

YR ARENIG

The two main peaks, Arenig Fawr and Arenig Fach rise up from the moorlands and give their names to this large area of hills, some of which are quite remote. The large moorland areas make walking quite difficult with areas of tussocky grass interspersed with marsh, heather and rock. Some of the hills are outliers of the main area; also, the eastern part of the Migneint is also included here.

Arenig Fawr 854m SH 826369

Aren(n) + *-ig* and *Eren(n)* + *-ig* are diminutive forms of *aran* 'high, height', this is signified by the *-ig* ending. Perhaps, the Mountain was being compared to the larger mountain mass of Aran Fawddwy and Aran Benllyn to the South. The summit also has the rather incongruous name Moel yr Eglwys on the maps. This name seems to be used to note the large but badly disturbed burial cairn, the cairn has a 12m diameter low kerb, now seemingly larger with the disturbance material. Noted as erynnic 1400 Gwaith Lewis Glyn Cothi, Rarau uauere hill 1579 Saxton, Rarauaur Hill 1610 Speed, yr Ennig c.1700 Parochialia, Arrenig 1795 John Evans - Map of North Wales, Arrenig Fawr 1783 Thomas Pennant, Arrenig 1834 Greenwood Map.

Moel Llyfnant 750m SH 805351

This *moel* 'hill' is either named after the valley below or the stream flowing through it. If it is *llyfn* 'smooth' + *nant* 'vale, valley', the name probably describes the smoothing of the landscape through glaciation. Otherwise, the *llyfn* term, derived from the Brittonic **limnā* 'smooth', could refer to a *nant* 'small river, stream' with smooth sections of flow in the flatter areas. Moel llefnant 1607 Wynnstay Manuscripts, Moel y Llevnant c.1700 Parochialia, Moel-llyfn-nant 1838 OS.

Rhobell Fawr 734m SH 786257

Rhobell is a corruption Yr Obell, this is seen in the earliest forms recorded; *obell* 'saddle' is therefore a descriptor for a col or feature similar to the term *cyfrwy* 'saddle'. Irobell was an undated form of yr obell in the archives. There are a number of long platforms for hovels and shelters in the area which show that at one time the area was used a great deal by shepherds for Summer pasture. Apart from the curious Eglwys Rhobell name (SH 786261) there was also a Tap y Bela to be found on the flanks of this hill at one time; *tap* 'cliff, rock; shelf, ledge' + *y* the + *bela* 'wolf'.

Yr obell 1200 Record of Caernarfon, Irobell 1209 Cymer Abbey Charter, Mynydd yr obell c.1592 Public Record Office, Rhobell Fawr 1838 OS,

Daear Mawr 697m SH 837382

On the first OS maps the name recorded for the summit was Pen Tyrau; while Daear Mawr was placed exactly along the line of the northern precipices. The term, which should actually be *tyrrau*, is the plural of *twr* 'heap' with *pen* 'head' giving a sense of a large and high mass. On the 1887 6" OS maps, the name Gelli Deg appeared; *celli* 'grove, woodland' + *teg* 'fair', but this disappeared off the maps by 1899 to be replaced by Pen Tyrau.

The term *daear* 'earth, ground' is straightforward but could include the general sense of 'land'; Middle Welsh *dayar* 'earth; land'. The word *mawr* has more meanings to it than just a *mawr* 'big, large'; further sense is that of 'remarkable, striking', another is 'awful, terrible'. Also, *mawr* 'much, open' could also be applied. One should note that the lower northern section of this mountain is made up of an impressive band of rather foreboding precipices, as well as blocks, rocks and moraine. Shepherds could certainly use the description 'daear mawr' for such bad or difficult terrain.

There are other names on this hillside Simdde Ddu and Bryn y Dyfrgi are nearby and may refer to parts of the mountain. *Simdde* 'chimney' + *du* 'black' refers to a dark vertical cleft in the cliff while a *dyfrgi* 'otter' refers to animals that lived in the valley, and were once very common throughout Wales. Daear-fawr 1838 OS.

Craig y Bychau 695m SH 826354

The plural of the word *bwch* 'buck' is *bychau*, this may be male deer or even goats. Craig y Bychau 1887 OS.

Arenig Fach 689m SH 820416

The summit is also known as Carnedd y Bachgen; the *bachgen* 'boy, young man' may have been interred in one of two large Bronze Age funerary cairns to be found here. One is much more disturbed than the other. As previously mentioned, *aren(n)* + *-ig* or *Eren(n)* + *-ig* are diminutive forms of *aran* 'high, height', and signified by the *-ig* ending.

