

Llangynyw

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Introduction

Llangynyw (or Llangyniew), 10km to the west of Welshpool, lies on a minor road leading north from the A458(T) between that town and Llanfair Caereinion. The church, accompanied only by the former rectory, is set high into the eastern flank of one of a group of hills edged by Afon Banwy, which at its closest is some 600m away to the west. It is in a reasonably sheltered location and one enjoying an excellent aspect to east and south. Three hundred metres to the south, the old school lies at a T-junction and apart from a new bungalow built between the two places, the overall pattern of settlement is one of dispersed farms.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangynyw 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

It may be assumed that with its British dedication and the shape of the churchyard, Llangynyw was established as a religious focus in the early medieval period. Other than the fact that it became the centre of an ecclesiastical parish, nothing is known of its later history. The place is first recorded as *Llangaenia* in the years 1213 to 1215, and as *Llankenwy* in the Norwich Taxation of 1254, while *Llangynewe* appears about 1570. The name of course references the church of St Cynyw, reputedly a 'saint' or holy man who was the uncle of St Beuno.

There is nothing to suggest that a settlement ever developed around Llangynyw. Even at the time of the Tithe survey in the mid-19th century, the church and rectory were isolated. There were, however, several other buildings in the vicinity of the road junction to the south.

The heritage to 1750

Much of the simple, single-chambered, whitewashed church dedicated to St Cynyw (7647) dates to the 15th century, and this includes its fine timber porch. Internally, too, there are features of that period particularly the screen, together with some 18th and 19th century fittings.

The churchyard, raised by up to a metre on its east side, now exhibits a most irregular shape (7648), but its earlier curvilinear boundary is recognisable on the west and the north.

The church is accompanied only by the Rectory (40883), a Grade II listed building, which is believed to have been built by an incumbent who died in 1729. There is as yet nothing to suggest that there was an earlier house on the site.

There are no incontrovertible signs of former habitation sites around the church. One hundred metres to the south and at a slightly lower altitude adjacent pasture fields contain ground irregularities (4783) beside a well, but the significance of these has yet to be established.

Small tracts of ridge and furrow cultivation have been tentatively identified in several places in the neighbourhood, but their date has not been determined.

Other than a watching brief which was implemented during the excavation of a trench for a power cable across the churchyard in 2008, there has been no archaeological works of any kind in Llangynw in recent times.



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