

Y GLUDERAU

The Gluderau range of hills form a long dogleg ridge stretching from Mynydd Llandygai to Capel Curig and contain five high peaks. At one time, there was only one mountain termed Gluder; they were separated at a later stage. Tryfan is one of the most striking peaks in Wales; it is one of the few that needs some straightforward scrambling in order to reach its top. The summits show the tremendous shattering of the rocks that took place during the last glacial period. The eastern part of the ridge is particularly popular with walkers.

'The first, is the summit, or utmost of the Glyder (a Mountain above-mention'd as one of the highest in these parts) where I observ'd prodigious heaps of stones, many of them of the largeness of those of Stonehenge, but of all the irregular shapes imaginable; and all lying in such confusion, as the ruins of any building can be suppos'd to do. Now I must confess, I cannot well imagine how this hath happen'd: for that they should be indeed the ruins of some Edifice, I can by no means allow, in regard that most of them are altogether as irregular as those that have fall'n to the Valleys. Let us then suppose them to be the Skeleton of the hill, expos'd to open view, by rains, snow, etc. But how came they to lye across each other in this confusion?' Edward Lhuyd (Britannia: ed. E Gibson 1722)

Y Gluder Fawr 999m SH 642580

Glyder Fawr is how the name is shown on the OS maps, but glyder is a misspelling, the correct form should be Y Gluder Fawr or Y Gludair Fawr. The original word *cludair*, *cluder* 'anything collected together to form a heap or pile' + *mawr* 'large'; the reference is to the huge heap of rocks making up the mountain. The meaning of *cludair* 'heap' is seen in an early form in the 13th Century recording of Mediaeval Welsh laws as *chudeyr* and its lenited form can be seen in the poetry of Guto'r Glyn (c. 1412 – c. 1493): *Mae'r glod, pe bai 'mwy'r gludair/Am bob carreg deg o'i do/Mae 'mendith am y maendo*. The word was also in early dictionaries; however, when Edward Lhuyd visited the area in 1688; to update the Botanical work of John Ray, he must have learnt of the name and he mentions the term, with a Glyder spelling several times; for example: *'Rhiw'r Glyder; supra locum Llyn y Cwn'*.

Why he adopted this form is not known, but when one notes the spelling of other locations (e.g. *Karnedh Dhavidh, Karnedh Lhewelyn*), there might have been an attempt to allow non-Welsh speakers to try and grasp some kind of correctness in pronunciation. At the time, no-one really tried to correct this corrupted form, perhaps due to the academic stature of Lhuyd. Although Lewis Morris did state *'Glyder, a mountain in Eryri, perhaps y Gludair'* Celtic Remains (1757).

Cevn y Glyder 1719 Glossarium Antiquarium Britannicarum (E Lhuyd), Bryn y Gludair/Bryn y Gludr 1790 Penrhyn Manuscripts, Glider Fawr 1834 Greenwood Map.

Y Gluder Fach 990m SH 656582

Both of the Gludair/Gluder names reflect the fact that the flanks of these mountains are made up of a pile of rocky cliffs, huge jumbles of rocks and scree slopes. The terms *mawr* 'larger' and *bach* 'lesser' have generally been used even before the surveys could record the difference in height. However, as stated above, there was only one y Gludair or y Gluder name, meaning the huge mass of both tops was probably considered as one mountain at one time. Gludar Bach & Glyder Bach 1781 Thomas Pennant, The Glydars 1809/11 Edmund Hyde Hall.

Castell y Gwynt 972m SH 654582

This Castle (of) the Wind is a rather romanticised and fairly late name, this top has an impressive rocky shape and its exposed nature makes it a blustery spot; *castell* 'castle' is a term probably borrowed from the Latin *castellum* or Middle English *castel*. In describing Waen Oer, the area

between the two Gluderau Thomas Pennant wrote *'The shepherds make it the residence of storms, and style part of it Carnedd y Gwynt'* (1781) *The Journey to Snowdon*.