The term Parochialia in the list of recorded names below, refers to a compilation of information that was amassed by Edward Lhuyd. A questionnaire was sent off to each parish in Wales regarding various points of interest in that parish and information was to be sent back and compiled. Some parishes did not reply, some replies were lost and not all sections were fully transcribed. However, it provides a great deal of interesting information and relatively early name forms.

Arennig Fach 1580 Saxton Map of Wales, Arennig Vechain c.1700 Parochialia, Arenig Vach 1796 Cambrian Register, Arenig Bach 1838 OS.

Y Castell 2244ft 684m SH 838375

Castell is a term borrowed through the Brittonic **castellon* 'castle' from the Latin *castellum*; or, from Middle English *castel* 'castle'. The location must have resembled the positioning or fortifications of a castle to some; it may or may not have been an actual defensive site; note that the use of the term castell was of relatively later usage compared to *din* or *caer*.

Carreg y Diocyn 673m SH 831364

This is probably not a corruption of the word *diogyn* 'a lazy person'; rather, *di-* 'negative' + *ocyn* 'harrow' to describe an area too poor to cultivate.

Carnedd y Filiast 669m SH 871446

The *carnedd* 'cairn' + *y* 'the' + *miliast* 'female greyhound' is a much disturbed site; this is probably a Bronze Age cairn and it was a very large one at one time. To some, it was associated with the semi-legendary Elen/Helen, the cairn being the burial place of her favourite dog. Others have connected the name to Ceridwen of Welsh mythology, the goddess of Nature, one of whose symbols was the miliast. As to the name of this mountain one should note that the curve in the outline of the hill may have reminded people of the curved backs of these hunting dogs. Karnedd y Filiast c.1700 Parochialia.

Y Dduallt 657m SH 811274

The words *du* 'black, dark' + *allt* 'bluff, slope' attempts to describe this dark sharp scarp in the landscape. The precipitous East face of this north-south ridge nearly always casts a dark shadow in the afternoon. Ydhuallt 1209 Cymer Abbey Charter.

Gwaun Carnedd y Filiast 650m SH 875473

This top is on an offshoot ridge or spur of Carnedd y Filiast. *Gwaun* 'high and wet level ground, open moorland', is an apt name for this area of upland. Waen garnedd-y-filiast 1838 OS.

Carnedd Llechwedd Llyfn 643m SH 857445

This is the name for this top seen on the older OS maps; the other name associated with the area, a bit further South at one time, is Gylchedd. The name for the summit Carnedd Llechwedd Llyfn describes a *carnedd* 'cairn' + *llechwedd* 'slope' + *llyfn* 'smooth, level'; the effect of glaciation on the

mountain's north western slopes perhaps. There are two cairns at its top, one is certainly prehistoric; the cairn(s) would have been much larger at one time, before later disruption and stone removal. The word *cylchedd* 'sphere, roundness' could refer to the generally rounded landscape in the area. However, because of the old name Ekelchet (Y Gylchedd) 1291 Taxatio Ecclesiastica, the word *cylchedd* is probably associated, it has two meanings: either: i) 'a going around, encompassing' or ii) 'that which encloses, bound'. One can see, a little to the North, the deep and enclosed Cwm y Gylchedd which may be the reasoning behind the name.

Y Foel Cynfal 630m SH 750396

The mountain name is taken from the river Cynfal, the river and its valley is characterised by impressive steep sided gorges and a fierce flowing river and numerous waterfalls. Cynfal or Cynfael, a fairly common male personal name is made up of *mael* 'leader'. This is preceded by the element *cyn-* [the original form of the element *ci*] 'dog, hound', which is used to denote fierceness and strength. One should also note this element in words such as *cynfil* 'monster'. Was there an early sense of a beast or monster prior linked to the river or mountain name before a personal name interpretation developed.

Brottos 626m SH 873438

The *brat*, seen in the earliest recorded name, is a form of the word *brad* 'false, treacherous'; at this location the *brad* was a *ffos* 'ditch, pit'. The pit was covered with vegetation in order to camouflage it and to trap animals driven over the pit. The English equivalent of this term would be a pit fall. However, it may be that the original Brottos/Bratfos was a stream name, as a land boundary probably that reads as 'to the brook called Bratfos,' in the 1291 Taxatio Ecclesiastica. Bratfos 1232/3 Calander of Charter rolls, Bradfos 1419/20 Record of Caernarfon, Brottos 1838 OS.

Y Foel Boeth 616m SH 779342

During a period of drought, the thin mountain soils cannot retain water and the grasses would dry out and scorch; ground such as this would be termed *poeth* 'hot'. Gallt y Darren is the other name for the hill, therefore if the rocks are close to the surface, as the word *tarren* 'rocky hill, cliff' implies, this is an apt name.

