

CADER IDRIS

The largest cliffs are on the northern slopes of Cader Idris; forming a striking rampart which then curves round to the West in a huge arc of steep slopes and cliffs. Other hills have numerous steep facets, Craig yr Aderyn probably being the most famous, but the geology changes to the East of the Bala Fault and the rocks do not form impressive cliffs. The use of *tarren* is generally taken to be a hill name in this area and not really a cliff like feature as found further South in Wales; one can also note that there is no use of the term *clogwyn* here. This area has a number of cliff names taken from the farms or features below; some of these may not be included.

Cerrig Cochion SH 703135

Cerrig 'rocks' + *coch* 'red' (*cochion* is the plural form, to agree with the plural of *carreg* 'rock'), is a toponym that is not used on the OS maps. As the information was not there, there was a tendency for some to name the cliff after the hill Cyfrwy, which itself was named after the *bwlch* 'pass'.

Cerrig Nimbwl SH 716139

There was one exasperated statement in an old Welsh Journal ... 'Beth a olyga Ceryg y Nimbwl, os nad ceryg y nifwl' 1886 Y Geninen [What is the meaning of Ceryg y Nimbwl, if not rocks of the mists?]. The *nifwl* 'niwl, cwmwl' in this reference is cognate with Old Breton *nem* 'heavens, sky', Middle Breton *neff* 'sky'; linked to Old English *nifol* 'dark, misty'; all are derived from the Indo-European **nebos* 'cloud, mist'. Cerig Nimbwl 6" 1840-80 OS.

Craig Buarth-glas SH 827160

Named after an old *ffarm* Buarth Glas; there is not much evidence of the *buarth* as the main road now runs through the area where the farmstead was located.

Craig Cwm Amarch SH 710117

The name Dol-amarch is to be found in the Parochialia c.1700 and the form Cwm-ammarch in the 1838 OS map; the farm name in the 1840-80 6" series was given as Pentre dol-amarch. The *dol* 'meadow' element points this to being a name taken from the low lying area; which is in fact a delta of post-glacial debris. Thus the name could be from *am-* a prefix with strengthening sense + *march* 'horse'. If the toponym is actually *amarch* 'dishonour, shame' or 'oppression', it may be an attempt to describe a poor area of pasture perhaps.

Craig Cwm Llwyd SH 647122

Named after the *cwm* 'valley' + *llwyd* 'grey'.

Craig Fach Goch SH 608013

Named after the *ffarm* Fach Goch; the *fach* may refer to *bach* 'hook, bent' rather than *bach* 'small'.

Craig Goch SH 714084

This area of cliff that's left after a huge landslide, the *coch* 'reddish' colour here is that of the winter hues of purples and browns of the vast amount of bilberries and heather plants found here. Y graig koch c.1700 Parochialia.

Craig Hen-gae SH 758104

The cliff name is from an farm name *hen* 'old, original' + *cae* 'field, enclosing'; it could therefore denote one of the first land-holding in the valley.

Craig Las SH 673134

Craig 'cliff, rock' + (*g*)*las* 'grey, glaucous'; this is a name for the cliffs of Tyrrau Mawr, the name is not on the OS map.

Craig Lwyd SH 654108

Sometimes, as here, there is very little in the way of an actual cliff, just patches of rocks and steep ground. One must remember that a rocky slope such as this would have had its vegetation 'burnt' in the summer and that the colour term *llwyd* is used to denote many reddish hues not just *llwyd* 'grey'.

Craig Maesglase SH 827140

The name is derived from the name of the farm below, which is itself a corruption of *Maesglasfre*.

Craig Pentref SH 668058

This *craig* 'cliff' is close to the *pentref* 'village' of *Abergynolwyn*.

Craig Pen y Meini SH 861093

Pen 'top, head' + *y* 'the' + *meini* 'stones' is also the name of the farm below; one has to decide which came first. *Penmeini* 1682 *Peniarth Manuscripts*, *Penmeini* 1796 *Cambrian Register*.

Craig Rhiw-erch SH 819152

The *rhiw* 'slope' here is incredibly steep; walking up (or down) this ridiculously steep slope would be dangerous. One has to decide between: *erch* 'mottled, variegated, reddish'; or, *erch* 'dire, hideous'.

Craig Rhwyddfor SH 734122

Locally, some lean towards the first element as being *rhwyf*, *rhwy* 'king, lord, chieftain, leader'; others support one of the numerous senses for the word *rhwydd*, such as - 'easy', 'unhindered', 'open'. If the descriptor is actually *rhwyddfor*, then it may refer to the way the valley breaches the high mountains? *Kwmrhwythor* 1609 & *Cwm Rhyddor* 1657 *Maesyneuadd manuscripts*, *Kwm y Rhwyddor* c.1700 *Parochialia*, '*Cwm Rhwyddor*, the coom of free passage' 1796 *Cambrian Register*, *Craig Cwm-rhwyddfor* 1837 AO.

Craig y Bwlch SH 800167

The *bwlch* 'pass' is that of *Bwlch Oerddrws*, it has been a very important pass through the mountains for many

Craig y Llam SH 748127

The word *llam* 'leap, leaping'; or, 'plummeting' could simply be used to describe a very steep and precipitous cliff. The name could refer to the presence of *llamysten* 'Sparrow Hawk: *Accipiter nisus*'. The form *Kraig y Lham* appeared alongside the name *Y Tyrre hirion* 'the tall towers' in the *Parochialia*, c.1700, these towers are the large vegetated buttresses along the southern side of *Cwm Rhwyddfor*. Immediately above the little lake of *Llyn Bach/Llyn Y Tri Greyenyn* at the top of the pass, one notable buttress was called *Pen y Delyn*.

