HEBOG & NANTLLE

Although the passes here refer to some high routes and gaps through the hills, there are a number of lower passages where people and animals used to regularly travel through.

Bwlch Cwm Dulyn SH 508490

Named after the *cwm* 'corrie, valley' of the lake known as *Dulyn* 'dark lake'. Some of the *du* 'dark' names can convey a sense of dread and forboding. Also, as these dank shadowy spots were not very good for birds or wildlife, they tended to became associated with stories of disappearance, of never seeing birds; or, even that witches and fantastic beings. Lakes were also associated with the otherworld and of the dead, and that descending into the otherworld was possible through lakes.

Bwlch Cwm Trwsgl SH 552496

Named after the cwm where the terrain is *trwsgl* 'difficult, rough'; to farm or to travel through. Parts of this pass would have been even harder at one time as many of the tracks were 'improved' to get to mines and quarries in the area.

Bwlch Cwm Ystradllyn SH 576450

Named after the cwm of *ystrad* 'floor, strath' + *llyn* 'lake, pool'. Not named on modern maps, it was at one time a very important routeway, as getting through Aberglaslyn and the subsequent estuary flatlands was at one time extremely difficult. Bwlch-Cwm-ystradllyn 1840-80 6" OS.

Bwlch Derwin SH 460484

This is where Llywelyn fought his brother and succeeded in taking over Gwynedd as his realm. The word *derwin* 'oaken' could be a general term for an area of oak trees. Bwlchderwin 1879 Phillmore, Bwlch-derwin 1901 OS.

Bwlch Dros Bern SH 530508

This is probably not *dros* 'over' + *ben* 'top' (*pen* 'head' in a lenited form) as many believed; another suggestion was that there had been a corruption of the word *bar* 'crest'. What is of interest is the obscure word *bern* 'heap, pass; stream' linked to Cornish *bern* 'stack', Old Cornish *bern* 'heap, pile', Old Irish *bern* 'pass' is given as an explanation.

Bwlch Gylfin SH 555534

Developedom the Brittonic word *gulbino* 'beak', and the crag near this pass, Clogwyn y Garreg, has a pointed summit which can be seen from almost any angle. However, *cylfin* is alternative form of the *gylfinir* 'curlew'. Bulch y Gylfin 1836 Vaenol Manyscripts, Bwlch Gyfelin 1838 OS.

Bwlch Meillionen SH 560476

The diminutive ending *-en* has been given to the plant name Meillion 'Clover': *Trifolium*. However in upland areas, the term *meillionen* was sometimes used for 'Birds Foot Trefoil' *Lotus Corniculatus*. Bulchmellonen 1269 Litterie Wallie, Bwlch Meillionen 1838 OS.

Bwlch Sais SH 551491

Sais is a singular of *Saeson*, a word borrowed from Latin *Saxōnes* 'saxons'; it later developed into a term for foreigner or Englishman. Perhaps they were looking for Owain Glyndwr and his cave?

Bwlch y Bedol SH 512452

This might be named because of the *pedol* 'horseshoe' shape of the valley leading up to this low pass; it may also be named because a horseshoe was used as an indicator of a path or routeway on a pole or boundary marker. ssarn y pedole 1589/90 Dolfriog Manuscript, Bwlch-y-bedol 1838 OS.

Bwlch y Ci SH 566477

The word *ci* 'dog, hound' is straightforward. The dog was a creature revered by the 'Celtic' peoples at one time; it was particularly associated with loyalty and leadership, as well as for healing. Bwlch y Ci 1844 6" OS.

Bwlch y Ddwy Elor SH 553504
Elor, gelor 'bier' was a wooden framework with long handles at either end, on which a body would be carried to the grave. At one time, if a person died in a parish neighbouring the one where they were born, one bier would take the body to the parish boundary and another (from the 'birth' parish) would be brought up to the pass to take the body down for burial. Bulchrindeyliawr 1269 Litterie Wallie, Bwlch doyol 1352 Revue Celtique, Bwlch-y-ddau-elor 1838 OS.

Bwlch y Moch SH 561540
Is this *moch* 'soonest, swiftest', cognate to Old Irish *mó, mos-, mus-*, Middle Irish *moch* 'early'; rather than *moch* 'pig, swine'? If one were to travel from Betws Garmon into the Nantlle valley, this would be the first or swiftest pass one would use in order to enter the other valley. However, one should not forget the rather obscure word *mochriw* 'ascent, slope, hill'.