Y Foel Goch 611m SH 954424

This translates quite simply as red hill, the redness (or usually a brownish colour) would have been determined by a number of factors. However, as seen in this area, the 'improvement' of upland pasture has changed the landscape to a rather monotonous green.

Y Foel Boeth 596m SH 865431

The term *poeth* could be used where *poethwel* 'gorse, heather, turf' was collected for kindling and fuel. Otherwise, it could denote a rocky hill top such as this where the soil is so thin it dries out quickly and any vegetation seems to be burnt.

Y Gamallt 580m SH 752447

The name is made up of *cam* 'crooked, bent, bowed' + *allt* 'bluff, cliff, slope'; there is a distinct curve in the western cliff/scarp flanking the ridge on this hill. Y Gammallt 1576, Gamallt c.1592, Y Gamallt 1838 OS.

Moel y Feidiog 577m SH 782324

This name, as well as the lower hill-name Pen y Feidiog 529m (SH 783332) is a mis-corrected form of the early name Efeidiog. It was assumed that the letter 'e' in efeidiog was a mis-spelt definite article y and the name should be y Feidiog. However, it is far more likely that efeifiog is a shortened form of the term (*d*)*efeidiog* 'sheep-walk, mountain pasture'. Also on the early maps one finds Efeidiog Isaf as a farm name; though on later maps Defeidiog Ganol a Defeidiog Uchaf are the only

names seen. Verydyawc 1200 Records of Caernarfon, Ewydioge c.1592 PRO, Pen Efeidiog 1838 OS.

Y Garnedd Fawr 569m SH 937424

The *carnedd* 'cairn' at the top has been rather badly disturbed and would have been much bigger than it is now.

Trum Nant Fach 560m SH 889458

The term *trum* 'ridge' is not often found in the area; the word is linked to the Cornish *trium* 'ridge', Old Irish *druimm* 'back, slope, hill'. This ridge is by the *nant* 'stream' + *fach* 'small'.

Moel yr Wden 560m SH 781356

Gwden, gwyden 'withy, snare, noose; bindweed' is a name that is usually associated with lowland woodlands; or, perhaps the winding of small streams in wet meadows. The name found nearest the actual top on the OS map is Bwlch y Bi, this name probably referring to *bu* 'cattle' instead of a lenited *pi* 'magpie'. An old drover's path is shown in the upper reaches of the Afon Lliw; seemingly coming to an abrupt stop at Bwlch y Bi. At one time the track would have come up the steeper slopes from the West to this point, one can still see the trace of these tracks in the landscape, zig-zagging up the hillside. Moel-yr-wden 1838 OS.

Y Graig Wen 556m SH 739395

Y 'the' + *craig* 'rock' + (*g*)*wen* 'white'; however, this is not a reference to quartz. The usual meaning in such names is either a rock or crag with a bright sunny aspect or, the rock itself is having a greyish hue or perhaps mottled white with pale coloured lichen.

Yr Orddu 555m SH 964424

It is probable that this name is not linked to *arddu* 'height, hill'; the few hills named with the rather rare term *ardd* 'high, height' are quite high or quite striking in their form, this is not. The name may well derive from (*g*)*orddu* 'very black, very dark'. When viewed from the north this little hilltop would be just above a deep vale with a steep shaded back-wall, this could give the reference to darkness. There is a Banc Mynydd Gorddu in northern Ceredigion (SN 668866) and an Esgair Gorddu near Llanbrymair (SH 928056).

The name seen in the first OS maps in 1838, Yr Orddu is recorded correctly; later forms were not. Yr Orddu 1838 OS, Orddu 1840-80 6" series.

Moel y Slates 552m SH 785364

The name is derived from the English word slates. There were some early quarries hereabouts, at one time they would look for areas where layered or slabby rocks were close to the surface and had split naturally. Moel-y-slates 1838 OS.

Moel Ymenyn 550m SH 839346

The word *ymenyn* 'butter' seems to be an odd descriptor and some may proffer that there is a sense of 'abundance, fertility' in using this word. Unfortunately this is rather a steep and rocky hill with poor ground and rough pasture, this link does not fit here. There could be a reference in the name to an area of upland where cattle were milked outside in the Summer, at a hafod, during the era of transhumance. Moel-y-menyn 1838 OS.

However, in the early Mediaeval period a mound of butter was taken as a payment by the local lord; the shape of it was important; the butter mound was not allowed to be too conical. It had to be what was termed *heb ei foel* 'without its moel'; in other words, a high sided mound of butter - a pointed cone would have deprived the lord his full payment. This little hill has a *moel* 'pointed cone' shape

when seen from the East. The name may be comparable to the conical hill of Sliabh an Ime 'mountain (of)the butter', Mourne & Wicklow.

