

## **Llanfihangel Nant Bran**

SN 944343  
5279

### ***Introduction***

Llanfihangel Nant Bran is a small linearly laid out settlement adjacent to its church. It is sited on a slight spur on the north-eastern side of the Nant Bran valley on the southern edge of Mynydd Epynt.

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](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

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

The name of this settlement literally translates as 'St Michael's on the Bran brook'. The first documented reference to it is a late one, *Sancti Michaelis de Nantbrane* appearing in 1503, though the Bran stream puts in an appearance in documents as early as 1326.

As with many of the smaller settlements in the region, the early history of Llanfihangel Nant Bran is obscure. The village plan looks typical, comprising a simple linear development running eastwards from the church, but the period that this occurred is open to discussion.

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

St Michael's Church (20133) is perhaps originally a 14<sup>th</sup>-century building, but appears to have been largely restored in 1882. It comprises a simple undivided nave and chancel with a western tower which is almost certainly 16<sup>th</sup>-century.

The present churchyard (2945) is sub-rectangular and almost polygonal, though there is a hint of a curve to its southern perimeter. A case has also been made for an arcuate scarp circling the church on the south and these slight traces may be the remains of a former sub-circular churchyard (2946) about 50m diameter.

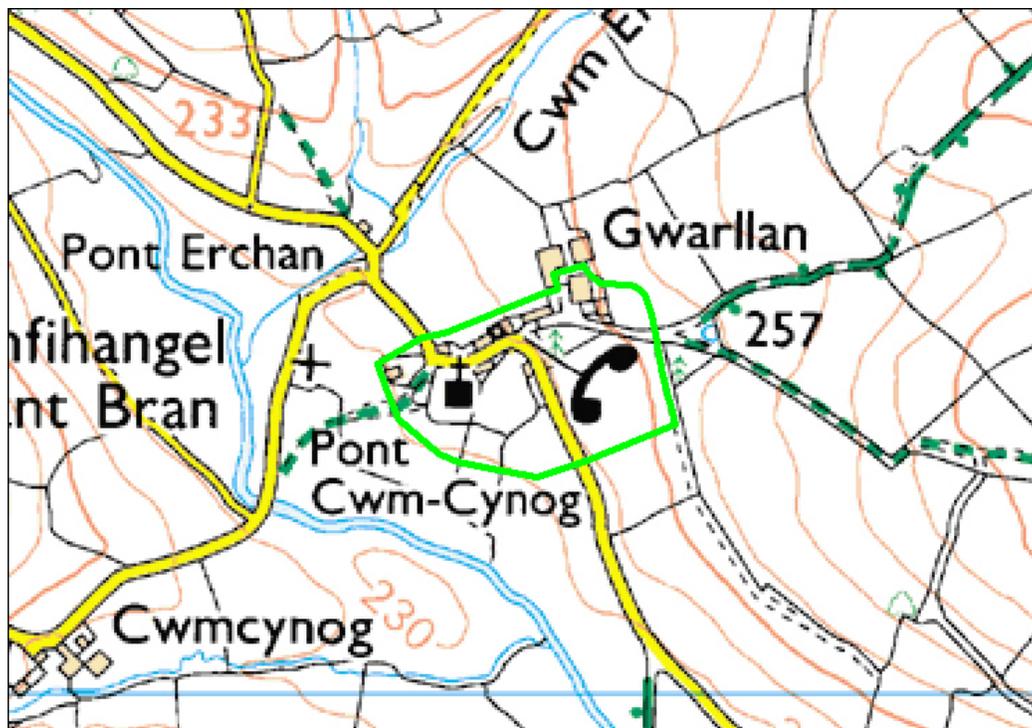
The possible site of a building survives as a small square raised platform (2947) within the churchyard, adjacent to the north gate. To judge from the absence of marked burials in the plot this building has been removed relatively recently.

A series of possible building platforms and associated earthworks (2948) are visible in the field to the south of Gwarllan Farm. If authentic, they presumably represent a now deserted part of the medieval settlement, which might be assumed to have once occupied both sides of the lane between the church and the road junction east of Gwarllan.

A further isolated platform (2949) is visible in an elongated field to the south-east of the churchyard. Topographically the area immediately to the east of the church would have been suitable for medieval settlement. While no remains are visible this plot may have archaeological potential.

The surviving buildings in Llanfihangel Nant Bran are all of post-medieval character, and as many have recently been renovated the settlement now has a modern air to it.

In summary, the nature of the historic settlement at Llanfihangel Nant Bran remains obscure. It could be no more than a church settlement on the edge of Epynt, or a more nucleated settlement whose slight traces have yet to be tested.



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