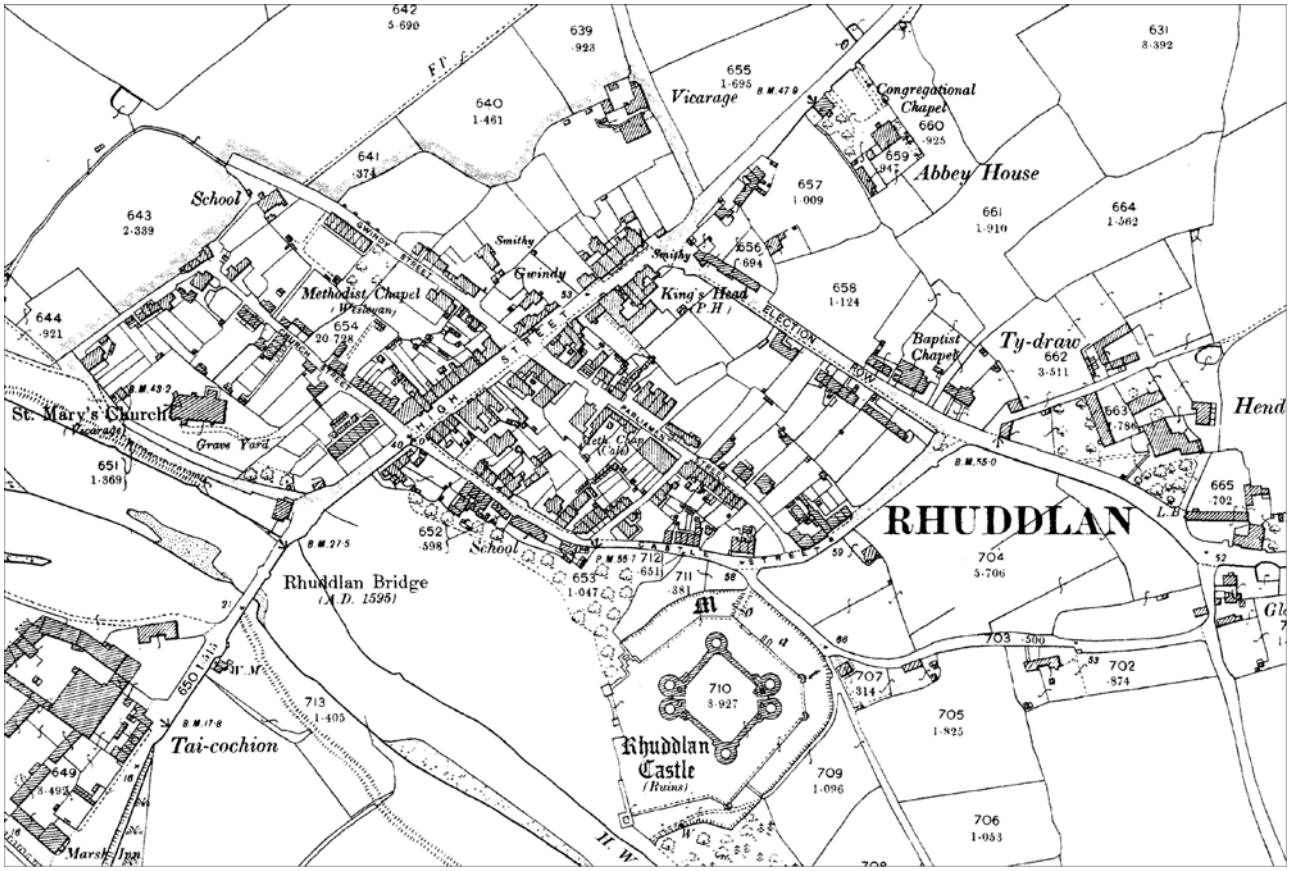
**CPAT Report No 1257**

# Historic settlements in Denbighshire




Llywodraeth Cymru
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Cadw

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

**CPAT Report No 1257**

# Historic settlements in Denbighshire

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**Report for Cadw**

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# The historic settlements of Denbighshire

## An introduction

***Background***

Nearly twenty years ago the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust compiled assessments of the historic settlements of what was then termed Glyndwr District, one of the districts that made up the modern county of Clwyd, which was subsequently abolished in 1996. This was one of several such assessments undertaken on behalf of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments that covered the local authority areas of eastern and north-eastern Wales. Ultimately ten reports were completed between 1992 and 1995, embracing the entire region for which CPAT had and still retains a remit.

The imperative that underpinned these surveys was committed to paper when the first area of eastern Wales was assessed – Brecknock Borough – in 1993, being expressed in the following terms:

It has long been recognised that development within town and village alike [might] disturb or obliterate significant information about the past, but a suitable response to a specific building development or other permanent land use change has usually been instigated, if at all, on an *ad hoc* basis. A more structured approach to the understanding of historic settlements and the preservation and management of this fragile resource is required. This has been given a greater urgency by the publication in 1991 of the Welsh version of the *Planning and Policy Guidance Note: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16 Wales). This emphasises the responsibilities of Local Planning Authorities in the conservation of the archaeological heritage and confirms that archaeological remains are a material consideration when determining planning applications (Martin and Walters 1993, 3).

Three principal objectives of the Brecknock Borough study were defined at that time, and these were considered to be equally applicable for the later studies:

i) to produce a general picture of historic settlement in the area,
ii) to identify, in as far as the evidence allows, those areas within the historic settlements that could be termed archaeologically sensitive, in order to assist in the day-to-day and long-term planning processes initiated by the local authority, and
iii) to define areas of potential archaeological significance where developers might be required to undertake an archaeological evaluation as part of the planning process.

The individual village histories were never intended for publication, but their contents were absorbed into the Sites and Monuments Record (now the Historic Environment Record) where they could be accessed and recycled, often we have found without any acknowledgement to their source, in others' reports.

There is no need to stress that in the two decades since those reports on Glyndwr's towns and villages was circulated to a relatively small number of interested organisations, there have been changes, and we would hope improvements, to our collective perception of the emergence, development and in some instances collapse of historic settlements in the border counties and more specifically in Denbighshire, the successor to Glyndwr for many of the settlements considered here.

Firstly, a series of Cadw-funded site-condition studies have appeared which directly or indirectly have had a bearing on settlement studies. The historic churches survey (1995-99), the early medieval ecclesiastical sites survey (2001-04) and even the deserted medieval rural settlement survey (1996-2001) have all played a part in enhancing our understanding of

settlement patterns and development in eastern Wales, as have some rather more specific and detailed ground surveys such as those of village earthworks in Brecknock (1993) and Radnorshire (1996), though none unfortunately for Denbighshire.

Secondly, there are the results that have accrued from client-funded works on development sites – whether excavation, evaluation, watching brief or building recording – as a result of local authorities implementing PPG16 and, from 2002, the guidelines contained in Planning Policy Wales.

Thirdly, there are recently published studies which have transformed our thinking on certain topics. Most notable in this context are the place-name studies by Hywel Wyn Owen and Richard Morgan (2007), the three volumes of the early medieval inscribed stones corpus prepared by Nancy Edwards, Mark Redknap and John Lewis (2007 and 2013) and Richard Suggett's *Houses and History in the March of Wales. Radnorshire 1400-1800* published by the Welsh Royal Commission in 2005. The last of these is not directly pertinent to Denbighshire but it illustrates the quality of some of the work that has recently been completed or is in progress in the Principality.

Finally though in some ways the least tangible of the inputs is the ever-improving perception and appreciation of settlement development and the patterns that are fostered in east Wales, as a result of accumulated expertise, and the accessing of research from both other regions of Wales and from England. This doesn't normally manifest itself in publications, although the writer's paper, co-authored with Wyn Evans (2009) on *clas* churches and their landscapes is an exception.

In 2010 CPAT felt that the time had come to re-examine the pictures of its historic settlements, fifteen to twenty years on from when the initial studies were completed. In a general sense, various questions had been raised. Had developer-funding in advance of the potential destruction or damage to the cultural heritage had much of an effect and if so where? Had our knowledge and appreciation of the historic settlements in the region markedly improved in the last fifteen to twenty years? And in a departure from the practice in the early 1990s when the Internet was little more than an unfulfilled dream, could we successfully disseminate that information authoritatively so that it could be accessed digitally to satisfy the increasing number of people who search our website? There are several hundred historic settlements in eastern Wales and it was not possible to examine them all in a single exercise. The former local authority areas of Brecknock Borough and Radnorshire were selected to initiate the programme in 2010-11 and this has been followed with studies of Montgomeryshire and Flintshire in 2011-12, Wrexham in 2013, and during the current year Eastern Conwy as well as Denbighshire.

***Methodology and presentation***

The 1995 report. A pattern for each report was established in 1992 comprising a report which covered a minimum of one A4 page of text and in some instances, depending on the size and interest of the settlement involved, three or four pages. The report considered, under four sub-headings, the geographic location of the settlement, the known history of its origins and development, the buildings and archaeology that were integral elements of the settlement, and finally a set of recommendations for further work.

Accompanying each settlement study was an Ordnance Survey map-based depiction of the settlement showing scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, known archaeological features and earthworks, areas which it was felt at the time should be preserved in situ, other areas that should be evaluated in advance of development, and a boundary line drawn around the historic settlement as it was then recognised, in other words the perceived historic core of the town or village.

Those early reports also contained as annexes a copy of the descriptive brief for the preparation of the study and another of a draft paper on archaeology and the planning process in Powys

*The 2014 report.* After various discussions the configuration of both the text layout and the accompanying map were altered when the first revisions took place, to take account of changing circumstances and current requirements.

The baseline information – the settlement name, the national gird reference and the primary record number that links the settlement (as well as its individual elements) to the Historic Environment Record – have necessarily remained the same, although the height above sea level and the prefix PRN have been dropped.

The geographic location has been retained, as has the section on history, now renamed 'history of development'. More change can be seen in the section formerly headed 'buildings and archaeology' which has been altered to 'the heritage to 1750'. This alteration results from two considerations. Firstly, it is becoming increasingly commonplace to refer to the cultural heritage and cultural heritage assets, convenient collective terms that embrace not only below and above-ground archaeology, and buildings, but also historic landscape (and townscape) elements that did not necessarily get the recognition that they warrant in the former terminology. Cultural heritage is seen as a useful shorthand descriptive term for everything that we are concerned with here. Secondly, a decision was taken to end the study at 1750, bringing it into line with Cadw's terminal date for the concurrent scoping programme of medieval and early post-medieval monument scheduling enhancement. 1750 to 1760 is often seen as a starting date for the Industrial Revolution, even if its full 'flowering' did not occur in Wales for another fifty years. Equally importantly, however, it was during the later 18th century and a little beyond that, some settlements saw marked development with a concomitant increase in the number of buildings, and the diminishing significance in the forms of evidence that are significant to the archaeologist. This is not to downplay the significance of the buildings that date from the later 18th and 19th centuries, nor to infer that settlements that contain large numbers of such structures are not historic, rather it is a commentary on the shift in the nature of the evidence that is available to us.

This report has also tried to adopt a more rigorous approach to the presentation of the data, whether it be on archaeological sites, buildings or the townscape. It would be easy to write protracted descriptions of some buildings such as churches or earthwork complexes, or even in some instances the discoveries from development-led evaluations. The regurgitation of much detail, it was felt, would not necessarily be particularly useful to the general reader, and indeed might act as a deterrent. The inclusion of PRN numbers will allow the researcher or enthusiast to follow up individual leads in the regional Historic Environment Record should they wish, but what is offered here is a concise text covering as many issues as are currently known without over-elaboration on any one of them.

Finally, the section of recommendations has been removed. This, it should be admitted, is in part a pragmatic decision based on the realisation that some of the original recommendations covering standard issues such as the importance of consultation with the archaeological curator, the need for watching briefs and evaluations, and the like were compiled at a time when PPG16 was new, consultation practice was yet to be regularised, and the importance of the cultural heritage resource in our towns and villages had in some areas yet to be appreciated by at least some local authority planners. This situation has changed, and the importance of the cultural heritage is now largely accepted at local government level. It is pragmatic, however, for less satisfactory reasons. In an ideal world the recommendation for Llanfwrog that a survey be conducted to identify the relict earthworks of the former village would have been followed up and completed at some point over the last seventeen years. That these aims have not been achieved is less a comment on the validity of the recommendation, more on the limited resources that are available for surveying and research: it is unrealistic to assume that this is going to change in the foreseeable future.

There have also been some modifications to the plans that accompany the texts. The depiction of designated archaeological sites (scheduling) and buildings (listing) has been left out, for we are conscious of the fact that it is entirely the prerogative of Cadw and/or the local authority to define these sites in cartographic form, and that the reader requiring information on the extent of a designation should approach the appropriate authority for that information. Furthermore, the number and extent of designated sites within any given settlement will change through time, and assuming that these maps have a currency measured in years, there is the potential for misleading a reader because the situation could have changed.

The definition of the historic core has also been modified, taking more account of existing boundaries in order to lessen any potential contention over whether a particular spot lies inside or outside the historic core as we perceive it. We would stress that the core boundary as defined is not an immutable perimeter, but is simply an estimate and a guide based on an assessment of the existing evidence by the writer as to where earlier settlement may once have existed.

Dropped too is the zonation of areas for evaluation in advance of development. In 1992, defining such areas was a useful guide to planners as to where archaeological intervention was most needed, but there is a potential conflict between the depiction of one or two such areas on a map on the one hand and the definition of the historic core on the other. If for whatever reason, an area within an historic core envelope is not highlighted for evaluation, this could be taken as an indication that the area would not require further assessment in the event of a proposed development. Rather we must work on the assumption that any development within an historic core could be a candidate for an evaluation, depending of course on the nature of the development itself, but that it should be the development control officer at CPAT who makes that decision, based on his own professional judgment.

More contentious perhaps is the decision to omit the identification of blocks of land defined as ‘areas for preservation in situ’, another facet of the 1992 survey. Where such areas are already statutorily designated within an historic settlement, their preservation is a given and no problem arises. However, in some cases in the past a decision that an area ought to be preserved has been taken on the basis of a rather superficial assessment of its worth, rather than on a detailed analysis of what is there. If, then, at a planning level a field containing earthworks is going to be preserved it needs to be based on rigorously defined evidence that will stand up to objective scrutiny, and this requires a detailed record that is rarely accessible through a report of this nature.

One final aspect to clarify is that the historic core envelope now defines only those areas within which there is the likelihood of settlement, by which we mean dwellings and their curtilages. The setting of any settlement will have been the surrounding landscape that was farmed and utilised from it, and potentially could spread over several square kilometres. Defining its fields, its pastures and its woodlands will be a considerable task, and its success cannot be guaranteed. Vital though it is to an understanding of that settlement, the inclusion of the setting within the historic core cannot be advocated. It requires a different level of zoning.

The original study of Glyndwr listed 46 settlements. The current survey covers 40, but there have been both introductions and omissions. Gone are settlements such as Gellifor, Maeshafn and Rhydycroesau that reflect developments and events that occurred only after 1750. Gone too are a group of settlements at the extreme southern end of the district – Llanarmon Mynydd Mawr, Llangadwaladr, Llangedwyn, Llansilin as well as part of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant – which have been moved into modern Powys, and two others – Chirk and Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog – which now fall within Wrexham County Borough. Perhaps to compensate, Rhuddlan, St Asaph and several smaller settlements, Bodfari, Cwm, Dyserth and Tremeirchion, have been moved out of their historic catchment, Flintshire and into Denbighshire.

## A brief overview of Denbighshire's historic settlements

The categorisation of towns, villages and settlements in any region is frequently a difficult and sometimes impossible task, based as it is on sparse and often sporadic evidence, incomplete and sporadic survival, and poor early documentation. On the positive side, form and shape, more correctly termed morphology, provide guidance on planned towns and villages, and the presence of older buildings can offer clues as to whether there was some level of nucleation in a settlement in the Tudor era, though rarely it should be stressed before that time. Both of these characteristics provide positive evidence that can usually be relied on as long as it is accurately interpreted. By contrast, negative evidence used to support a particular contention, may or may not be reliable, and there is always a risk that what commences as a tentative idea takes on the guise of a fact. There may be no immediate way of knowing. Overall, the number of settlements where we have positive evidence for their emergence and development is far outweighed by those underpinned by negative evidence alone, but Denbighshire is not unique in this respect. It is a problem that is implicit with virtually every area of Wales. The categorisation that follows then is little more than provisional, and is likely to stay so for the foreseeable future.

***Planned and unplanned settlements***

There are only three settlements which reveal elements of deliberate planning, and they account for all of Denbighshire's major historic towns. With Rhuddlan and Denbigh the evidence is very clear and in the case of the former the regular street pattern adopts what can be seen as a classic planned layout. With Denbigh there were greater constraints imposed by the natural topography and also a two-phase to development which saw initial growth within the constraints of the town walls and later more regulated growth on the grid-patterned streets laid out below the walled town. Ruthin is more difficult to unravel; the topography was again an influence on the town design, and to this might be added (with the stress on 'might') the influence of a pre-existing settlement whose layout to some degree dictated how Edwardian Ruthin emerged. The street plan then displays certain regularities – a central spine street from north to south, from church to castle, with the market placed on it, and some roads coming off at right angles – but it is not a classic pattern and it seems likely that we are, to an uncertain degree, witnessing urban compromise. All three may have had town defences. In the case of Denbigh the stone walls are unambivalent, with Rhuddlan there is a perpetual sense of the town defences always being short-lived regardless of the era that that they were thrown up in, and as for Ruthin the question as to whether the town did or did not have defences rumbles on. Probably there was a ditch around the town, this much seems to be agreed by the majority of commentators, but it seems a hardly sufficient barrier to protect a built-up area. Only future excavation is likely to clarify the issue.

This leaves three small towns, two on the higher reaches of the River Dee, one beside the Elwy. All three interestingly originated in points of growth around mother churches that had flourished in the early medieval era as important and probably quite powerful ecclesiastical centres (the same cannot be claimed for the three towns already considered above). Neither Llangollen nor Corwen shows any convincing evidence of planning before the modern era. Both look to have developed organically, with dwellings emerging along a single road, and later spreading out to either side of it. Town planning goes hand in hand with markets, burgesses and defended central places such as major castles, lords making money from urban growth. With the exception perhaps of their simple market systems, Llangollen and Corwen appear unable to boast any of these. St Asaph is different again. Small even today, it does have a straight main street, but this is hardly a reflection of deliberate planning, but rather reflects the presence of the cathedral authorities, who it might be argued probably didn't have the same capitalistic tendencies as their secular counterparts. And unlike the Episcopal counterpart at the opposite end of the country – St Davids – the town didn't even have a recognisable market place.

***Nucleated village settlements***

A feature of most areas of eastern Wales is the sporadic presence in medieval times of admittedly small, nucleated settlements. In Denbighshire these are particularly difficult to pin down; there are few written records that enable us to assume that groups of dwellings existed around long-established churches in the Middle Ages, no maps that go back that far and, unlike southern Powys, settlement earthworks are almost non-existent. Paradoxically, it is Cynwyd in the Dee Valley, a village with few outwards signs of a long history and no church of any age, which has the best claim to having been a nucleated settlement in the medieval era. The other exception could be Dyserth if the claims of its size at the end of the Stuart era were not exaggerated by a contemporary observer. Dyserth, it might be argued, had many things going for it in its potential for village development. A well-established mother church, a nearby castle, albeit a short-lived one, and proximity to two urban centres, Rhuddlan and St Asaph.

It is only two hundred years later at the end of the 17th century that we start to get an idea of the size of settlements that were emerging as villages from the returns provided by Edward Lhuyd's correspondents. At that time we can see that Bettws Gwerfil Goch, Gwyddelwern, Henllan, Llandegla, Llandrillo and Meliden all had upwards of ten houses in association with their churches, suggesting established nucleated villages. But their size in the 17th century cannot be taken as an indicator of size in earlier centuries. Growth and expansion under the Tudor and Stuart monarchs is seen as a standard occurrence across England and Wales, and the emergence of a nucleation in the post-medieval era could have been a result of entirely local factors after the Reformation.

Smaller number of houses lay around the churches of Bryneglwys, Cwm, Derwen, Llanarmon, Llanfair, Llanrhaeadr and Tremeirchion, as well perhaps as Bodfari, Llandyrnog and Nantglyn where the evidence is not as clear.

***Church settlements***

Church settlements, where an isolated church is accompanied even today by only a single farm or inn, top the list of site types in numerical terms in some parts of east Wales. There are certainly some of these in Denbighshire. Carrog, (formerly Llansantffraid Glyn Dyfrdwy), Cyffylliog, Efenechtyd, Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd, Llanelidan, Llanfarchell, Llanferres, Llangar, Llangwyfan, Llangynhafal, Llanrhudd, Llantysilio, Llanychan and Llanynys, and perhaps Clocaenog and Llanfwrog, could all fit into this category. Yet it is symptomatic of our general ignorance and the lack of archaeological work that in not a single instance can we be certain that the church and farm that we see now are not the sole survivors of a larger settlement existing here at some point in the past.

## Bettws Gwerfil Goch

**SJ 0330 4660**
**105946**

***Introduction***
Bettws Gwerfil Goch is set in a U-shaped valley occupied by a small stream that runs south-westwards to join Afon Alwen no more than three hundred metres away. Hills press down on the settlement to the east and west, the church with its surrounding houses sitting on a gentle south-east facing spur where the tributary opens out into the main valley.

Bettws is now one of the most westerly villages in Denbighshire, Afon Alwen to the west at times forming the boundary with neighbouring Conwy. Until 1974, it was a parish in Merionnydd, before being transferred to Clwyd, now itself discarded. Corwen is a little less than 6km to the south-east and the A5 trunk road about 3km to the south, but the settlement itself is served only by minor lanes.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Bettws Gwerfil Goch 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 require modification 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. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

***History of development***
The church here is recorded as *Ecc'a de betos* in 1254, and as *Bettus* in 1535. In 1291 it appears as *Bettus Guerfyl* but the full name emerges only in the Elizabethan period. The betws element is usually taken to indicate a chapel or oratory rather than a parochial church, while Gwerfil Goch is identified in early genealogies as a daughter of one of the princes of Gwynedd, Cynan ab Owain Gwynedd, who lived at the beginning of the 13$^{th}$ century. Assuming her to be the patron of the chapel, this might indicate a late foundation date for it, and this would be in keeping with the adoption of the element *betws*. It has implications too for the development of the settlement that subsequently developed around it.

Yet we should acknowledge at least a possibility that there was already a chapel here and that Gwerfyl Goch simply re-founded or re-endowed it. Certainly Archdeacon Thomas, the historian of the diocese, considered that it might have originated as an oratory or pilgrims' church on an ancient routeway from Bala to Ruthin and Holywell. He suggested, too, that its earlier dedication might have been to St Elian, on the basis of locally surviving place-names, and that it was rebuilt by the husband of Gwefyl Goch, a grand-daughter of Owain Gwynedd, in the 12$^{th}$ century. However, this supposed dedication to St Elian is in doubt as the place-names quoted by Thomas appear to be of little antiquity.

The position of the settlement close to its own parish boundary with two other parishes, Corwen and Llanfihangel, also points to a late emergence for Bettws.

Edward Lhuyd at the end of the 17th century noted that there were nine cottages by the church which suggests a small but not insignificant settlement. Fairs were held in the churchyard until the 18th century which reinforces the view that Bettws was a local focus, and this is reinforced by Lhuyd's remarking on 'the small market of sale kept in it on fryday and 3 fairs in ye year'. The mid-19th-century Tithe survey reveals a pattern and density of settlement on the north-west side of the stream that has altered very little in the intervening century and a half.

***The heritage to 1750***

The small church (19754), a single cell structure with a porch and vestry attached, is dedicated to St Mary. The fabric of the church traditionally dates to the 15th century but whether any of it could be of earlier, 12th-century date, is impossible to determine. The porch was constructed in 1606. The church as a whole was restored and partially rebuilt in 1882. There are late medieval (1492) painted panels forming the reredos, a medieval roof with carvings and faint traces of wall paintings in the chancel, together with 18th-century furnishings.

The churchyard (19755) is almost rectangular. Encroached upon in the southern corner and perhaps on the north-west side, it is raised particularly on the south-east side where its level is nearly 3m above the lane beyond. There is no evidence of a former curvilinear circuit.

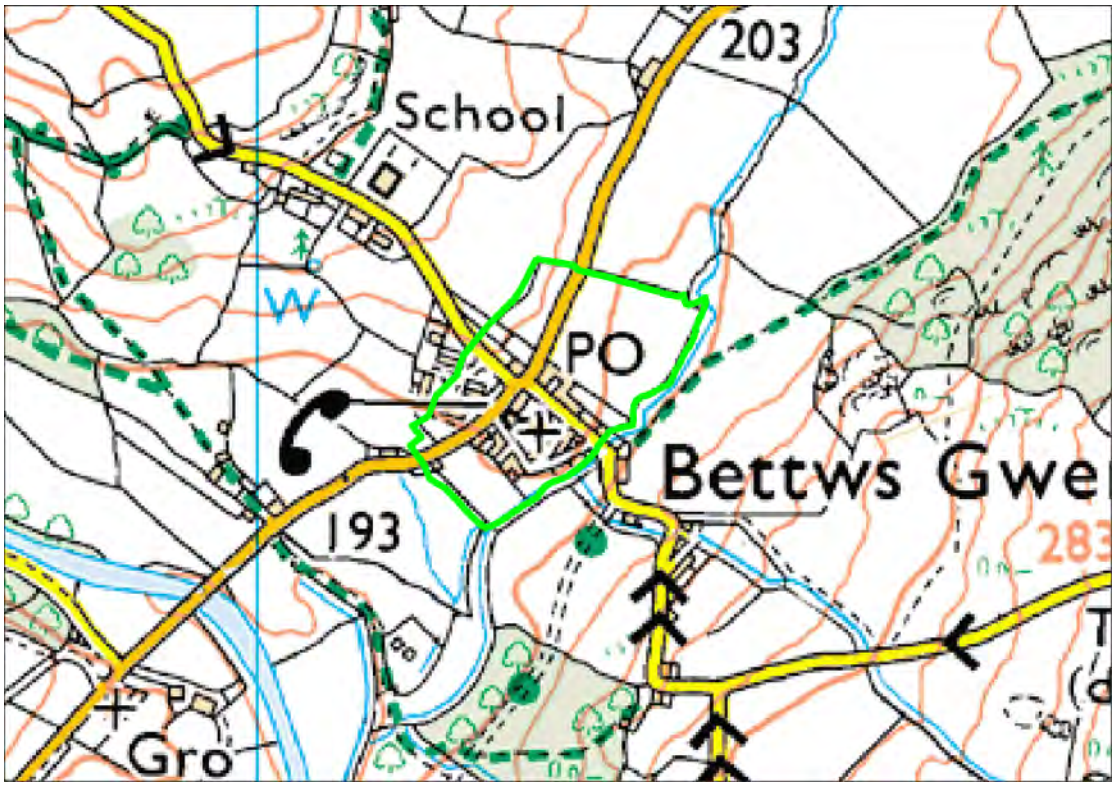
Lewis refers to a nearby well, also called after St Mary; its site has not been positively located, though Lhuyd referred to Ffynnon y Saint as a stone's throw from the church, and the Royal Commission linked this to Gwerglodd y Saint (Saint's meadow) about 90m from the church, though its name had apparently been forgotten locally and there was no notice of it on early Ordnance Survey maps. Towards the middle of the field was a spring, and perhaps this should be associated with the damp area still visible on vertical aerial photographs, about 95m north-east of the corner of the church.

The church apart, there are a few obviously older buildings in Bettws. Wyn Lan near the centre of the village includes a house thought to be of 16th or 17th-century origin, a derivative longhouse, and as such an exceptional survival. The public house known as The Hand is no earlier than the late 18th century, though its location points to it being the successor of an earlier building. Gwynfa was formerly a farmhouse, but later a public house, the White Horse Inn, and is probably of the 17th century.

The street pattern is a simple one with roads intersecting at right angles beside the church, and some evidence that the churchyard was previously completely encompassed by lanes. The broad thoroughfare on the north-east side of the churchyard appears to have been encroached on by Gwynfa.

The bridge over the stream on the south-eastern side of the village is assumed to be 18th century, but cannot be dated more precisely than this.

Shallow ridge and furrow (19757) was discernible in OS plot 3167 to the north-east of the village in the 1990s.



## Bodfari

**SJ 0922 7009**
***105801***

***Introduction***
The village of Bodfari is situated on sloping ground at the foot of Moel y Gaer. Here there is a gap in the Clwydian hills, the only natural break in the range, and through it flows the River Wheeler. East-west road communications have, naturally, utilised this easier passage through the hills.

Bodfari lies 7km south-east of St Asaph and was in the historic county of Flintshire, before its merger in Clwyd, though following Edward Lhuyd we should note that in past times only the church and about a third of the parish was in Flintshire, and the rest of the parish was in Denbighshire. It is now in the local authority area of Denbighshire. The B5429, running north/south along the eastern edge of the Vale of Clwyd, passes through the village centre, whilst the A541, running from east to west skirts the southern fringe of the settlement.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Bodfari up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
The first record of Bodfari in a document comes in Domesday in 1087 as *Boteuuarul*. Six years later, the church and manor at *Batavari* were given to the monks of St Werburgh's in Chester. The church is mentioned again in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 as *Bottewaru* and in Pope Nicholas' Taxation of 1291 as *Botevarro*. There are several further documentary references in the 14th and 16th centuries, but the modern form of the name did not emerge until 1839. Modern authorities admit that this is a difficult name to explain, despite the frequent forms that have come down to us. The first element *bod* is probably straightforward and means house or dwelling, so the name, it is suggested, could mean 'the abode of revered Barre' but this is by no means a certain conclusion, and even if correct tells us nothing about who the individual was.

The date at which settlement emerged around the church is completely unknown. The recorded presence of a church before the end of the 11th century probably reveals that it was a pre-Conquest foundation, i.e. of early medieval origin, and was traditionally linked to a 6th-7th-century holy man, St Deifer (or Dier or Diheufyr) who makes an appearance in 'The Life of St Wenefride' and has been classed as an abbot. If this were actually the case it would signal a higher status church at Bodfari.

Much time could have elapsed before dwellings developed around the church, and the size of the village at Bodfari in the Middle Ages, assuming there was one, cannot be determined.

Even in the post-medieval period, it is not possible to establish the size of the village around the church. Edward Lhuyd's correspondent in the late 17th century failed to record the number present, and estate maps from 1738 and the late 18th century, the latter showing Bodfari with four dwellings around the church, present schematic pictures that are probably not accurate representations of the settlement at those times. Bodfari was on the itinerary of some antiquaries, but only because it was one of the reputed locations for the Roman centre of *Varis*. Thus Richard Fenton in 1808 briefly mentioned the village in his diary but expended much more ink on describing his unsuccessful search for *Varis* in the company of Sir Richard Colt Hoare.

The village does not appear to have grown much before the Tithe survey of 1845, when five or six houses were depicted on its map, nor has there been very much further expansion up to the present day. The plan of the roads and fields has hardly altered.

The village centre now consists of the church, a Public House, Tyddyn Llan farm, a rectory and a small number of houses, most of which appeared on 19th-century maps. Some more modern housing and a school has been added on to the outer edges of the historic core of the settlement.

***The heritage to 1750***

St Stephen's church (102172) has a late medieval western tower with Perpendicular bell-chamber openings, a battered base and a battlemented parapet. The remainder of the church was rebuilt in 1864-5 replacing a whitewashed church with an undivided nave and chancel, a south aisle and timber arcade. The new building reputedly followed the plan of the old, but for the introduction of a chancel arch. Inside, the font is of the 16th century, the altar table and pulpit are dated 1635 and there is a memorial to John Mostyn who died in 1671. The church stands in an elevated position, overlooking the village.

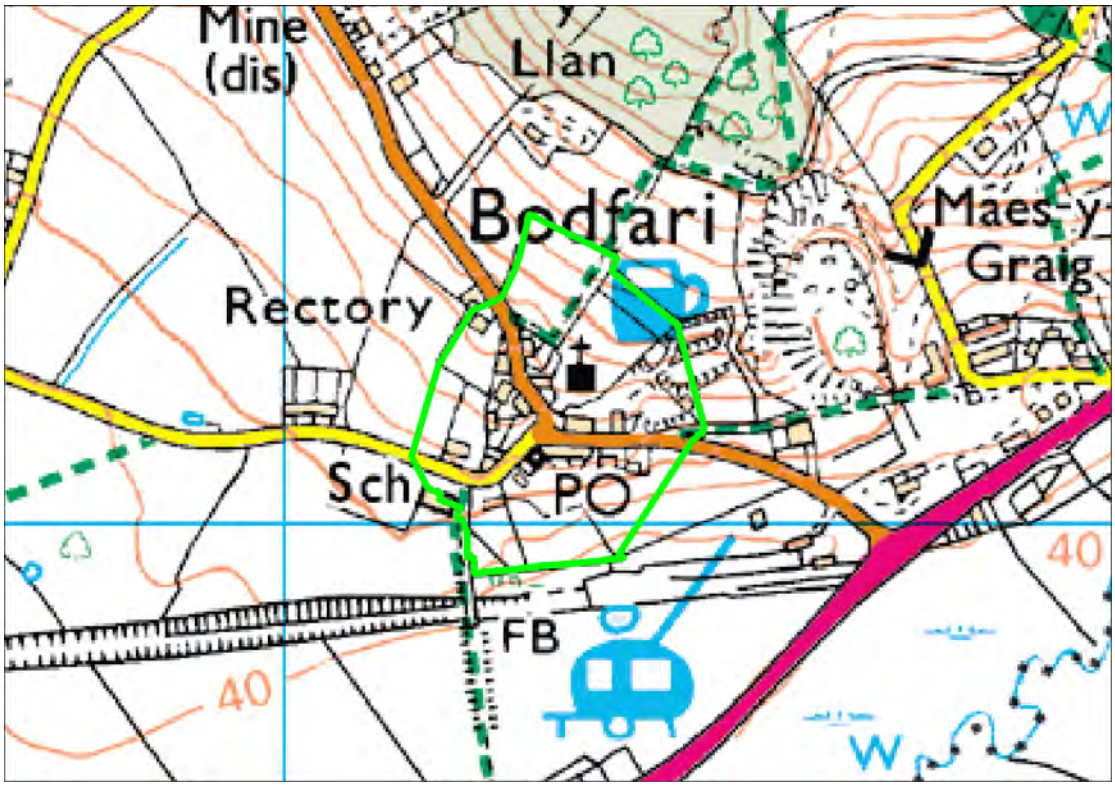
The churchyard (105818) has a faintly curving boundary on its south-western side, which may perhaps hint at a former circular shape, but otherwise has a rectilinear shape that in part is due to the local topography.

The site of Ffynnon Diefer, (102014) a holy well named after the reputed founder of the church, St Diefer, is no longer readily visible, and now lies in an area of wasteland south-east of the modern 'Ysgol Bodfari'. Mentioned in Edward Lhuyd's description of the parish at the very end of the 17th century, the well was 100 metres or so south-west of the church and was stone-lined with steps leading to it.

Only two buildings other than the church are recorded in detail as being of any age. The Dinorben Arms (105819) nestling below the churchyard is a 17th-century brick building that has been altered. The Old Rectory (105820) to the north-west of the church is late 18th-century. Hafod-tan-yr-eglwys, formerly known as Ty-gwyn and named as such on modern Ordnance Survey maps, lies immediately to the west of the churchyard and may have a mid-18th-century origin; it was termed a 'poor cottage' in 1843, but is now a fine Regency-style structure of presumably slightly later date.

Of the remainder of the buildings in the village, the following two are worthy of mention: Tyddynllan Farmhouse (105820) is also worth mentioning and is probably one of the buildings shown on the late 18th-century estate map, referred to above. A watching brief in 2000 identified a brick-lined well here with a graveslab of 18th-century date re-used as a capstone.

Nothing akin to village earthworks have been recognised in the vicinity of Bodfari.



## Bryneglwys

**SJ 1450 4740**
**105947**

***Introduction***
A small settlement lying to the south of the A5104 that links Bala and Chester, Bryneglwys lies beneath Llantysilio Mountain, 8km north-east of Corwen. The church surmounts a knoll projecting northwards into the valley of Afon Morwynion. The rest of the village lies to the south of it, mostly at a slightly lower altitude, on a spur between small streams that drop down off the mountain.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Bryneglwys 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
Nothing is known of the origins of this small settlement. The name is an apposite one, literally meaning 'hill church', and is first documented in 1284 as *Breneglus*. In the Taxation of 1291 it was *Ecclia de Bryn Eglwys*.

There is little to suggest that the church is an early medieval foundation, other than its dedication to a British saint, yet this remains a possibility. Its medieval growth, if there was any, is unchronicled, and by the standards of rural Denbighshire, its post-medieval development is not well charted. If Thomas Badelsade's map can be trusted, the church and the parson's house represented Bryneglwys in its entirety in 1740, but the map's small scale calls for caution, and is probably misleading in that Edward Lhuyd's correspondent at the end of the 17th century claimed that there were five houses by the church. The shortage of information continues even into the mid 19th century for Bryneglwys' tithe map is poor and unusually does not even depict individual dwellings.

As a consequence there is virtually nothing that can be said about how the village reached its present form.

***The heritage to 1750***
The single-chambered church (100951), dedicated to St Tysilio, is mainly Perpendicular (i.e. later 15th or early 16th-century) with a chapel, the Yale Chapel, added to the south side in the later 16th century. Since that time the church has seen some rebuilding, possibly in the 1730s and certainly in 1875. Internally there is a 14th-century grave slab, and some 17th-century woodwork including pulpit and stall fragments, and a coat-of-arms from the reign of George

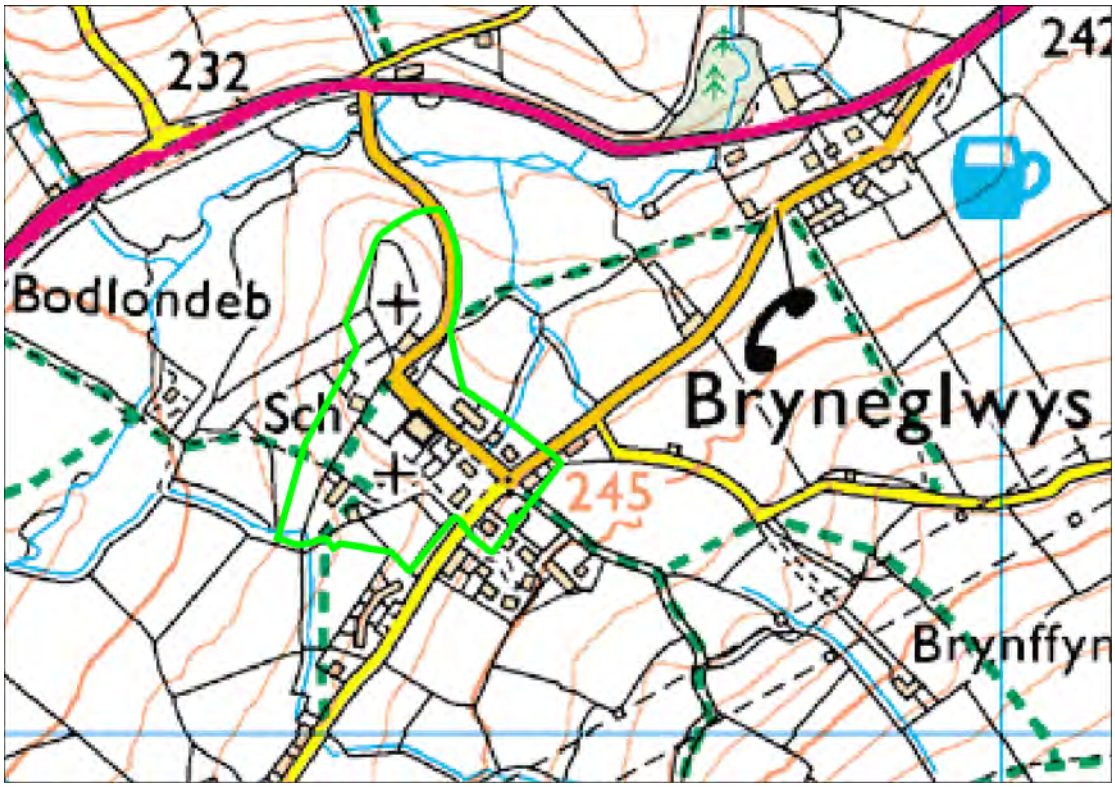
III. To Samuel Lewis in 1833 it was 'a small edifice, having no claim to architectural notice', an unreasonable observation.

