

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 mutated 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 fawr 'great' in its first written form of Weddvavawr in 1198, its importance as a revered site 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 '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- 'glasaidh'; 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'. Cyn-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:

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.

'Upon 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 doeings of theire ancestors, namelie, of theire wars againste the Kings of this realme and the English nacion, and then do they ripp upp theire petigres at length howe eche of them is discended from those theire ould pryncs. Here alsoe doe they spende theire 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]

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 mutated 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 mutated 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, wyn 'white, bright' cannot be found after the word craig, it must be the feminine form for white, namely wen, Craig Wen on the present day OS map. Apart from the actual colour of the rock, which could be 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.

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'. 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 mutated form of the word llefain 'cry, shout'.