

MYNYDD DU

The larger hills of Y Mynydd Du is one fairly homogenous mass, differing sections of it were given names, but the whole scarp could be seen as being one range; therefore, mynydd 'mountain' can be used as a singular. Building up gradually from the south and come to an abrupt stop at a prominent scarp. It is the northerly aspect of this scarp, coupled with a number of glacial cwms hollowing out the edge even more, that creates a band of deep shadows and shade to give the name. In general the scarp looks quite dark and foreboding; even more so on a bright sunny day and looking very du 'dark, shaded' rather than du 'black'; this is linked to Cornish *du*, Breton *du*, Old Irish *dub*. This is the western area of the National Park, that is the hills to the west of the Tawe and Crai valleys; however, there may have been a confusion at one time with the whole scarp being thought of as being named Y Mynydd Du. The black mountayne 1578 Saxton, The Black Montayne 1610 Speed, Mynydd Du or Black Mountain 1729 Bowen Map, The black montayne 1718 Taylor Map.

One of the Charters in Book of Llandaf deliniates the ecclesiastical boundary and shows that the name for the mountain was just Mynydd Du at one time: 'y blain uysc hyt y mynydd du, y mynydd dunhyt hyt blain turch'. This translates as 'to blaen 'source' Wysg along to Mynydd Du, the Mynydd Du down towards blaen Twrch'.

Y Fan Brycheiniog 802m SN 825217

The name Brycheiniog name is not on all maps, for example on the 1885 1" OS map Y Fan Foel was the only name. The hill has been given to this name as it is the highest part of the mountain mass of Mynydd Du that is to be found in the former county of Brycheiniog (Breckonsshire). Fan is the mutated form of ban 'top, end, point, crest, summit, height, pinnacle, peak, hill, mountain'; Cornish *ban* 'height' (mutated form *van*), Irish *benn* 'mountain, horn, peak'.

There are a number of references to Y Fan Foel at various locations to the South, for example Mawnog Cefn y Fan Foel (838215). One could suppose that the name Y Fan Foel would be a good descriptor when viewing the mountain from the South, note that the name has been moved by the early surveyors to a lesser hill. Brecknock Van 1828 Greenwood Map, Y Fan Brecheiniog 1832 OS.

Tŵr y Fan Foel 802m SN 822223

The tŵr 'tower'; from the proto-celtic **turi* 'tower', linked to or borrowed from the Latin *turris* 'tower, castle'; or, borrowed from the Middle English or Early French *tour* 'tower'. It may well be a later addition to the landscape and a means to transfer or reinforce an old name to a differing site. By looking at the OS maps and in the field, one can see that there is a large and separate buttress forming the feature that may have resembled a tower. However, some state that it may be corruption of twr 'pile, heap'; also, that there was a connection between twr and tŵr originally.

Y Fan Foel 781m SN 824221

This ban 'height' would seem to be both moel 'bald, bare' to describe hills that are either rounded and smooth or are bare of trees, but only from the south. From the North, it would look far more peaked and moel can also refer to the summit of a mountain or hill being peaked; or even conical, Old Irish *moil* 'conical hill'. The remains of a large bronze age round barrow can be found at the summit.

Y Fan Hir 760m SN 831209

This particular ban 'peak, protrubance' is given a simple but very descriptive name, hir 'long, extensive, Cornish *hyr* 'long, lengthy'. This is certainly a long hill, the summit ridge extends South for about two kilometres from Bwlch y Giedd.

Picws Du 749m SN 812218

One rarely finds the word picws 'little peak' in the landscape and is mainly found in the Bannau;

this is a diminutive of the Welsh word *pic*, *pic* 'peak, point', a word borrowed from the Old English *pic* 'pike, spear'. Out into the field one can see a pyramidal or pointed form to the mountain. However, there was also a cairn at the summit, which could have been far more prominent at one time; the cairn may well be the *picws*. The *du* 'black, dark' element of its name is probably due to the fact that the scarp is North facing, this puts the steep northerly slopes into the shade for most of the day, giving the overall impression is of a dark mountain. *Picws Du* OS 6" 1886.

