

Llanddewi Fach

SO 146454
16313

Introduction

Terraced into the northern face of a broad valley that carries a minor tributary of the Bachawy, the church is now the sole element of Llanddewi Fach other than the dispersed farms in the neighbourhood. It lies about 2km south-west of Painscastle and 12km south-east of Builth Wells. It is approached on foot across fields for there is no lane leading to it.

This brief report examines Llanddewi Fach's 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 origin and history of Llanddewi Fach are not recorded, though the first reference to it is an early one from the 12th century when it was reported as *llann dewi y crwys*. The significance of the 'cross' element is not clear. By the 16th century it appeared with the affix *Ismynydd* revealing the commote in which it lay. At this time and presumably in previous centuries it was a chapel of ease to Llowes.

The mid-19th-century Tithe survey shows the church to be as isolated then as today, but the presence of adjacent house platforms (see below) suggests that the possibility of some dwellings adjacent to it in the past cannot be ruled out.

The heritage to 1750

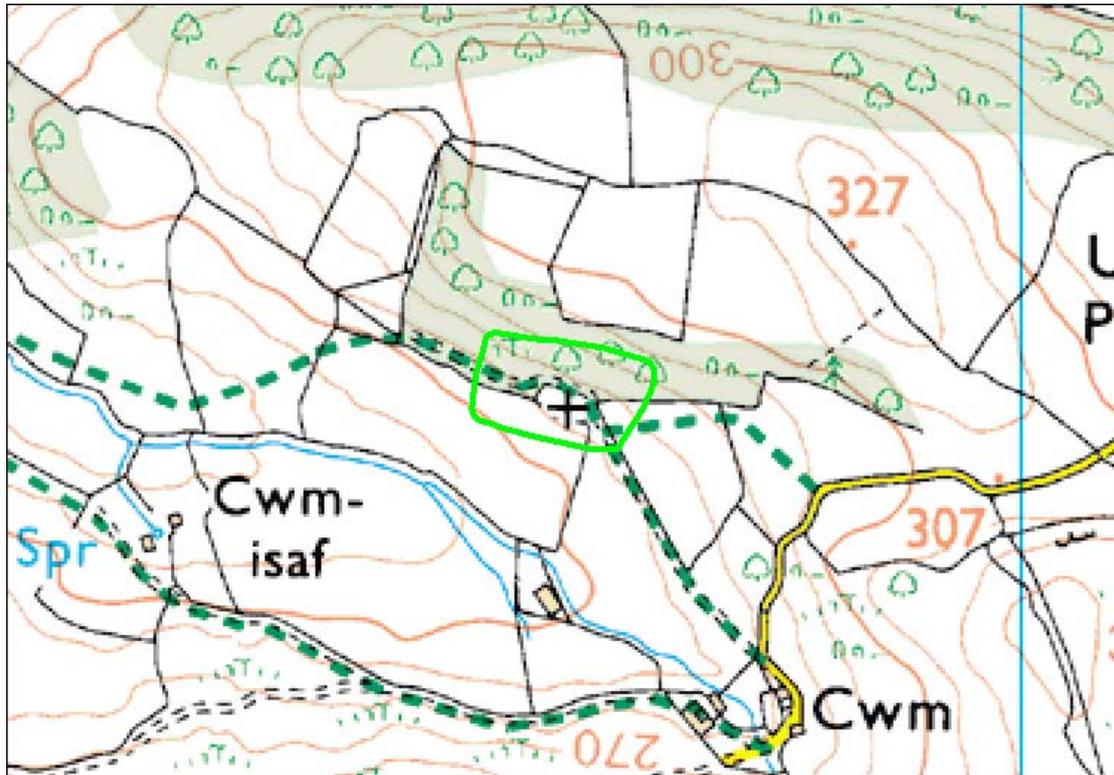
St David's church (16061) was entirely rebuilt in 1860, and is a simple structure with no features of any age. It has a fireplace built into the north wall.

The churchyard (16242) is small and roughly rectangular with a surrounding stone wall, embanked on the south. Marked burials commence in the later 18th century, implying its transformation from a chapel of ease.

The wooded slope around the church (OS old plot 207) shows one probable and two possible house terraces and perhaps two house platforms (16243), all within 40m of the churchyard wall.

Immediately below the church, low ridge and furrow (16244) covers the pasture (OS old plot 205) and other fields on the opposite side of the valley also retain similar traces of open field cultivation.

The nearest farms, Cwm (16241) and Cwm Issa, are both of stone, the former perhaps mid-18th-century, the latter a 17th-century platformed house. The former is a listed Grade II building and was formerly the vicarage.



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