Y Garn 947m SH 631596

Carn 'cairn, barrow, tumulus or mound', it is linked to Breton *karn*, Cornish *karn*, Irish *carn* 'pile of stones'; it was from this word that the term *cairn* developed in English. Usually it is used in the names of hills and mountains where there is (or may have resembled) a pile of rough stones stacked up to form a pre-historic burial mound. When one sees the 'yr' or 'y', in front of a placename, it is not a true proper noun, but a common noun made special.

Elidir Fawr 923m SH 612613

Elidir was fairly common personal name at one time, of a form similar to Eluet, Elitivae and Elit and are connected to the Welsh *elain* 'doe, young deer' as well as Old Irish *elit* 'doe'; all ultimately derived from the Celtic **elanī* 'doe, deer'. Apart from a personal name, there might be a link here to *elain* 'doe, young deer' + *tir* 'area, ground'. There is a rather unconvincing legend linking the naming of the hill as a commemoration to a prince of the 'Old North' called Elidyr Mwynfawr, married to Eurgain, the daughter of Maelgwn Gwynedd.

However, the name may be hiding an older inference, through **el-*, to the distinctly angular shape of the mountain. The Celtic **ol-īnā* 'angle, elbow'; Old Cornish *elin*, Old Irish *uilenn* 'angle', Mid Irish *uillind* 'elbow; angle', Breton *elin*, *ilin*. When looking at the mountain from the West it has a prominent elbow or wedge shape. The south western spur, which was called Carnedd Clippiau, has at its end the name Talcen y lidir on the 1838 Tithe Map.

Carnedd Elidir 1757 Lewis Morris, Llider Vawr 1781 Thomas Pennant, 'mountain called Lidir' 1828 Llawysgrifau Porth yr Aur, Llder Fawr 1834 Map Greenwood.

Tryfan 915m SH 663592

It is almost certain that the combination of the Welsh element *try* 'very' + *ban* 'peak, top' is the correct interpretation for this sharp or pointed mountain. A mistaken interpretation, common at one time, had the meaning linked to the word *tri* 'three' + *ban*, because of the three peaks, and even as *tri* + *fa(e)n* (a corruption of *maen* 'stone'). A further erroneous explanation as *tr(w)y* 'through' + *ban* 'peak' in a sense of a passage through the hills, i.e. the valley, was espoused at one time. Tryvan 1646/7 Baron Hill Manuscripts, Trevaen 1781 Thomas Pennant, the Trivan 1810 Richard Fenton Tours in Wales.

Y Foel Goch 831m SH 628612 & Y Foel Goch 805m SH 678582

A common hill name, found throughout Wales. The word *coch* 'red, ruddy, bloody; brown' can be used to denote any reddish to brown hue, as well as colours that are rather sallow or yellowish in tinge. For example, the general autumnal/winter hues of common vegetation such as bracken could be termed *coch*.

Carnedd y Filiast 822m SH 620628

The *carnedd* 'cairn' is named with the lenited form of *miliast* 'greyhound bitch', these were mystic/legendary animals and cairns could be associated with them. The name could also be a counterpoint to Elidir, if the term Elidir is a reference to deer. Otherwise the name could reflect the shape of the hill, reminiscent of the curved back of a greyhound. Carnedd y Filiast 1781 Thomas Pennant, Carnedd y Filiast 1838 OS.

Mynydd Perfedd 813m SH 622620

The word of interest here is *perfedd* 'amid, centre, heartland, interior'. It describes a location in the midst of others, an almost hidden place; or, towards the centre when viewed from a distance.

Elidir Fach 795m SH 603612

It has been said that this slightly lesser top was named Elidir Fach artificially, when it was decided that a balance was needed to the name Elidir Fawr on the OS map. As there was a Gluder Fawr and a Gluder Fach, further along the range; so it would be better if there was a matching Elidir Fach also. However, Thomas Pennant used the terms Llider Fawr and Llider Fach in his *A Journey to Snowdon*, published in two parts (1781 and 1783 respectively); this show that the names were in place long before any surveying by the OS.