Bannau Sir Gaer 677m SN 798214

A name that appears twice on the maps, it is a later general term for the mountain(s) as being in the old county of Sir Gaerfyrddin 'Carmarthenshire'; normally termed *Swydd Gaer* in Welsh] and is used as a counterpoint to *Y Fan Brycheiniog*. It is possible that *Tyle Gwyn* (792219) is one name for this hill; *tyle* 'heap, height' from the Irish *tulach*, *taloch* 'eminence, height, hill, hillock, ridge' + *gwyn* 'white, pale, bright, fair': *Tir y Tyle Gwyn* 1605 Dynevor Deeds. Carmarthenshire Van 1828 Greenwood Map, *Fan-sirgaer* 1832 OS.

Y Garreg Las 635m SN 777203

The flanks of the mountain are quite rocky and the summit is the location of two large rock cairns and a boulder field. The cairns are named *Carnau'r Garreg Las*, they are a pair of 'robbed out' Bronze Age round barrows and are in a prominent position on this ridge; passed as it was by two ancient tracks, one to the East following the *Twrch* valley and the other to the west along the *Sawdde*.

The *carreg* 'stone, rock' in the area does have a grey-blue tint to it and the term *glas* 'blue, green, grey' is quite apt. *Carreg-las* OS 1831. The other name of the mountain is *Esgair Hir* (779197) and here the terms *esgair* 'scarp, ridge' + *hir* 'long' is also quite apt as a descriptor; linked to Breton *esker*, Old Cornish *escher*, Middle Irish *escir* 'spur, long ridge'.

Moel Gornach/Y Garreg Lwyd 616m SN 741179

The word *moel* in this instance probably refers to *moel* 'rounded or bare top'. In the second element of the *Gornach* one probably finds *corn* 'cairn, point' + *-ach* suffix. One must decide between i) *-ach* a diminutive Welsh ending e.g. *crachach*, *dreiniach*; or, ii) the Irish *-ach* suffix linked to Welsh *-iog*, *-og* 'nominal, special': with the sense of 'abounding in, full of, having, rich in'. There was once a substantial round cairn at the summit, it was about 20m in diameter, this was probably the *corn*. *Carreg* 'rock' + *llwyd* 'grey' probably refers to the geology of the area. *Gornagh* 1513, *Carreg Llyyd* 1828 Greenwood Map

Y Foel Fraith 602m SN 757183

The mutated form of *braith* 'speckled, mottled' might be used here because the hill may be mottled due to a number of reasons. Areas of heather may be burnt off in strips to improve grazing or one might find a patchwork of colours produced naturally by the heather, rocks and bracken against the pasture, especially in the autumn. *Fael Ffraeth* 1828 Greenwood Map, '*Foel-ffraith* 1832 OS.

Moel Feity 591m SN 848231

This *moel* is both a 'rounded' and a 'bare' hill, with a descriptor that may refer to a hill where there would have been a defeity 'sheepcote, sheepfold'. The plural form of *dafad*, namely *defaid* 'sheep' + *tŷ* 'dwelling, shelter', Cornish *devetty* 'sheepcote'. This becomes defeity with usage, then with the loss of the initial letters, (de)feity changes to feity. *Moel-feu-dy* on the early OS maps in 1832 may be a confusion with a corrupted *beudy* 'cowshed'; or, *meudwy* 'hermit' as it is noted as *Moel Feudwy* on the 1884 6" OS map. However, the form *meity* is seen in the valley and farm names below, this may allow one to suggest a *mei*- 'middle' + *ty* 'dwelling' interpretation. *Voel Mity* 1828 Greenwood Map.

Carreg yr Ogof 585m SN 777215

The main name given on the map simply means *carreg* 'rock' (of the) *ogof* 'cave', Cornish *ogo*, *fogo*, *gogo* 'cave'. The caves that can frequently be found on Limestone uplands are in fact sink holes. The other names in this area, near (777218), are *Carn y Gigfran* 'Raven Cairn' and *Carn Pica* 'Peaked Cairn', and both names probably refer to the cairn marked on the OS map, but are also used as the hill name.