The churchyard (19728) forms an irregular polygon, slightly raised, and also extended a little to the north since the end of the 19th century. There is no convincing ground evidence of an inner and more curvilinear 'llan' or a diminution of the original enclosure. Yet we might note that in the late 18th century Thomas Pennant contended that the church was built inside an enclosure or camp; Derek Pratt considered that this might be a reference to the platform which he believed the church was built on.

There are a few small cottages of 19th or even 18th-century date, but nothing of any architectural significance, and Bryneglwys in the main consists of modern houses.

No earthworks of any significance can be recognised in the immediate environs.

The road pattern in the village has changed and this perhaps accounts at least in part for the absence of early dwellings. The A5104, passing to the north of the village, is a turnpike road, and thus likely to date to the second half of the 18th century or even later as it does not appear in its entity on John Evans' map of 1795. Indeed it was classed as the 'new road' on the Tithe map. The older road is the lane entering the village from the north-east, running from Llandegla down to Llansantffraid (now Carrog). The lane entering the village from the north runs off the turnpike road and is thus likely to be of a similar date to it, but it follows a pre-existing holloway and this accounts for its sinuous course and its dog's-leg bend immediately to the south of the church where a new street has been introduced. The holloway, traceable further north beyond Afon Morwynion and the mill, and further south as it curves around the western edge of the modern settlement of Byneglwys, would prior to the 18th century have been a more major thoroughfare through the village and some earlier houses are likely to have been located along it.



## Carrog (Llansantffraid Glyn Dyfrdwy)

**SJ 1110 4357**
**105949**

***Introduction***
Carrog, formerly known as Llansantffraid Glyn Dyfrdwy, lies on the north side of the River Dee. The church is set high above the river, the river-terrace edge only a few metres to the south and the steeply incised but shallow valley of Afon Morwynion just to the west. The village spreads eastwards descending gently towards Pont Carrog, the crossing of the Dee.

Llangollen is about 11km to the east, Corwen 3km to the west, both being on the main A5 trunk road. Carrog lies on the B5437 which links with the A5 on the far side of Pont Carrog. Until 1974, it was in Merionnydd when it was transferred to the now defunct county of Clwyd.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Carrog 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
In earlier times the small ecclesiastical foundation was a chapelry attached to Corwen, its name recorded as *Ecclesia de Lansanfreyt* in 1254, with villa (= township) *de Lansanfreyt* in 1292-3.

As a given name for the settlement Carrog is relatively modern, one of three transferred from Corwen, to create the new parish of Glyndyfrdwy in 1866; it is claimed that the name Carrog was allotted about the same time to the railway station because it was easier to pronounce for travellers. The river of the same name goes back to the late 13$^{th}$ century when it was documented as *Carrau* and a century later, in 1292-3 as *Carrok*, a Welsh term meaning ‘swift-flowing stream’ or ‘torrent’, and the vill of Carrog appears in medieval documents from at least the end of the 13$^{th}$ century.

The medieval church at Llansantffraid, undoubtedly a minor structure which was valued at only £2 in 1291, originally stood on the bank of the Dee but was swept away by the river in the early 17th century; its precise location has not been established. Oak beams up to 9 yards long were found when stone was removed from the river sometime before 1893, the speculation being that these might have formed part of the old church washed down by the river. The lost church was replaced, though on a different spot, in 1611. The nature of the settlement that centred on the earlier church is unlikely ever to be determined.

Lhuyd recorded 6 houses 'scattered' around the new church at the end of the 17th century. By the mid-19th century there was closer to a dozen dwellings, well spaced between the church and the bridge.

***The heritage to 1750***

The church (19772) is dedicated to St Bridget as was its predecessor. Of early 17th-century build, it consists of a nave and slightly narrower chancel with a south porch. Heavily renovated in 1852, a new chancel erected in 1867; some of the 17th-century fabric remains. The font is considered to be late 12th-century in date and presumably was salvaged from the earlier building, while all the other fittings and furnishings are post-Reformation; its roof is considered to be a good example of its type from the early 17th century.

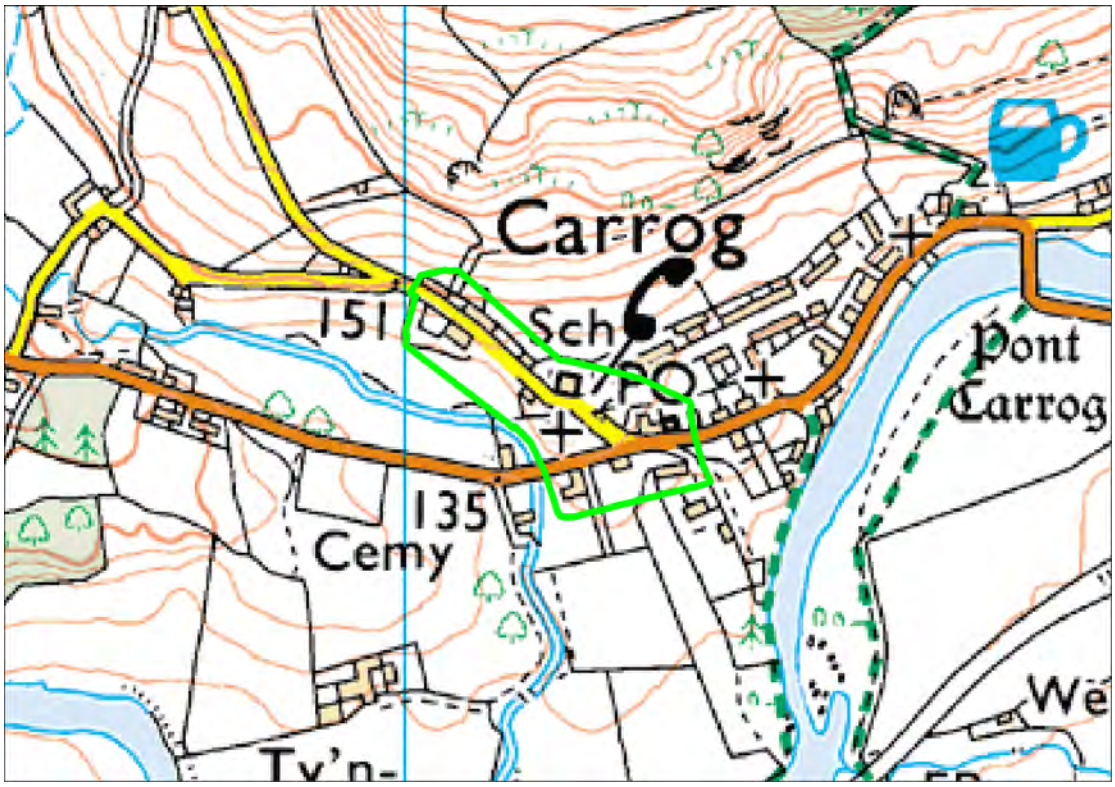
The churchyard is an irregular rectilinear shape, virtually trapezoidal, its form dictated by the local topography.

According to Lewis in the first half of the 19th century, the village contained a small building, then a dwelling, which was known as 'Owain Glyndwr's Prison House', reportedly used to confine captives taken by Glyndwr. On the other hand RCAHMW report an article in the Llangollen Advertiser in 1906 that said that Glyndwr himself was imprisoned in the house, and tied to a property called Carchardy on the bank of the river.

Llan farm, a short distance to the north-west of the church has an interesting group of buildings. Llan House was built in the 17th century, but its external appearance betrays remodelling around the beginning of the 19th century. The separate Llan farmhouse seems to have been erected at about the same time. Completing the group is an L-shaped range of farm buildings, which are probably 17th or 18th century but represent several phases of construction.

A well, Fynnon Sanfraid, presumably considered a holy well, was mentioned by Lhuyd a quarter of a mile above the church. This is taken to mean higher up the Dee towards Rhagatt but no details of its precise position can now be found.

Pont Carrog (102561) with its five arch span and cutwaters lies at the east end of the village. Classed as an exceptionally good example of a late 17th-century masonry bridge, it has the date 1661 engraved on one of its stones.



## Clocaenog

**SJ 0835 5414**
***105951***

***Introduction***
Clocaenog lies in the hills that border the valley of the River Clwyd on its western side, about 6km south-west of Ruthin. Nant-du, a stream that has carved a moderately deep but gently sloping cleft through the hills, runs eastwards, joining other streams before swinging north on its way to join the Clwyedog. Part of the village lies beside the stream, but the church and some dwellings occupy higher ground looking down onto the valley. To the south-east lies Cefn Cloion, a tract of upland that for long remained common.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Clocaenog 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.

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***History of development***
The first documented reference to Clocaenog, and this to its church rather than the settlement itself, is in 1254 when *Colocaynauc* is recorded, followed by *Clocaynauc* in 1266 and *Clocaenok* in 1349. The name incorporates two elements, *clog* and *caenog*, which collectively mean something akin to ‘lichen-encrusted rock or knoll’.

Nothing is known of the beginnings or subsequent development of the settlement. The dedication of the church might be a pointer to an early medieval origin, but there is little else to corroborate such an early beginning. Its development through the medieval and later centuries is uncharted, but from earlier maps (from the 19th century) we can infer that the church was at a distance from the gradually expanding settlement which lay on the valley floor to the east.

According to Samuel Lewis in 1833 Clocaenog was almost completely 'surrounded by unproductive and widely extended heaths'.

From earlier maps (from the 19th century) we can infer that the church was at a distance from the gradually expanding settlement which lay to the east. In 1841 the village sheltered in the valley bottom while the church on the higher ground above was accompanied by no more than two houses, and from this it might be inferred that any medieval or early post-medieval settlement is perhaps unlikely to have been around the church. Only in the relatively recent past has infilling led to the space between the two being closed.

***The heritage to 1750***

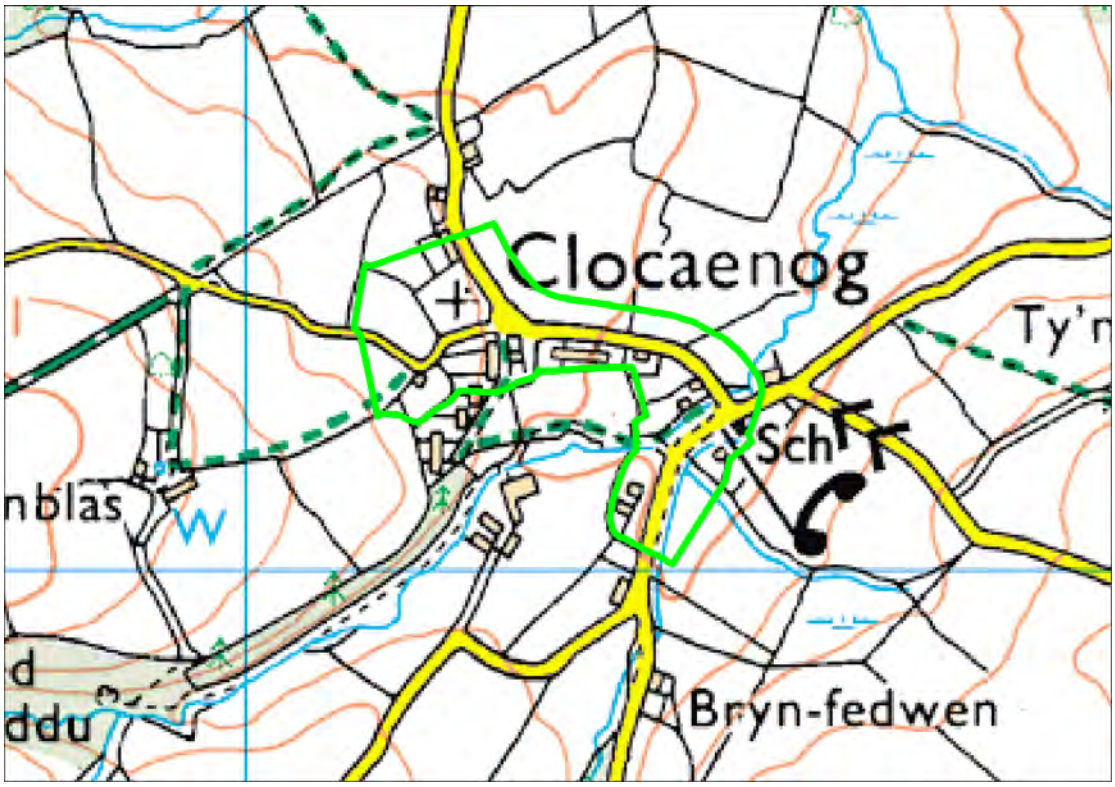
The church (100765) consists of a single chamber with a west bellcote, and may have some masonry of medieval date. The east window is said to have once carried the date of 1538, though this is no longer visible. The church was restored in 1856 and again in 1882, and during the latter wall paintings were exposed but not preserved. The font is considered to be 15th century, there are 16th-century fragments of stained glass, a wooden chandelier of 1725 and a pulpit of 1695, while outside fragments of a Romanesque shrine, presumably 12th century or a little later, are built into the bellcote.

Changes in the dedication of the church are a cause of confusion. The Ordnance Survey give it as St Trillo's which concurs with the past view of the parish authorities, and this gels with what Samuel Lewis recorded in 1833. But Edward Hubbard names it as St Foddhyd's (confusingly also known as St Meddvyth, a daughter of St Idloes) and in this respect follows Archdeacon Thomas, the leading, 19th-century authority on the diocese of St Asaph. A cleric in Bangor expressed a wish to be buried in the church of *Sancte Medwide Virginis* in 1530. A note in the church additionally raises the spectre of an imaginary and wholly unattested St Caenog – this can be discarded. Today it is known as St Foddhyd's in the diocese.

The churchyard (19729) is rectangular, with a modern extension to the west; there is no evidence to suggest a different shape at any time in the past.

Small cottages of uncertain age but probably no earlier than the 18th century lie close to the church. Ty-isaf for instance is identified as a building remodelled in the 19th or even the 20th century from an earlier house, but with a spurious date inscription of '1511' cut into the mantel beam of the fireplace; it was derelict when visited by the Royal Commission in 2003. There is also an intriguing mid 19th-century record of a large old building, 'Ty-mawr', within the village which traditionally was a residence of the Bishops of Bangor. A large quadrangular building enclosing a courtyard, it had been replaced by a cottage and a smithy by 1856, and its site is now, and perhaps surprisingly, impossible to pinpoint. A cruck-framed, hall-house known as Paradwys stands on the south edge of the settlement on the opposite side of the stream from the church; not dated in the NMR, it is presumably sub-medieval.

No earthworks of any significance have been recognised in Clocaenog. An archaeological watching brief in 2001 at Bryn-llan on the north-eastern edge of the churchyard identified nothing of interest.



## Corwen

**SJ 0780 4340**
**105952**

***Introduction***
Corwen shelters beneath the crags of Creigiau Llangar where the broad U-shaped valley of the River Dee drives eastwards, edging the Berwyn Mountains. Facing north, the core of the town sits on a low river terrace, with more modern development reaching up the steep slopes behind. The A5 trunk road passes through the town with Llangollen some 14km to the east and Ruthin about the same distance to the north.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Corwen 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.

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***History of development***
The first appearance of the place-name is as *Cornain* in 1206 and a year later as *Coruain*. In the ecclesiastical taxations of the 13th century, Corvaen is given in 1254 and Coruan in 1292. Its modern form of *Corwen* is documented for the first time in 1443. A possible interpretation of the names sees a combination of the two words *côr* and *maen* meaning ‘sanctuary stone’ and some commentators have been tempted to see this as a reference to the prehistoric standing stone built into the wall of the church porch. An alternative but obscure meaning comes if the first element is cor meaning ‘small’.

The origins of Corwen appear to lie in its emergence as a 'mother church' during the early medieval period, a major ecclesiastical centre which controlled its surrounding region, in this case the commote of Edeyrnion. In the mid-13th century it was still an important ecclesiastical centre with sixteen clerics. It has been suggested that the name of the adjacent almshouse, the 'College', retains an embedded memory of a collegiate establishment that had been present during the Middle Ages, though this may be asking too much of the evidence. The secular centre for the area was perhaps at Cynwyd in the adjacent parish of Llangar. But it is worth remembering that in England, minster churches which are the equivalent of the mother churches are viewed by modern historians as the most likely places where secular settlement would have developed, simply because of their stability over several centuries.

There is little in the way of information on the appearance and nature of Corwen during the Middle Ages, but some level of nucleated settlement can be assumed. When Edward Lhuyd’s correspondent replied to the Oxford scholar at the end of the 17th century, there were about 27 houses in the town, and it seems improbable that this degree of growth could have occurred from scratch entirely after the Reformation, particularly as there was also a market in the town.

The mid 19th-century Tithe map reveals a village of the pre-railway era still centred round the church. Housing had extended along Church Street for only a short distance, though there were more dwellings on the lane traversing the hillside to the south. Eastwards the London Road was also becoming a popular location for housing. The lane leading north from the church to the river served only a few houses before bifurcating and giving access to arable lands (quillets) on the valley floor.

The town was part of Merionethshire (Merionnydd) until 1974 when the region was merged with Caernarvonshire and Anglesey to form Gwynedd. In 1996 Corwen together with several other communities was transferred to Denbighshire.

***The heritage to 1750***

A Roman tile antefix with the symbol of the XXth legion (102673) was found in Coed Pen-y-bryn Felin on the wooded slopes to the south of Corwen in 1977. An alleged Roman building (102674) is also said to have been uncovered west of Chapel Street in the centre of Corwen in 1909; few details are available and its authenticity remains to be established. But even if either or both of these discoveries ultimately demonstrate the presence of a Roman or Romano-British establishment at Corwen, its existence is not likely to have influenced the foundation and development of the medieval settlement.

Corwen church (105907) is dedicated to two 6th-century saints, Mael and Sulien – though earlier authorities such as Lhuyd refer only to the latter – and its original cruciform shape could be an indicator of its early importance as a mother church. It was first referred to in 1220 and renovated lancet windows surviving in the east wall could belong to this time, from which it might be inferred that the fabric of the church dates to around the 12th or 13th century. Repairs and refurbishments occurred in 1777, in 1872 and again in 1907, and both the west tower, which is thought to have been constructed in the 14th century, and the body of the church have seen considerable reconstruction. There is a font of 12th-century date, and a priest's effigy in the chancel dating to the 14th century, but otherwise little of medieval date has survived. There are memorials of 18th and 19th-century date and the nave roof goes back to 1687 (though it was heavily restored in the 19th century).

Early medieval stones associated with the church and emphasising its earlier significance are: a cross-carved stone (100817), probably a pillar stone of 7th/9th-century date and utilised as the lintel of the south door from at least the late 17th century; a 10th/11th-century cross shaft with its base (100818) in the churchyard; a now lost stone fragment with plaitwork of the 10th to earlier 12th century; and two further decorated fragments both now lost but both represented by sketches, and thought to fall within the 9th to 12th centuries. In addition a bronze censer (100819), attributable to the 12th century, was discovered in 1858 'a little above Corwen church', but it too is now lost. From a completely different era is a monolith, known to Samuel Lewis as *Carreg i Big yn y fach rewllyd*, which is built into the porch wall and is presumed to have been a prehistoric standing stone; its presence according to tradition dictated the location of the church.

The churchyard (105908) is of moderate size and is polygonal in shape. Its boundary appears to have been cut back on the north side to accommodate both a number of dwellings and a canalised stream. On the south side the 'College' (q.v.) has also intruded into the graveyard, and while it is tempting to see an oval enclosure truncated by later activity, it must be admitted that there is no convincing evidence of it.

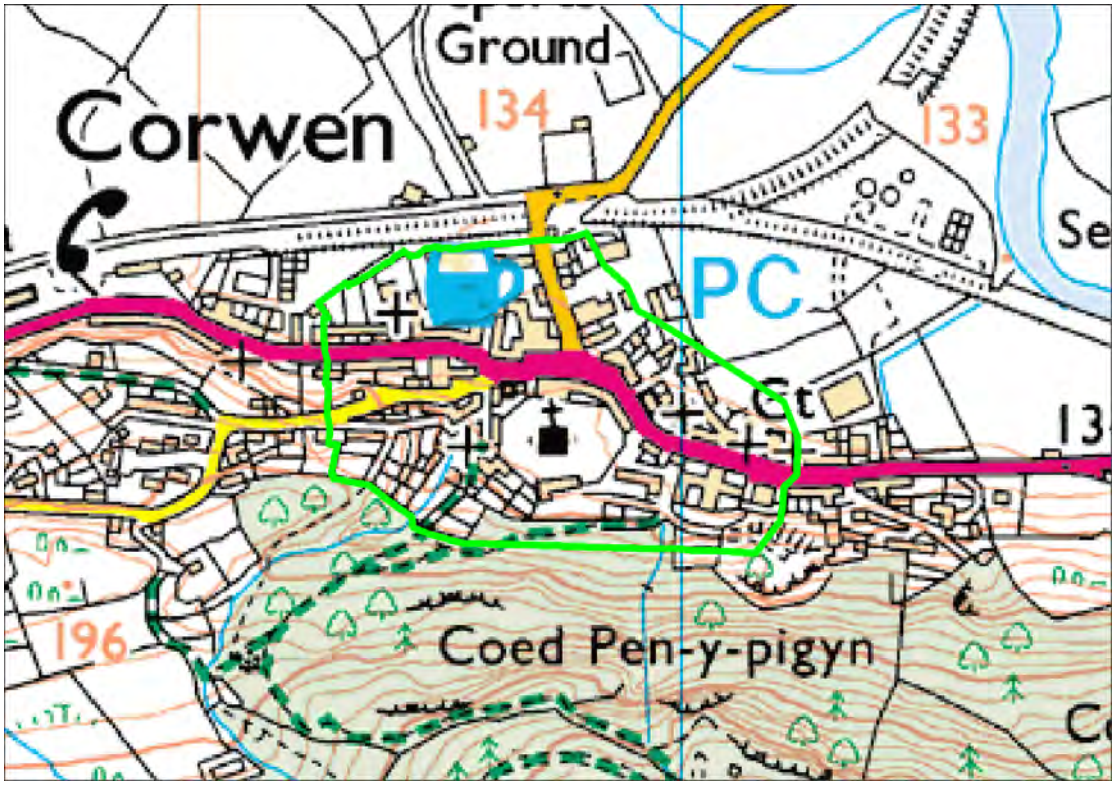
Ffynnon y Gloch (100821) lay near the base of the wooded hillside behind the church and is now supposedly represented by a hollow 30m wide and 8m deep. It was mentioned by Lhuyd at the end of the 17th century as the place where a bronze bell was discovered.

There is no evidence of the settlement that existed beside the church in the Middle Ages. What appears to have been a market place lay on the north of the churchyard and is still

recognisable as a broadening out of High Street despite post-medieval encroachments. However, we have had no success in locating any records that might refer to a medieval market at Corwen, though Lhuyd in the 1690s referred to it as a market town, so the nature of the urban topography here must for the moment remain a mystery.

No early buildings are known to survive, and most of those in the centre are from the years around 1750 or later. The Post Office in the High Street was built as a house around about 1750, and was extended for its current use in 1936; Waterloo House in the High Street dates to around 1740 but may incorporate elements of an earlier structure; the Owain Glyndwr Hotel is classed as a fine example of an 18th-century coaching inn, and also dates to around 1740; and the six 18th-century almshouses known as The College (105909), and now converted into a retreat, were established in 1750. Interestingly, however, Edward Lhuyd more than fifty years earlier had referred to the existence of six almshouses at Corwen, built by the owners of nearby Rûg.

The open fields worked from the settlement in the Middle Ages lay immediately to the south of the settlement in a large loop of the river Dee – their pattern was fragmented but still recognisable on mid-19th-century maps.



## Cwm

**SJ 0663 7445**
***105802***

***Introduction***
The village enjoys a secluded location and if the 19th-century chorographer, Samuel Lewis, were to be believed its name is derived from its situation in a 'sequestered hollow, enclosed by lofty hills', otherwise a small side valley on the eastern slopes of the Vale of Clwyd.

Cwm lies 2km south-south-east of Dyserth, and 2.5km north of Rhuallt. A minor road, running north/south along the slopes of the Vale of Clwyd, passes to the west of the village centre, and from this another winds through the village centre and onwards up to Marian Cwm. It is now in the local authority area of Denbighshire but was formerly in the historic county of Flintshire.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Cwm up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
The church at Cwm was included in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 as *Cum* and later in the Lincoln taxation of 1291. *Kwm* appeared in a document of 1284, *Combe* in 1608 and in its present form of *Cwm* in 1795. The name as Lewis pointed out somewhat poetically means ‘valley’.

The emergence of the village here has not been recorded. There may have been medieval dwellings around the church, but in 1699, only four houses lay by the church according to Edward Lhuyd’s correspondent.

In 1833 much of the land in the parish was composed of mountainous tracts of common, and very little was enclosed and cultivated. The only industry mentioned within the parish at this time was corn milling and a forge and foundry to make use of the local iron stone.

The village today consists of the church and vicarage, the old school, a public house, and a few 19th-century limestone cottages. Bod Hamer is a 20th-century addition to the village.

***The heritage to 1750***
The church (102077), dedicated to St Mael and St Sulien, is a listed building built on a hilly site with the nave on two levels and the chancel yet higher. The walls of the church are built

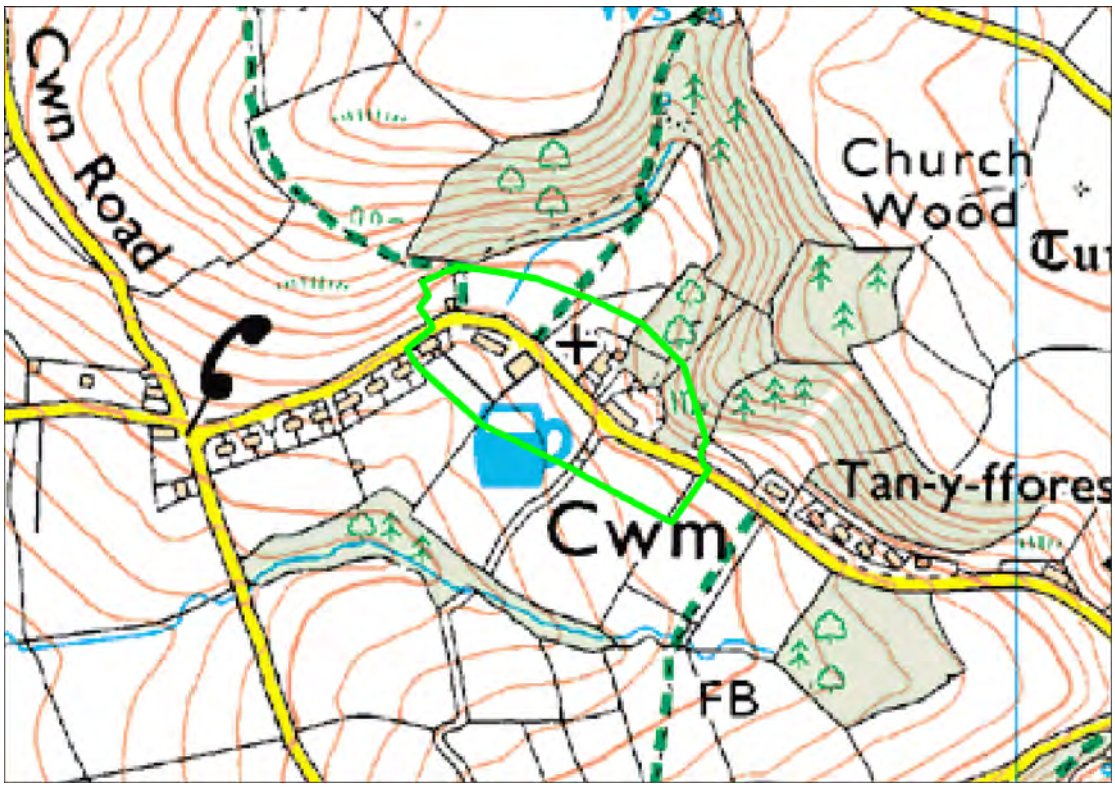
of limestone of the type found at the south end of Moel Hiraddug, and the arch in the south porch is matched by the limestone in a small quarry near the road between Cwm and Dyserth, but when it was seen in 1839 the church was whitewashed. The church has a double western bellcote. The east window, containing fragments of late medieval stained glass, is Perpendicular. Two south windows and the west and south doorways are of a similar date, but the south porch and the north windows are later. The western gallery and high pews were removed in 1843. There are several 14th-century sepulchral slabs, and in the chancel is a tomb recess of reused stones with 14th-century floral motifs in the soffit. A portion of the head of the churchyard cross with crucifixions on either side still survives. In the churchyard is an elaborate hooded tomb of 1642. There is an old and unsubstantiated tradition that the original church stood on the top of Mynydd y Cwm.

The churchyard (105822) is surrounded by a much-repaired stone wall, and seems to have been extended to the east, for it no longer displays the square boundary which appears on the Tithe map. There is no evidence, however, of the graveyard ever having had the circular outline associated with very early churches.

In the vicarage garden is a spring 'Ffynnon Fael a Sulien' (102078), which is possibly one of the many springs and wells mentioned by Lhuyd in 1699. A pipe brings water, presumably from this spring, to a roadside trough in front of the vicarage. Until fairly recent times the village was supplied with water from the covered wells in the woodland to the north.

There are, it would appear, no buildings of any age around the church. Ty Cerrig for instance was built as the vicarage as late as 1847 though there was an earlier vicarage (105824) on the plot, positioned further back from the road. The stables at the rear of the property are earlier, a date stone recording that they were built by the Reverend John Edwards in 1772.

In the Tithe schedule are found the names erw, cefn, dryll, quillet and accar, indicative of a former open field system. To the south of the village, the Tithe map shows a number of long narrow plots adjacent to a now disused and impassable lane.



## Cyffylliog

**SJ 0589 5782**
**105953**

***Introduction***
The small settlement of Cyffylliog is set in the valley of Afon Clywedog where the river forces its way through the hills to the west of the Vale of Clwyd. Twin streams, Afon Corris and Nant Gladur, run down from the south-west delineating a spur, the tip of which is occupied by Cyffylliog church. The heart of the settlement is set a little further south on the north bank of Nant Gladur. A minor road serves Cyffylliog, leading from Ruthin which is 6km to the east.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Cyffylliog 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
Cyffylliog (or in Welsh Y Gyffylliog) is first documented as *Kyffellauc* in 1259-60 and appears as *Kyffylyog* in 1400 and as *y gyffyllioc* in c.1566. This has been tentatively interpreted by recent authorities as '(the place of) pollard trees or stumps'.

Until 1873, Cyffylliog was a chapel of ease attached to Llanynys; it was said to have been built by Griffith Goch at the end of the 12th century. The spur location above a stream apart, there is certainly little to recommend an early medieval origin for its foundation, though Cadw's listed building specialists are more sanguine about this possibility.

The form of the medieval settlement around the church, assuming there was one, is not known.

Late 18th-century and mid 19th-century maps indicate a very small settlement here. An estate map from the years 1772-4 appears to show no more than a single building north-west of the church, and the absence of obviously old dwellings near Nant Gladur does seem suggest that the development of dwellings in this part of the valley was a relatively recent occurrence. However, by the time of the mid 19th-century Tithe survey the north bank of the stream had attracted housing, and a few other dwellings had been erected on the lane beyond the church. On the face of it this appears to be a late post-medieval settlement.

***The heritage to 1750***
St Mary's church (105910) consists of a single chamber built in rubblestone which is impossible to date. The east window has decorated tracery and other windows, though now

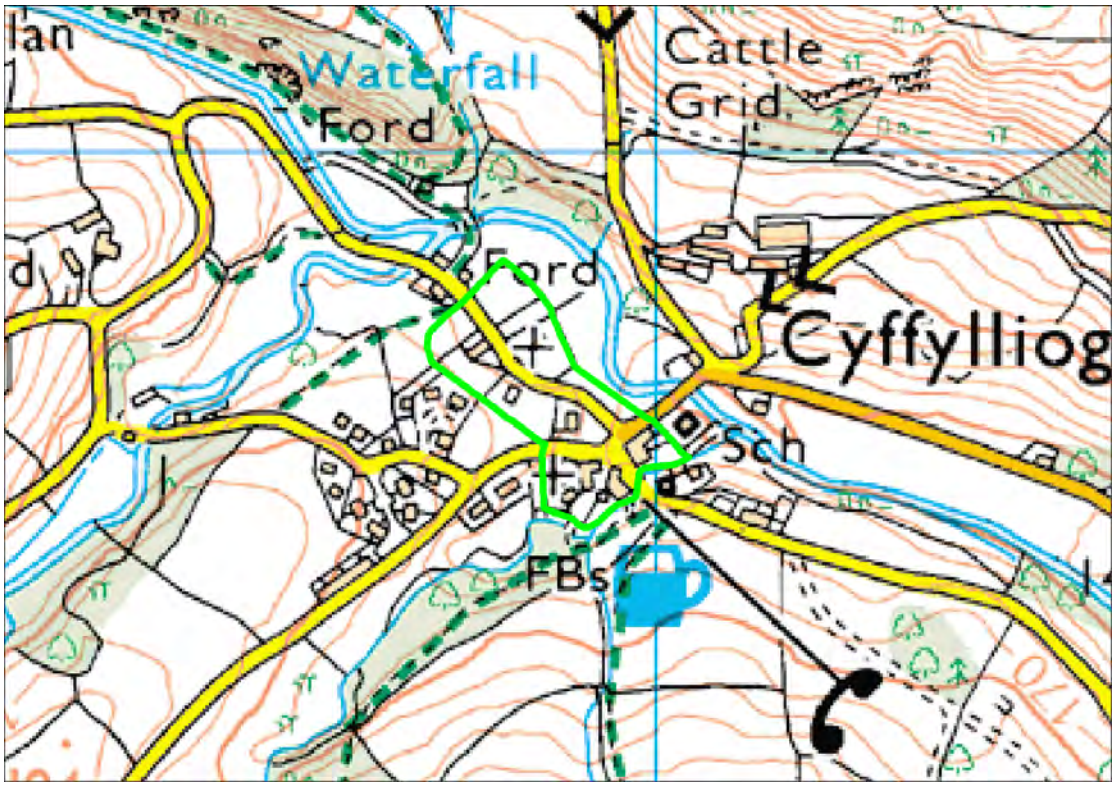
wholly renewed, could have originated at the same time. An extensive restoration of 1876 saw much of the building replaced. Inside the church the font, originally fashioned in the 14th century, has been re-tooled, fragments of the medieval rood screen were incorporated into the 19th-century church furniture and there are two chests. It is of no surprise that a wall painting of the crowning of the Virgin uncovered in 1876 was not preserved.

The churchyard (19767) is rectilinear, its north-eastern perimeter following the edge of the river terrace. Only on the south does the arc of the boundary and the adjacent lane suggest something more curvilinear. The stone-built hearse house carries a date of 1823.

There are no listed buildings other than the church.

A building platform (19768) which can be equated with the dwelling shown on the later 18th-century estate map is discernible in OS plot 7886.

Ridge and furrow (19769) covered the adjacent field (OS plot 7280) on a 1946 aerial photograph, but was not recognised during fieldwork in the 1990s.



## Cynwyd

**SJ 0560 4110**
**105954**

***Introduction***
Cynwyd has grown up on the eastern flank of the Dee Valley at a point where a tributary of the river, Afon Trystion, has etched a sharp notch down the western slope of the Berwyn. The village occupies a low spur projecting from the river terrace towards the main river some 300m away. A crossroads serves as the focus of the settlement with houses spreading up the tributary valley eastwards, and a more industrial element closer to the Dee. Corwen is just over 3km to the north-west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Cynwyd 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
Cynwyd is a personal name, though the person behind the name is not known to history. As a place-name *Kowryt* (or Conryt) is first recorded in 1292-3 while one of the constituent townships was referred to as *Kynnwyt Vawr* in 1470. The present form of the name appeared as late as 1838.

It is worth noting Derek Pratt's view that this location on the Dee valley edge marked the point where perhaps during the prehistoric and medieval periods an east to west routeway from England traversed the northern watershed of the Berwyn and then ran down the valley of Afon Trystion to a Dee crossing. This was a spot where the flood plain of the Dee narrowed with a spur of higher ground projecting from the western side to match the one on the east utilised by Cynwyd. Such a potentially significant point on the communications network could well have seen settlement or other activity at a much earlier date, and Pratt considered it the only place in Llangar Community suitable for village development.

Its early history has not been established. Possibly succeeding a place at or near Rug, Cynwyd can be recognised as the *caput* or centre of the commote of Edeirnion in the later Middle Ages and is referred to in passing in 12th-century Welsh poetry. It has been claimed too that 'Cwnwyd with its doctor, merchant, and cobblers [and also crowders or fiddlers] has been described as one of the few places in Merioneth which resembled a town' at the end of the 13th century, when its 45 tenants collectively paid the highest subsidy in the commote. A Dee Valley website informs us that it was formerly 'the site of the ancient boundary courts', but this could be a reference to a John Davies's comment of 1716 that a court had been held in Cynwyd within the memory of sevral people in his own lifetime.

Yet now the village has the appearance of a post-medieval development. Lhuyd at the end of the 17th century recorded a village of nine houses and a mill, but it was not of sufficient size to register with any of the 17th and 18th-century mapmakers such as Speed, or Bowen and Kitchen, though the absence of a church during these times will not have encouraged its mapping.

Not an ecclesiastical unit in its own right, Cynwyd even in the early 19th century lay in the parish of Gwyddelwern, and functioned as a centre of flannel manufacture. The church was consecrated only in 1856, the much older parish church of Llangar, almost certainly a medieval foundation being little more than one kilometre away.

