

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' and the lake known as Dulyn 'dark lake'. Some of the du 'dark' names convey a sense of forboding, these shadowy spots were not very good for birds or wildlife and therefore became associated with stories of never seeing birds there; or, witches and beings descending into the otherworld through the 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 not dros 'over' + ben 'top' (pen 'head' in a mutated form) as many believed; the other suggestion is a corruption of the word bar 'crest'. However, with uncertainty 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

Developed from the Brythonic 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 Manuscripts, Bwlch Gyfelin 1838 OS.

Bwlch Meillionen SH 560476

The diminutive ending -en has been given to the term 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 is probably not named because of the the shape of the valley leading up to this low pass; it may be named as an indicator of a path or routeway. 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 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 where one was born, one bier took the body to the parish boundary and another would be brought up to the pass to take the body down for burial. Bulchrindeyliawr 1269 Litterie Wallie, Bwlch doyl 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'.