CATHEDINE

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Introduction
Cathedine is located just beyond the south tip of Llangorse Lake, some 10km to the south-east of Brecon. It lies on the eastern slopes of the valley containing the Afon Llynfi, adjacent to the B4560, a modern number attached to a routeway which probably originated in the Middle Ages if not earlier.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Cathedine 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 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
The place-name is obscure. There could be a personal name – Cathed or Cethed – evoked here; but an alternative is that the elements are *cath* (pl. *cathau*) and *din* signifying 'cats' fort'. As *Kethedin* it first appears in the years between 1143 and 1154. Later the church's dedication was included as in *Mygahaleschurch in Kethedyn* (1382) and *Llanuihengle Kethedine* (1536-9), but neither version was widely used.

Nothing is known of the settlement's early history and an early medieval origin for the church cannot be assumed. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that during the Middle Ages a settlement developed here, though this possibility cannot be ruled out. By the beginning of the 19th century, the time when the first maps of the area were being prepared, Cathedine consisted of little more than the church and the farm that lay immediately adjacent, while Cathedine House was sited nearly one kilometre to the north.

The heritage to 1750
St Michael's church was certainly a medieval foundation, perhaps earlier, but some fabric apart there is structurally nothing that survived the rebuilding of the tower and chancel in 1868 and the nave in 1894. Inside is a 13th-century font, and two later 18th-century mural tablets.

The churchyard is rectilinear in shape, with nothing to suggest that it has had a more curvilinear form in the past.

Lower Cathedine farm immediately to the north of the church has a house built in the 17th century to which a new range was added in the 18th century. The other elements in this group around the church, the cottages, appear to be of more recent date.
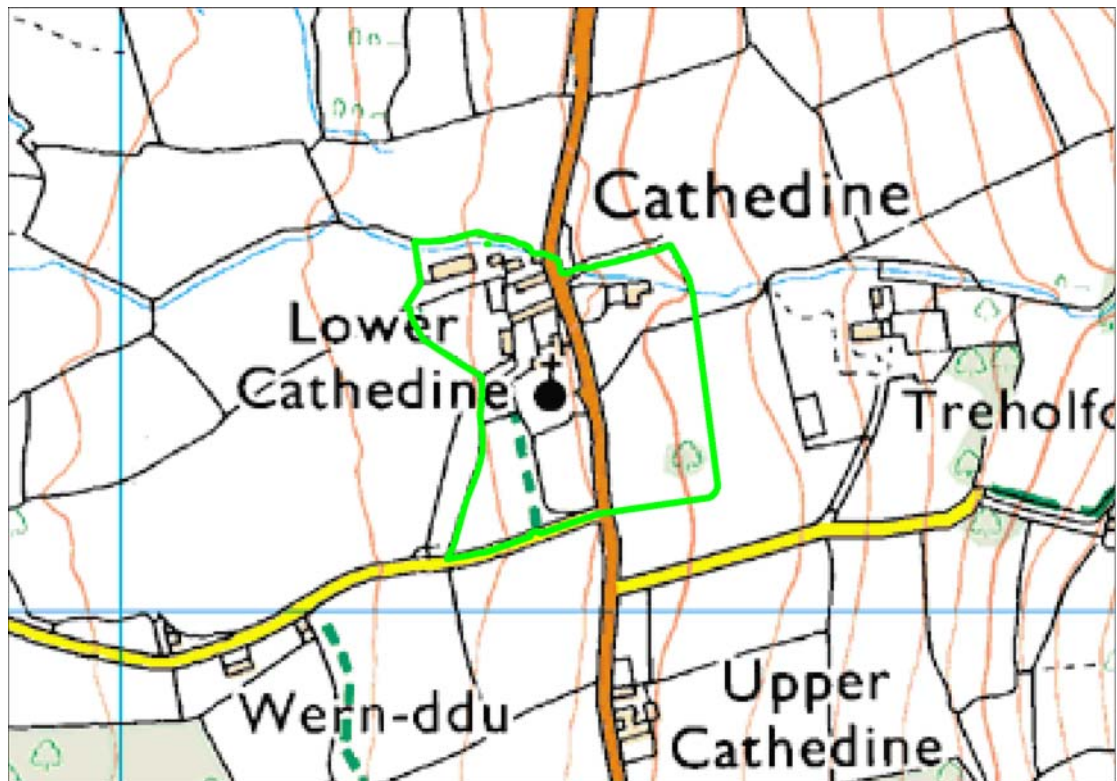
Faint ridge and furrow – sometimes an indicator of medieval cultivation – is visible in some of the fields around the church, but its date is unclear. Indeed, it is possible that it overlies and is thus later than strip fields of medieval date below the farm.

Cathedine, photo 05-c-0074 © CPAT, 2013

Two other contexts for settlement within the parish should be mentioned. The first, Castell Blaenllynfi, lies just over 2km to the south of the church. This was the principal stronghold or caput of a large lordship spreading over eastern Breconshire in the 13th to 15th centuries, though the castle itself had been abandoned, though perhaps only temporarily in 1403. Today a few stone walls and buttresses accompany the impressive earthworks. John Leland, the king's antiquary, travelled through the district in the 1530s and recorded a tradition that beside the castle was a 'borow (borough) town now in decay'. No convincing traces of a settlement can now be recognised in the vicinity of the castle, although earthworks said to represent platforms and a trackway were visible in the 1980s.

Cathedine Common (also known as Werndu Common) is an irregularly shaped patch of low-lying ground in the valley bottom some 400m to the south-west of the church. In common with many such unenclosed areas in Wales it attracted encroachment cottages in the 19th century, and perhaps in earlier centuries.

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