

Llanfair Talhaiarn

**SH 9278 7009
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Introduction

Llanfair Talhaiarn is situated close to the A548 – the Abergele to Llanrwst road – and its junction with the A544. The village lies inland from the coast, about five miles south of Abergele. The village occupies the bottom of the valley of the River Elwy, on the south side of the river, where a tributary of the Elwy runs northwards through a steep-sided valley to join it. The older part of the village nestles in this valley, with houses extending up the steep sides. The waters of the tributary stream are conduited below Water Street, the main street of the village. The church is prominently sited at the top of the western slope of the valley, where it also overlooks the Elwy. Modern housing estates have been added on higher ground to the east of this river valley.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanfair Talhaiarn up to the year 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 only 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 will require modification 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. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development

Modern authorities translate this name into English as ‘the church of Mary associated with Talhaiarn’, explaining the latter as perhaps an early lay patron of the church. It is recorded as *Llanber* in 1254, as *Lanveyr’ dalhaearn* and *Lanveyr’ Dalhaeyn* in different copies of Pope Nicholas’ Taxation and as *Llanvair Talhayarne* in 1632. The first use of the modern name comes in 1839.

Nothing is known of the origin and early history of the settlement, though we can perhaps assume that the church itself was established in the early medieval era, even if the evidence from the churchyard morphology is not wholly convincing. The story of the settlement throughout the Middle Ages is obscure, and Pennant in 1781 in describing Llanfair Talhaiarn as ‘a village and a church at a small distance above the confluence of the Elwy and Aled’ tells us little.

The 1842 Tithe map appears to show a fairly compact settlement entirely on the south side of the River Elwy, with all the buildings lying to the east of the church. Only one bridge over the Elwy is shown. Roads run out of the village centre to the east (now Denbigh Road) and west (now Church St) and also to the south (now Allt y Powls). But neither this map nor the smaller-scale maps of the Ordnance Survey (1819) or of John Evans (1795) offer a clear view of the form of Llanfair in the 19th century and this is only provided in the large-scale mapping

by the Ordnance Survey in the mid-1870s. The modern village has since spread much further to the east and a little to the south.

The heritage to 1750

St Mary's church (100513) probably has some fabric dating back to the 15th century but there was considerable rebuilding in 1876 and all the windows date from that time. It is a double-naved structure, but not architecturally distinguished. The sole surviving late medieval features are a few of the beams in the arched-braced roofs, and there are two disused font bowls. A range of funerary monuments memorialise the Wynnes of Garthewin, dating from 1692 to 1842. An unusual feature is a 19th-century tank for adult baptism set into the floor.

The boundary of the churchyard (105527) on the north and east sides is dictated by the very steep slopes here, but on the south side, the boundary is slightly curved, hinting at an early curvilinear graveyard. There is a large western extension to the graveyard from 1879.

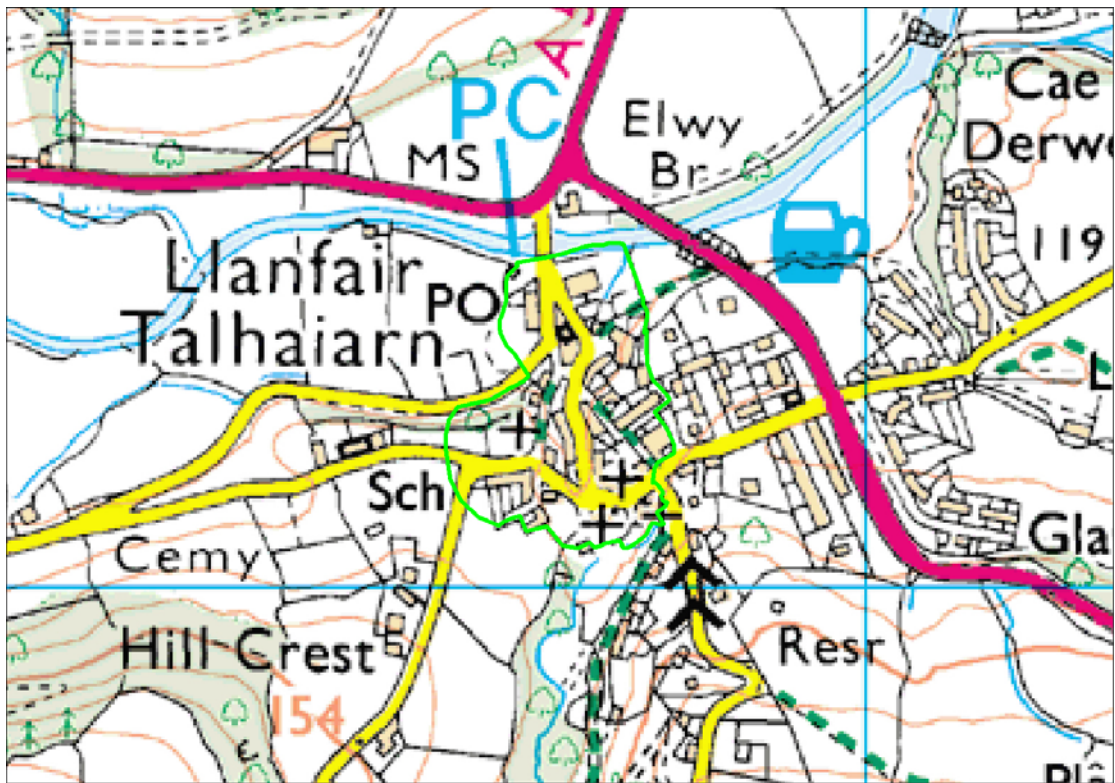
The Old Harp Inn has not been dated in the records that refer to it, but looks to be of post-1750 origin. This holds true for other buildings in the village. The Old School for instance dates to 1836, and adjacent Glandwr was the schoolmaster's house and contemporary with the school. Plas-yn-llan on the opposite side of the road is broadly of the same period, while the former village hall, now known as Neuadd Elwy is mid 19th-century.

Talhaiarn Farm, also termed Dolhaiaran Farm (105528), is on the east side of the village. The stone building, dating to the early 17th century is re-fronted and also has 18th- and 19th-century features. An associated stone barn dates to 1694.

Llanfair bridge (105458), built of rubble masonry, has three elliptical arches and cutwaters. It has generally been believed to be of 18th-century origin and recent work on the Quarter Sessions Records suggest that it was rebuilt in 1766.

Melin Dolhaiarn on a tributary of the Elwy and beyond the eastern limits of the village was a stone-built corn mill, possibly dating from the 18th century, and was in use until about 1950.

There are no recognised archaeological sites represented by earthworks in the vicinity of the village.



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