

YR WYDDFA

This range is dominated by its highest point, many of the other peaks would be quite dramatic in other settings. One undulating ridge extends northwards and provides a slightly gentler landscape to the crags and cliffs of the main mountain mass. There are a fair number of pre-historic sites showing early land use in these mountains; one of the most surprising finds was that of a crannog settlement and a dugout canoe in the waters of Llyn Llydaw.

Yr Wyddfa 1085m SH 610544

The word *gwyddfa* is derived from *gŵydd* 'grave, burial mound' + *-ma* 'place, site'; the *-ma* ending (here changing to *-fa*) enhances the initial term. Thus *gwyddfa* has an enhanced sense of importance as being 'place of honour, height, throne, mound, tomb, monument'. Some lean towards the whole mountain being the monument, others just the rocky tor and later large cairn at the very top. The peak was also given the name distinction *fawr* 'great' in its first written form of *Weddvavawr* in 1198, its importance as a revered site being made even greater.

It is difficult to be certain about the 'individual' with whom this tomb was associated; it may well have been a memorial for a pre-historic hero if not a vaguely historic one. For many, it was the tomb of the giant Rhita (also known as Rhica or Ritta), a legendary giant who appears in Indo-European fables, who made the cloth for his clothes or cloak out of the beards of those he had slain. There was at one time a large cairn at the top, this was later destroyed in the building of many tourist shelters around the summit; this monument had the name *Carnedd y Cawr* 'the Giant's Cairn'. While the summit itself was also called *Moel y Wyddfa* c.1450 by the bard Lewis Glyn Cothi. This use of the word *moel* 'summit, conical hill, pointed top' probably refers to the pyramid shape of the final rocky tor; or, the pointed or cairned peak.

Wedduavaur 1198 Aberconwy Charter and *Caput Wedua vaur* in a 13th Century version, *Y Wyddfa* 15th C Guto'r Glyn, *Withaw Hille* 1536-39 John Leland, *Y Widna* 1573 Humphrey Llwyd *Cambriae Typus*, *Guydhvaen* 1719 *Glossarium Antiquarium Britannicum*, *Klogwyn Karnedd yr Wydhva* 1722 William Camden, *Y Wyddfa* 1781 Thomas Pennant, *Y Wyddfa* 1838 OS.

Carnedd Igin 1065m SH 610552

Carnedd Ugain is the name on the OS maps; although the use of *carnedd* 'cairn, tumulus, mound' is correct, the term *ugain* 'twenty' is totally wrong. How this name was arrived at by the OS is anyone's guess. *Carnedd Igin* or *Igyn* is probably the best forms of the name; with *Igin/Igyn* being a personal name. One should note that in local legend, this is the dwelling place of a giant called *Igin*. Other explanations have been directed towards it being linked to (*b*)*igin* 'peak', a corruption of *y gaing* 'the wedge, lump', as well as *digu* 'unloved', or even *digus* 'angry'. *Carnedd Higin* 1719 *Glossarium Antiquarium Britannicum*, *Carnedd Igyn* 1757, *Carnedd Igin* 1839 Tithe Map, *Carnedd Igin* 1854 Vaynol Manuscripts.

Crib Goch 921m SH 625553

A straightforward name *crib* 'crest, peak, ridge' + *coch* 'ruddy, scarlet, brown'. *Crib Goch* is a fine and impressive feature and the rocks are certainly reddish in colour; particularly on a sunny summer evening as the cliffs take on an almost golden glow. *Crib* is from the Brittonic **cripa* and is cognate with Cornish *krib*, Breton *krib*. This was noted as *Y gribgoch* and *Caput Grybgoch* in the *Aberconwy Charter* 1198, *Crib Coch* 1781 Thomas Pennant, *Crib-goch* 1838 OS.

Y Lliwedd 898m SH 622553

There have been a number of theories put forward to explain the name of this mountain; perhaps the most likely are the ones based on the word *lliw* 'tint, colour, hue'. One can compare the Old Cornish *liu* 'colour', Old Breton *liou*, Irish *lí*, Old Irish *li*, *lli* 'colour': all from the Celtic **lī-uo-* from the root **(s)lī-* 'glasaid'; this also gave the Latin *līuor* 'greyish blue'. This Latin *līuor* form is of

interest as one could present an argument for a name such as *lliw* 'grey/grey blue' + (*g*)*wedd* 'aspect, face' to denote a grey or blue mountain. If 'tint', it may even denote a stained mountain, perhaps because of the quartz streaks across its main face.

