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THE PLACE-NAMES OF ANGLESEY

1996

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The Administrative Sub-Divisions of Anglesey — an historical review of place-names

§ 1–1 Môn/Anglesey

The name, in the form of *Mona*, first appears during the Roman period. Julius Caesar in his description of the conquest of the Celts of Gaul (*c.*51 BC) refers to Mona but uncertainty surrounds the reference since Caesar could well be alluding to the island nowadays known as the Isle of Man rather than to the island of Anglesey.

A century or so later, Pliny the Elder (AD 23/24–79) also refers to Mona in his *Natural History* and adds the militarily significant piece of information that it was located 200 miles from Camulodunum (Colchester).

Cornelius Tacitus, the Roman historian, is quite clearly referring to Ynys Môn in his often quoted description of the Roman onslaught on the island under the leadership of Suetonius Paulinus in AD 60. The *Monam Insula*, whose invasion is so graphically chronicled in his 'Annales', is unquestionably Anglesey. His comment, which clearly implies that the island had become a power base of some importance for the besieged Celts, merits quotation in full:

> *... igitur Monam Insulam incolis validam et receptaculum perfugarum aggredi parat.*
>
> ('... for its inhabitants, Mona is ready to declare itself a powerful island and a haven for deserters', or, in the view of some translators: 'a rendezvous for dissenting refugees'.)

Ptolemy, a Greek scholar working at Alexandria in Egypt in the second century, also appears to have been aware of Anglesey's existence. Ptolemy combined scholarship in both the fields of geography and mathematics and uses the Greek form *Móva* to designate the island in his 'Guide to Geography'.

The precise significance of the Celtic form *Môn*, from which the Latinised *Mona* was derived, remains quite obscure. Its first documented form relates to the sixth century and occurs in the Book of Taliesin (alongside a reference to Menai). It is thus a place-name of considerable antiquity and may even

represent one of a group of relic toponyms in Wales which are pre-Celtic in origin. Melville Richards, whose contribution to place-name research in Wales was so massive and authoritative, took the view that the name Môn could not be satisfactorily interpreted.

The alternative, though not necessarily English form *Anglesey*, is far more amenable to explanation, being derived from the Scandinavian name *Ongulsey*, the *Island of Ongull*. Anglesey incorporates the personal name Ongull, presumably that of a Viking leader, whilst the *–ey* suffix, which also occurs in Bardsey, Wallasey and Orkney, equates with the Scandinavian designation for an island. Gradually the name came to be regarded as the simplistic identification of 'the island of the Angles' and doubtless English influences did operate to bring about the conversion of the prefix to *Angle*.

Several early references exist to the island as *Môn*. The name was widely used throughout the mediaeval period and its portrayal by Gerald the Welshman as *Môn Mam Cymru* gained such currency that it was quoted repeatedly in virtually every subsequent account of the island.

Gerald expressed the view that:

> This island produces far more grain than any other part of Wales. In the Welsh language, it has always been called *Môn mam Cymru*, which means 'Mona the mother of Wales'. When crops have failed in all other regions, this island from the richness of its soil and its abundant produce has been able to supply all Wales. — *Itinerarium Kambriae* (1191)

Whilst evidence suggests that Anglesey may well have functioned in Gerald's day as the granary of Gwynedd, his general assertion seems somewhat exaggerated and needs to be treated with reservation.

§ 1–2 Anglesey: its emergence as a County

Prior to the Edwardian Conquest and the defeat of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, the last Prince of Gwynedd, Anglesey formed part of Gwynedd Is-Conwy, a territory which incorporated the prince's lands to the west of the Conwy Valley. The Statute of Rhuddlan (1284), imposed in the aftermath of the Conquest, brought about a comprehensive re-structuring of the lands of the defeated Llywelyn. His principality, located for the most part in the north and west of Wales, became sub-divided into counties, administrative units roughly similar to the English shires.

As an island, possessing clear-cut natural boundaries, Anglesey offered itself as a natural unit of administration and in 1284 became one of the six Welsh counties created by Edward, a status it was to retain until 1974, when it became subsumed into the newly-created and far larger county of Gwynedd. Recent reorganization of local government and the granting to Anglesey of unitary authority status (1996) has, however, restored much of the autonomy it once enjoyed as a county.

§ 1–3 The hundreds and commotes of Anglesey

At the time of the Edwardian Conquest, Anglesey had already been sub-divided, for purposes of administration and the enforcement of law, into three hundreds, each of which was divided into two commotes. By virtue of its limited territorial extent the commote yielded the optimum administrative unit in mediaeval Wales. The affiliation of an individual both to a commote and its inhabitants became reflected in the word *cymydog* (neighbour). In the same manner the term *cymdogaeth* (neighbourhood) admirably expresses the cohesion which its compact territorial character bestowed on the commote.

The disposition of hundreds and commotes is shown on MAP 1, overleaf, and an explanation of the territorial toponyms is offered on the chart on page 93.

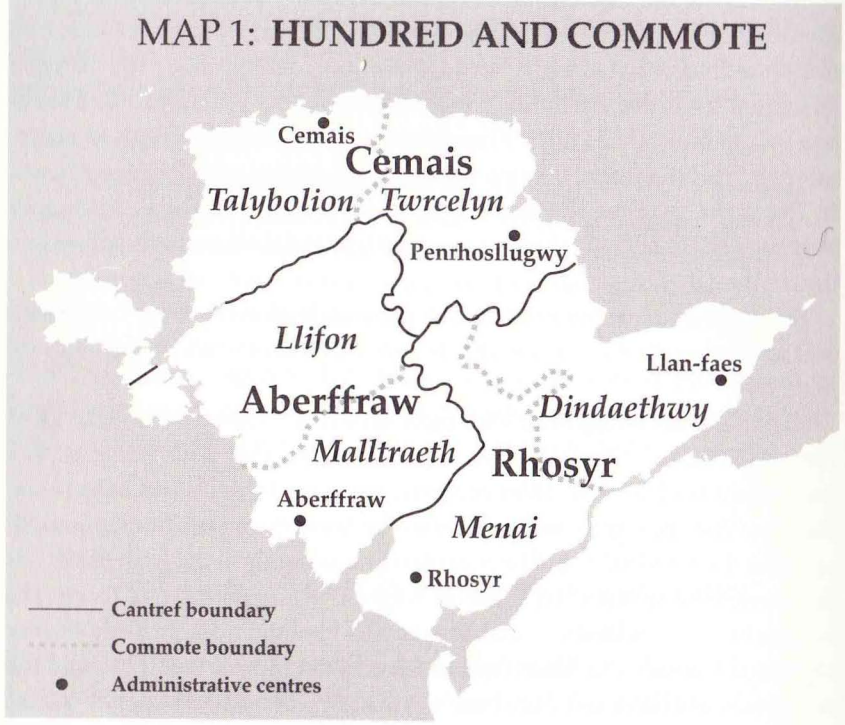
Historians have suggested that these divisions evolved from early tribal territories. Norah Chadwick has argued that this may have occurred at a comparatively late date. More recently, however, John Davies has offered the view that they 'may well date from the immediate post-Roman period' and that the hundred could be regarded as analogous to the Irish *tuath*. It is pertinent to note that their limits in Anglesey were defined by rivers, the only natural boundaries available in such a lowland area. The **Alaw** river separated **Cemais** and **Aberffraw** hundreds, the **Llifon** river separated the commotes of **Llifon** and **Malltraeth**, whilst the lower reaches of the **Cefni** divided the lands of the hundred of **Aberffraw** from those of the hundred of **Rhosyr**.

Courts were convened regularly in each of the commotes and were held at the centres shown on the map. **Aberffraw** functioned as the administrative focus of **Malltraeth** commote and also as the location of the chief court (or manor) of the Princes of Gwynedd. Uncertainty persists as to the precise

geographical location of **Llifon**'s commotal focus. Some historians take the view that **Bodedern** may have possessed the locational advantages required to fulfil the function of a commotal centre for Llifon.

Two interesting place-names which relate to the commotal divisions of Anglesey have survived. To clearly identify it from other churches in Anglesey dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the church of St Mary's in the commote of Menai and the very tiny parish which it once served became **Llanfair-yn-y-Cwmwd**. The eastern part of Malltraeth Commote is characterised by a well-defined ridge (Welsh: *cefn/cefnen*). Located prominently on the crest of this ridge, and lying a short distance to the south-west of Llangefni, is **Cefn Cwmwd**, a place-name which not only identifies a farm but also its immediate vicinity.

MAP 1: **HUNDRED AND COMMOTE**



Menai, Malltraeth, the gentle commotes, – Twrcelyn
The rough terrain of Talybolion
Genial the land of Lliwon,
And Dindaethwy – there are no more in Môn.

— translation of a Welsh poem by Lewis Môn (1480–1527)

Hundred	Commote	Commotal centre
Cemais	**Talybolion.** *Tal*, the end (as in Tal-y-Sarn and Tal-y-Bont) linked by the definitive article '*y*', to *bolion*, the plural form of *bol*, which occurs in Rhos-y-Bol. *Bolion* describes an undulating landscape of low hills and intervening hollows.	**Cemais** (Royal Manor)
	Twrcelyn. Composed of the elements *tŵr* (a tower) and *Celyn* (Cuhelyn?), quite probably a personal name. The exact significance of the name of the commote is unclear.	**Penrhosllugwy**
Aberffraw	**Llifon.** Derived from the river name, *Llifon* (*llif:* to surge). The variants *Lliwan* and *Lliwon* are sometimes encountered in early references. The sand-strewn coastal fringe of the commote inspired Goronwy Owen's famous couplet: 'Pwy all rif tywod Llifon Pwy rydd i lawr wŷr mawr Mon?'	Uncertain. Bodedern has been suggested as a possible location.
	Malltraeth. Prior to the building of the Malltraeth Embankment in the late eighteenth century the coastal inlet extended along *Morfa Malltraeth* (a sea-swept salt marsh) as far as Pentre-berw and Lledwigan. *Mall* describes the filthy or polluted character of the *traeth* (ie the shore or foreshore). *Trefdraeth* and *Glan Traeth* both incorporate the latter element.	**Aberffraw** (Royal Manor)
Rhosyr (earlier form **Rhosfair**)	**Dindaethwy.** *Din*, fort or stronghold (and equivalent to *Dun* in Scotland and Ireland) linked with the name *Daethwy*, the designation of a Celtic tribal group. This group, which also gave its name to *Porthaethwy*, may have had its stronghold at *Dinas* on the western side of the Cadnant Valley.	**Llan-faes** (Royal Manor)
	Menai. The name originally designated the *Menai Strait* but was subsequently extended to the commote. It occurs elsewhere in Wales as a river name. Its meaning is thoroughly obscure but may relate to a current or a flow of water.	**Rhosyr** (later **Newborough**)

§ 1–4 The townships of Anglesey

By the twelfth century both the settlement pattern and the social structure of Anglesey had become based on townships (*tref/trefi; trefgordd/trefgorddau*). Each hundred, as the term implies, was composed of roughly 100 such units. Each township, or 'vill', consisted of some 250 acres of land and each would be sub-divided into family holdings (or inheritances) which were known as *gwelyau* (sing. *gwely*). It has been estimated that within the average township each individual family member would farm and derive sustenance from approximately four acres of land.

Townships were organized in one of two ways. In Bond Townships tenants were burdened with feudal duties and obligations to the landowner, and in such townships settlements tended to be clustered or nucleated. On the other hand, the tenants in the Free Townships enjoyed greater freedom and were less constrained by ancient feudal responsibilities. In these townships too, individual dwellings tended to be far more scattered and dispersed.

Some two hundred township sites have been located in Anglesey. Approximately two-thirds of these mediaeval nuclei are nowadays occupied by farms which, in most cases, continue to be designated by the original township names.

Maps of each Anglesey commote, showing the detailed distribution as well as the location of the majority of the island's townships, were drafted by Professor Melville Richards and can be consulted in *An Atlas of Anglesey* (published by the Anglesey Community Council in 1972).

Since mapping and listing the known townships of Anglesey would be well beyond the scope of this work, an attempt has been made in MAP 2 to show merely the ones located in the central part of the island. The map clearly shows that many township names are still in everyday use. A few designations such as Bodbenwyn, Bryndewin and Tal-y-Llyn appear to have lapsed completely and even their locations on the map are largely conjectural.

Not unexpectedly, many of the township names represent the fusion of the prefix *Tref* (township/farm) with a personal or possessional suffix.

Examples of names which fall into this category include:

Treriffri: *Tref* + personal name *Griffri.*
Trefollwyn: *Tref* + personal name *Mollwyn* (or *Collwyn*).

Trefowen: *Tref* + personal name *Owen.*
Treferwydd: *Tref* + personal name *Erwydd* (or *Merwydd*).
Trefiddon: *Tref* + personal name *Iddon.*

All these names literally translate as the lands or holdings of Griffri, Owen, etc., and with the passage of time such lands would have been held by lineal descendants of these individuals. As these examples also show, where the initial letter of the personal name is a consonant, a mutation has occurred.

Trewalchmai can also be included in this toponymic category. Gwalchmai ap Meilyr (1130–80), court poet to Owain Gwynedd, was awarded a grant of land by the Prince in the locality which now carries his name.

In addition to occurring widely in Anglesey, *Tre* place-names are pan-Celtic in character. They are extensively distributed in Cornwall and exemplars are also frequently encountered in Brittany.

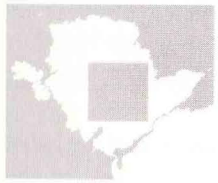
The prefix *Bod*, signifying habitation, provides another common element in Anglesey township names and tends also (as exemplified by **Bodwina**, **Bodewran** and **Bodwrog**) to be followed by a personal or possessional suffix. **Lledwigan** township also carries a possessional designation in that it combines the prefix *Lle* (place) with the name of a person, probably Gwigan. In fact, two townships carry this designation. **Lledwigan-Llys** appears to have been secularly-owned, occupied by tenants of the *Llys* (court) – in other words, tenants of the Princes of Aberffraw. **Lledwigan-Llan**, on the other hand, located near to where Llangristiolus Church now stands, designated a township held by the ecclesiastical authorities. The personal name, Gwigan also arises in the farm name **Bodwigan** (Llanddeusant) and may probably provide the basis for the English place-name, Wigan.

Some township names were either indicative of the township's geographical location or reflective of some topographical characteristic or peculiarity. **Trefdraeth**, the township near the *traeth* (shore) provides a case in point. One part of Trefdraeth had been granted to the stewards (*disteiniaid*) who served the court and royal household at Aberffraw and the remainder had been given to the grooms (*gwastrodion*).

Nanhwrfa consisted of township lands located on either side of the Nant Hwrfa stream, a west bank tributary of the Cefni River. The name of the river, now bereft of the letter *-r-*, survives in the Llangefni street name, **Glanhwfa** Road.

MAP 2: TOWNSHIPS OF CENTRAL ANGLESEY





Townships

Subsequent parish boundaries.
Parishes are individually identified on Map 3.

Parish churches.

Tregarnedd, a township once held (virtually free of any feudal obligation) by Ednyfed Fychan, seneschal or senior advisor to Llywelyn the Great, took its name from a conspicuous *carnedd* (cairn) which by now has long since disappeared. The adjacent township of **Hirdrefaig** was linear and narrow in form and its name, composed of the following elements, gave expression to this: *Hir* (long), *tre* (township) and *Faig* (the mutated form of the personal name, Maig). A fairly ancient variant of the name, **Hendrefaig**, is still used on occasions.

