

Bryngwyn

SO 186494
16120

Introduction

Bryngwyn is set high in the hills of southern Radnorshire. Hay and the River Wye are some 8km to the south-east. The settlement has a south-easterly aspect, the open common of Bryngwyn Hill rising behind. It is reportedly one of the highest villages in the region.

This brief report examines Bryngwyn's emergence and development prior 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). The preparation of this report has been funded by Cadw, the historic environment service of the Welsh Assembly Government.



Bryngwyn village, photo 95-C-0349 © CPAT, 2011

History of development

Bryngwyn meaning 'white hill' first appears as *Brewen* in 1231 and as the more recognisable *Bringwyn* in 1291.

Nothing is known of its early history. Hill-top settlements are not common in eastern Wales, but there are others examples, and there is no reason to assume that their development was fundamentally different from comparably sized settlements in the valleys. The curvilinearity of the churchyard hints at an early medieval origin, and this is reinforced by the presence of an early medieval inscribed stone. The presence of an early church, however, does not mean that there was also an early settlement here.

In the 1840s, though the overall pattern was similar, there were more houses in Bryngwyn than today with four facing the church across the open ground beyond the southern sector of the churchyard. What cannot be readily explained is the outer, if somewhat irregular boundary line between 30m and 60m out from the churchyard wall which is near continuous on all sides but the north-east; it could define an earlier enclosure though this is perhaps the least likely explanation, it could be an earlier patch of common on which the church was positioned, or it could simply be due to incidental development.

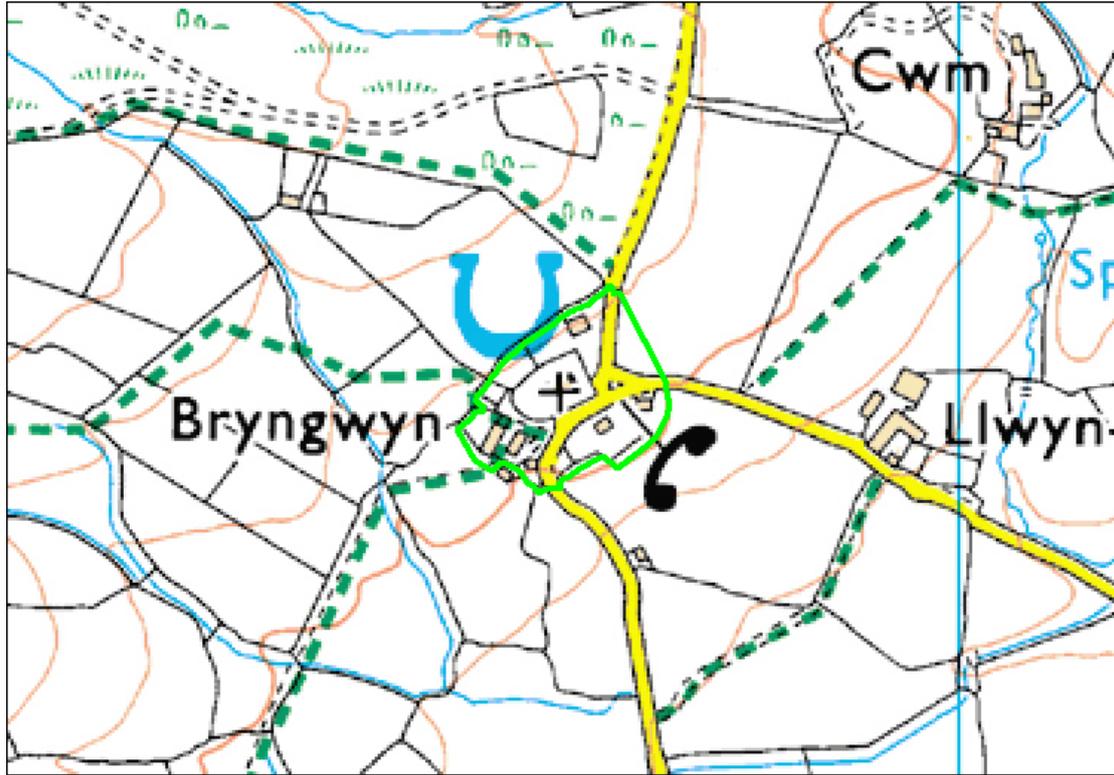
The heritage to 1750

St Michael's Church (16006) consists of a nave, perhaps of the late 13th century, a chancel, south porch and a west belfry. There is a fine chancel roof of c.1500, but some of the church was rebuilt between 1874 and 1877. A pillar stone with incised crosses and considered to be from the period between the 7th and 10th centuries (385; SAM Rd101) is housed in the chancel, but was formerly in the churchyard. A curious carved stone with two small figures is set in the outer wall face of the chancel. The church is set on a platform, a trait it shares with the Rectory to the north-east.

The churchyard (16247) is D-shaped. Though raised on the west and south, this is largely a result of the ground fall. The linear eastern boundary looks like a secondary truncation of an earlier perimeter, but if so it is now impossible to discern its original line.

The pattern of small closes around the south quadrant of the churchyard was paralleled to some extent on the north side, as noted above. Several buildings have disappeared and boundaries removed, but early Ordnance Survey maps reveal the pattern and there are earthwork traces - perhaps a track - just beyond the southern limit of the field containing the village hall (OS plot 7045).

The church apart there are no listed buildings within the village core. The Old House, formerly Church Cottage (16248), is a cross-passage house that has been attributed to the late 18th century.



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