trunk road, 16km west of Brecon. It occupies gently sloping land on the north side of the Usk valley, with the river a few hundred metres to the south. A small stream, Nant Logyn, flows through the village from north to south, the micro-topography of its own valley influencing the appearance of the settlement. On the eastern edge of the village, the medieval motte and bailey castle that was instrumental in coining the place-name occupies higher ground.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Trecastle up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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### ***History of development***

The name seems to mean 'the settlement by the castle', and appears in its present form in 1298. It was named as Trecastel Toune in the period 1536-9 and as Trecastell yn llywel in 1600.

The motte and bailey castle on the eastern edge of Trecastle was thrown up at some point in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, probably earlier rather than later. It must have suffered during the Welsh insurrections of that century, but was not sufficiently important to merit a mention in contemporary documents. Yet clearly it functioned long enough to facilitate the foundation of an adjacent settlement and for that settlement to thrive if only in a minor way, somewhere close to the border that separated the medieval lordship of Brecon from that of Carmarthen.

The eastern half of Trecastle was administered as an outlying part (or detached ward as Samuel Lewis termed it) of Brecon borough, though there are hints that it was a borough in its own right. But throughout its existence it lay within the ecclesiastical parish of Llywel and western Trecastle constituted a detached portion of the Bishop of St David's chief manor at Llanddew, modern maps still carrying the label Bishops' Town. In 1290/91 it was one of the Bishop's holdings that was granted an annual fair and weekly market by Edward I.

In the late 1530s, John Leland claimed that it was 'sumtime a large borow and market, now much in ruine, wherby yet apperith the ruines of a castel'. He also differentiated Trecastle from Bishop's Town on the opposite side of the stream on the basis of their differing lordships. 'Ther is building on the farther side of this river [the Luggun] hard joining to

Trecastel, and is caullid the Bisshops Toun, and it kepith Lawday at Llan[ddew] lordship a myle from Brekenok (as Trecastel dothe at Brekenok)’.

In 1675 it was classed only as a small village and Ogilby on his map at that date attributed the name Trecastle to the village west of Nant Logyn, that is Bishop’s Town. The eastern part of the village probably gained extra prominence in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the turnpike road incorporated stretches of earlier routes including that to the east of the stream, but Lewis’ description of it in 1833 is telling: ‘a cluster of several houses, among which is a good inn and posting-house, from which it derives all the little importance it possesses’.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

The fine motte and bailey castle occupies slightly higher ground on the eastern edge of the village. As noted above virtually nothing of its history is documented.

The settlement at Trecastle has twin foci. Immediately to the west of the castle lie a series of properties with narrow tenements behind them looking, on modern maps, rather like burgage plots. This however is deceptive for an estate map of 1780 shows few properties to the north of the road with more to the south, and it is apparent that some of the narrow tenements are of 19<sup>th</sup>-century origin. The original road then curved westwards, Login Terrace marking its line, crosses Nant Logyn and then after one hundred metres or so arcs northwards to meet another street running westwards to Mynydd Trecastell (and this in turn is likely to have been the Roman road from Brecon Gaer to Llandovery). The first part of this was known as Bishop Street in 1780 and constituted the core of Bishop’s Town, with almost as many dwellings fronting on to it as in Trecastle east of Nant Logyn. This pattern of streets represents the medieval settlement.

Post-medieval changes (between say the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries) focus on the development of the turnpike road that is now the A40. Its present course north-westwards from where Vicarage Road runs off it to almost as far as Llywel may be entirely a creation of the turnpike era – this is the implication of Ogilby’s 1675 map.

Plausibly there was a market at Trecastle but this seems to be linked to Bishop’s Town. Would Brecon borough’s part of Trecastle have had its own market? It has been suggested that the patch of ground north-west of Bush House reveals the presence of a triangular market place. But we can note on the 1780 map a widening of the main street by Neuadd Farm at the east end of the village, with a couple of buildings set in the road, and also a curious layout of lanes that surround Mill House. Largely obscured by subsequent developments during the earlier part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these could reveal where there was a medieval market.