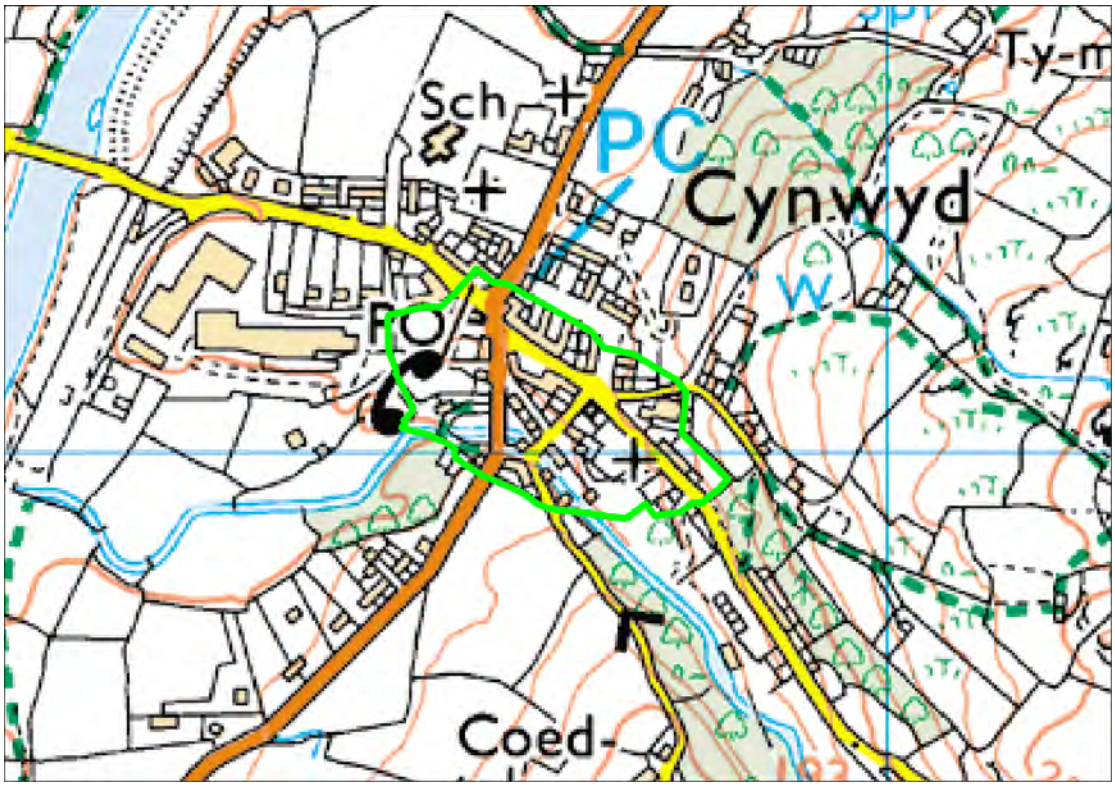
Cynwyd is now the centre of a community, one of the modern administrative units.

***The heritage to 1750***

Pont Dyfrdwy with its four arches spanning the River Dee has been claimed to date from 1612 and is assumed to be the bridge referred to by Edward Lhuyd at the end of the 17th century. Strengthened in 1989, it is both scheduled and listed.

The bridge carrying the main road through the village over the little Afon Trystion is almost certainly 19th-century in origin. Originally the road looped eastwards and crossed the river by a smaller bridge – Pont Trystion - which is still in existence. Undoubtedly this is post-medieval in date, probably 18th-century, and the local tradition that it has been here since Roman times can be dismissed. However, the tradition may have been fed by the acknowledged fact that Llewelyn ap Madog left money in his will for the repair of the crossing here in 1357.

Other than this bridge there are no buildings of pre-1750 origin in the village. The exception is Bryn Berllan now on the western edge of the village but formerly standing alone overlooking Pont Dyfrdwy, which is a two-storey 16th-century box-framed farmhouse, much altered in the late 20th century. The mill constructed in the mid –19th century occupies the site of its predecessor which was recorded in the 17th century.



## Denbigh

**SJ 0500 6610**
**105955**

***Introduction***
Both castle and walled town were constructed on what has been termed a 'dramatically steep outcrop' of Carboniferous limestone known as Caledfryn Hill which rises from the flat base of the broad Vale of Clwyd. A small tributary valley isolates the hill, though higher ground to the west acts as a backdrop. The later town has spread down into the tributary valley although a small bench breaks the otherwise consistent slope from hill-top to valley floor. In a low-lying part of the town, west of the centre, was the Lenten Pool, now infilled.

The coast of north Wales lies some 16km away, with the cathedral city of St Asaph a little over 8km to the north and the administrative centre of Ruthin nearly 11km to the south-east.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Denbigh 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 in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
It is not surprising in view of its status and history that Denbigh was the subject of several major studies in the 19th century, complemented by a string of articles in more recent times on a range of topics. Not all of these were consulted when the original survey was compiled in 1995, because of the amount of research that would have been required, and it has not been possible to rectify this omission during the present reassessment.

The hill-top castle and its accompanying walled town were constructed by Henry de Lacy late in the 13th century, following the creation of the lordship of Denbigh by Edward I in 1282. However, it has long been argued that the hilltop had previously been a stronghold of Dafydd ap Gruffydd, a *llys* which was the centre of the cantref of Rhufoniog; and there are references, too, during the 13th century to the maerdref of Dinbych. D. H. Owen in 1978 noted that 'the prominence of Dinbych in the pre-conquest [i.e. pre-Edwardian] period explains the selection of this township as the administrative centre of the new lordship established in 1282'.

The name Denbigh is a compound of the Welsh elements *din* and *bych* meaning 'little fort'. As *Dunbeig* it was first recorded in 1211 and subsequently as *Tynbey* in 1230 and *Dinbych* in 1269. The modern form of Denbigh is first encountered in a document of 1536-9. The predecessor of medieval Denbigh referred to in the place-name is generally taken to equate with the motte and bailey castle at Llŷs, Pont Ystrad, about 1.4km to the south of the town, also known as Llys Gwenllian after a daughter of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, and also reputedly as Hen Ddinbych.

The town was recaptured – albeit briefly - by the Welsh in 1294, but by the time of de Lacy's death in 1311 the fortifications at Denbigh including its town walls, are assumed to have been largely complete; with Ruthin, it controlled the Vale of Clwyd.

The creation of a borough followed quickly after the construction of the castle, leading to an influx of English families. Forty-seven burgages held by thirty-nine burgesses were listed in 1285 when the first charter was granted, but subsequent to the Welsh attack on the town in 1294, a second charter dating to somewhere between 1295 and 1305 recorded only 45 burgages, but provides the first record of the presence of the town walls.

A demesne manor was also established near to the castle, though its chronology is not recorded in the same level of detail as the stronghold. It included two granges, a byre, a dovecote and two fishponds, extending over 75 acres.

As early as the beginning of the 14th century, the town had started to expand beyond the confines of its walls and down the northern slopes of the hill. As Ian Soulsby pointed out in 1983 the site of the walled town was ideal for defence but not for commercial operations. In 1305 there were 183 burgages outside the defences, 52 within, and by 1337 the town had spread over 57 acres. By 1311 an annual fair was being held and in 1334, the 'Survey of Denbigh' refers to 'a borough within the walls' and 'a market town without'. It also mentions the hamlet of 'Neuburgh', part of Lleweni where originally the townspeople had held agricultural land. Neuburgh cannot now be traced and Beresford stated that 'it is not certain whether the survey has recorded an abortive attempt to lay out a small borough beyond the suburbs of Denbigh, or whether it is the remains of a Welsh commercial settlement, older than Denbigh..'. The name would probably argue against the latter.

In 1373 there were 438 burgages, and Denbigh at this time was clearly commercially successful. A detailed rental of 1476 also charts the growth of the town beyond the walls with more than four times as many burgages outside as inside, and this some eight years after the extra-mural areas had been ravaged by fire, during the Wars of the Roses when the Earl of Pembroke besieged the castle.

For the late 15th and 16th centuries there are details of craftsmen practicing within the town: a draper, glovers, shoe-markers, mercers and weavers. From the 15th century, too, come references to some of the thoroughfares in the town: High Street, Beacon's Hill, Pepper Lane and Sowter Lane. And from the early 16th century a survey records suburbs for three quarters of a mile to the north of the castle. The picture is confirmed by Leland's remarks in the 1530s. *'There hath beene diverse rows of streates withyn the wald towne, of the which the most part be now doone in maner, and at this tyme there be scant 80. howsolders". He continued: "But the towne of Denbigh now occupied and yoining neere to the old toun hath beene totally made of later tyme, and set much more to commodite of cariage and water by maany welles in it. And the encreace of this was the decay of the other'*.

In 1536, following the Act of Union, Denbigh was established as one of four administrative capitals in Wales, an indication of its stature at that period, and a spur to further development. John Speed's map published in 1611 reflects the general abandonment of the walled town with relatively little housing within its confines, though there was St Hilary's chapel and the incomplete church begun by the Earl of Leicester in the 1580s. But it is noticeable, too, that the market place and town hall lay outside the walled town – the commercial and urban heart of Denbigh had shifted from the constraints imposed by the walled hilltop.

The decline within the walls continued in later centuries: a drawing of 1750 shows few houses, even though the population of the town at the time was nearly 2000. Instead the focus of the town was High Street with three roads - Love Lane, Henllan Street and Lower Street - leading off it. Lower Street (now Vale Street) had three minor streets running parallel to it. Ogilby in his road atlas of 1675, *Britannia,* stated the town to be 'esteemed the best in North Wales'.

During the Civil War in the mid-17th century, Denbigh temporarily became important for military reasons. There was a battle here in 1645 and the castle was besieged, surrendering to the Parliamentarians in the following year.

Some expansion occurred between the early 17th and the mid-19th century. Edward Lhuyd noted a total of 330 buildings in the town at the end of the 17th century. Redevelopment occurred later in the 19th century. The railway along the Vale of Clwyd was built in 1860, and communications were further improved by the major road from Ruthin to Rhyl.

***The heritage to 1750***

The castle (101960) and the town walls (101961) are contemporary constructions. The castle has a fine gatehouse with three towers, leading into a ward of irregular polygonal shape defined by a curtain wall; the south and west sides of this form part of the town walls. Angle towers project from the curtain.

The town walls display a largely complete circuit, enclosing an area of some 9.5 acres. Drum towers project at several points around the circuit, the course of which was dictated by the terrain. The main entrance to the town, the Burgess Gate, survives from the later 13th/14th century, but a second entrance, the Exchequer Gate is believed to have been built during the first phase of construction of the castle, and was demolished sometime after the 16th century. It was excavated in 1982/83. The Goblin Tower on the north-eastern side of the town is thought to have been built to protect 'The Bloody Well', the towns main water supply and was the scene of a Civil War Siege in 1646.

The siegeworks relating to this episode (102598) consist of a crescent-shaped bank around the Goblin Tower. An adjacent mound (102591), still discernible early in the 20th century, may have been a prehistoric barrow but more probably part of the Civil War earthworks. Another earthwork comprising a broad low linear bank running gently downhill (19784) lies between the castle and the hospital. Its function is uncertain. Ken Brassil has suggested that it may also be a Civil War feature, although other interpretations are possible. Metal detector finds including a piece of bar shot, a musket ball, a pistol ball and fragments of impacted lead shot were recovered in the area around the Goblin Tower during an archaeological excavation in 2001. Though the excavations did not reveal any archaeological features that could be specifically related to the Civil War siege, the metal detector finds should be relevant.

It has been suggested that an old wall (101570) behind the Crown Hotel is a remnant of a pre-Edwardian stone castle, a view that has yet to be authenticated. Archaeological monitoring during alterations to the Crown Hotel in 2003 also revealed a vaulted cellar below the north side of the Hotel, which did not correspond to the current hotel ground plan. However this was considered to be of 16th century date if not later.

St Hilary's Chapel (102017) was mentioned in an extent of 1334, and as a garrison chapel was presumably constructed early in the development of the town. Its tower and west wall survive but the nave and chancel were demolished in 1923. During the medieval period the nearest parish church was at Llanfarchell, a mile to the east of the town.

St Anne's or Flemings' Chapel (102749) was probably a guild chapel that had fallen into disuse by the early 16th century, when it was mentioned by John Leland. An undercroft below nos 15 and 17 Bridge Street is all that survives. Archdeacon Thomas noted that an almshouse associated with the chapel stood nearby.

The Earl of Leicester's church (102018) was begun by Robert Dudley in 1578 (on the basis of a foundation stone), but was abandoned soon after his death in 1588. Though later used as a stone quarry, substantial parts remain, and it is considered a unique example of major church building in the Elizabethan era.

A Carmelite Friary (102020), founded in about 1289 by Sir John Sunimore, lay in the northern suburbs of the town at the end of Vale Street. After the Dissolution in the 1530s, it was used for various purposes but part at least was destroyed by fire in 1898. The remains now consist of the choir, a portion of the nave, and the wall of a barn. The foundations of other monastic buildings may lie beneath the field to the east. Abbey Cottage adjacent occupies the site of the south cloister range and incorporates two 13th-century doorways. A possible ossuary associated with the friary was cut by a trench in 1985 (101836), and an exploratory evaluation also took place at a later date in advance of a school extension. An evaluation in 2004 confirmed the location of the friary cemetery as well as uncovering cobbled floor surfaces and evidence of demolished buildings which were probably a part of the friary complex.

A late 13th-century cross-head (100591) from the friary was moved to the grounds of Dolhyfryd, a kilometre or so to the south-west of the town, in the 19th century. The four sides are relief-carved with the scenes described by Owen in 1886, namely the Crucifixion, the Virgin and Child, an ecclesiastic in the act of devotion, and a figure thought to represent St John.

Denbigh was classed as 'one of the most complete townscapes in North Wales..' by the Royal Commission in the early 20th century. It is evident that the expansion beyond the town walls was the result of careful planning with a market place at the top of the town and a long and very straight road – Vale Street – leading downhill to the north-east. A back lane was laid out to the east of this and another for at least part of the distance to the west; but west of High Street and the market place the pattern of lanes is less regular, and we may speculate that the creation of new thoroughfares and burgages outside the town walls in this rapidly growing urban centre in the 14th century was not as regulated initially as was to be the case in later years. The modern street pattern clearly reflects that mapped by John Speed in the early 17th century which in turn reveals the medieval layout. Some of the names, however, have changed. In the 17th century Vale Street was Lower Street, and Bridge Street was Chapel Lane the former name probably taken from Pont Garreg, a small footbridge crossing part of the Lenten Pool.

A number of listed medieval and sub-medieval vernacular buildings survive in the town. Friesland Hall House, otherwise known as Bryn Awelon (102593), is a cruck-framed house and has a 14th-century doorway in its southern side. The Plough in Bridge Street (99806), originated as an L-shaped timber-framed building with a medieval rock cut cellar below. A stone range extends to the rear in which the roof purlins have been dated to between 1546-82.

Plas Clough House (101473), with its three gables on the front, was erected by Sir Richard Clough in 1567. To the rear of No 19 High Street, (26063) is an end-jetty house of three storeys which has been dated to 1566-1602 and forms an island block. Shown on John Speed's depiction of Denbigh, it represents an early encroachment into the market place.

Grove House (PRN 25768), once one of the grandest town houses in Vale Street may retain features of a house built by Hugh Clough in 1574. It was constructed from building materials imported from Antwerp and was amongst the first brick houses to be built in Wales. Land opposite Grove House, now occupied by 52-54 Vale Street is known to have been in use as an open 'grove' between the early 17th and 19th centuries. That the site remained an open space for centuries, whilst elsewhere on Vale Street post-Georgian architectural expansion replaced practically all of the earlier buildings, suggests this plot may have been retained by Grove House throughout this period to provide an open vista from the house, eastwards across the Vale, emphasising the importance of setting in considering urban layouts.

Galch Hill House (102592) was in existence in the later 16th century, as was 24 Bridge Street (26066), which although remodelled in the late 18th century, contains many of the original features including fireplaces and a garderobe. Bryn-y-parc (Nos 3-5, Park Street) contains internal features of late 16th/17th-century date, perhaps reused. Nos 27-31 Vale Street is essentially a medieval hall house with later additions (19785). The Eagle Hotel is thought to

be 16th- or very early 17th- century but has seen considerable rebuilding; the Golden Lion is 18th-century but with a later 15th-century timber frame. No.2 Love Lane is dated to around 1500. No 33 High Street (25731) has been dated by dendrochronology to 1533 and it is likely that 32 and 34 High Street are contemporary. No. 22 High Street is a late 16th-century building, however the walls incorporate dressed sandstone characteristic of that employed in the late 13th-early 14th century works of the castle and therefore possibly reused.

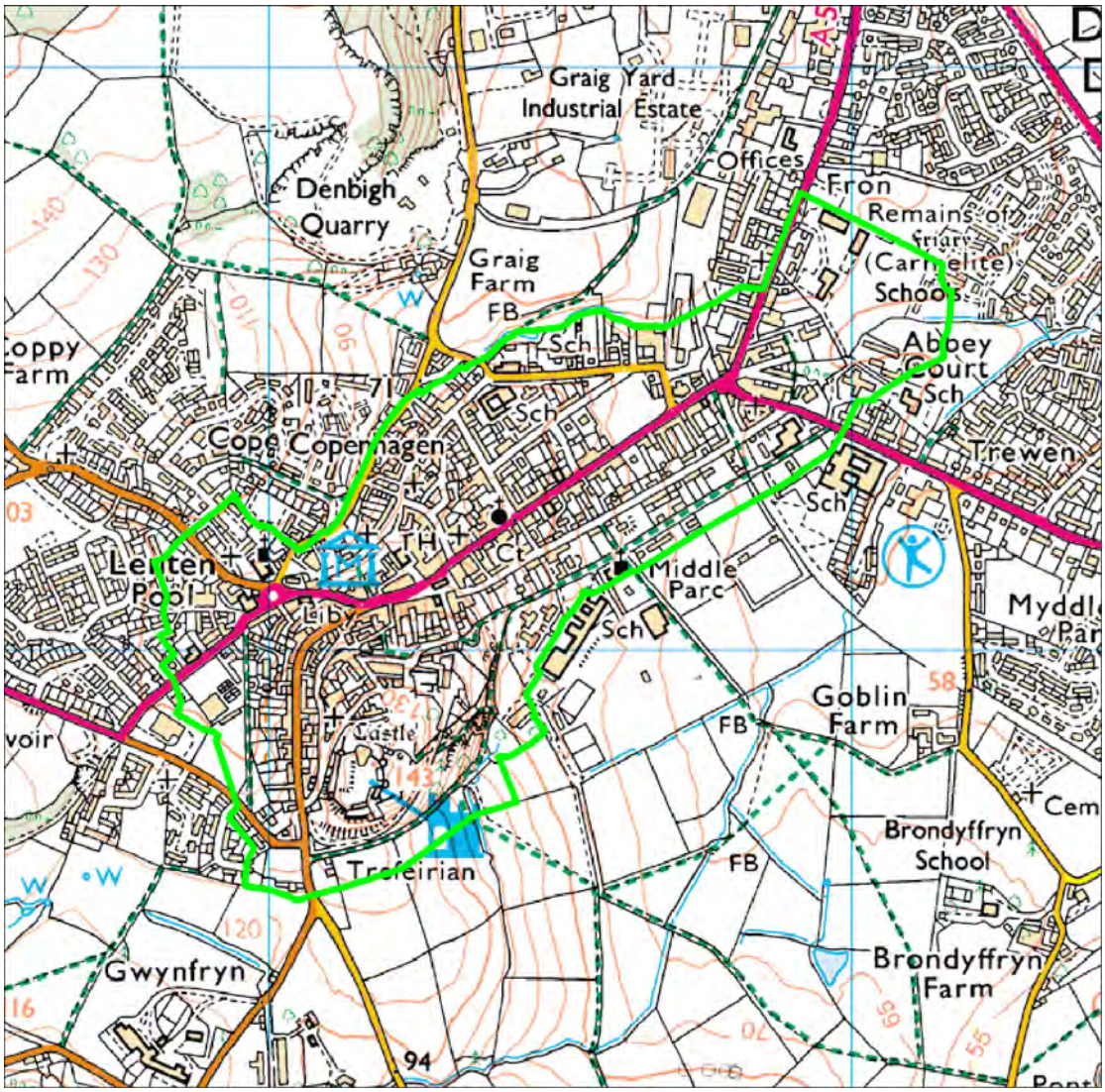
Other buildings have 17th-century features, but no thorough survey of the stock of early buildings in Denbigh is presently available, and the number of such survivals has probably been underestimated.

Of the public buildings and features, the two-storied town hall (102597) was built of stone in 1572 and restored in 1780. The market cross (102019) a medieval cross, much modified in 1760 was later removed to the bowling green near the castle, but has now been returned to the edge of the market place. Denbigh boasted a circular thatched cock-pit possibly of the 17th century which was removed to St Fagans Museum in 1964.

A tile kiln (102021) of 14th/15th-century date was uncovered during construction of the welfare centre in 1938. Irregular and poorly defined platforms (101813), perhaps associated with a holloway, to the north-east of the historic core of the town, could just be the remains of earlier settlement. The site of a well, Fynnon Farcel (102022), was noted by Edward Lhuyd's correspondent in 1698. No trace remains.

Relatively few archaeological interventions have taken place within Denbigh over the course of the past 15 years as a result of local development. Work carried out at 52-54 Vale Street between 2012 and 2014 revealed evidence for medieval occupation in the form of 15th-century pottery and potential beam slots for a contemporary timber framed building. An intact cobbled surface was also uncovered at some depth below the present street frontage, attesting previously unknown medieval activity in this part of the town. The depth of the imported material overlying the cobbled surface demonstrated a considerable degree of groundwork in the 17th and 18th centuries that subsequently changed both the view and nature of the street frontage for a purpose, presently, unknown.

Denbigh Green, an area of unenclosed common, lay to the north of the town. Its extent is depicted on an estate map of c.1809. Strip fields lay on the edge of town, south of the modern quarry. Some at least have now been built over.



## Derwen

**SJ 0700 5070**
**105956**

***Introduction***
Derwen lies in the hills some 9km south-west of Ruthin, and about 1km from the A494 trunk road linking Mold with Bala. High above the valley of the River Clwyd, here in its upper reaches, the land slopes downwards from the ridge of Cefn Mawr interrupted only by the occasional natural shelf. Derwen occupies one of these flatter shelves, with church and houses on relatively level ground.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Derwen 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
Recent place-name authorities have assumed that there was a prominent oak tree near to where the various minor lanes converged on the hamlet. It was recorded as *Derinney* in 1254, but as *Derwen* in 1291. A longer version, *Ll. Derewenenyall* (1392) and *Derwenynial* (1535), incorporates an element which is seen as a version of *anial* meaning ‘desolate’ or ‘wild’, rather than the commote known as Iâl which lay well over to the east.

Nothing is known of the emergence and subsequent development of Derwen. The truncated curvilinear churchyard hints at an early medieval foundation, and it is perhaps likely that the present dedication to St Mary is not original but was imposed on an already existing church after the Norman Conquest, but such an early beginning requires corroboration. And even with a church here in the Middle Ages we cannot assume that there was a settlement around it.

In the late 17$^{th}$ century Edward Lhuyd termed it *Lhan Dherwen*, and stated that there were only about 4 or 5 houses by the church. The mid 19$^{th}$-century Tithe survey presented a similar picture with 4 houses (or pairs of houses) on the lane circumambulating the churchyard.

***The heritage to 1750***
St Mary's church (100767) is single-chambered, and retains medieval fabric though what this is cannot be established. It is thought to be earlier however than the fine rood screen and loft, the late medieval roof and the east window. The double west bellcote is dated to 1688 and the font to 1665. The church was restored in 1857 and is now in the hands of the Friends of Friendless Churches.

Though the churchyard (19723) is sub-rectangular with a curve to its south-east side, it displays otherwise relatively straight boundaries, though a slight curve on the north-west has been flattened out since the Ordnance Survey's mapping towards the end of the 19th century. One senses nevertheless that this is originally a small curvilinear graveyard. Generally it is raised above the surrounding lanes, one metre or so on the west, rather more elsewhere.

The churchyard houses a fine, late 15th-century cross consisting of a shaft and pedestal and finely decorated if somewhat worn crosshead (100769). It is considered to be one of the finest of its type in Wales.

Also within the churchyard is Church House (19722). This is believed to date from around 1700, or perhaps even earlier, Two-storied, the upper floor was formerly used as a parish room or vestry and also served as a village school, while the lower storey functioned as both a lych-gate and a hearse house.

The ecclesiastical structures apart there are no recognisable buildings of any age within Derwen itself.

The pattern of lanes converging on the churchyard confirms the focal character of the church in the Middle Ages. That approaching from the north-east could however be a late addition to the landscape for it appears to cut across the grain of a field system that integrates medieval strip fields though these were more in evidence on maps of the 19th century. Other medieval strips lay to the south-west of the churchyard.

Uncharacterised minor earthworks appear in OS plot 1176 behind the house of Ael-y-bryn to the east of the churchyard.

## Dyserth

**SJ 0561 3793**
**105803**

***Introduction***
Dyserth lies at the foot of Moel Hiraddug, towards the northern end of the Clwydian hills, approximately 3km east-north-east of Rhuddlan and 3.5km south-south-west of Prestatyn. The older, lower part of the village occupies the sides of a narrow valley, into which Dyserth waterfall pours a stream. The majority of the older limestone-built cottages stand on the lower slopes of the west side of the valley. The stream below the waterfall is canalised, but previously was prone to flooding the whole of lower Dyserth.

Dyserth was for long in the historic county of Flintshire. But transferred to the new county of Clwyd in 1974, it became part of the Denbighshire local authority area in 1996 when Clwyd was broken up.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Dyserth up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

***History of development***
The name Dyserth is thought to be indicative of an early phase of Christian evangelisation by eremitic holy men. The name occurs as a title for several parishes in Wales, and in the form 'Dysart' it is common in Ireland. A pre-Conquest origin has always seemed likely and there is a growing realisation that Dyserth was perhaps the mother church for the region and thus of a higher status than most early medieval ecclesiastical foundations.

The manor is first mentioned in Domesday Book in AD 1087, as *Dissard*, one of the berewicks of Rhuddlan. Later forms include *Dissarth* in 1241, *Dyssard* in 1315 and *Dysserth* in the years 1458-9.

In 1093 the church and manor was bestowed on the monks of St Werburgh's in Chester. The growth of the settlement around the church is impossible to gauge at present; a nucleated settlement seems likely and even some nucleation before the Norman Conquest is plausible, given the importance of the church.

Dyserth was, in the past, distinguished for its castle. The location had been occupied intermittently since Neolithic times, but in 1241, Henry III began work on a castle here. In 1248 it was complete and interestingly a number of burgage plots near the castle were offered to tenants. These are thought to have been to the east and south-east of the castle entrance,

rather than on the site of the present village. The castle and presumably the new borough were destroyed in 1263 by a Welsh force.

In the last years of the 17th century, Edward Lhuyd's correspondent noted that there were 35 houses by the church, a remarkable number compared with what is usually recorded for small settlements in the region, and one which we should perhaps treat with a pinch of salt. Richard Colt Hoare during his travels in north Wales in 1801 commented on the castle but evidently saw nothing of interest in the village.

There was formerly a fulling mill at Dyserth, and the name 'Pandy' still survives as well as 'Weavers Lane' as a testimony to the former importance of the woollen industry in the neighbourhood.

The Tithe survey of 1839 shows a small settlement, including the church, at Lower Dyserth. Houses extended along Waterfall Road from Carreg Heilin Lane to Weavers Lane. This still forms the core of the present village, although 20th-century housing estates have been added on to the west and north. Pendre stood at the top of Waterfall Road (where old farm buildings still stand today), but at this date there was very little of Upper Dyserth - three or four buildings only are shown on what is the modern High Street, with a few more around Bryn y Felin. Common land separated the upper and lower villages, and there were further areas of common on the rocky higher ground. The enclosed land was mostly arable.

Early attempts were made to mine lead and copper at Dyserth, but such poor results were obtained during the reign of Edward II that the works were abandoned. Later on, lead mining particularly at Talargoch, became very important in the economy of the settlement. Out of a parish population in 1833 of 714, an average of 200 people were employed in procuring lead. The lead was then shipped from Rhuddlan to be smelted at Flint.

***The heritage to 1750***

St Ffraid's (otherwise St Bride's) church (102073) formerly had a dedication to St Cwyfan. The 13th-century building was heavily restored (and arguably largely rebuilt) by Sir George Gilbert Scott who removed, *inter alia*, the Norman west doorway. The east window is perpendicular, and an inscription of 1450 is recorded for the stained glass. Inside are a later 16th-century arch-braced roof, a decorated 11th-century standing cross formerly in the churchyard, and the cross base of another of similar date, various sepulchral slabs of late medieval date, and a medieval font that was completely retooled at the time of the Victorian restoration.

The walled churchyard (105826) has been enlarged in 1871 and it is not clear what the original size and shape would have been. However, with the polygonal enclosure that existed at the beginning of the 19th century, there are hints (though no more) of a curving boundary on the south side of the church. The topography, however, may offer a clue; the ground level immediately around the church and including the yew trees is noticeably higher than the remainder of the graveyard and this might well represent the extent of the earliest churchyard. In the churchyard are two 17th-century canopied tombs.

The holy well of Ffynnon Cwyfa (102075), the precise location of which is no longer known, is said to lie to the east of the church amongst rocks, but to have dried up.

Dyserth castle (102059/60), situated half a mile north-east of the church at the top of a steep hill, was completed by 1250, but destroyed in 1263 by Llewellyn ap Gruffydd. Quarrying has removed most of the castle site, including stone buildings, but a bank and ditch defending the outer ward still survive to the north-east. Excavations outside the castle in 1914 yielded finds suggesting occupation here in the Neolithic, the Bronze Age and the Roman period.

It is not straightforward to compile a coherent story for the village, even in the post-medieval centuries. The church set on the valley floor was accompanied by some dwellings fronting

onto the lane running northwards towards the coast and now known as Waterfall Road. The one recognisable higher-status building here, variously known as the Old Vicarage or Old Manor, lay beside the stream but back from the lane. Southwards the lane ran away from the church, separating from the stream, and following instead a straight course towards Rhuallt and perhaps more significantly other historic settlements such as Tremeirchion and Bodfari, with just the occasional house or farm, such as Pendre. On rising ground to the east of the lane was a common and by the 19th century this was being encroached on by cottages, though to a lesser degree than the modern infilling of what is now known as Bryn-y-felin. The overall impression is one of a small core settlement by the church but with a significant number of historic houses within a kilometre or so of the church, some of which are noted below.

Opposite the church is The Old Manor (102071), a former vicarage; the building was largely restored in 1799 and now shows little evidence of its predecessor of 1584 (although a date tablet remains) which was called Plas yr Esgob and used as a residence by the Bishops of St Asaph. The house is mentioned by this name by Edward Lhuyd's respondent in 1699. The site of Dyserth vicarage ice house (103563) now lies beneath a modern housing estate.

Siamber Wen (102072), to the south of Dyserth castle, is a medieval T-plan house, built of limestone and now roofless and ruined, consisting of hall and service range and an upper-end cross wing. The solar is at the east end. The floors are thought to have been of clay. The building is said to date to the early 14th century. A well is noted in earlier accounts of the house. There is a holloway to the north-east and a platform to the south.

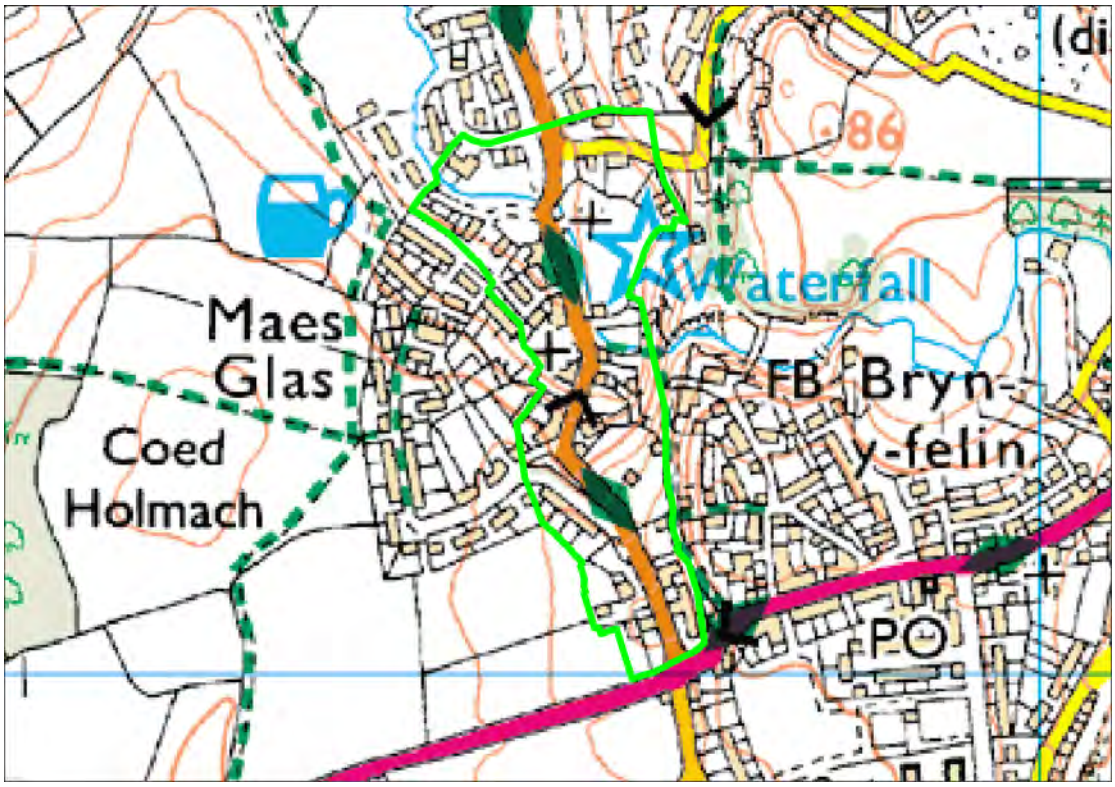
Dyserth Hall (102762) is situated just outside the village to the north of the church. Although 19th-century in appearance, it has one 16th-century mullioned window and another of the later 16th or 17th century. There is also a 17th-century stone barn here.

Llewerllyd to the north-west of the village was former 17th-century but rebuilt in 1783.

Craig-y-Castell (102070), a grade II listed building lying north-east of the village centre, is listed in Lhuyd's *Parochialia* of 1699. The two-storeyed stone-built house is possibly of early 16th-century date. The house has now been incorporated into a larger modern residence.

The lower village still contains a number of small limestone-built cottages, probably of 18th or 19th-century date, on the west side of Waterfall Road and also higher up the valley side on Maes Hyfryd. On Weavers Lane there were formerly thatched roofed cottages, but these were destroyed by fire in 1928 and have been replaced with modern houses. The upper part of Dyserth, too, contains buildings which appear to be of a similar date on Bryn y Felin and at Pendre farm (on the east side of B5119).

A mill formerly stood at the foot of the waterfall, and just back from the north to south lane through the village, some ruins still being visible there today (105827). It appears on a map from 1756 and obviously has a longer history than that. Further upstream at Pandy is the site of a fulling mill (103564), but the original buildings have been renovated and altered substantially.



## Efenechtyd

**SJ 1115 5577**
**105957**

***Introduction***
Efenechtyd lies on a minor road in the hills bordering the Vale of Clwyd, some 2km to the south of Ruthin. The church shelters on the west side of a broad valley, a little above the flat floor. Four lanes meet here and a few houses are situated in the immediate vicinity.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Efenechtyd up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
Efenechtyd appears as *Eccla de Wenechdit* in the Norwich Taxation of 1254, a reference to the church rather than any settlement. Between that date and 1838 when it was first written down in its modern form, several variant names appear including *Venitghit* (1324), *Veneghted* (1530) and *y fenechdid* (1530). The name signifies 'the monastery' (in Welsh, *y menechdid*), although it is considerably more likely that it was a monastic grange or farm.

The form of the churchyard and its careful positioning on the edge of a valley, however, suggest an early medieval origin, its dedication to a British saint probably being superseded by that to St Michael at a later date.

Whether a settlement developed around the church in the Middle Ages has yet to be established, and Edward Lhuyd, usually a good source of information on late 17$^{th}$-century Denbighshire, is silent on Efenechtyd.

At the time of the Tithe survey the church was accompanied by two farms – Penybryn (now Bryn-llan) and Llan Efenechtyd (now Plas-yn-llan) – and no more than three dwellings, one of them the Rectory.

A complicating factor is a proposed association with Valle Crucis Abbey, *menechdid*, bringing together the terms for 'monk' and 'dwelling' from which it has been deduced by some writers that there was a monastic grange here, as noted above. Against this interpretation, however, is the fact that David Williams, the leading authority on the Welsh Cistercians, associates the reference not with this location but with a farm of the same name on the banks of the river Dee in Llantysilio.

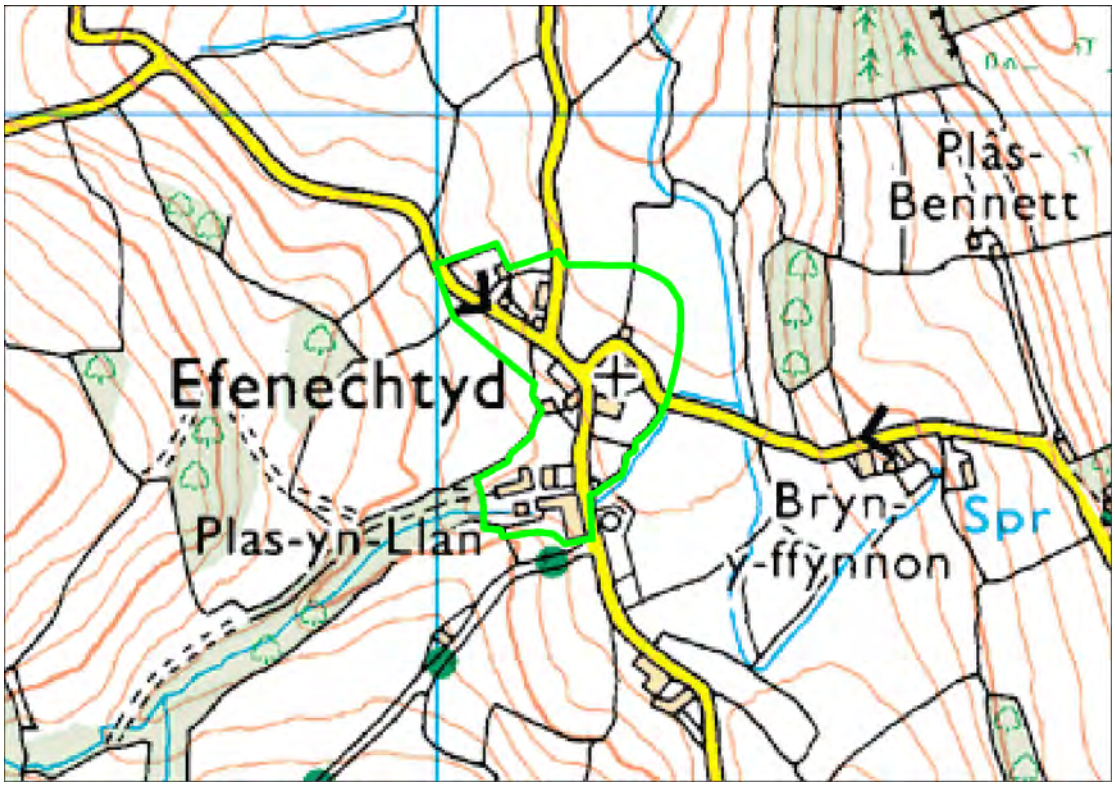
***The heritage to 1750***

The small church of St Michael (16774) consists of a heavily restored single chamber, though with the chancel added to an earlier nave. A decorated window in the former could indicate that the nave is 13th century. Internally there is a late medieval roof, an unusual wooden font, remnants of the medieval screen, a pulpit with 17th-century panelling, a fragment of a wall painting, and *maen camp*, a stone once used locally in games of strength.

