Mochdre

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Introduction

Mochdre, although only 5km south-west of Newtown, lies in a remote valley approached by minor lanes. The church and vicarage occupy a shelf on a moderately steep east-facing hillside above Mochdre Brook. Further buildings lie on the valley floor.

This brief report examines Mochdre'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

The name is normally translated as 'pig farm', combining the elements *moch* and *tref*. *Mochdref* appears as the earliest form of the name in 1200 with *Moghtre* in 1497.

In the 12th century, the area lay within the Lordship of Kerry, and for a time may have been in Kerry parish. There is no evidence to take Mochdre back before this time. Neither the dedication nor the morphology of the churchyard point to an early medieval foundation, and it is to the 12th century that the first church on the spot has been attributed.

Its subsequent development in the Middle Ages and into more recent times is unchronicled.

The heritage to 1750

All Saints' Church (7549) was largely rebuilt in 1867 on the foundations of its presumed medieval predecessor. All that was retained from the earlier building was the early 16th century roof, which has seen some modification, and an inscribed bell of *c*.1660. Two 14th century wooden rood figures found during the 19th century restoration are now in the National Museum Wales.
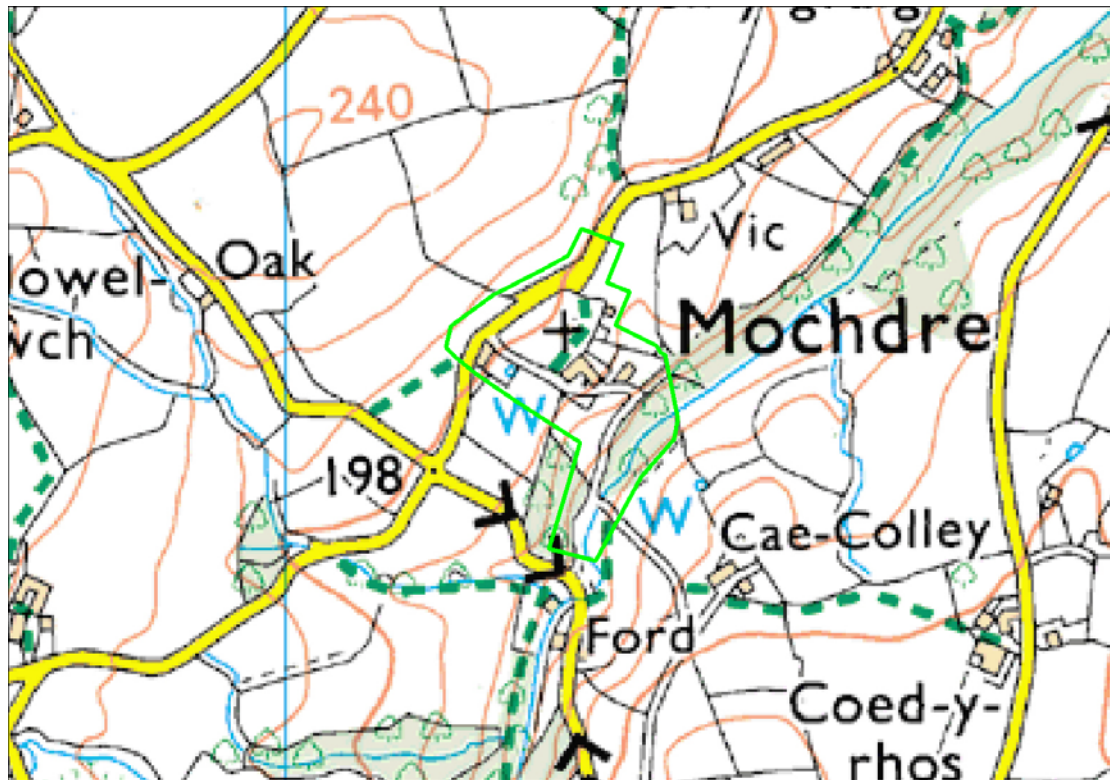
The rectilinear outline of the churchyard (7726) has witnessed minor modifications on the north side, but there is little to indicate that formerly it had any element of curvilinearity.

Houses beside the Mochdre Brook are the survivors of a slightly larger group including a mill (7550) and a Methodist chapel which were distinguishable in the mid and later 19th century. An estate map of 1805 also depicts up to four dwellings (7727) beside the track leading down to the stream, and these should probably be equated with the houses named on modern maps

as Church House and Tynwtra, just below the churchyard. None of these point satisfactorily to a nucleated settlement at Mochdre in the Middle Ages or Tudor era.

A network of narrow trackways running both along and across the contours reveal a pattern of communications that undoubtedly stretches back into the medieval era and perhaps earlier (e.g. 8617).

Some traces of ridge and furrow cultivation (4850) have been recorded in the vicinity of Cae-Colley, the farm on the opposite side of the valley.