

LLANGATTOCK

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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.

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

History of development

The 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 Brechieniog. The name appears first as *llangadawc* in about 1180 and as *LlanCADOK* 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 19th 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 19th-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 16th 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 14th-century with 15th and 16th-century additions (though the nave has been claimed as 13th-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 19th 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 19th 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 17th-century features at its southern end, and Village Farm is late 17th-century to early 18th-century. West of the church the Old Rectory is thought to have originated in the 16th century, while the Court is reported to be of 18th-century design.

Plas Llangatwg, opposite the church and on the other side of Nant Onneu, has an early 18th-century front, but features from an earlier, Tudor house are said to survive within the fabric. It was remodelled late in the 18th 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-19th-century date, has a wing, now much altered, that was constructed in the 17th or 18th century.



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