Also, it must be noted that the cairn is visible from afar as it is built out of red sandstone while the rocks around it are all the pale white or greys of Carboniferous Limestone. The cairn is in fact a disturbed Bronze Age round barrow and it was probably far more pointed at one time, to have earned the term *pica* 'pointed'. The other name hereabouts is *Tyle Du* (778221), *tyle* 'heap, height' + *du* 'black, dark'.

Cefn Cul/Waun Leuci 562m SN 862206

The narrow ridge leading up from the upper Tawe valley is described well by its name *cefn* 'ridge, back' + *cul* 'narrow', Cornish *cul*, *kyl* 'narrow, thin' from the Brittonic **coilo-* 'narrow'. This is the only name seen anywhere near the summit of this hill, but on the early OS maps the name was closer to the top. The hill has been noted as *Castell Cryfer* and this is part of *Fforest Fawr* on some maps. *Waun Leuci* is the name on the the Northern slopes and was recorded as *Waen Lleuci* on the 1840-80 6" OS map; *Lleuci*, *Lleucu* was a common feminine personal name at one time. *Cefn Cul* 1828 Greenwood.

Carreg Goch 558m SN 819170

Carreg 'a rock, rocky location' + *coch* 'red, tan, brown, fallow'; Old Welsh *'carrecc'*, Brittonic **carricā* 'rock, rocky location'. This really is an extensive location of numerous rocky outcrops, but mainly limestones. In English, the landscape colours described by red '*coch*' does not cover the same breadth of colours as the Welsh term. In Welsh *coch* includes yellow to brown through orange all the way to red; as there were no specific words in Welsh for brown or for orange. In essence, *coch* is used for many of the varied autumnal/winter colours of bracken, heather, bilberry and tussocky grasses in the mountains.

Cefn y Cylchau 556m SN 757197

To the North at (759206), one can see the word *Cylchau* on the present day OS maps, very close to a feature marked as enclosure. At one time, the grazing of the uplands was done by cattle; these would have been herded back into an enclosure for safety from predators such as wolves. Initially these enclosures could have been thorn barricades shored up with wooden hurdles. The later introduction of sheep still required the sheep to be herded back at night; it took many generations before the sheep 'learnt' to stay in their area of mountain pasturage; in Welsh *cynefin* 'accustomed' is a term for a sheepwalk, the tract of mountain on which the sheep are settled. *Cefn-y-cylchau* 1831 OS.

The name *Cylchau* 'circles' does not refer to the enclosure, it probably refers to the round features of the cairn-field known as *Tir y Beddau* 'area the graves'. On the stretch of land between the *Sawdde Fechan* and *Afon Ceulan* are a number of disturbed and scattered circular patches of stones which seem to be the bases of small cairns; which may be clearance cairns rather than graves. However, there is a local legend that links *Tir y Beddau* to *Brychan*; after a victory in battle, *Brychan* walked from the battlefield and its graves, to the summit of *Y Garreg Las*, drinking the water from the hollows of the stones he passed on his way to the summit.

Disgwydfa 544m SN 815179

This is the only name to be found anywhere near the hill on the present OS maps; on the old maps the name is much closer to the summit. Here, the meaning of *disgwydfa* 'lookout' probably does not

have a defensive connotation but rather a watching over of flocks or herds. Disgwilfa 1832 OS.

Y Foel Fawr 550m SN 735187

This spur is part of a larger hill namely Moel Gornach.

Carreg Cadno 538m SN 875177

The only name in the area of these rocky tors is carreg 'stone, rock, cliff' + cadno 'fox'; the word cadno is almost exclusively used in the South.

Carn Pen Rhiwddu 530m SN 726187

One can see the carn 'cairn, pile of stones', Cornish *carn* 'pile of stones', Brittonic **carna*- 'heap of stones' at 727189; this is pen 'head, atop' a slope named rhiw 'steep slope' + du 'dark, black, shaded'. The slope is shaded because of its northerly aspect, a common occurrence in this part of Wales. The term carn can have a varied usage in the landscape; burial mounds, rocky tors and hills and even scree slopes can find this term applied to them. However, here one can find a large Bronze Age cairn made of small loose boulders piled within a turf-consolidated ring.

