

Llanllwchaiarn

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Introduction

Llanllwchaiarn lies beside the B4568, some 2km north-east of Newtown. The meandering River Severn, just below Newtown, curves around a spur projecting from the upland slopes. Rock Farm utilises this spur, and the church lies behind it, a small stream creating a shallow valley on the eastern edge of the churchyard. Northwards, the ground rises steadily into the hills. The settlement is currently undergoing rapid change. Opposite the church on the north side of the road to Newtown, a housing estate has sprung up, entirely altering the character of this small historic settlement.

This brief report examines Llanllwchaiarn'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 place-name appears as *Llanlocharen* in 1254 and as *Llanllochaiarn* in 1597. It refers to St Llwchaiarn's church, the dedicatee also appearing on the other side of the Severn at Llanmerewig.

The history of settlement here from early medieval beginnings, as suggested by the dedication, the churchyard morphology and the location beside the river, through to the post-medieval era is unchronicled. In the mid-19th century the church was still relatively isolated, accompanied only by Rock Farm and two houses.

The heritage to 1750

St Llwchaiarn's church (31051) is a brick construction of 1815 which was enlarged in 1864. Little is known of its medieval predecessor. A carved effigy carrying a date of 1630 and some 18th century memorials are virtually all that have survived from the church that was replaced in 1815, but recently it has become the new home of the fine, carved medieval screen that was once in St Mary's at Newtown.

The churchyard (7716) has been enlarged considerably since the mid-19th century. The Tithe map depicts an oval yard and this is still visible on the ground (7716) as a slightly raised area surrounded by a low scarp bank.

The older buildings in the vicinity of Llanllwchaiarn church have a Grade II listing. The church apart, Church House (31053) is a 17th century timber-framed building and was formerly a public house, and its adjacent barn (40391) may be contemporary, although this is not certain. There is some disagreement over the age of Rock House (31054) which is cited as being entirely 19th century (except for the internal staircase) or mid-18th-century according to different experts.

We might care to speculate whether the river was the barrier that at first sight it appears to be. Immediately opposite the church on the other bank is the fine motte and bailey castle of Gro Tump. Is its location purely coincidental? And in the 19th century the vicarage for the incumbent serving the church was also on the south side of the river, a ferry providing transportation, as well as a ford just downstream.



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