

## YR WYDDFA

The passes here are nearly all high, the only one that was regularly used for travel rather than for sometimes moving livestock was Bwlch Maesgwm between Llanberis and Rhyd Ddu.

### **Bwlch Carreg y Gigfran SH 580562**

Carreg 'rock, stone' + y 'the' + cigfran 'raven'; one often sees ravens on a prominent rock or crag in the mountains. Ravens were seen as birds of wisdom and prophecy; it was also the bird favoured by the solar deity Lleu (Lugh).

### **Bwlch Ciliau SH 620537**

This is the plural of the word cil this has two meanings: 'corner, angle', or 'recess, nook'. Any gully, hollow or recess in a mountain slope could be termed cil; there are a great many on either side of this bwlch 'pass'.

### **Bwlch Coch SH 621552**

Although the usual use of the colour term word coch 'red' is usual today, it could at one time be used to describe various reddish to brown to orange tints.

### **Bwlch Cwm Brwynog SH 591558**

A cwm 'valley' + brwynog 'full of rushes' rather than brwynog 'sorrowful, sad'. Mentioned by William Bingley c. 1798 in his book *Tour Round North Wales* and later by 1819 Thomas Evans in his *Walk Through Wales*.

### **Bwlch Cwm Cesig SH 558572**

A cwm 'cirque, valley' where cesig 'mares' gathered. Although the horse had differing symbolic aspects, mares were generally seen as symbols of fertility and bounty. Even until quite recently, the ownership of horses, especially mares with foals, was seen as a sign of wealth and prestige.

### **Bwlch Cwm Llan SH 605522**

Cwm Llein on the early maps; llain, llein 'sword' or 'narrow strip of land'; however, in the Aberconwy Charter the river was called the Llem, one must decide between llem 'sharp' or a corruption of llam a descriptive term for a river 'leaping' down.

### **Bwlch Garw SH 643552**

The term garw has two possible meanings here: 'craggy, rough, rugged'; or, 'dire, perilous, terrible'. It could certainly refer to the difficulty in getting to or over the bwlch 'pass' because of the rocky ground. In fact the spot has found the rather ridiculous name The Horns appearing, but only on the modern series of maps; when and why this tedious imposition appeared is not of interest, it should just be removed.

### **Bwlch Geifr SH 626557**

This could give a sense of only where geifr 'goats' would usually use; they stay further up than sheep and graze on areas not usually accessible to sheep. Another important point in assessing this location is to realise a slightly different meaning to the term bwlch 'break, notch, gap'.

### **Bwlch Glas SH 608549**

In many places, the colour described by the term glas is a greenish grey or glaucous tint. Bwlch-glas 1838 OS.

### **Bwlch Gwynt SH 606565**

A very apt name for a bwlch 'pass'; however, by using the term gwynt 'breeze, blow, gale' for this

pass, it would tend to show that this was a very windy spot. The cwm below has the local name of Cwm Hetiau 'cwm (of the) hats', because in the early days of the railway here, the carriages were open. On reaching this particularly open area, a gust of wind would often blast the hats off the head of an unsuspecting passenger and into the cwm below.

#### **Bwlch Llechog SH 606566**

Llech 'slate, flagstone, flat rock' + -og 'pertaining to'; this gives the sense of a slabby area of rock which is a good description of the cliffs here when seen from the valley.

#### **Bwlch Maenderyn SH 605530**

Maen 'rock' + (a)deryn 'bird'. The bird associated with high rocky places is the raven; however, peregrines are found high up on valley sides looking out for potential prey.

#### **Bwlch Maenllys SH 604570**

The maen 'rock, stone' is straightforward; however, one has to decide whether one has: llys 'slime, scum': llys 'plants, vegetation': or, a corruption of llus 'bilberry'. Any interpretation as to the final element of the name would be possible.

#### **Bwlch Maesgwm SH 572559**

Maes signifies a tract of land of no particular size + cwm 'valley'. However, the original name for the pass was Bwlch Adwy'r Waen 1838 OS; adwy 'entrance' + 'r 'the' + waun 'moor'.

#### **Bwlch Main SH 606539**

Narrow or Rocky. The pass is indeed main narrow'; however, it must be remembered that the word main was an old form of the word and is also an old plural ' for maen 'stone, rock'. Bwlch-y-main 1838 OS.

#### **Bwlch Moch SH 633553**

Another pass with the descriptor moch; it is easier to accept moch 'pig, swine' here, rather than the obscure moch 'soonest, swiftest', cognate to Old Irish *mó*, *mos*-, *mus*-, Middle Irish *moch* 'early'.

#### **Bwlch Nudd SH 618552**

The bwlch 'notch, gap' here is very high, where the nudd 'mist, fog' reference is probably due to the broken wisps of cloud often to be seen here. Nudd is also a Middle Welsh form of the name Nodens, a 'Celtic' god; Nudd was the father Gwyn ap Nudd who was the king of the Tylwyth Teg 'fair folk' and the ruler of Annwfn 'underworld'.

#### **Bwlch Uffern SH 611553**

This particular bwlch is quite small so the sense 'notch, gap, groove' would be better for the top of this large gully. The word uffern 'hell' is probably used figuratively here to describe a very difficult and dangerous place to find oneself in, if having to go there to retrieve sheep.

#### **Bwlch y Saethau SH 614542**

This col led to what was, according to legend, the site of the supposed King Arthur's last battle. In the battle he was slain by a volley of arrows, a story linked to many other sites around Britain. Perhaps the word saethau 'arrows' refers to the vertical rock formations in the area. Bwlch y Saethe 1775 Bangor Manuscripts.

#### **Bwlch yr Wyddfa SH 610557**

Not a pass in a through valley sense, this is the only way through between big cliffs to the upper part of the mountain, and as such it is used by the railway and the Llanberis Path.

### **Bwlch yr Eisteddfa SH 647557**

Bwlch 'pass' + 'the' + eisteddfa 'chair, seat', perhaps due to shape of some mediaeval seats or a saddle shape; although it could also infer a resting place. One should note that the old hotel at the top of the pass was called Gorffwysfa 'resting place'; the name on the map is now Pen y Pass. There is also an eisteddfa as a pass name in the upper Rheidiol, namely Eisteddfa Gurig. According to legend, a local giantess was carrying a heap of white rocks in her apron to decorate her husband's grave; unfortunately a string on the apron broke and the quartz rocks fell to the ground. The name for the pile of white rock, one of two cairns close to the top, was Barclodiad y Gawres 'Giantess's Apronful'; this, or very similar forms of the story is linked to a number of sites.

In **Beddgelert: its facts, fairies and folk-lore. 1899 DE Jenkins, WB Jones** we find 'there used to be two large heaps of stones, one of which was completely scattered when the houses were built, and the other was partly destroyed in order to get the stones that were in it'. A cist and some artefacts were found in the first one destroyed. A little below, on the Llanberis side, were some seven or eight long graves that are now destroyed. The location must have retained an importance for a long time, as Edward Lhuyd c.1700 mentioned that his guide to the area walked nine times around one of the cairns 'repeating the Lord's Prayer as rapidly as he ever could'.

sedem peris 1198 Aberconwy Charter, Bwlch yr eisteddfa c.1700 Parochialia, Bwlch yr Eisteddfa 1795 John Evans Map of North Wales.