

Alltmawr

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Introduction

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

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

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

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers used in the HER to provide information that is specific to individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).



Alltmawr Church, photo 1215 © CPAT, 2011

History of development

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

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

The heritage to 1750

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

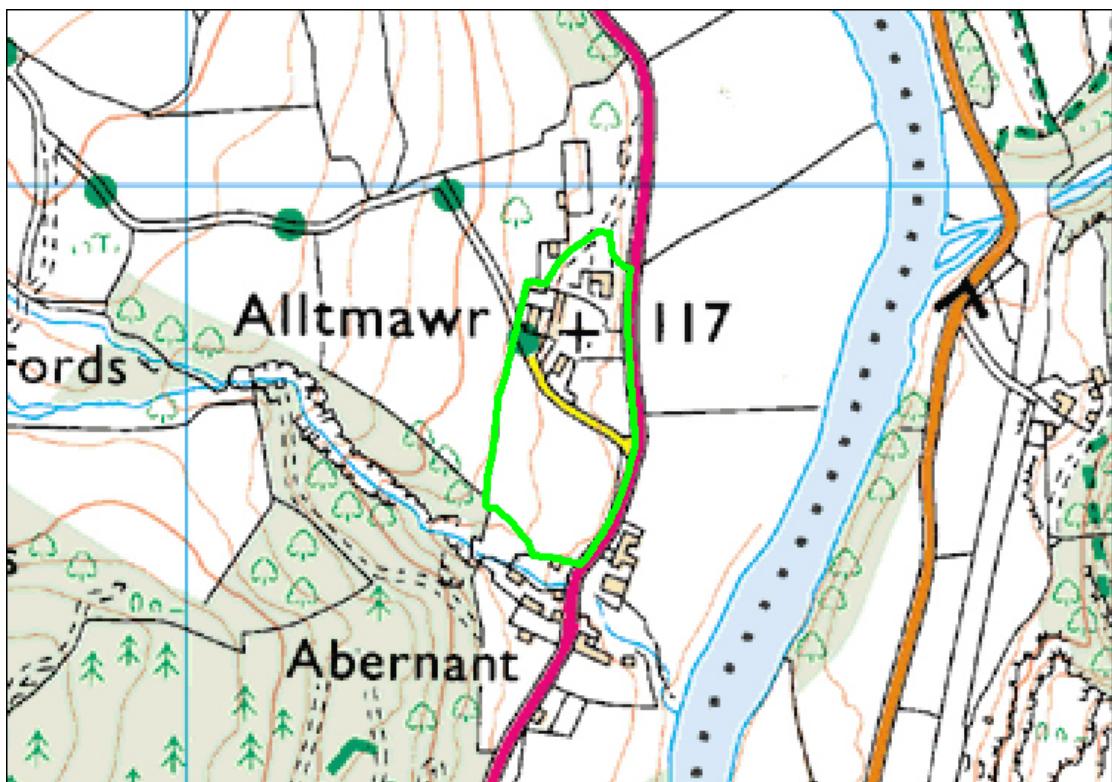
The church occupies an irregular stone walled churchyard (2683) lying on a moderately steep east-facing slope. This enclosure is curvilinear on the north and east but straight on the west, where it abuts Chapel House Farm, and on the south, where it borders a modern garden. This sub-circularity, albeit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

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

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

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

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



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