The church is set in an irregularly curvilinear and slightly raised churchyard (19702), its boundary on the south side adjusted to accommodate the rectory and its garden. Lewis noted that in the earlier part of the 19th century the stone mentioned above lay in the churchyard.

Plas-yn-llan (19703) on the south side of the village is an early 18th century gentry house, with remarkable gate piers at the entrance to the grounds. Of its predecessor nothing is known. Bryn-llan (19704) originated in the 17th century but has later additions.

No significant earthworks have been recognised in the environs of the village. The convergence of so many lanes around the church does however reveal that this was a focal point, albeit a minor one, in the hills on the western side of the vale of Clwyd.



## Gwyddelwern

**SJ 0750 4660**
**105960**

***Introduction***
Gwyddelwern is placed on the eastern face of a broad U-shaped valley which channels an obscure stream, the Afon Camddwr, southwards towards the Dee. The church lies almost on the valley floor and the village itself is virtually no higher. A small tributary stream now partly culverted runs down from off the hills to the north-east and passes just to the south of the church. Through the village runs the A494 which links the A5 trunk road in the south with Ruthin and the North Wales coastal strip further north. The nearest settlement of any size is Corwen, some 3km to the south. Now in Denbighshire, it was one of several parishes transferred from Merionnydd to the newly formed county of Clwyd in 1974.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Gwyddelwern 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 in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
The origin and growth of Gwyddelwern are not documented. Both the church dedication to one of the best known saints of north Wales and the atypical shape of its churchyard hint at an early medieval date for the ecclesiastical foundation. A tradition perpetuated on the village information panel that Gwyddelwern was originally known as Llanalhaiarn can be dismissed as a confused recollection of the incorporation of a medieval parish of that name into Gwyddelwern at a later date, probably around 1550 according to Archdeacon Thomas, the historian of the diocese.

The earliest written reference comes from 1198 when it was termed *Gwothelwern* and in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 the church is listed as *Ecc'a de Gwidelwern*, a form very close to the modern version. Putting aside a folk tradition that St Beuno restored an Irishman (Gwyddel) to life near here, modern place-name authorities suggest that the elements *gwyddwal* and *gwern* signify ‘an alder marsh in the thickets’ which seems not unreasonable in this broad valley location.

The development of a settlement here during the Middle Ages can be no more than an assumption, but in the closing years of the 17$^{th}$ century Edward Lhuyd recorded eight houses and two cottages by the church. Maps of the late 18$^{th}$/mid-19$^{th}$ century imply a similar density of settlement. Bueno's Terrace and other houses further north as well as the ribbon development to the south of the church represent later 19$^{th}$-century growth.

***The heritage to 1750***

St Bueno's Church was largely rebuilt in 1880 when a new chancel was erected, together with a tower and spire over the porch. An earlier rebuilding, its scale unknown, occurred in 1538, and together these have complicated the architectural story of Gwyddelwern's development. Windows of 14th-century date, though much restored, remain in the nave, as does a priest's door, and the east window may be similar to its 16th-century predecessor. Internal features include a 19th-century screen integrating late medieval work, a late medieval dug-out chest and a font, probably of 15th-century origin, some pre-Reformation stained glass fragments in the chancel, 18th-century pew panels and a couple of memorials from the same century.

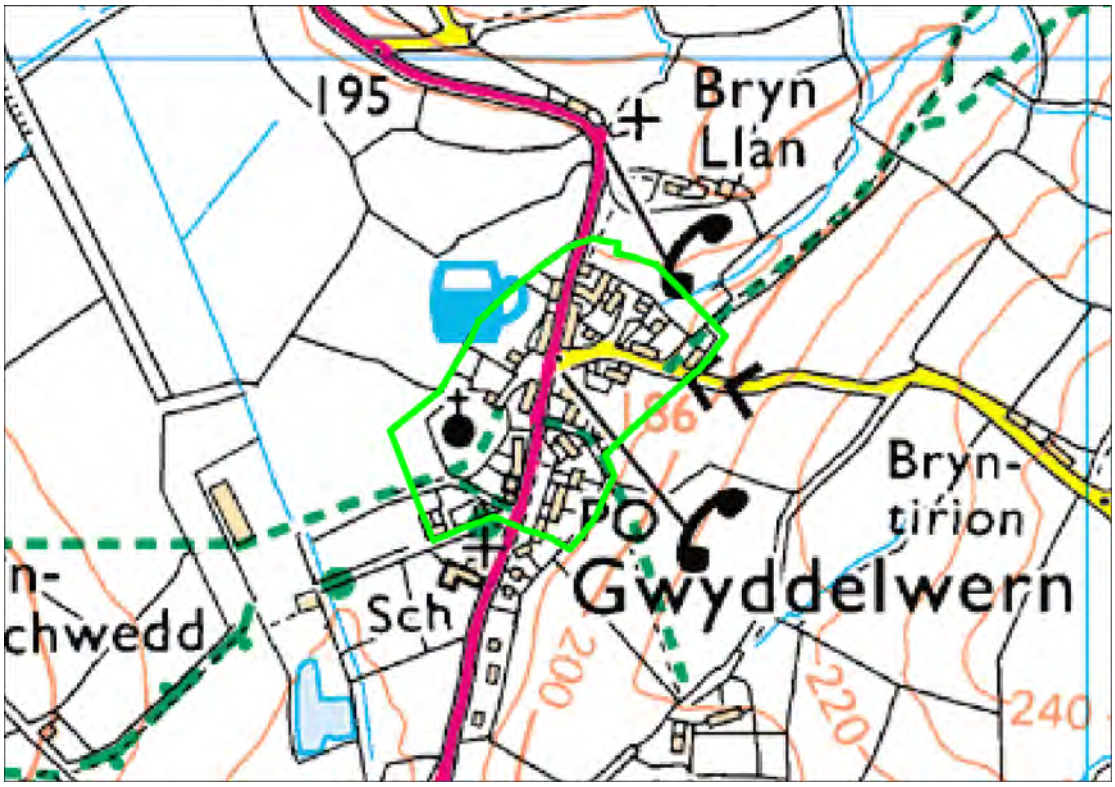
Elias Owen in the late 19th century was convinced that Gwyddelwern had a 'circular' churchyard, pointing out that its curvilinear shape had been disturbed on its north-west and south-west sides but that an earlier line was still apparent. This earlier perimeter line is no longer discernible, but the relatively modern artificiality of the boundary on these sides is not in doubt, nor is the curvilinearity on the north-east and around the south end, notwithstanding the encroachment of the now-ruined building by the north entrance.

Fynnon Bueno lies to the north of the village and was marked on early editions of the large-scale Ordnance Survey map. The spring formerly rose in a sunken slate-lined chamber but this was apparently used as a rubbish tip and no trace of the well remained. There is now a brick and stone tank, fenced off from the rest of the field. Another well, Fynnon Fair, was recorded, though less precisely, as lying to the west of the village.

Apart from the church, there are several early buildings in the village. The Rose and Crown immediately to the north-east of the churchyard, and in the late 19th century known more simply as the Crown (and before that reportedly as Ty Mawr) has box-framing and half-timbering; the building is now known to date from 1570-2 as a result of dendrochronology. A little further north along the main road, the former Blue Bell Inn has some details that could be late medieval or perhaps sub-medieval according to the RCAHMW. And Ty'n Llan on the east side of the Camddwr stream is a cruck-framed hall-house perhaps from around 1500, but then converted to a storeyed house of regional type a century later.

Low earthworks exist on the valley floor immediately to the west of the churchyard. These have not been characterised and are not sufficiently distinctive to merit detailed recording. Narrow quillets covered low ground north of the church in the late 18th century, showing on an estate map of the time. Almost all traces of these have now been erased, but farm names incorporating the element '*maes*' are probably a reminder of medieval open field agriculture associated with the settlement. Field patterns to the west of the church imply something similar.

The axis of the village has been adjusted over the last two to three hundred years. The main road passing through the village is a turnpike road. Perhaps it superseded an earlier track along the valley though this is not certain. The network of lanes and footpaths aligned across the valley from north-east to south-west could indicate the main approach in earlier centuries.



## Henllan

**SJ 0240 6810**
**105961**

***Introduction***
Henllan lies a little less than 3km to the north-west of Denbigh on a secondary road, the B5382. The location is an interesting one in as much as the early village is set on both the top and the upper sides of a limestone spur, the detached church tower on an outcrop, the church itself lower down the slope. To the west is the deep valley cut by Afon Meirchion, to the south a small, dry re-entrant. The modern village (see below) has spread over the flattish plateau behind the limestone spur.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Henllan 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 in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
The name of the village is significant. Presumably, though not certainly it has an ecclesiastical origin, but at what point the name 'old church' was applied to the ecclesiastical foundation and the settlement is not known. However, the name could conceivably refer to an otherwise unknown enclosure, probably not associated with a church, but one albeit of very early date. The church dedication to St Sadwrn may indicate an early medieval (i.e. pre-Conquest) origin, but the first documentary reference to it is in 1291 when it was described as a chapelry subservient to St Asaph though with the relatively high value of £16 10s which might offer a hint that the church in earlier centuries was of greater importance than it was reduced to in the high Middle Ages. The presence of a possible holy well – Ffynnon Sadwrn – close to Fox Hall, immediately to the south-east of the village, also focuses in on the obscure saint, and probably strengthens the argument for an early medieval foundation.

The earliest reference to the church and by association the settlement that was to develop here is the Pope Nicholas' Taxation of 1291 where *Helan* appears, a little too late to determine whether the creation of the new castle and settlement at Denbigh, the former presumably with its own associated chapel, could have had some influence on the name applied to what was certainly the earlier settlement. Later, in 1311, it was recorded as *Henthlan* and in 1518 it appeared in a document in its modern form. What is worth remarking is the relatively small number of references to Henllan in medieval documents.

To John Ogilby in the 1670s, Henllan was 'a little village seated on an eminence', while Edward Lhuyd at the end of the 17th century reported about thirteen houses around the church and another eighteen not far off, suggesting a not insignificant community.

Henllan has grown considerably in the last century and a half, spreading eastwards away from the historic core, but attention to this strictly falls outside this study.

***The heritage to 1750***

A church dedicated to St Sadwrn (100582) was erected here in the 15th century, although this will not have been the first on the spot. The detached tower of that building (100583) survives, constructed on a spur of rock in the north-east corner of the churchyard. Some of the present building is Georgian (early 19th century), but in places the wall fabric may be of 15th-century date. Very few medieval architectural features have been retained or reused, but there is a doorway in the decorated style now leading into the vestry. The only medieval furnishing to survive is a piscina, although the medieval font, formerly functioning as the basin for a small well in the grounds of Llysmeirchion, on the opposite side of the river, has now been returned to the churchyard where it is set beside the path leading to the church entrance. Other furnishings and fittings, all post-Reformation, include a Jacobean altar table, 18th-century chandeliers and befaction boards and monuments from the late 17th century onwards.

The churchyard (19773) sprawls across a steep slope falling away to west and south. Now a quadrilateral in shape, with a curving perimeter only in the north-west quadrant, there is a break of slope south of the church itself which is probably a natural feature. It was extended to the south-west in 1889.

The churchyard cross (100584) of which only the shaft survives was, if an undated sketch in the Bodleian is accurate, at one time sited outside the churchyard, perhaps being uprooted at the time of the 1807-8 restoration; a date of 1608 incised on it must be associated with an earlier, but unchronicled, event.

The layout of Henllan is intriguing, with its numerous roads and lanes forming an irregular network of thoroughfares and 'islands', unusually complex for this part of north-east Wales. It is the lanes themselves that provide both hints and uncertainties about the origins and development of Henllan. Some can be dismissed as recent additions to the village-scape. The narrow lane that runs down from the church tower to Llindir Street past the Institute cuts across an existing 'island', while the zig-zagging lane beside Plas-meifod give the appearance of a road established in a pre-existing landscape.

At the core of Henllan are four or probably five routeways coming in from various points of the compass, and focussing not on the church itself which would almost certainly have been here before any settlement developed, but on the ground immediately to the east of it. Some of these tracks certainly had a long history, originating back in the Middle Ages if not earlier. That approaching from the north-west was referred to as 'the way leading from the parish church of Henllan towards Abergley' in 1537, that coming up from Nantglyn to the south was referenced in 1518, and there are various 16th-century references, too, to the road from Denbigh which came in from the east. The pattern created however is slightly irregular, particularly with the lane coming down from the north-east and exiting to the south-west, and this suggests that there was probably not a well-defined thoroughfare through Henllan but an area of open ground through which tracks threaded an irregular course.

Such open ground might be a small common, but in this area of Denbighshire, there were also greens, an essentially English landscape form, seen nearby at Denbigh Green which was a large tract of open land until its enclosure between 1802 and 1814. On and around this common/green dwellings would have been established in random fashion and the lanes across the common would gradually have become formalised to create the irregular layout visible today. What this common might have been called in the past is not clear. Elizabethan and later documents refer to various commons close to Henllan such as Craiga Henllan, Y Llindir

and Henllan Common, and a number together with Denbigh Green might be traceable through detailed analysis of the Enclosure Map.

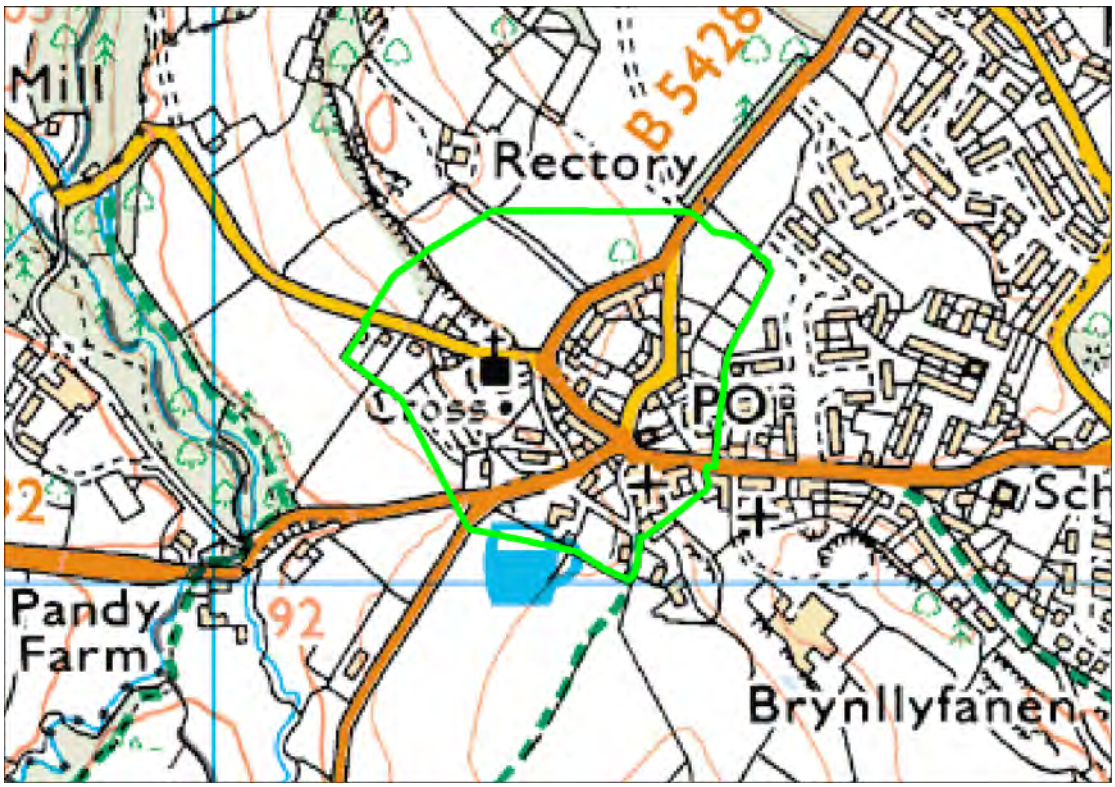
The two oldest houses in Henllan appear to be the Llindir Inn (102746), traditionally always an inn, though it perhaps originated as a farmhouse, the earliest of its several phases probably of late 16th-century date; and Plas Meifod (102747), which is located on what is now the eastern edge of the modern village – it originated as a late medieval timber-framed hall house, the central truss of the former open hall still surviving, and the house was subsequently encased in stone in the late 16th or early 17th century, at which time it became a storeyed structure. Tan yr Eglwys (19752) is a sub-medieval, stone-walled house; Bryntirion on Denbigh Street is a late 16th-century lateral chimney, storeyed farmhouse; Bryn–y-ffyn(n)on is a mid-18th-century end-chimney house (a plaque above the door sports the date 1752); and two terraced cottages on School Street originated as a mid-18th-century storeyed house.

Also significant is the grouping of historic houses situated within the environs of the village; these include Plas Heaton (102807) to the north-east, Garn (101470) to the north, Foxhall (100586) to the south-east, and Bryn-y-parc also to the south-east.

Uncharacterised earthworks (19774) of potential archaeological interest survive in pasture, north of Ty-coch Street and south-east of the Rectory. Their significance has not been ascertained.

Strip fields lay on the north side of the village and could still be seen from the air in 1946, as could a patch of ridge and furrow (19753), though this has now been built over.

In addition to its parish church Henllan reputedly had four chapels within the parish, none of which were still standing in 1864.



## Llanarmon-yn-Iâl

**SJ 1900 5620**
**105964**

***Introduction***
Llanarmon-yn-Iâl is set high in the valley of the River Alyn as it courses northwards off the Clwydian Hills. Church and village occupy the northern lip of the valley side close to where the changing alignment of the river has created a spur. Behind the settlement the undulating limestone plateau rises gradually. Llanarmon's mill and motte lie in the valley below, the latter on the far bank from the settlement.

Two secondary roads, the B5431 running up from the south and the B5430 from Wrexham to Ruthin, converge just to the east of the village. Ruthin itself is less than 7km to the west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanarmon-yn-Iâl 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 in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
Llanarmon-yn-Iâl first appears as *Lanarmavn* in the ecclesiastical taxation of 1291, while in the earlier Norwich Taxation of 1254 it is recorded simply as *Sancto Garmano*. Its commotal name – as *Thlanharmon in Yal* – is revealed in a document of 1314. The name is of course a simple reference to the 'church of Garmon', but its appearance in this abbreviated form in 1254 is perhaps an indication of the status and ready recognition of the church.

The church of St Garmon has long been held to be the leading church in the commote of Yale, and this dedication alone points to an early medieval beginning. As the ecclesiastical centre it would have functioned in the early medieval period as a 'mother church' with a *clas* community comprised of individual clerics whose successors claiming portions of the church's revenues are attested in the early 14th century. Suggestions that the earlier church lay on the east bank of the river where the foundation marks of a rectangular building have been seen in the valley floor field beside Plas-isaf cannot be verified.

The late Glanville Jones argued that on the west side of the river around the church was a *maerdref* or bond settlement in an area known as Tre'r Llan. The unfree bondmen provided the local labour on the lord's demesne attached to his *llys* or court.

On the east bank of the river is the earthwork castle or motte known as Tomen y Faerdre which was presumably established in the 12th century. Here too was the manorial court or *caput* of the lord of Yale (Îâl) complete with a mill and demesne land, all recorded in an Extent of Bromfield and Yale in 1315. The court at that time consisted of (or perhaps should

have consisted of) 'one hall, one chamber, one stable, one grange and one cattle shed, and each house shall be 64 feet in length, and in breadth as best fitting, except that they ought not to thatch, but they roof the said house with lathes'. A plausible but largely circumstantial case can then be made for an earlier, pre-12th-century *llys* or court here, the motte being a deliberately positioned successor, although the Royal Commission back in 1914 argued that the motte itself would have been the *llys*.

With these fairly disparate elements it is possible to construct a feasible early history for the emergence of Llanarmon, but much of it for the present remains speculation rather than fact. And supporting this hypothetical settlement framework for the village, there is little solid fact about its early origins and development.

Strangely for a village with such an august origin, Edward Lhuyd refers to only four houses by the church in the late 17th century which can be compared with the larger number for the lesser neighbouring village of Llandegla. A century and a half earlier John Leland had referred to it simply and without explanation as the most 'famous' parish in Yale, though it is likely that this was tied to his additional comment that 'greate pilgremage and offering was a late to S. Armon' which probably relates to an image of St Garmon which was remarked on in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535.

The Tithe survey prepared in 1844/45 shows only a slightly larger scatter of dwellings.

***The heritage to 1750***

St Garmon's church is a double-naved structure, a type relatively common in and around the Vale of Clwyd. It has been suggested that the chancel may be 15th-century, but much of the building was replaced in about 1736, probably on the earlier foundations, and the windows are distinctively 18th-century. Internally there is an early 14th-century effigy of an ecclesiastic and another of a contemporary secular lord of Bodidris; an interesting mural monument of 1639; a pre-Reformation chandelier comparable to that in Llandegla; an oak chest; royal arms of 1740 and a font of 1734; and retained from the earlier church the plain, late medieval roofs.

The churchyard is raised, by one metre on the west and considerably more on the south above the river. It now has straight sides with rounded corners, the exception being on the south where it was curved. A segment of the churchyard has been cut off on this side and has reverted to secular use. This most southerly portion of the churchyard was walled off, prior to the first mapping of the area in the earlier 19th century, and the most logical explanation is that it occurred either when the school was built in 1777, a date well attested on the Benefaction boards in the old school, or in the thirty years before that date when there are references to bequests for educational purposes at both Llanarmon and Llandegla. Evaluation in this segment of the former church failed in 2010 to identify any earlier burials, although fragments of human bone were found in the deposits of soil that had built up.

Internally there are traces of an inner platform around the church, on all sides but the east. Does this indicate a smaller and earlier *llan* or is it perhaps a relic of the earlier church and its demolition? The shaft of the churchyard cross, set in the south-west segment of the enclosure, has been used for a sundial, reputedly erected in 1774.

Unlike neighbouring Llandegla there is no holy well close to the church and though it is generally conceded that there was a Fynnon Garmon, its precise location is disputed (for which see internet sites such as wellhopper), with all the candidates some distance from the village.

Housing in the settlement is a mixture of 18th/19th-century cottages and modern houses. Several of the former have date stones, the earliest of 1749 being that for Llwyn Onn. The Raven Inn, now much altered, was constructed in 1722 and initially had a Grade III listing.

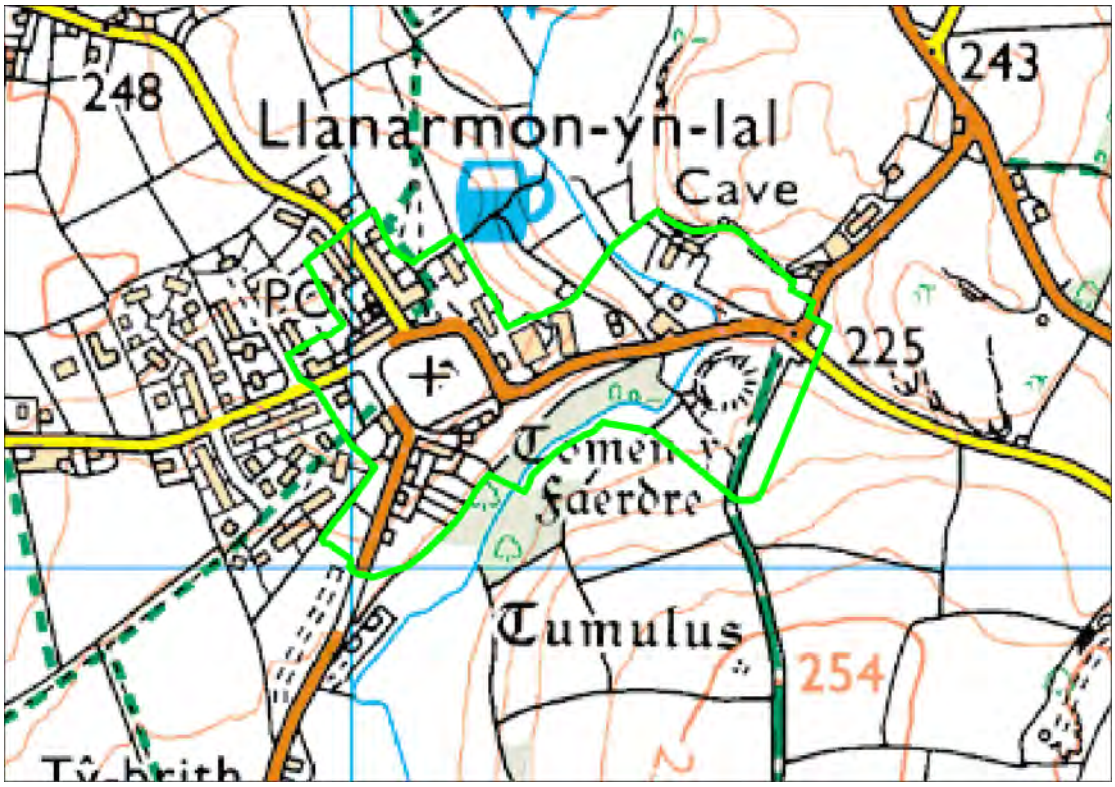
The pattern of lanes converging on the churchyard is an interesting one. It seems to signal that the church enclosure as a nodal point was once completely ringed by lanes, though that on the south has partially disappeared, and that tracks – one now a footpath – accessed this ring at each of the four corners. That leading off from the south-east corner runs down to a crossing point of the Alyn with access to the castle and the mill and their predecessors. Probably as important is the north to south track that passes a few hundred metres to the west of Llanarmon. An arterial route along the Alyn valley and below the Clwydian Range its overall line is much less clear as a result of modern road alterations, but in the 18th century it was one of the most direct routes in the region and directly linked Basingwerk Abbey and Holywell with Valle Crucis Abbey.

The motte of Tomen-y-faerdre, scarped from a natural knoll, lies on the east side of the village. The motte and its buildings have been attributed to the Norman Earl of Chester in the earlier 12th century if not earlier. One authority considers that this was the castle burnt by Iorweth Goch in 1157 and restored by King John in 1212, another that these written references refer to another castle in the parish, Tomen y Rhodwydd. Adjacent to the manorial centre was a park, still recognisable from local place-names.

Documentary evidence reveals a manor house here from at least 1315. Jones has argued that at that time the bond settlement was focused on the church in an area known as Tre'r Llan, while the court was on the opposite bank of the river and consisted of 'one hall, one chamber, one stable, one grange and one cattle shed'. Each house was to be 19.5m long with a width 'as is best fitting'. It has been postulated that the hall was located in the bailey of Tomen y Faerdre. However, it has also been claimed though not satisfactorily documented that the foundations of a rectangular building can be recognised at certain times of year in the valley floor field beside Plas-isaf.

A mill is set close to the River Alun. It is claimed that this spot has been the site of an earlier mill back at least to 1315.

Llanarmon Bridge, single-arched, is probably 18th-century in origin, but a more specific date is not possible.



Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd
**SJ 1453 5981**
**105965**

***Introduction***
Llanbedr is a settlement of two halves. The old church accompanied by Llanbedr Hall is set on the lower, western slopes of the Clwydian range, a shallow dry valley lying to the south, and westwards a gentle slope running off to the River Clwyd and Ruthin, 2km to the south-west. The old church is now effectively isolated and accessible only by a footpath. At a slightly lower altitude, the modern village centres on the Victorian church and the modern A494 which loops down off the Clwydians, several hundred metres to the south-west and south respectively of the old church. Open ground currently separates the old and the new, but both command fine views over the Vale of Clwyd.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanbedr up to the year 1750, and as a consequence focuses on the old part of the settlement. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
The topographical qualifier of Dyffryn Clwyd was not introduced until the 19th century, presumably to differentiate it from other places in Wales also termed Llanbedr. As *Lanpedir* the church was registered in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 and as *Ecclia' Sci' Petri* it is revealed in the later taxation of Pope Nicholas in 1291. The modern form of the name seems to have been recorded no earlier than 1795. The English translation is 'the church of Peter in the vale of Clwyd'.

Like so many other small church settlements in Clwyd, the origins and history of Llanbedr are obscure. An early medieval beginning for the church is possible though there is little solid evidence available to support this contention, and it is the churchyard shape alone that is suggestive. Whether a settlement developed around it and if so when are questions that have yet to be resolved.

The earliest cartographic depiction, which is from 1744, shows only the old church, the hall and its gardens, and several lanes and footpaths, seemingly confirming that in the post-medieval era this was nothing larger than a church settlement. The main approach to the church was from the hall, reinforcing the association between the two in the post-medieval era.

By the 1830s a scatter of dwellings had emerged along and near to the Ruthin to Mold toll road (the A494). More recent developments have emphasised this relocation of settlement along both the main road and the two lanes that join it near the Victorian church.

***The heritage to 1750***

The old church of St Peter (100866) is a ruin, its single chamber retaining its west wall with doorway and bellcote, the base of a Perpendicular window in the east wall, a blocked north doorway, the lower part of a south doorway with an adjacent niche for a stoup, and the base of a timber porch. This older structure has been replaced at the junction of the B5429 and A494 by 'a neat little High Victorian church, of considerable vivacity' (Hubbard) dating to around 1863 and similarly dedicated to St Peter (105900).

The old churchyard (19740) is small and irregularly oval, its straight sides accompanied by rounded corners. It is raised to a height of up to 1.5m on all sides but the east. Set on the tip of a slight spur, there is nothing to suggest that its form has been modified at any point in the past. The earliest gravestone in the churchyard dates, so it is believed, to 1677 (though one now within the church carries a date of 1616), and generally there is an interesting set of grave markers and tombs.

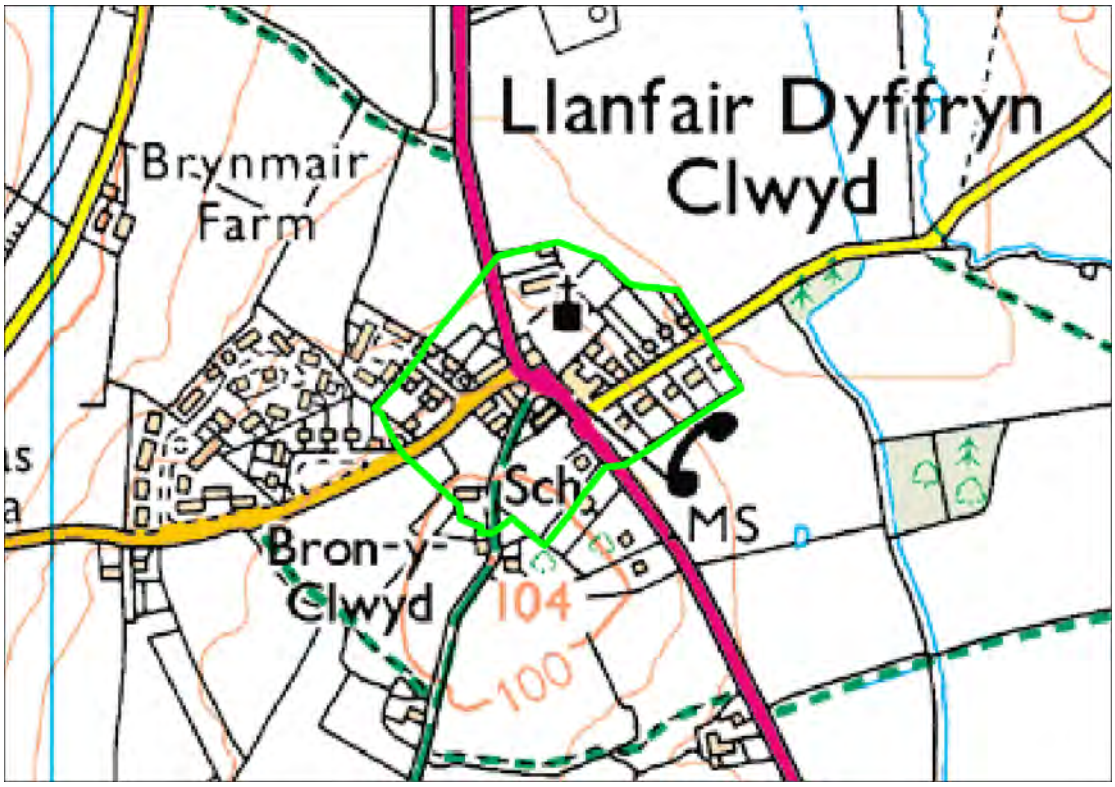
A field named as Cae Castell (19739) on a late 18th-century map and in the Tithe survey lay just north of the A494. Its significance is unclear and it is now incorporated in the house and gardens of a modern property, Robin Hill.

Llanbedr Hall (106063) was largely rebuilt in the third quarter of the 19th century. Its original date of construction has not been determined, but the present building does incorporate earlier fabric.

Wood pasture surrounded the hall at the time of the Tithe survey, and generally this was a much more open landscape than the bounded fields of today would indicate. It is referred to as a park in the accompanying apportionment and Samuel Lewis in 1833 referred to the church as being within the park. An overview of the early Ordnance Survey maps suggests a polygonal area of parkland of around 70 hectares. This is not likely to pre-date the hall's construction, and it does not figure in the *Historic Parks and Gardens Register*.

A reasonably large platform (19741) occupies the corner of a pasture field, little more than one hundred metres to the south-west of the old church. This could be artificial, but requires confirmation by methods other than fieldwork. This apart there is no sign of earlier occupation around the church though woodland on the uphill side could conceivably disguise some features.

The position of the earlier road shown on a map of c.1785 is still distinguished by a continuous field boundary 200m or so south of the old church. Its line is continued by footpaths to the south-west and perhaps the east, and there can be no doubt that it represents an earlier routeway off or over the Clwydian hills.



## Llandegla

**SJ 1960 5250**
**105966**

***Introduction***
Llandegla lies on the eastern slopes of the Clwydians in the upper valley of the River Alyn, here running northwards with the church established on its eastern bank. The village occupies a north-west-facing hillside with the church at the bottom of the slope on the lip of a river terrace. To the south-east, the more recent settlement of Pen-y-stryt has developed on a spur above Llandegla. The nearest town, Ruthin, lies 9km to the north-west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llandegla up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
The church of the female saint Tegla appears first as *landeglan* in 1277-8, as *Llanddegla* in 1284, and as *Landegla* in 1291. Around the year 1700 it was committed to paper as *Lhan Dekla*. The present spelling is initially encountered as late as 1838.

Little is known of the origin and subsequent development of Llandegla. An early medieval foundation for the church seems plausible, based on a dedication which looks British but which conventionally is linked to a 1st-century Middle Eastern saint, Thecla, and the fossilised churchyard shape (see below), but whether a settlement then grew up around it before the Norman Conquest, or indeed in the centuries after that event has yet to be determined by archaeological investigations.

In the 13th century Llandegla was acknowledged as little more than a chapelry dependent on the former mother church at Llangollen, and as such it belonged to the Abbey of Valle Crucis, but its annual value of more than £5 as given in the 1291 *Taxatio* suggests that it was not amongst the poorest churches in the region. The view of the late Dr Glanville Jones was that one of two priests attributed to the commote of Iâl (Yale) in Domesday Book may have served the church at Llandegla, an interesting speculation, but one for which Dr Jones could offer no supporting evidence. There is, however, a reference in John Leland's *Itinerary* in the 1530s to the parishes of Iâl and that after Llanarmon, Llandegla was (for reasons unstated) the most famous.

The village as seen today developed initially around the church and one of Edward Lhuyd's correspondents noted at the end of the 17th century that there were thirteen houses by the church. Subsequent expansion was up the slope south-eastwards towards Pen-y-stryt and the main arterial roads, but dating this is difficult for there are no known maps of the village prior

to the Ordnance Survey's drawing of 1835 and the even smaller scale map of north Wales prepared by John Evans in 1795, both of which do show this southern extension of settlement away from the church.

In the mid-19th century the church was grouped with Mill Farm and the present Hand Inn, together with a couple of buildings, presumably dwellings, on the south and south-west edge of the churchyard, the National School being added to the group in 1791. A second focus of surely more recent origin lay to the south around the Bethania Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, first erected in 1827.

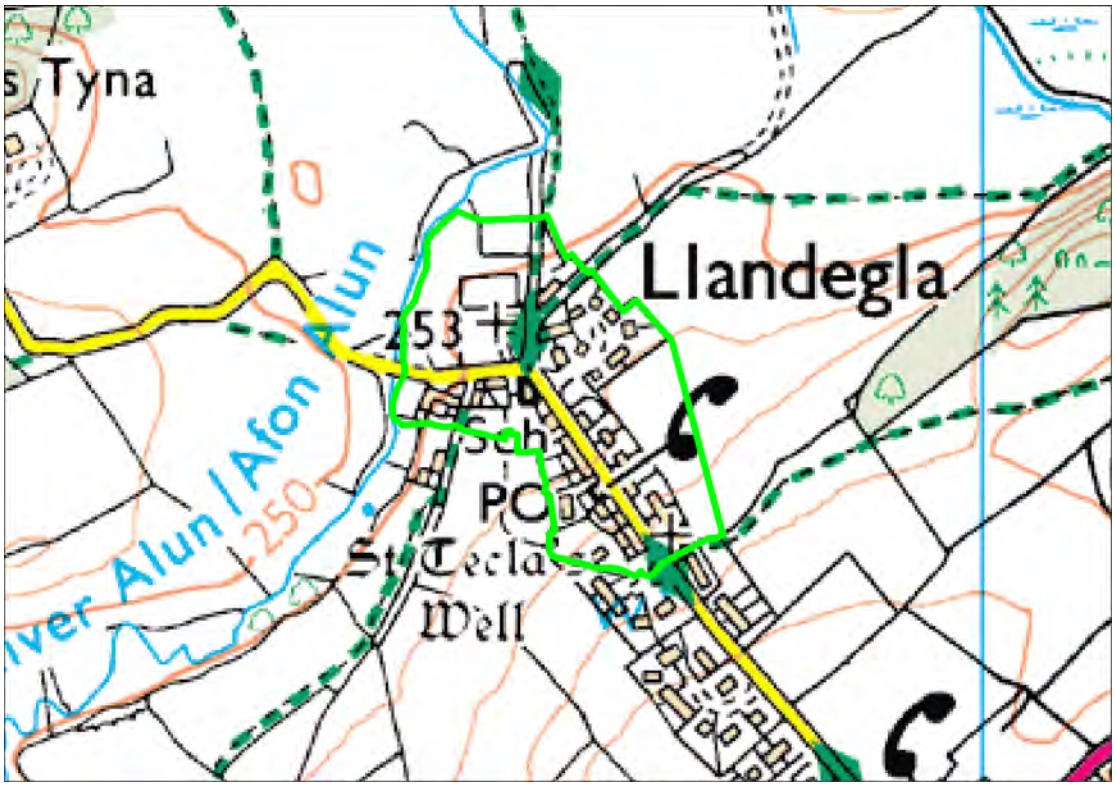
***The heritage to 1750***

St Tegla's church is a Victorian structure, rebuilt on an older site in 1866. There is a fine, late medieval brass chandelier (traditionally but almost certainly incorrectly reported to have been recovered from Valley Crucis Abbey), a Perpendicular font and the parish chest, the only furnishings to survive the Victorian rebuilding which may have removed some items. However, that inveterate church visitor, Sir Steven Glynne coming to the church sometime in the 1840s or 1850s reported that the 'small, mean church without distinction' had 'scarcely any original feature remains either within or without', other than a west door with some 'tolerable mouldings' and a pulpit with some 'tolerably good carving'.

