

Snead

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Introduction

Snead lies on gently sloping ground on the north side of the River Camlad, a tributary of the River Severn. The Camlad here forms the county border with Shropshire, so the church at Snead is little more than a stone's throw from England. The A489, the main road from Newtown to Craven Arms hugs the contours passing the settlement at a slightly higher level. The nearest town is Bishop's Castle, 3km to the south.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Snead 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 only 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

Snead enters documented history as a manor where at the very end of the 12th century the lord of Montgomery founded a priory for Augustinian canons. Within two or three decades they had been moved to Chirbury but retained the manor as part of their landholding.

The chapel at Snead probably came into existence soon after the original foundation, and probably continued to function after the move to Chirbury. There is, however, nothing to suggest that a nucleated settlement developed during the Middle Ages.

The place-name has been recorded in many variant forms. *Sned* is referred to in documents of 1201, 1253 and 1577, *Snethe* appears in 1227, *Snet* in 1231, *Snedde* between 1230 and 1240, *Le Snedde* in 1317, and *Sneade* in 1583. In its present form it is recorded in 1649 and as *the Snead* around about 1700. The Old English term *snaed* means 'a piece of land separated from a manor'.

By the 17th century, houses were being constructed along the main road above the church, leaving the church isolated but close to the mill.

The heritage to 1750

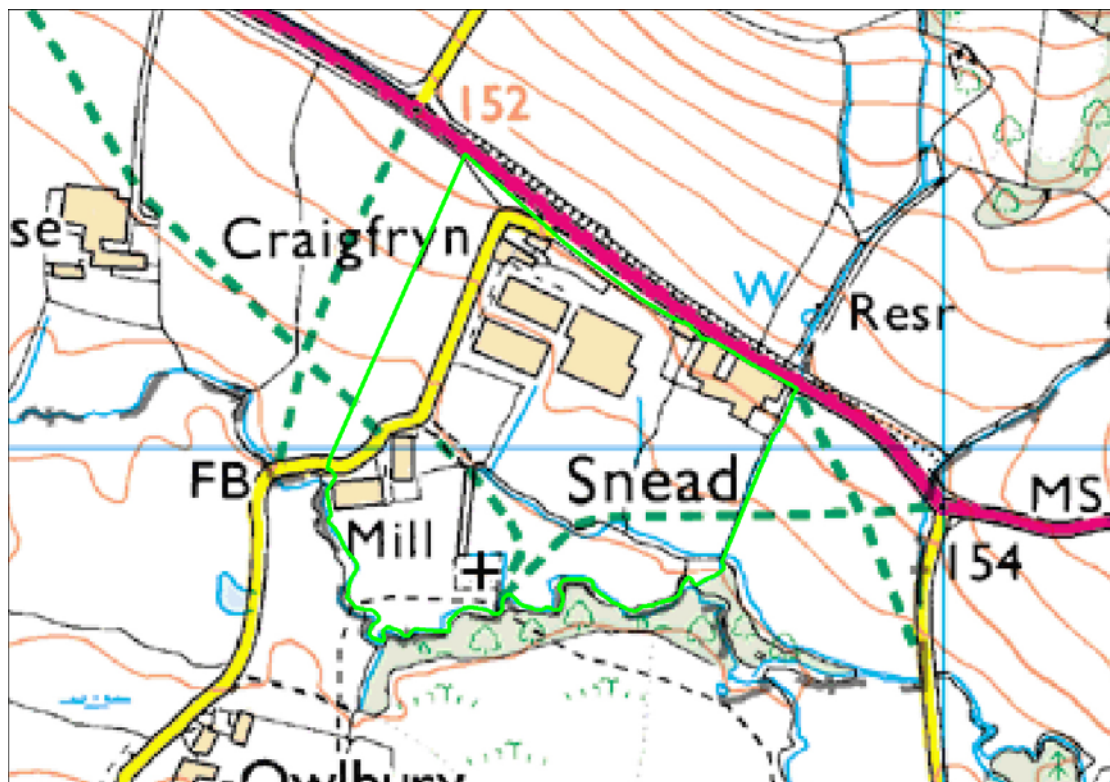
Snead church, dedicated to St Mary the Virgin (16390), is a small, single-chambered building, which retains some medieval walling but was largely rebuilt and restored in 1870 and again in 1998. All its windows were replaced in the Victorian era. It retains a font which could be 12th century in date, and part of a 14th or early 15th century sepulchral slab.

The churchyard is raised and of square design, its graves primarily of 19th century date, though one of 1739 was found during archaeological work in 1998. The church itself appears to be set on a deliberately raised platform.

Snead farmhouse (32545) is a two-storey timber box-framed building, its hall/parlour range of the early to mid 17th century, and the kitchen service range, from later in the century. Snead Stores House (20592) lying immediately to the west of the farm is probably a fragment of what was originally a much larger building, again half-timbered and of box-frame construction, with one room incorporating a Tudor-headed doorway. And Graigfryn House, (20590), 200m to the north-west, is a sub-medieval, half-timbered house, its dormers carrying dates of 1658 and 1740.

The mill at Snead (26749) almost certainly had its origins in the Middle Ages, for immediately after the dissolution of the priory at Chirbury in 1536 there is a reference to the rent of the mill at 'Sned'. Nothing from this earlier period is known to remain, and the present mill is a 19th century brick building.

In 1999, a watching brief during a development, identified a small length of stone foundation (70736), perhaps the north-western corner of a house platform, with fragments of burnt clay and charcoal overlying the stones. The remains can be tentatively attributed to the medieval period.



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