

Llantysilio

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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 Llanekeimer*, 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 18th 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.



Llantysilio Church, photo 1766-0159, © CPAT 2014

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.

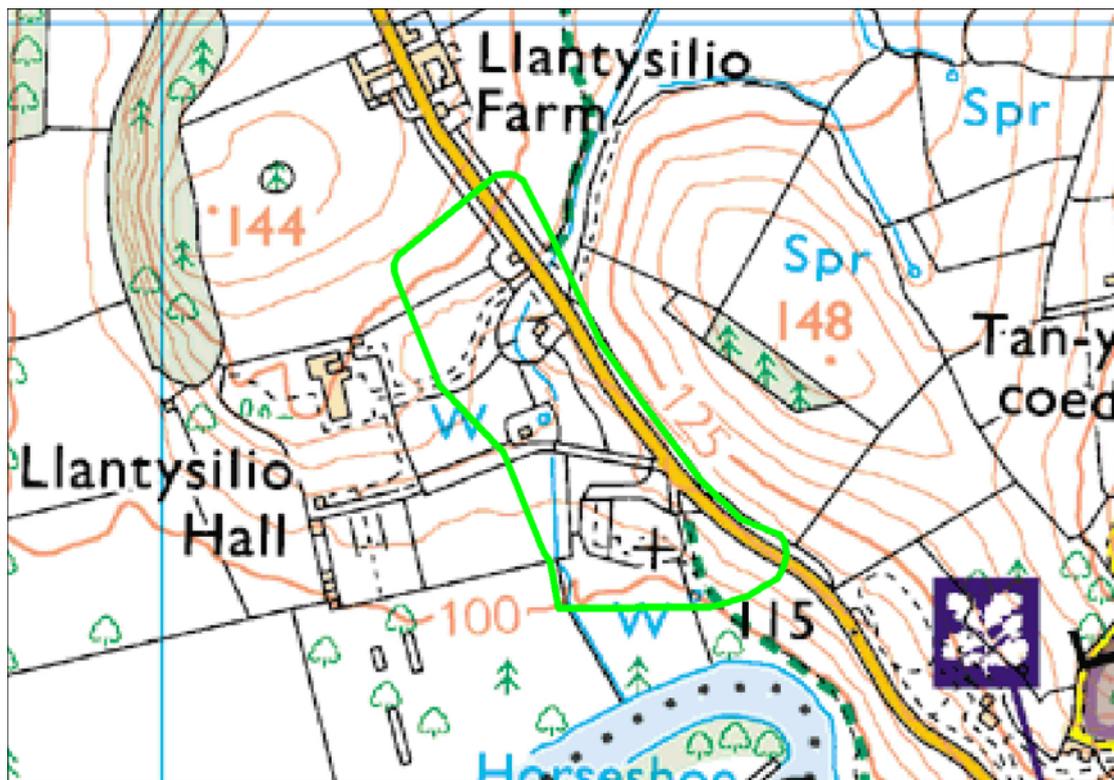
The present Llantysilio Hall (130216) was built in 1872-74, but the walled garden (130219) is earlier by a century and a half, broadly contemporary with the first, brick-built house on the site dated to 1723.

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.



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