

Llangurig

SN 9090 7988
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Introduction

Llangurig, some 6km south-west of Llanidloes in the extreme south of Montgomeryshire, sits at the junction of the A44(T) with the A470(T) on one of the few through routes in the Cambrian Mountains. The church stands out above the northern edge of the Wye flood plain where the river swings southwards. A backdrop of high, moderately steep hills to the north, incised with small stream valleys, contrasts with the flat plain of the river which is marked by palaeochannels and gravel fans left by the changing course of the river. The village core around the church is only now being extended by housing set into the northern hillside, and more noticeably on flattish ground beside the old A470, which has now been superseded by a bypass.

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 earliest version of the place-name is in 1254 as *Llankiric*, a reference to the church of Curig. By 1310 the more recognisable *Llangerig* was in use.

It is, however, generally accepted that there was a mother church with a *clas* community here (1515) in the early medieval period, but its relationship to the comparable establishment at Llandinam on the Severn, which is at no great distance, is unknown. The mother church may have been founded as early as the 6th century. The role of Curig, reputed to have been a bishop at Llanbadarn Fawr, can only be guessed at, but the link with the early medieval saint is strengthened by the presence, on the western edge of the parish, of *Eisteddfa Gurig* (or seat of Curig), a name that goes back into the 15th century. The mother church survived into the 12th century, but from about 1180 it came under the control of the Cistercian house of Strata Florida.

The medieval appearance of Llangurig is unknown. It may have been solely a church serving the farming community dispersed along the valley and adjacent hills, or a small, nucleated settlement could have developed. On the basis of present thinking the former is perhaps more likely.

By the mid-19th century the picture is of only a handful of houses around the church. There is a suggestion of a village 'green', in reality a small tract of unenclosed common land

immediately to the east of the churchyard which probably shared some of the functions of the traditional English village green. Earlier links southwards from the settlement may have been limited, for the road to Rhaeadr along the valley was built only in 1830.



Llangurig, photo 87-c-0140, © CPAT, 2012

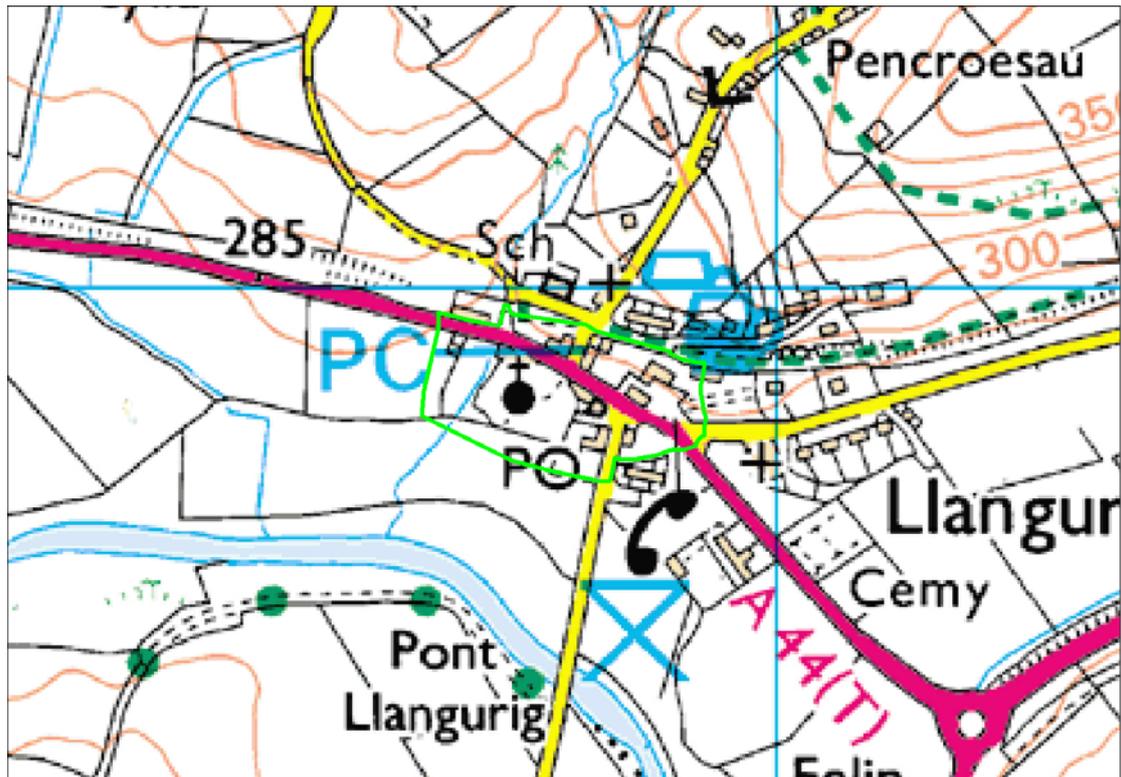
The heritage to 1750

St Curig's church (7536) has a west tower with 15th century features but perhaps an origin three hundred years earlier. The nave is on a slightly different axis and also appears to be 15th century. Restoration occurred in 1877-78.

The irregularly shaped churchyard (7537), partially terraced into the slope and with its church well below the adjacent road, has seen some modification: an earlier line is clearly evident due west of the church. There are thus indications of circularity, but it does not conform to a typical early medieval plan, nor to the larger enclosures sometimes associated with mother churches. A hoard of medieval silver coins was found in a churchyard grave here in about 1753 (1518).

The Blue Bell Inn, situated opposite the church, started as a lobby-entry house, probably in the 17th or 18th century, but was subsequently transformed into an inn.

A field 250m west of the church was termed *Cae Castell* in the Tithe survey, and a similar name has been recorded slightly to the north (3707). There is no obvious explanation for these appellations.



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