Gallt yr Ogof 763m SH 685585

Gallt 'bluff, cliff' + *yr* 'the' + *ogof* 'cave, cleft' is the name of the cliff at the end of this spur, the top of the hill is actually a fair way up from the cliff. This cliff has a prominent deep cleft or gully and this is the *ogof* 'cave'. *Gallt y gogo* is the name for this mountain on the early OS Maps 1838 and this is still the local name for it.

Cefn y Capel 444m SH 709584

Cefn 'back, ridge' + *capel* 'small church'; named after the tiny but historical church in the hamlet of Capel Curig. At the western end of this ridge, at (SH 697580) is a prehistoric long mound aligned east – west and over 20m in length. The word *cefn* is linked to Middle Breton *queyn*, Old Cornish *chem*, Gaulish *cebenna*; note that the Gaulish term is the derivation for the name Cevennes in France.

Moel Lleuci 410m SH 593659

The erroneous *Moel y Ci* (Hill the dog) form is seen on OS maps over a very long period; even though the Penrhyn Estate knew the correct form of the name, the early surveyors had *Moel y Ci* on the first series 1" map. *Lleuci* or *Lleici*, is a common feminine name in the Middle Ages; today, the English form of *Lleuci* would be *Lucy*. This name appears in the classic 14th century poem 'Marwnad Lleucu Llwyd', written by Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen for his deceased lover. In the past, some have postulated a *Moel Llyctir* or *Lleyctir*; *llyctir* being land given as payment for a secular favour. *Moylycki* 1588, *Moel y Ki*, *Moylike* 1612, *Moylyki* 1614 all Penrhyn Manuscripts, *Moel-Lyci* 1781: the form *Carnedd Moelyci* is seen sometimes.

Parc Drysgol 404m SH 589644

On the first OS maps, the ridge between *Rhiwen* and *Moel y Ci* was called *Drysgol-fawr*; and *Trysgol Fawr* was the name on the tithe map. The *trwsgol*, *trysgol* 'difficult, rough' is a fairly common term in mountainous terrain. The word *parc* 'a large area of enclosed land, field, enclosure'; is a word borrowed from the Middle English *park*, that developed from the Old English *pearroc* 'enclosed land, field, paddock'. *Drysgol-fawr* 1838 OS.

Rhiwen 401m SH 582644

It is recorded as *Rhiwan* on the 1838 tithe map, a form that reflects the local vocalisation of the name. *Rhiwen* is derived from *rhiw* 'slope' + (*g*)*wen* 'white (in its feminine form)' shows an opposite or counter location to *Rhiwlas*, now the name of a local village, one dark, the other light. *Moel Rhiwen* 1838 OS.

Y Foel Gron 353m SH 586623

Cron is feminine adjective of *crwn* 'round' and this would be quite an apt name for this fairly smooth dome shaped hill. However, the form *Moel Gronw* is seen on the first OS maps; this is the shortened form of the personal name *Goronwy*. The name *Moel Goronwy* is to be seen on the 1887 6" OS map and one also sees the name *Foel-Goronwy* for the small farmstead nearby (SH 586624).

Pen y Bigil 292m SH 577622

If there is a connection to *bigel*, as in *Llanfigel* [*llan Vigail* 1536-9 *Leland*, *Llanfigail* 1556] and the

name Maen Bigel on Ynys Mon, the likelihood is that the word *bugail* 'shepherd' is to be found. However, it must be noted that Bigl and Y Bigl are the forms seen on the earliest OS maps. One must note the Cornish *begel* 'tump' (Angl. as beagle). Also, there is a plant named *bigl, pigl* (borrowed from the Middle English *pigle*) Hounds Tongue *Cynoglossum officinale*. Otherwise, due to the pointed form of the hill, some suggest a link to the word *pig* 'prow, pointed top', borrowed from the Middle English *pik(e)*. Y Bigl 1840-80 6" OS.

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