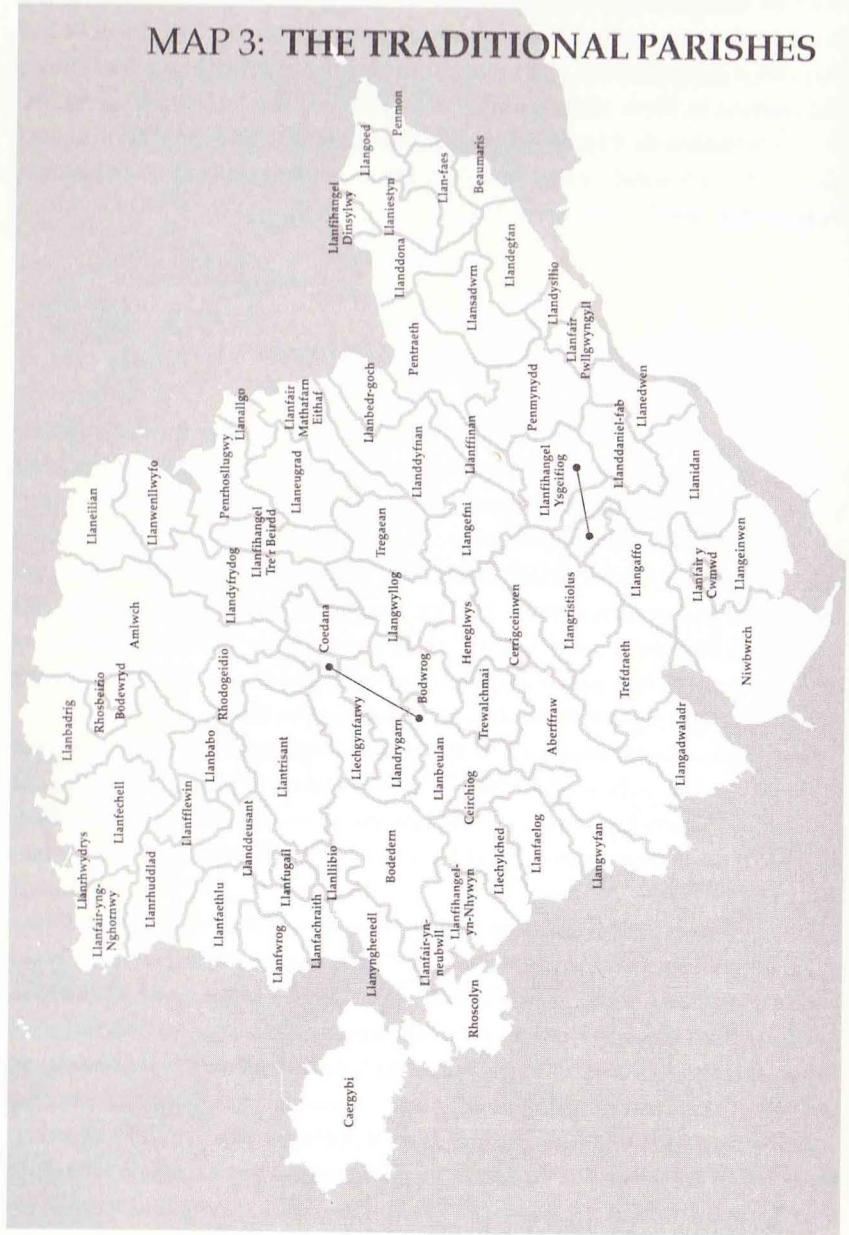
§ 1–5 The parishes of Anglesey

Throughout the mediaeval period and up to as recently as the early seventeenth century, an individual would be regarded as the occupant of land within a specific township. Gradually, however, townships were superseded by parishes as the basic units of territorial definition. Parishes began to evolve during the Norman period and, although ecclesiastical in origin, they quickly acquired a range of civic functions. Once the Highways Act (1555) and the Poor Law Act (1601) were passed their implementation was undertaken at parish level. Gradually too individuals ceased to be affiliated to a specific township and became affiliated to a parish.

Parishes emerged when one or more townships came under the pastoral and spiritual direction of a priest. The priest would be sustained by the tithes of the townships and, as townships became consolidated and united, a single church (the parish church) began to serve the needs of the parishioners.

MAP 2 demonstrates, to some degree, how townships consolidated into parishes. **Llangefni** parish evolved from the fusion of **Trefollwyn**, **Nanhwrfa** as well as Llangefni (itself also briefly called **Llangyngar**). **Llanfihangel Ysgeifiog** emerged as a result of the aggregation and consolidation of **Berw**, **Carnan Uchaf** and **Ysgeifiog**. The long township of **Hirdrefaig** on the other hand transformed itself, more or less as a single entity, into the equally long parish of **Llanffinan**. Other instances of the same process can be exemplified elsewhere in Anglesey. The townships of **Bodlew**, **Chwaen** and **Bodynolwyn** in the western part of the island aggregated to become the ecclesiastical parish of **Llantrisant**.

MAP 3: THE TRADITIONAL PARISHES



MAP 3 depicts the 74 parishes which emerged largely as a result of this process. These administrative divisions were to provide (either singly or in clusters) the framework and infrastructure for the implementation of local government in the county for some four centuries. They vary considerably in size. **Amlwch** was by far the most extensive, whilst **Newborough**, **Aberffraw** and **Holyhead** parishes were also quite substantially sized. In contrast, **Llanfair y Cwmwd** appears to have been almost idiosyncratically small and, in comparison to most other parishes, **Llanfugail**, **Rhosbeirio**, **Bodewryd** and **Llandysilio** were also extremely limited in size.

§ 1–6 Community areas

The parochial system continued to provide the lowest tier of both civil and ecclesiastical administration until well into the second half of the twentieth century. However, the Local Government Act of 1972 activated a comprehensive review of both the functions and territorial organization of local government. In its wake, the Special Community Review (1975-87) led to the abandonment of the parish as the smallest territorial division and to its replacement by somewhat larger Communities or Community Areas.

MAP 4 outlines the nature of the changes which took place and depicts the forty Communities into which Anglesey was sub-divided. **Rhoscolyn**, **Llangefni**, **Trewalchmai** and **Penmynydd** communities appear to bear a close territorial correlation with the traditional parishes. The new units vary considerably in size. **Rhosyr** and the curiously-shaped **Llanddyfnan**, extending from Bodafon Mountain to Hirdrefaig, are by far the largest, whilst the much more compact community based upon **Menai Bridge** is clearly the smallest.

Community designations were selected with some sensitivity after due consultation with the public. Both the retention of a large number of traditional names, as well as the resurrection of the mediaeval place-name **Rhosyr** to denote the community centred upon the village of Newborough, elicited general approval. A measure of innovation also occurred and one or two interesting new names were created to identify some of the Communities. For instance, the parishioners of **Llantrisant**, **Llanddeusant** and **Llanbabo** became members of the **Tref Alaw** Community, a unit located in the middle and upper parts of the Alaw Valley. In the extreme north west of the island those living in the farms and hamlets surrounding

MAP 4: COMMUNITY AREAS



MAP 5: ELECTORAL WARDS (census 1991)



Mynydd y Garn became members of the newly established **Cylch y Garn** Community. **Bodorgan**, a mediaeval township and part of the Bishop of Bangor's estate in Anglesey, which had never achieved parish status, but had nevertheless acquired a clear neighbourhood identity, also became the designation of one of the new Community Areas. **Cwm Cadnant**, a name which hitherto had merely described the valley of the Cadnant river as a physiographic entity, was adopted to define the Community area which incorporated **Llandegfan**, **Brynminceg** and **Llansadwrn**. At the same time too **Dyffryn** became officially accepted as an alternative designation for the **Valley** Community.

§ 1–7 Electoral wards

One other facet of the island's administrative structure needs to be discussed. For the purpose of electing the County Council, the island is now subdivided into the Electoral Wards shown on MAP 5. The wards, which vary both in size and population, are each represented by one County Councillor and the group photograph opposite page 87 identifies the councillors who represented these wards during the period ending April 1996.

Llannerch-y-medd is territorially the largest ward, whilst the various urban wards, and more particularly those of Holyhead, are much smaller in area. In population terms the largest electoral units, based on the 1991 Census Returns, are **Amlwch** (3,865) and **Llanfair Pwllgwyngyll**, and the smallest are **Cadnant** (1,039), **Holyhead Town** (1,093) and **Moelfre** (1,199).

Although several ward names are based on traditional, historical designations, an interesting blend of the old and the new emerges. **Trearddur** and **Bryn-teg** appear as specific administrative units for the first time, and in both cases there is a clear reflection of the reality of demographic change in their recognition. **Parc a'r Mynydd** is also new and is a name which effectively acknowledges the geographical fusion, within the ward, of part of the urban area of Holyhead with the more outlying rural communities located on the flanks of **Mynydd Twr.**

Readers will appreciate that this initial chapter has merely endeavoured to review some earlier administrative designations. The more recent names – shown on maps 3, 4 and 5 – will be discussed more fully in subsequent chapters.

Place-names reflecting the influence of religion

Anglesey is extremely rich in names of this kind and, since they pre-date most of the other names found on the island, they are listed and discussed separately from those of secular origin.

§ 2–1 The Llannau of Anglesey

Visitors to the island always tend to be intrigued by the proliferation of place-names which have the prefix *Llan* (plural form *Llannau*). The following verses, which have been skilfully and rhythmically assembled by some unknown author, list 46 of Anglesey's *llannau* and can be sung to the traditional Welsh air, 'The Ash Grove':

Llandegfan, Llanbeulan, Llanffinan, Llanidan,
Llangwyllog, Llanfwrog, Llanfaelog a'i Blas,
Llanddona, Llansadwrn, Llaneugrad, Llanallgo,
A Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy, Llangwyfan, Llanfaes,
Llanfaethlu, Llanfachraeth, Llanrhuddlad, Llangeinwen,
Llandrygarn, Llandyfrydog a Llannerch-y-medd,
Llanrhwydrus, Llanfechell a Llanfair Mathafarn,
Llanfugail, Llanfflewyn, Llan'llwyfo-bro-hedd.

Llanddeusant, Llanddyfnan, Llanddaniel, Llanedwen
A Llanfair-yn-neubwll, Llaniestyn, Llangoed,
Llanfihangel-yn-Nhowyn a Llanfair-yn-y-Cwmwd,
Llaneilian, Llanbadrig, Llangefni erioed.
Llanynghenedl, Llangaffo, Llantrisant, Llanbabo,
Llanfihangel Dinsylwy a Llanbedr-goch.
A Llanfair-pwll-gwyngyll-goger-y-chwyrn-drobwll-llantysilio-go-go-goch.

Drafting a concise definition of a *llan* is not easy. It relates to the English word 'land' and would in essence comprise an early Christian building, usually, but not necessarily, a church together with the land, or enclosure upon which and within which it was located. The *llan* element in the sense that it represents an enclosure is also encountered in the Welsh names

perllan (orchard), *gwinllan* (vineyard) and *corlan* (sheepfold). As other dwellings became established within the enclosures, the *llannau* gradually became foci of settlement within the Welsh countryside.

Melville Richards argued that not all *llannau* need necessarily be early in origin and that their designations probably extend over a long period of time. He envisaged that the primitive, early *llan* would have consisted of:

> ... a tiny cluster of beehive huts made of turf and brushwood, a small church similarly constructed, a preaching cross, the saint's holy well, a cemetery and some cultivated plots – all surrounded by a protective wall or fence ...
>
> Centuries later, many of these primitive churches were replaced by a structure in wood or stone, and a very large number of them survive today as our parish churches, still bearing the names of their original founders.

In that they normally bore the name of an early Celtic saint, or perhaps more precisely an itinerant Christian missionary, *llan* names tend to be eponymic in character. Although the use of the term 'saint' is nowadays beset with theological reservations, the early poets employed the description with certainty and confidence. For instance Lewis Glyn Cothi (1447-86) – not, one might add, a native of Anglesey – described the island (in the manner that other poets would often depict Bardsey) in the following terms:

Ynys yw Môn o henaint,
Ynys yw hi lawn o Saint

(Anglesey is an ancient isle
An island full of Saints)

In time the *llan*'s designation would extend to land beyond the perimeter of the ecclesiastical enclosure and, in due course, it would be used to define the parish area served by the early church. It should be stressed, however, that the nucleating influence of the early church on the settlement pattern in Wales was far less significant than it was in England. Whereas the parish church tends to be a central and focal feature within the traditional English village, in Wales it tends, more often than not, to be far more marginally located in relation to human settlement. There are numerous examples in Anglesey of localities where the church's or the *llan*'s remote location detaches it completely from the nearest population cluster.

It is worth noting too that there has persisted in Anglesey a tradition which tends to describe even non-*llan* settlements as *llannau*. One of the authors has clear childhood recollections of the village of Bodedern being referred to as *'y Llan'*. A person visiting the village from an outlying farm would always speak in terms of 'going down to the *Llan*' (*mynd i lawr i'r Llan*). For some reason the phrase 'going up to the *Llan*' (*mynd i fyny i'r Llan*) was never used.

Although the *Llan* names of Anglesey are numerous and varied, they cannot easily be categorized. Nevertheless, the following general points may assist the reader in reflecting upon their names:

❖ The vast majority of the names commemorate the dedication of a church and its associated enclosure to one specifically named saint or missionary.

❖ Two of the names, namely **Llanddeusant** and **Llantrisant**, bear dedications to more than one person.

❖ Several of the Anglesey *Llannau* are dedicated to female saints and names such as *Ceinwen*, *Dona*, *Dwynwen* and *Gwenllwyfo* testify clearly to the role played by women in the affairs of the early Celtic church.

As the following traditional verse reveals, *Cwyllog*, to whom the church at Llangwyllog is dedicated, appears to have been another of the island's female saints:

Peirio, Eugrad, gwŷr o'n bro
Ac Allgo, Caffo a Maelog
Oedd feibion cawr o Frydain gain,
A chwaer i'r rhain oedd Cwyllog.

(Peirio, Eugrad, men of this locality
And Allgo, Caffo and Maelog
Were sons of a giant from fine Britain,
And Cwyllog was their sister.)

❖ Many of the names reflect later, Norman influences and are not dedicated to native, Celtic saints but to scriptural ones such as *Mair* (Mary), *Mihangel* (Michael) and *Pedr* (Peter).

❖ In some instances the names lack a dedicative element and are toponymic rather than eponymic in character. The suffix in these names designates either a distinctive environmental characteristic of the *Llan* or its geographical location.

The ensuing list attempts to record all the *Llannau* of Anglesey. A brief interpretation is offered and, where the *Llan* is designated by a personal designation, the personal name is indicated by an asterisk.

Llanallgo
Llan (church/religious enclosure) + dedication to Saint **Gallgo*.

[It should be noted that in this and every other instance, where the first letter of the personal name is a consonant, a soft mutation has occurred (in this particular case *Gallgo* has altered to *Allgo*). This arises because the saint's name is in the genitive case which indicates that the saint belonged to the church. This does not happen in modern Welsh and is, in effect, a fossil feature which demonstrates clearly the antiquity of these place-names.]

Llanamo (or **Llananna**)
Llan + Saint **Amo*/Saint **Anna*. An early designation for Newborough. Tradition maintains that Amo (or possibly Amwn) and Anna (possibly Aneu) were the parents of Saint Samson, an important and influential early Christian activist in Western Britain.

Llanbabo
Llan + **Pabo*, a secular leader of some significance as well as a saint.

