

Llandinam

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Introduction

The village of Llandinam lies beside the River Severn and the A470 trunk road, 9km to the south-west of Newtown. The church occupies a commanding position astride the western end of a pronounced ridge that juts out from the valley side above the river to the west and a dry valley to the east. The village lies in this dry valley, expanding down to the edge of a river terrace, just beyond the western edge of the main road. A more recent expansion of settlement further to the south is now beginning to spread up the valley side.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llandinam 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 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 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 origins of the settlement go back to the early medieval era when the foundation of a mother church established it as one of the more important religious sites in the region (965). Its dependent chapelries included Llanidloes and Llanwnnog and it had an abbot overseeing a religious community until the 13th century.

The earliest reference to Llandinam comes in about 1207 in a form – Landinan – not so dissimilar to today, and indeed it was only around nine years later that the modern name appears in a document. The meaning is the ‘church near the [little] fort or stronghold’, but nothing is known of the latter unless it could be a reference to the great hillfort of Cefn Carnedd on the far side of the Severn. There is a possibility, too, that it was originally Nandynan, a name which was reported in the mid-12th century and that nant was subsequently replaced by llan. Opinion appears to be divided on this, but if correct, the context – a raid by an army from Gwynedd – suggests that Llandinam was a place of some importance

Whether from this we can assume the presence of the mother church attracted settlement around it is unclear, but one might speculate that some form of secular community must have existed here in the Middle Ages. Yet, even after the Reformation, its development cannot be satisfactorily charted and it is only in the mid-19th century that maps provide any sort of picture with a cluster of dwellings in the valley below the church.

*Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust
Historic Settlement Survey - Montgomeryshire*



Llandinam, photo 06-c-0092, © CPAT, 2012

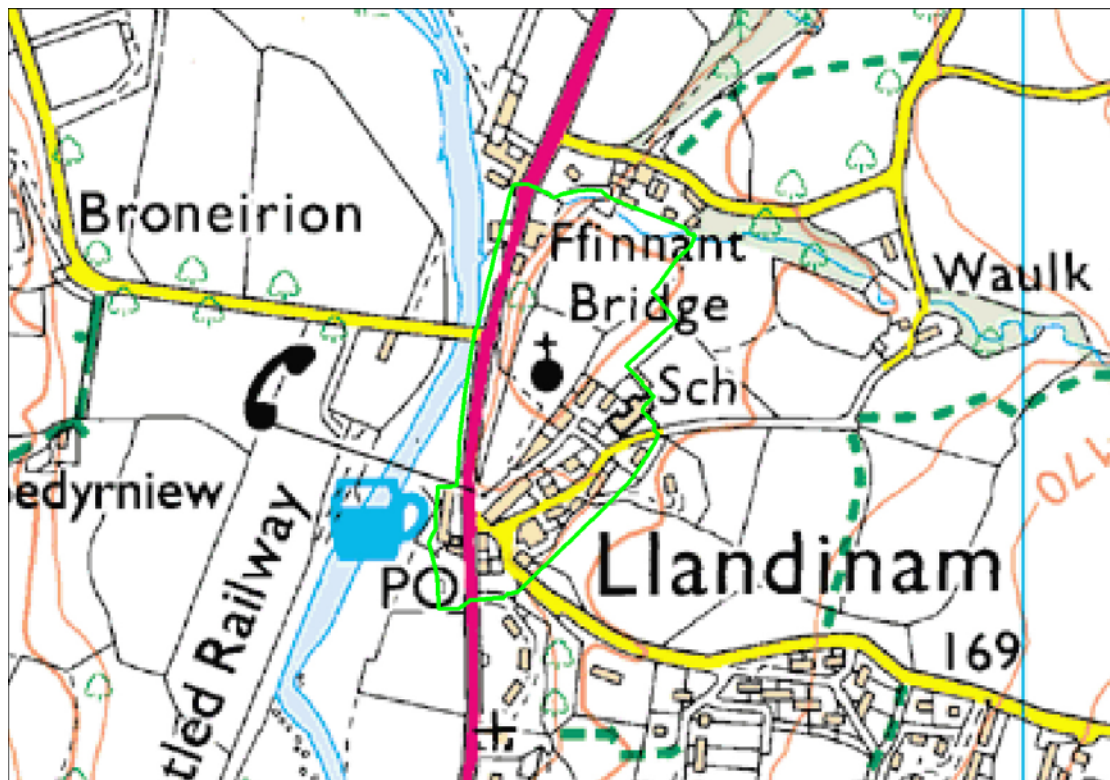
The heritage to 1750

The church of St Llonio has a western tower attributed to the 13th century, but much of the body of the building was rebuilt in 1864/65. Virtually nothing earlier than the 17th century remains inside though other than a Perpendicular font and two old tomb recesses in the sanctuary which should be medieval. Otherwise there are 17th century carved choir stalls which are believed to contain some medieval pew ends, and a wooden reredos that was brought from Trefeglwys church.

There is no evidence for a former circular churchyard, and the graveyard's wedge-shaped form at the end of the 19th century embraced the crest of the ridge on which it was set (and may also explain why the church is oriented closer to north/south than east/west). A substantial bank across the ridge represented the north-eastern boundary of the churchyard until recently. Limited excavation of the bank (6031) during the construction of a new access road in 1985 proved uninformative.

There are no buildings considered to be sufficiently significant to warrant listing in the village, although as an aside, mention should be made of one of the first iron bridges to be built in the county (in 1846), just below the church. Yew Tree Cottages on the lane south of the church are considered to have formed parts of a single sub-medieval, half-timbered house, while Red House a short distance to the west could be mid-18th century.

The mid-19th century pattern of small lanes and dwellings that constitute the core of the village is suggestive of a green, though there is no concrete evidence for it.



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