Other possible meanings are available for *lliw* 'form, shape' + (*g*)*wedd* 'yoke, harness'. This mountain, with its distinctive twin peaks, does have a shape reminiscent of a yoke. Another meaning for the word *lliw* 'open, obvious' could be inferred if this is used in an old sense of prominence. One should also note the Old Irish *lia* 'stone' a term that could apply here. A number of *-ed* endings could be linked to one of the *lliw* meanings as has been put forward by some. In the past some have postulated that it is in fact a personal name derived from the word *lliw*, similar to the Latin which has given the personal names *Livia* and *Livius*.

The presence of a *lliwed* 'troop, host', Old Breton *liuuet* 'a group of men' this is perhaps supported by; or rather, supports the legend that has been associated with the mountain. The one where King Arthur's men are resting in a cave on the mountain; where they await the call to save Britain once more; this is a favourite for many. *Lliwedd yr Aran* 1781 Thomas Pennant, *Lliwedd* 1838 OS, *Crib y Lliwedd* 1781 Myrddin Fardd.

Y Gyrn Las 850m SH 612559

One can translate this name as *curn*, *cyrn* 'heap, pile, pyramid' + *glas* 'grey' and not the later meanings of *glas* 'blue' and/or 'verdant'. This is probably the name of the mountain as it is seen from the valley, it does not look quite as significantly cone; or, pyramidal in shape from other angles. The word *curn*, *cyrn* is a feminine singular and should not be confused with the term *cyrn* 'horns', a plural of the word *corn* 'horn'. *Cyrn-las* 1838 OS.

Yr Aran 747m SH 604515

There are several similar meanings to the element *ar(d)*- (i) high (ii) height, (iii) cape, point, promontory, the element is also linked to *ardd* 'upland'; Old Irish *aird*, *ardd* 'upland, high land' e.g. An Bhinn Ard 'the high peak'. The ending *-an* can be a diminutive or a verb-noun ending. Although not as high as many of the mountains around it, this peak is certainly prominent. *Yr Aran* 1838 OS.

Moel Eilio 726m SH 556577

Depending on the viewpoint, this mountain could be seen to be *moel* 'bare rounded hill'; or, *moel* 'conical hill'. One must be careful about the tendency for what is termed 'confirmation bias'; where one tends to see what one wants to find in a name or location and ignore other factors. *Eilio* or *Eiliaw* is a personal name, a form of the name *Eliudd*, *Eilydd*, or another form as seen in the saints name *Sant Eliud*. However, there may have been another meaning *ail*, *eil* 'weaving; lean-to, wattle building' can also infer enclosure(s) and one should note that there were a number of settlement areas in the cwms below at one time; or, with less certainty the shape of the hill may have reminded earlier inhabitants of the shape of a wattle building. There is a large but much disturbed Bronze Age cairn at the summit. *Myleilio* 1538 Wynnstay Manuscripts, *Moel Eilio* 1810 Thomas Pennant, *Moel Eilian* 1838 Tithe Map, *Moel Eilio* 1838 OS.

Moel Cynghorion 673m SH 585563

Another *moel* which is either a rounded or a pointed top depending on where it is being viewed from. *Cynghorion* is the plural of the word *cyngor* 'advice, counsel, gathering'. It may be rather difficult to relate the meanings to the landscape; however, local legend has the place as a meeting point for local chieftains to meet to discuss important matters. One must remember that not only was there an oral tradition in Wales there was also a tradition of gathering outside. A report regarding gatherings in Arfon, sent to the Council of the Marches of Wales at the end of the Sixteenth Century, noted:

U'pon the Sondaies and hollidaies the multitude of all sortes of men and woomen and childerne of

everie parishe doe use to meete in sondrie places either one some hill or one the side of some mountain where their harpers and crowthers singe them songs of the doeinges of their ancestors, namelie, of their wars againste the Kings of this realme and the English nacion, and then do they ripp upp their petigres at length howe eche of them is discended from those their ould princs. Here alsoe doe they spende their time in hearinge some part of the lives of Thalaasyn, Marlin, Beno, Pybbe, Jermon, and suche other the intended prophets and saincts of the cuntrie.' [Hen Chwedlau': Sir Ifor Williams, Cymmrodorion, 1946-7]

One early interpretation of the name was as Y Foel Greorion; *greorion* is the plural of *grëwr*, *greor* 'herdsman, shepherd'; however, this would require a great deal of corruption to become anything like *cynghorion*. For others, the word *cynorion*, the plural of *cynor* 'hunter' may well be the descriptor: Leland describes the presence of woods and deer in his Itinerary through Wales 1536-9. Otherwise, *cynhorion* as the word plural of *cynnor* 'door-post, entrance, approach' could be closer to the meaning as it may reflect the mountains position between two important passes. Moel Cynhorion 1781 and Moel y Cynghorion 1783 Thomas Pennant, Moel y cynghorion 1838 OS, Moel gyng horion 1839 Tithe Map, Moel Greorion 1908 Griffith Tecwyn Parry.