Llanbadrig
Llan + **Padrig*. Tradition – which may well have historical validity – maintains that Llanbadrig was dedicated to the patron saint of Ireland. An island, which is located a mile offshore and which forms the most northerly part of Wales, is also identified as **Ynys Badrig**.

Llanbedr-goch
Llan + **Pedr* (Peter) + *coch* (red). The latter element may possibly relate to the colour of the soil in the locality. John Leland (1536-9) offers the alternative name **Llanfeistr**.

Llanbeulan
Llan + **Peulan*. Peulan may represent a diminutive form of Paul or may alternatively designate a left-handed person.

Llandegfan
Llan + **Tegfan*.

Llandrygarn
Llan + *trygarn* (a 'large cairn' and not a personal name). Presumably the church was located near to the cairn, no trace of which nowadays exists.

Llandyfrydog
Llan + **Tyfrydog*.

Llandysilio
Llan + **Tysilio*. The early church was located on **Ynys Tysilio** (nowadays known as Church Island) in the Menai Strait.

Llanddaniel
Llan + **Daniel* or **Deiniol*. An alternative form, **Llanddaniel-fab**, incorporates the suffix encountered in the word *mab-sant* (patron saint or parish saint).

Llanddeusant
Llan + *dau* (the number two) + *sant* (saint). The dedication relates to the two saints, Marcellus and Marcellinus.

Llanddona
Llan + **Dona*.

Llanddwyn
Llan + **Dwyn* or **Dwynwen*, traditionally regarded as the patron saint of lovers.

Llanddyfnan
Llan + **Dyfnan*.

Llanddygfael
Llan + **Dygfael*. A name subsequently transferred to two farms located to the west of Llanfechell.

Llanedwen
Llan + **Edwen*.

Llaneilian
Llan + **Eilian*/**Elian*.

Llaneuddog
Llan + **Euddog*. Llaneuddog and Capel Euddog (Euddog's chapel) were located near Dulas Bay.

Llaneugrad
Llan + **Eugrad*.

Llanfachraith
Llan + **Machraith*. Frequently pronounced as either 'Llanfachraeth' or 'Llanfachreth'.

Llanfaelog
Llan + **Maelog*. The prefix *Mael*, also encountered in the name Maelgwn, suggests a chieftain or prince.

Llan-faes
Llan + *maes*. 'Maes' describes an open and flat area of land.

Llanfaethlu
Llan + **Maethlu*.

Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf
Llan + **Mair* (Mary) + the mediaeval township of *Mathafarn Eithaf* within which the Llan was located. *Mathafarn* is composed of *maes*, 'an open area' (as in Llan-faes) + *tafarn* (tavern). The suffix *Eithaf* (further) contrasts the location of the township with that of the more accessible **Mathafarn Wion**, located in Llanbedr-goch.

Llanfair Pwllgwyngyll
Llan + **Mair* (Mary) + *Pwllgwyngyll* (the name of the mediaeval township). The latter is composed of *Pwll* (pool) + *gwyngyll* (white hazel). The abbreviated form, **Llanfairpwll**, is frequently used, but the usage of Llanfair P.G. is as thoroughly unacceptable as the usage of Stratford U.A. would be in England. The name Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrn-drobwll-llantysiliogogogoch is nothing more than a fanciful nineteenth century fabrication.

Llanfair y Cwmwd
Llan + **Mair* (Mary) + *y* (the definite article) + *cwmwd* (commote: a reference to its location in the commote of Menai). Its limited parochial extent was reflected in its alternative designation, **Llanfair Fach** (*Fach*, mutated form of *bach:* small).

Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy
Llan + **Mair* (Mary) + *yng* (in) + the mediaeval township of *Cornwy*.

Llanfair-yn-neubwll
Llan + **Mair* (Mary) +*Deubwll* (the name of a mediaeval township). *Deubwll* defined the township of the 'two pools', namely Lakes Penrhyn and Dinam.

Llanfawr
Llan + *mawr* (large/extensive). The name defined a mediaeval township on the eastern side of Holyhead.

Llanfechell
Llan + **Mechell*. The personal name may be of Irish origin and Melville Richards has suggested that its orginal form may have been *Mechyll*, a view supported by the fact that a tenant of Clegyrog referred to in the 'Extent of Caernarfon' (1352) is identified as Dafydd Mechyll. The name is sometimes mispronounced as 'Llanfellech'.

Llanfeirian
Llan + **Meirian/*Meirion*. A chapel, long since disappeared, in Llangadwaladr. Once designated as *Merthyr Meirion*.

Llanfihangel Dinsylwy
Llan + **Mihangel* (Michael) + *Dinsylwy*, the name of a mediaeval township, itself derived from the fort (*din*) of the *Sylwy* tribe (sited on Bwrdd Arthur to the east of Llanddona).

Llanfihangel Tre'r Beirdd
Llan + **Mihangel* (Michael) + the name of a mediaeval township, *Tre'r Beirdd:* literally 'the township of the poets'.

Llanfihangel-yn-Nhywyn
Llan + **Mihangel* (Michael) + *Tywyn* (duneland), a reference to the sandy character of the locality. Prior to the establishment of the RAF base at Valley the extensive expanse of sand in this area was known as Towyn Trewan (a designation derived from an earlier form, Tref Owain).

Llanfihangel Ysgeifiog
Llan + **Mihangel* (Michael) + *Ysgeifiog*, the name of a mediaeval township, and one which describes sloping land.

Llanfugail
Llan + **Bugail*. Located between Bodedern and Llanddeusant and often pronounced as either 'Llanfigel' or 'Llanfigal'. Tradition maintains that the rocky islet known as **Maen y Bugail** (West Mouse), which lies off the north west Anglesey coast may have been used as a hermitage or retreat by the same Saint Bugail.

Llanfwrog
Llan + **Mwrog*.

Llanffinan
Llan + **Ffinan*.

Llanfflewin
Llan + **Fflewin*.

Llangadog
Llan + **Cadog*. Located at the head of Dulas Bay.

Llangadwaladr
Llan + **Cadwaladr*. The church is located near Aberffraw, one of the early power bases in Gwynedd. In it an inscribed stone commemorates Cadfan, Cadwaladr's grandfather, as the 'wisest and most illustrious of all kings' and appears to imply that Cadwaladr himself may also have been a secular leader of some importance. The alternative name of the church was **Eglwys Ail**, a designation which sheds light on the original character of the Llan itself. *Ail* is derived from *gwiail* (wattle) and represents in Melville Richard's view, either the material from which the original church was assembled or the material from which the perimeter fence of the religious enclosure was built.

Llangaffo
Llan + **Caffo*. An earlier variant of the

name, **Merthyr Caffo** (cf Merthyr Tudful) suggests either the consecrated burial place of Caffo or the commemorative shrine of the saint. The term *merthyr* (martyr) need not necessarily imply that actual martyrdom occurred at the location in question.

Llangefni
Llan + *Cefni*, the name of the river alongside which the church is located. Since the church bears a dedication to Saint Cyngar the alternative form, Llangyngar, was occasionally used in the past.

Llangeinwen
Llan + **Ceinwen*.
Since the lands of the parish belonged to the wealthy church of Saint Beuno at Clynnog Fawr, the parish was also known as Clynnog Fechan (*fechan:* small/lesser) during the mediaeval period. The name Clynnog continues to designate a farm located near the church.

Llangoed
Llan + *coed* (trees). A religious enclosure, located alongside trees or surrounded by trees. The parish church is dedicated to Saint Cawrdaf but has been associated also with Saint Tangwn.

Llangristiolus
Llan + **Cristiolus*.

Llangwyfan
Llan + **Cwyfan/*Cwyfen*. Cwyfan, in common with several Anglesey saints is regarded as being of Irish origin and is equated by some with St Kevin of Glendalough.

Llangwyllog
Llan + **Cwyllog*.

Llanidan
Llan + **Idan/*Nidan*.

Llaniestyn
Llan + **Iestyn*.

Llanlleianau
Llan + *lleianau*. The suffix is unclear. A speculative interpretation suggests a designation based on *lleian* (nun) or its plural form (which is actually *lleianod* and not 'lleianau'). Llanlleianau is located to the east of Cemais Bay.

Llanllibio
Llan + **Llibio*. One tradition maintains that Llibio was the son of Seithenyn the Drunkard, King of Dyfed.

Llanrhuddlad
Llan + **Rhuddlad*.

Llanrhwydrys
Llan + **Rhwydrys*. According to tradition, Rhwydrys could claim descent from one of the ruling dynasties of Ireland.

Llansadwrn
Llan + **Sadwrn*. Sadyrnin, who is commemorated on an early memorial stone in Llansadwrn Church, should not be confused with the saint to whom the Llan is dedicated. He may well have shared kinship with Sadwrn or may have been a devotee or pupil of the saint.

Llantrisant
Llan + *tri* (the number three) + *sant* (saint). The three saints to whom the dedication relates are Gafran, Ieuan and Sannan.

Llanwenfaen
Llan + **Gwenfaen*. An early alternative designation to Rhoscolyn.

Llanwenllwyfo
Llan + **Gwenllwyfo*.

Llanynghenedl
Llan + **Enghenedl/*Ynghenedl*.

Several secondary place-names were also to evolve from the *Llan* locus. **Ty'n Llan**, or sometimes **Tyddyn-y-Llan** would identify (and continues to do so in many cases) the nearest habitation to the church. Other designations, expressing a similar geographical affinity, include **Maes-y-Llan** (a mediaeval township and subsequently a farm name in the parish of Llandrygarn) **Maes-y-Llan** (Penrhosllugwy) **Llawr-y-Llan** (Bodedern) and **Fferam-y-Llan** (Cerrigceinwen).

Tir Llan (glebe land) is encountered as a place-name in other parts of Wales, but the authors have failed thus far to discover any Anglesey exemplars of the name. Names such as **Llain yr Eglwys** (the Church's quillet) in Llangristiolus, **Cae'r Ficer**, Llaneilian, **Llain yr Allor**, Llechylched and **Llain y Gloch** in Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy, may however designate lands once held by the church.

§ 2–2 Early names incorporating the element *betws*.

Betws. The name is derived from the early English form, *Bed-hus* which subsequently became *Bead House*, i.e. a chapel of prayer, or oratory. Nowadays the term 'bead' tends to be associated with the rosary or paternoster, but its original meaning related to the prayer itself, which would be offered in the Bead House and chanted by the Beadsman. The Welsh form, *Betws* appears to have survived less strongly in Anglesey than in other regions of Wales. It was nevertheless quite widely encountered on the island in the early period and, as the ensuing names indicate the designation could often be eponymic in character. Strangely it does not occur as a place-name element in England.

Betws Coedanau
Betws + *Coedanau* (the parish name; see p114). The site is located near to Saint Anau's church and is nowadays occupied by a farm named Betws.

Betws Geraint
Betws + *Geraint* (the personal name). An early name for Pentraeth and one which nowadays designates a housing estate in the village.

Betws y Grog
Betws + *y* (the definite article) + *Crog* (the Holy Rood). Located near Treban Meurig, Bryngwran and associated with the Church of the Holy Rood, Ceirchiog, all traces of which have virtually disappeared.

Betws Machwdw
Betws + *Machwdw/Mwchwdw/Machutus* (the personal name, all variant forms of *Mechell*). Two prayer houses in Anglesey carried this designation, one stood near Moelfre and the other was located in Llanfechell.

Betws y Naw Saint
Betws + *y* (the definite article) + *Naw Saint* (Nine Saints). Located to the east of Cemais, it may have once been connected with the religious community at Llanlleiana. The place-name has survived and nowadays identifies a cluster of dwellings on either side of the road which links Cemais and Bull Bay.

Betws Perwas
Betws + *Perwas* (an epithetical rather than a personal name – *perwas*: dear/sweet servant). Located in the Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy/Cemlyn area.

One interesting toponym which may bear some relation to this group of names is *Carreg y Bedmon* (The Beadsman's Stone). The name survives as the designation of a dwelling in Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy.

§ 2–3 Place-names incorporating the prefix *bod*

These names, which are again eponymic in character, are widely distributed in North Wales but far less frequently encountered in South Wales. The prefix itself, signifying an 'abode' or 'dwelling' is comparable to *Tŷ* ('house'; 'home') as in Tŷ Ddewi (St David's) and is similarly followed by a personal name. Only a small number of the *Bod* place-names of Anglesey are religious in origin and in each case the prefix is followed by the name of a saint.

These include:

Bodedern
Bod + *Edern*. Other place-names dedicated to a saint named Edern/Edeyrn are encountered in the Llŷn Peninsula and the Cardiff area. Dedications to Saint Eterne in north-west France appear to relate to a similar personal name.

Bodewryd
Bod + *Ewryd* (possibly *Gewryd*).

Bodwrog
Bod + *Mwrog* (possibly *Gwrog*) c.f. Llanfwrog.

[It is interesting to note that the associated churchyard in each of the preceding three locations is either square or rectangular in form.]

Boteiniol
Bod + *Deiniol*. Nowadays the name of a farm located at the southern end of Llyn Alaw. Its inclusion in this category of names is based on the fact that lands in this locality were once held by the ecclesiastical authorities and were attached to Llanfechell Church.

In addition to these four religious names, a proliferation of secular designations, based on personal names and prefaced by *Bod*, are found in Anglesey. These tend to identify large farms and came into being as a result of 'a re-organisation of land tenure ... in the twelfth century'. Since it is not the intention to discuss this category of names in detail at this juncture, the following list is included merely to exemplify the widespread distribution of this type of place-name on the island:

Bodednyfed (Amlwch)
Bodegri (Llanrhuddlad)
Bodeilio (Talwrn)
Bodelwyn (Llanfechell)
Bodewran (Bodffordd)
Bodfardden (Llanfaethlu)
Bodfeddan (Bryngwran)
Bodgedwydd (Aberffraw)
Bodgylched (Beaumaris)
Bodior (Rhoscolyn)
Bodnolwyn (Llantrisant)
Bodronyn (Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy)
Bodwina (Gwalchmai)
Bodwrdin (Aberffraw)

§ 2–4 Chapel names dating from the early period

Several of these names, many of them eponymic and many of which are found on Holy Island, have survived to the modern period.

The following represent a sample of such designations:

Capel Cadwaladr
Capel (chapel) + the personal name, *Cadwaladr*. Located in Llanddaniel-fab.

Capel Eilian
Capel + the personal name, *Eilian*. Located near to Eilian's well in Llaneilian. Another chapel, dedicated to Eilian, was located in the parish of Llandegfan.

Capel Gorlas/Gollas
Capel + *Gorlas/Gollas*. Located between Holyhead and Llaingoch.
The designation is unclear but may have related initially to a personal name.

Capel Gwyngeneu
Capel + the personal or epithetic name *Gwyngeneu* (regarded by some as being of Manx origin). Located to the south of Trearddur Bay on a site now occupied by a Nonconformist chapel, Capel Noddfa. A farm, known as Capel Farm used to be located near the site.

Capel Halen/Helen
Capel + *Halen/Helen (?)*. Located in Penrhosllugwy. The remains, which are those of the court chapel of the commote of Twrcelyn, are still comparatively well preserved.

Capel Llugwy
Capel + *Llugwy*, the name of a nearby river. Located in Penrhosllugwy.

Capel Lochwyd (Golochwyd)
Capel + *Lochwyd/Golochwyd* (refuge or retreat). The chapel occupied a remote and inaccessible site amidst the rugged cliffs on the western coast of Holy Island. (See also Ffynnon Lochwyd).