One final anomaly in the village topography is the curving lane that links the two built up parts of Trecastle. What if anything was the purpose of the area that it defined (and now filled by the school, a chapel and several houses); could it have been a ‘village green’?

With one exception the village has no buildings of particular interest. Neuadd has at its core a house with 17<sup>th</sup>-century features, its status reflected perhaps by the fact that it was in the ownership of the Gwynne family, one of whose members was high sheriff of the county in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Much of the building though is late 18<sup>th</sup>- or 19<sup>th</sup>-century in date, becoming an inn well before the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. All the other buildings in eastern Trecastle appear to be 19<sup>th</sup>- or even 20<sup>th</sup>-century, influenced by the presence of the turnpike. Interestingly, no buildings of any antiquity has been recognised in Bishop’s Town.

A dam consisting of an earthwork 76m long and over 2m high lies just to the north of the A40 and ponds the waters of Nant logyn. This was supposedly constructed by the Gwynne family:



meadows between Trecastle and Llywel were converted into a lake and fish pond and tradition has it that the family were rowed to church at Llywel.



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## **TREFECCA**

**SO 1432 3214**  
**15981**

### ***Introduction***

Trefecca lies on the B4560, 2km south-west of Talgarth. It has grown up on almost level terrain, about 200m east of Afon Llynfi.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Trefecca up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website ([www.archwilio.org.uk](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

### ***History of development***

While tradition has it that it was named after a Rebecca Prosser who lived at Trefecca Fawr nearby in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this folk tale must be discounted. The name meaning ‘Becca’s settlement’ is considerably earlier and could contain an Old English personal name. As Trevecke it is documented in 1409, and as Trevek in 1398. It has also been associated, less certainly, with an earlier place-name in the area – Traneck – which was recorded in 1309.

The earliest known feature here is the motte and bailey castle which overlooks the river. While it has no documented history, it is likely to have been one of the early cluster of defended strongholds along the Llynfi that were thrown up before the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The subsequent development of Trefecca is impossible to determine directly. However it can be suggested that here as elsewhere in the Llynfi lowlands a hamlet may have been established linked to the manor which continued to thrive through the Middle Ages.

There is no parish church here for Trefecca has always lain within the large ecclesiastical parish of Talgarth.

