

Llandefaelog Fach

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Introduction

Llandefaelog Fach (or Llandyfaelog) is a small valley-floor settlement focused on its church. It is located at the confluence of the Afon Honddu and a minor tributary, on the B4520 Bulth to Brecon road some 3km to the north of Brecon.

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

Llandefaelog Fach (lesser St Tyfaelog's) is presumably so named to distinguish it from the equally small (by modern standards) Llandefaelog Tre'r-graig. It is first referenced about 1200 as both *Landeuailac* and *Landemayloc*, and both forms seem to have been in use in the 11th century.

The present church, though medieval, possesses a dedication to a British saint, two early medieval decorated stones and is set within the remains of a sub-circular churchyard on the banks of a river, all of which point to it being an early medieval foundation.

Nothing is known of the medieval history of Llandefaelog Fach, but in more recent times the settlement has been closely associated with the local estate of Llandefaelog House and from a distance by that of Penoyre.

The heritage to 1750

The oldest surviving part of St Maelog's Church (2956) is the 16th-century tower, the nave and separate chancel having been rebuilt at different times during the 19th century. The church contains a 13th-century font which was retained from its predecessor. The church has yielded two early medieval inscribed stones, one (475) highly ornamented and displaying an incised figure is of the late 10th century, and the other (465) inscribed 'CATVC'. The former is now fixed inside the north wall of the tower, while the latter has disappeared but is reputedly concealed in the tower arch.

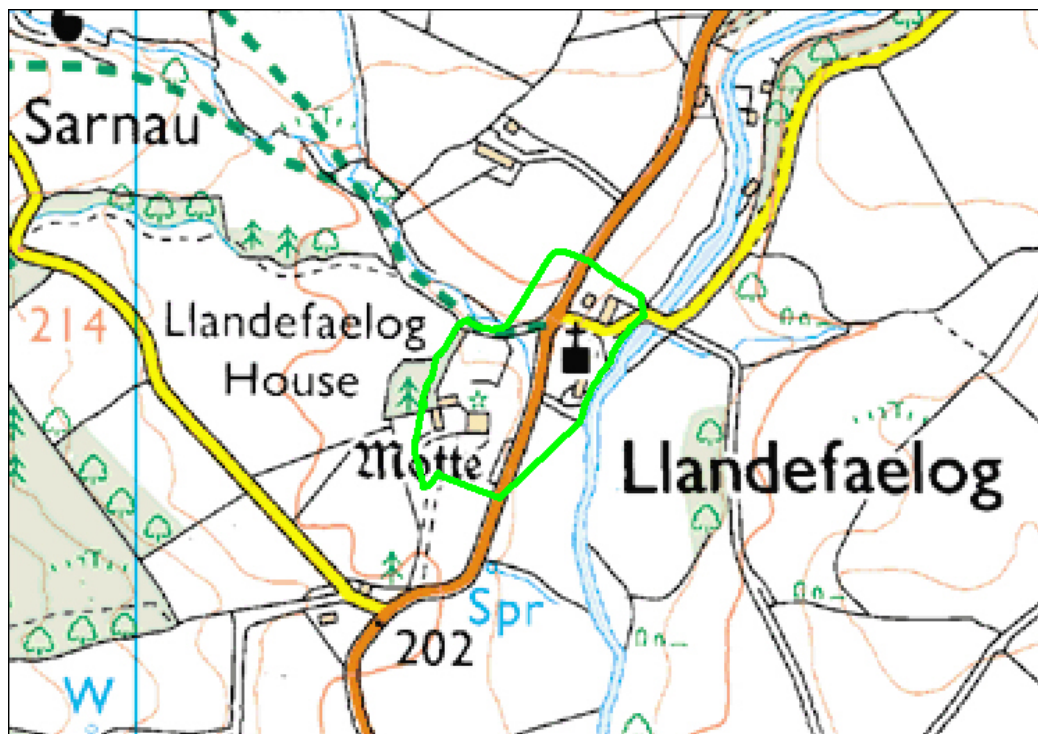
The church stands in the remains of a sub-circular churchyard (2957), originally some 50m across, which although much altered, can still clearly be traced in places within the present sub-rectangular enclosure (2958), and is picked out by a curving line of yews. The churchyard has been extended on the south to accommodate the remarkable mausoleum (2959) of the

Penoyre estate. Encircled by a substantial wall built in Egyptianate style and dated 1816, this consists of a low square building with a single door on the west and a grill covered window on the east, containing a number of vandalized lead coffins. The feature is quite unique in the region.

A motte lies to the west of the church, in the grounds of Llandefaelog House. The mound, a scheduled ancient monument (473/SAM B191), lies close against the house, and while there is now no sign of a bailey there could easily have been one where the house and its gardens now stand. The motte may also have functioned as a garden viewing-platform of post-medieval date, assuming of course that there were formal gardens on this side of Llandefaelog House.

There is little evidence of earlier domestic settlement here. The church is virtually surrounded by steeply sloping ground and the most suitable area for any sort of building is closer to the motte, where Llandefaelog House now stands. Speculatively, this house might have replaced earlier settlement. The house itself has 17th-century origins (with a datestone of 1639 still in evidence) but was rebuilt, probably at the end of the 18th century.

An area of faint earthwork undulations (2960) to the west of Llandefaelog House may be residual earthworks representing an area of former settlement, but they could equally well be natural features. Ridge and furrow cultivation of unknown date (2961) survives to the north of the church.



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