Capel Mair
Capel + *Mair* (the Virgin Mary). Located near Llyn Padrig to the west of Llanfaelog and also known as **Capel Tal y Llyn**. John Leland (1536-9) lists the chapel as **Capel Mair o Dindryfol** and thus associates the name with that of a nearby Celtic fortification.

Capel Meigan
Capel + the personal name *Meigan/Meugan*. Located in the vicinity of Beaumaris.

Capel Ulo
Capel + the personal name *Ulo*, possibly *Ilo*. Located in the Kingsland area of Holyhead.

Capel Sant Ffraid
Capel + the personal name *Ffraid* (Saint Bride). The chapel was located at the head of the cove at Trearddur Bay/Porth y Capel (*porth:* 'cove' or 'inlet'). The location became identified as **Towyn y Capel** (*towyn:* a dune covered area), and more recently as Trearddur Bay.

§ 2–5 Other early religious names

Cerrig Ceinwen
Cerrig (plural of *carreg:* stone) + *Ceinwen*, the name of a female saint. The prefix almost certainly refers to the conspicuous rock outcrop which shelters Saint Ceinwen's church on its western side.

Clas
Although this place-name appears not to have survived on the island it is pertinent to record that this form of ecclesiastical organization developed in two localities in Anglesey. One *clas* was centred on Llaneilian and the other, based on Saint Cybi's Church at Holyhead, included the parishes of Bodedern, Llandrygarn and Bodwrog. Celtic in origin, the *clas* had a collegiate structure and would incorporate a group of priests who, although attached to a mother church, would minister to a fairly extensive neighbourhood. *Clasau* were often wealthy institutions, frequently owning land and property on a substantial scale. Place-names such as Clastir/Clasdir (*Clas* + *tir:* land) continue to reflect this in some parts of Wales. Such names however do not appear to have survived in Anglesey.

Coedanau
Coed (trees/woodland) + *Anau*, the name of a female saint.

College
This relic name is encountered in Llansadwrn, Llangadwaladr and Newborough (**College Bach**). It appears to be ecclesiastical in origin and may well relate to some form of collegiate arrangement in the early period (see *Clas*). It could also mean 'poor house'.

Croes
Most Anglesey place-names incorporating this very common element are clearly secular in character. A few, such as
– **Y Groes Faen** (Newborough)
– **Croes Wion** (Benllech)
– **Croes Feuno** (Llanddeusant)
– **Croes Efa** (Llanrhuddlad)
– and **Croes Eilian** (Llaneilian)
would appear to possess a religious significance.

Dwyran
Dwy (the number 'two') + *rhan* (part). The mediaeval township of Dwyran was sub-divided into two parts. **Dwyran Feuno** was held by Saint Beuno's Church, Clynnog Fawr (see Llangeinwen) whilst lands in **Dwyran Esgob** (*Esgob:* Bishop) were owned by the Bishop of Bangor. Proprietorial names of this kind continue to designate many parishes in England.

Heneglwys
Hen ('old' or 'former') + *eglwys* (church). In this instance, 'former' may be a more appropriate translation than 'old' since it implies the re-building and the rededication of a church on a former ecclesiastical site. Heneglwys is associated with Saint Corbre and earlier names for the church include **Mynwent Corbre** (Corbre's burial place) and **Llan y Saint Llwydion** (*Llan* + 'the blessed saints').

***Llech:* Place-names incorporating the prefix *llech*.** *Only a small number of such names occur in Anglesey. 'A llech', literally a large stone slab, commemorative in its intent, would have provided the geographical focus for the name. Since it stood as a memorial for a saint or missionary its site would acquire, in due course, a reputation for sanctity and holiness. Exemplars of names relating to such sites include:*

Llech Edern
Llech + the personal name *Edern*. The memorial stone, located to the east of Bodedern and long since vanished, is referred to by Lewis Morris.

Llechgynfarwy
Llech + the personal name *Cynfarwy/Cynfarwydd*. A large standing stone, located alongside the Old Post Road to Holyhead at Trefor, and long since vanished, may have served as the original 'Llech' or memorial to Cynfarwy. John Ogilby's map (1675) denotes a 'Longstone' on the south side of the road at this point.

Llechylched
Llech + the personal name *Ylched*. Located in the vicinity of Bryngwran, the memorial's designation was subsequently transferred to the parish of Llechylched.

Mynachdy
Mynach (monk) + *tŷ* (house), i.e. 'Monastery'. The name of a farm located close to Carmel Head, an area unusually rich in early religious place-names. Lands were awarded in this part of Anglesey to the Cistercian Abbey of Aberconwy in the thirteenth century and the farm lies on or near the site of a grange established by the Cistercian brethren.

Mynwent
The place-name *Mynwent* (cemetery or burial place) can often be indicative of an early religious location. For instance, **Tan-y-Fynwent** (*Tan:* below + *y:* the definite article + *mynwent*) in Bodedern is located alongside the remains of the cemetery which is all that now marks the abandoned site of Llanllibio Church. Similarly **Pen y Fynwent**, to the east of the village of Rhos-y-Bol locates another early religious focus. Sited on the top of a small hill the prefix *pen* is clearly descriptive of the cemetery's location.

Rhodogeidio
The name is derived from **Rhodwydd Ceidio**: *Rhodwydd* (a defended mound) + the personal name *Ceidio*. The now abandoned church is one of several in Anglesey located within a virtually circular cemetery.

Rhosbeirio
Rhos (moor) + the personal name *Peirio*. The church of Rhosbeirio, near Llanfechell, carries a dedication to Saint Peirio.

Tref Was Padrig
Tref (township) + *Gwas* (servant) + *Padrig* (Patrick). The name identified a mediaeval township in the commote of Malltraeth and its inclusion in this category of place-names is based on the assumption that Patrick's servant was either a priest or an acolyte.

Tregaean
Tref ('farm' or 'land') + the personal name *Caean*. Often incorrectly spelt as 'Tregayan' and 'Tregaian'.

§ 2–6 Recent religious place-names

Places which fall into this category originated as a result of the strong growth of Nonconformism in Anglesey during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nonconformist chapels were not always established in existing centres of population but were built, for a variety of reasons, in peripheral and often quite remote, rural locations. They were usually given names based upon biblical locations and, once established, they functioned, as some of the early churches had done, as settlement foci. Since many of these chapels were located at road junctions a cluster of dwellings, in essence a hamlet, would quickly develop nearby and invariably the biblical name of the chapel would be extended to designate both the settlement and its immediate vicinity. In this way, another distinctive group of settlement place-names, exemplified by the following list, came into being on the island:

Bethel
The thirty-five biblical references to the name are all encountered in the Old Testament. Its correct biblical orthography is *Beth-el*.

Capel Coch
Capel (chapel) + *Coch* (red). The name derives from the fact that the exterior of the original chapel was red in colour.

Capel Gwyn
Capel + *Gwyn* (white).

Capel Mawr
Capel + *Mawr* (large). Located in Llangristiolus and once known as **Capel Bethlehem**. The largest chapel, in terms of size and structure, in any locality would often be identified as 'Capel Mawr'.

Carmel
The name is encountered seventeen times in the Bible, on every occasion in the Old Testament.

Dothan
The name is referred to on two occasions. Both references are in the Old Testament.

Elim
There are four references to the name, all in the Old Testament.

Engedi
There are seven references to the name, all in the Old Testament. Its correct biblical orthography is *En-gedi*.

Hermon
There are five references to the name, all in the Old Testament.

Nebo
There are twelve references to the name, all in the Old Testament.

Soar
There are six references to the name, all in the Old Testament. Its correct biblical orthography is *Zoar*. According to Thomas Charles the designation implies a place of worship which is small.

Thus, Nonconformist chapels began to provide a second and, in places, a more influential settlement node. In some localities their appearance was to have a substantial effect on long-established patterns of population. In the Llanddeusant area, for example, the growth of settlement in the vicinity of **Elim** Chapel created another hamlet in the parish of Llanddeusant. Similarly, the small, linear village of **Hermon** grew quickly once the chapel had been established, leaving the existing focus alongside Llangadwaladr Church to languish. In the adjacent parish of Trefdraeth an identical process manifested itself as settlement growth became overwhelmingly concentrated in the vicinity of **Bethel** Chapel.

Secular place-names

The place-names reviewed in this chapter share two things in common. They are secular rather than religious in origin and they are not related to any specific historical phase but have derivations ranging from the late Celtic period to the recent past. Whereas designations such as **Aberffraw**, **Cemais** and **Pencaernisiog** are deeply rooted in the Dark Ages, place-names such as **Menai Bridge** and **Valley** have come into being in relatively recent times.

The changing fabric of the island's economic geography, particularly since the early decades of the nineteenth century, induced substantial changes in the disposition of its population and the location of its settlement. These were accompanied by changes to the place-names in some localities. The building of Thomas Telford's new Post Road to Holyhead (now the A5) rapidly attracted settlement, and as new clusterings of population came into being the evolution of new place-names became inevitable.

Settlement development on Telford's road caused the village of **Gaerwen** to grow and it quickly adopted the name of a nearby farm. It rapidly became a more significantly defined population nucleus than the nearby settlement of **Llanddaniel Fab** and, when the railway line to Holyhead was laid down by the Chester & Holyhead Railway Company a quarter of a century later, the station built at Llanddaniel Fab became identified as **Gaerwen Station**. This interesting exemplar illustrates the initial transfer and the subsequent re-transfer of the name, from farm to village and afterwards to a nearby railway station, all within a span of some thirty years.

At Gwalchmai, Telford's road brought in its wake another kind of toponymic development. The historical settlement nucleus, to the south of the new road, retained its name, albeit in a slightly altered form, and became **Gwalchmai Uchaf** (Upper Gwalchmai) whilst the separate, linear part of the village which grew rapidly alongside Telford's road became **Gwalchmai Isaf** (Lower Gwalchmai).

Where roads, which had existed prior to the nineteenth century, crossed Telford's new road, the junctions or cross-roads (*croesffyrdd*) thus formed soon acquired their own genus loci and their own designations. More often than not these nodes were identified by the name of the nearest farm, and in this manner names such as **Groeslon Cymunod**, **Groeslon Treban**, and

Groeslon Cefn Cwmwd came into being. **Groeslon Star**'s designation, on the other hand, was derived from the name of a nearby tavern.

When, in the mid-nineteenth century, the Holyhead railway was built, that too exercised its own influence on place-names. Station sites were often designated by names which had been transferred from other local or neo-local features. Exemplars include **Gaerwen** Station (already referred to), **Bodorgan** Station, which took its name from **Plas Bodorgan**, a nearby mansion and **Tŷ Croes** station, which took its name from a nearby dwelling.

The railway also induced a clear and quite sudden toponymic shift at Valley. The early settlement nucleus nowadays called **Hen Valley**, located on Telford's new road at the Anglesey end of the Stanley Embankment (Pont Lasinwen) ceased to develop and allowed the rapidly growing area in the vicinity of the station free to adopt the name **Valley**.

The naming of **Rhosneigr** station, the last one to be opened, is singularly intriguing. The Chester & Holyhead Railway Company chose not to identify it as **Llanfaelog**, the name of both the parish in which it was located and that of the nearest large settlement. Instead it adopted the name of the settlement that was starting to grow rapidly on the coast nearby. In making this decision the Company clearly anticipated the long-term demographic trend in this locality with remarkable prescience.

The list which follows incorporates not only the designations of the larger towns such as **Caergybi** (whose English form, **Holyhead**, might arguably have been included in the previous chapter), **Beaumaris** and **Amlwch**, but also those of smaller villages and hamlets such as **Rhyd-wyn** and **Trefor**. The list also records those localities and neighbourhoods which have acquired, over the years, specific identities as well as their own distinctive designations.

Aberffraw

Aber (the mouth or estuary of the river) + *Ffraw*. Melville Richards suggests that the river's name was originally *Ffrawf*, meaning 'flow'. The name Frome, which designates a number of rivers in England, also derives from this form. The present river is narrow and small but it should be remembered that coastal changes and dune deposition would most likely have caused the original outflow to contract significantly and it is possible that the estuary was much wider and deeper in the the age of the Princes of Gwynedd. The form used colloquially is **Berffro**.

Amlwch

The prefix *Am* (around, nearby, the other side) + *llwch* (lake, pool or marshy ground). The second element, however, may correspond to the Cornish form *logh* (coastal inlet) and may refer to the inlet at Porth Amlwch. Earlier and more fanciful explanations such as *aml-hwch* (many sows), *aml-och* (many sighs) and *am lwch* ('such dust' – supposedly referring to the dust created by the copper industry on the slopes of Mynydd Parys in the old days) should be completely disregarded.

Beaumaris (Biwmares)

The name came into being when the castle and borough were established by the Normans following Madog ap Llywelyn's rebellion in 1294/5. The castle was built on low, coastal land, and given the French name, *beau marais* (beautiful marsh). Numerous Latin forms of the name exist in early documents, and at the end of the thirteenth century the following names were used to denote the place:

Before 1294/5 – **Cerrig y Gwyddyl** (the old Welsh name).
From May 1295 – **Bello Marisco**, **Bellum Mariscum** and **Album Mariscum** (Latin designations). **Beaumaris** (the Norman name).

Occasionally, as the Morris brothers' letters show, the form **Duwmares** was also used. The form **Bliwmaras** is also sometimes used colloquially, a pronunciation which may have been derived from the Latin designation, *Bellum Mariscum*.

Benllech/Y Benllech

The prefix *pen* (top or head of) + *llech* (stone), combine to yield the term *penllech*, 'capstone'. The village took its name from the name of a farm, Tyddyn y Benllech (also called Tyddyn Iolyn). A cromlech with an enormous capstone used to stand near the farm, thereby giving it its name, which was later transferred to the village.

Bodorgan

The name denotes a district (which is fairly extensive) rather than a definite cluster of dwellings. It used to be the name of a township in Malltraeth Commote and also the name of one of the main estates on the island. It was later adopted as the name of a railway station. Original forms of the name include **Bodgorgyn** (1306) and **Bodgorging**.

Bolsach

This designation stems from an inlet bearing the name, **Porth-y-Sach**. The inlet and adjacent areas lie to the west of Holyhead harbour and have a strong sea-going tradition stretching

back many centuries. One of the authors remembers the adjective *Bolsachaidd* sometimes being used colloquially in the Holyhead area some fifty years ago.
It is possible that *sach* (sack) specifically describes the shape and outline of the inlet.

Bodffordd
Bod (dwelling) + the English word 'ford'. It is known that at least three fords developed in the Bodffordd area, two of them located on the Old Post Road which runs through the village. Lands in this area used to belong to the Bishop of Bangor, and the name of the mediaeval township was Bodffordd Esgob, or Bodffordd Ddeiniol. (Deiniol being the name of the first bishop of Bangor).

Bryn-du
The name of a farm on the first One-Inch Ordnance Survey map and one which was extended to include a cluster of nearby dwellings. The prefix *Bryn* usually denotes a position on elevated land.

Bryngwran
Bryn + the personal name *Gwran*. The village is denoted as **Bryngwyrain** on the first One-Inch Ordnance Survey map.

Brynminceg
From the elements *bryn* and *minceg* (from the English 'mint- cake'). It was originally the name of an individual dwelling but was later transferred to denote a fairly large suburban development to the north of Llandegfan. No logical basis has been found for the original name.

Brynsiencyn
Bryn + the personal name *Siencyn* (Jenkin).

Bull Bay. *See* Porth Llechog.

Burwen
The name of a locality a little to the south of Porth Llechog. Before it was extended to that of the locality in the first half of the nineteenth century it had been the name of a dwelling. Several forms of the dwelling's name are to be found including **Burwen** (1717) and **Birwen** (1830) but there is uncertainty as to its origin.

