

YR ARAN

A number of important drover's passes in to be found; not only for getting animals from one valley into another; or, to the local livestock markets, but also to herd them to the East into England. The trackways over passes such as Bwlch y Pawl were shown on the John Evans map of North Wales 1795, which was an important drover's road at one time as was Bwlch y Groes.

Bwlch Cam SH 975274

The name for this pass could either refer to *cam* 'wrong, false' or *cam* 'bent' as there are two ways out of the top of the valley. However, on some maps the name is over the upper course of the Afon Cedig, which is bent, curving round to the East; is this the *cam* 'bent'. However, on the early 6" maps the name for the pass was Bwlch Garn, with the *carn* 'cairn' element perhaps suggesting a mis transcription.

Bwlch Coediog Uchaf SH 88155

The pass is not named on the map, it is the name of a farm; at one time the area was *coediog* 'wooded', the *uchaf* 'upper' is in reference to the lower farm of Bwlchcoediogisaf.

Bwlch Sirddyn SH 885230

Bwlch Maes-yr-hirddyn sydd ar y map OS 6" 1840-80 series. *Maes* 'open land' + *yr* 'the' + *hyrddyn* 'small ram – also figuratively for a man' perhaps, rather than *hir* 'long' + *ddyn* 'man'.

Bwlch Sycan SH 877175

Some may think that the word *sycan* 'flummery', is the name on the map. However, on the 1838 OS maps the name is given as Bwlch y Sugyn; a corruption of the word *sygnyn* 'marsh, mire', from *sugn* 'suction, suck' + *-yn* a diminutive ending.

Bwlch y Cribwr SH 923303

Cribwr 'comber or carder of wool' and their dwelling may have been nearby; the name may have a figurative use in describing a scouring or raking. However, one should also remember that one useful plant was Llysiâu Cribau, Llysiâu'r Cribwr: Wild Teasel: *Dipsacus fullonum*. This was not only used for fulling, the dried heads of the plant were also used to lift up the nap on woolen cloth.

Bwlch y Dŵr SH 991298

Dŵr 'water' may seem quite an odd term to use for the name of a col or pass without a lake or pool; however, this is an extremely damp area of peat bog.

Bwlch y Fedwen SH 931139

The term *bedwen* 'birch' – here lenited to *fedwen* is to be seen in many landscape names because of its prevalence as a pioneer species. *Bedwen* is linked to Cornish *besow*, Middle Cornish *bedou* 'birch trees', Irish *brethe*, Celtic **betu*. The birch was regarded as one of the most sacred trees, symbolizing new beginnings. It was also a symbol of good luck, birch branches would be placed around doors at Midsummer by householders to protect themselves against misfortune.

Bwlch y Fenni SH 973333

Named after the small river Nant y Feni. Bwlch-y-feni 1838 OS.

Bwlch y Fign SH 882186

Very simply *mign* 'marsh, bog, swamp'; from the Celtic **mūkinā*, itself from the Indo-European **meug-*, **meuk-* 'slimy, slippery'. As clear as muck?

Bwlch y Fwlet SH 906301

Although the present name of this pass translates as Pass of the Bullet, the name may derive from

bwlaets, a Welsh word for the blackthorn; borrowed from the English *bullace* 'sloe tree'. However, it may have been *bowlyd*, a vocalised form of *bawlyd* 'dirty, foul'; which at one time could also mean 'poor, shabby' Bwlchyfwlet 1835 Jones-Williams manuscript, Bwlch-y-fwled 1838 OS, Bwlchyfowlet 1874.

Bwlch y Gesail SH 835188

There is no actual col or pass here as such, though there is one a little lower down the hillside than where the name is on the maps linking Glasgwm to Y Gribin; otherwise it could denote the way through or round the top of Craig Cywarch. The element *cesail* 'nook, recess' could refer to a great many features in the landscape here.

Bwlch y Groes SH 913233

It is probable that the boundary crossing this pass has been marked with a *croes* 'cross' rather than a pole. There was usually a mark on the pole to denote the landowner.

Bwlch y Groes Fagl SH 921264

Croes 'cross' + *bagl* 'crook, crozier'. The shape of a bishop's crozier could also be used as a mark on the rock, cross or pole in place to show the boundary of ecclesiastical land.

Bwlch y Pawl SH 921264

The word *pawl* 'post' is used here as a post was sometime used as a boundary marker rather than a cross; the word is borrowed from the English *pole* 'post'. Seen as 'i ben bwlch y Pawl' c.1700 Parochialia, Bwlch y Pawl 1795 Evans Map of North Wales.

Bwlch yr Anges SH 853172

The changes in the names is rather confusing. Today, on the OS maps, one sees the farm name Nant yr Henfaes below the pass in Cwm Cywarch (SH 858173). On the OS 6" 1840-80 one finds Nant-yr-henfaes for the farm name and Bwlch yr Henfaes for the pass. However, the map of the 1888-1915 6" series shows the name of the col as Bwlch yr Anges and the farm as Nant-yr-Anges. The name of the farm was recorded as Nant yr Hanges 1780 Merioneth County Records Office.

Otherwise, on the 1836 OS one finds the name as Nant-yr Angau, which would link the name to a rather grisly *angau* 'death, demise'. However, there is the old word *hang*, *ang* 'narrow, thin' might be the important element in the pass/stream name; rather than [again rather confusingly], an alternative meaning *ang* 'broad, wide'.