

## Glyn Ceiriog

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### *Introduction*

Known in past centuries as Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog but now abbreviated to Glyn Ceiriog, this village represents a classic example of settlement shift. The church accompanied by only a few houses is set on a steep south-facing hillside at a point where the Ceiriog valley describes a dramatic loop, and the location offers an excellent aspect both upstream and downstream. East from the church the ground also drops away steeply into the valley of Nant y Weniar. Above the church the ground rises for nearly 200m to a ridge running off the Berwyn Mountains. The main and modern part of the village lies in the valley below the church, on flatter ground beside the Ceiriog.

Glyn Ceiriog is served by the B4500 from Chirk and the B4579 from Oswestry. Llangollen is some 4km over the hills to the north, Oswestry 12km to the south-east.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Glyn Ceiriog up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely 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 adopted in the HER to provide researchers with information that is specific to the individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website ([www.archwilio.org.uk](http://www.archwilio.org.uk)).

### *History of development*

The earliest reference to the settlement is the Taxation of 1291 when the church was termed *Lansanfreit*. In 1538 we read of *Llansanffraid ynglyn* but it was not until 1566 that the Ceiriog was mentioned in association with the church, although as an independent feature the valley of Glyn Ceiriog was recorded in 1400. The meaning is straightforward – the ‘church of Saint Ffraid in the valley of the Ceiriog’.

The church was originally a chapel dependent on the mother church at Llangollen, and it seems likely though has not been proved that it came into existence in the early medieval era (i.e. before the Norman Conquest). The date at which it became a parish church is unknown, though this was certainly before the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The origin and subsequent development of any settlement around the church remains obscure.

A large map of the manors of Chirk and Chirkland which dates to the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century depicts the churchyard and cottages on the lane leading to it from the west. Above these were open moorland (*cf* Llanarmon Mynydd Mawr). This must have been the original

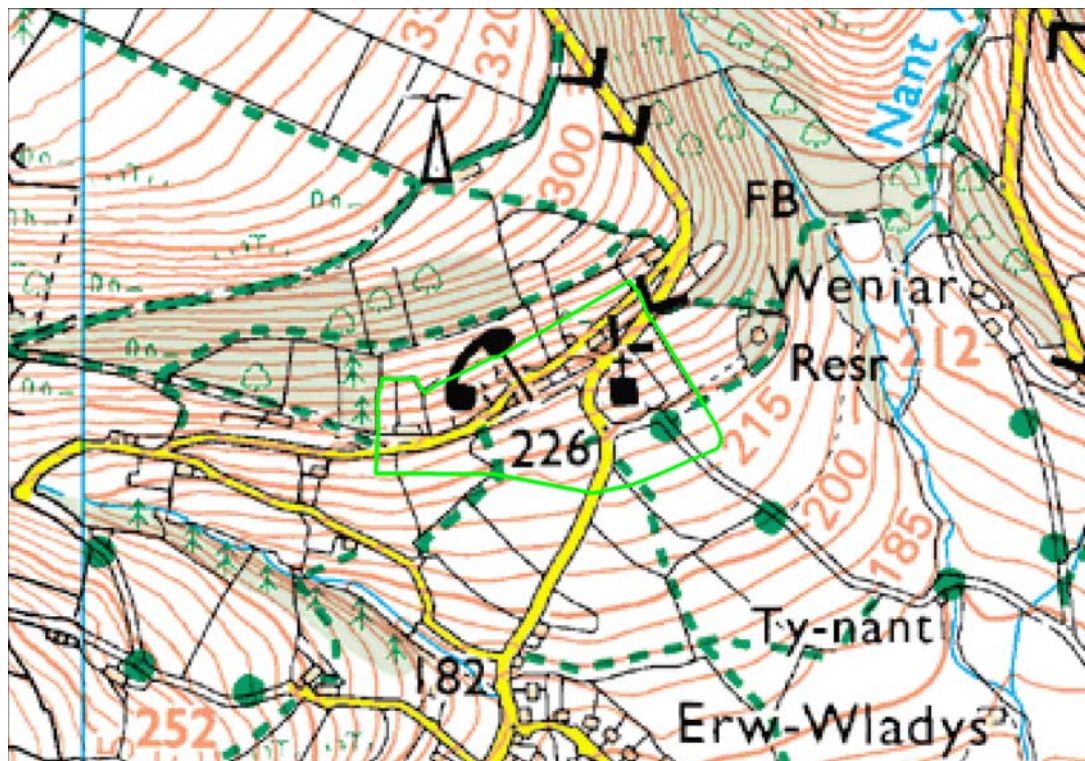
focus of settlement, though whether dwellings began to emerge here in the late Middle Ages has yet to be established. In the valley below on the Chirk manorial map there was only a single farm, Ty Newydd (now gone but originally east of the Vicarage), and by the river the mill of Felin-bychan. John Evans' map from 1795 implies rather more settlement close to the river, but both of these maps are at too small a scale to allow any certainty on the true extent of the settlement. More precision comes from the tithe map of 1838 which reveals that dwellings had started to cluster around the crossroads three hundred metres below the church, creating the nucleus of modern Glyn Ceiriog, while along the numerous lanes lacing the northern side of the valley there was sporadic housing.

### ***The heritage to 1750***

St Ffraid's church (101088) was rebuilt about 1790, remodelled half a century later in 1838-9, and restored and to some degree refurbished in 1887. A claim that the tower is substantially 13th-century in origin, and thus the only early portion of the building, remains unproven. Sir Stephen Glynne, the inveterate commentator on churches, visited the church in 1853 and found 'scarcely any object of interest', and sadly that is the case today with only 18<sup>th</sup>-century altar rails and an illegible brass which from an earlier source is thought to commemorate a death in 1746. With the exception of the font which was classed by Archdeacon as 'old Perpendicular', its more obvious furnishings and fittings – the commandment boards and the royal arms – are all Victorian.

The churchyard (19745) is now of polygonal form; the Tithe map's depiction of a more curvilinear outline should perhaps be treated with caution. Today the northern slopes are overgrown, and the graveyard has been enlarged with successive extensions to the east.

As noted above the focus of settlement in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the track leading westwards from the church. None of the houses on the track now appears to be any earlier than the 19<sup>th</sup> century, until Pen-draw'r-garth is reached, four hundred metres along the track, its date 1733.



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