Caergeiliog
Caer (fort) + *ceiliog* (cockerel). The significance of the second element is unclear.

Caergybi (Holyhead)
Caer + the name of a saint, *Cybi:* 'Cybi's fort'. Cybi's church stands inside the Roman fort and has been a focal point for the town for many centuries. The English name, **Holyhead**, which refers to the holiness of the locality, is also very old, and is the exact equivalent of the Cornish Celtic name *Penzance*. The chart opposite shows the variety of names which have been used to denote this locality from the earliest periods until the present time.

Caergybi (Holyhead)

The early period	**Llan y Gwyddel** **Llam y Gwyddel** **Capel Llan y Gwyddel** **Eglwys y Bedd** **Eglwys y Beddi**	Indicates Goidelic (Irish) influences and Irish settlement in the area (cf Cytiau'r Gwyddelod)
	Cor Cybi	*Côr:* circle of/seat of/place of
1283	**Castrum Cuby**	During his itinerary of North Wales, Edward I sent dispatches from 'Castrum Cuby'
1315	**Haliheved**	
1332	**Holiheved**	
1352	**Caergybi**	'a hamlet within the township of Trev Llowarch', ie Llanfwrog. (*Extent of Talybolion* in the reign of Edward III)
1394	**Le Holyhede**	
Late fifteenth century	**Insulae de St Ceby**	
1536-39	**Kaer Kybi** **Holy Hed** **The Holy Hedde**	John Leland
1573	**Caer Cybi** **Holy Head**	Humphrey Llwyd, *Cambriae Typus*. The first map of Wales drafted by a Welshman
1586	**Holihead**	Sotheby MSS 290
1590/1600	**Llan Gaer Kybi**	Sotheby MSS 355
1610	**Holy Head**	John Speed
1654	**Gorffwysfa Gybi**	'In the township of Trelowarch' (Bodewryd MSS 74)
Early nineteenth century	**Holyhead**	First edition One Inch Ordnance Survey map

Carreg-lefn
Carreg (stone) + *llefn*, the feminine form of *llyfn* (smooth).

Cefniwrch
Cefn (ridge) + *iwrch* (roebuck: a type of small deer). This was originally the name of a house but the designation has been extended to include the surrounding locality which lies a little to the north of Llangefni.

Cemais
This name, which is a fairly common one in Wales, derives from the word *camas*, meaning a bend, loop or meander. The old name for this place was **Porth Wygyr**. Here the river Wygyr enters the sea and can be seen to meander before reaching Traeth Mawr, the name of the beach at Cemais.

There has been a tendency to change the spelling to 'Cemaes' in order to suggest that its meaning has somehow been derived from *maes* (field). The use of this form should be avoided, and the correct spelling, Cemais, adhered to.

Church Bay. *See* Porth Swtan.

Corn Hir
This name means 'long chimney', and was first given to a dwelling house but has been extended to denote a locality and a community which later grew rapidly at the western edge of the town of Llangefni. The name describes the type of chimney used on the house at one time (before *c*.1913). This class of name is not unusual, and we find, for example, a similar designation, *Corn Coch* (red chimney) in both Newborough and Bodedern.

Dyffryn/Valley
No place-name has caused more debate and controversy in Anglesey in recent years than this one. Prior to the 1970s when Dyffryn became accepted as its official, alternative designation, the locality had been identified on early maps and documents as **Traethau Cleifiog** and, from the early nineteenth century onwards as **Valley** (transcribed in Welsh as **Fali** or **Y Fali**).

The name Valley originated when a depression or a valley was dug to yield rubble for building the Cob (Stanley Embankment) in the early 1820s. A small cluster of dwellings, which stood nearby was referred to as **Valley** by the labourers engaged in the work. This gradually became designated as **Hen Valley** (Old Valley) and sometimes also as **Pentre Gwyddelod** (the village of the Irish), as opposed to the newer Valley, which developed further to the east around the crossroads (Valley Square) and the railway station in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The name Valley, so frequently misinterpreted in the past, thus originated in the aftermath of civil engineering activity carried out in connection with the building of Thomas Telford's new Post Road to Holyhead. The following note drafted by a resident of the area who had observed these substantial changes makes this abundantly clear:

> *Cyn gwneud y cob ni bu erioed sôn am le o'r enw Valley yn yr ardal, ei enw oedd glan môr Tŷ Coch and* [sic] *Glan Môr Castell llyfaint* [sic].
>
> (Before the cob was built there was never any mention of the name Valley in the area; its name was *glan môr Tŷ Coch* and *Glan Môr Castell llyfaint*)

Four Mile Bridge. *See* Pontrhydybont.

Gaerwen
Caer + *gwen* (white fort). There are no clear remains of a fort in the area today. It was the name of a farm to begin with before being adopted by the nearby village and later extended to the railway station.

Glanrafon
This name means 'riverside'.This small hamlet represented the half-way staging post on the old coach road between Holyhead and the ferry at Porthaethwy. As a result, an imposing coaching inn, 'Y Gwyndy', now utterly derelict, was built nearby. As one of the staging posts for the Mail Service between Holyhead and London, the landlord at Gwyndy was responsible for providing fresh horses for the mail coach on this section of the road.

Glyn Garth
This is the site of one of the early Menai ferries. The name, which does not seem to be very old, may have been transferred from that of the landing stage at Garth on the other side of the water at Bangor. The name *garth* means a ridge or a piece of enclosed land.

Gored/Y Gored
The name of a coastal area near Valley. *Cored* means 'weir' and denotes the wall built either of wattle or stones on the sea shore in the olden days to create a fish trap. *Cored* is a feminine noun in Welsh and therefore the first letter softens to 'g' after the definite article 'y' to form the name **Y Gored** (locally pronounced) 'Y Gorad'.
The remains of the weir denoted here can still be seen as a wall of large stones, called *Y Wal Ddu* (the black wall) on the eastern side of the **Lasinwen** strait in the Valley area. The remains of other weirs can be seen on the beach near Llan-faes and at Ynys Gorad Goch ('The Island of the Red Weir') in the Menai Strait.

Gwalchmai
Its early name was **Trewalchmai**, which described one of the townships in the Commote of Malltraeth. The township belonged to the family of Gwalchmai ap Meilyr (1130–80) one of the poets of the Princes. It seems that the placename **Trefeilir** (earlier known as **Trefeilyr**) incorporates the name of his son, Meilyr ap Gwalchmai.

Holland Arms. *See* Pentreberw.

Holyhead. *See* Caergybi.

Kingsland
The name describes a district on the outskirts of Holyhead.

It was coined to commemorate the visit of the king, George IV, to Holyhead in 1821. He travelled on to Ireland and his visit to that part of his realm was commemorated by the bestowal of the name Kingstown on Dun Laoghaire. As some of William Morris's letters show, the Kingsland district was known in the eighteenth century as **Penllechnêst**.

Llain-goch
Llain means a 'quillet' (a piece of

land), and it is likely that the adjective *coch* (red) refers to the colour of the earth. There is a farm called **Dryll** (which also means a piece of land) on the village outskirts. Llain-goch lies to the west of Holyhead, and when the quartzite quarries were opened on the slopes of Mynydd Twr, additional clusters of dwellings were established above the original focus at **Pentre Uchaf** and **Pentre Canol**.

Llannerch-y-medd
Llannerch (glade, meaning a piece of land cleared of forest and fenced in) + *medd* (mead, an alcoholic drink made from honey). Melville Richards offered the suggestion that there was an abundance of bees there to produce honey. The Morris brothers would sometimes jokingly refer to the place as *Llannerch-y-Meddwon* (glade of the drunkards).

Llynfaes
Llyn (lake) + *maes* (field). These two elements also combine to denote the name of a small farm in the locality, **Maes y Llyn**. A post office was established in a nearby house called **Ty'n Lôn** in the nineteenth century, a designation which was eventually extended to that of the locality.

Maenaddwyn
Maen (stone) + the personal name *Addwyn*. The name does not refer to the standing stone seen by the roadside today. Addwyn's stone had been removed before the time of the Morris brothers.

Malltraeth
The village takes its name from Malltraeth marsh. Wet, marshy land could be called *mall*, meaning 'dirty, rotten'. The second element *traeth* refers to the nearby foreshore, and it should be remembered that in the days before the Cob was built at Malltraeth the tide would flow over the marsh and foreshore and across Cors Ddyga as far as the bridge (called *Y Bont Fawr*) in Llangefni. The names **Glantraeth** and **Trefdraeth** also come from the period before the Cob was built.

Another name for the village of Malltraeth in the old days was **Rhyd y Maen Du**, which designated the ford (*rhyd*) carrying the road from Aberffraw to Newborough over the River Cefni. The name of the ford was extended first of all to that of a dwelling, which exists to this day.

Marian-glas
Marian (stony place) + the adjective *glas* ('blue' or 'green'). There are many examples of the form *marian* in Anglesey. As a technical term *marian* corresponds to the English term 'moraine' which describes the stony deposits left by glaciers when they melted.

Menai Bridge. *See* Porthaethwy

Moelfre
The name combines the adjective *moel*, 'bare' or 'treeless', with *bre*, an old form of the word *bryn*, meaning a 'hill'. The name is often encountered in other Welsh localities to denote a raised area of land much higher than that found in this instance.

Newborough
This was the name given to the new borough established by Edward I after his conquest of Gwynedd. The town was established for the burgesses of Llanfaes as part of Edward I's intention to dishonour and demean the status of that town as one of the main centres of the princes of Gwynedd.

The area was known in the old days as **Rhosyr** or **Rhosir**, a name whose origin is quite unknown. The designation may be a simple combination of *rhos* (moor) and *Mair* (Mary) but it may also have developed from the name **Rhosfyr** from *rhos* again and *myr* (an old plural form of *môr*, 'sea'). The second interpretation appears rational when it is borne in mind that Rhosyr is surrounded by seas, in Llanddwyn Bay, the Menai Strait and Traeth Melynog.

Paradwys
This attractive and well-known place-name (which means 'paradise') identifies a neighbourhood in the Llangristiolus/Trefdraeth area. The name is devoid of any religious significance and appears to have been derived from the name of a small mansion called Paradwys, which was once located there. The mansion's designation was based on the Persian term for a walled garden, once attached to the mansion. The mansion's site had formerly been occupied by a dwelling called **Tyddyn Deicws Deg**.

Pencaernisiog
The name derives from the mediaeval township of *Conysiog* or *Conisiog*, a possessional name based on *Conws/Cwnws*. An adjacent settlement, located on slightly more elevated land, became identified as **Penconisiog**, and since it was assumed, quite incorrectly, that this name incorporated the word *caer* (fort), its orthography and enunciation eventually changed to *Pencaernisiog*. The enunciation 'Gnisiog' is also often encountered nowadays.

Conws's memorial stone still stands in the locality and carries the inscription *CVNVGVSI HIC IACIT* (Cunugusus lies here). Cunugusus, from which Conws is derived, is believed to be an Irish personal name.

Pengorffwysfa
The name of a small hamlet on Mynydd Eilian.

Penmon
The name combines *pen* (here meaning 'end' or 'extremity') and *Môn*. The area, comprising the eastern extremity of the island, extends from the high ground of Mariandyrys to the sea near Trwyn Du.

Penmynydd
Pen (here meaning 'end', or 'upper end') and *mynydd* (mountain). The steep hill leading from the Ceint valley to Penmynydd is known either as **Allt Penmynydd** or **Allt Dragon**. The second designation originates from the names of a number of dwellings (Dragon Wen, Dragon Ddu, Dragon Goch) located at the top of the hill. Local tradition has it that the name Dragon reflects the fact that in the old days the stage-coach had to brake when going down the hill. It did this by using the drag or the brake (i.e. putting the 'drag on'). This represents a totally fanciful effort to explain the

name and should be disregarded totally. It is more likely that the name either derives from that of a personal designation, perhaps based on the name of an early heroic figure, or (and this is far more likely), it has been adopted from the name of an inn such as the 'White Dragon' or 'Black Dragon' which may have been located at the top of the hill at one time.

Penrhosfeilw
The name which combines *pen* (extremity), *rhos* (moor)and the personal name *Meilw*, is located on the western side of Holy Island. Other examples of the form Penrhos in the same locality include Penrhos Stanley and Penrhos Bradwen.

Penrhosllugwy
Pen + *rhos* + the name of the river *Llugwy*. Since *–ug–* tends to be pronounced as *–ig–* in Anglesey the name is usually spelt 'Penrhoslligwy'.

Pen-sarn
Pen (the end) + *sarn* (a roadway with a hard surface raised a little above the surrounding land). The name in full is **Pen-y-Sarn** and the old name for the roadway itself was **Sarn yr Offeiriad Du** (roadway of the black priest).

Pentraeth
Pen (upper end) + *traeth* (beach). Pentraeth is located near Traeth Coch (or Gwyndraeth Cyrchell as it may have been called in an earlier period). This location was also called **Betws Geraint** and **Llanfair Betws Geraint** in the Middle Ages.

Pentre-berw
Pentre (village) + *berw* (cress). The second element in this place-name derives from the name of a mediaeval township in the commote of Menai called **Berw**, a name either arising from the cress plant which commonly grew in this locality, or from the turbulent movement of water down a waterfall. A village developed in Berw alongside the old road which ran from Newborough to Ceint. An inn was eventually built there which displayed the arms of the Holland family who lived nearby at Plas Berw, and the name of this inn extended itself, as **Holland Arms**, to become an alternative designation for the village.

Pentrefelin
The name translates as 'the village with the mill' and identifies a locality on the outskirts of Amlwch. A mill called **Melin Adda** was located there. This is a common name and other examples of it can be found across Wales, eg Pentrefelin near Portmadoc and Pentre'r Felin near Sennybridge, Powys.

Pontrhydybont (Four Mile Bridge)
The name combines the elements *pont*, *rhyd* and *pont* ('bridge', 'ford' and 'bridge'). As the strait of Lasinwen is exceptionally narrow in this place a ford was established there at a very early date and later a bridge was also built to join Anglesey to Holy Island. There is evidence that the ford was still in use, even after the bridge was built, and this explains the core of the name, which is **Rhyd-y-Bont**. The element *pont* was added quite unnecessarily as a prefix to this name.

The English name for this place is **Four Mile Bridge**. Some have suggested that this is a scornful reference to the size of the bridge.This explanation is quite unfounded, and the name stems rather from efforts to improve transport in the locality. The old Post Road from Holyhead to Porthaethwy crossed the bridge, and when milestones were placed at the side of the road in 1752 or thereabouts, as one of William Morris's letters shows, the fourth stone from Holyhead was placed near the bridge.

Porthaethwy (Menai Bridge)
Porth (doorway, ferry or crossing place) + *Daethwy*, the name of an old Celtic tribe which used to live on the shores of the Menai. The early form of the name was **Porthddaethwy**, but the *–dd* was lost and the name changed to **Porthaethwy**. It was further shortened colloquially to **Borth.**

There was a ferry landing-place here from early times and by 1500 the Porthaethwy ferry was the most important and, apparently, the safest of the Menai ferries. There is a colourful description of the service and the boat (*Ysgraff Porthaethwy*) by the poet, Syr Dafydd Trefor (died *c.*1528), where he plays with the various meanings of the word *porth:*

Nid porth eithr Porthaethwy
Porth Cymru yn llethu'r lleill,
Porth i wŷr pyrth eraill
Porthwyr a meirch porth aur Môn,
Porth Iesu i'r porthwysion.