The churchyard is now a solidly rectangular plot, though its east side retains a slight concave curve. The church is set in its north-east quadrant. However, within the western boundary of the graveyard is a low scarp bank, suggesting an earlier straight-sided enclosure with curving corners. This is likely to be the outline of an earlier more curvilinear *llan*.

St Tecla's Well (Fynnon Degla), with three sides encased in stone, was believed to have medicinal properties, apparently frequented for a cure for what was known as 'Tegla's malady', or epilepsy as it is now known. People were still visiting it in anticipation of a cure in the 19th century. The well lies about 200m to the south-west of the church and was excavated in 1935 and produced quantities of finds, most of the coins dating to the 18th and 19th centuries. Thomas relates an unsubstantiated report of 1710 that there was a monumental inscription associated with it. The presence of a holy well tends to reinforce, without proving, the early medieval origin of Llandegla.

The older, stone-built cottages of the village are set on lower ground to the south of the church. One has a datestone of 1736, but none is listed. The bridge across the river Alyn is of mid-19th-century date.



## Llandrillo-yn-Edeirnion

**SJ 0340 3700**
**105967**

***Introduction***
Llandrillo has grown up where Afon Ceidiog breaks out from the constriction imposed by the Berwyn Mountains into the broad valley of the upper Dee. The village is then set on level ground, although a river terrace, utilised by both the church and other buildings, is clearly discernible on the west side of the Ceidiog. The Berwyns loom to the east, while the Dee is little more than a kilometre to the north-west. The B4401 linking Bala and Corwen passes through the village, with the former 11km to the west, and the latter 8km to the north-east.

Llandrillo was, until the 1974 local government reorganisation, in Meirionnydd, as was the rest of the commote and later the hundred of Edeirnion. The affix, though adopted here, is now used only intermittently when referencing the village.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llandrillo up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
The earliest form of the name comes with the listing of the church in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 when it was called *Lantruello* and in the subsequent taxation of 1291 as *Landerillo*. Its commotal label was appended in 1370-1 with *Thlandrethon in Edyrnyon* and in 1691 there was a reference to *Llandrillo in Idernion.*

There is virtually no information about the origin of Llandrillo. A local tradition has it that St Trillo in his wanderings founded a church near where the Ceidiog and the Dee meet, sometime in the late sixth century. This somewhat romantic view is not supported by modern research which tends to the belief that ‘the distribution of particular dedications is unlikely to reflect the actual activity of the named individual’. Nevertheless the morphology in the form of the strongly curvilinear shape of the churchyard, combined with its location on the lip of the river terrace argues persuasively for an early medieval date.

At what point a settlement started to emerge around the church cannot be determined. It could have been in the pre-Conquest period, but perhaps a later date is more likely. However, it is significant that Llandrillo was granted a weekly market and two annual fairs in 1334, indicating that it must have been a settlement of some substance in the Middle Ages. By the post-medieval era it had developed into a sizeable village. Edward Lhuyd’s correspondent at the end of the seventeenth century recorded thirty houses by the church, and the tithe survey in the middle of the nineteenth century confirmed the High Street as the main focus of

development, though this is not perhaps surprising as from the 1760s, the village lay on the turnpike road from Corwen to Bala and beyond.

***The heritage to 1750***

The present church of St Trillo with it west tower surmounted by a low spire was erected between 875 and 1877, incorporating the lower walls of its predecessor from 1776. Of the medieval church nothing remains. It contains a font which is believed to be 15th-century, a little late 17th and 18th-century woodwork, and some late 18th-century memorials, but by and large little survived the successive rebuildings of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The churchyard is distinctively curvilinear, its perimeter encroached upon by houses on the west and north; and it is raised, particularly on the east where the utilisation of the river terrace projects the ground level nearly 4m above the valley floor. A sundial plinth on the south side may originally have been a cross shaft. Sadly the stone benches which in 1749 were 'along the inside of the churchyard wall .. in very regular order for the parishioners to sit upon before prayers' were removed in 1877.

The site of St Trillo's well lies about 450m north-north-west of the church. It appears to have been deliberately filled in, and no meaningful traces can now be seen. Its former presence reinforces the pre-Conquest religious significance of the immediate area, but is of little importance in understanding the settlement at Llandrillo. Likewise an inscribed (though largely unintelligible) stone now in the church but formerly at Blaen-y-cwm at the head of Cwm Pennant (the valley that runs southwards from the village) could be early medieval in origin. A second stone with a possible inscription was also recorded at Blaen-y-cwm by the Royal Commission, but its present whereabouts are not known.

The houses and cottages in the High Street, some of which are listed, are generally attributable to the mid or late 18th century; the Bell Inn carrying a date of 1748. Curiously, given Lhuyd's statement recorded above, nothing earlier has been recognised. The stone bridge spanning the Ceidiog also has an 18th-century date but cannot be attributed more specifically. However Cross Foxes, once an inn is said by the Royal Commission to be 17th-century in origin, though this does not appear to have been verified. To find anything earlier it is necessary to go 400m to the west of the village where Tyddyn Llan is recorded in the listing description as a fine regional house of the 17th century if not earlier.

Moving to a more speculative stance, we might wonder if High Street on the north side of the churchyard is a result of road widening, or perhaps even a new construction at the time of the turnpike being driven through the area. The right-angled change in direction of the turnpike road as it enters the village is extreme, giving the impression that this layout has been dictated by what was already in place. Could this have been a small market-place, perhaps? The line of the pre-turnpike lane suggests that originally this curved around the south side of the churchyard before crossing the Ceidiog (by the bridge referred to by Lhuyd). However, this would have been too narrow for turnpike traffic so a new course north of the church was necessary, and probably a new bridge as well. This would explain why the houses along the High Street are uniformly later 18th century, although the former Bell Inn with its date of 1748 might argue for an existing lane, as perhaps would the relatively large number of dwellings recorded by Lhuyd. Probably the northern side of the churchyard was shaved off to give extra space.

Quillets visible on late 19th-century Ordnance Survey maps and still recognisable in the modern field pattern lie to the north-east of the village. These strip fields might be the best evidence yet for a small nucleated settlement here in the Middle Ages.

## Landyrnog

**SJ 1070 6500**
**105968**

***Introduction***
Landyrnog is one of several historic settlements that developed along the eastern flank of the Vale of Clwyd, with the river itself little more than one kilometre to the west and the Clwydians rearing up 2km to the east. The surface of the land here is relatively flat but the church is positioned almost equidistantly from two converging streams and the ground falls away gently on the south side of the settlement.

The B5429 runs through the settlement from north to south, and Denbigh lies to the west on the far side of the River Clwyd, about 5km away.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llandyrnog up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
The earliest document referring to the church of St Teyrnog (or Tyrnog) is the Norwich Taxation of 1254 which lists *Landernauc*. In 1291 it was *Llandurnok, Llandyrnok* in 1423 and it achieved its modern form in the middle of the 17th century. With only a single dedication to this saint in Wales, there can be no certainty as to the precise form of the name, though it has been suggested that the saint may have been of Irish origin.

Tradition has it that the church dedication commemorates a 6th-century saint and at least a part of the churchyard's shape is sufficiently curvilinear to suggest an early medieval origin.

The history of the church subsequent to its foundation and the origins of the settlement that now surround it are unclear.

By the mid-19th century a small nucleation had developed at the crossroads south of the church. The tithe map hints at a rather wider street south of the churchyard which at that time was being infilled, and its presence might in turn suggest a small market place. But there is no other evidence to collaborate this 'market area', and given the proximity of Denbigh only 5km away it seems unlikely. Furthermore there must be some doubts about the antiquity of the B5429. Its course in the vicinity of the village, cutting through the north-west/south-east axis of the former open fields implies a late insertion into an already existing layout. The minor lane running up from the river and passing on to Llangwyfan then takes the role of the major thoroughfare through the village.

***The heritage to 1750***

St Tyrnog's church is a late 15th-century, double-naved building, which saw some restoration in the late 1870s. Of the sequence of construction nothing can be said because it is covered in a uniform coat of render. Two windows on the south side appear to retain Perpendicular stonework, but the remainder are Victorian replacements. There are fragments of a priest's(?) effigy in the sanctuary and some figured stained glass from around 1500, but otherwise little of medieval date remains.

A curvilinear churchyard is still apparent as a scarp within the north and east quadrants of the present rectilinear yard. Local information records that a segment of the churchyard was removed in the 20th century to widen the main road through the village, leading to the disinterment of skeletons. Records suggest this was done in 1931 and is clearly evident from a comparison of the modern Ordnance Survey map and its 19th-century predecessor. Apparently some 3m was shaved from the west side and at least 17 graves exposed.

Within the village core of Llandyrnog, 4 and 5 Church Square are cottages which could perhaps date back to the 17th century. They constitute the surviving part of a larger group of cottages which in 1839 were said to be cottages in the village occupied by 'paupers and others', suggesting that they could have functioned as almshouses.

As noted above, the pattern of the medieval open fields (though not the fields themselves) is retained to the present day in the layout of enclosures around the village. The pattern is even more obvious on 19th-century Ordnance Survey maps, emphasising the north-west/south-east axis of the medieval strips.

## Llanelidan

**SJ 1096 5053**
**105969**

***Introduction***
Llanelidan lies to the south of the upper Clwyd. A secondary road, the B5429, passes through the village to join a trunk road, the A494, further west. This links Ruthin, nearly 8km to the north, with Bala in Gwynedd. The church sits fractionally above the valley floor on the east side of Afon y Maes, accompanied only by a public house. The modern village is set at a slightly higher altitude on the opposite side of the stream some 300m away.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanelidan up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
A document from the beginning of the 13th century provides the first reference to the church or settlement, then termed *Llanhelidan* (1207). In the Norwich Taxation of 1254 it was recorded as *Lanelidan* and in its present form it appears as early as 1390. St Elidan whose church provides the basis for the place-name, is an obscure saint with this the solitary dedication in his name.

The history of Llanelidan has not been chronicled and few references to the settlement are encountered in documentary records. We might suspect an early medieval foundation, but only from the obscure British dedication. Even if a church was here before the Conquest, this does not mean that a settlement developed in the vicinity, and sadly there does not seem to be a single strand of evidence that would point to a nucleation growing up around the church in the Middle Ages.

Even in the middle of the 19th century the stylised Tithe map, supported by the 1819 Ordnance Survey surveyors' drawing, shows the church and only one building, the public house, in close proximity. Westwards, the triangle of lanes that now forms the focus of the scattered hamlet of Llanelidan supported no more than two dwellings.

***The heritage to 1750***
St Elidan's church (100914), with its two naves, a characteristic of the Vale of Clwyd, and its double bellcote, is said to have been partly rebuilt in 1460 and this seems to correspond with the appearance of the southern nave. But the earliest architectural details date from the late 13th century and are to be found in the north nave. A vestry was added to the west end of the

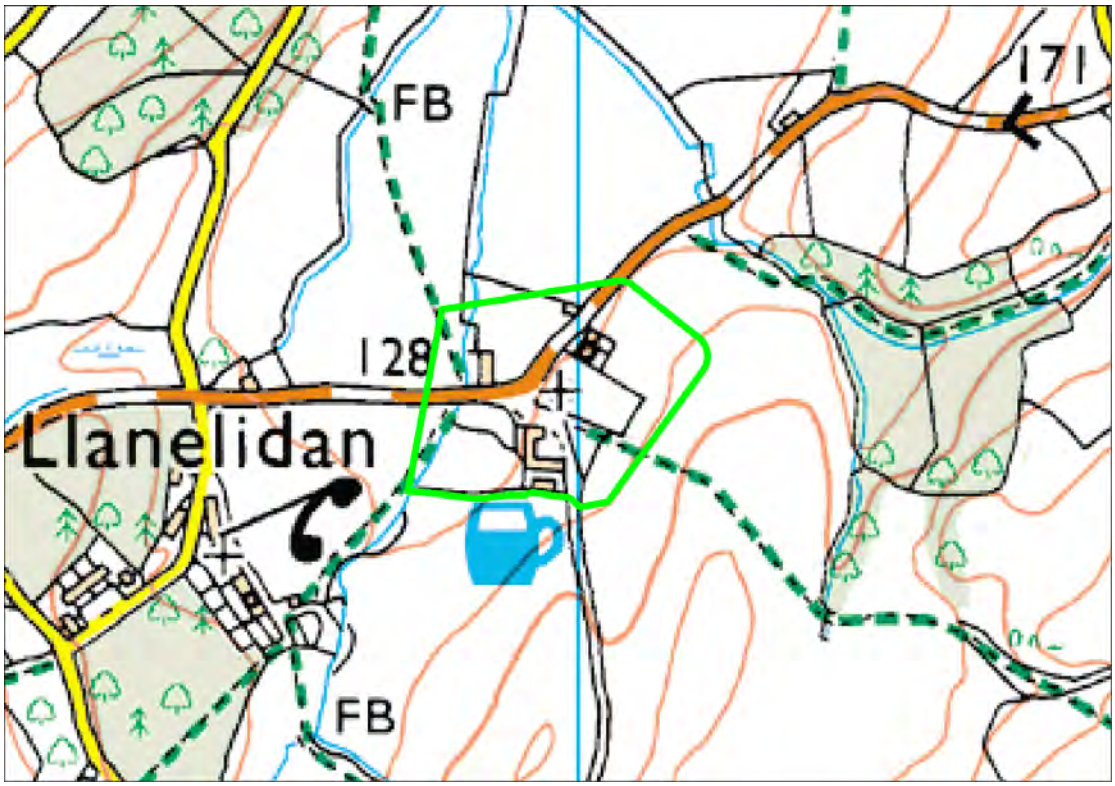
north nave in the 19th century, although there are hints that this could be an earlier extension, perhaps of the 17th century. Internal features include timberwork re-used from the medieval rood screen, a font and piscine, and some stained glass from the 15th century, a Jacobean pulpit, and some 18th-century box pews.

The churchyard (19730) is now rectilinear with a substantial extension on its eastern side. Hubbard in 1986 claimed it was originally circular, but the surviving traces are not entirely convincing. Particularly on the west side, the churchyard is raised well above the road.

The buildings in the vicinity appear to be of relatively recent date. The Rectory 250m to the west of the church was purpose-built at the very beginning of the 19th-century; the Leyland Arms adjacent to the church presents a 19th-century face to its clientele, but there is an older range of buildings behind, associated with the former farm, Ty'n llan, though its date remains a mystery. There is no evidence for earlier dwellings amongst the scattered houses on the west bank of the valley.

On the west side of the stream, a pasture field rising gently towards the village (19731; OS plot 7846) displays a tract of ridge and furrow cultivation of unknown age that does not extend over the whole field. The nature of other low earthworks in the same field are obscure, but could be modern.

No other earthworks of any significance have been recognised, but little field survey has been conducted in this region in recent years.



## Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd

**SJ 1340 5540**
**105970**

***Introduction***
Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd as its topographical affix indicates lies in the Vale of Clwyd, some 3km south of Ruthin, with the road from that town to Wrexham and Llangollen, the A525, bisecting the village. The settlement lies towards the head of the Vale as this narrows and the River Clwyd emerges from the hills to the south-west which are really a western extension of the Clwydian Range. The church occupies gently sloping ground in the lee of a low hillock rising just to the south. A small stream, Dwr Ial, runs northwards some 300m to the east, while the Clwyd itself is about 500m to the west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
In the taxation records of 1254 and 1291 it is *Lanweyr* and *Lanveyr* respectively. Its siting in the vale is alluded to in 1386 when we read of *Llanvair in Diffrencloyt*. Later references clung to the full name to differentiate it from the other Llanfair settlements in north Wales and the present form of the name was first recorded in 1838.

There is no element of the ecclesiastical foundation, whether in physical form or name, that points to an early medieval origin for Llanfair. This though cannot be taken as confirmation that there wasn't a church here in early medieval times, and the twin dedication incorporating the British saint St Cynfarch might reveal an early origin (with tradition supposedly signalling that St Mary was only added after a medieval rebuilding, though this would have had to have been before 1254). The great Welsh historical geographer William Rees distinguished Llanfair as the *maerdref* (or settlement of bondsmen who served the lord's court) in the commote of Llanerch in existence before the Norman Conquest, though the evidential base for this view is not given.

Little or no information has become available on the medieval history and development of Llanfair. By the end of the 17th century, Edward Lhuyd could refer to six houses by the church, but there are no maps that would help in understanding the layout of the village at that time. In the middle of the 19th century when the first larger-scale maps were prepared, Llanfair had emerged as a compact village at the centre of a web of five roads and lanes converging on it, but what is not clear is whether the turnpike road running north to south through the village was a new creation of the later 18th century or followed the course of an

earlier thoroughfare. Its straight alignments either side of the village could indicate the former.

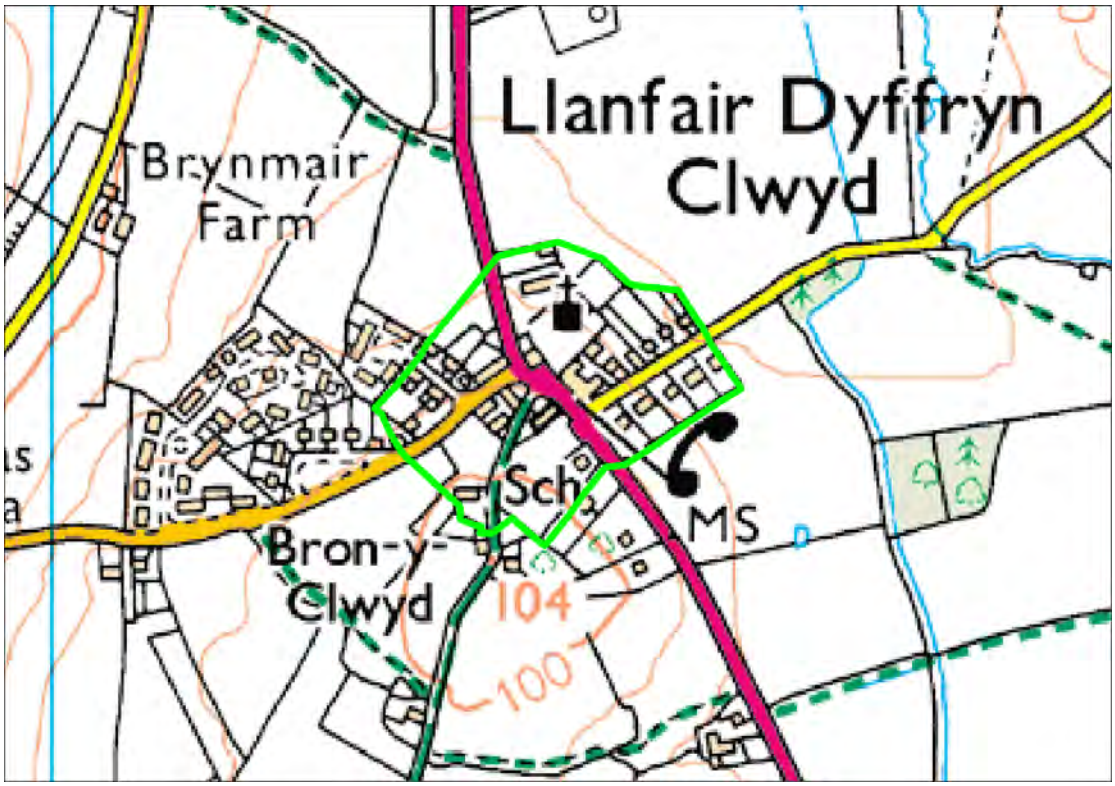
***The heritage to 1750***

The church dedicated to St Cynfarch and St Mary is a double-naved structure, a typical form in the Vale of Clwyd, with a west tower, all of Perpendicular (15th-century) build. The windows too are in the Perpendicular style though one carries a date of 1626. It was restored in 1871-2. There are two early 14th-century sepulchral slabs, fragments of the medieval rood screen (and timbers from the medieval roofs have been recycled), fragments of stained glass with one perhaps carrying the date 1503, a large iron-bound chest thought to be earlier 17th-century, and several wall memorials, the earliest being from 1582.

The churchyard is wholly rectilinear with no sign of any ancient modifications and no obvious curvilinearity. Cleared almost entirely of gravemarkers, it presents a manicured artificiality. A fragment of the medieval churchyard cross, reused as a sundial, is set close to the south door of the church.

There are no listed buildings of any age in the village other than the church. However, the settlement is surrounded by landholdings, the farmhouses of which date to the 16th and 17th centuries. Possibly some may go further back into the medieval period and have had some bearing on the development of the village, for Samuel Lewis in 1833 pointed to the 'great number of ancient family mansions, occupied by opulent and highly respectable families'.

Traces of ridge and furrow cultivation survived in fields on the south-western edge of the village until after the war. That in the field south-west of Bron-y-Clwyd is still in evidence. There are hints too from the 1st edition of the large-scale Ordnance Survey map that a medieval open-field system existed in the same area and was subsequently enclosed into individual strip fields.



## Llanfarchell

**SJ 0710 6620**
**105971**

***Introduction***
The modern settlement of Llanfarchell consists of little more than the church and a farm occupying the edge of a river terrace of the Clwyd on the west side of the Vale. Westwards the ground rises around Denbigh, eastwards the valley floor is almost completely level and beyond the river, the Clwydians rise steeply. The impression is of an early foundation positioned deliberately to overlook the flood plain of a major river. The suburbs of Denbigh have encroached to within two hundred metres of Llanfarchell church (and Denbigh's sewage works are even closer) while the centre of the town is little more than a kilometre away.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanfarchell up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
Llanfarchell, a name derived from the saint to whom the church was dedicated, was known as *L(l)annvarcell* in 1254. Other forms are no doubt to be found in medieval and later documents, but unlike most small Welsh settlements Llanfarchell was overlooked in the authoritative *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales* (2007). An alternative name is Whitchurch, apparently a post-Reformation appellation, which in Welsh is *Eglwys Wen*, and supposedly recalls the church's white-washed exterior, as well as giving a name to the farm on the opposite side of the road.

The dedication is to a 7th-century saint, whose latinised name was Marcella, and who reputedly established her hermitage by a holy well here in the 7th century. This then is a strong candidate, though based on circumstantial evidence, for an early medieval origin beginning.

Llanfarchell was originally the parish church for Denbigh, but its history and the development of any settlement in its vicinity are obscure. It is one of those curious places where the parental role has been usurped by the offspring, the former disappearing into obscurity while the latter has thrived. Denbigh emerged as a manor in the late 13th century after the Edwardian Conquest of north Wales, and perhaps significantly so did Kilford on the opposite side of Llanfarchell.

A manuscript map depicting the liberty and borough of Denbigh from c.1809 depicts only the church and the adjacent farm, together with a lane leading up from the south which is now

reduced to a footpath. This absence of settlement is confirmed by the Ordnance Surveyors' survey drawing of 1819 which similarly shows only the church and farm.

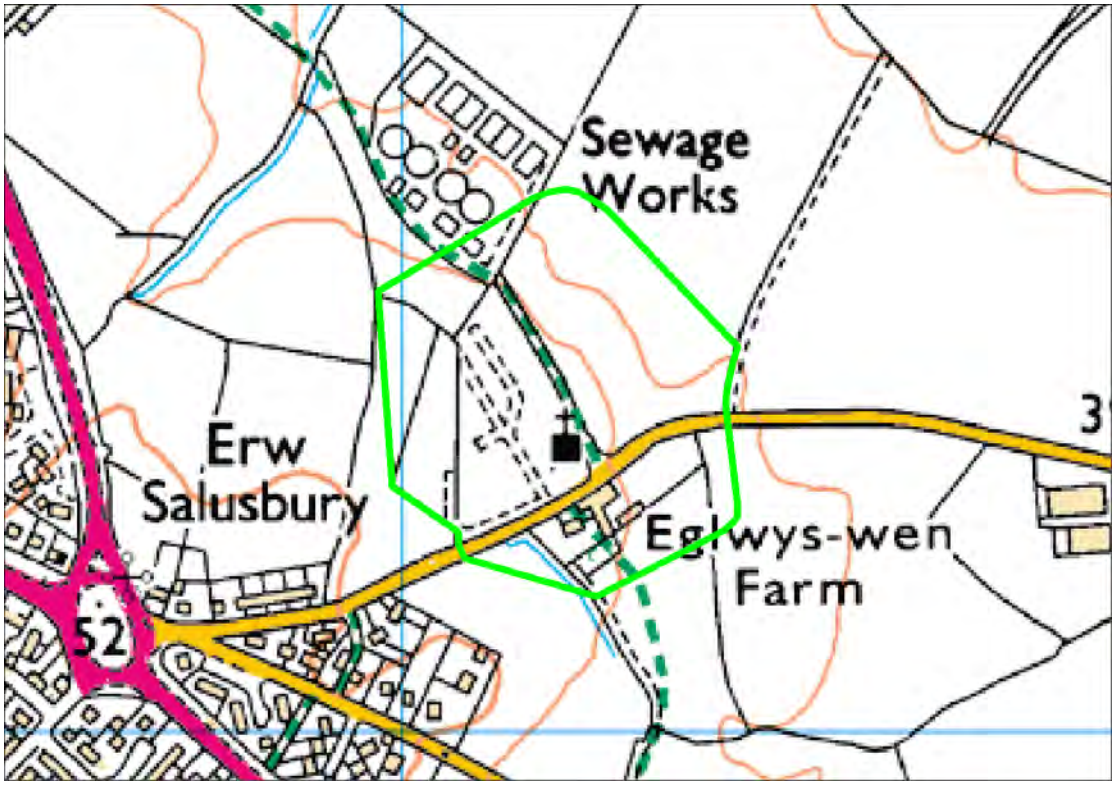
***The heritage to 1750***

Claimed as the grandest of all medieval Denbighshire parish churches, St Marcella's is a 15th-century double-naved structure of a type prevalent in the Vale of Clwyd. While largely Perpendicular, there is a blocked doorway of earlier, 14th-century date. Internally the arcade and roofs are of late medieval origin. The near total absence of medieval furnishings and fittings could be a result of the building falling out of use in the early 19th century, other than for burial, when it was supplanted by St Hilary's in Denbigh (though it was subsequently restored in the first decade of the 20th century). A little medieval stained glass remains, and parts of the medieval rood screen were incorporated in the early 20th-century screens. But most of the internal features are 17th- and 18th-century in origin, including a font of 1640, an altar table of 1623, the pulpit of 1683, a chandelier of 1753 and a benefaction board of 1720. There are interesting memorials starting with that to the antiquary, Humphrey Llwyd (d.1568) and a brass to the governor of Denbigh Castle, Richard Myddelton (d.1575).

The rectilinear churchyard has been extended on several occasions over the last one hundred and fifty years. A manuscript map of c.1811 appears to show a smaller churchyard with the church placed eccentrically within it, but it is difficult to determine how much credence to attach to its accuracy.

There are no earthworks characteristic of earlier settlement in the vicinity of the churchyard. However, the fields to the south-west (OS plot 9844) and north-west (OS plot 9758) of the sewage works both have irregular surfaces. While some of the irregularities are clearly modern and others perhaps of natural origin, it is possible that one or two may be archaeologically significant.

Slight ridge and furrow is discernible in pasture below the river terrace (OS plot 3700).



## Llanferres

**SJ 1880 6050**
**105972**

***Introduction***
Llanferres has developed on the eastern dip slope of the Clwydian range where the River Alun cut deeply into the hillside on its course northwards. Sheltered by the hills to the west, the village itself occupies a gently sloping ledge, before the land drops away more steeply eastwards to the river. The settlement lies on what is now the A494 trunk road linking Mold 6km to the north-east with Ruthin 7km to the south-west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanferres up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
The earliest reference – almost inevitably to the church – is in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 where *Lanwerteys* is encountered. *Lanuerr[es]* appears in 1283 and *Lanverreys* in the later taxation of 1291. Later variations are similar except for a document of 1699 which gives *Llysickill alias Llanferres*, a reference to the ancient township of Llys-y-cil which was virtually co-extensive with the parish. Of Berres (or Berreis), the saint to whom the church was dedicated and the place-name recalls, nothing is known, permitting recent commentators to theorise that the original dedication was to the faintly better known St Briutius.

An early medieval origin based on the association with the obscure St Berres and the shape of the churchyard is perfectly feasible, but is little more than speculation. Unfortunately, Llanferres is equally anonymous in the Middle Ages and virtually nothing is known of how it developed, its lack of significance arguably reinforced by the fact that neither John Leland in his travels around Wales in the 1530s nor Edward Lhuyd at the end of the 17th century found reason to mention it.

There is currently no evidence for a nucleated settlement here. Evans in 1795 depicted only a couple of buildings in the vicinity of the church and even by the mid-19th century, the church was accompanied only by the Druid Inn to the south, the rectory built in c.1813 to the west and two farms, Ty'n Llan to the north and Rhos Farm further north still. A second public house, the Red Lion, had come into existence only a few metres to the south of the Druid Inn by the end of the 19th century.

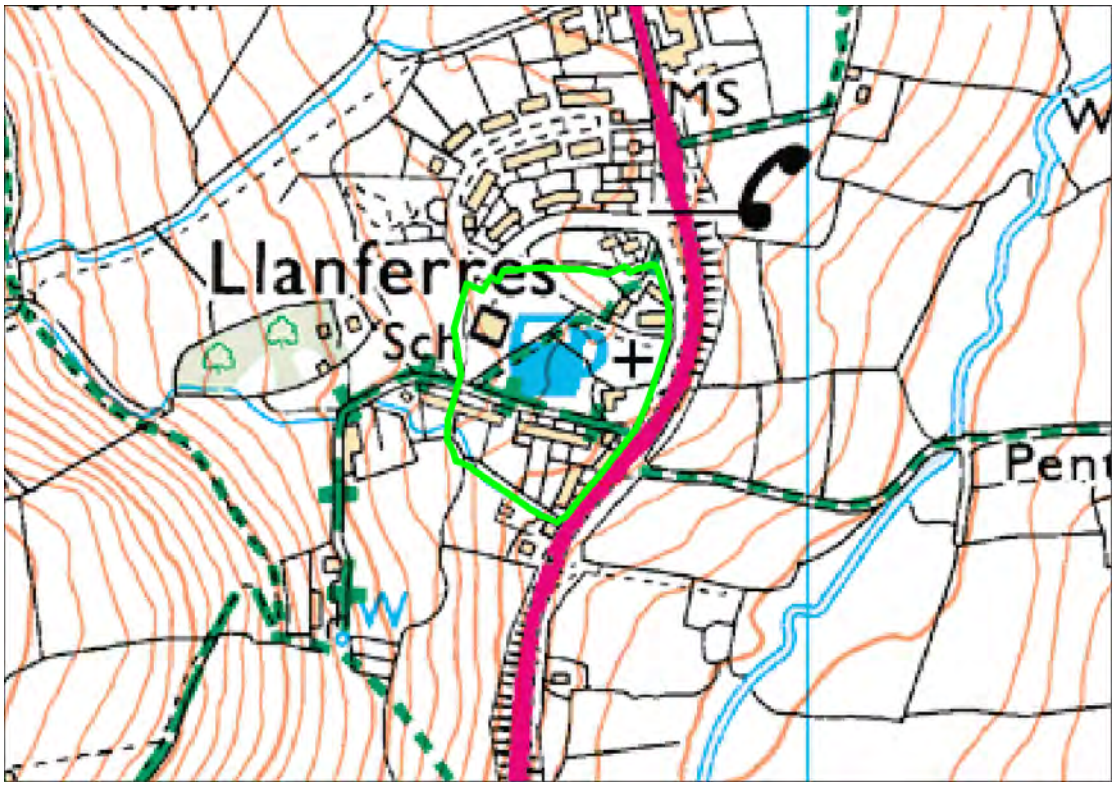
***The heritage to 1750***

Structurally, little if anything survives of the medieval church at Llanferres, which in the middle of the 18th century was said to be ' a very ancient structure… so ruinous that [it] is in great danger of falling..'. A 1650 datestone could relate only to the eastern gable end, and it is fairly clear that much of the church was rebuilt in the 1770s, dates of 1772 and 1774 being given by different sources. There were further additions in 1843 when the south transept, vestry and west tower were added. So were galleries but these have now gone, removed during further restoration in 1891-2. There are two sepulchral slabs of the late 13th and early 14th centuries, and a mutilated effigy from the late 14th century. There is an undated church chest, the font carries a post-Restoration date of 1684, a bench displays memorial plaques the earliest of which is from 1709, and there are several memorials from the 17th and earlier 18th centuries.

The churchyard is now of irregular form, owing in part to an extension appended to the original western side in 1905. An earlier curving boundary on the west can still be discerned on the ground and hints at an original curvilinear enclosure. The wall around the rest of the present churchyard was probably erected in the 1720s, but it would not be surprising to find that the turnpike road when it was created in the 18th century (see below) shaved off some of the churchyard edge. An attempt made in 1993 to locate an earlier *llan* boundary outside the northern wall, was not successful.

The buildings of Tyn Llan to the north of the church are listed, but of late 18th and early 19th-century build. No other houses in the village are known to have a long history, though it might be conjectured that there was an earlier building on the spot where the Druid Inn now stands.

The road pattern around Llanferres has changed considerably over the last two to three hundred years. Originally a cobbled way ran around the western edge of the churchyard, a portion of the main thoroughfare from Mold and Cilcain in the north to Llanarmon in the south, and this was still shown on John Evans's small-scale map compiled in the 1790s and published in 1795. But around the turn of the 19th century this was replaced by a turnpike road running around the eastern side of the churchyard, though the older road was not closed until 1818. Much more recently a new line for the A494 has been constructed a short distance to the east of the turnpike.



## Llanfwrog

**SJ 1136 5779**
**105974**

***Introduction***
Llanfwrog is now effectively a suburb of Ruthin, linked to the town by large modern estates on the west bank of the River Clwyd. The church occupies a pronounced end of spur position projecting into a broad flat valley that to the east rapidly broadens out onto the Clwyd valley floor. A road - the B5105 - passes over the top of the spur, curves around the churchyard and then drops gently eastwards towards Ruthin, less than a kilometre away.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanfwrog up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
The early forms of the place-name are interesting for their variety: *Lanwrauc* in 1254, *Llanmurrok* in 1291, *Llanvorok* in 1559 and *Llanvoorog* in 1684. That this was the 'church of [or dedicated to] Mwrog', a saint who is otherwise unknown to history, seems to be generally assumed rather than proved, and the past picture is complicated by the fact that some time after the Norman Conquest the church was re-dedicated to Mary the Virgin, today's church getting the best of both by twinning them in the modern church dedication.

St Mwrog is thought to have lived in the later part of the 7th century AD, and there can be little doubt that the church was founded in the pre-Conquest era, as its circular churchyard attests.

The scale of any settlement around the church cannot be judged, in the Middle Ages or indeed in the centuries immediately after the Reformation. The emergence of Ruthin may well have constrained settlement around the smaller and older places of Llanwrog and Llanrhudd. Maps of the late 18$^{th}$ century indicate a small settlement of church and scattered houses, some lying around a patch of common to the west of the church. By this time, Ruthin was expanding with housing spreading westwards across the River Clwyd and along the road towards Llanfwrog.

***The heritage to 1750***
The church dedicated jointly to St Mwrog and St Mary (100870), has a double nave and is largely of 15$^{th}$/16$^{th}$-century date though it was much restored in 1869/70 when the north nave was almost entirely rebuilt; the west tower is undateable except for its west door which is thought to be 14$^{th}$-century, and the porch is of the 19$^{th}$ century though it may incorporate earlier woodwork. Inside is a disused font of late medieval date, re-used fragments of the rood

screen, an early 18th-century table and a range of wall monuments from the middle of the 18th century onwards.

The churchyard (105993) is distinctively circular, except on the north where the topography has necessitated, perhaps at a later date, a straight wall buttressed by massive supports, and on the west where the graveyard has been extended. With the latter, an earlier curving line is depicted on an estate map of 1826 and can be recognised though only faintly on the ground. The churchyard contains displaced memorials, one of 1640 propped against the wall being of particular interest. The lych-gate (105992) is perhaps of 18th-century origin.

There are buildings of some age to both west and east of the church suggesting a steadily developing settlement after the Reformation which is still in evidence today. West of the church Brynffynnon (105994) carries a datestone of 1746; Ty-gwyn is a two-storeyed, sub-medieval house of late 16th-century date, originally half-timbered, but significantly altered in the mid-17th century and again in the Victorian period (105995); Pen-y-bryn is a timber-framed, three-unit dwelling probably of the 16th century (105996); Glan yr Afon, outwardly Victorian, has apparently earlier features internally; and the Old Alms Cottages were founded in 1605 and rebuilt in 1708. To the south the Cross Keys Hotel opposite the church is considered to be 18th century or earlier but modified. Ty-cerrig is late 17th or early 18th-century, while the contiguous building known as Hafan (= OS Nafan) and seemingly grouped with Ty-cerrig is a modified cruck-framed hall-house, thought to be of medieval date with an inserted 16th/17th-century fireplace; this has been confirmed by dendrochronology where a series of dated roof timbers indicate that Ty Cerrig was likely to have been constructed during 1501 (105997). A full description can be found on the Coflein website. About 125m east of the church on the south side of Mwrog Street, a row of several houses reveal fabric that may go back as early as 1600, now confused by later modifications.

South of the church and adjacent to the modern cemetery, earthworks (105999) cover a pasture field (OS plot 4574). Terraces with lynchet edges lie close to the cemetery, with ridge and furrow beyond. On the basis of what shows on early aerial photography, the latter may run into the field to the south.

Further ridge and furrow (19700) was previously identified immediately west of Ty-newydd at the extreme western edge of the village. It has not been established whether this is still extant.

Low earthworks (19701) exist on the flat valley floor beside the stream and below the church. These require characterisation through detailed fieldwork.

Estate maps of late 18th-century date show both the church and, 100m to the west, a patch of unenclosed common at the stream confluence. This common together with a ford and perhaps the village pound is shown on a print of 1794. Some of the earlier houses were sited around the edge of the common. This layout may have been disrupted by 1826 when a smithy was built on the common itself. South of the church, Cerrig Lane was little more than a track leading past irregularly shaped strip fields.

## Llangar

**SJ 0634 4243**
**105976**

***Introduction***
Set in a remote spot where the confluence of the River Dee and its tributary the Alwen creates unusually extensive low-lying levels, Llangar church is set into a steep west-facing hillside just above the main river with the Berwyn massif providing a back drop. The B4401, a former turnpike road linking Bala and Llangollen, runs along the valley edge above the site, while a now dismantled railway between the same two centres has left its terraced course immediately below the churchyard. Corwen is less than 2km to the north-east. Llangar was in Merionnydd until 1974 when it was transferred to Clwyd and in turn to Denbighshire in 1996.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangar up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
The earliest reference in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 is to *Langar* with a similar spelling in the later taxation of 1291, and *Llangar* in a document of 1292/3, revealing little change to the place-name over eight centuries. There were, however, minor variations over the centuries, as in 1370 when we read of *Thlangair in Edeyrnyon*. Archdeacon Thomas claimed that there was another old name for the parish, *Llan-garw-gwyn*, but Melville Richards' place-name archive indicates that this term was current only in the 18th century.

