

## **Llandysilio**

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### ***Introduction***

Llandysilio lies beside the A483 trunk road, almost equidistant from the market towns of Welshpool and Oswestry, and only a short distance from the English border. The confluence of the Severn and the Vyrnwy rivers has created a slightly undulating landscape north of the Breidden Hills where only minor variations in altitude can be the difference between periodic flooding and remaining dry. Llandysilio church is little more than 200m from the Vyrnwy but, perched on the edge of a gravel terrace, it is raised above the flood plain.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llandysilio 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](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

### ***History of development***

The combination of the 'llan' name with a well-known early medieval saint, and a sub-circular churchyard points irresistibly to an early medieval origin for the church, if not for any settlement around it. Legend has it that St Tysilio was a hermit here for seven years, but that will forever remain unproven.

The earliest mention of the name, Llantessilyau, occurs in the Norwich Taxation of 1254, and is a straightforward reference to the church of St Tysilio. From the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century there are then regular references to Llandysilio with minor variations in the name: Llandisiliowe in 1385, and Llandisilio in Dithor in 1568, for example.

The subsequent growth of Llandysilio cannot be charted with complete conviction, but recent work on the Four Crosses bypass which came to within 30-40m of the church did not uncover any evidence of concentrated medieval activity, the inference being that there was no nucleated settlement around the church, for it would almost certainly have been the south side that saw medieval growth.

The main trunk road that passes Llandysilio is a creation of the turnpike era in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, emphasising its relative isolation, and the earliest map from 1747/8 seems to indicate that the only buildings by the church at the time were those in the Church House complex. It is thus probably safe to assume that this was never more than a church settlement.

***The heritage to 1750***

The church of St Tysilio (7607) was built anew, with contemporary internal fittings in 1867-8. Only a brass of 1674, several later 18<sup>th</sup> century marble, memorial tablets, a medieval stoup and an early 18<sup>th</sup> century bell survived the demolition of the earlier church.

The churchyard (7608) has a strongly curvilinear shape, the straight northern side being a result of its conformity to the edge of the gravel terrace on which it was set. It contains another survival of the 19<sup>th</sup> century rebuilding, a sundial of 1760.



*St Tysilio Church, photo 82-c-0247, © CPAT, 2012*

Old Church Cottage (7639), the former National School built in 1896 incorporates in its fenestration three windows, two of them medieval, from the old church. It is grade II listed.



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