(No doorway compares with Porthaethwy
Doorway to Wales surpassing all others,
A doorway to the men of other doorways
Doormen and horses the golden doorway of Anglesey,
Doorway of Jesus to the ferrymen)

When Thomas Telford's suspension bridge was built over the Menai in 1826 it was called **Pont y Borth**, but a new English designation, **Menai Bridge**, was soon coined and used by English speakers as an alternative name for Porthaethwy.

Porth Llechog (Bull Bay)
Porth (which in this context means 'bay') + *Llechog*, the name of one of the mediaeval townships of Twrcelyn. The name of the township, which survives in the name of two farms in the area, may have been derived from the rocky and stony nature of the area. The English designation of the place, **Bull Bay**, is much more recent and derives from the name of a pool on the beach called **Pwll y Tarw** (the bull's pool).

Porth Swtan (Church Bay)
Porth (again meaning 'bay') + *swtan* (the Welsh term for the whiting, a species of fish). This provides a good example of one of the many coastal designations on the island which derive from particular biotic features (eg *Porth Delysg* 'seaweed bay', *Porth y Gwichiaid* 'winkle bay', *Trwyn y Wylan* 'gull's head peninsula'). The name has nothing to do with the personal name Suetonius, the Roman General who invaded Anglesey in AD60, as many believe.

Since the steeple of Llanrhuddlad Church is such a prominent feature in the locality (especially from the sea), the place began to be called **Church Bay**, and it is interesting to note that the English name first appeared on a navigation chart in 1816.

Rhoscolyn
Rhos (moor) + the personal name *Colyn*. Since the church at Rhoscolyn had been consecrated to Saint Gwenfaen, an alternative name for the locality in the early period was **Llanwenfaen**.

Rhos-fawr
Rhos (moor) + *mawr* ('large' or 'extensive'). With the advent of the postal service in the last century the name was superseded by **Bryn-Teg**,which was the name given to the local post office. One of the other prominent features in the locality was an inn called **California**, and its name has also been extended nowadays to refer to the general locality.

Rhos-goch
Rhos + the adjective *coch* (red). The adjective may refer to the colour of the soil in the locality, and it must be remembered that *coch* in Welsh may describe a number of shades along the spectrum from red to the colour usually described as brown in English.

Rhos-meirch
Rhos +*meirch* (stallions).

Rhosneigr
Rhos + the personal name *Neigr/Yneigr*. Yneigr was the grandson of Cunedda Wledig and cousin to Cadwallon Lawhir. It is said that he fought side by side with his cousin in the battle of Cerrig-y-Gwyddyl (*c.* AD 450) when the Irish were completely routed and driven out of the island by Cadwallon's army. *Cerrig-y-Gwyddyl* ('the rocks of the Irishmen') are located near Bethel.

Rhostrehwfa
Rhos (moor) + *Tre Hwfa*, or maybe *Tŷ/Tyddyn Hwfa* (a name based in the first place on the personal name Hwfa).

Rhos-y-bol
The name combines the elements *Rhos*, the definite article '*y*' and *bol*. It seems that the last element, which is also found in the name **Talybolion**, refers to the locality's undulating landscape. (*See* Talybolion).

Rhyd-wyn
Rhyd (ford) + *Gwyn*. The second element may be a personal name but some nineteenth century documents record the name as **Rhyd Wen**, that is, *rhyd* followed by the adjective *wen* (the feminine form of *gwyn)* meaning 'white', rather than *rhyd* qualified by a personal name. Rhyd Wen is the name we find on both the first edition of the One-Inch Ordnance Survey map and the Tithe Redemption Schedule. There is also evidence that the usual pronunciation of the name around the middle of the nineteenth century was **Rhydwen** (the stress having disappeared from the second element).

Talwrn
There are a number of meanings to this word, including 'threshing floor', 'cockpit' and 'open glade'. The name originally designated one of the local farms, **Y Talwrn Mawr**, before being extended to describe the locality in general. There is evidence that one part of the locality, that which grew up around the crossroads, was described as **Rhyd Ddimai** (halfpenny ford) at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Trearddur
Tref (town) and the personal name *Iarddur*, an important personage in the mediaeval period and a brother of Hwfa ap Cynddelw.

The name is an old one and designated one of the largest farms in the area for a long time. The name of the largest inlet near Trearddur was **Porth y Capel** (the inlet or bay located alongside the chapel of Saint Ffraid) and at the upper end of the bay were located the sand dunes of **Towyn y Capel**. Given the tendency to Anglicize Welsh place-names, and with the intention of trying to attract tourists once the railway to Holyhead had been built, the form **Trearddur Bay** came into use (as happened at Cemais Bay, Bull Bay and Benllech Bay).

Trefdraeth
The name is a descriptive one and denotes a *tref* (township) near the *traeth* (beach). Of course, there is no beach at Trefdraeth today, but it should be remembered that the sea used to wash the southern finges of the locality before the Cob was built at Malltraeth.

The town stood near the Court of the Princes in Aberffraw and was divided into two parts in the Middle Ages. The lands of **Tref-*(draeth)* Ddisteiniaid** were located near the site of the present day parish church and fairly near to the *traeth*, whilst the site of **Tref-*(draeth)* Wastrodion** was located a little further west. The *disteiniaid* (stewards) and the *gwastrodion* (the grooms who looked after the princes' horses) were important court officials.

Trefor
The designation developed in the first place from the elements *tref* and *mawr* ('large town'). It is known that its form had changed to Trefor by the middle of the eighteenth century and we have documentary evidence for that period noting forms such as **Tythin Trefor** (1749) and **Trefor bach** (1753). The focus of the area was the crossroads where the road which ran from Llannerch-y-medd to Aberffraw in the old days crossed the Old Post Road to Holyhead. The area therefore possessed some nodality before the island's communication pattern was changed completely by the building of Thomas Telford's road.

Tŷ-croes
The name originally derives from that of a house in the locality 'with a wing attached'. The name gradually became extended to the whole locality and gained even greater currency when a station was established there following the building of the railway from Bangor to Holyhead in 1848.

Tyddyn To
The name identifies a locality on the northern outskirts of Porthaethwy. Its designation derives from that of a dwelling which was once an inn located alongside the old Post Road to Holyhead.

Tyn-y gongl
Tyn (an abbreviation of *tyddyn:* 'smallholding'), the definite article '*y*', and the common noun *congl* (corner).

Valley. *See* Dyffryn.

CHAPTER 4

The Coastal Place-names of Anglesey

Although Anglesey is a fairly small island, it does have a coastline about 125 miles long. The coastline and offshore waters include hundreds of topographical features – coves, landing places, beaches, islands, rocks and promontories. The names of over 750 of these features have been recorded and many others without doubt survive orally, known only by the island's oldest inhabitants.

In order to interpret place-names correctly, scholars in Wales and elsewhere have emphasized the importance of recording the old forms found in documents and books. In the case of coastal names this is a difficult task as they seldom occur in deeds and tenurial records. One must depend on charts and ordnance maps, and documents and books relating to the sea and shipping. Documentation is therefore quite late: it is unusual for a coastal name in Anglesey to be recorded before 1500. The names were also often recorded by mapmakers and chartmakers who knew very little Welsh. All this makes the task of interpreting the names, especially the Welsh names, quite difficult.

Of the 750 and more names recorded, 600 are completely Welsh. (The remainder are English or Norse, and combinations of elements from Welsh and other languages.) *Porth* is the element which occurs most often in the Welsh names: 165 names containing it are recorded on the Anglesey coastline. *Porth* is a loanword from Latin *portus* (harbour) and it is probable that its meaning in Welsh is 'landing place; harbour'. Occasionally, as in names such as **Porthaethwy** and **Porth Abermenai**, it may mean 'ferry'. Generally, in Anglesey, it is more than likely that *porth* refers to a cove where boats could be brought to land or sent out to sea. *Porth* is a feminine noun, although *porth* meaning 'gate, gateway' is masculine. That is why names such as **Y Borth**, **Borthwen**, **Porth Fudr** and **Porth Lydan** are to be found on the Anglesey coast. In later times the true gender of *porth* was forgotten and names such as **Porth Mawr** and **Porth Lleidiog** came to be used. Some names such as **Porth Nobla** in Aberffraw are difficult to explain, although popular oral explanations do abound.

Traeth (shore) is another common element. This element again refers to a locality where the sea runs inland, and in this case it refers almost without exception to a sandy part of the coast. *Traeth* is cognate with Irish, Cornish

and Breton words meaning 'shore', which also occur in place-names. It is also related to the Welsh word *trai* (ebb). Some shores and beaches in Anglesey are long, such as **Traeth Malltraeth** and **Traeth y Gribin**, but the majority are short.

In Goronwy Owen's words:

Môn doreithiog, a'i mân draethau.
('Fruitful Anglesey and its small beaches'.)

Trwyn (literally 'nose', but here 'point') and *penrhyn* (promontory) are the main elements referring to topographical features that protrude into the sea. *Ynys* (island), *carreg* (rock) with its plural *cerrig*, and two further Welsh words meaning 'rock', *craig* and *maen*, are the most frequently occurring elements of the names of topographical features lying off the coast. *Ynys* is closely related to Irish *inis* and both words come from a Celtic root word meaning 'an object standing in water'. It is difficult for us today perhaps to understand why the word *carreg* (stone) was used in a name such as **Carreg y Frân** near Llanfaethlu, a fairly large rock off the coast. Over the years the meaning of *carreg* has changed. To us today it means 'pebble, stone', but in place-names, without exception, it means 'rock'.

A number of coastal names contain elements or parts of names that have been moved from another spot – a fairly common pattern in place-names. These are known as 'shift names', and include **Ynys Amlwch**, **Porth Amlwch**, **Porth Cemlyn**, **Traeth Cemlyn**, **Cerrig Cemlyn**, **Porth Cwyfan**, **Porth Edwen** and **Porth Padrig**. These places and features were so named because they stood in close proximity to Amlwch, to **Llyn Cemlyn** – a curved lake (*cam* 'bent' + *llyn* 'lake') formed behind **Esgair Gemlyn** (a curved gravel bank) – or because they stood in the parishes of Llangwyfan, Llanedwen or Llanbadrig. The name of the patron saint of the parish became part of the names of these coves. Names such as **Porth Ruffudd**, Holyhead, **Porth Solomon**, Beaumaris and **Porth Diana** near Trearddur Bay, however, are different. Here there must have been a close connection between some unknown person and the particular cove. The name Porth Diana is extremely interesting. The form is first recorded in 1787, but the name recorded by Lewis Morris in 1759 is **Porthdwnna**. This shows that the original second element of the name must have been the masculine Welsh personal name *Twna*. However, this was slyly changed to Diana in the late eighteenth century.

In the case of the Welsh names, descriptive elements are often used to describe coastal features. Adjectives describing appearance occur frequently in names such as **Porth Fain** (narrow cove), **Porth Fudr** (dirty or muddy cove), **Traeth Melynog** (yellowish shore) and **Ynys Gron** (round island). Other elements refer to life and work on the coast many centuries ago. *Cwrwgl* (coracle) and *ysgraff* (an ancient boat larger than a coracle) are examples of such elements. Today coracles are only to be seen on a few rivers in Wales and the word *ysgraff* has disappeared from the spoken language in Anglesey. However, boats of this kind must have existed on the island's shores. These elements occur in names such as **Porth y Corwgl**, Holyhead and Llaneilian, **Porth yr Ysgraff**, Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy and **Pant Ysgraffiau**, Llanidan.

In several instances the name of an animal or a bird forms part of name of a feature, or occurs sometimes on its own, because of a perceived resemblence to the shape of the creature. Names such as **Carreg Ddafad** ('sheep rock', Penrhosllugwy), **Carreg y Gath** ('cat rock', Aberffraw) and **Craig yr Iwrch** ('roebuck rock', Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy), belong to this group. Out at sea beyond the Bar at Malltraeth there stands a large rock. Its curved back has a deep fissure. The rock is called **Caseg Falltraeth** (the mare of Malltraeth), a name first recorded in 1617. This rock must have been so-called because it resembles a mare in the sea. Between the rock and the shore lie a number of smaller rocks called **Yr Ebolion** (the foals). When foul weather approaches, the wind drives the sea through fissures in the rocks, creating a strange, high-pitched sound which can be clearly heard from the village of Malltraeth. On such occasions the villagers say that Caseg Falltraeth is neighing – a sure sign of imminent stormy weather. Off the coast of Llanrhwydrys, not far from the church stands a rock called **March Rhwydrys** (the horse of Rhwydrys) a name first recorded by Lewis Morris in 1724-7.

The majority of the Welsh-language coastal names of Anglesey are fairly easy to explain and understand but the occasional one can be extremely difficult. Some rocks in Llanfaethlu near Porth Tywyn Mawr are called **Creigiau Cliperau**. The name is first recorded in 1605 in the form of an English phrase 'a plain called Clapper'. The form **Clapira** is recorded in 1769 and **Clipera** first occurs in 1838. It is possible that 'clapper' is an unrecorded English word or a loanword from English. Some people have suggested that the name refers to a 'clipper' ship, but this explanation is unacceptable. The name remains unexplained.

The strait between Anglesey and Holy Island is called **Y Lasinwen** or **Afon Lasinwen**. The name is first recorded in 1634 in the form **Lasinwen**. It is fairly probable that the name can be connected with the Welsh word for

'green sward' or 'sod', and with the place-name **Glasinfryn**, but it has yet to be explained properly. It is possible that it refers to the colour of the water – a mixture of green and white.

On the western coast of Holy Island lies a cove called **Porth Dafarch**. The name is first recorded in 1545 in the form **Porth Davagh**. There is no *-r-* in this form but an *-r-* occurs in all forms of the name from the late eighteenth century onwards. It has been suggested that the true form of the name is **Porth Daufarch**, 'the cove of the two horses', but this is unacceptable. It is possible that the second element is an unrecorded personal name such as *Tafach*, but yet again the name remains unexplained.

Of the coastal names which are neither Welsh, nor a mixture of Welsh and some other language, a small group has been acknowledged to be of Scandinavian origin. Amongst these are **Priestholm** (Puffin Island), which contains the elements *prestr* (priest) and *holmr* (island); **Skerries**, the plural form of *sker* (rock); and possibly **Maen Piscar**, a rock standing in the sea off Rhoscolyn. It is possible that the Norse *fiskarr* (a fisherman) is the second element of this name. **Osmond's Air**, an early name for **Gallows Point** near Beaumaris, can be added to this group. It contains the personal name *Asmundr* and the Norse word *eyrr* (a gravel bank near the sea).

Southcrook is almost certainly the English name for Abermenai Point. The name is first recorded in 1304 but has not been used for centuries. It is probable that the second element is the old English word *croc* (a crook) and that the name refers to the long curved series of sand dunes at Abermenai. Other middle-English elements are recorded in Anglesey coastal names. Off the northern coast of the island lie three small islands: **West Mouse** (Maen y Bugail); **Middle Mouse** (Ynys Badrig); and **East Mouse** (Ynys Amlwch). One of these islands was known as **le Mouse** in the fifteenth century. Perhaps the islands were so-called because they resembled mice in the sea or because they swarmed with mice. In this context it is interesting to note that the alternative name for Ynys Moelfre was **Ynys Lygod**: 'the island of mice'. In 1478 William of Worcester called a headland in north western Anglesey **le Foulforeland**. This is one of the earliest examples of the English word *foreland* to be recorded. It is obviously a reference to **Carmel Head** (Trwyn y Gadair). The element **Carmel** is also interesting. It first occurs in the sixteenth century in the form the 'Road of the Cardinals'. This became **Carnels Head**, but the form Carmel Head does not occur until the nineteenth century.

