

Llangynog

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Introduction

Llangynog is situated in a remote region of northern Montgomeryshire on the Welshpool to Bala road (the B4391), about 12km north-west of Llanfyllin. The village has grown up at the confluence of Afon Tanat and its tributary the Afon Eirth. Surrounded by steep-sided valleys and overshadowed by the crags of Craig Rhiwarth, the spur between the rivers flattens out as it closes on the valley floor. The church was established on the tip of the spur, no more than 3m above the level of the river.

This brief report examines Llangynog's 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 date of foundation of the church and the subsequent emergence of settlement around it are obscure. St Cynog himself was a 'saint' firmly associated with Brecknock, the elder son of Brychan, the eponymous founder of that region. It seems improbable, therefore, that the church was established in person by St Cynog, though some saints are believed to have travelled widely. And it has been pointed out that Doewan (Dogfan), another 'son' of Brychan, is the dedicatee at Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant.

Llangynog is first referred to as *Lankenauc* – seemingly a variant of *Kynauc* (Cynog) - in 1254 and in its present name-form as late as the Elizabethan era. The name of course refers to the church of St Cynog.

The growth of the village received some impetus from 1692 when rich veins of lead began to be exploited on Craig Rhiwarth, and from about 1775 when slate quarrying started above the village. It is tempting to think that this industrialisation converted Llangynog from a church settlement to a small village, and the one archaeological evaluation within the settlement, beyond the western edge of the churchyard in 2008, strengthened this content for no medieval material was found.

The heritage to 1750

The single-chamber church of St Cynog (7629) was rebuilt at the end of the 18th century and renovated in 1894. Only a few fragments of reused stone remain from the earlier church, and

the only fittings to survive the restoration are a series of slate wall memorials and a couple of pieces of furniture.

The church is set in a small, and distinctively raised sub-circular churchyard (7628), which retains its original shape and has not been enlarged.

The earliest domestic building in the village appears to be the New Inn, opposite the church, which is dated to 1751 (7634). Other buildings such as School Terrace are believed to be later and thus fall outside the scope of this report. A number of occupied houses cluster at the base of the Craig Rhiwarth scarp and in addition the remains of stone-walled enclosures and platforms on both sides of the road past Glan-hafon point to former dwellings from the 18th/19th century industrial expansion (7630), now long abandoned.

Ridge and furrow (4993) of unknown date is recognisable on the side of the spur, just south of Bank House.



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