

LLANGYNIDR

SO 1544 1931

15966

Introduction

Llangynidr lies just over 6km west of Crickhowell, beside the B4558. Its church occupies flattish ground which slopes very gently down to Nant Cleisfer, about 100m to the south-east. The stream empties into the River Usk, and the village has developed on the southern side of the river valley, overlooked by the Brecon Beacons to the south.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llangynidr 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 need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. The HER can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development

The earliest reference to Llangynidr is as *Llankgenedire* in 1398 and by 1535 this had become *Llangeneder*, the name obviously referring to the church of St Cynidr. However, the appearance of *Llangenyder Eglosyell* in 1561 highlights another name, Eglwys Iail, which seems to signal a church built of wattle and daub, first documented as *Eggesseil* in 1263.

That there was an early medieval ecclesiastical foundation here cannot be doubted. The churchyard shape, the Cynidr dedication and the proximity to Nant Cleisfer all signal an early origin.

But nothing is known of its history and Theophilus Jones writing at the beginning of the 19th century referred somewhat disparagingly to: 'the parish church of Llangynidr ... near a few houses called a village'. Nevertheless Llangynidr was mapped from an early date and the church's appearance in the Badminton Manorial atlas of 1587 makes it one of the earliest church depictions in Wales. Sadly, Johnson's map and its successors show little of the village, because it fell outside the Badminton land holdings, so determining the extent of the settlement in Tudor times, let alone in the Middle Ages, is impossible.

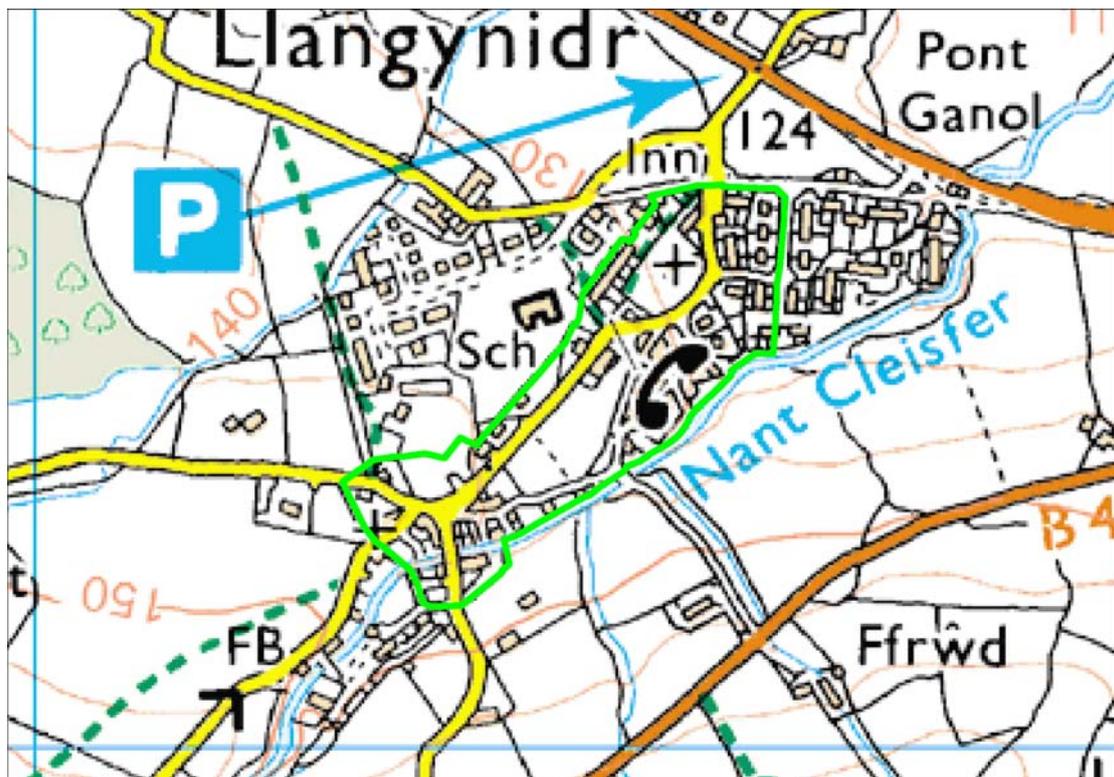
The heritage to 1750

The medieval church of St Mary and St Cynidr was totally destroyed by fire in 1928 and completely rebuilt though some of the old stone was re-used. Only a broken (13th-century?) font, a stoup, a decorated stone plaque and a 17th-century grave slab survive from the earlier building.

The remnants of a curvilinear boundary exist on the east side of the churchyard. Elsewhere the boundary appears to have been severely modified in past centuries and the Red Lion to the north-east and 'By-ways' (formerly the Post Office) to the south-west have been inserted into what was at one time the churchyard.

There are few historic buildings in the village. Lilac Cottage on Mardy Lane was supposedly built in 1769, though its appearance is largely 19th-century; the Red Lion by the churchyard could be 18th-century, with its plan based on a longhouse; and Penyrheol saw its beginnings as a farmhouse in the early 17th century.

A network of small lanes covers the ground between church and stream as far south as the bridge that carries Mill Road over the stream. The road running directly from Ash Cottage to the church appears to be a relatively modern creation and Mardy Lane is more likely to be the original thoroughfare through the village. The network of lanes is thus likely to represent the historic core of Llangynidr. However, a tract of pasture abutting Mardy Lane on its north side contains the earthworks of building platforms and adjacent plots (now scheduled), which were presumed to be of medieval date when first identified. Excavation in 2002-3 revealed traces of what was considered to be post-medieval parsonage, while the earthwork remains at the southern end of the field are thought to mark the home or *maedy* of a reeve (a manorial administrator), on the somewhat tenuous basis of the name of the neighbouring Mardy Lane.



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of HMSO. © Crown copyright and database right 2013. All rights reserved. Welsh Assembly Government. Licence number 100017916.