There are many versions seen in differing Welsh Laws regarding *moel* 'cone': '... *llestr emenyn try dyrned yn y hyt hep y uoel.*' Black Book of Chirk; also - '*... vas butrium trium palmarum sit in longo et in lato sine moyl [summitate]. ...*' Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales.

Moel or y Foel doth also signify a heap of corn, butter and of other things of the like sort, when raised up like a pyramid above the brim of the vessel in which it is contained' Antiquae linguae Britannicae (1753).

Moel Emoel 549m SH 938403

The descriptor in the name is not a corruption of *ymael* 'grasp, take, hold'; or, one of the *mael* 'profit' or 'prince' meanings as has been proposed in the past. It may be that the correct naming should either be *moel* 'peak, point' + *y* 'the' + *moel* 'hill', giving a strengthened sense of a very peaked or pointed top to a hill. The other interpretation is that this *moel* is among a group of other hills with similar *moel* forms, with *ym* 'inside, within'. From the South one can see that this *moel* really is among hills of very similar character. The name of this hill was recorded as Moyle ym Moyle c.1592 Public Record Office; however, by c.1700 Edward Lhuyd, in his Parochialia, had noted the name as Voyl Ymmoel; Moel Emoel 1838 OS.

Banc y Merddwr 548m SH 835355

Banc is a borrowing from the Middle English *bank(e)* 'river bank'; in the landscape it can also mean hill, knoll as well as rising ground. The term *merddwr* 'standing water, stagnant pool' would be a good name for an area of wetland such as the large area of upland mire to the North of this hill, it is also the name of the stream flowing through it.

Moel Cae'r Defaid 540m SH 801247

This *moel* 'pointed hill' has an angular ridge when viewed from the farm after which it has been named; this can sometimes lead to slightly incongruous names for the mountains. With *cae* 'field' + *yr* 'the' + *defaid* 'sheep'].

Mynydd Bryn Llech 540m SH 806314

Probably named because of the outcrop of rocks crossed by an ancient, probably pre-mediaeval, trackway that passes along the base of this hill. These rocks could have been used for a form of paving on some sections of this trackway, *llech* 'flooring stone, flag'; or, *llech* 'crag, slab'.

Mynydd Nodol 539m SH 865394

This is the mountain that has been termed *nodol* 'notable, obvious'. It is an apt name for the hill despite the fact that it is fairly low, it stands out quite prominently on its own. Mynydd Nodol c.1700 Lhuyd, Mynydd Nodol 1838 OS.

Y Garn Prys 534m SH 887484

In the landscape, the term *carn* 'a heap of stones' generally indicates a man made feature such as a cairn. This may be a prehistoric site of burial or a remembrance feature; at a later stage, cairns were erected as boundary markers. There are a number of cairns in this area both ancient and modern as well as a line of boundary markers lower down the slopes. This cairn has also been classified as a boundary marker by archaeologists.

Although there was a 'settlement' with the name Prys just to the North, it is very unlikely that there is any link to Prys as in a Welsh personal name. Further, the meaning of the word *brys* 'haste, hurrying' is not really much of an option either. The term involved is probably derived from *prys*,

prysg 'wood, grove', and is linked to Cornish *prysk*, Middle Welsh *prisc*, from the Brittonic **prestjo-*. The lenited form of *prys* would be *brys*, and the 1838 OS map had the name *Garn Brys* for the hilltop. The 1840-80 6" map had *Garn Brys* for the hill, with other features and habitations being *Bryn Brÿs*, *Garn-Brÿs* and a *Hendre Brÿs*. By the 1888-1915 6" map things had changed to *Garn Prys* as the hill name, while the nearby locations had changed to *Bryn Prÿs*, *Garn Prÿs* and *Hendre Prÿs*. *Karn Brys* c.1700 Parochialia, *Garn Brys* 1838 OS.

Carnedd Iago 532m SH 783406

Carnedd 'cairn, pile' + the personal name, *Iago* 'James', a name that was in quite common useage at one time. The initial element is similar to Cornish *carneth* 'heap of rocks'. There are a number of locations in the area with the name *Iago*. A much disturbed cairn, now just a grassy mound, is to be found just to the south of the hilltop; its position here actually made it more visible to those in the valley below. This is a common positioning for prehistoric sites; as being on a skyline was much more visible than on a flat-ish top. *Carnedd Iago* 1586 Wigfair Manuscripts, *Carneth Iago* 1606 Ruthin Records, *Karnedh Iaco* c.1700 Parochialia.

Y Ddau Faen Llwyd 530m SH 805311

On the 1887 6" OS map the *dau* 'two' + *maen* 'stone' + *llwyd* 'grey' stones are marked: one as stone, the other as boulder.

