

Llandefaelog Tre'r Graig

SO 127298
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Introduction

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

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

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

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

History of development

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

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

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

The heritage to 1750

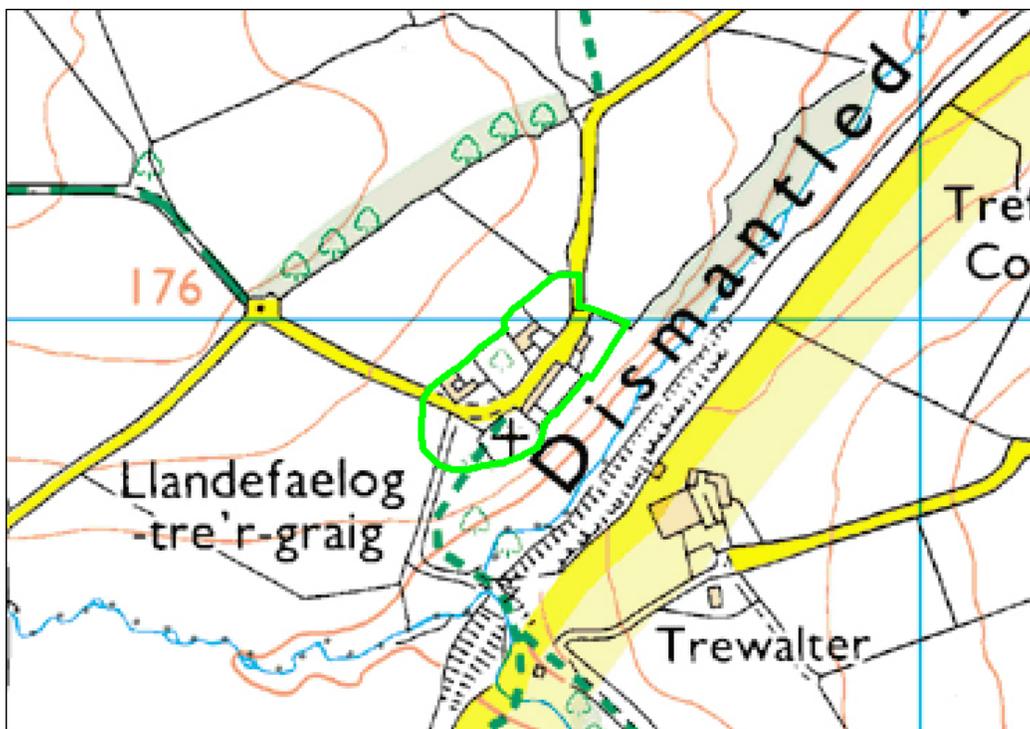
The church of St. Maelog (2940) is a single-celled building, the core of it probably of 13th-century date, though there is evidence of rebuilding and refurbishment in several later centuries. The font, though simple, is considered to be Romanesque, which takes the church back to an earlier century. Declared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

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

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

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

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



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