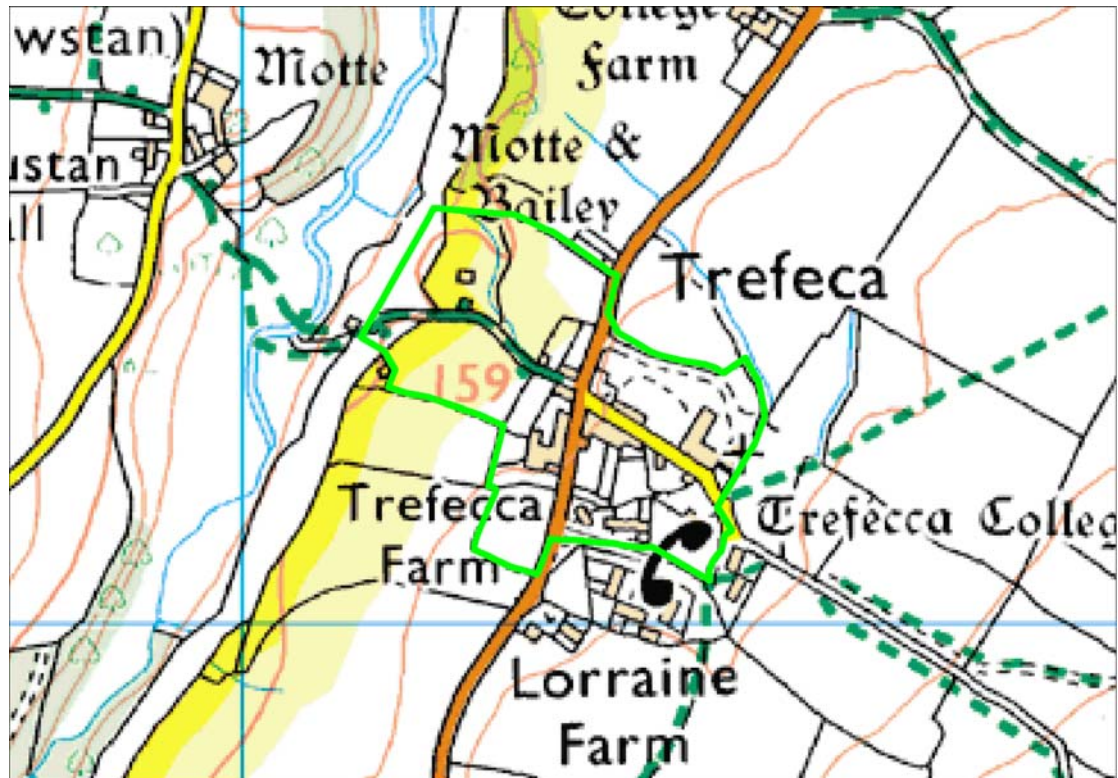
### ***The heritage to 1750***

The degraded state of the motte is attributed to the passage of the railway in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while its bailey occupies a strong position between two streams and is better preserved.

Famous for Trefecca College which is of mid-18<sup>th</sup> century build (although perhaps containing remnants of an earlier building) with a coach house which is said to be from around 1700, the settlement itself has no other buildings of any great age. The pattern of closes and small fields

at Trefecca could simply be a result of this activity from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, but the possibility that it reflects an earlier layout associated with the putative medieval hamlet cannot be ignored entirely.

College Farm (late 16<sup>th</sup>-century) and Trefecca Fawr (mid-17<sup>th</sup>-century), several hundred metres to the north and south respectively, have more history attached to them than Trefecca itself, and Cefn Mawr a similar distance to the south-east is believed to be a longhouse derivative which could provide a date in the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century.



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## **TRETOWER**

**SO 1859 2128**

**15982**

### ***Introduction***

Tretower is situated beside the A479 trunk road, 4km north-west of Crickhowell, just before it meets the highway between Abergavenny and Brecon that runs along the Usk Valley. Influenced by the positioning of a Norman lord's castle, it has grown up close to the valley floor of the Rhiangoll with the settlement on gently sloping ground pressing back against the steeply rising hillside that ascends eastwards to the Black Mountains.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Tretower up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

Translated Tretower (or Tretŵr) is the 'settlement by the tower'. The earliest mention is as Trevetour in 1463 and as Tretour in 1479. These are late forms and it seems likely that Tretower, as the centre of the sub-lordship of Ystrad Yw, was referred to by that name in earlier times.

Tretower emerged at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century when Picard one of the followers of Bernard de Neufmarché involved in the Norman expansion into south Wales was granted land in the valley of the Rhiangoll, throwing up a motte and bailey earthwork castle to control the area. No parochial centre was established here, however, and Tretower continued within the ecclesiastical parish of Llanfihangel Cwmdru.

Medieval settlements associated with the more important castles in lordships frequently exhibit a regular layout of streets, evidence of early town planning. Deliberate planning at Tretower is evident in the several streets that are aligned north-east to south-west and which are more obvious on the estate map of 1587 than on today's Ordnance Survey counterparts.

Perhaps as early as the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Bluets (the successors to the Picard family) abandoned the cramped stronghold on the motte and moved to the late medieval defended house known as the Court.

A chapel may have been here in the Middle Ages but if so it served the castle and its settlement and was not parochial, being dependant on the parish church of Cwmdru a couple of miles up the valley.