Red Wharf is another interesting English name. Early forms show that 'Red Warth' was the original form of the name and that *warth* (beach; shore)

is the second element of the name. It is therefore perfectly possible that the original name is a translation of **Traeth Coch**: 'red beach'.

Other English translations of Welsh names can also be found. **Mill Bay** to the east of Cemlyn (a name first recorded in the sixteenth century) is a translation of the Welsh name **Porth y Felin**. **Black Point**, Penmon, and **Black Rock**, Holyhead, are translations of **Trwyn Du** and **Carreg Ddu**. On the contrary **Ynys Halen**, Holyhead, is a translation of the English name **Salt Island**. The form Ynys Halen is first recorded in 1839 but the name Salt Island – which refers to a salt works on the island – is first recorded by Lewis Morris in the eighteenth century. Lewis Morris also called Salt Island **'Ynys Gybi'**.

English elements in coastal names occur most often in combination with Welsh elements. Names such as **Dulas Bay**, **Rhoscolyn Head**, **Wylfa Head** and **Abermenai Point** abound in every part of the island. Other elements such as *'stack'*, *'sound'*, *'race'* and *'platter'* occur less frequently. The element 'platter' is most interesting. It occurs a number of times off the coasts of Anglesey in names such as **The Platters** and its meaning is almost certainly 'a flat rock' which appears only at ebb tide. This word is not recorded in a topographical context in any English dictionary.

There are some independent English names for features which already had established Welsh names. **Cable Bay** is the English name for **Porth Trecastell**, Aberffraw – a name given because the Atlantic telegraph cable terminated there. **Bull Bay** is the English name for **Porth Llechog**, and **Church Bay** is the English name for **Porth Swtan**. *Swtan* is the Welsh word for 'whiting'. Perhaps the most remarkable set of names in this group are the names for the curved gravel bank and bay on the outskirts of Beaumaris. The Norse name **Osmond's Air** has already been noted along with the English name **Gallows Point**. There is also a very old Welsh name for this feature: **Penrhyn Safnas**. This name is first recorded in 1536-9 in the form **Pen ryn Savyn ast** (the headland of the bitch's mouth). Welsh speakers must have thought that the gravel bank and bay resembled the open mouth of a bitch. The bank was called Gallows Point in English either because a gallows stood there or because English speakers thought that the bank and bay resembled a gallows.

It is obvious that many of the independent English names were coined by cartographers. **Freshwater Bay** in Llaneilian is a fine example. The name is first recorded in the sixteenth century and one chartmaker has this to say about the bay: 'at the south end of this bay fresh water may be procurred'. **Ceg yr Afon** is the Welsh name for the spot.

A number of the English names refer to offshore features which have no Welsh names. **Archdeacon Rock** and **Langdon Ridge** are good examples. The names refer to two famous nineteenth century marine chartmakers – W E Archdeacon and C H Langdon. **Bolivar Rock** or **Fenwick Rock**, (the names of a rock out at sea off Church Bay), are similar names. Lloyd's Register for 1844 lists a ship called *Bolivar* and notes that the master's name was J Fenwick. This ship must, then, have struck the rock. Some other rock names refer to ships that were wrecked on them. **Nimrod Rocks**, Holyhead, must refer to *HMS Nimrod* which was wrecked there in January 1827. It is also fairly probable that the names **Ethel Rock** and **African Rock** off the Skerries refer to wrecked vessels. In this context it is interesting to note that the Welsh name **Trwyn Euphrates**, Aberffraw, refers to the ship *Euphrates*, wrecked there in 1868.

About twenty per cent of the coastal names are Norse or English – a very high proportion if one remembers that only a few inland place-names in Anglesey are English. This is not a sign of Anglicization but rather it shows the existence of two naming systems. On the one hand Welsh speakers gave Welsh names to coastal features and on the other mapmakers and sailors tended to designate them in other languages and these names were then consistently recorded on marine charts.

The Lakes of Anglesey

Lakes and pools are common features on Anglesey, and although they are not as prominent in the landscape as they are in Snowdonia, there are far more of them on the island than in other areas of lowland Wales such as the Llŷn Peninsula and the Vale of Glamorgan.

The lakes of Anglesey may be divided into two categories on the basis of their formation. Some were created as a result of natural geological processes, and a key factor in their development was the impermeable nature of most of the island's rocks. With rocks of this type water tends to gather and remain on the surface, developing a dense network of small rivers, pools and lakes. The lakes in the other category were created through human endeavour over the centuries. An interesting variety of artificial lakes were thus formed, including not only the larger reservoirs built in the recent past but also the mill pools, some of which date back to the Middle Ages.

§ 5–1 Natural lakes

Two important geological processes influenced Anglesey's topography:

❖ During the Ice Age the ice sheets which flowed across the island from the north east to the south west eroded shallow basins, especially in those areas where the rock was soft and in the course of time lakes formed in such depressions. (see *Hendref* and *Archaeddon*).

❖ Over time, the sea has successfully closed off some coastal inlets, either fully or in part, through the transportation of sand and pebbles. The processes of longshore drifting of sediment by the sea and the blowing of dry sand by the wind created substantial bay bars, on the landward sides of which ideal situations were created for lagoons and other coastal lakes to develop. (See *Cemlyn* and *Maelog*).

After the creation of these natural lakes other processes began to operate. On the whole these are processes which gradually combine to obliterate such lakes. For example, if a river empties into a lake we find that the lake shows evidence of infilling with sediment. When plants establish them-

selves along its margins sooner or later the lake will begin to contract through the effects of organic accumulation. Many lakes on Anglesey have disappeared because of such changes and it may be confidently assumed that all the natural lakes on the island are now smaller than they were in the past.

§ 5–2 Artificial lakes

The wide variety of these lakes may be classified into five categories:

❖ ***Reservoirs.*** These lakes are extensive in size and have been developed in the recent past. (See *Alaw* and *Cefni*).

❖ ***Mill pools.*** These are much smaller in size (see *Hafodol* and *Strydan*) and are now fast disappearing. We have a good example in the vicinity of Llanfachraith of this type of lake which has now been completely lost as a geographical feature, but whose existence is effectively commemorated in a nearby place-name, Pen-yr-Argae (the head of the dam). This category of names also includes those artificial lagoons which were established on the coast to provide a run of water for tide mills. (See *Melin Tysilio* and *Felin Wen*).

❖ ***Other industrial lakes.*** These include the precipitation pools which may be seen at the foot of Mynydd Parys (see *Coch* and *Llaethdy*) as well as Llyn *Pwmp*, Llangefni which was extended by the Anglesey Central Railway Company during the 1860s.

❖ ***Decorative lakes.*** These were created by the island's gentry, mostly during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, not only to decorate and improve the landscape in their parks but also to form a suitable habitat for their leisure pursuits such as fishing and wildfowling. (See *Treiorwerth* and *Llwyn Crwn*).

❖ ***Lakes to promote nature conservation.*** A few examples can be found on the island of lakes which, in the recent past, have either been created deliberately as specific habitats to conserve wildlife or which have been developed and adapted to this end (see *Cemlyn* and *Parc Mawr*). Many of the small pools and ponds which have been created on the island to promote conservation during recent years may also be included in this category. It is possible that more lakes of this type will come into being in the future.

In the ensuing list, attempts are made to note the location of the various lakes, to offer a few comments on their names, to discuss some of their special features and to refer to the beliefs and traditions associated with some of them.

Alaw
Location: upper part of the Alaw valley.
The lake, which now covers Cors-y-Bol, was created in 1966 to increase the island's water supply. Three dams were built to create the reservoir, the largest of which was built across the Alaw valley near Boteiniol, Llanbabo. This lake is now by far the largest lake in Anglesey.

Archaeddon
Location: on Bodafon mountain.
This is a small lake located in a natural depression created by glacial erosion during the Ice Age. It is nowadays referred to as **Llyn Bodafon** or **Llyn Mynydd Bodafon**, but the name invariably used by Lewis and William Morris, who were both very familiar with the area, was **Archaeddon**. Another name for the lake and its environs according to an early Ordnance Survey map (1887) is **Gors Fawr**.

Bach
Location: Nant y Pandy (the 'Dingle'), Llangefni.
This was initially a river pool which was extended into a mill pond by constructing a weir across the Cefni river to divert a flow of water to the Cefni Mill. Parts of the weir still remain but the old mill stream has now been completely obliterated by recent development.

Bloeddia
Location: the lake lies in a depression on the eastern slopes of Mynydd Tŵr, Holyhead.
In describing this small lake as 'a traditional pool' the Rev H L Jones (*Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1855) seems to imply that the lake and locality may have possessed some special significance during the Celtic period (*See* Llyn Cerrig Bach).

Bodgylched
Location: near Beaumaris.
This lake was comparatively large at one time but is now experiencing shrinkage because of alluvial and organic sedimentation.

Bodowyr
Location: near Rhos-y-Llyn, Llanidan.
The lake was created to provide water for Bodowyr Mill. It has by now shrunk substantially leaving in its wake a muddy bog.

Bodronyn
Location: the lake, which has by now disappeared, used to lie somewhere in the vicinity of Bodronyn farm in the Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy area.
John Leland (1536-9) records Llyn Bodronyn as a feature in the vicinity of Llanfflewyn and Llanddygfael. The topographer may well have been referring to Llyn Llygeirian, but if so it should be noted that Bodronyn farm is situated a mile or more from this lake.

Bwch
Location: on the slopes of Mynydd Mechell.
A small lake formed in a depression on the northern side of the Mountain (*bwch:* 'buck'). The first Ordnance Map (*c.*1830) shows that this lake also was once far more extensive.

Cadarn
Location: Llanbedr-goch.
This is one of several small lakes located within Cors Goch.

Cadwgan
Location: near Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy.
A survey of the lands of the Llysdulas estates (1793) reveal the existence of a lake bearing this name in the vicinity of Cemlyn. The lake has now completely disappeared and insufficient evidence exists to enable us to establish its exact location with any certainty.

Cefni
Location: Bodffordd.
This is a man-made reservoir formed by building an extensive dam across the Cefni river in 1951. This was the first large reservoir to be built on the island and it holds some 400 million gallons of water. The reservoir and dam have also provided the means to control and stabilize the flow of the Cefni and thus reduce flooding in the marshes which lie downstream of Llangefni.

Cemlyn
Location: a coastal lake or lagoon in the Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy area.
The name combines the elements *cam* (crooked) and *llyn* (lake) to form a description of the lake's nature and shape, and it should be noted that the form recorded in some old maps and documents (eg John Evans's map of 1795) is **Camlyn**. It is also interesting to note that two lakes in Scotland, Cam Loch in Argyle and another Cam Loch in Sutherland, as well as Camlough in South Armagh, are variants of the same name.
The lake was created when a substantial ridge of coarse shingle formed by the sea (now called **Esgair Gemlyn**) acted as a natural dam to separate the lagoon from the rest of Cemlyn Bay. It should be added however that human influences have also played their part in the survival of this lagoon in recent years, since the weir placed at the western end of the Esgair ensures that the water level is kept high.

Cerrig Bach
Location: Llanfair-yn-neubwll.
This small lake would hardly deserve mention were it not for one important event. When peat was being dredged from the floor of the lake during the building of the Valley RAF base on the sand dunes of Tywyn Trewan in 1942 a valuable collection of iron objects dating from the first century AD was discovered. These objects are now in the care of the National Museum & Galleries, Cardiff. In his interpretation of these objects, Cyril Fox showed that this remote lake had been a religious focus for the Celts. Here votive offerings would have been made to the lake gods and here too the druidic priesthood would have gathered to officiate at the rituals.

The lake took its name from a nearby smallholding, Cerrig Bach.

Very little of the original lake now remains. With the development of the air base and the building of an adjacent road, the greater part of the lake has now been filled in.

Coch
Location: on the northern slopes of Mynydd Parys.
The lake is one of a series of precipitation ponds created in the Amlwch area during the last century. Water which was rich in dissolved copper would be run from the shafts and slopes of the mountain to these pools, and scrap iron thrown in to cause the copper to be precipitated on the bottom of each pool. Sluice gates would be opened periodically to dry out the pools and the layers of copper-impregnated mud would be collected and subsequently processed and purified. Since the copper content polluted the water and coloured it red, the name (*coch:* red) was given to the lake, and the river which flowed from the lake into the sea at Amlwch was also called Afon Goch.

Another name, **Llyn Meiri**, was used to describe the lake on the first Ordnance Survey Map (*c.*1830). However, this designation may represent a misspelling of Llyn Mieri.

Coron
Location: Bodorgan.
This is a natural lake which was once a part of a coastal inlet which has since been separated from the open sea by the development of the sand dunes at Aberffraw. The River Gwna flows from the north into the lake and the River Ffraw drains from it at the beginning of its journey to join the sea near Aberffraw. The name is first recorded in 1199 in the Charter of Aberconwy Abbey. John Leland (1536-9) calls the lake Llyn **Coran** and describes it as 'the greatest lake in the ysle, and the Fraus cummyth owt of this poole'. The designation **Corun**, an early form of the word 'coron' (meaning 'crown') may also have been used to describe the lake in the early period.

The name found on John Speed's map (1610) is Llyn **Corran**, the form **Carran** was used in Camden's *Britannia* (1772) and **Llyn-y-Goron** is the form encountered on John Evans's map (1795). Aberffraw was one of the centres of power of the princes of Gwynedd and the location of one of their courts for many centuries. It would therefore be very easy to interpret the name as a possessional one and to accept literally the form used by John Evans ('the crown's lake'). But we should refrain from doing this and accept that the exact meaning and significance of the name are uncertain.

Corslwyd
Location: somewhere in the Penmynydd area.
There is an interesting reference to this lake in the Reverend Henry Rowlands's early eighteenth century definition of the border which separated the commotes of Menai and Dindaethwy in the Middle Ages. According to the antiquarian the border ran from Pentraeth Mill, across the ford at Ceint and through **Corslwyd Pool** to Nant y Crwtt.

Dinam
Location: situated in Llanfair-yn-neubwll (which translates as 'St Mary's of the two pools').
The name appears to have been transferred to the lake from a neighbouring farm. The lake is also described, (for instance on the first Ordnance Map), as **Llyn Treflas**, an extension of the name **Treflesg**, which designates another nearby farm.

Felin Wen
Location: part of a coastal inlet located between Valley and Cymyran.
A dam was built across the inlet long ago to create a reservoir of water which was sufficient to provide for the needs of a tide mill, **Felin Wen**, located on the southern banks of the inlet. The tidal currents in the straits which separated Holy Island from the rest of Anglesey were strong enough, especially so before the building of the Stanley Embankment, to turn the waterwheels of at least three other tide mills in the vicinity (Tre'r Gof, Holyhead; Tŷ Mawr, Llanfair-yn-neubwll and Bodior, Rhoscolyn).

Frogwy
Location: near Bodffordd.
This is a large pool on the **Gafrogwy** river, effectively the upper section of the Cefni river. This pool was already quite extensive in its natural state but was later extended by building a mill dam across it to create a head of water for the Frogwy Water Mill.

The name is an abbreviation of the word Gafrogwy. R J Thomas (*Enwau Afonydd a Nentydd Cymru*, 1938) suggests that it derives from the word *gafr* (goat) and the associated adjective *gafrog* (goaty) and that it denotes a place where goats would assemble to graze.