Carn Pen y Clogau 523m SN 717186

Clogau is one plural of the word clog 'a rock, a crag, steep cliff', Cornish *clog* 'crag'; clog is from the Brittonic word **clocā*, itself from early Celtic **clucā*. Looking at an OS map one can note the cairn and the numerous crags surrounding it. Once again, carn 'cairn' refers to a large Bronze Age cairn is in a prominent position on a ridge line, probably a funerary site and a boundary feature. Carreg Lhwyd Carn 1834 Greenwood Map.

Carn Fadog 512m SN 767152

Madog 'good man; good, just', from mad 'good' + -og is a common personal name; the name could refer to a local or historical person. However, one must keep in mind madoc, madog 'fox'. Carn fadog & Cefn-y-carn-fadog 1831 OS.

Y Garreg Fraith 504m SN 717179

Carreg 'rock, stone' + braith 'mottled, speckled', the fraith is the mutated form of the word. Perhaps the rocks are speckled due to lichen or multicoloured due to staining by water; however, it is probably the scattered rock outcrops on this hillside that give rise to the name.

Tair Carn Uchaf 480m SN 94174

Tair is the feminine form of tri 'three' + carn 'cairn' + uchaf 'higher'. One does indeed find three large Bronze Age cairns which can be seen from quite some distance. Most cairns were built to be in view, so that the tribe that built them could see the resting place of their ancestors. Tair carn uchaf 1831 OS.

Carreg Lem 474m SN 804174

Carreg 'rock' + llem 'sharp', a feminine form of the word llym and not a corruption of the word llam 'leap, step'. In 1502 the name was recorded as Karrec Lem.

Llorfa 474m SN 791177

Llorfa is the name of the ridge rising to this top, there is no name near the actual top, even on the early 1831 OS map Llorfa is the only name to be seen. The term llorfa denotes a flat area is linked to llawr 'floor', Old Welsh *laur* 'floor', Brittonic **laro*- 'floor, ground', early Celtic **laro*- 'floor, ground, flat area'. The area where the name is seen is indeed pretty flat, forming a shallow hollow with a number of Bronze Age features, including a stone circle.

Tyle Garw 468m SN 785178

Tyle Garw is the only name recorded near this hilltop. This tyle 'bank, steep hill, steep slope' is rather craggy and deserves the descriptor garw 'rough, difficult, wild', Cornish *garow* 'rough, harsh'. Tyle is a very common term in South Wales, it is quite rare further north; it can denote a variety of landscape features from larger ones such as tyle 'eminence, height, hill, hillock, ridge', to somewhat lesser features of tyle 'bank, steep slope, steep hill'. Tyllegarw 1745 Tredegar Manuscripts, Tyle-garw 1831 OS.

Y Foel 463m SN 801243

This is a rather flat ridge, however from the valley it does look rather pointed so would tend to give the meaning of moel 'peak, conical hill' rather than rounded bare hill.

Tair Carn Isaf 459m SN 684167

Once again, because of the name tair 'three' and carn 'cairn', one would expect to find three cairns on this isaf 'lower' section of the spur. There are certainly three main cairns, with another carn 'cairn' a little lower down to the West. Tair carn isaf 1831 OS.

Bryn Mawr 457m SN 805248

Bryn 'hill' + mawr 'large, extensive' The word bryn is not used that much in the Bannau area; cognate with Cornish *bren*, from the Brittonic **brunnjā*, which is similar to Old Irish *bruinne* 'breast, brow'. However, the word mawr is quite common in the landscape; Middle Welsh *maur*, linked to Cornish *meur*, Breton *mor* are derived from Brittonic & Gaulish **māro-/ā-* 'big, great'.

