

Llanfihangel Bryn Pabuan

SN 984566
2578

Introduction

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

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

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).



Llanfihangel Bryn Pabuan village, photo 95-C-0620 © CPAT 2011

History of development

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

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

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

The heritage to 1750

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

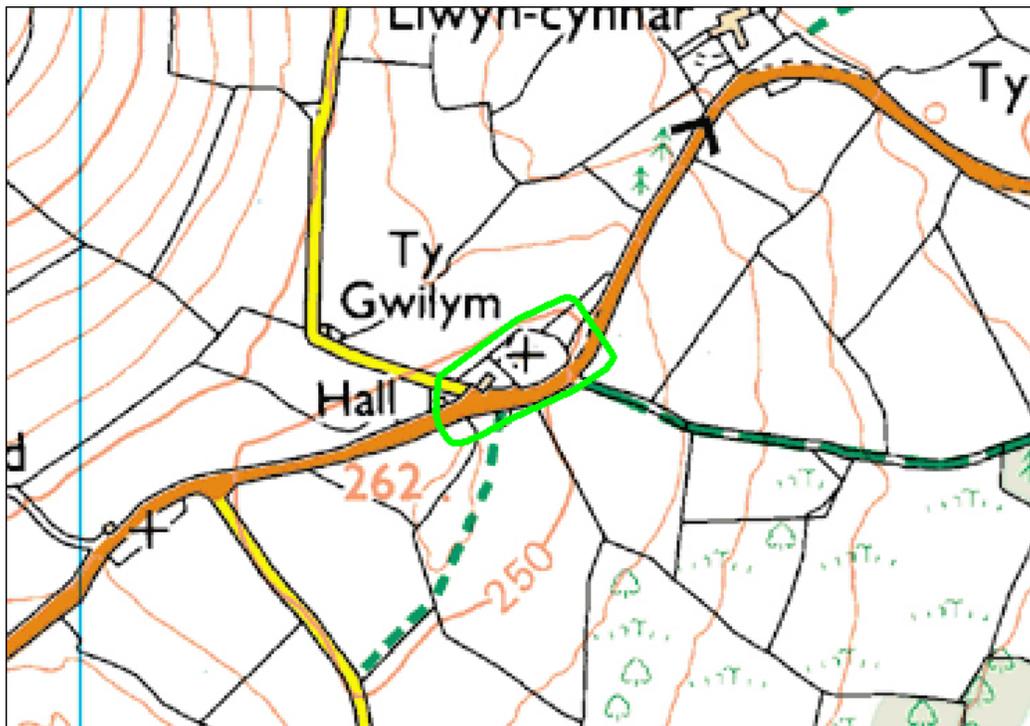
The church lies within an irregularly polygonal churchyard (2904) and the tithe survey shows that the churchyard in the 19th century was little different.

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

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

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

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



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