According to Samuel Lewis in the earlier part of the 19th century, the name was derived from 'an ancient fortification which formerly occupied the summit of a hill called Caer Wern, in the immediate vicinity of the church, and of which there are still some vestiges...'. This interpretation has found little favour in more recent times and the late Derek Pratt argued for a personal name 'Car', related to modern Welsh 'car' meaning kinsman or friend.

There is no record of a settlement here, excepting the nearby farm of Stamp and the loosely nucleated settlement of Bryn Saint, 300m higher up the slope. The latter was certainly in existence in the mid-19th century, but how much earlier is impossible to ascertain. Edward Lhuyd's correspondent at the very end of the 17th century made a point of noting the absence of any house by the church.

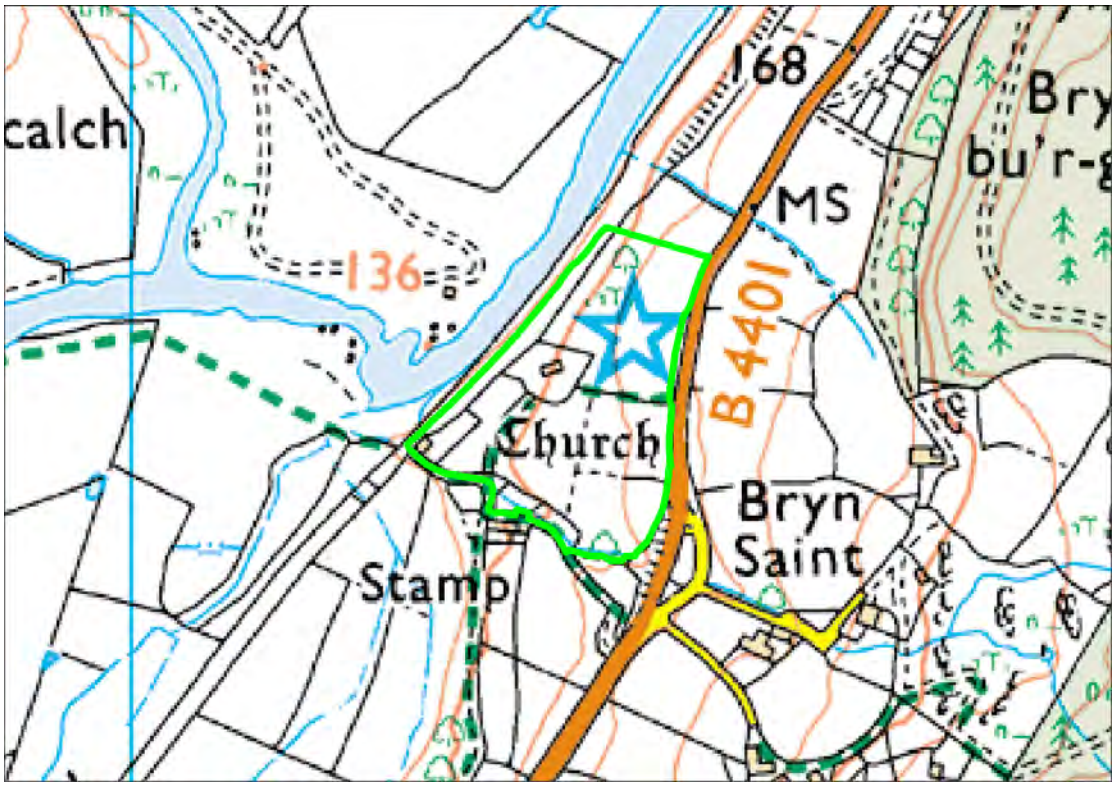
***The heritage to 1750***
The church of All Saints (100815), from 1967 a guardianship site in the care of Cadw, is at least as old as the 13th century, but it is probable that there has been a church or chapel on the

site since before the Conquest. Much of the structure is post-medieval, and date stones in the walls indicate rebuilding between 1615 and 1620 and the erection of the porch in 1617. The west wall was rebuilt sometime after 1656 and again in the early 17th century. Excavations in the 1970s found nothing pre-dating the 14th century. The church however escaped Victorianisation, largely because it was superseded, in 1856, by a new church in Cynwyd. The windows are largely of 17th- and 18th-century date. A simple exterior is matched internally by stone-flagged floors, box pews, a three-deck pulpit and a west gallery. From the medieval era there are roof trusses and fragmentary wall paintings (with others of the 18th century), and a font that is 12th or 13th-century.

The churchyard (19761) is of irregular shape, as a result of extensions, and set on a relatively steep slope. An original curvilinear form is suggested on the south side and on both the west and east there are traces of an earlier boundary within the present enclosure, the former merging with the platform supporting the church itself. The lychgate on the south side carries a date of 1731.

Earthworks (100829) have been recorded in the past in the bracken-covered field to the north of the church and in pasture just to the east of the main road. The former may be no more than a medieval or later lynchet and perhaps a quarry, while the significance of the others is uncertain. The track leading to the church from the south is certainly of some antiquity and is edged by flattish ground suitable for occupation.

Hafod-yr-afr (104521), some 300m to the east of the church is recorded as a cusped cruck-framed house of post-medieval date. Its inclusion here underlines the dispersed nature of local settlement and the absence of any nucleated community.



## Llangollen

**SJ 2150 4190**
**105978**

***Introduction***
Llangollen shelters in the valley of the Dee overshadowed by the Berwyn massif to the south and the heights of Ruabon Mountain together with the detached hill supporting Castell Dinas Bran to the north. The rising face of the Berwyn is however not continuous, for the steep slopes are interrupted by a shelf and the ground then rises to another isolated hillock, Pen-y-coed, beneath which Llangollen has developed.

The Dee valley here is narrow, and the town has developed on both sides of the river, though the main historic core is on the south bank where the ground shelves gently. Housing has extended, largely in the last 150 years, up both hillsides, but the main concentration is still south of the river. The town sits astride the A5 trunk road, with Wrexham 14km to the north-east and Oswestry a similar distance to the south-east.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangollen up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
The 'church of Collen' was named as *Lancollien* in 1234, while the Norwich Taxation of 1254 listed *Sancti Colyenni, Llancallen* in 1254. *Langollen* was given in the later taxation of Pope Nicholas (1291) and another variant – *Llangollenn* – at the end of the 14th century.

A church was reputedly established here by St Collen as early as the 6th or 7th century, and his *cell-y-bedd* (or a successor) survived in the churchyard to the west of the church tower beyond 1749. The church became an important ecclesiastical centre in the pre-Conquest era, emerging as the mother church for a part of the middle Dee Valley which largely equates with the commote of Nanheudwy, though its relationship with Corwen, another mother church is unclear. A mid-9th-century poem refers to the grave of Sawyl here.

Pengwern less than a kilometre to the south-east also supposedly has early medieval origins.

The development of the settlement at Llangollen, either side of the 11th-century Norman Conquest is impossible to determine at present, although Welsh control of the region remained strong in the region up until the Edwardian Conquest of the 1280s, and this could have restricted its development. It was in 1284 that Edward I granted the manor of Llangollen to Roger Mortimer, together with the rights for a weekly market and two annual fairs for a community that had perhaps already grown up around the church. It has been suggested that

the settlement ('tref') may have emerged as a result of the proximity of Gruffudd ap Madoc's stronghold on Dinas Bran from around 1270. The king's grant reputedly allowed, too, for the construction of a bridge across the Dee, although according to tradition there was a bridge here from the time of Henry I. If its construction immediately followed, it did not stand up to the power of the river for supposedly, it was rebuilt by the bishop of St Asaph in 1345. For some of the Middle Ages the settlement lay within the forest of Cwmcathi.

Little is recorded of the subsequent history of Llangollen in the Middle Ages. A market house lay between the church and the bridge, but Leland referred to it only as a village in the mid-16th century. A correspondent of Edward Lhuyd claimed 70 houses in the town at the end of the 17th century from which considerable development might be inferred during the Tudor and Stuart eras. Pennant in the later 18th century dismissed it as 'a small and poor town, seated in a romantic spot', while the Rev Bingley at the end of that century 'wandered into the dirty, ill-built and disagreeable town of Llangollen'.

By the mid-18th century expansion across the river had already occurred. On flattish ground beside the river and west of the bridge was an open space known as Llangollen Green, used for recreational purposes until its purchase by the Vale of Llangollen Railway Company soon after 1860. It is now covered by houses and by St John's Church, but its previous history is recalled in the name 'Green Lane'. Plas Newydd was added to the townscape of Llangollen from 1780, a stone cottage transformed.

The 18th and 19th centuries also saw changes to the street layout in the town. Two manuscript maps, one of 1743, the other from the late 18th century, provide us with some evidence of the earlier layout though the evidence is a little ambivalent (see below).

In the 19th century the village expanded as a result of its position on the London to Holyhead coach road, local industries such as quarrying and wool-working developed, and the riverine setting attracted increasing numbers of tourists. A branch of the Ellesmere Canal was constructed to the town in 1808 and the railway reached here in 1862.

***The heritage to 1750***

St Collen's Church is a double-naved building of Perpendicular design though it has at its core a 13th-century structure, added to in subsequent centuries. The west tower is 18th-century and the whole building was drastically remodelled in 1864-67, though a few medieval architectural features survive. Most of the internal fittings are post-medieval in date. A 12th-century stone shrine fragment has been incorporated into the fabric, an indicator of its importance in the Middle Ages, and there are two fine late medieval roofs.

The churchyard (PRN 16744) is now trapezoidal in shape though the west side exhibits a slight curve. That its plan has been modified through time there can be no doubt, but there is little guidance as to its original form and there appear to have been no changes subsequent to the mid-19th century Tithe survey. It can be surmised that the Hand Hotel has taken in part of the earlier churchyard and that in the 19th century those who designed the National School (now replaced by the Health Centre and Hall) also cut away some of it on the south side. The eccentric position of the church set up against the eastern perimeter also points to fundamental changes in design but this could be due to the increased size of the church in the 19th century, though even prior to the 1860s remodelling it was set to one side of the churchyard.

The broken shaft of a medieval cross with its original stone pedestal has been erected on the Maesmawr Road, but where it was first placed is not known. In the past it has been known as *Croes y beddau*.

Llangollen Bridge, with its four arches and deep cutwaters, is considered to be largely of 17th-century date and linked with the 'Rondle Reade 1656' stone in Hall Street which may commemorate its reconstruction. Fragments of sepulchral slabs were embedded in the

masonry. Leland referred to a great stone bridge and it is possible that the present structure incorporates 16th-century work. The original bridge was supposedly constructed in wood in the reign of Henry I (the 12th century) to facilitate access to Valle Crucis Abbey, and reconstructed by John Trevor, Bishop of St Asaph, in 1346, although other commentators have suggested that the reference may be to John Trefor II, a local man, who was bishop between 1395-1411. The present bridge was extended in 1863 to allow for the railway, and widened in 1873 and again in 1968.

The street pattern in Llangollen and the town plan as a whole have undergone changes in the early modern era. Additions include Regent Street and Berwyn Street, their straight line surely a result of Telford driving the Holyhead Road past the town in the years between 1821 and 1825, and Castle Street and the grid of streets to the west of it which were later 19th-century modifications, Castle Street providing a direct, straight link from the Holyhead Road to Llangollen Bridge. The name can only refer to Castell Dinas Bran overlooking Llangollen from the north-east.

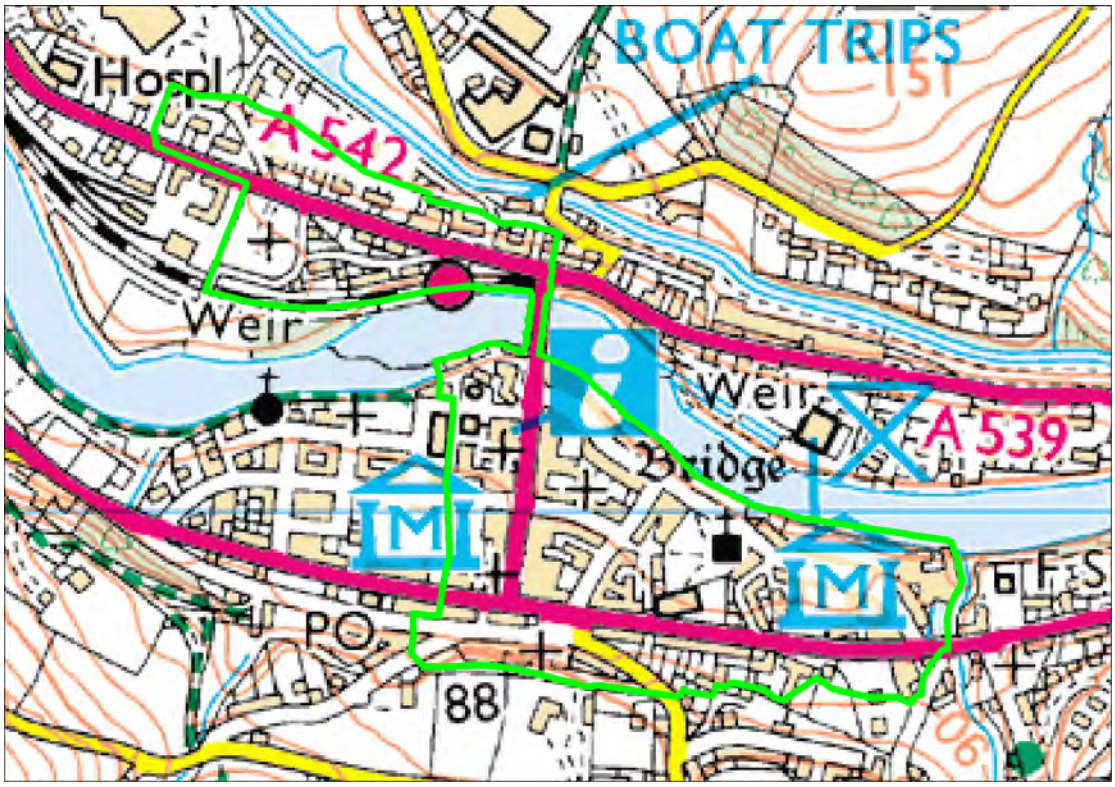
Bridge Street/Church Street was the main thoroughfare up to the 19th century, the road curving off the bridge and past the church to link in with what is now Queen Street, where beside the Bache stream there was a small area of open ground with dwellings around its edge. The late 18th-century map shows a distinctive triangle of land edged by buildings, in the vicinity of what are now nos 10 and 12 Bridge Street. In the absence of a plausible alternative this is suggested as the medieval market place. Chapel Street lying to the west of the church looks to be an early thoroughfare linking town to Bache Mill though it is possible that its line may have been straightened out at the southern end, perhaps as a result of the construction of Regent Street. The 1743 map does not show Chapel Street but instead depicts another lane running southwards from the vicinity of the putative market place; its presence is only hinted at on the late 18th-century map, so its former existence – for no trace of it remains to day – cannot be authenticated and it could be a mapmaker's error in 1743. Minor lanes dropping down from the hills to the south such as Hill Street and Willow Street were certainly present in the 18th century and account for the curious convergence of roads to the west of the Grapes Hotel.

Early buildings are not common in Llangollen. Overall, Church Street retains the oldest houses: no 31 is of cruck-construction with probably 17th-century origins, and others from the same century include Bryn-dwr and nos 18, 25. In Chapel Street no. 12 is probably a much altered 16th-century timber-framed structure and 1 and 2 Chapel Street Square have been attributed to the 17th century. 1 and 2 Regent Street are thought to be later 17th or early 18th-century. The early 18th-century Siambr Wen close to the north end of Llangollen Bridge was later re-modelled, and Wynnstay Arms on Bridge Street is believed to be an early 18th-century structure. The Willows on Willow Street is thought to have been constructed in the 18th century. To round this off, Edward Hubbard noted in the *Buildings of Wales* that 'much of the centre [of Llangollen] belongs to an interesting piece of mid-19th century town planning'.

Plas Newydd, home of the ladies of Llangollen, lies on the south-eastern side of the town and was transformed from a simple cottage after 1780. The gardens have a non-statutory Grade II* rating in the Cadw/ICOMOS register. They also contain one or two medieval curiosities brought from elsewhere, as for example the shaft of the High Cross from Chester and a medieval font.

It has been suggested that Lower Dee Mill originated in the 17th century, but the evidence for this has not been confirmed.

In the garage at Siambr Wen near the north end of Llangollen Bridge are medieval sepulchral slabs which are claimed to have come from Valle Crucis Abbey and were then re-used in the re-building of the Llangollen bridge in the 16th or 17th century, before being rediscovered by Henry Robertson the owner of the house when he altered the bridge for the railway.



## Llangwyfan

**SJ 1200 6630**
**105979**

***Introduction***
Llangwyfan has emerged on the eastern edge of the Vale of Clwyd where the ground starts to ascend gradually before rising steeply to the crest of the Clwydian Range. A minor stream running down to the River Clwyd passes immediately to the north of the churchyard, but its shallow course has left virtually no imprint on the gently sloping landscape. The church itself is virtually lost on the periphery of the sprawling remains of the former Llangwyfan Hospital.

Llangwyfan is served only by minor lanes one of which winds over the Clwydians to Nannerch. The larger settlement at Llandyrnog is less than 2km to the south-west and the town of Denbigh is about 7km to the west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangwyfan up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
Llangwyfan was listed as *Langrifin* in the taxation record of 1254, but nearly three hundred years passed before another reference can be identified, this one to *Llan Goyffen* (1535). After this the place-name occurs rather more frequently, evolving into its present form by 1795. The saint whose dedication has given rise to the place-name is thought to have been Cwyfen who may have been of Irish extraction.

The origins and history of both church and settlement are obscure. The church dedication and perhaps the location beneath the Clwydians – it is in much the same topographical situation as Llangynhafal and Llanbedr – might suggest an early medieval beginning, though there is no substantive evidence to collaborate this view.

If there was a medieval settlement around the church, it had probably long gone by the time that John Ogilby in his *Britannia* published in 1675 depicted only the church close to the road linking the pilgrimage centres of St Davids and Holywell. Similarly a late 18$^{th}$-century estate map shows only the church and Plas Llangwyfan a little over 100m to the south-east, a pattern confirmed by the mid 19$^{th}$-century tithe map when there were no other buildings in the vicinity. Yet this is not altogether certain. When John Ingleby drew the church with Vron Yw (to the north) in the background in 1793, he included a small cottage on the track that led from the church. Was this simply artistic licence? It seems not for the Ordnance Survey surveyors' drawing of 1821 shows two small buildings here, one of which seems to have survived into the last quarter of the century when it was mapped by the Ordnance Survey

again for the 25" to the mile map of 1875. That the 18th-century estate map does not show the cottage is of no relevance for the boundary of the estate that was being mapped stopped short of it, but what is of interest is that the lane running beside it north-westwards and now gone was then termed 'the old road to Caerwys'. The lane going north-east and still a track today was termed 'the new road to Caerwys'.

***The heritage to 1750***

St Cwyfan's church is a small single-chambered edifice with a west bellcote, its rendered external surfaces obscuring any signs of surviving medieval masonry. One window is 15th-century and the south door could be 14th-century, while others windows are post-medieval, one carrying a date of 1684. The porch is from the early 18th century. Box pews survive in the interior but there are no medieval fittings.

The churchyard is rectangular, raised above the surrounding ground. There is nothing to suggest an earlier curvilinear *llan*.

The parish stocks are set outside the churchyard gate, though it is not clear whether this was their original position. They are believed to be a modern replica of the original stocks, now stored inside the church.

Llangwy(n)fan Hospital was constructed as a sanatorium in 1918-1920, and closed in 1981. Parts of it are now a care home. It replaced Plas Llangwyfan, a small late 16th-century house.

An earthwork platform lies in wood pasture a few metres to the north-east of the churchyard gate. It is not well-defined and its purpose is unclear.

## Llangynhafal

**SJ 1331 6337**
**105980**

***Introduction***
Situated within 3km of four other *llan* settlements, Llangynhafal shelters beneath the Clwydian Hills close to the end of a lane that fades into a track that continues up the side of a small valley and ascends Moel Dywyll. The church signalling the historic core of the settlement was set on gently sloping ground with a small stream cutting a shallow valley less than 100m to the north. The modern focus of Llangynhafal, however, centres around Carneddau Farm and the Golden Lion Public House, and is set at a more accessible T-junction nearly 400m away and on a different lane from the church.

The settlement, whether modern or historic, looks westwards down into the Vale of Clwyd with Denbigh just over 8km distant to the north-west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangynhafal up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
The church is named as *Langenhaval* in the Norwich Taxation of 1254, and as *Lankynaval* and *Llanganhavall*' in 1291. As with most *llan* names this refers to the saint's church, in this case Cynhafal.

Cynhafal was reputedly a saint of 7$^{th}$-century date, and this dedication together with the shape of the churchyard and its position on the east side of the vale in the shelter of the Clwydians makes a strong case for an early medieval origin for the church if not necessarily the settlement.

As is normal with these small church settlements there is a dearth of information on the historical development of Llangynhafal until relatively recently. It has been pointed out that it is set at the junction of a well-used track over the Clwydians and another leading down from Ffynnon Cynhafal, though in itself this does not signal a reason for settlement development and expansion. There is no convincing evidence on the ground to indicate that the settlement was larger at any time in the past (though see below), and as depicted on the mid-19th-century Tithe map, it was very much the same then as it appears today.

***The heritage to 1750***

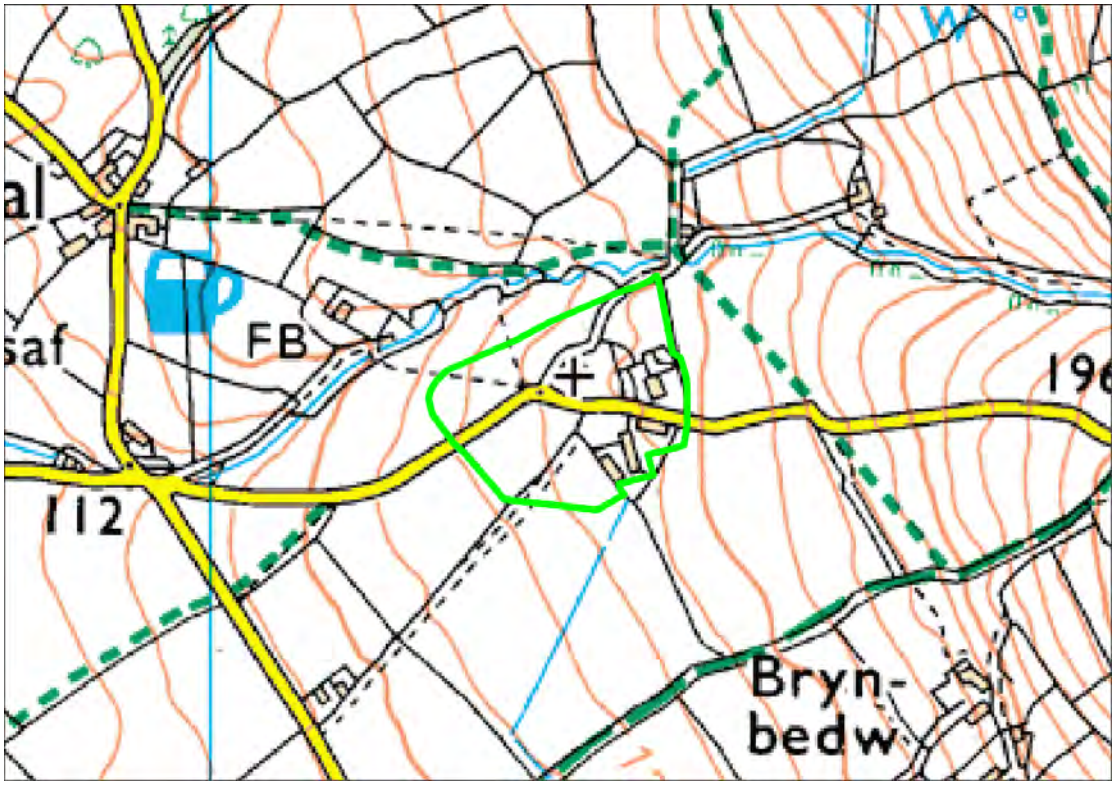
Built in the Perpendicular style, St Cynhafal's church (100612) is little altered as far as can be established, with a double nave and bellcote. It was apparently renovated in 1669 and restored in part in 1869-70 and again in 1884. It retains its late medieval roofs and a medieval font, and has a fine range of internal wooden fittings that are predominantly 17th- and 18th-century in date, including a dedicated box pew. The attribution to St Cynhafal is said to be unique in Wales.

The churchyard (19791) has seen modifications to its shape over the years, but there can be little doubt that at originally it was a raised sub-oval enclosure, the traces of which can still be seen on the ground, particularly on the eastern side.

Plas-yn-llan (102907), adjacent to the church, is an elaborate timber-framed and brick structure of 16th-century and later date, restored in the mid-1980s. Plas Iago (104542), 200m south of the village is a stone, single-storeyed structure but has an undated cruck-framed timber hall at its core.

The holy well known as Ffynnon Cynhafal is nearly 450m to the north of the church and a little higher up the slopes of the Clwydians below Moel Dywyll. It has a large roofed well-chamber in brick and a stone basin, and was reputedly resorted to by a local poet, Gruffydd ap Ieuan ap Llewelyn Fychan (c. 1485–1553), in the hope of a cure for his leg.

Earthworks (19792) survive in the field on the opposite side of the lane south of the church. These have not been characterised and require more detailed assessment.



## Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch

**SJ 0810 6350**
**105982**

***Introduction***
Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch lies on the western slopes of the Vale of Clwyd, a little above the confluence of the Clywedog and its parent river, the Clwyd. A shallow valley bearing a small stream that runs off the hillside to the west edges the churchyard on the south, and practically all of the older part of the village lies on the northern side of this valley. Originally positioned beside the A525 linking Ruthin with Denbigh, the village has now been by-passed. Denbigh itself is located 4km to the north-west.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanrhaeadr up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
Unusually for Denbighshire the place-name does not reflect the saint to whom the church was dedicated, but is translated into English as the 'church near the rushing stream in Cinmeirch', a reference to the medieval commote in which Llanrhaeadr lay. The name appears as *Lanrayadyr* in 1254 in a direct reference to the church and as *Llanreyadur in Kymmerth* in 1455 which was almost certainly to the settlement. The saint's name was acknowledged only rarely in medieval and post-Reformation documents, as in 1566 when we read of *ll. dayfnoc*.

The church dedication favours an early medieval origin for Llanrhaeadr, but whether this might apply to a neighbouring settlement as well as the church cannot be determined. Likewise its subsequent history also remains a mystery.

When Edward Lhuyd compiled his *Parochial Queries* at the very end of the 17th century, there were no more than four houses by the church. A century and a half later the Tithe survey shows a small nucleated settlement centred on the T-junction formed by the main thoroughfare running from north-west to south-east and a lane running down from the hills on the north side of the churchyard. A few other buildings lay scattered along these lanes beyond the confines of the settlement.

***The heritage to 1750***
St Dyfnog's church (100601) is a double-naved building with a small tower at the western end. It windows are varied but mainly in the Perpendicular style. The tower or at least some parts of it have been claimed as 13th-century, though not convincingly. The church contains late medieval roofs, a superb 16th-century stained glass Jesse window, a 17th-century font, a

large chest with a pillar poor box attached to it, and a range of 18th century monuments including a fine Baroque tomb for a deceased owner of Llanrhaeadr Hall. The church was restored in 1879-80 and again in 1986-9.

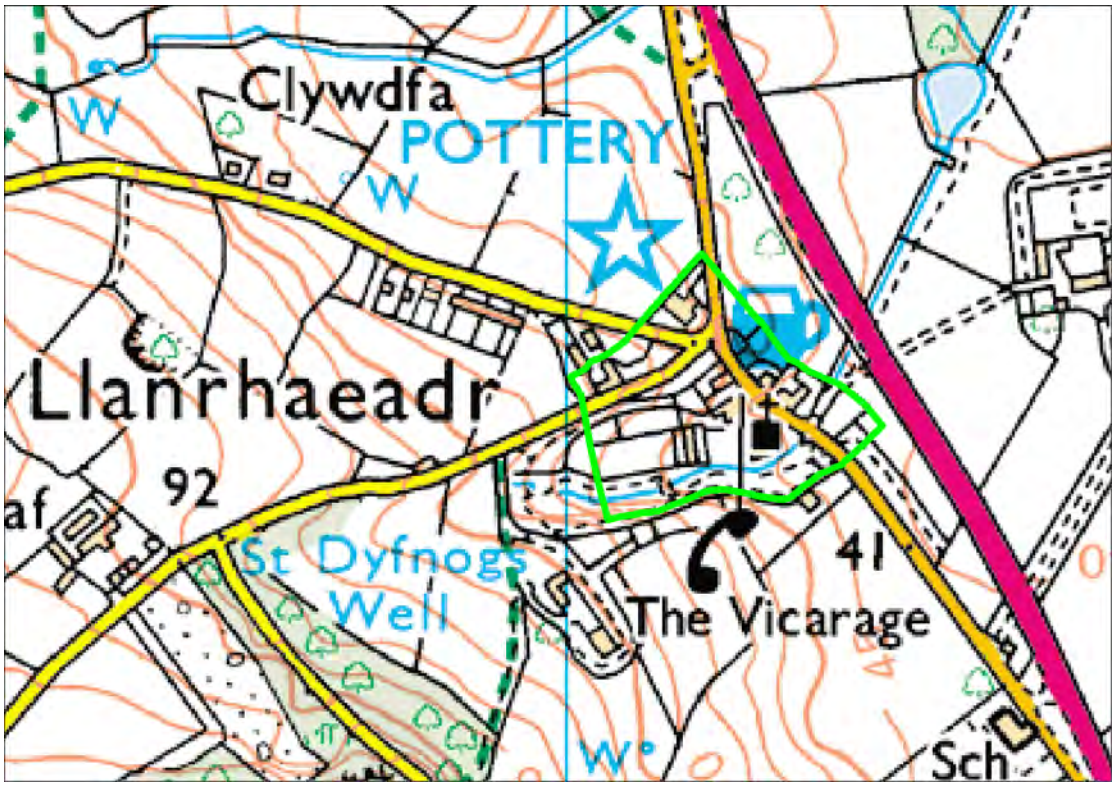
The churchyard (19786) is largely rectilinear and has been extended, but there is no evidence of an earlier curvilinear form, other than on an estate map of 1771 which displays a distinctively curved churchyard projecting into the road on the east; no ground traces of this portion survive.

Dyfnnog's Well/Fynnon Dyfnog (100603) lies 200m west of the church (and thus a little beyond the limits of the settlement), rising as a spring and dropping into a rectangular bath tank. Edward Lhuyd drew attention to its healing properties and Pennant in 1773 recorded that the 'the fountain is enclosed in an angular wall decorated with small human figures, and before it is the well for the use of the pious bathers'. An extremely thorough report on the well was prepared by Tristan Gray Hulse a few years ago.

The almshouses (105911), an H-shaped block beside the churchyard were erected in 1729 and repaired in 1820. The smithy opposite the Church (now used by a potter) and the adjacent smith's house are attributed to the late 17th or early 18th-century in date (19787).

Llanrhaeadr Hall (105910), some 350m to the east of the church, has at its core an E-shaped stone house, going back to the 17th century, but remodelled in the 1770s. It now functions as a hotel. Its gardens have the non-statutory Grade II listing in the Cadw/ICOMOS register, and run up almost to the eastern edge of the settlement. The manuscript map of 1771 implies that there have been some subsequent alterations to the layout of the grounds around the Hall, although it is possible that the map represents a landscaping proposal rather than a completed design.

Remnants of medieval open fields are fossilised in the strip fields to the north of the village.



## Llanrhudd (Llanrhydd)

**SJ 1399 5775**
**105973**

***Introduction***
The church settlement of Llanrhudd occupies level ground beside a minor lane 1.5km to the east of Ruthin. In this neighbourhood the Clwyd follows a course on the western side of the vale, but a series of tributary streams, the chief amongst them being Dwr Ial, converge in the vicinity of Llanrhudd, passing the church little more than 100m to the east, with the building and its graveyard deliberately sited on the lip of a gentle river terrace.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanrhudd up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
Also reportedly known in the past as Llanfeugan, Llanrhudd (or Llanrhydd) was the parent church for newly established Ruthin, and appears as *Ecclesia de Lanruth* in the Norwich Taxation of 1254, a form which with minor variations continued through the later Middle Ages and into the post-Reformation era. The growth of the town, however, effectively marginalised the older settlement (assuming there was one), the church's value in 1291 was only £5, and there is no mention of it in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* in 1535 when it was presumably subsumed in the reckoning of the town. It is generally assumed that the second syllable of the name is the adjective 'rhudd' meaning 'red' or 'brown', referring to the colour of the building stone, but does not explain why the original dedication did not survive in the place-name.

The church is supposed to have been founded by St Meugan in the 6th century, though this dedication is really the only tangible evidence of an early medieval (i.e. pre-Conquest) origin. The nature and scale of any earlier settlement around it has not yet been determined. By the middle of the 19th century Llanrhudd consisted solely of the church together with Plas Llanrhydd and the mill, and from this it might be inferred, though with no great certainty, that there was never a nucleated settlement here. Nevertheless it retained its own identity with the ecclesiastical parish surviving to the end of the 19th century.

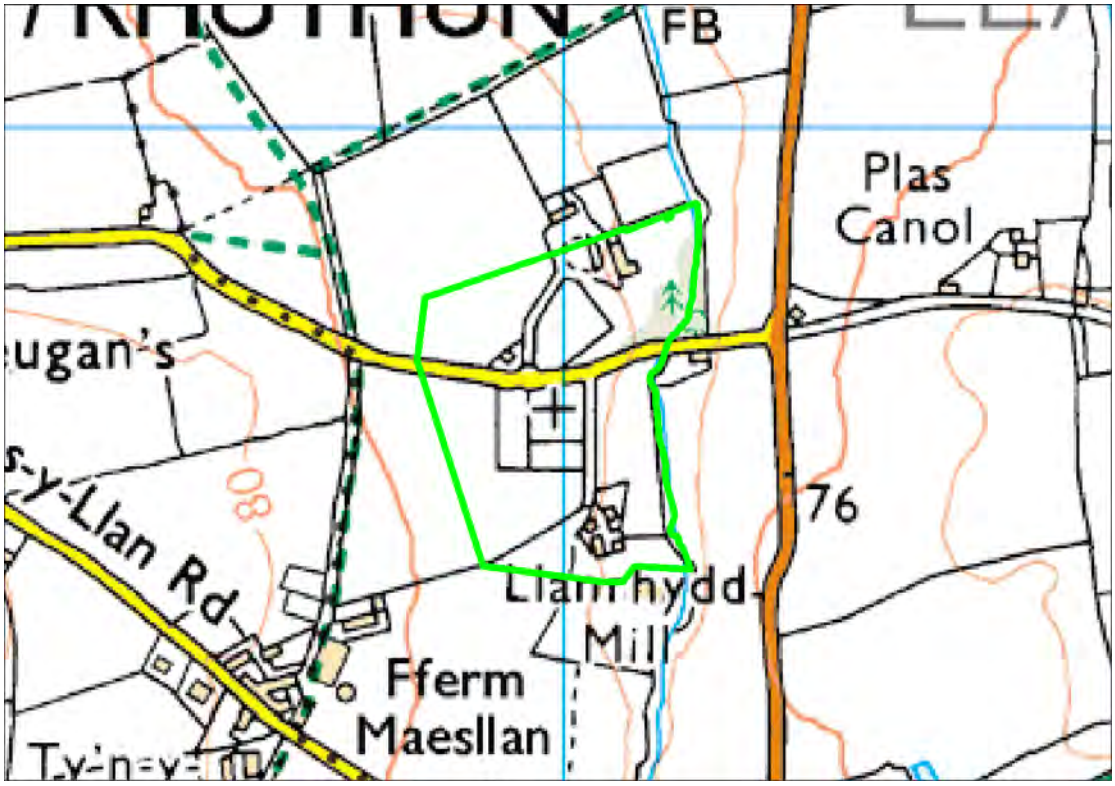
***The heritage to 1750***
Llanrhudd church (19798) is dedicated to St Meugan. It is single-chambered with the earliest surviving fabric perhaps 15th-century in origin with a single Perpendicular window surviving in the north wall, and a broadly contemporary south door and porch. Some restoration may have taken place in 1626 and in 1852 it was restored by a Victorian architect who retained

more of the old building than some of his contemporaries would have done. Inside is a late medieval rood screen, some fragments of stained glass from the 15th or 16th century, a succession of monuments from the late 16th century onwards, a plain font and a 17th-century altar table.

The churchyard (19799) is rectangular and there is nothing to suggest that there was an earlier curvilinear 'llan'. An elaborate churchyard cross, one of the more notable Denbighshire crosses but now reduced to a decorated shaft and a socket stone, stands beyond the south door of the church.

Llanrhydd Hall on the north side of the lane opposite the church is a small gentry house with 16th or early 17th-century origins as a timber-framed building. It was extended and partly encased in brick in the early 18th century, with further alterations in the second quarter of the 19th century. In 1703 it was the home of the High Sheriff of Denbighshire. For Llanrhydd Mill, the only other building in the settlement, we have not been able to establish any details of its history, though an estate map of around 1720 confirms its existence at that time.

Though the surviving evidence is slight, there can be little doubt taking early maps and aerial photographs in conjunction that open fields lay in the immediate vicinity of the settlement in the medieval era. It is unclear, however, whether these could be the fields farmed from Ruthin or from a settlement, now lost, at Llanrhudd itself.



## Llantysilio

**SJ 1939 4357**
**105984**

***Introduction***
Llantysilio (also known as Llandysilio and Llandysilio-yn-Iâl) lies on the northern bank of the Dee in one of the river's frequent meanders. About 4km north-west of Llangollen, it comprises of little more than the church and hall, and a couple of dwellings. The church is set on the lip of the river terrace at a point where it is particularly pronounced rising several metres above the valley floor. A stream in a shallow valley runs along the western edge of the churchyard. The hall is about 300m away and set further back from the river.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llantysilio up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

***History of development***
Little known history is attached to this settlement. The earliest reference is from 1234 (though written down in a surviving source of 1295) when it appeared as *Llan Tessiliau*. The church was recorded as *Sancto Tessiliao* in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 and as *Landesylian* in the 1291 papal taxation of ecclesiastical property when it was worth £6, not an insignificant sum but equally not one to suggest an important medieval church. Later in 1393 came *Llantissilio in Yale alias Llanekemer,* the late term reflecting the confluence of several streams with the river. *Llandysilio* appears as late as 1795.

We might speculate, on the basis of the dedication and its remote location, that a pre-Conquest origin was likely. The presence of the church, however, is no guarantee that there were dwellings here, and its subsequent development through the Middle Ages, as well as its origins, are not known.

However, Edward Lhuyd in his *Parochialia* which was compiled from information provided by his correspondents at the very end of the late 17th century, recorded six houses and a cottage near the church, rather more than the number present today. Taken at face value this suggests a small nucleated settlement, rather than an isolated 'church settlement'. The earliest maps from the first half of the 18$^{th}$ century, perhaps not presenting the full picture, show only a single house together with the hall, the former on the edge of a small common that opened off the lane past the church. Open common also spread over the hills to the north.

