

Llanwrin

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Introduction

Llanwrin is set beside the B4404 in the extreme west of Montgomeryshire, 5km north-east of Machynlleth. The road follows the northern edge of the Dovey valley floor, the lip of a gravel terrace being visible just to the south of the road in the vicinity of the village. The church is set a few metres higher than the road and the building itself is terraced into the base of the steep valley slope and much of the churchyard is on a pronounced incline.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Llanwrin 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

Llanwrin first appears in the records in very much its modern form – *Llannwrin* – at some unspecified point in the 12th century. Later forms show rather more variation as in 1578 when it was referred to as *Llaworing*. Its meaning as the church of St Gwrin is straightforward, but curiously in the 12th century source cited above, Ust and Dyfnig are recorded as the saints at *Llannwrin y Nghyfeilioc* (the cantref of Cyfeiliog), and it is to them the church is currently dedicated. It has been suggested that Ust and Dyfnig were the first holy men associated with this place and that Gwrin was of a later generation.

Nothing is known of the settlement's history, and it has yet to be established whether in the Middle Ages there were dwellings around the church or if it was simply an isolated church. The B4404 is probably a turnpike road, but it almost certainly replaced an existing track that followed the edge of the valley. It is possible, too, that there was a nearby ford across the Dovey. This is implied by the footpath running from the village south-eastwards to the river and that this linked to hill tracks coming down from the north which converged on the village.

The earliest map of the village is from the 1760s. Though the picture that it presents is only a partial one, the number of buildings around the churchyard has not altered radically in the intervening 250 years, other than perhaps in the addition of a handful of cottages. In simple terms there has not been a fundamental change to the layout of the village since Georgian times.

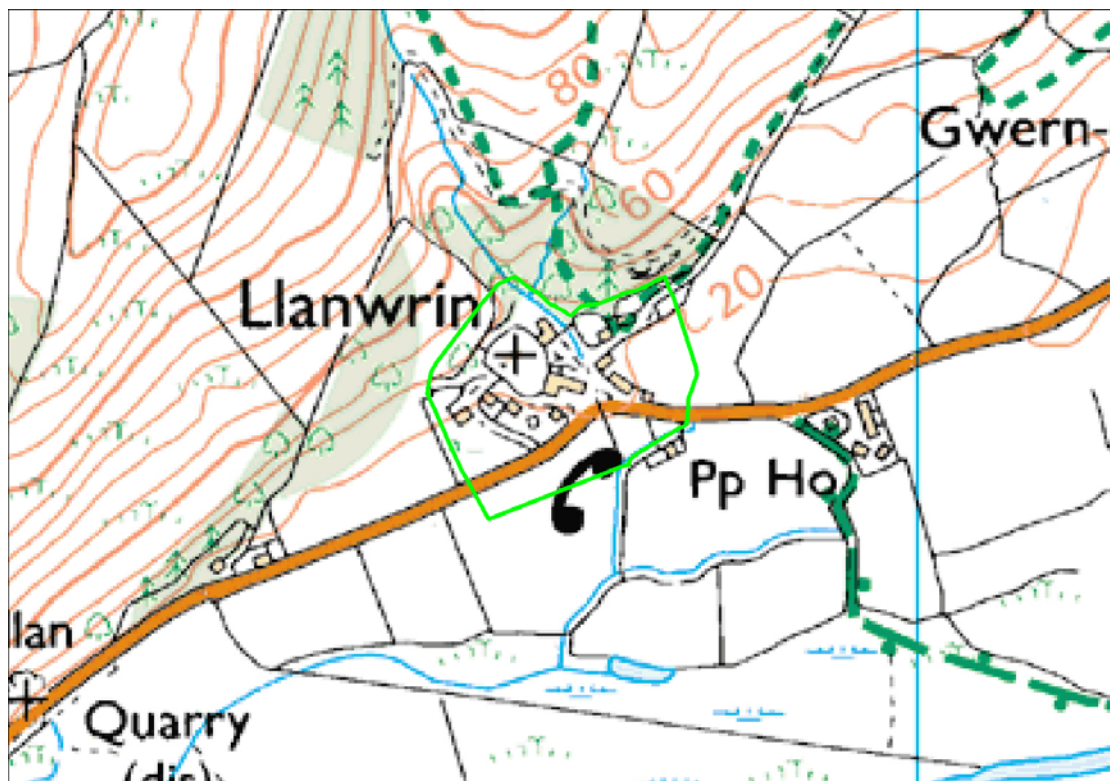
The heritage to 1750

The church of SS Ust and Dyfrig (7658) is a small single-chambered structure of late medieval date which was restored in 1864. It retains some late medieval features including a 15th century screen, a piscina and some stained glass, and the arch-braced roof is also of this period though the timber has been much renewed.

The churchyard in its present irregular form is not wholly convincing as an early medieval foundation, yet it retains a curvilinear appearance on the east and the construction of buildings around its perimeter has probably resulted in the flattening out of some of its sides. An abandoned track around the north-western wall of the churchyard wall implies some modifications to the overall village pattern and possibly even a reduction in the overall size of the churchyard.

The church apart there are no pre-1750 buildings in the settlement. Plaswrin (7660) is a Grade II listed building of late 18th century date, much altered in the earlier 19th century. Ty-uchaf (40310) on the opposite side of the churchyard is 19th century.

Minor earthworks (37009) in the field to the south of Ty-isaf do not appear to be the remnants of former habitations, but would merit further examination.



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