Y Foel Fawr 528m SH 726395

Y 'the' + *foel* 'hill, top' + *mawr* 'large' is quite simply translated.

Pen y Bedw 527m SH 778469

The word *bedw* 'birch' can be used for a grove of the trees and also the kind of ground where they can be found. The Silver Birch is a tree well adapted to growing in wet marshy areas, it is a pioneer species of tree but not that long lived.

Cyffiau 523m SH 889437

This hill also has the name *Craig yr Hyrddod* on its flanks; the *craig* 'cliff' + *hyrddod* a plural of *hwrdd* 'ram'. The term *cyffiau* 'shared field' shows that the pasturage in this area was probably common land. The word *cyffiau* is a term usually found in Northeastern Wales.

Pen y Cerrig Serth SH 522m 971429

This *pen* 'top' is above the *cerrig* 'rocks' + *serth* 'precipitous, steep' could describe an area of scree slopes as well as steep rough ground.

Moel y Gydros 521m SH 915454

The main descriptor here is probably a reference to the area being shared land; *cyd* 'common' + *rhos* 'moor'. However, a glance at the map will show that there are two other names on this hill; *Llechwedd-fign* and *Moel Cwm-main*. Both the names relate to nearby farms, the usual term for a farm's mountain pasture or sheep walk, namely *mynydd*, has been replaced by *moel*. *Gydrhos* is the name of the farm on the 1838 OS; however, the hill name is given as *Moel-cwm-main*.

Allt Gwyddgwion 520m SH 652013

Allt 'hill, hillside, bluff', which later came to mean 'sheepwalk' of the farm named *Gwyddgwion*.

Bryn Pig 520m SH 767307

The shape of this hill is barely sharp or pointed enough to be termed *pig* 'peak, point, spur'; furthermore, there is no cairn or rock to be seen at the top that would give an alternative reason for using the term *pig*. However, to the west, just where the name is on the modern maps one sees a spur jutting out. The other name near here is *Ffridd Wen*, *ffridd* 'intake' is from Middle English

frithe 'heath or moor'.

Moel Ystrodur Fawr 518m SH 815340

There is also a Moel Ystrodur Fach nearby (at SH 813340); making up the fawr 'greater' and fach 'lesser' of the two. The fairly obscure word *ystrodur* 'saddle' refers to the two hills forming a saddle shape.

Craig Dolfudr 518m SH 828311

Named after the farm in the valley below; the farm name is seen on the old OS maps [*dol* 'meadow' + *budr* 'dirty'; probably land that flooded and muddied with sediment could be named].

Cerrig yr Ieirch 513m SH 759424

Cerrig 'stones, rocks' + *y* 'the' + *ieirch* 'roe-deer, roe-bucks', this is just one of the plural forms of the word *iwrch*; Middle Welsh *yurc* 'hart'. Cerrig yr Iwrch 1842 OS.

Moel Llechwedd Gwyn 512m SH 761421

This *moel* 'bare, top, hill' is noted for its *lechwedd* 'slope' + *gwyn* 'white, bright, pale'. Here the *gwyn* could be a reference to brightness of a sunny aspect or a tendency to frost or snow. Not too far away is a rocky scree slope of grey rock which is named Maes Gwyn 'white field' because it is in a sunny spot.

Rhobell Ganol 512m SH 785285

The *canol* 'middle' of three tops with the name Yr Obell 'the saddle' [that gives Rhobell]; the col formed between the two hills is the saddle.

Bryn Mawr 511m SH 801443

The name is a straightforward descriptor, *bryn* 'hill' + *mawr* 'big'. There are a number of rectangular house/shelter platforms in the area showing that shepherds were here during Summer grazing at one time.

Moel Cors y Garnedd 510m SH 777237

Here the word *moel* probably infers 'sheepwalk, upland pasture' as Cors y Garnedd is the name of a farm below [*cors* 'marsh' + *y* 'the' + *garnedd* 'cairn' may well refer to a tumulus to be found near the farm]. There is no cairn at the top of this hill, but there are many sheepfolds, harking back to the time when sheep were introduced to the mountains and shepherds had to herd them back to their folds overnight.

Moel Darren 509m SH 953414

This *moel* 'hill' has term *tarren* 'hillock, steep hill, scarp, rocky hill, rock' being used; the term *darren*, *tarren* is not generally to be found further North than this.

Rhobell y Big 504m SH 783283

Once again the *Yr Obell* 'the saddle' has become Rhobell; this one is defined by the addition of *pig* 'beak, peak'. There are three grass covered cairns on the western slopes of this hill; the term *pig* may reference one of these, to a rocky tor; or, the fact the upper section of this hill forms a rocky cone.

