

YR ARENIG

Most of the passes in the northern part of these hills try and skirt around the rather bleak and open moorland; travelling through the terrain would have been very difficult. Further South, a number of routeways can be seen.

Bwlch Blaen y Cwm SH 873467

A simple descriptor of a *bwlch* 'pass' + *blaen* 'head, end' + *y* 'the' + *cwm* 'valley', where most are probably located. Blaen -y-cwm 1838 AO.

Bwlch Carreg y Frân SH 734454

There are many locations with this name; in the mountains the *carreg* 'stone, rock' + *y* 'the' + *brân* 'crow'; is usually linked to *cigfran* 'raven'. Ravens were generally associated with death, while crows were also a bad omen if you saw just the one, although seeing two crows was a sign of good luck.

Bwlch Goriwared SH 765245

Gor 'above' + (*g*)*warded*, (*g*)*waered* 'downward sloping, descent, declivity'; Old Welsh *gwoiret* from the Celtic word **uo-ad-ret* 'descend'. In French, the word *adret* is used for a sunny, south-facing slope. Bwlch Gorwaered 1838 OS.

Bwlch Graianog SH 890422

A fairly straightforward name, *graianog*, *graeanog* 'stony, gravelly'.

Bwlch Gwyn SH 755242

It is difficult to see how colour terms are used in the landscape; the term *gwyn* 'white' might be an allusion to brightness, the pale colour of rocks, or even snows. However, it should be noted that in 'Celtic' culture the colour white was associated with the South, a southerly wind was a white wind, also a favourable direction or way through difficulties might also be viewed as being white. This pass was quite important at one time and it heads almost directly North/South through the hills.

Bwlch Llwyd SH 847337

Apart from a reference to colour either as *llwyd* 'grey'; or, even a 'brown, russet' there are a number of other meanings, some of which may be in a figurative sense, such as 'ancient' or 'undistinguished'.

Bwlch Pen y Feidiog SH 783332

Beidiog is one name for the plants in the *Artemisia* genus; the 'Lady's Mantle' *Alchemilla vulgaris* is just one of this group, many of which are found in the mountains.

Bwlch y Bi SH 780355

Bi(w) is an old word for cattle, one can also find *bi*, *bu* 'cattle' in names such as Perth y Bi or Buarth to support this. Bwlch y Bi 1838 OS.

Bwlch y Buarth SH 840395

This is the pass that was used by the old railway to get round the base of Arenig Fawr, it was an important way through the mountains even before Roman occupation. The term *buarth* usually denotes a 'cattle enclosure'; or, a 'milking yard'. See Bwlch y Bi above.

Bwlch y Llu SH 750387

The word *llu* 'a host, army' is probably correct, the proximity of this pass to Tomen y Mur, a Roman fort at one time, later a medieval stronghold would support this. Bwlch y Llu 1837 OS.

Bwlch y Pentre SH 883457

The name of this pass refers to *pen* 'head, end, extremity' + *tref* 'dwelling, farmstead'; also seen in the stream name Nant y Pentref below, not *pentref* 'village'. Bwlch-y-pentre 1838 OS.

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