

Llanynis

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Introduction

Llanynis is now an isolated church with no associated settlement, lying on the southern bank of the River Irfon some 4km to the west of Builth Wells. The site is not even accessible on a public 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).

History of development

Llanynis is now an isolated church with no associated settlement, lying on the southern bank of the River Irfon some 4km to the west of Builth Wells. The site is not even accessible on a public road.

The early history of Llanynis is unknown. However, the sub-circular churchyard and the former British dedication of the church may indicate an early medieval date for the foundation.

As *Lanenus*, it is first documented in about 1291 and as *Lanynys* in 1374. The element 'ynys' here is taken by modern authorities to mean a river-meadow rather than its usual connotation of an island.

The present settlement has comprised no more than the church since at least the 1840s, and if there was any adjoining settlement at some distant point in the past it may never have been more than a few dwellings.

The heritage to 1750

St David's Church (20139), which was formerly dedicated to St Llyr, is a simple, double-celled building with a southern porch and a bellcote, and is largely the product of successive rebuildings and restorations in 1687, 1778 and 1894, though there is the possibility that some medieval fabric remains. Simply furnished, it has altar rails from the 17th century and a font of 14th-century origin.

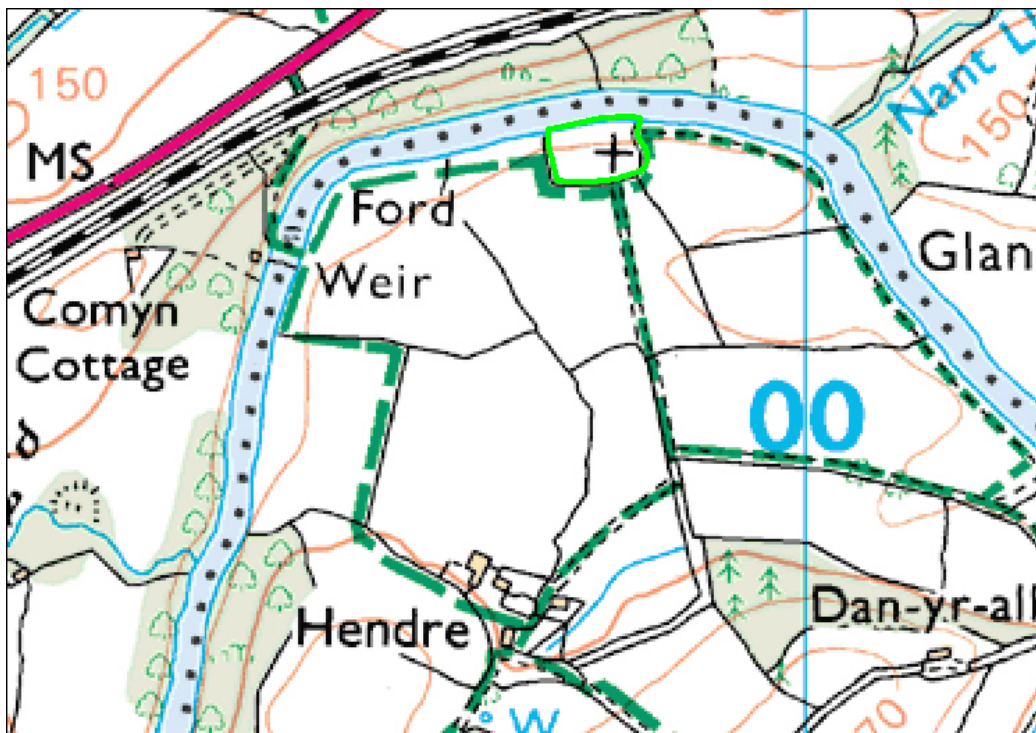
At one time the church appears to have stood within a sub-circular churchyard (2983) some 50m across. This now only survives as a slightly raised platform within the modern sub-rectangular enclosure (2984), although part of the present eastern and southern boundary is

common to both. A clearance and renovation scheme in the early 1970s, which saved the church from permanent closure, apparently removed more substantial earthwork remains from the churchyard.

The 18th-century buildings of Hendre farm (2985), which lie 400m to the south of the church, are the nearest surviving habitation. The name (literally - 'old *tref* or settlement') could be significant and perhaps indicates that a larger settlement once existed here. It could be argued that the most likely area for such settlement is along the causeway linking the two sites, but there is no evidence that this is of any antiquity, and in truth anywhere in this large loop of the river valley could have accommodated a nucleated community. Any remains here may be relatively undisturbed, due to the absence of re-development, and therefore of a high archaeological potential.

Two blocks of ridge and furrow survive to the west (2986) and to the south (2987) of the church, and these presumably represent parts of the settlement's field system.

In summary, Llanynis appears to be an atypical church settlement, with the church not even accompanied by an adjacent farm or inn. However, the presence of Hendre nearby might suggest the presence of a nucleated, medieval bond settlement in the vicinity.



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