Llantysilio Hall has been dated to no earlier than 1723 (but see below), and this is borne out by the fact that it was not mentioned by Edward Lhuyd in his 'houses of note' in the parish. The school and former vicarage are even later, dating to the end of the 1850s. At some point

before the tithe survey of the mid-19th century, a new road (the modern thoroughfare past the church and Llantysilio Farm) was constructed.

***The heritage to 1750***

St Tysilio's church (100978) is a single-chambered structure of reputedly late 15th-century date with (unconfirmed and probably unlikely) masonry survivals from 1180 and some surviving windows of the 15th or 16th century. A north transept was added in 1718 and there was a restoration in 1869 that included some rebuilding and further work in 1919. One window has medieval sepulchral slab fragments incorporated in its surround, the font is Perpendicular, some 15th-century stained glass survives and the wooden lectern is early.

The churchyard (19746) is polygonal in shape with virtually no convincing signs of curvilinearity. This layout appears to have been modified but little over the last three hundred years.

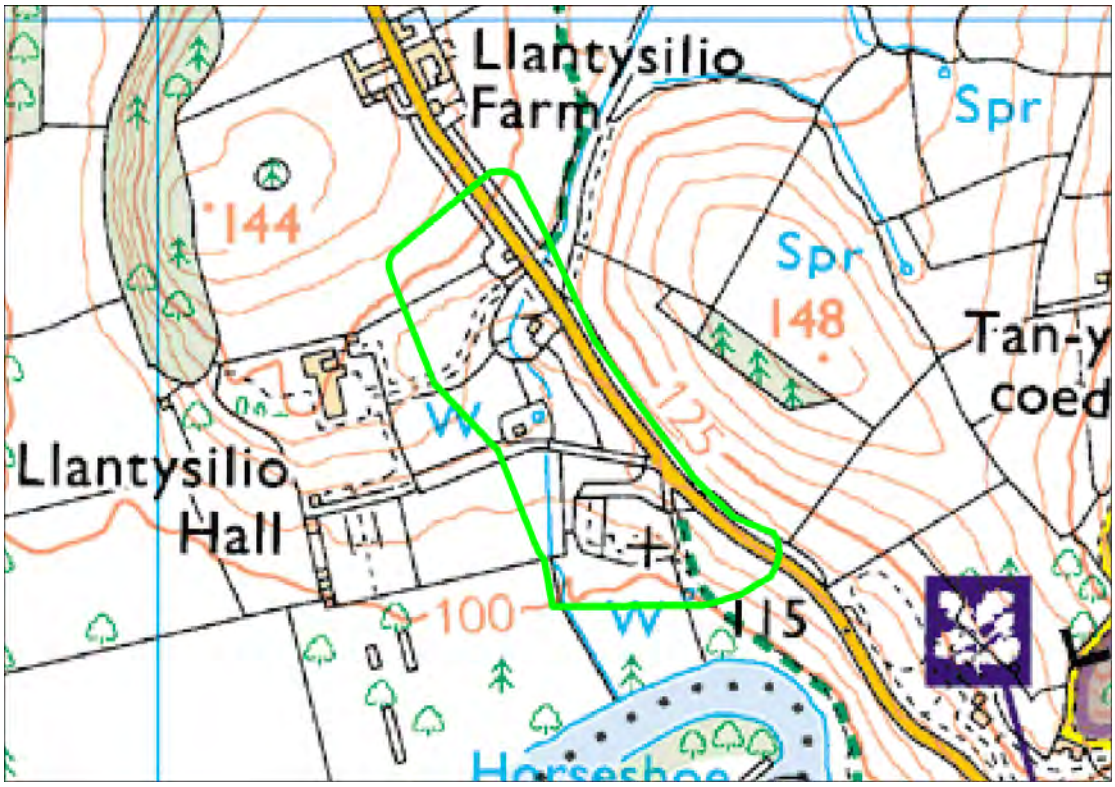
The present Llantysilio Hall (130216) was built in 1872-74, but the walled garden (130219) is earlier by a century and a half, broadly contemporary with the first, brick-built house on the site dated to 1723.

Tyn-y-llan (19748), adjacent to the modern road exhibits timber-framing, and has been thought to be sub-medieval in date, though this has not been corroborated. Until the 19th century, it lay on the east side of a common.

Another dwelling (19749) lay immediately to the west of the churchyard in the early 18th century. Shown on an early map, its precise position in relation to the stream cannot be gauged.

Close to the south-west corner of the present churchyard, the river terrace projects further beyond the churchyard perimeter than elsewhere and a small platform (19747) has been created in the slope. The age and function of this cannot be established but possibly it may have had a building on it.

The common referred to above had disappeared by the end of the 18th century, but was shown at an admittedly small-scale on Thomas Badeslade's map of the commons in the lordship of Bromfield and Yale drawn in 1740. From this it appears that the lane from the east ran beneath the churchyard wall and opened out into a small triangular common or green with at least four houses beside it. Beyond the western apex of the common was the hall. Tyn-y-llan almost certainly lay on the eastern side of the common, but the other dwellings have gone.



## Llanychan

**SJ 1147 6211**
**105985**

***Introduction***
Llanychan lies in the centre of the Vale of Clwyd, little more than one kilometre from Llanynys and nearly 8km south-east of Denbigh, with the B5429 passing through this church settlement. The church itself is set on the edge of the river terrace created by the River Clwyd, and a distinct drop to the valley floor is discernible beyond the churchyard wall. Behind the churchyard the ground levels out and then continues to rise gently towards the Clwydians.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanychan up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
The first reference to the church and thus to the settlement is in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 when it is referred to as *Ecclesia de Laneban*. Three centuries later the Valor Ecclesiasticus named it as *Llan Hichen*. Hychan is claimed as a 5th-century saint, one of the family of Brychan, eponymous founder of Brycheiniog, and this is only one of two churches dedicated to him, the other being in Llanfarian, just south of Aberystwyth. No explanation has been given as to why an otherwise obscure south Walian saint should have a church dedicated to him in the Vale of Clwyd.

The dedication together with the shape of the churchyard and its location imply that the church was an early medieval foundation. According to Archdeacon Thomas writing at the end of the 19th century the church was supported by the smallest parish in the diocese of St Asaph, a mere 567 acres.

But such passing references apart, there is nothing to inform us of how this church settlement might have developed.

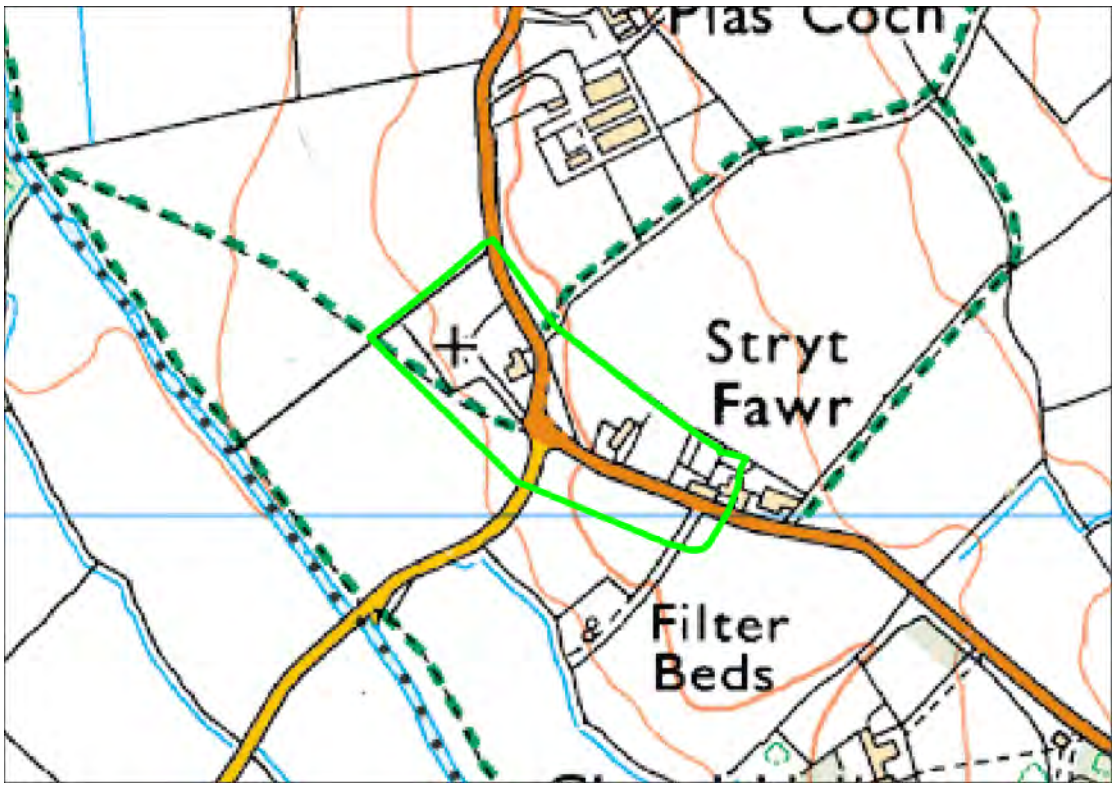
An estate map of 1785 and the Tithe map in the mid-19th century present a consistent picture of a settlement comprising the church and two nearby farms, and with the exception of the school introduced in 1866 is as it is today.

***The heritage to 1750***
The small church (105913) of St Ychan (Hychan) consists of a single chamber with a Perpendicular west doorway, but otherwise little else of obvious medieval interest, most of the walls having been rebuilt in later centuries. Internally most furnishings are 18th-century

(the reading desk, the altar rails) or later, although fragments of pre-Reformation woodwork from the roof have been reused. The church was restored in 1877/8.

The churchyard (19797) is virtually D-shaped, but is sufficiently curvilinear on one side – the north-west – to suggest that originally there was a curvilinear 'llan' here.

Nothing else of archaeological or historic interest has been recognised in the immediate vicinity of the church. The age of Stryt Fawr and Stryt Fach has not been determined, although both were in existence in the second half of the 18th century. The field systems as shown on the earliest available large-scale maps from the late 18th century hint at former medieval open fields, subsequently fossilised as strips through enclosure, but nowhere near Llanychan is the pattern particularly distinctive.



## Llanynys

**SJ 1028 6267**
**105986**

***Introduction***
Llanynys lies on a minor road in the Vale of Clwyd, 5km north-west of Ruthin and just over 6km south-east of Denbigh. The core of the settlement occupies a discrete area of well-drained sandy loam soils raised slightly above the valley floor. The churchyard straddles the south-eastern lip of this island which overall is about 650m long.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanynys up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
In the first record that we have of it, the Norwich Taxation of 1254, Llanynys appears as *Ecc'a de Lanenys*, and in Pope Nicholas' taxation of 1291 as *Llanynnys*. It first appears in its present form in 1386. The second element of the name can mean either 'island' or 'river meadow', but in this instance the location favours its rendering as 'church on an island'. It has been the subject of a particularly thorough study by Glanville Jones in 1964.

Llanynys may have been founded as a monastic site (100606) as early as the 6th century AD, and there is an early 15th-century reference (in 1402) to it housing a *claswyr* or *clas* community at some previous time. As a 'mother church' it served an area, (as reported by Edward Lhuyd) extending at least as far as Cyffylliog, four miles away, a subservient association that can be traced back to at least the 13th century. An early holy man, St Saeran, is supposedly buried here; and the place was recorded in 9th-century verse as 'Lanfawr beyond Bannawg, where the Clwyd joins the Clywedog'.

In the 13th century the church was one of the richest in North Wales, with a value of £16 estimated in 1291. By then the *clas* had become what Glanville Jones called 'an hereditary ecclesiastical corporation'. But none of this means that a settlement had grown up around the church during the medieval centuries, though this is certainly possible.

At the end of the 17th century, Edward Lhuyd's correspondent noted that in time of heavy flooding, Llanynys became an island but there were only two houses near the church, Plas Llanynys and Ty'r Clochydd. By the mid-19th century the settlement had grown only slightly: the church, the rectory, a few cottages and Plas Llanynys, a short distance to the south. Since then there has been only limited development around the village core.

***The heritage to 1750***

The island on which Llanynys sits has a long history of land use. Enclosures, probably of late prehistoric or Roman date have been photographed on both sides of the settlement and a double ring ditch (19788), probably of Bronze Age date, underlies one of the former open-field quillets to the north-west of the settlement.

The church is dedicated to St Saeran (100605). It is typical of the Vale of Clwyd with a double-nave, a south porch and a bellcote at the western end. It appears to have started as a small church in the 13th century which was enlarged in the 15th century with an extension at the east end and the addition of a long southern nave, a substantial part of which was rebuilt in 1768. The present porch was added in 1544. Inside it has one of the best collections of furnishings and fittings in the diocese of St Asaph: a Perpendicular font, a superb wall painting of St Christopher thought to be earlier 15th century, a tomb chest with the effigy of a priest on top, the head of a 14th-century churchyard cross, fragments of 16th-century stained glass, a royal arms on canvas form 1661, 17th-century wooden furnishings, and wooden dog tongs.

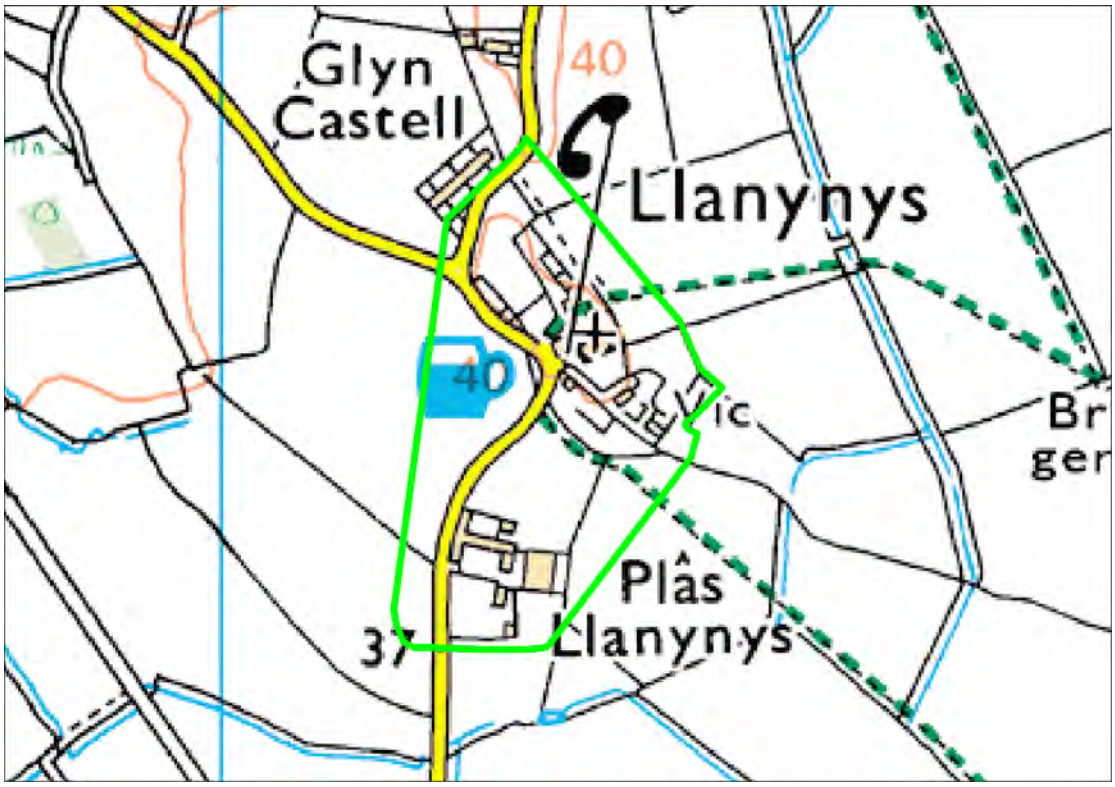
The present churchyard, now irregularly pear-shaped, lies within what appears to be a larger, oval enclosure defined at least in part by existing property boundaries. Work on the Cerriglwydion Arms to the west of the church in 2012 uncovered human remains, demonstrating that the public house had been built across the edge of the former churchyard.

Glanville Jones suggested in the 1960s that a radial pattern of fields converging on the llan were the back gardens or quillets of undertenants of the *clas* community in the pre-Conquest era, though his arguments do not perhaps convince everybody. He argued that there were other radial plots in Bryn Castell to the north, and that beyond were the hereditary lands of the clas.

More certainty attaches to the two open fields, Maes Isa and Maes Ucha, 300m north-west of the church, and still sub-divided into quillets at the beginning of the 20th century. The sub-divisions were ploughed up in 1971. An important open-field relic (105912), it has been discussed in detail by Jones. The balks between the quillets in Maes Isa are still faintly visible in the right lighting conditions. Other quillets to the south of the village are recorded on the Tithe Map but have now disappeared.

The name Bryn Castell (now translated into the housing estate Glyn Castell) appears in the Tithe survey but has not been explained.

The church apart there are no buildings of any age within the core of Llanynys. Plas Llanynys and a nearby barn have both been attributed to the 18th century but no full descriptions of them have been circulated.



## Meliden

**SJ 0628 8109**
**105805**

***Introduction***
Meliden lies on the A547 road, 4.5km to the east of Rhuddlan and 2km south-west of the centre of Prestatyn; it now appears to be virtually a suburb of the latter, though historically Prestatyn was a township within Meliden. The old portion of the settlement occupies rising ground above the coastal plain, though it is almost 3km from the coast itself, and lies just below the steep slopes of a prominent hill known as Graig Fawr. Meliden still contains a number of stone-built, 18th- or 19th-century miners' cottages in the vicinity of the church, but a large part of the settlement today consists of modern housing estates.

Meliden is one of several parishes which were in the historic county of Flintshire until 1974, but with the disbandment of Clwyd, it was transferred to the local authority area of Denbighshire.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Meliden up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
Meliden is an Anglicised form of the Welsh name *Gallt Melyd*, translated as the 'hill of Melyd or Melydn'. St Melyd, the patron saint of the church, has in the past been thought of in the alternative guise of Mellitus, the first Bishop of London, who lived in the late 6th/early 7th century. This, now, seems highly unlikely, a clear antiquarian attempt to link early names to known historical individuals (*cf* Garmon and Germanus).

Various forms of the name, sometimes referring to the church here, are known from the 13th century onwards. In 1241 we read of *Estradmelened*, in 1256 *Altimeliden*, between 1346 and 1353 *Alltmelydyn* and in 1413 *Moledyne alias Allthmeldyn.* *Gallt Melydon* was recorded in a document attributed to the period 1586 to 1613.

Thus, while an early medieval origin for the church seems assured on the basis of the church dedication and also the churchyard morphology, the time at which a settlement began to emerge here is unknown. We can only speculate that there was a small nucleated settlement here in the Middle Ages and it is not until right at the end of the 17th century that Edward Lhuyd's correspondent revealed a small village here with twelve houses lying close to the church.

In 1833, Samuel Lewis described the parish as 'an extensive tract of rich arable and pasture land, which is in a high state of cultivation...the soil is favourable for the growth of all kinds of grain, but more especially for wheat..'

The Tithe survey of 1839 shows a very small, compact settlement at Meliden, consisting of the church with a small cluster of houses adjacent to it, and a further cluster of half a dozen buildings opposite the access road to Llys Farm, a short distance down Ffordd Penrhwylfa. At this date most of the land around Meliden was divided into small fields, though further west larger fields, divided into strips, are depicted on the tithe map. The main road through Meliden from Dyserth to Prestatyn took the course of the present Talargoch Road; the more southerly course of today's A547 is a new road. Tyn-rallt, to the south, was then a quite separate settlement.

It was only in the 19th century the village began to grow in size, spreading southwards from the original core at the church. This growth was surely related to the fortunes of the Talargoch lead mine, which from 1807 was beginning to show a profit. Miners formed a large proportion of the population of Meliden at this time – a fact reflected in the earlier name of the Melyd Arms public house, formerly the Miners Arms – even though the Talargoch vein was being exploited in the 17th century, and documentary evidence suggests that workings may date back to late Tudor times.

***The heritage to 1750***

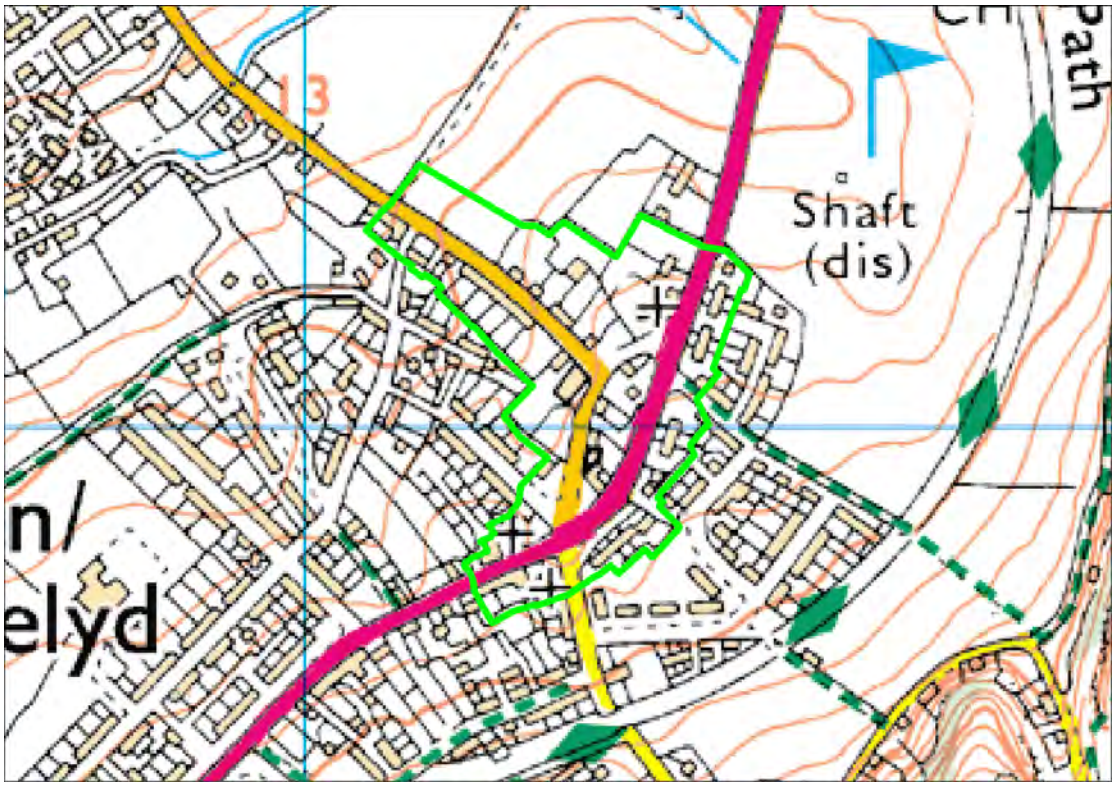
St Melyd's church (16938) is probably 6th-century in origin, though nothing of course remains from this time. Its single chamber may be 13th-century, and was extended eastwards in the 15th century as indicated by the Perpendicular east window. The church was described in 1839 as 'small, with a nave and chancel and large rude, south porch but with a great want of ancient features and very modern in appearance'. It was restored in 1884-5. Internally there is an arch-braced roof of the 14th century, a font that appears to be late 12th or early 13th century, part of a 14th-century sepulchral slab and, perhaps surprisingly, a 15th-century misericord.

The churchyard (105829), small, curvilinear and with a raised interior, was extended on its northern side in 1862.

There are no houses of any age close to the church. The tone is set by Mountain Ash, a small stone and brick cottage typical of the miners' cottages that proliferated in this area in the 18th and 19th centuries. It appears on the Tithe map of 1839 but the date of its construction has not been established, though it is perhaps unlikely to be before 1750. At a greater distance is Llys Farmhouse (102202) which lies amongst fields about 350m to the north of the church. The L-shaped stone building occupies the site of a much earlier building, possibly dating to the 13th century. Llys in Rustock, as it was known in the past, was one of the medieval manors of the bishops of St Asaph and reputedly became a popular residence for them.

The layout of the village is uninformative. Three roads converge here, but other than the church, there is nothing to indicate a specific village core that reflects a long history, and dwellings, if John Evans' map of 1795 is anything to go by were spaced out along two of the roads, coming in from the south-west and the north-west.

The mid-19th-century Tithe map shows the distinctive remains of open-field agriculture to the south of the settlement, presumably medieval in origin. All of this has disappeared under modern housing.



## Nantglyn

**SJ 0044 6212**
**105989**

***Introduction***
Nantglyn occupies the tip of an interfluvial spur, just above a small stream flowing eastwards from the foothills of Mynydd Hiraethog to meet a larger watercourse, the Lliwen, in a somewhat broader valley a few hundred metres to the east of the settlement. The church occupies the lip of a natural terrace above the stream, with the historic core of the village stretching up the hill behind. Nantglyn is the most westerly of the historic settlements examined in this report. The B5435 passes through the southern edge of the village, with the B4501 from Denbigh, 6km to the north-east, meeting it here.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Nantglyn 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 in particular at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

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***History of development***
Translated as the ‘stream in the valley’, Nantglyn is first recorded as *Nantlym* in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 and in the later Lincoln Taxation of 1291 as *Nantclyn*. Nantglyn makes a first appearance in 1636.

St Mordeyrn's chapel to the east of the village must represent the earliest foundation here and has been commented on by antiquaries since the 16th century. Whether its earlier status is in anyway commemorated by the suggestive name of the nearby farm, Clasmor, remains to be ascertained. However, Edward Lhuyd’s *Parochialia* referred to the right of sanctuary here, something that was normally an attribute of the longer established and more important churches, and coupled with the fact that in the 14th century dues were paid to *abbates* here, the implication is that Nantglyn was probably not an ordinary, simple pre-Conquest chapel. There is too a final observation, this from John Leland, the king’s antiquary, who in the 1530s recorded that ‘there is … a chappelle by a paroch church in a place caullid corruptely Nanclin for Nantglyn .. where as divers sainctes were of auncient tyme buried’.

Even allowing for an early medieval foundation of unknown status at Nantglyn, the emergence of settlement and its later development at Nantglyn are obscure, with virtually no known documentary evidence to throw any light on its earlier history.

The first reliable statement comes from Edward Lhuyd’s respondent at the very end of the 17th century who stated that there were six houses by the church. And it was little different two hundred years later when the Ordnance Survey produced their first large-scale mapping.

***The heritage to 1750***

Two hundred metres to the east of the village and close to the Lliwen is the site of St Mordeyrn's chapel (100592). It was mentioned by Leland and its foundations were visible to Lhuyd's respondent in 1699, while Fenton in the early 19th century recorded a local superstition about the efficacy of soil dug up from within its walls. Its position appears to be a slightly domed ridge above the valley. No traces of the chapel are visible on the ground and geophysical survey has also proved fruitless.

The site of St Mordeyrn's well (100595) is about 100m north of the parish church. Capped, it now apparently lies unrecognisable beneath a modern garden boundary.

Single-chambered with a south porch and west bellcote, the church of St James (100593) within the village was drastically restored in 1862, having been partially rebuilt in 1777. It is possible but unconfirmed that some of the wall fabric may be medieval, as are some of the roof timbers, but the furnishings and fittings are almost entirely of the 19th century.

Its churchyard (19781) is now of irregular form but was polygonal in the 19th century. However, a broadly curvilinear earlier perimeter can be determined on the ground incorporating the existing northern side and a scarp bank within the churchyard on the south.

The village plan is of a single street south of the stream with the church at the lower end and a cross-roads at the top. A small cottage on the edge of the churchyard has been attributed by the Royal Commission to the 17th century, but has seen substantial alterations. The farm of Glasmor lies at the crossroads in the village and though primarily of 19th-century build is believed to have 18th-century origins, with one of the ancillary buildings having a datestone of 1762, though other sources link this to the house or farm of Penllan.

The bridge, Pont-y-llan (19783), is of late build, 1831, and perhaps replaced a ford crossing.

## Rhuddlan

**SJ 0280 7721**
**105808**

***Introduction***
Rhuddlan is situated on the east bank of the River Clwyd, approximately 4km inland from where the river empties into the estuary. It occupies fairly level ground raised well above the river and the formerly marshy grounds that lay to the west and north, its position carefully selected which to a large degree accounts for the longevity of Rhuddlan as a settlement. Three major roads enter this small town, the A547 (east/west), the A525 (north/south) and the A5151 from the south-east.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Rhuddlan 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 in particular 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 require modification 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. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

***History of development***
Rhuddlan is a highly favoured location for settlement and its very long period of use is reflected in the features and finds of many periods revealed by the standing structures and by excavations in the town. It reflects both the lowest crossing of the River Clwyd by ford, and the highest point reached by tides. Communications with areas to the west and east were enhanced by the fact that land routes could skirt around the northern end of the Clwydians.

The name Rhuddlan should be translated as 'red bank', and is derived from the red colour of the soil on the riverbank where the town is situated. This is straightforward, more so than the number of name forms that have been identified for it. From the 10th century though only appearing in a late 13th copy is the term *brudglann*. Domesday Book in 1086 has *Roeland*, *Ruthelan* was used in c.1191, *Rothelan* in c.1253 and *Rundlan* a year later. *Rodlan* appeared in 1291, *Rhuttlan* in 1320, *Rudlan* in the 14th century and *Ruthlan* in 1437. The present name's first showing seems to have been in 1577-8, but other variants continued to appear including *Rutland* in 1582. In addition, an entirely different appellation, *Cledmutha*, reflecting the mouth of the Clwyd, was recorded in AD 921 and is generally believed to refer to an early settlement here.

Rhuddlan is first referred to in connection with the defeat of the Welsh by King Offa in the battle of Morfa Rhuddlan at the end of the 8th century. There is a documentary reference in the chronicles compiled at a later date to *bellum Rudglann* in AD 796. Then, in 921 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records the foundation of a *burh* at *Cledmurtha*, primarily to obstruct Viking raids. Opinion has varied as to whether this was at Rhuddlan itself or closer to the coast, but the wait of evidence, particularly archaeological, now favours the former. Regardless of its location, it seems unlikely that it functioned for long.

Rhuddlan is reputed to be the site of the stronghold (*palatium*) of Llewelyn ab Seisyll, built in 1015, perhaps on Twt Hill. It passed to his son, Gruffydd ap Llywelyn of Gwynedd, and his *llys* there was destroyed by Earl Harold in 1063.

After the Norman Conquest, a motte and bailey castle was built in about 1073, probably on top of the llys at Twt Hill, by Robert of Rhuddlan, the deputy of Hugh of Chester. A small borough was founded by the castle and was referred to in Domesday Book. It revealed that there were eight burgesses there as well as the mint. A church is mentioned, and it seems highly likely that this was the structure found in Henrietta Quinnell's excavations on Ysgol-y-Castell playing fields (see 101950) rather than on the site of the present church. Her excavations revealed that the Norman borough was located immediately to the south-east of Rhuddlan Castle, and that its defences enclosed an area of 7ha which incorporated the Twt Hill motte and bailey (102026).

To what degree Rhuddlan prospered under its Norman lords is unknown, but in 1140 during the English civil war known as the Anarchy, the town fell under Welsh control and apart from a brief English resurgence in 1211-3 generally remained in Welsh hands until 1241. A further period of Welsh control under Llywelyn ap Gruffudd began in 1256 and continued until Edward I's campaign in 1277.

In that year it is likely that the town ditch was thrown up to enclose 30 ha that included the earlier Norman borough and the Dominican friary, butting up against what was to become Edward's stone castle, also begun in 1277. Plans to canalise the lower reaches of the Clwyd river were drawn up and the work was probably completed by the end of 1280, facilitating access to the sea and providing waterfront access for the castle. The first mention of the new borough at Rhuddlan came in the early part of 1278 – planned on a grid system of streets, it lay to the north-west of the new castle and had its own defences, though these appear to have remained incomplete during the earlier 1280s and may perhaps have been completed by the burgesses rather than the king. The king's plan to move the see of St Asaph to Rhuddlan came to nothing, but a new church was subsequently built within the borough. The town achieved some lasting fame for the fact that it was here that Edward drew up the Statute of Rhuddlan (also known as the Statute of Wales) which created the constitutional basis for the government of North Wales for two and a half centuries and led to the counties of Anglesey, Merionethshire, Caernarfonshire, and Flintshire being established.

By 1292 the town had 75 taxpayers and in later years it can be assumed to have prospered though probably not significantly. The absence of a market is worth noting, Caerwys being recorded at a later date as the only market centre in post-medieval Flintshire. More than a century separated the town's establishment from its destruction, in 1403, during the Glyndŵr rebellion, although the castle itself remained in English hands. The town was back under English control in 1406-7, but in 1428 only 37 burgages were recorded though there is uncertainty as to whether this was an accurate figure.

Rhuddlan was mentioned by Leland in the 1530s but the absence of any description suggests that the town made little impression on him, and it is the infrequency of records on the town that implies that Rhuddlan was not developing to the same degree as other urban centres. A summary of Elizabethan ports in 1561/2 records Rhuddlan as 'a barred haven and a good Creke where is a noble Castell of ye Kings and well kept'. From the 16th century the main harbour developed downstream from the bridge, initially extending for around l00m on either bank, but later focusing on the wharfage along the eastern bank.

The castle's importance declined; it appears to have become dilapidated and neglected, and when the Civil War broke out in the 1640s expensive repairs were needed to make it fit to receive the king's garrison. Rhuddlan castle surrendered to Parliament in 1646 and was slighted in 1648. As a port, though, Rhuddlan continued to have its uses and the King had several vessels there in 1646, laden with corn, bacon and other provisions waiting to relieve the siege of Chester.

Edward Lhuyd's correspondent at the very end of the 17th century noted its borough status with two bailiffs, and estimated that there were about 68 houses in the town and another 30 in 'ye Liberty', presumably the suburbs.

Our earliest map of the town, drawn in 1756, shows a small settlement with the church and castle. Most of the houses are contained within the Edwardian defences and there are plenty of vacant plots, but little evidence of an expanding community. Only a few houses are scattered east of the castle in the old town.

Even in the 19th century Rhuddlan was still little more than a large village, consisting of one main street intersected by several smaller thoroughfares, and the streets only partially paved. Richard Colt Hoare, passing through it in 1801 classed it 'a mean village situated on the banks of the Clwyd'. The port still functioned, and quays, wharfs and warehouses constructed. It had become a depot supplying coal, food stuffs, and the like to towns deeper into the Vale of Clwyd, but the principal trade was the export of grain and timber and, from the Talargoch mines, lead ore.

***The heritage to 1750***

Producing a coherent and detailed narrative of Rhuddlan where standing structures are complemented by regular archaeological works is outside the scope of this brief report. The last such narrative was published by Henrietta Quinnell in 1994, and in the intervening years some interesting discoveries have been made in advance of development. Here, we have listed the known features, standing and below ground level, according to type and context. We can express a hope that a fuller synthesis might be prepared in the not-too distant future.

***Buildings***

St Mary's Church (102048) is a double-naved church with a west tower. Built on a new site around 1300, the north nave and tower were added late in the Middle Ages. Restoration occurred in 1812 and again in 1868-70. A mausoleum was appended to the north nave in 1820. Little architectural detailing of the 13th century now remains, though some of the windows suggest that the Victorian replacements were faithful to the originals. The interior was also restored, but the late medieval roofs and the 15th-century arcade were retained. There are several 13th and 14th-century effigies and sepulchral slabs; patches of 17th-century wall paintings and an early 18th-century parish chest, but one would have hoped for more medieval survivals including the font.

The churchyard is rectangular as might be anticipated for a settlement planned on a grid pattern. There have been minor alterations to its outline, particularly in the 19th century, but it is largely as it was in the medieval period. The base of the churchyard cross remains.

Rhuddlan Castle (102031) is one of Edward I's great castles. It was concentric with the inner ward wall surviving and sporting two round angle towers and two gatehouses, while the outer ward wall has gone. The outer moat still rings the castle on the sides away from the River Clwyd.

There has been a bridge over the Clwyd (102034) since the 13th century. A timber bridge was destroyed in about 1277 and immediately replaced, and the first stone bridge was constructed in c.1358. It was rebuilt in 1595 and parts of this bridge remain, although there have been more recent alterations to it.

Abbey Farm (102025), formerly known as Plasnewydd, is on the site of the Dominican friary, founded here prior to 1258 and dissolved in 1538. Much of the friary church was still standing in the middle of the 18th century but had gone by the time that Thomas Pennant visited it in 1784. The farmyard occupies the site of the cloister garth and part of the south cloister range is now incorporated into a barn; some blocked windows survive, probably 14th-century. Medieval building materials have been re-used and the east range of the farm buildings incorporates some sepulchral slab fragments and there is a niche with a much-eroded 14th-

century effigy in it (123752). It has been recorded in the past that stone coffins and human remains have been unearthed, presumably from the friary cemetery.

Parliament House (102032) on Parliament Street incorporates a blocked 13th-century doorway and a 14th-century cusped ogee window. Neither are thought to be in situ, and probably originated at the castle. Although an inscription associates Edward I with this site and with a parliament, these views are unsubstantiated.

The Banquet House (102047) on Princes Road is dated to 1672 and is considered to be a sophisticated late 17th-century vernacular building. It is a tall, compact, two-storeyed building with coped gable ends, and some mullioned windows and a doorway with a four-centred archway.

***Earthworks***

Twt Hill motte and bailey (102026) was built in 1073 by Robert of Rhuddlan, and according to tradition occupies the site of the Welsh palace of Gruffydd ap Llywelyn. The motte is 80m in diameter, with a height of 5m on its north side and 12m on the south (river) side. The bailey bank to the north is ploughed down.

***Town defences***

The remains of early town defences (17761) lie to the south-east of the castle. The bank-ditch-bank combination (17648), known as 'Town Ditch', enclose an area of c.30 ha and were once considered to be the defences of the Saxon *burh* of *Cledmutha*, but are now generally thought to be the first Edwardian town defences from 1277, playing little obvious part in the protection of the town of Rhuddlan in later years.

The corner of the Edwardian borough defences in the form of a ditch and an outer bank (101958) survive to the north-east of Gwindy Street and is now surrounded by housing and other buildings. The earthworks were partially excavated in 1971, but further work in 1989 (17461) and 1993 (17847) along the supposed line of the ditch adjacent to Gwindy Street failed to locate any trace of defences.

Road widening work at Lon Hylas in 1983 and subsequent excavation (PRN 101753), immediately to the north-east of the castle, revealed a large ditch which was estimated to be 23m wide and 4m deep. It is presumed to be part of the Edwardian borough defences on the south-east side of the medieval town.

***Town plan***

The 13th-century grid plan of the Edwardian town is still represented by the High Street (reflecting the short axis) and the two roads crossing it, Castle and Church Streets to the south-west and Parliament and Gwindy Streets to the north-east. These, however, are not necessarily their original names. An extent of 1428 mentioned only High Street and Castle Street. Other names such as *Peperstrete* and *Pyloristrete* have long been abandoned.

