

Cyffylliog

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Introduction

The small settlement of Cyffylliog is set in the valley of Afon Clywedog where the river forces its way through the hills to the west of the Vale of Clwyd. Twin streams, Afon Corris and Nant Gladur, run down from the south-west delineating a spur, the tip of which is occupied by Cyffylliog church. The heart of the settlement is set a little further south on the north bank of Nant Gladur. A minor road serves Cyffylliog, leading from Ruthin which is 6km to the east.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Cyffylliog 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

Cyffylliog (or in Welsh Y Gyffylliog) is first documented as *Kyffellauc* in 1259-60 and appears as *Kyfflyog* in 1400 and as *y gyffyllioc* in c.1566. This has been tentatively interpreted by recent authorities as '(the place of) pollard trees or stumps'.

Until 1873, Cyffylliog was a chapel of ease attached to Llanynys; it was said to have been built by Griffith Goch at the end of the 12th century. The spur location above a stream apart, there is certainly little to recommend an early medieval origin for its foundation, though Cadw's listed building specialists are more sanguine about this possibility.

The form of the medieval settlement around the church, assuming there was one, is not known.

Late 18th-century and mid 19th-century maps indicate a very small settlement here. An estate map from the years 1772-4 appears to show no more than a single building north-west of the church, and the absence of obviously old dwellings near Nant Gladur does seem suggest that the development of dwellings in this part of the valley was a relatively recent occurrence. However, by the time of the mid 19th-century Tithe survey the north bank of the stream had attracted housing, and a few other dwellings had been erected on the lane beyond the church. On the face of it this appears to be a late post-medieval settlement.

The heritage to 1750

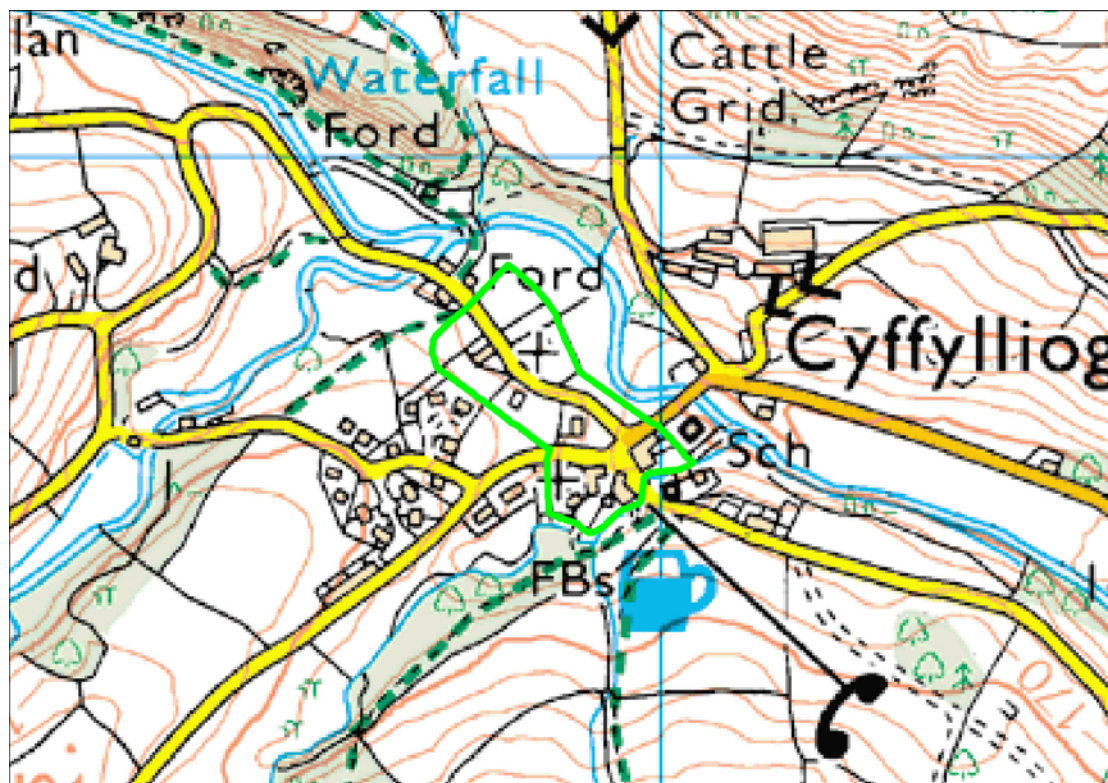
St Mary's church (105910) consists of a single chamber built in rubblestone which is impossible to date. The east window has decorated tracery and other windows, though now wholly renewed, could have originated at the same time. An extensive restoration of 1876 saw much of the building replaced. Inside the church the font, originally fashioned in the 14th century, has been re-tooled, fragments of the medieval rood screen were incorporated into the 19th-century church furniture and there are two chests. It is of no surprise that a wall painting of the crowning of the Virgin uncovered in 1876 was not preserved.

The churchyard (19767) is rectilinear, its north-eastern perimeter following the edge of the river terrace. Only on the south does the arc of the boundary and the adjacent lane suggest something more curvilinear. The stone-built hearse house carries a date of 1823.

There are no listed buildings other than those associated with the church and the bridge spanning the Clywedog.

A building platform (19768) which can be equated with the dwelling shown on the later 18th-century estate map is discernible in OS plot 7886.

Ridge and furrow (19769) covered the adjacent field (OS plot 7280) on a 1946 aerial photograph, but was not recognised during fieldwork in the 1990s.



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