

CADER IDRIS

The largest cliffs are on the northern slopes of Cader Idris; forming a striking rampart which then curves round to the West in a huge arc of steep slopes and cliffs. Other hills have numerous steep facets, Craig yr Aderyn probably being the most famous, but the geology changes to the East of the Bala Fault and the rocks do not form impressive cliffs. The use of *tarren* is generally taken to be a hill name in this area and not really a cliff like feature as found further South in Wales; one can also note that there is no use of the term *clogwyn* here. This area has a number of cliff names taken from the farms or features below; some of these may not be included.

Cerrig Cochion SH 703135

Cerrig 'rocks' + coch 'red' (in its plural form, to agree with the plural of *carreg* 'rock', namely *cerrig*), is a toponym that is not used on the OS maps. As the information was not there, there was a tendency for some to name the cliff after the hill *Cyfrwy*, which itself was named after the *bwllch* 'pass'.

Cerrig Nimbwl SH 716139

There was one exasperated statement in an old Welsh Journal ... 'Beth a olyga Ceryg y Nimbwl, os nad ceryg y nifwl' 1886 Y Geninen (What is the meaning of Ceryg y Nimbwl, if not rocks of the mists'. The *nifwl* 'niwl, cwmwl' in this reference is cognate with Old Breton *nem* 'heavens, sky', Middle Breton *neff* 'sky'; linked to Old English *nifol* 'dark, misty'; all are derived from the Indo European **nebos* 'cloud, mist'. Cerrig Nimbwl 6" 1840-80 OS.

Craig Buarth-glas SH 827160

Named after an old *ffarm* Buarth Glas; there is not much evidence of the *buarth* as the main road now runs through the area where the farmstead was located.

Craig Cwm Amarch SH 710117

The name *Dol-amarch* is to be found in the *Parochialia* c.1700 and the form *Cwm-ammarch* in the 1838 OS map; the farm name in the 1840-80 6" series was given as *Pentre dol-amarch*. The *dol* 'meadow' element points this to being a name taken from the low lying area; which is in fact a delta of post-glacial debris. Thus the name could be from *am-* a prefix with strengthening sense + *march* 'horse'. If the toponym is actually *amarch* 'dishonour, shame' or 'oppression', it may be an attempt to describe a poor area of pasture perhaps.

Craig Cwm Llwyd SH 647122

Named after the *cwm* 'valley' + *llwyd* 'grey'.

Craig Fach Goch SH 608013

Named after the *ffarm* Fach Goch; the *fach* may refer to *bach* 'hook, bent' rather than *bach* 'small'.

Craig Goch SH 714084

This area of cliff that's left after a huge landslide, the colour here is that of the winter hues of purples and browns of the vast amount of bilberries and heather plants found here. *Y graig koch* c.1700 *Parochialia*.

Craig Hen-gae SH 758104

The cliff name is from an farm name *hen* 'old, original' + *cae* 'field, enclosing'; it could therefore denote one of the first land-holding in the valley.

Craig Las SH 673134

Craig 'cliff, rock' + (g)las 'grey, glaucous'; this is a name for the cliffs of *Tyrrau Mawr*, the name is not on the OS map.

Craig Lwyd SH 654108

Sometimes, as here, there is very little in the way of an actual cliff, just patches of rocks and steep ground. One must remember that a rocky slope such as this would have had its vegetation 'burnt' in the summer and that the colour term llwyd is used to denote many reddish hues not just llwyd 'grey'.

Craig Maesglase SH 827140

The name is derived from the name of the farm below, which is itself a corruption Maesglasfre

Craig Pentref SH 668058

This craig 'cliff' is close to the pentref 'village' of Abergynolwyn.

Craig Pen y Meini SH 861093

Pen 'top, head' + y 'the' + meini 'stones' is also the name of the farm below; one has to decide which came first. Penmeiny 1682 Peniarth Manuscripts, Penmeini 1796 Cambrian Register.

Craig Rhiw-erch SH 819152

The rhiw 'slope' here is incredibly steep; walking up (or down) this ridiculously steep slope would be dangerous. One has to decide between: erch 'mottled, variegated, reddish'; or, erch 'dire, hideous'.

Craig Rhwyddfor SH 734122

Locally, some lean towards the first element as being rhwyf, rhwy 'king, lord, chieftain, leader'; others support one of the numerous senses for the word rhwydd, such as - 'easy', 'unhindered', 'open'. If the descriptor is actually rhwyddfor, then it may refer to the way the valley breaches the high mountains? Kwmrhwythor 1609 & Cwm Rhyddor 1657 Maesyneuadd manuscripts, Kwm y Rhwydhor c.1700 Parochialia, 'Cwm Rhwyddor, the coom of free passage' 1796 Cambrian Register, Craig Cwm-rhwyddfor 1837 AO.