Moel Oernant 503m SH 743340

The *moel* 'hill' overlooks a *oer* 'cold' + *nant* 'stream, vale', a very common name in the landscape of Wales. Recorded as Moyle Oyrnant, moyle yr oernant c.1592 Public Record Office.

Carreg Lusog 500m SH 818264

The *carreg* 'stone' or rocky area where on finds: either *llys* 'slimy, mucous, muddy' + *-og* 'likeness

to, association with'; or, (*l*)*lus* 'bilberry' + *-og*. Carreg Llysog 1838 OS.

Cerrig Chwibanog 500m SH 830302

This is probably a noisy location, with the wind whistling through the rocks, as here we have the term *chwiban* 'whistle, hissing' + *-og* 'likeness to, association with'. Because of its openness it was also a good place to site a triangulation pillar.

Copa Ceiliog 496m SH 881482

Copa 'crest, peak' is borrowed from the Middle English *coppe* 'top, summit'; but the general use of *ceiliog* 'rooster' would be associated with lowlands or farms. It could also refer to the Ceiliog Du 'a male black grouse', that could be found in moorlands like these, particularly when displaying in the Spring. However, a corruption of *ceiliau*, the plural of *cail* 'sheepfold, flock of sheep' has been put forward in the past, as has *ceiliog* being a corruption of *ciliog* 'cornered'.

There is a disturbed Bronze Age funerary cairn a little to the south west of the summit; which at one time may have held a central cist, now long gone.

Mochogryn 496m SH 806407

On the present day OS map this is the form of the name that is seen, the 1838 map had the name as Moch awgryn; however, the head name put forward by the Melville Richards Archive is that of Machogryn. A little further down the slope is the site of a small Manganese mine; when recorded as being worked, between 1887-91, it was variously written as Llechowgryn, Moel Llechowgryn, Mochowgryn and Mochawgryn. Is the word seen here as a second element - *hygryn* 'trembling, tremulous, tottering, shaky' here; or, is a form similar to (*g*)*ogryn* 'to sift, riddle, cleanse'. Perhaps, the sifting or cleansing linked to the mining that was to be found in the area at one time?

Y Foel Frech 494m SH 874470

The *moel* 'hill' in its lenited form + *brech* is the feminine form of *brych* 'mottled, speckled'. Foel-frech 1838 OS.

Moel Bowydd 490m SH 713471

There may be a link to an old personal name Bywi; however, there is a plant *bywi* 'earthnut, pignut' : *Conopodium majus* that was commonly rooted for by pigs and gathered by people for food in hard times. Once the tuber (of this member of the parsley family) was roasted, it was a very useful addition to what could be a poor diet. *dol com bowi* 1588 Elwes Manuscript, Cwm Bowy 1601 Nanhoron Manuscripts, Moel Bywydd 1838 OS.

Garw Fynydd 490m SH 945401

Garw 'rough, rugged, craggy, uncultivated' + *mynydd* 'mountain' in its lenited form. The word *garw* is quite common in landscape names, this is reflected in its use in other 'Celtic' languages and the fact that its meaning in the landscape has hardly changed - Middle Breton *garu*, Old Irish *garb* 'rugged, rough' from the Celtic **garuo* 'rugged, craggy, uncultivated'

Craig y Llestri 486m SH 837299

If it is not the plural of the term *llestr* 'vessel, bowl', perhaps there is a corruption of *lluesti* 'temporary dwellings'. There are holes and drifts of historical mines here as well as miners and shepherd's huts. However, one quite interesting word which might have a bearing is *callestri*, the plural of *callestr* 'a stone which produces sparks when struck', this could include iron pyrites as well as flint.

Moel Trwyn Swch 483m SH 809447

This hill is near the end of a ridge, the term *trwyn* 'nose' + *swch* 'pig, sow' is a descriptor of either a

ridge shape was reminiscent of a pigs nose; or, of *swch* 'ploughshare' - named for the way the ploughshare digs up and turns the ground like a pig. Trwyn y Swch 1608 Ruthin Records.

Moel y Croesau 480m SH 748383

Croesau is the plural form of the word *croes* 'cross'. In the landscape a cross was often used as a boundary marker, whether the land was owned by the church or not. However, there seem to be no such stone boundary markers on this hill, stones that are usually recorded on the early maps. Moel y groesau 1838 OS.

Y Foel Gron 480m SH 794278

Gron is feminine adjective of *crwn* 'round'; this is quite an apt name, as from some aspects this moel is a really smooth dome shaped hill.

Y Dyrysgol 473m SH 834283

This is another form of the descriptors derived from the word *trwsgl* 'awkward, difficult' that applies to the landscape in a number of locations; the older meanings of *trwsgl* 'rough, wild' were probably referencing an area of very unforgiving terrain. It is a very rocky area with many small outcrops around it. There are a number of alternative spellings for this relatively common descriptor in Eryri. For example, this hill is also recorded as Y Drysgol c.1700 Parochialia. Dyrysgol 1838 OS.