The village presumably developed only gradually after the Reformation, Leland at that time calling it ‘a smaulle village stonde on a little brooke’. It did not become a town in the way that Crickhowell or Talgarth did. Instead it remained small and compact, with little to attract the passing observer whose attention (if Richard Fenton at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is a reliable guide) was drawn to the castle and the court. There are probably now fewer houses here than in the time of the first Queen Elizabeth.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

Tretower Castle began as a motte and bailey earthwork set on a slight natural ridge that ran out onto the marshy valley floor. Generally considered to have been constructed in the years around 1100, it has also been suggested as a pre-Norman (i.e. Welsh) stronghold though this cannot be substantiated. A stone shell keep was constructed on the motte top in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and a tower (keep) and stone-walled bailey were added around 1230 following the castle’s destruction in a civil war. Superseded as a residence by the Court, it was still garrisoned in times of emergency, the last documented occurrence being in 1403 during Glyndŵr’s rebellion. The remains included the ruins of the tower on the motte, some of the bailey wall and the bailey ditch.

Tretower Court, an important fortified manor house designed around a courtyard and adjacent to the castle, is said to have come into existence at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but it was in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century that the north and west ranges were constructed (on the evidence of dendrochronology). A gatehouse and a barn on the opposite side of the road were added around 1480.

Rebuilt in 1776 and again in 1876-7 and dedicated to St John the Evangelist, the church may originally have been the chapel that served Tretower Castle and was initially dedicated to St Michael. The latter – as Sancti Johannis de Straddwy – was mentioned in a document of 1234, though there can be no certainty that it was on the spot occupied by its Victorian successor. It thus functioned for centuries as a chapel-of-ease, servient to Cwmdru. No pre-Victorian furnishings and fittings remain, though a medieval stoup lies in the churchyard.

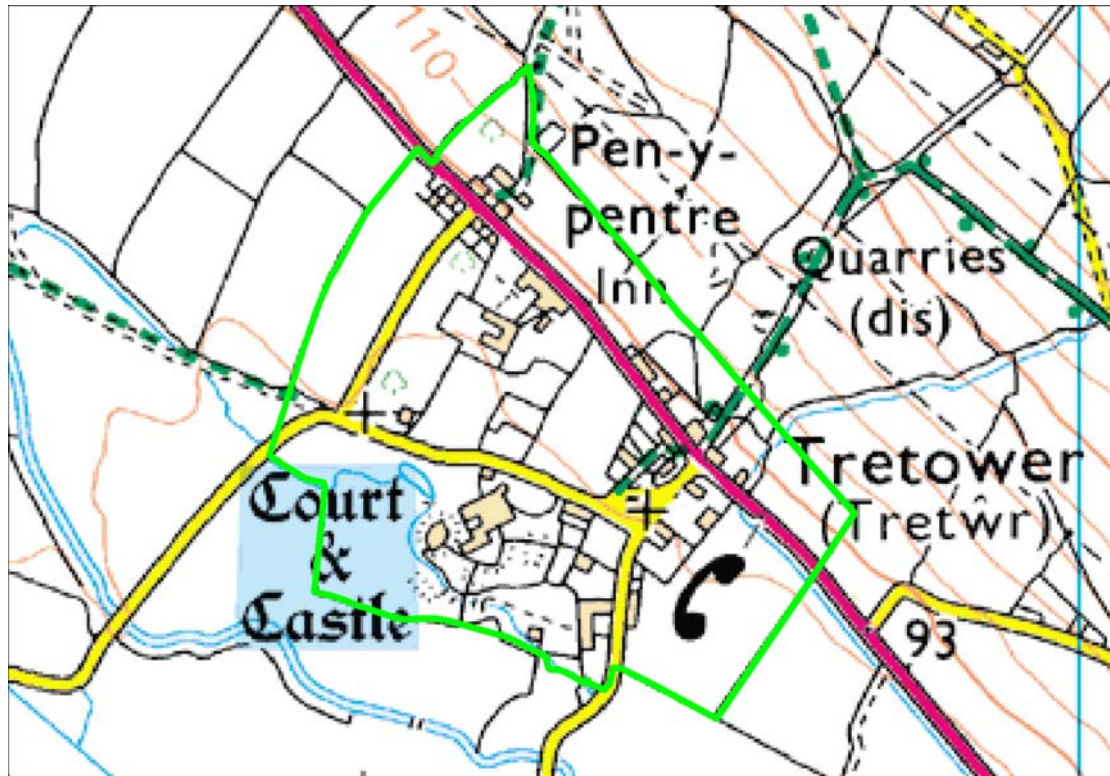
The houses in the modern settlement are quite widely dispersed, but a rather denser grouping of over thirty is portrayed on an estate map of 1587. The pattern is of small irregularly shaped closes, rather than long narrow tenement plots. On the basis of the map, together with slight earthworks in the pasture fields to the north of the castle, it is evident that Tretower was a well established settlement in the late medieval and Tudor eras.

