

Tregynon

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Introduction

Tregynon is situated in the hills to the west of the Severn valley. It lies beside a through route, the B4389, some 8km south of Llanfair Caereinion. South-east of the village several streams converge on the Bechan Brook in what has the appearance of a bowl in the hills. The church lies on a spur created by the valleys of two of these streams, the southerly being considerably more pronounced than its northern counterpart. The early village appears to have spread eastwards from the church beside the northern stream, but new housing developments have extended the village in all directions except the north, so that the modern village is considerably larger and more spread than its predecessor. The large estate of Gregynog with a history stretching well back into the Middle Ages lies immediately to the south of the village.

This brief report examines Tregynon's emergence and development up to 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it will be necessary to look at other sources of information and particularly at the origins and nature of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered only as an indicative guide to the historic settlement. The continuous line defining the historic core provides a visual interpretation of the area within which the settlement developed, based on our interpretation of the evidence currently to hand. It is not an immutable boundary line, and may need to be modified as new discoveries are made. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers used in the HER to provide information that is specific to individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development

'Cynon's settlement' is first recorded as *Trefkenon* in 1254 and the modern form, Tregynon, is documented in 1583. The 'tref' element, a little unusually, is linked with the name of an obscure saint (rather than a secular leader) to whom the church is dedicated, but as Ceredigion has Capel Cynon, it is probably authentic rather than a back-formation with the dedication being invented from the place-name.

On the basis of the dedication and perhaps the shape of the churchyard, an early medieval origin may be postulated, but there is nothing to substantiate this assertion. The later, medieval history of Tregynon is equally obscure, though it formed part of the Knights Hospitallers' Halston estate and the church had been acquired by this military monastic order.

The village as shown on 19th century maps comprised the church, Church House Farm and a few cottages strung out along the lane to the east of the churchyard. Dwellings did not extend as far as the present crossroads. The layout earlier in the post-medieval era is likely to have been even more confined and today's main through route – a turnpike road of the 18th century – may not have existed, so that the settlement would have been more isolated than it is now.

The heritage to 1750

St Cynon's church (7732) is a single-chamber building with a bell turret at the west end. It was largely rebuilt in 1787 with further work in 1892, but the medieval roof was retained and could date to the 15th century while the bell turret may retain some 17th century timbers. Virtually all of the internal furnishings and fittings are 19th century, though some 18th century funerary monuments remain. Tregynon's raised churchyard (16434) exhibits curvilinear traces only where the road swings around the wall. Elsewhere it is distinctly angular, indicative probably of later modifications.

The Cottage (18139) beside the churchyard is an early 18th century, half-timbered building with a Grade II listing. This is the only building in the village core, with the exception of the church, that is known to be earlier than 1750.

There are traces of earthworks (7735) on the opposite side of the road to the church, but their nature is unclear. Rising ground to the north of the crossroads (OS field 8081) has the name Castle Hill (4749), but there is now no evidence of a fortification there, and evaluation work in 2002 found no traces.

On the southern edge of the modern village, four hundred metres from the church and close to the Bechan Brook, is a fine moated enclosure (765; scheduled as SAM Mont204), with possible platforms or outworks on its north-east side. While a 13th or 14th century date is likely, its precise function is unclear, although it is likely to have surrounded a dwelling of some status.

Immediately adjacent to the moat is Tithebarn Cottage which reputedly had its origins as a tithe barn. However, the basis for this assertion is unclear, and it has not been possible even to establish whether there was formerly a tithe barn on the spot (1175).



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