Moel y Graig 470m SH 845295

Here the *moel* 'pointed' meaning is to be found *craig* 'cliff, rock', for this rocky tor.

Craig y Garreg Lwyd 470m SH 731427

The *craig* 'cliff' is probably named after the smallholding of Y Garreglwyd [*carreg* 'stone' + *llwyd* 'grey'].

Bryn Glas 465m SH 793439

This *bryn* 'hill, mount, rise' is probably *glas* 'grey, greyish' rather than the modern use *glas* 'blue'; the originally Latin term *glaucous* describes the range of colours better. The word is cognate to Cornish *glas*, Old Irish *glas*; all are derived from the Brittonic **cunglase*, which has developed from the Celtic word **glasto* from the Indo-European root **ghel* 'sparkling'.

Yr Oerfa 463m SH 861416

A fairly straightforward name for a windy spot such as this, with *oer* 'cold' + *-fa* 'place' combining to produce the name; however, this name may not have referred specifically to the hill, but to the general area. Craig Lios is the other name to be seen this is probably *llios* 'multitude, host, army' rather than a corrupted form of *llias* 'death, slaughter'.

Craig y Dinas 457m SH 779297

Just as hills have been called *castell* 'castle' because of their similarity, imagined or otherwise, to fortifications. This hill does not have a *dinas* 'stronghold'; even though its defensive position could be used temporarily as such.

Y Foel Ddu 445m SH 819475

A hill with the *du* 'black, dark' descriptor. On the early OS maps the name also covered the higher (458m) top to the East. The modern 1:50,000 map also has the name on the higher top.

Y Foel 430m SH 753350

Moel 'bare hill', though it is likely that this has been used to denote the sheepwalk of a farm.

Pig Idris 429m SH 731323

Idris is a personal name but this probably not the name of a local landowner, there was however, an Idris ap Gwyddno, a 7th Century King of Meirionnydd. A kilometre to the South one finds the impressive 3m high standing stone of Llech Idris and the hill name is probably linked to this. According to legend the giant Idris threw the stone (or kicked it?) from the top of Cader Idris and this is where it landed. However, it is far more likely to be a prehistoric marker stone for one of a number of ancient trackways that meet up nearby.

Unfortunately, the word *pig* 'beak, peak' is difficult to link to the location as it is not very pointed. A number of hills have been named with the term *pig* in this area, none of which are that pointed; although, there may have been cairns on their tops at one time.

Craig y Penmaen 420m SH 724300

A very straightforward descriptor, as this *craig* 'cliff, rock' does have a *pen* 'head' + *maen* 'stone'; and it is indeed a very rocky little hill.

Moel y Garth 420m SH 847392

Garth can indicate a 'hill, ridge or spur' as well as 'wooded slope', here any one of those meanings would be correct to use. The area is pitted with exploratory diggings for Manganese.

Cerniau 412m SH 757212

It is likely that a plural form for the term *cern* 'hillside, exposed slope, side, corner' and that is what is found here. The nearby Moel y Llan has been named after the hamlet of Llanfachraeth.

Cadair Benllyn 407m SH 907455

Cader Benllyn is the form seen on the 1838 OS 1" as well as the 6" 1840-80 and some later maps. The descriptor Penllyn [head (of the) lake] is straightforward; it the name of an old *cantref* 'hundred' that was once in the kingdom of Powys, but was later taken into the Kingdom of Gwynedd. This little hill is in the northern boundary area of the *cantref*; to the North are the *cantref* of Nant Conwy and also the *cantref* of Is Aled. In the 1796 Cambrian Register it was described as 'Cader Penllyn, the keep of Penllyn, a high mountain near Bala'.

It is the **cader/cadair* 'stronghold, stone fort' name element that poses the difficulty here, as a number of features that might be associated with a **cader/cadair* name are not easily identified, even if they were used in a metaphoric sense for this little top. With little in the way of a *cwm*, there is no apparent *cadair* 'seat' shape at this site, also it is not a particularly eminent or prominent spot to give a *cadair* 'throne' interpretation. An enclosure or fortification of some kind could have been in place as there seems to be a curved embankment on the gentle slopes on the western side. However, most of the hilltop has been much altered over the years, a track has modified one part of the embankment and near the road a part of the hilltop has been bulldozed level. If there was a defensive site, the location would have controlled what would have been an important route-way through the hills at one time.

Maen Bras 407m SH 917394

Maen 'rock, stone' + *bras* 'thick, bulky, large'; a very apt name for this bulky lump.