***Town features***

Excavations in 1969-74 (101950) in the vicinity of Ysgol y Castell revealed the remains of a stone-built Norman church, medieval houses and other timber buildings, defensive ditches (both Norman and Edwardian) and pottery kilns. The church, on the east side of the footpath from Hylas Lane to Twt Hill, was a simple structure of mortared local limestone, around 27m long with a nave 9m wide. Documentary records indicate that the church survived until relocated by Edward I between 1284 and 1301. In the adjacent burial ground, a large number of graves were identified, two coins of William Rufus (1092-1095) associated with one burial providing the earliest dating evidence.

Further archaeological work in this area in 2001 revealed a steep sided ditch, a cobbled surface, middens and industrial residues, which were considered to be of medieval date, and certainly no later than the 16th century when the land reverted to agricultural use. The ditch appeared substantial and may be postulated as a continuation of a ditch observed in 1969. In

subsequent years a 13th-century pottery kiln was uncovered, together with other possible associated remains such as ditches, gullies, floor surfaces, middens, pottery and pits.

In 2010 on land immediately to the east of the church, linear features lying at right angles to High Street and roughly parallel to Church Street were uncovered. These were tentatively interpreted as the remains of burgage plot boundaries relating to the Edwardian Borough. The features produced a range of faunal remains and pottery of late 15th- and 16th-century date together with industrial waste. Pit-like features containing late medieval pottery were also recorded.

A hospital probably run by the knights of St John is documented prior to 1281, and may be what was referred to by Edward Lhuyd as a hospital. It has been linked to Spital Cottage, where in 1699 the land here was known as Spital Land; there is no archaeological evidence to support this link.

Ffynnon-y-castell (PRN 101572) reputedly located near the castle, is a spring mentioned by Lhuyd in 1699, used for drinking water in the 19th century.

An old stone cross (103606), probably a hiring cross for labourers, formerly stood near the junction of Church Street and the High Street. The site is now within the garden of a cottage.

The course of the Clwyd would originally have flowed against the western side of the outer ward, although today the channel is 70m further to the west. The Edwardian port was linked to the castle, being integrated with the moat (83514). The Edwardian dock (83514) is now silted and no longer reached by high tides.

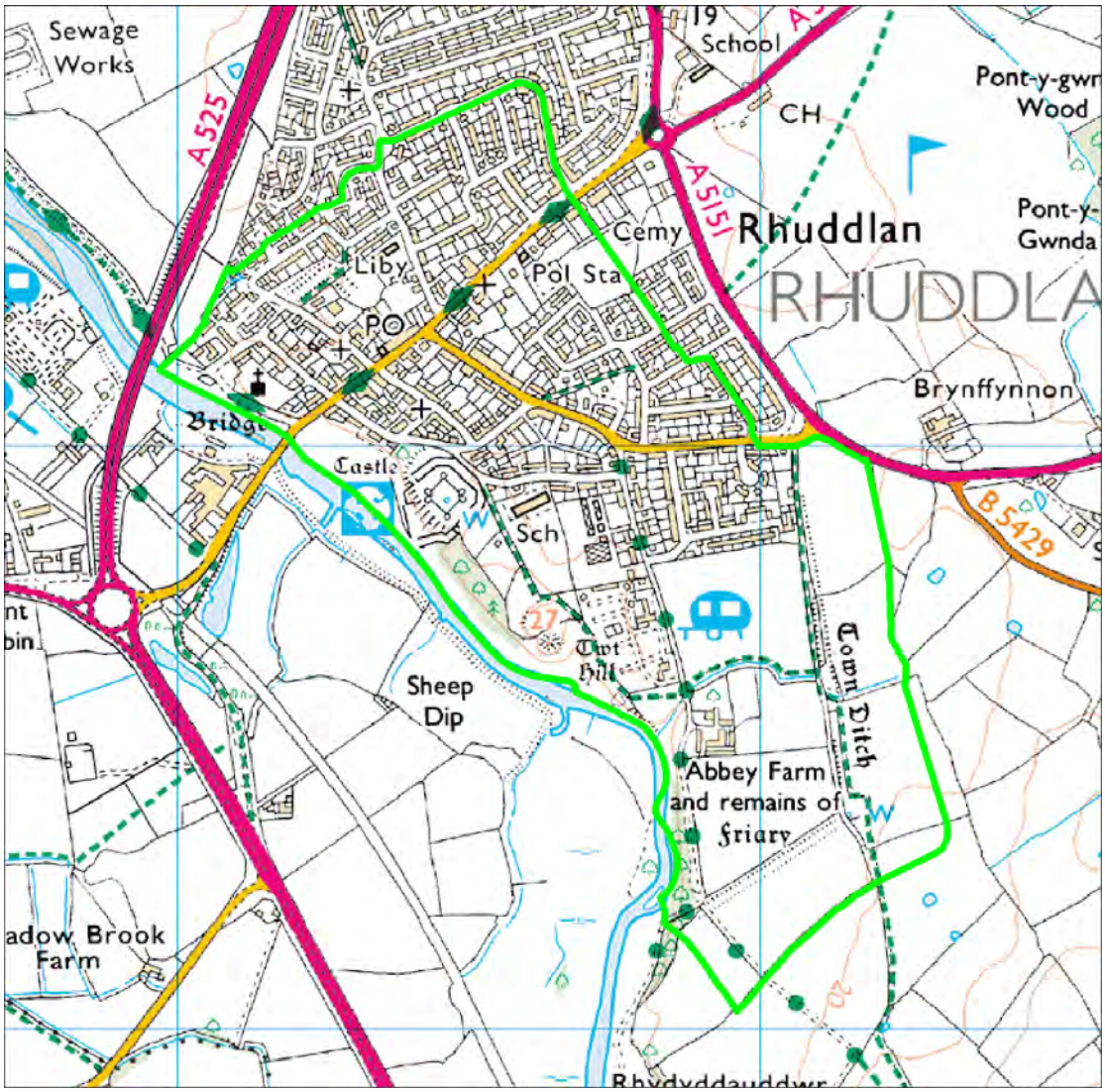
***Land use***

Excavations at Fairmead in the 1980s (17596), beyond the Edwardian borough defences, exposed a series of shallow ditches, probably field or plot boundaries and perhaps of medieval date.

Excavations in 1978 at Hendre (102570) to the east of the castle and also beyond the Edwardian borough defences failed to find any trace of the medieval hospital suspected at the site, but did uncover a kiln structure (17961), probably in use between 1680-1720.

***Industry***

Much of Rhuddlan's industry was located on the opposite (west) side of the river Clwyd - this included an iron foundry and tannery which were in existence in the 19th century.



## Ruthin

**SJ 1260 5830**
**105991**

***Introduction***
Ruthin lies within the Vale of Clwyd, and is amongst the largest historic settlements in Denbighshire. It is also home to the modern local authority.

The historic core of Ruthin occupies the east bank of the river on a low glaciated ridge running parallel to the river and isolated from a second ridge and the undulating vale to the east by a shallow and largely dry dip in the landscape. The western ridge is utilised by the castle at the southern end and by the church at the northern tip. From this ridge settlement has spread out primarily to the east where modern estates are reaching towards the medieval church of Llanrhydd, and westwards across the Clwyd to link with the medieval village of Llanfwrog.

A nodal point in the road network, Ruthin lies on the A494 trunk road linking the Chester region with the west coast of Wales. Denbigh is 10km to the north-west, Llangollen 18km to the south-east.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Ruthin 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 in particular 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 require modification 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.

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***History of development***
Ruthin has been the subject of various detailed studies over the years, not all of which were consulted when the original survey was compiled in 1995, because of the amount of research that would have been required. This situation still obtains and there can be no doubt that the town requires and deserves a comprehensive study.

Prior to the Edwardian Conquest in the second half of the 13th century, Ruthin is believed to have been a 'maerdref', the administrative centre of the commote of Dyffryn Clwyd; and a Welsh settlement of some size could have developed in the area of modern Well Street, formerly 'Welsh Street'. But we should stress that this is speculative rather than substantiated. Claims of a Welsh stronghold of *llys*, 'the Red Fort', beneath or close to the later castle, are not backed by any solid evidence, but nor can it be ruled out.

Maurice Beresford pointed out some years ago that the boundaries of the borough at Ruthin reveal that it had been cut out of the parish of Llanrhydd. This is not to diminish the potential importance of the town's early history, but it does imply that there was no early church here.

Dyffryn Clwyd was disputed by English and Welsh in the mid-13th century, but the area came under Edward I's control in 1277 and the construction of Ruthin Castle commenced immediately. The town was returned to David, brother of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, almost immediately, but after an abortive Welsh uprising in 1282, Dyffryn Clwyd was bestowed on Reginald de Grey who continued the castle building programme and also commenced laying out a town which probably integrated the existing Welsh *tref*'. Ruthin Castle became the 'caput' of a lordship extending over three commotes.

A charter granted privileges to the newly established borough in 1282 or soon after, and in the words of Professor Ian Jack this 'reflected the prosperity of the town under the Welsh princes and the relatively peaceful transition into a marcher borough, where despite the initial number of English immigrants, a genuinely Anglo-Welsh community was created'.

St Peter's church was founded as a chapel in 1282 or thereabouts, and subsequently rebuilt in 1310 as a collegiate church with seven priests. With the castle and the market place it represented one of the three focal points of the town.

By 1324 there were 70 burgesses controlling 100 burgages, one third of them Welsh and concentrated mainly in the Well Street area. A weekly market and thrice-yearly fairs centred on the market place which was established properly in 1295-6.

Ruthin was sacked by Glyndŵr in 1400 and again perhaps in 1402, and it was a result of these attacks that town defences were added, a murage grant being recorded in 1407. This led to the construction of a ditch around the town which is referred to obliquely in at least one 15th-century town record.

The town recovered quickly and became the centre of an important cloth industry leading in the late medieval era (c.1447) to the formation of a guild of fullers and weavers. Shoemakers established a second craft-gild, late in the 15th century. The built-up area expanded westwards across the Clwyd towards Llanfwrog. By 1496 90 burgesses holding 209 burgages were recorded, suggesting to Ian Soulsby the emergence of an urban aristocracy, a non-uncommon situation in developing medieval boroughs.

Henry VII purchased the lordship of Ruthin in 1508 and in the same year he granted a charter to the borough confirming market rights and other privileges. But the 16th century saw the rise of Shrewsbury as a cloth centre and the consequent decline of Ruthin. It was of little interest to John Leland travelling the country in the 1530s, but to William Camden at the end of the century it was 'the greatest market town in all the Vale, full of inhabitants and well replenished with buildings'. During the Civil War it was besieged in 1644 and again in 1646 by Parliamentary forces, and when it finally fell the castle was razed.

From 1536 Ruthin functioned as one of the county towns of Denbighshire. Quarter Sessions and Great Sessions courts were held in the town, and in 1775 the county gaol was built there. We may suspect gradual rather than spectacular growth. Sir Richard Colt Hoare in 1801 found a 'town built on a hill and its declivities, chiefly of brick. The many porticos and penthouses give it an ancient and rather a picturesque appearance.. The new Town Hall, erected in 1785, is a handsome and commodious building…Though there are considerable remains of the castle the ruins are by no means picturesque'.

A number of maps show the town as it was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, with the market hall known as the Old Hall in the centre of the Market Place. That of 1823 shows the inns in black - 23 in all.

***The heritage to 1750***

Ruthin Castle (100863) was built in the 13th century. Much of it was demolished in the Civil War in the middle of the 17th century but parts of the curtain wall and its towers survive on the north-west and north-east. The site is now occupied by a hotel which is largely 19th-

century in origin, with phases of building in 1826 and 1849-52. A park associated with the castle is now termed Castle Park and could well have medieval origins, but the gardens adjoining the castle appear to have been laid out in the Victorian era.

Nothing remains of the town defences above ground (102891), though Ian Soulsby in 1983 was able to define the probable course of the ditch from surviving property boundaries: continuous boundaries on the north beyond St Peter's church, Wynnstay Road on the east, Dog Street on the south-east as far as the castle and, on the west side of the castle, perhaps a curving route to the west side of Mill Street to the river which would have provided a natural line of defence. Masonry defences were claimed in the vicinity of Clwyd Street in 1829, and it seems improbable that the town was defended by a ditch alone. The Water Gate (Porth-y-dwr) leading to the bridge across the Clwyd was reportedly demolished about 1800, itself a successor to the tower built by the de Greys. Soulsby's analysis has now been re-assessed by D G Evans (2011) who has defined a somewhat different perimeter; this clearly demonstrates the difficulties in trying to define a feature that has been effectively erased from the visible landscape through urban growth.

St Peter's church (100871) lies north of the market square. It is much altered since its construction in 1310-15, for a 'grievous restoration' in 1859 followed from its decay during the previous century. Parts of the early 14th-century walling survive, but the medieval chancel was demolished in 1663, permanently reducing the size of the church, and the south nave, other than its arcade, was completely rebuilt in the 18th and 19th centuries. There is fine range of wall monuments, the earliest from 1601, a couple of mutilated medieval effigies and a little woodwork of late medieval and early post-medieval date, notably an early 17th-century altar table and some interesting bench ends.

The churchyard is of an irregular shape and holds little of interest.

The medieval college buildings were on its north side and reputedly formed a quadrangle. The Old Cloisters on this side were the residence of the college of priests and contain 14th-century work including a 5-bay vaulted undercroft. Almshouses known as Christ's hospital (100872) and still surviving, were built in the precinct in 1590 by the Dean of Westminster who was born in the town. These were reconstructed in 1856 (but 1865 according to another source). North-east of the church, Ruthin school was re-founded in 1574 with an endowment twenty years later. The present buildings (102887) date from 1700 but were refurbished in the 19th century.

A Carmelite priory (or nunnery) founded by Reginald de Grey near St Peter's has been claimed on the site of the modern post office, just to the south-west of the churchyard gates. Its existence, however, has never been confirmed.

The street pattern extending from the square is relatively rectilinear, but the natural topography has clearly imposed a constraint on the town's layout with the result that Ruthin looks less like a planned settlement than comparable towns elsewhere in Wales. Traces of burgage plots are still discernible off Clwyd Street and Castle Street, but were more in evidence on 19th-centiry maps. Dog Lane appears to be a medieval name, although as late as 1826 seems not to have been significant in terms of the small number of houses on it. Record Street and Well Street were previously Castle Lane (though New Hall Street in 1823) and Welsh Street respectively. The name 'Pen Barras' is commonly used for the lower part of Well Street, and more especially for the boundary between the parishes of Ruthin and Llanrhudd. 'Bars', of which Barras is a corruption, is mentioned in a conveyance of 1486. Market Street was created during the mid-19th century. The road from Corwen originally adopted a straighter course, running close to the castle and merging into Castle Street; in the early 19th century, it was diverted further to the east to its present line. Housing almost certainly extended westwards across the River Clwyd: New Street (previously Borthyn) and Mwrog Street were both mentioned in a register of tenants of the local lordship in 1324.

The centre of the medieval town was St Peter's Square which represented the regular market place from 1295. A timber-framed court house (102550; now the NatWest Bank) was erected in the centre of the square. A felling date of 1421 was obtained from timbers in the building in 2004/5, a slightly later date than the date of 1401 traditionally ascribed to it. The Royal Commission have suggested that the courthouse symbolises the recovery of the lordship after Owain Glyndŵr's revolt. The building was restored in 1926. The beam of the former gibbet project from one wall, while a few original prison cells survive below ground.

A rough, flat block of limestone, Maen Huail (100868), is set on the west side of the market square. Local legend has it that it was the site where Huail, brother of Gildas, was beheaded by King Arthur, and is recorded in the middle of the street in Edward Lhuyd's *Parochialia* at the end of the 17th century.

Nantclwyd House (102552) is a large two storey, timber-framed building of several phases though developed considerably in the 17th century. The earliest house was constructed with timbers felled in the winter of 1434-5. The inner garden immediately behind the house defines a former double burgage plot and is surrounded by a high stone wall which probably dates from the late 15th century and incorporates a late 17th or early 18th-century gazebo. Walls defining the outer garden are thought to be 15th century or possibly earlier, 13th century in date and contemporary with Ruthin Castle, having originally formed the kitchen garden to the castle until it was rented to the owner of Nantclwyd House in 1572.

The castle mill (100869) is thought to date from the late 13th century and is a rare medieval survival in Wales, even though it is much modified; built of grey stone, but with red sandstone used for the quoins and some window dressings, it also houses a cross in the east gable. No. 65 Clwyd Street (102888) is said to have been associated with the mill, before being converted to domestic use in 1586 (Cadw) and has at its core a 15th-century structure. It was added to and extended at several points in later centuries; the interior of No 67 (Grade II listing) was originally part of No.65, and contains a medieval arched doorway that was probably connected to storage rooms.

The mill leat also remains, running below the castle fed from a mill pond (now gone) situated in the castle precinct. A mill dam was named on the map of 1826 and a mill pond is depicted in 1874.

Gorphwysfa (19707) is a medieval hall with a near intact northern cross-wing.

The Old Grammar School (26018) was opened in 1598, and the current stone building may be of this date. Portions of the Castle Hotel (17998) have been claimed as a mid-16th century timber-framed structure added to in the 18th century, but a recent reassessment points to all of this being of 19th-century origin. No. 3 Upper Clwyd Street (19705) may have a late medieval origin; nos 4a and 6 Well Street are perhaps late 15th-century in origin (19709), while No 2 Well Street, despite having a history traceable from 1401, in its present form and fabric suggests a date of the 16th to 17th century (19710). Other buildings with 16th-century work include nos 20 Castle Street (19711), 8 Well Street (26045), 33, 35 and 37 Clwyd Street (19713), and the Wynnstay Arms (19720)

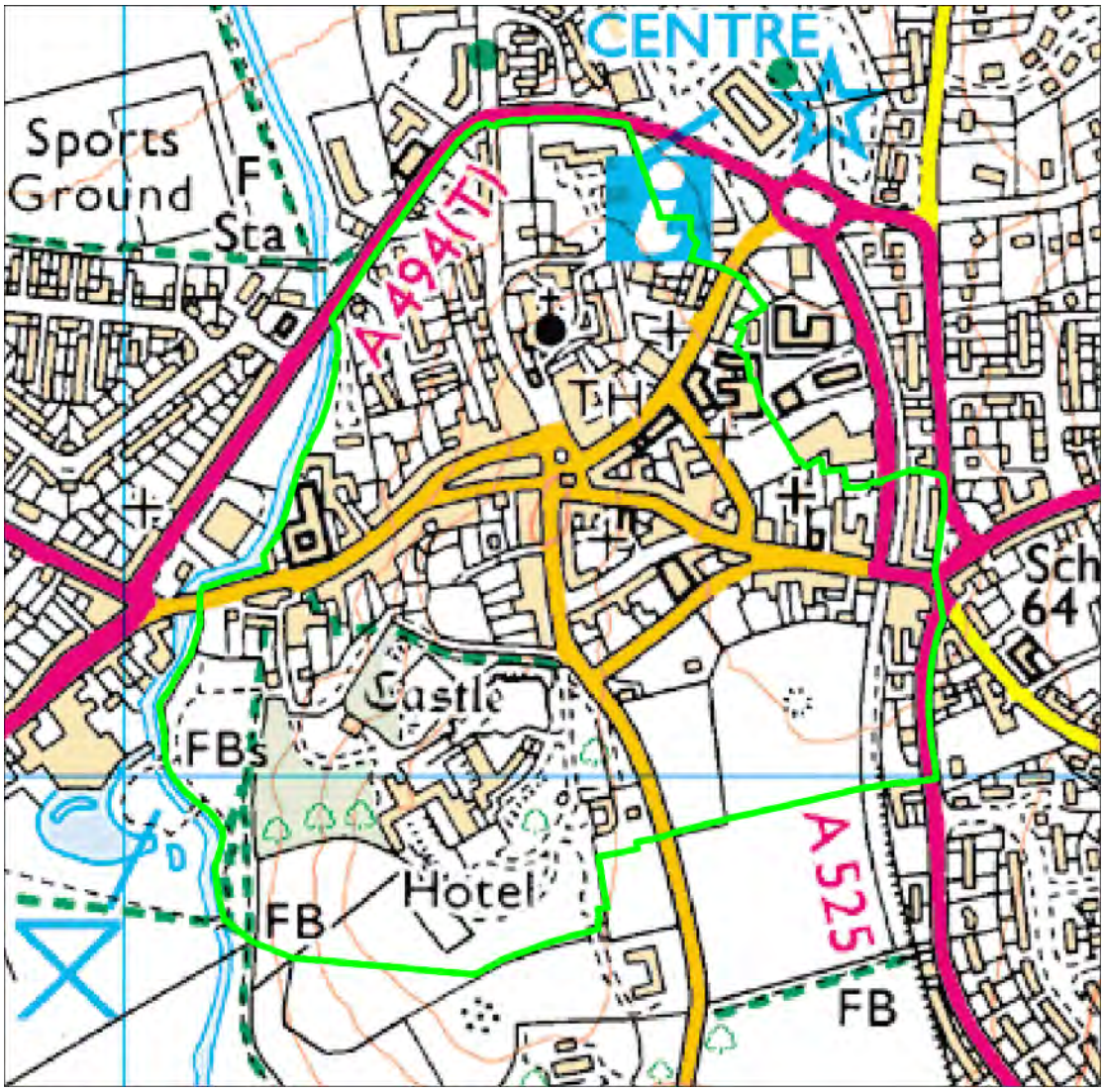
Seventeenth-century buildings: include nos 11 and 11a St Peter's Square (19706); 12 St Peter's Square (26024); no.7 Castle Street (19708); nos 39 and 41 Clwyd Street (19714); nos 47 and 49 Clwyd Street (19715); no. 51 Clwyd Street, though it may be earlier (19716); no. 53 Clwyd Street (19717); nos 32 and 34 Clwyd Street with a 16th/17th-century frame (19718); the Waterloo Club on Upper Clwyd Street (19719) in which a fine carved oak overmantle with the date 1611 has been recorded. Parallels can be made between the cruck details of 15 Rhos Street, (26016) and the Ship Inn on Rhos Street, which had 5 great cruck frames, but was demolished in 1950; no. 11 Well Street (26035); and nos 24 and 26 Well Street (19721), a large early 17th-century town-house, unusual for its stone construction in this area and built for the constable of the castle. On the west side of the river nos 5-7 Mwrog Street are also perhaps 17th century, and there are undoubtedly other equally early buildings in the town

whose external appearance is later in date. Recent discoveries (2012) at 73 Clwyd Street revealed the gable end of a timber-framed building thought to date to around 1600; it has been suggested that this building may be related to the former mill complex.

A small sub-square mound (PRN 100867) lies 200m to the east of the castle, its date and function unknown, though a medieval or later date has been assumed. Other, uncharacterised earthworks survive in the same field, some though not all probably of natural origin.

Archaeological watching briefs have revealed evidence of both medieval and post-medieval activity close to the heart of the town at Ruthin. In Record Street, evidence of smithying associated with 14th-15th century pottery came to light during an archaeological evaluation in 2005. In Clwyd Street, to the rear of the main street frontage, two separate watching briefs carried out in 2004 revealed evidence of possible medieval buildings and around the Town Hall, 15th or 16th-century pottery and residues from a possible tanning workshop.

Further away from the historic core of the town an assemblage of medieval pottery was recovered in the grounds of Ysgol Brynhyfryd in 2002, and a medieval buckle plate was unearthed in 2006, confirming medieval occupation nearby. Also in 2006, excavations also revealed the remnants of a possible timber building. Although this was sealed by post-medieval deposits, it has not been firmly dated. The remains of a possible field system were also uncovered, noted to be of a different alignment to the modern boundaries.



## St Asaph

**SJ 0390 7440**
**105810**

***Introduction***
St Asaph lies towards the north coast of Wales, 7.5km south-west of Rhyl and 8.5 km north of Denbigh. The A525, running north/south through the Vale of Clwyd, passes through the settlement, and the A55 east/west trunk road bypasses its northern perimeter.

The small town, recently elevated to city status lies on a hill spur between the Rivers Clwyd and Elwy. The cathedral is situated at the top of the hill, and the High Street, running westwards, slopes downwards from it to the bridge over the Elwy. The older part of the settlement is situated on the slopes below the cathedral on the east side of the River Elwy. The town expanded greatly during the 19th and 20th centuries from this small core and housing now extends much further north and south along the hillside and also covers the valley floor west of the river.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of St Asaph 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 in particular 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 require modification 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. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

***History of development***
The settlement derives its Welsh name of Llanelwy from the River Elwy which runs through it. A monastery and mother church (*clas*) and an episcopal see are believed to have been founded here in the later 6th century AD by the exiled holy man, Cyndeyrn (St Kentigern). The monastery grew and is said, almost certainly hyperbolically, to have contained no fewer than 965 brethren, some devoted to religious instruction, and some to labour and secular pursuits. On Kentigern's return to Scotland, St Asaph (Asaff), a native of North Wales, succeeded him as bishop and whose name was adopted for the settlement. The *clas* may well have continued, but the bishopric fell into abeyance until it was re-founded in the Norman reorganisation of the Welsh Church. It was the last of the four episcopal sees to be established.

The first reliable historical reference to St Asaph is in 1143 when the bishopric is recorded as *Lanelvensis Ecclesiae*, while the 1291 taxation of Pope Nicholas provides the first naming of St Asaph, *Ecclesia Cathedralis de Sancto Asaph. Llan Elwy alias S. Asaphe* is given in 1536.

Speed's plan of the town in 1610 (all four cathedral settlements in Wales were drawn) shows a small, quite scattered settlement, of less than fifty dwellings. The cathedral, church and the Bishop's Palace are indicated, also a mill and mill race at the bottom of the High Street. The river at this time appears to have flowed closer to the town. The only notable concentration of

houses is shown in the area of Lower Street, with a few more on Gemig Street, High Street and at the bottom of Red Hill. Mount Road/Upper Denbigh Road is present and also a road along the south side of the cathedral running past Esgobty Farm and down to the river. Chester Street did not yet exist. The bridge over the Elwy at this date seems to have been further north than today, somewhere in the area of Llys y Felin.

Richard Colt Hoare travelling through north Wales in 1801 stated that 'the epithet *paupercula* [=poor] applied by Giraldus [Cambrensis] to this place in former days may be equally applied at present. The town is small, situated on the declivity of a hill; at the bottom is the parish church, at the top the cathedral whose only merit is its neatness. From the bridge over the Elwy the town, cathedral, parish church etc form a picturesque group of buildings'. A description of the town in 1833 mentions the construction of a 'new road' (which would appear to be Chester Street) with 'several handsome houses and pleasing cottages'. The Tithe map of 1845, although giving no details of the town centre, shows the existence of most of the present day roads.

***The heritage to 1750***

St Asaph Cathedral (102126) is cruciform in plan with a central tower and an aisled and clerestoried nave. With a length of little more than 55m, it is the smallest of the cathedrals in England and Wales. Building is known to have been in progress by 1239, but much of the cathedral was rebuilt probably between 1284-1381, having been burnt during the Edwardian Conquest in 1282. After its completion with the building of the tower in 1391-2, the cathedral was burned again, by Owain Glyndŵr in 1402. This necessitated re-roofing and other restoration work. There has been further restoration and repair work over the years, with a major one by Sir Gilbert Scott in 1867-75, and another in 1929-32. There are a number of 19th-century buildings associated with the cathedral. These include the Diocesan registry, a canonry (now Kentigern Hall) and Dean Williams Library.

Esgobty farm (32269) lying to the south-west of the cathedral was an earlier Bishop's Palace. The T-shaped house has 16th/17th-century timber-framed origins, and an early to mid 18th-century brick casing. A barn and stable range and also a 17th-century dovecote are all associated.

The old Bishop's palace (102125), also to the south-west of the cathedral, was built by Bishop Bagot in 1791 and enlarged to the west in 1831. It is thought to be built on the site of an earlier palace dated 1634, itself the successor to Esgobty. The building has now been converted into flats, which involved the demolition of the south wing and the building of a modern brick range. Palace Gardens (32255) was formerly the coach house to the 1791 Bishop's Palace and is probably contemporary with it. There is a curved section of stone wall (106456) near the Old Palace, built of large sandstone and limestone blocks. It survives to a height of around 3m, and has openings in it, now partially blocked; its function is not known, but it may possibly have been agricultural.

Tithe Barn House (32254) is a late 17th/early 18th-century building with possible 16th-century origins. It has later alterations and has been converted to a house.

The Church of St Kentigern and St Asaph (102123), situated at the bottom end of the High Street, was built to serve the parish, but probably represents the site of the pre-Norman Conquest mother church. The double-naved church is mainly Perpendicular in style but has earlier Gothic origins. At the west end of the church there is a visible change in the masonry between the earlier southern part and the Perpendicular northern extension. The nave and north aisle are divided by an arcade of five bays. There were formerly a few early floriated crosses in the church and churchyard.

The churchyard (105825) belonging to the parish church has an irregular, but vaguely circular outline, also indicative of an early origin. The churchyard sundial (32239) is possibly as early as the 6th-century date. It has a square base and a circular stem, and stands 1.4m high. The

circular top has holes for a dial plate. Other sundials in St Asaph (32224) include one in the grounds of 'The Bryn', Chester Street, dated to 1588, and another (32246) at Kentigern Hall dated 1696.

A mother church would almost certainly have had a precinct larger than the churchyard that we see now. It has recently been suggested (by one of the writers) that the line of Cemig Street followed this larger and earlier enclosure, but not traceable south of High Street because of the imposition of successive bishop's palaces. That High Street was later than this early circuit is suggested by the slight shift in alignment of the former where the two meet.

Listed buildings are considered below and include the Old China Shop and China House/Kirkside (32258), on Lower Street. This is sub-medieval in origin and is said to date back to 1580 and to have been a convent associated with the Parish Church, though whether there is a factual basis for this is less certain.

The High Street contains a large number of listed buildings dating from the 17th to 20th centuries. The following are amongst the earliest ones: The Kinmel Arms (now named Kentigern Arms) public house (32240) has late 17th-century origins but incorporates later alterations and was formerly a brewery; Beulah House (32252) has 17th-century origins, but Victorian and modern alterations; and towards the bottom of the High Street, No.1 (32241) is a later 17th/early 18th-century structure, with subsequent alterations.

St Asaph almshouses (102122) were founded by Bishop Barrow in 1680 to house eight widows, but were rebuilt in 1795. The present brick-built single-storey structure has a U-plan. The building is presently used as a restaurant.

The Red Lion Public House (32229) on Gemig Street probably dates to the late 16th/early 17th century, but has later alterations. The building is of two storeys with a slate roof.

St Asaph Bridge (102567) was built in 1770, and is a five-arch, stone bridge over the River Elwy to which a modern footpath has been added. It replaced a timber structure in a slightly different location, but the absence of a bridge on John Speed's map suggests that there was only a ford across the river at the beginning of the 17th century; this in turn could have implications for the growth of settlement on the west bank of the river, though the presence of the Old Deanery (for which see below) suggests that access was not a fundamental problem.

Roe Gau (32259) on Mill Street was built in 1778, but is said to have earlier origins. The two-storey brick-built house is now divided into two dwellings.

Further out from the town centre are one or two other listed buildings worthy of note: The Old Deanery (32226), west of St Asaph Bridge, was probably built in the 17th century, though altered later. On Glascoed Road, the Hendre and Plas yn Roe were formerly one property known as Plas yn Roe (40422), an L-plan building of probably 17th-century cross-passage design. April cottage is probably late 17th-early 18th-century. Bronwylfa (105837) on the north-east edge of town was erected in 1660 and enlarged in 1816. The present Bronwylfa was built in 1930s.

St Asaph Corn Mill (103097), a water-powered corn mill, formerly existed probably in the vicinity of the garage at the bottom of the High Street. The line of the millrace is still discernible to the south, now appearing as a shallow dry ditch. A deed of 1353 refers to a water corn mill in St Asaph close to the Bishop's Palace, and later, Speed's map of 1610 shows a mill hereabouts.

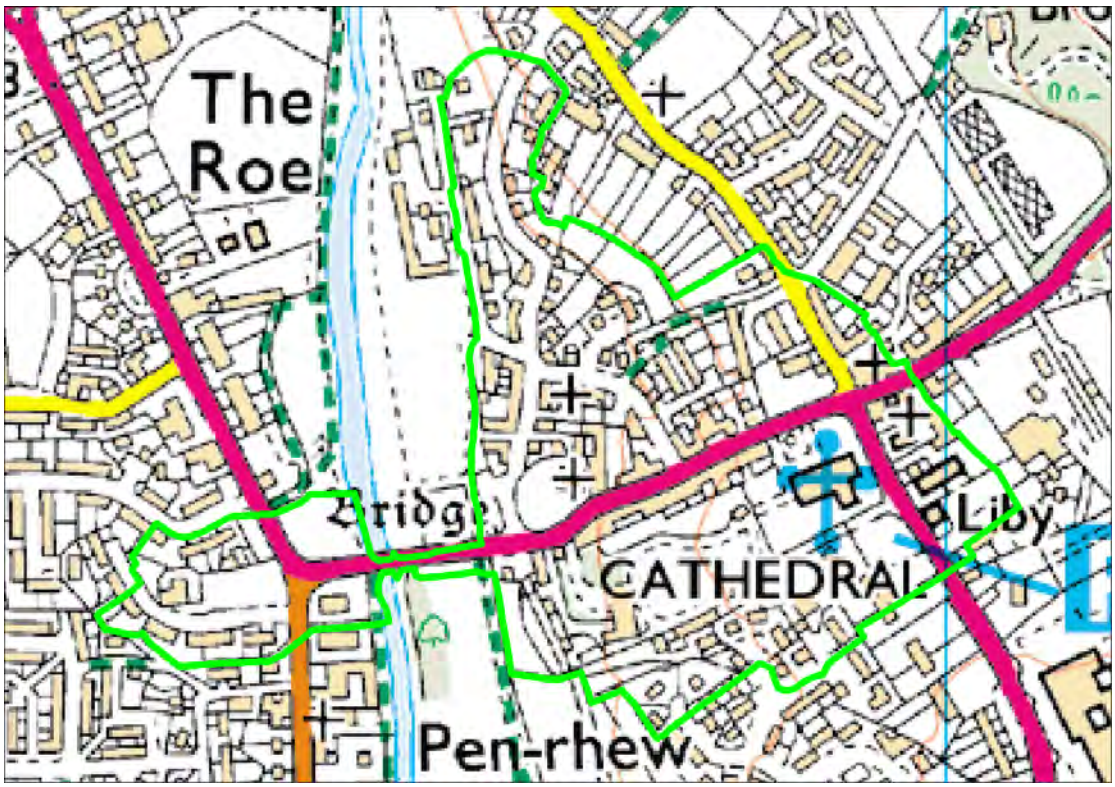
A faint rectangular earthwork of 3 acres (102120), lying south west of the cathedral, was excavated in 1952 in the anticipation of discovering the lost Roman centre of *Varis*, but ther work revealed only banks of medieval or later date. At Kentigern Hall, an area of 30 square metres was excavated (102926) in 1981 in order to find some evidence of the fort; only post-medieval building remains were revealed. It has been speculated that the fort may have been

located near the H.M. Stanley Hospital or Bryn Polyn where pottery and tile fragments have been found.

There have been relatively few new archaeological discoveries in St Asaph since the first report on Denbighshire settlements was compiled in the 1990s. Those few discoveries that have been made, however, are significant in their findings.

During work in 2003 and again in 2007, collections of architectural fragments were found in amongst material of relatively modem date adjacent to the Cathedral boundary wall. It is possible that some of these pieces originated from the Cathedral, particularly fragments of window tracery, thought to be late medieval in date. Archaeological monitoring of land between Church House and the Cathedral uncovered a few fragments of medieval floor tile in 2004.

An archaeological evaluation on land to the south-west of the cathedral in the Deanery Gardens in 2005 identified a number of gullies and medieval rubbish pits. A significant quantity of medieval pottery was also recovered, all of a high status and firmly dated to the 13th-14th centuries. A significant number of pottery sherds from the 15th-17th centuries were also found, along with fragments of medieval stained window glass and ridge tile. Activity at the Deanery Gardens is clearly significant and implies there may have been an associated high status medieval building close by.



## Tremeirchion

**SJ 0827 7308**
**105813**

***Introduction***
The village is set into a hillside lying on the lower slopes of the Clwydian Hills. It is located 4.5km south-east of the cathedral city of St Asaph on a secondary road that runs along the east edge of the Vale of Clwyd. The village is situated around the junction of this road and a minor lane running in from the east, which winds through the older part of the settlement where the church, vicarage and school are located. In recent years the settlement has spread considerably to the east and south with the building of new housing estates.

Tremierchion was formerly in Flintshire, but was transferred to Denbighshire after Clwyd was broken up in 1996.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Tremeirchion up to the year 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it might be necessary to look at other sources of information and in particular 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 require modification 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. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

***History of development***
Tremeirchion in its earlier form, *Dymeirchion*, can be translated as 'the fort of Meirchion'. (One such named individual was reputedly the ancestor of the head of one of the Fifteen Tribes of North Wales, and his court was reputed to be held at Llysmeirchion, near Denbigh). However, modern authorities are sensibly rather more cautious about directly linking these places to the legendary leader.

It is mentioned in Domesday Book (1086) as *Dinmersch* while the church in the 1291 *Taxatio* is *Dymneyrchyvan* (or *avn*). *Dimeirchion* is recorded in 1336, but it is only after the Reformation and towards the end of the 16th century that the dim element was superseded by *tre*.

The early history of Tremeirchion is obscure; we cannot determine whether the church was founded in the early medieval era, nor whether there was a nucleated settlement here in the Middle Ages. In 1699 there were four houses ‘within a stone’s throw’ of the church according to Edward Lhuyd’s correspondent.

A 1790 estate map shows a very small settlement here, composed of just the church and one or two other buildings and with an area of common to the west of the church. By the time of the 1841 Tithe survey the village centre still consisted of no more than the church, a public house and one other building. In addition, there were a few cottages along the west side of the B5429 and one or two outlying buildings. The pattern of roads has not altered since that time.

***The heritage to 1750***

Tremeirchion church formerly dedicated to the Holy Trinity, now Corpus Christi, a very uncommon dedication (102162), is first mentioned in 1291. The building is designed as a single chamber, with a north transept added in 1864. There is a western bellcote and a large south porch. The south doorway and a blocked western one may be 14th-century, and from this it might be inferred that some of the fabric could be of a similar age. The roof is late medieval and arched-braced, but at the east end it has the trussed rafters of a former wagon ceiling. There is a Perpendicular font, some fragments of 15th-century stained glass, fragments of 13th and 14th-century sepulchral slabs, a 14th-century effigy of a knight, a late 14th-century canopied tomb with the effigy of a former incumbent, a parish chest dated to 1740 and two hatchments.

The older part of the churchyard (105833) was polygonal in shape, with only the vaguest trace of curvilinearity. It was enlarged in 1864, and the level of the eastern extension is noticeably lower than that of the original. The elaborately carved head of the medieval churchyard cross was sold in 1862, ending up at the neighbouring St Beuno's College (102152); it has now been returned and reinstalled in the churchyard. The gated entrance to the churchyard on the south-west appears to date from 1731, while the lychgate on the south-east could be 17th or 18th-century.

No buildings of any great age (other than the church) have been recognised in that part of Tremeirchion that might be thought of as the historic core. The stone-built parish school (105834) stands on the southern edge of the churchyard. It was built in 1765, and later restored in 1835. It was superseded by the national school and schoolhouse to the west of the church, built in 1865. Tremeirchion smithy (103466), on the southern edge of the settlement, has been altered an extended in modern times but the original stone walls remain.