

Newchurch

SO 21575075
16183

Introduction

Newchurch lies high up the valley of the River Arrow in south-eastern Radnorshire. Newchurch Hill to the west and Disgwylfa Hill on the north-east channel the river eastwards, and the village lies on the west bank just above the flood plain. The church itself surmounts a slight rise above the river. Kington in Herefordshire is 10km to the north-east and the English border is little more than 2km away. The village has developed at a crossroads with the B4594 passing on a broadly north-south axis and a minor road crossing it from east to west.

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

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers 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

Nothing is known of the early history of Newchurch, nor of its subsequent development.

The earliest form of the self-explanatory place-name is as late as 1497 when it was termed *Newchurch in Elwell*, a reference to its location within the cantref of Elvel. Its Welsh equivalent – Llannewydd – first appears as *ll. newydd* about 1566. It has been suggested that the dedication of the church to St Mary may favour a date for its establishment in the 13th or 14th century, a period when Marian dedications were particularly popular (but see the putative date of the font below).

By the mid-19th century the settlement consisted of the church, Great House and a few cottages, its appearance little different from today.

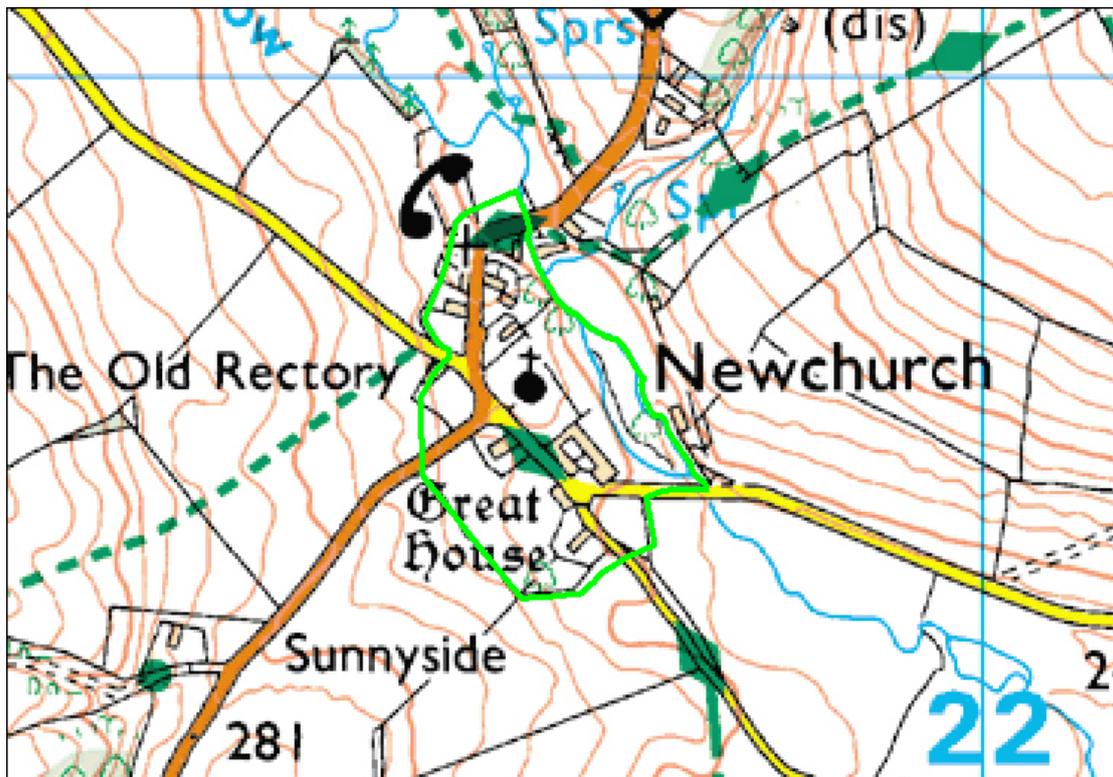
The heritage to 1750

St Mary's church (16059) was completely rebuilt in 1856-7. The only features surviving from the earlier church are the font which could be of 10th/11th century date, a 17th-century communion table and some re-sued 18th-century panelling; it is said too that there two mid-14th-century bells though this has not been verified.

The churchyard (16300) is rectangular, and although it is raised high above the adjacent road there is little to suggest that this is an early medieval (i.e. pre-Conquest) foundation.

Great House (20638; Grade II*) has a cruck hall of c.1450 built down the slope and converted into a storeyed house around 1661, the date on a doorway. It is the largest cruck-framed building surviving in Radnorshire. A further wing on the north was built in stone in 1790. The attached barns are also of stone, while the detached barns on the south-west side of the yard have a Grade II listing.

No settlement earthworks have been recognised in Newchurch but several fields surrounding the village retain ridge and furrow: to the north (16301), to the north-west in OS plot 3700 (16302) and to the south across OS plot 6350 (16303). It has not yet been determined whether these are medieval survivals or are later landscape elements.



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