Mynydd Myddfai 440m SN 807297

The hill is named after the village, which was recorded as Methvey in 1535, Mothvey 1754. The area is the location of the Physicians of Myddfai, a long line of physicians that according to legend began in the 13th Century with Rhiwallon. The book *Meddygon Myddvai*, published in 1861 by John Pughe, collected together much of the materials attributed to the Physicians, which it groups under two manuscripts.

Twyn Perfedd 426m SN 832254

The meaning of twyn is a hillock, pile, banc or knoll; while perfedd 'middle', linked to Cornish *perveth* 'middle', denotes a central location among other hills. This hill is sandwiched in the middle between Moel Feity and Y Foel Darw. Other tops can be found at (905277) 381m and (908264) 382m; however, they are not named on the maps.

Cribarth 426m SN 829145

Crib 'crest, spur' + garth 'ridge of land, headland, hill, promontory' rather than garth 'enclosure' is a good descriptor. There is an obvious crest to this hill, but the landscape has been changed a great deal due to industry, with many quarries and tramways. There are a number of little peaks here and two Bronze Age Cairns. The most northerly is in the best condition with a number of red sandstone slabs that have been transported here to make the cairn more visible. Gribarth 1626 Glamorgan Records Office.

Y Foel Darw 424m SN 826259

The element darw is the mutated form of tarw 'bull'; the name may be derived from the river Nant Tarw, which is a good hydronym for a strong, fast flowing stream. Alternatively, the name may simply be derived from an area where cattle were grazed; there is a Nant Lloi 'Calf Stream' nearby (8125). However, another option is for the name to be linked to the ritual complex to be found in the valley of Nant Tarw, where there are two stone circles and a stone row to be found nearby. The bull was a common symbol for many prehistoric cultures; animals were an important part of 'Celtic' culture, many such as the bull were revered for their strength. Another name for this spot, on the

Greenwood map of 1828 was Voel Fawr.

Mynydd y Llan 423m SN 791248

It is probable that the Llan in this name records the village of Llanddeusant nearby and may denote this hill as being the area of rough grazing for the village. It is also probable that the name is recent in comparison to Bryn Cedni, which it may have replaced. The meaning of llan is now 'church'; Cornish *lan*, Breton *lann* 'church'.

Bryn Cedni 421m SN 792254

A fairly straightforward explanation of this name can be given once that it is known that the word cedni is a local plural of the word cadno 'fox'; cedni is a variation on cedny 'foxes'.

Pen y Bicws 415m SN 699229

The meaning of the word picws is a small peak, it is a diminutive of a word borrowed from the English, namely pic 'pike, spear'. The hill could be named due to its conical shape, from certain angles. The name Trichrug (697231), is probably the older name; tri 'three' + crug 'hillock, knoll, heap' shows this; there are three Bronze Age cairns to be found here. The 1729 Bowen Map of South Wales one finds Mynydd Tre chrig, Trichrug 1831 OS.

Carn y Pigwn 412m SN 828313

Carn 'cairn' + pigwn 'cone' indicates a peak, especially a pointed peak or one with a cairn; locally pigwn 'cone' is the interpretation. However, when one looks at the OS map one can see that there are cairns here, but not at the very top, at (831313) and (832310). These cairns date from the Bronze Age and funerary urns were found in one. Another name for this general area is that of Mynydd Bach Trecastell 'Little Mountain (of) Trecastell'. A name that probably denotes the rough pasturage used by the villagers of Trecastell. The landscape hereabouts has seen a great deal of historical usage; Roman Camps, a Roman Road as well as Mediaeval enclosures and fields. Pigwn 1832 OS.

Y Drysgol 393m SN 688162

The term trwsgl, trwsgwl, trysgol 'rough, difficult, awkward' are some of the meanings of this topographic term and there are many examples of this word across Wales. Generally, one has to decide whether the term refers to uncultivated land or to land that was hard to cross. They do not necessarily go hand in hand. It is probable that the name here refers to having to tackle heather or tussocky grass, or even patches of stony ground in the area. The name is seen in the Dynefor Deeds as Y dryscale 1566 and Y Droskol 1597.

Twyn Henwen 391m SN 833304

The word twyn 'hill, cairn or a knoll' is quite common and there are a number of other examples of the word can be found in the area, even as a term for a mountain. This feature, a knoll, has been named after the stream, Nant Henwen (8329).

