

Llanfihangel Rhydithon

SO 151667
16169

Introduction

Llanfihangel Rhydithon's church looks southwards over the Maes Brook, a small tributary of the River Aran which itself flows into the Ithon some kilometres to the west. Behind the church the ground rises steeply to the northern flank of Radnor Forest. The church occupies higher ground with the older houses of the settlement set below it. A few modern dwellings have been built at the same level as the church, hemming the churchyard in on the south-west side. Llanfihangel is around 10km north-east of Llandrindod Wells.

This brief report examines Llanfihangel Rhydithon'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 name links St Michael's church with a ford of the River Ithon, though the river is several kilometres away. Possibly then Rhydithon was a district name or this was simply a mechanism for distinguishing this Llanfihangel from others in the region. It is first documented as *Langmiclen* in 1291 and as *Thlan Mihangel Redyethan* in 1304.

Nothing has been gleaned about the earlier history of this settlement, and there have been no pre-planning assessments or evaluations here in recent years.

The church, Lower House Farm, Church House and at most a couple of cottages constituted the village 150 years ago, and there is nothing to suggest that this was ever a properly nucleated settlement.

The heritage to 1750

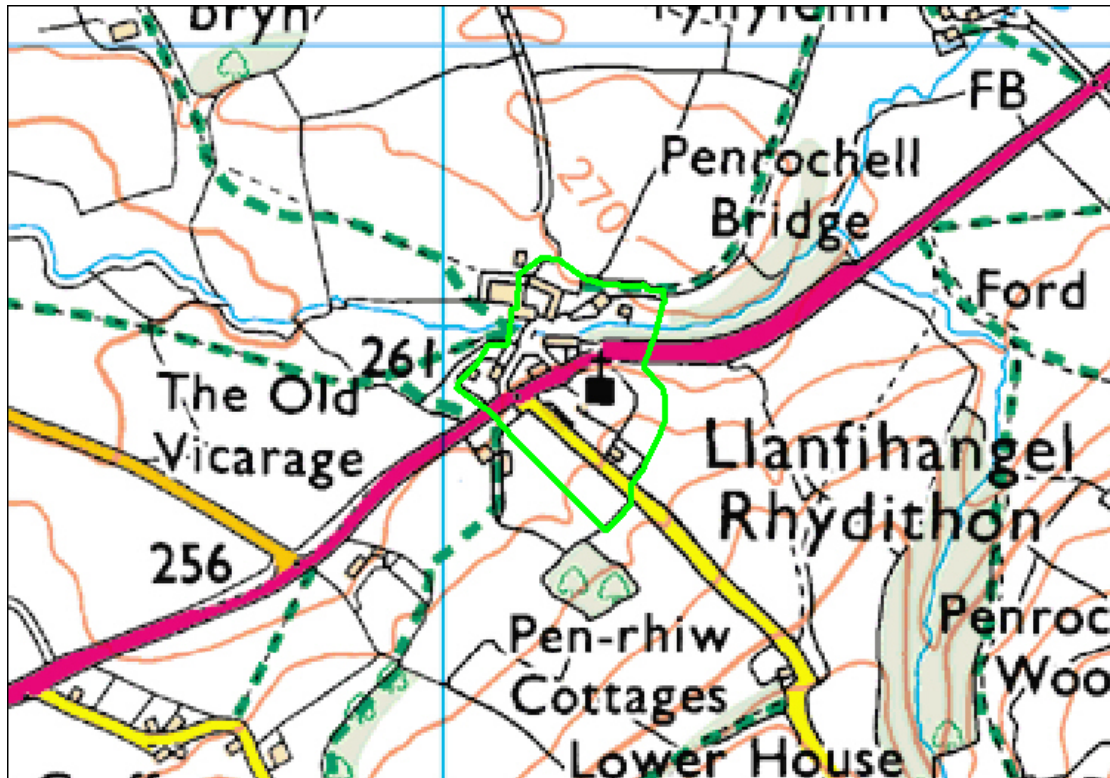
The church of St Michael and All Angels (16033) was rebuilt in its entirety in 1838, and retains no earlier features other than a 14th-century font and a couple of late 18th-century memorials.

The churchyard (16232) is raised, particularly on its north-eastern side, but it has an irregular shape with an element of curvilinearity about it only on the north where the topography

dictates its line. A post-1840 extension to the graveyard south of the church is discernible, for the original scarp bank is still apparent.

Lower House Farm (16062) incorporates a cruck-framed former house of 15th-century date, with 17th/18th-century additions at the east end where it links to a barn/cowhouse range of similar origin. The complex carries a Grade II listing.

Although strictly it falls outside the remit of the study, mention might also be made here of the parish hall which also carries a Grade II listing, and has a complex if brief history. It has been converted from a toll house built about 1800, although an inscription at the east end also records that that part was erected as a school in 1848.



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