Llechog 650m SH 537598

Llech 'slab, rock', Old Welsh *lech* 'flat stone, slab' + *-og* 'likeness to, associated with'; therefore, a rocky or slabby area of mountain and exactly what is found. Llechog 1838 OS.

Y Foel Gron 629m SH 560569

This is a rounded hill, when viewed from the West; *gron* is the lenited form of *cron* the feminine adjective of *crwn* 'round, circular, rotund'; Cornish *cren*, Old Breton *cron*. The name form on the OS map is given as being just Foel Gron, this is not grammatically correct, the lenited foel form shows that there should be a definite article 'y' before the word.

Gallt y Wenallt 619m SH 643533

There are plenty of choices here as to the meaning of the term *allt* in this name, as it appears twice. *Gallt* is the same as *allt*, the *g-* has been added through vocalisation over the years. *Wenallt* is a combination of (*g*)*wen* [the feminine form of *gwyn*] 'white, pale, bright, shining' + *allt* 'hill(side), (steep) gradient, bluff, cliff; woods, wooded slope'. It is attempting to denote a bluff with a bright slope; that is, one that is south facing and catches the sun.

Diffwys 609m SH 636553

The name *diffwys* 'precipice' is not on the present day OS maps; however, this name has been used for generations of farmers in the area. The Aberconwy Charter has: ad caput Wregyssauc 'to the head of Gwregysog' for this section between Crib Goch and Sedem Peris 'Peris's Seat' (i.e. Gorffwysfa). *Gwregys* 'belt, + *-og* 'associated with' is a term that could either mean an area being enclosed; or, a place which is connected or linked. It is difficult to defend the appearance of the ridiculous name 'The Horns', a little further on on this ridge, on the OS map.

Y Graig Wen 608m SH 594507

The as the initial word *craig* 'rock, crag' is feminine, it influences the 'gender' of the next element in the name. Therefore, *gwyn* 'white, bright' cannot be found after the word *craig*, it must be the feminine form for white, namely (*g*)*wen*, *Craig Wen* on the present day OS map. Apart from the actual colour of the rock, which could be a gray and thus able to be described as being white, the probability was that this rock was in a bright sunny area. Y Graig wen 1838 OS.

Y Foel Goch 605m SH 571563

The word *coch* 'red, tan, brown' can be used to denote the colour of rocks or vegetation, especially the golden colour of bracken and the reddish browns of bilberry in the autumn. Moel Goch 1838

OS.

Tryfan 570m SH 598579

This is not the famous mountain of the same name, but a long ridge line with a number of low tops extending down from Llechog. It reinforces the idea that the name Tryfan is not made up of the element *tri* 'three' + *ban* 'peak, point, top'. This is well defined ridge or crest where the element *try-* 'much, very' + *ban* 'crest, peak, top' is a better explanation. Locally one finds the names Tryfan Mawr and Tryfan Bach in use, i.e. just two tops.

Carreg Gwalch 545m SH 641553

Carreg 'stone' + *gwalch* 'hawk'; it is difficult to decide which particular kind of hawk (*falconidae*) was nesting on a cliff.

Cefn Du 441m SH 508604

The use of the term *cefn* 'back, ridge, spur' is usually one that gives the sense of a ridge of some form; sometimes *cefn* 'rising hill, slope' + *du* 'black, dark'. The heathery slopes and top of this hill are probably responsible for the use of *du* 'dark' in this descriptor.

Derlwyn 416m SH 588586

A fairly simple name derived from *der(w)* 'oak' + (*l*)*lwyn* 'grove'. *Derw* is one plural of the word *dar* 'oaktree' from the Indo-European **doru* 'small wood'. However, it must be noted that the word *derw* was sometimes used to denote trees in general. Derlwyn 1838 OS.

Pannelau 338m SH 673502

Panelau is a variant form of the word *pannwl* 'small valley, hollow, furrow'; the name is to be seen on the first series OS maps of 1838.

Carreg Lefain 336m SH 541613

Echo rock is the explanation for the name of this low top at the end of the ridge extending down from Cefn Du; the term is seen in a number of locations around Wales. *Lefain* is the lenited form of the word *llefain* 'cry, shout'; so this is a *carreg* 'rock' that shouts back.