Buttington

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Introduction

Buttington lies beside the main A458(T) road, less than 3km from Welshpool. It now consists of a church, a former vicarage, a public house, a small group of houses, and a business park is now developing beside it.

Little more than 300m from the River Severn, the settlement occupies a spot where the ground sloping down from Long Mountain levels out and projects on to the valley floor, producing a slight elevated location when viewed from the south and west. An ancient ford known as Rhyd-y-groes crossed the Severn just to the west, the same place marking the point where Offa's Dyke met the river.

This brief report examines the emergence and development of Buttington 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

The first reference to Buttington is a particularly early one, coming in 893 when, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a Viking army was besieged in a fortification here. Buttington near Welshpool is commonly considered the correct location, although another candidate has been flagged, namely Buttington on the Severn Estuary. Reportedly, in 1039 a battle between Welsh and English forces took place at the ford.

These aside, place-name specialists cite *Butinton* as the earliest reference from 1166-7, with *Butyngton* appearing in 1312. The name appears to mean 'Böta's settlement' which would normally suggest a Saxon origin. An alternative name *Dal-y-bont* meaning end of the bridge is not evidenced until the second half of the 15th century, but a bridge over the River Severn is recorded here in the 13th century.

The origin of the church is not known. An early medieval foundation is not impossible and the hint of curvilinearity in its form and its position on the edge of the flood plain could be taken as corroborative evidence. Against this is a reference in an *Inquisition Post Mortem* of 1304 that it was built on land given by a member of the de la Pole family in the 13th century.

Buttington's church was regarded as a chapel in the 14th century, and apart from sparse references to this, Buttington does not seem to have excited the interest of the chroniclers during the Middle Ages.

In the light of the information below, there is as yet nothing to suggest a nucleated settlement around the church before the 18th century. It was as late as in 1759 that the chapel was separated from its mother church of Welshpool, and a new ecclesiastical parish was created for it.
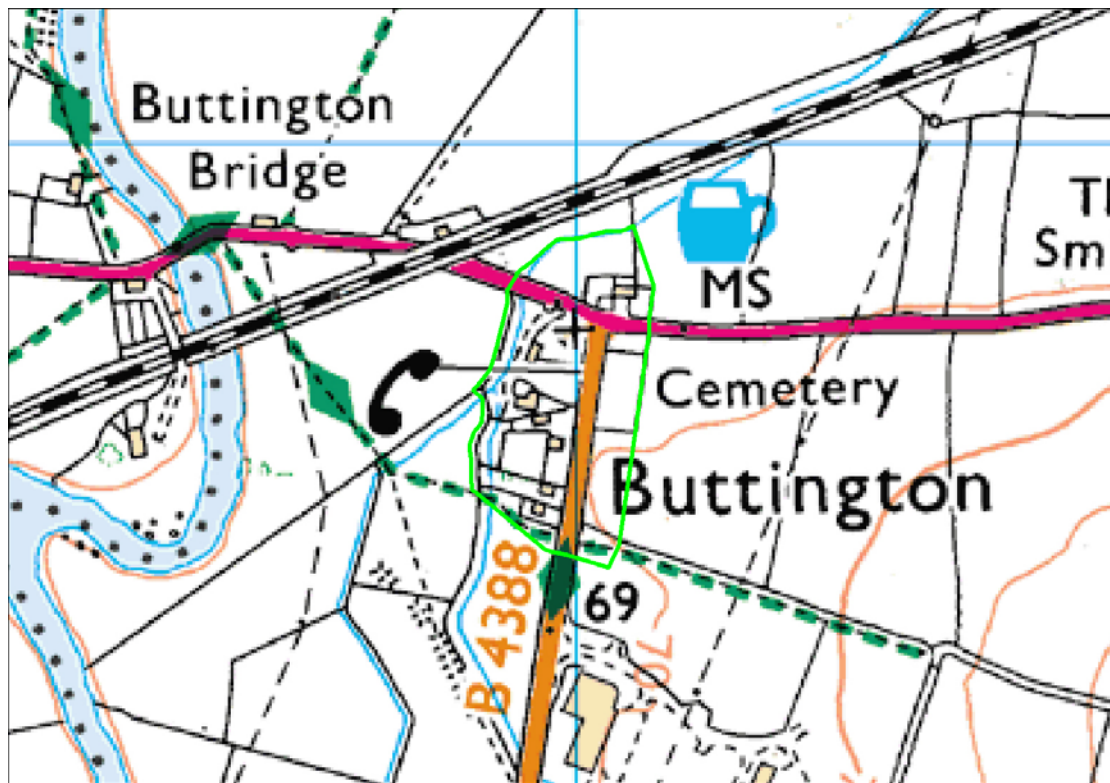
The heritage to 1750

All Saints' Church (30801; Grade I) retains some medieval masonry, perhaps 14th century, and some windows still retain original dressings. The porch is 17th century. Internally there is a 15th century arch-braced roof and some fragments of pre-Reformation stained glass.

The outline of the raised churchyard (7565) has altered since the mid-19th century when it appeared as sub-triangular with curving sides. In 1838, 400 skulls and many long bones were unearthed from three pits in the churchyard (6083). It has always been assumed that these were a legacy of one of the two battles in the vicinity, but recent scientific analysis at the National Museum Wales has revealed that two of the skulls were of much more recent origin.

A rectilinear earthwork (6082) enclosing upwards of 3 hectares, within which most of the present buildings are located, was described in the 19th century, and it has been argued that this was the fortification occupied by the Vikings in 893 though not necessarily constructed by them. No trace of this feature can now be identified and there is no independent evidence to corroborate it: the existence of this earthwork still requires confirmation.

There are two Grade II listed buildings in the settlement, namely The Vicarage (30803) and the Green Dragon (30807) which are of 19th and very early 18th century date respectively, though for the latter the Royal Commission hint at an even earlier date, in the 17th century. The inn, it might be assumed, emerged because of the proximity of the river crossing.