Tretower Court Inn on the main road seems to have originated as a house in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century with another house added at right-angles in the middle of the century. Wall paintings surviving on a chimney breast are probably of this period. It became an inn only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A nearby barn (behind Cross Keys) is considered to date from the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Tretower House to the south is an 18<sup>th</sup>-century rebuild of an earlier house, but is absent from the 1587 estate plan. Vine Tree Cottages, also on the main road, formed a single house in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, while Penisafpentre on the opposite side of the road is also recorded as having early features though details are sparse. Castle Cottage immediately to the north of the castle could incorporate elements of the dwelling that is shown here in 1587.

It is believed that a mill lay immediately to the south of Tretower Court and was served by a leat, still in existence) that ran past the castle and may have fed the castle moat. The date of this mill is not known and is not shown on any known plan of the village (including that of 1587).

There have been some archaeological works in Tretower in recent years. A probable medieval smithy was located in a field in front of Tyllys Farm in 1997, and more recently an evaluation near St John's Close revealed traces of post-holes and pits perhaps relating to a medieval timber-farmed building.

Ridge and furrow has been detected in several places around the village, notably on the lower slopes of the hillside north-east of the main road, but there can be no certainty that this was formed during the medieval period and it may well be more recent in date. More convincing in the search for medieval cultivation are the strip fields surviving to the north-west and south-east of the village.



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## **YSTRADFELLTE**

**SN 9300 1345**

**15983**

### ***Introduction***

Ystradfellte lies in a remote valley in the centre of the Brecon Beacons, 19km to the south-west of Brecon. The settlement occupies a slight spur that projects into the valley floor of Afon Mellte.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Ystradfellte up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core offers a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and will need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

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### ***History of development***

Translated, the name means the 'vale of [the] river Mellte'. It is first documented in 1230 as Stradmelthin and as Strathvelthly in 1316. A record of 1503 has Stradvellte, close to its modern name.

The church's origin is indeterminable. An early medieval beginning is a possibility but none of the usual pointers are present. Its absence from the 13<sup>th</sup>-century taxation lists suggests that it was of small value at that time, and in 1806 it was said to be a chapel dependant on the mother church of Defynnog though this may not reflect the situation in the Middle Ages.

Nothing is known of the history of Ystradfellte, and it must be doubted whether there was a nucleated settlement here in the medieval era. The earliest mapping that is relevant – the Ordnance Survey surveyors' drawing of 1813 – suggests no more than four or five dwellings south and west of the church.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

St Mary's church with its nave and chancel in one and a west tower, has blocked doorways of medieval date which could provide a guide to the original date of the nave. The chancel was added in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but rebuilding in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has obscured the earlier history. It contains a 16<sup>th</sup>-century font and a range of 18<sup>th</sup>-century mural tablets.

The shape of the churchyard is an irregular polygon and there are no earthworks that convince as an earlier boundary.



There are no other buildings of architectural or historic significance in the vicinity of the village.

A few areas near the church may have supported dwellings that have now vanished. West of the church ploughing has revealed dark-stained soil, perhaps indicative of occupation, while to the north there are building foundations.



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