Craig y Bwlch SH 800167

The bwlch 'pass' is that of Bwlch Oerddrws, it has been a very important pass through the mountains for many

Craig y Llam SH 748127

The word llam 'leap, leaping'; or, 'plummeting' could simply be used to describe a very steep and precipitous cliff. The name could refer to the presence of llamysten 'Sparrow Hawk: *Accipiter nisus*'. The form Kraig y Lham appeared alongside the name Y Tyrre hirion 'the tall towers' in the Parochialia, c.1700, these towers are the large vegetated buttresses along the southern side of Cwm Rhwyddfor. Immediately above the little lake of Llyn Bach/Llyn Y Tri Greyenyn at the top of the pass, one notable buttress was called Pen y Delyn.

Craig y Llyn SH 660115

This is still being written with hyphens, which are not needed; the lake in question is Llyn Cyri.

Craig yr Aderyn SH 643069

Craig 'crag' + yr 'the' + aderyn 'bird'; there is a famous colony of Cormorants: *Phalacrocorax carbo* to be found here as well as other cliff dwelling birds. However, the name could also be for the shape of the hill and the rocks above, they seem to resemble the form of a bird with its wing outspread.

Cribin Fawr SH 801152

Crib 'crest' + -in 'a diminutive ending' is being described as fawr 'large' in comparison to the **Cribin Fach 800158** which is the lesser or smaller of the two.

Daeare Fawr SH 703117

There is not much of a cliff here, the name describes a very rough area with large boulders and uneven terrain where it is not easy to gather sheep but is a good place for foxes - daear 'ground, earth' + mawr 'difficult, rough'. Daeare Fawr 6" 1840-80 OS.

Gallt Ffynnon yr Hydd SH 609117

The naming of this sea-level spring might be gallt 'bluff' + ffynnon 'spring, source' + y 'the' + hydd 'stag', denoting a spot where animals come down to drink. However, as this spring is a chalybeate, a spring containing mineral salts including salts of iron, it would have a taste of iron and a rusty tinge to it as well as rust deposits. This rusty colouring would bring to mind the word rhudd 'red, ruddy, brown'; this word is often confused with the similar sounding yr hydd 'the stag'. Gallt-ffynnon-yr-hydd 1837 OS.

Gesail SH 743136

The name is not marked on the present day map; this area of cliffs does fit the term gesail 'nook, recess'. However, it may be the location for one of the cliff names 'lost' since the Parochialia of Edward Lhuyd.

Tapiau'r Bele SH 729152

Tapiau is the plural of the word tap 'cliff, overhang', while the word bele can denote two differing sets of beasts; either, 'marten, pine marten, weasel' or 'wolf, predatory beast'.

Tapiau Cenawon SH 739133

The term cenawon is a plural of cenau 'bear cub, wolf pup'; however, in the locality, the term is used to describe 'foxes' in general. Middle Irish cano, cana 'wolves'.

Tap y Nyth SH 729156

The name tap 'cliff' + y 'the' + nyth 'nest' may be describing the location of a prominent or obvious nesting area, a number of mountain birds do construct large nests. The word nyth as well as the Old Cornish '*neid*', Old Irish '*net*' are from the Indo European **nizdo-*.

Tap Ffridd Windo SH 679117

The ffridd 'mountain pasture' where this tap 'crag' is to be found suffers from some very windy conditions according to the local slang term windo – a variant of 'gwyntog' windy.

Tapiau Gwartheg SH 696130

These tapiau 'crag' seem to be a place where the gwartheg 'cattle' would gather. They are very high up on the mountain and show that the hillsides were at one time grazed by cattle rather than sheep. Some cattle are still grazed all year round out in the open by some farms.

Tarren Cwm Ffernol SH 660018

This name is used for a hill name on the present day OS map; however, this tarren 'cliff, steep slope' is the name for a curve of steep rocks at the head of the valley of Cwm Ffernol.

Twll y Gwter SH 744142

This name is not on the OS maps; the twll 'hole, hollow, cave' + y + gwter 'gutter, channel' describes the narrow corner or gully in cliffs here.

Tap Du/ Twr Du SH 719135

There is no name for this cliff on the maps, the local name is either tap 'crag'; or, twr 'pile' + du 'black, dark'. The name can be seen on the early 6" 1848-80 OS and the second series 6" OS maps of 1888-1913.

Twr Glas SH 670164

This short line of broken cliff is described as twr 'heap, pile' + glas 'grey, greenish grey' 6" 1840-80 OS. Twr 'heap, pile' is from the Old Welsh *twrr* 'heap, pile', cognate with Irish *torr* 'lofty hill, mound'. It is easily mixed up with the apparently borrowed *tŵr* 'tower, keep'; perhaps from Old French *tor* 'tower'; there seems to be disagreement among etymologists as to the origin and development of the words.

Twr Maen SH 711121

Once again twr 'pile, heap'/'tower' + maen 'stone'. The name used by rock-climbers is the made up name Pencoed Pillar.

Y Daran SH 646138

It is likely that the name Y Darren was here originally. Daren 6" 1840-80 OS.

Y Gau Craig SH 745145

The word cau 'enclosed, sheltered' is a very common term in the landscape and is a very good descriptor of this little cwm overlooked by this craig 'rock, cliff'.