Arhosfa'r Garreg Lwyd 388m SN 805262

The word arhosfa 'stopping place' in the name may refer to the very well preserved Roman Camp that can be seen a little to the West of this point, at (803263). Some propose that arhosfa is a local term for a sheep-walk, sometimes known as an abiding place. The carreg 'rock' + llwyd 'grey' probably referred to the nearby round barrow, which is now turf covered.

Y Foel Deg ar Bedol 385m SN 705160

The initial elements are the mutated form of moel 'hill' + teg 'fair, beautiful'; however, the last element is not arbedol 'keeping, saving'. Here, ar- 'above, facing' is used to describe the hill above the river Nant Pedol [bedol being the mutated form] and its valley Cwm Pedol. The pedol 'horseshoe' probably refers to the deeply incised valley form. Y Foeldeg arbedol 1831 OS.

Bryn Du 384m SN 855255

Bryn 'hill' + du 'black, dark', the name has moved, on the 1888 OS maps it was closer to the top.

Llwyn Cwnstabl 371m SN 778152

The erroneous form Llwynnewmstabl is the only name on the present OS maps anywhere near this small hill; however, this is not 'llwyn grove' with the addition of cwm 'vale' + stabl 'stable'. The llwyn element is correct, but the cwnstabl section of the name is a corruption of the word cwnstabl, borrowed from the English constable. Constables were at one time the castellan, the King's officer in charge of a castle. Llwyn cwnstable 1831 OS.

Y Fedw Fawr 370m SN 804275

The mutated forms of bedw 'birch' + mawr 'large'. Bedw is the name for a very common tree or an area of these trees in upland areas, or anything to do with a birch tree. Old Cornish *bedwen*, Irish *brethe*, Celtic **betu*; from the Indo-European root **buet*, meaning incense or sap, as in the Latin *betulla* 'bitumen of the birch, pitch'. At one time, the tree sap was collected in early spring and used with honey to make a birch beer. Cefn-fedw-fawr 1832 OS.

Y Foel Deg 321m SN 740153

Both the moel 'hill' + teg 'fair, fine, beautiful, warm' are mutated; as a name for a hill it may denote a fine sunny location with good pasture.

Twyn Rhyblid 316m SN 783284

Twyn 'hill, hillock, mountain' + Rhyblid the farm at 780282 [Rhibleid 1831 OS].

Cribyn Du 309m SN 737254

This is the nearest name to this top on the OS maps, cribyn is a diminutive of the word crib 'crest, ridge'.

Twyn y Fan 256m SN 794311

Twyn 'hill, hillock, mountain' + ban 'peak, promontory'; an apt descriptor for a prominent little hill.

Cefn Golau 254m SN 794304

Cefn 'back, ridge' + golau 'light, bright' or golau 'evident'; the hill is quite evident in the landscape despite its stature. However, in many golau names a corruption of olau 'pathways' has taken place. Cefn goleu 1831 OS.

Gwerddon 238m SN 769344

A particularly interesting term to describe a good area of pasture in the hills, gwerddon 'glade, grove, a green area among rocks'.

Carn Goch 236m SN 691243

Carn is a fairly descriptive topographical term; this is shown also in Breton *karn*, Irish *carn* 'pile of rocks'. The word is therefore used to describe a hill with a pile of rocks at its peak; or, at least a cliff which resembles a heap of stones. Looking on the map one will find the huge fortification of Y Gaer Fawr, one of the best hillforts in Britain. This hillfort is defended with some massive stone walls, it is probably a later iron age site, perhaps with post-roman use, and is rather reminiscent of Tre'r Ceiri in North Wales. The location provides good views over the valley of the Tywi, with another smaller fort a little below and a large cairn and burial mounds, it provides a great spot for appreciating these pre-historic complexes,

Allt Troed Rhiwfelen 233m SN 786355

Allt 'bluff, slope' + troed 'base of, foot' + rhiw 'rise, slope' + felen 'yellow'.