Moel Offrwm 405m SH 750210

A *moel* 'bare, rounded hill', with the word *offrwm* 'offering, sacrifice; gift'; Middle Welsh *offrum* 'offering, gift' may have some connection with its surrounding pre-historic remnants. There is a settlement and or fort at the top and another one further down to the South. Around the summit one also finds a large complex of Iron Age enclosures, settlement structures and a hillfort. A little further to the south is a further hillfort and associated structures. Moel Othrwrm - Guto'r Glyn (1412-93), Moell Offrwm and Moyle Offrom c.1592 PRO, Moel Ophrom c.1600 Y Cymmrodor, Moel Orthrwn

1783 Thomas Pennant, Moel Offrwm 1838 OS.

This was the home of one of three giants associated with Idris Gawr; the giant who occupied this hill was Ophrwm, the other two were Ysbryn and Ysgydion.

Rhiw Lwyd 398m SH 813497

The initial term *rhiw* 'steep slope, hillside' is fairly straightforward; however, the second element may be a reference to a *llwyd* 'brownish' colour if it is an old name, it is only later that *llwyd* 'grey' would be implied.

Penmaen 397m SH 844266

Pen 'head, top' + *maen* 'stone' and a rocky top is to be found here.

Derlwyn 396m SH 843284

A fairly straightforward name *der(w)* 'oak' + *llwyn* 'grove', Middle Welsh *lluyn* 'bush, grove, wood'; from the Indo-European **doru* 'wood, tree'. However the hill is now under a stand of conifer plantation. However, at one time the use of the element *derw* could imply trees in general.

Allt y Gwine 376m SH 835254

Another landscape colour descriptor, and a fairly unusual one, this *allt* 'bluff, cliff, hill' + *gwine*, *gwinau* 'bay, reddish brown'. Alltygwinau 1450 Thomas Roberts, Allt y gweny c.1592 PRO, Allt y gwiney 1604 Nannau manuscript.

Moel Caws 367m SH 846278

One could argue that the term *caws* 'cheese' may well be linked to the herds of cattle, which at one time were kept out on the hills and were milked outside. The processing of the milk into butter and cheese may also have taken place in secluded shelters, well away from the lowland farmsteads. There is a small prehistoric settlement below the hill, which could be used to support this idea here. Otherwise, one could see this curious flat topped hill as being the shape of an early round cheese shape. Cheese curds were pressed in cloth-lined baskets, they didn't form perfect cylinders; you had to get the round out of the basket and so they were somewhat conical.

However, the *caws* in the name could also be derived from a corruption of the word *cawsai*, *cawse* 'raised way over marsh ground, causeway' from the similar sounding French word *causey* 'causeway'; note that the English causeway is derived from the French; the *cawse* 'a paved way' form is also sometimes seen on maps. One should note that there are two very ancient trackways passing the base of this hill; one from the North and the other following the course of Afon Dyfrdwy from the North East. Both trackways head up to escape the confines of what is a narrowing of the valley. A Roman camp to the East shows that this was an important route. To get out of the valley bottom, this track has to cross the headwaters of the Afon Dyfrdwy on what the modern surveyors have termed stepping stones at (SH 849275). These stepping stones could be the reasoning behind the name of the hill, located as it is above the original *cawse* 'causeway' perhaps.

This *cawsai* 'raised track' or roadway going through a wet area of ground; sometime termed *sarn*, is seen in other locations, even as stepping stones crossing a river. A number of these examples show the forms *cawsai*, *cawse* changing to *caws*; such as both the Nant y Cawse becoming Nant y Caws: seen in (SJ 2826) and (SH 7746), the latter having a crossing point near its outflow marked on maps.

Moel y Garnedd 360m SH 896355

A fairly low but quite prominent hill above Llyn Tegid, there is a *carnedd* 'cairn' at its top and this form of moel probably refers to the pointed summit, Mael y Garnen, moel y Garnedd and

Maelgarnedd were all forms recorded in Parochialia c.1700. One should note that both mael forms seen here developed from the Old Welsh mail 'hill, summit' and are not a form of *mael* 'prince, chieftan'; or, one of the other meanings of this element.

Mynydd Bach 355m SH 745313

This is named quite simply as *mynydd* 'mountain' + *bach* 'little' on all the older OS maps.

Moel Cynwch 320m SH 737212

The *moel* 'hill' is probably termed Cynwch as it is a personal name, otherwise, it may be a vocalised variation on the word *cnwch* 'swelling, hump, hillock'. At one time a monstrous serpent terrorised the area around the hill; looking into its eyes meant you could no longer move and you ended up being a meal for the monster. Moel Cynwch 1838 OS. The Foel Cynwch form on OS maps is incorrect.

mynyddoedd.co.uk