Craig y Llyn SH 660115

This is still being written with hyphens, which are not needed; the lake in question is *Llyn Cyri*.

Craig yr Aderyn SH 643069

Craig 'crag' + *yr* 'the' + *aderyn* 'bird'; there is a famous colony of Cormorants: *Phalacrocorax carbo* to be found here as well as other cliff dwelling birds. However, the name could also be for the shape of the hill and the rocks above, as from further down the valley they seem to resemble the form of a bird with its wing outspread.

Cribin Fawr SH 801152

Crib 'crest' + *-in* 'a diminutive ending' is being described as *fawr* 'large' in comparison to the **Cribin Fach 800158** which is the lesser or smaller of the two.

Daear Fawr SH 703117

There is not much of a cliff here, the name describes a very rough area with large boulders and uneven terrain where it is not easy to gather sheep but is a good place for foxes - *daear* 'ground, earth, land' + *mawr* 'big' or 'difficult, rough'. Daear Fawr 6" 1840-80 OS.

Gallt Ffynnon yr Hydd SH 609117

The naming of this sea-level spring might be *gallt* 'bluff' + *ffynnon* 'spring, source' + *yr* 'the' + *hydd* 'stag', Middle Welsh *hyd* 'stag', denoting a spot where animals come down to drink. However, as this spring is a chalybeate, a spring containing mineral salts including salts of iron, it would have a taste of iron and a rusty tinge to it as well as rust deposits. This rusty colouring would bring to mind the word *rhudd* 'red, ruddy, brown'; this word is often confused with the similar sounding *yr hydd* 'the stag'. Gallt-ffynnon-yr-hydd 1837 OS.

Gesail SH 743136

The name is not marked on the present day map; this area of cliffs does fit the term *gesail* 'nook, recess'. However, it may be the location for one of the cliff names 'lost' since the Parochialia of Edward Lhuyd.

Tap y Nyth SH 729156

The name *tap* 'small cliff; ledge, shelf' + *y* 'the' + *nyth* 'nest' may be describing the location of a prominent or obvious nesting area, a number of mountain birds do construct large nests. The word *nyth* as well as the Old Cornish '*neid*', Old Irish '*net*' are from the Indo-European **nizdo-*.

Tap Ffridd Windo SH 679117

The *ffridd* 'mountain pasture' where this *tap* 'small cliff, crag' is to be found suffers from some very windy conditions according to the local slang term *windo* – a variant of *gwyntog* 'windy'.

Tapiau'r Bele SH 729152

Tapiau is the plural of the word *tap* 'cliff, overhang'; however, it is a term which can also infer 'ledge, shelf'. The word *bele* can denote two differing sets of beasts; either, 'marten, pine marten, weasel' or 'wolf, predatory beast'.

Tapiau Cenawon SH 739133

The term *cenawon* is a plural of *cenau* 'bear cub, wolf pup'; however, in the locality, the term is also used to describe 'foxes' in general. Middle Irish *cano, cana* 'wolves'.

Tapiau Gwartheg SH 696130

These *tapiau* the plural of *tap* would seem to be a place where the *gwartheg* 'cattle' would gather. They are very high up on the mountain and show that the hillsides were at one time grazed by cattle rather than sheep. Some cattle are still grazed all year round out in the open by some farms.

Tarren Cwm Ffernol SH 660018

This name is used for a hill name on the present day OS map; however, this *tarren* 'cliff, steep slope' is the name for a curve of steep rocks at the head of the valley of Cwm Ffernol.

Twll y Gwter SH 744142

This name is not on the OS maps; the *twll* 'hole, hollow, cave' + *y* 'the' + *gwter* 'gutter, channel' describes the narrow corner or gully in cliffs here.

Tap Du/ Twr Du SH 719135

There is no name for this cliff on the maps, the local name is either *tap* 'crag'; or, *twr* 'pile' + *du* 'black, dark'. The name can be seen on the early 6" 1848-80 OS and the second series 6" OS maps

of 1888-1913.

Twr Glas SH 670164

This short line of broken cliff is described as *twr* 'heap, pile' + *glas* 'grey, greenish grey' 6" 1840-80 OS. The word *twr* 'heap, pile' is from the Old Welsh *twrr* 'heap, pile' and is cognate to the Irish *torr* 'lofty hill, mound'. It is easily mixed up with the apparently borrowed *tŵr* 'tower, keep'; perhaps from Old French *tor* 'tower'; there seems to be disagreement among etymologists as to the origin and development of the words.

Twr Maen SH 711121

One can choose which combination; either a *twr* 'pile, heap' or *tŵr* 'tower' + *maen* 'stone' or *main* 'thin': local usage leans towards *Tŵr Main*? However, this cliffline was also known to many as *Craig Cau* (or sometimes *Craig Cae*) a name still seen today a little way to the North. The cliff was recorded as '*Kraig y Kay odhiar lyn y Kay*' in the Parochialia c.1700. Part of the cliff has a name used by rock-climbers, the made up name, *Pencoed Pillar*.

Y Daran SH 646138

It is likely that the name *Y Darren* was here originally. *Daren* 6" 1840-80 OS.

Y Gau Craig SH 745145

The word *cau* 'enclosed, sheltered' is a very common term in the landscape and is a very good descriptor of this little cwm overlooked by this *craig* 'rock, cliff'.