

BLACK MOUNTAINS/MYNYDD Y GADER

There would have been more rock and cliff names in this area at one time. The knowledge of names having been lost as agricultural practice has changed with less shepherding on the hills and rural depopulation gathering pace. However, the main cause in the loss of names is the decline in the use of the Welsh language over the centuries; particularly during the Victorian Era with its 'progressive' ideas about education and the need for Welsh to be used. Some of the 'lost' names may still survive in local usage, though they will soon need to be recorded.

Y Darren Ddu (Black Darren) SO 293303

This is the name given on the OS maps; however, it is probable that this is a direct translation of an original name which was probably Y Darren Ddu. When the change occurred is hard to pinpoint, although it is probably quite late on. It must be remembered that much of Herefordshire, particularly the areas to the west of the Wye, were Welsh speaking well into the 17C.

Bryniog SO 198224

The term bryniog 'hilly' seems a little out of place for as a name for some rocks; although, this is the only name for this little patch of rough ground. An alternative might be breuan, brefan 'carrion crow, raven' + -og 'tending to, prevalence of', to denote the prevalence of ravens.

Craig Ddu SO 288265 .

Once again the word du crops up to denote a site where a dark or shaded aspect, north-easterly at this location, has placed the feature in shadow.

Y Darren SO 296244, SO 212212

The tarren 'cliff, crag'; many of these have been formed due to landslides.

Y Graig SO 255161

The use of the definite article y 'the' gives the feature or name a degree of importance as well as mutating in this case.

Tarren Goch/Red Darren SO 295296

A tarren 'crag' that looks red due to the presence of sandstone; or, rocks tinted by seepage of water through the red sandstones. Most of the rocks in the area are of the Old Red Sandstone group and date from the Devonian period. The sequence of rocks are made up of sandstones, mudstones and siltstones and the area shows the erosive effects of Glaciation.

Tarren yr Esgob SO 237314

This cliff name is very probably linked to esgob 'bishop', as it is above Capel y Ffin. However, as in other locations a local variation of either ysbig 'spike, pointed'; or, ysgyb 'sheaf of corn', vocalised as esbog, esgob could be in place. Taren'r Esgob 1832 OS.