Fydlyn/Y Fydlyn
Location: on the southern side of Trwyn-y-Gadair, Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy.
This is a muddy pool which formed in a narrow coastal inlet cut off from the sea by the deposition of sand and gravel. The pool turns into marshland after prolonged periods of dry weather. John Leland refers to the pool as 'yr **Havodlyn** ... the dairy poole' and, on one of the Two Inches to the Mile Ordnance Survey maps (1816–23), it is described, in a rather fanciful way, as **Hyfrydlyn** (pleasant lake). On contemporary maps however, and also in the locality, it is referred to as **Llyn-y-Fydlyn**. The name derives from the name **Hafod**, meaning a temporary summer residence for the grazing and milking of cattle and goats (a meaning which accords closely to Leland's designation). *Hafotai* (plural of *hafod*) used to be common features in Wales up until the end of the eighteenth century, especially in the mountainous regions, but they also characterised some of the roughest and remotest parts of Anglesey.

Some people see the name as a combination of the elements *mwd* (mud) and *llyn* (lake). Although this interpretation, at times, matches the character of the lake it should be disregarded.

Garreg Lwyd
Location: Llanfaethlu/Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy.
There are two lakes bearing this name.

One, which is now completely silted up, used to be situated on the boundary separating the above parishes, and the first One Inch Ordnance Survey map actually shows an extensive lake at this spot. All that now remains is some flat marshy ground attesting to its previous existence. The second, which was created to decorate the landscape of the Garreg Lwyd Estate, is located in a natural hollow near Garreg Lwyd Mansion.

Golau
Location: Malltraeth Marsh.
There are many references to lakes on Malltraeth Marsh before the land was reclaimed and enclosed at the end of the eighteenth century. For example, one document in the Baron Hill Estate Papers (1629) refers to **Llynnau Golau** ('light' or possibly 'glistening' lakes). It is likely that the name was a descriptive or adjectival one which referred specifically to the brightness of the lakes.

Gors/Y Gors
Location: Llandegfan.
It is shown as a moderately large lake on the first One Inch Ordnance Survey map but is now much reduced in size.

Gors Goch
Location: a little to the south of Llanfflewin Church.
This lake has now disappeared but sufficient archival evidence attests to its existence at one time.

Gors Goch
Location: the Llanfaelog area, between Rhosmor and Bryngwyn.
This little lake may represent the remains of an old mill pond.

Gwaith Glo
Location: on Malltraeth marsh between Llangaffo and Pentre-berw.
Two lakes are located on the floor of the marsh and are separated by a low causeway and, although they are situated near the old Berw coal mines their formation cannot be attributed directly to the coal industry. Rather, it seems that they were formed in a natural hollow or in two separate hollows on the marsh. They are marked on early Ordnance Survey maps as **Llynnau Gwaith Glo** but they are also referred to colloquially in the locality as either **Llyn** or **Llynnoedd Tai Hirion**.

Hafodol
Location: Carreg-lefn.
The lake is described as **Llyn y Gors Ddu** on John Evans's map (1795) and on the first One Inch Ordnance Survey map as **Llyn Felin Nant**.

The name which is still used and pronounced locally as **Llyn 'Fodol**, was transferred from a nearby farm. It also provides a good example of a reverse transference as the farm itself is now known as **Hafodol Llyn**. This lake, created in the first place to provide water for Nant Mill, has by now become virtually infilled with sediment and has shrunk a great deal.

Hendref
Location: the southern end of Cors Bodwrog.
Cors Bodwrog lies in a hollow which was deepened by erosion during the Ice Age and was subsequently filled by an extensive lake. Many lakes of this type were formed on Anglesey, lakes and have by now either shrunk

a great deal or have completely disappeared as a result of natural sedimentation. Llyn Hendref is a good example of this type of lake in that it represents the remains of a much larger lake which at one time extended across Cors Bodwrog as far as Llynfaes. The contemporary name is a simple transference from a nearby farm. In earlier times (eg on John Evans's map, 1795) it was called **Llyn Bodwina**, a name derived from another farm on the edge of the lake. The designation **Bodwino** used by John Leland (1536-9) is clearly a misspelling of this name, but Leland also describes the lake as **lacus Bodwrog** a description which might well have been apt and accurate four and a half centuries ago.

Llaethdy
Location: between Mynydd Parys and Amlwch.
This is another precipitation pool (*see* Llyn Coch.) It was created for industrial purposes and received the names of two neighbouring farms, **Llaethdy Mawr** and **Llaethdy Bach**. Looking at the area's drainage network it would seem that this lake receives its supply of copper-rich water from Llyn Coch.

Llwyd
Location: Malltraeth marsh.
This was another of the pools which existed on this marsh before it was reclaimed and enclosed. It is mentioned in a document dated 1629.

Llwydiarth
Location: on the slopes of Mynydd Llwydiarth in Pentraeth.
This lake, which is nowadays surrounded by dense forest, is the source of one of the tributaries of Afon Braint.

The name derives from the name of the mountain.

Llwyn Crwn
Location: near Parciau, Llaneugrad.
This is an example of a lake which is clearly denoted on nineteenth century maps but which is not recorded on more recent ones. It is shown on the first One Inch Ordnance Survey map (*c.*1830) and on a number of other maps up until the end of the century, but thereafter omitted.
The now infilled lake used to lie in a wooded hollow above the Llugwy Valley and opposite Mynydd Bodafon. The name of the surrounding woodland, **Llwyn Crwn**, was extended to that of the lake.

Llygeirian
Location: on the western slopes of Mynydd Mechell.
The name is a corruption of *llygaeron* or *llygeirin*, called cranberries or bog-berries in English, which grow on wet and marshy ground.

On John Evans's map (1795) the lake is marked as **Llyn corscerrigdân** and on the first Ordnance Survey map the name, recorded as **Llyn Llygeirion**, is similar to that used today. Locally, the name tends to be enunicated as **Llyn Geirian**.

Llywenan
Location: Bodedern.
This lake, formed naturally in the first instance, lies in a depression created by glacial erosion. However it was greatly enlarged during the last century when an embanking wall was built across its northern end to ensure a better supply of water to two nearby mills.

This lake was considered to be Anglesey's largest before the building of the Cefni and Alaw reservoirs. Unfortunately ecological changes during the last fifty years have caused its marginal reed beds to expand rapidly with the result that its area of open water has been considerably diminished. The name derives from the name of the river which flows from it, **Afon Llywenan**. This flows to the north of Bodedern before joining the Alaw River near the bridge at Llanfachraith. Evidence exists which suggests that the original name of both river and lake may have been **Llawenan**.

Madog Winau
Location: a little to the west of Malltraeth.
This was another of the lakes found on Morfa Malltraeth before the drainage and landscape patterns of the area were transformed at the end of the eighteenth century. There is a reference, in a survey of the lands of Bodorgan Estate in the 1720s, to '**Llyn Madog Wine** ... near Bryn Madog Wine and Cae Davydd on Malltraeth Common' and all the evidence suggests a location little to the west of the village of Malltraeth near a farm nowadays called **Y Fadog**. The designation comes from the name of a person, Madog Winau (*Madog + Winau:* 'red faced' or 'red haired').

Maelog
Location: Llanfaelog.
This is a natural lake located in an inlet which was at one time tidal. The inlet became separated from the open sea by the deposition of sand across its mouth in Tywyn Llyn. The River Llifon pours its waters into the lake, but there is a local tradition that a number of springs at the bottom of the lake also add their waters to its total volume. There is cartographic evidence that the surface of the lake has been diminished by alluvial and organic sedimentation during this century. The name derives from the name of the parish's patron saint.

Main
Location: near Pen Lôn, Llanfaelog.
This lake, which is clearly marked on the first One Inch Ordnance map has now been filled with sediment and completely obliterated.

Malltraeth
Location: on the inner side of the Malltraeth embankment.
This lake came into being after the Cob was built at the end of the eighteenth century. It is by nature shallow and muddy and provides an excellent habitat for a rich variety of shore birds. Charles Tunnicliffe refers to the lake as **Cob Lake** and used it often as a background to his paintings. The original English name was **Horseshoe Pool** and the Welsh form used locally is **Llyn-yr-Iard**.

Mawr (Mawr Y Caerau)
Location: near Caerau, Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy.
It is depicted as a fairly large lake on early maps of the area but it has since been so in-filled with sediment that it has now virtually disappeared.

Melin Tysilio
Location: the lake was sited in a coastal inlet between St Tysilio's Island (Church Island) and Menai Bridge .
It is sometimes described as **Llyn-y-Felin** and was used in the olden days to transfer the power of the tide in the Menai Strait to the tide mill at Llandysilio. (*See also* Llyn Felin Wen). Following the subsequent establishment of a gasworks alongside the lake it became known (somewhat inelegantly) as **Llyn Gas, Llyn y Gas** and even **Llyn Gias**.

Melin Wen
Location: Dwyran.
The lake resulted from the damming of the River Braint to power a water mill bearing this particular name.

Padrig
Location: near Rhosbadrig (Tŷ Croes) and west of St Mary's Church, Tal-y-llyn.
This lake, which takes its place wonderfully in the surrounding topography, is a completely natural one. Its name derives from the personal name Padrig, a toponymic element found in a number of place-names in the north of the island such as **Llanbadrig, Ynys Badrig, Trwyn Padrig** and **Ffynnon Badrig**.
The lake is identified on the first One Inch Ordnance Survey map as **Llyn Bodric** and was recorded by John Leland as **Llyn Pybai** and described as 'the next poole yn bygnes to Llyn Coran'.

The lake's existence has influenced the name of a nearby farm, **Tal-y-llyn** (head of the lake).

Parc Mawr
Location: southern end of Cors Malltraeth.
This lake was created recently as a wildlife reserve. It is located in a wooded setting on the floor of the marsh and offers a marvellous habitat to various types of birds and plants.

Pen-y-Parc
Location: between Beaumaris and Llandegfan.
The lake is marked on the first One Inch Ordnance Survey map as **Llyn-y-Parc**, and it is likely that the designation refers to an enclosure on the Baron Hill Estate. The lake provided the town of Beaumaris with water in the recent past.

Penrhyn
Location: alongside RAF Valley, Llanfair-yn-neubwll.
It is a fairly large lake and occupies a natural depression which may once have been part of a coastal inlet. There is a peninsula on the lakeshore bearing the name **Ynys Llywelyn** and local tradition has it that one of the princes of Gwynedd had once used this remote spot as a refuge.

Plwmp
Location: somewhere in the vicinity of Carreg-lefn.
The lake is referred to in a contract (1630) which ensured that Edward David ap Iorwerth of Glegyrog was responsible for 'a water course from Rhyd y garreg wen to **llyn y plwmp**'. The designation is a variant on the English word 'pump' and may suggest that pumping equipment may once have been used to raise and move water from the lake.

Pwmp
Location: Nant y Pandy, Llangefni.
This lake was created behind a solid stone-built weir on the river Cefni, a short distance upstream from the town, and its original purpose was to supply water to the Cefni Mill. The lake was enlarged in the 1860s when the Anglesey Central Railway Company built the line from Gaerwen to Amlwch and assumed that their engines would need to take on additional water for the journey. However, almost immediately technical improvements in the design of steam engines made it unnecessary to draw water from Llyn Pwmp and the Company's investment in the lake was effectively wasted. Nevertheless, the lake continued to provide water for the Cefni flour mill, and when an electric generator was placed in it in the 1920s the waters of Llyn Pwmp provided the means to light up the town of Llangefni. Sedimentation has now greatly reduced the size of the lake, and although it has recently been cleaned and tidied up, it is now little more than an enlarged river pool.
The derivation of the name is the same as that for Llyn Plwmp (*above*).

Rhos Ddu
Location: a little to the south of the village of Newborough.
The lake is situated in a natural depression which was eroded in the first place by the river Braint before its original course was deflected southwards to Traeth Melynog by the development of Abermenai Point.

Strydan
Location: a little to the west of the village of Gwalchmai.
The lake was created to provide a water supply for Strydan Mill. A fairly large body of water is shown on John Evans's map (1795) but the process of infilling with sediment of various type has by now transformed the lake into a marsh. It was known in the locality as **Llyn Glas** and it is also marked on one of the nineteenth century Ordnance Survey maps as **Llyn Mawr**, which is the name given to it by Frank Ward in his list of Welsh lakes (1931). It should also be noted that another name, **Pen-yr-Argae**, the name of a dwelling house on the southern side of the lake, is derived from the lake's existence. (*Pen:* the end of; *Argae*: the mill dam)

Traffwll
Location: Llanfihangel-yn-Nhowyn.
The lake, which is a completely natural one, has functioned as an important reservoir for nearly a century. It was initially developed for this purpose by the Holyhead Water Company as early as 1866 and it continues to supply water to parts of the island.

It is a comparatively large lake and its size is reflected in the name. The prefix *tra* is an affirmative element emphasising the fact that this is a large pool (*pwll*) and not an ordinary one. It is shown on the first One Inch Ordnance Survey map as **Llyn**

Traffwll, and we find W D Owen, the author of *Madam Wen*, a novel set in the lake's vicinity, creating the imaginary designation of **Triffwll** ('three pools' – which is quite accurate since three quite large lakes are found in the locality), to describe part of the novel's geographical setting.
The lake was also immortalised by Cynan, one of the great Welsh poets of the first half of the twentieth century. He sends a bird (a goldfinch) as a messenger to Anglesey and directs it specifically to this lake:

... A phan weli di lyn Traffwll
Gwna dy nyth yng ngardd Glandwr.

(And when you see the lake
at Traffwll
Make your nest in the garden
at Glandwr.)

He also expresses the wish to retreat from the horrors of the First World War in Macedonia to fish in the quiet waters of the lake:

Rhown y byd am hanner awr
I gael 'sgota yn y Traffwll
Draw o sŵn y gynnau mawr.

(I would give the world for half
an hour
To fish in Traffwll Lake
Far from the noise of the heavy guns.)

Treiorwerth
Location: Bodedern.
This small lake was created on the Treiorwerth Estate in an effort not only to decorate a nearby park but also to create a fishing pond. It was formed by building a dyke across a stream bearing the name Nant y Gamar. The old Post Road flows near the lake and crosses the river which flows from it at **Rhyd y Deic Bridge**.

A well-known heronry was established in the woods near the lake in the last century and persisted there until quite recently.

Wyth Eidion
Location: Llaneugrad.
This quite shallow lake has been formed in a natural depression on the bottom of Cors Erddreiniog. Its area is depicted as being much more extensive on the first One Inch Ordnance Survey map, which depicts it as **Llyn yr Wyth Eidion** (*wyth*: eight, *eidion*: oxen) and it is obvious that the lake has since diminished in size through sedimentation.

The significance of the name is unclear. On the one hand, local tradition has it that eight oxen were yoked together, and after being whipped mercilessly while ploughing the heavy clay soil nearby, had stampeded and dragged themselves, the large wooden plough and their cruel ploughman to the bottom of the lake. On the other hand, some have argued in a somewhat fanciful manner, that the name refers to the size and measurement, of either the lake or some other nearby feature. Those who favour this particular interpretation point to the fact that there existed in the mediaeval period a measurement of land in Wales called *ychgyfar* ('bovate' in English). This measurement represented the amount of land that could be ploughed by one ox and would correspond to some four acres.

CHAPTER 6

The Wells of Anglesey

Any study of wells has to draw on information from a number of different fields. Geology and geography can contribute a great deal to the discussion, and of course, such a discussion must be placed in its historical context, which may at times be relatively complex and based mainly on the development of religious ideas. Etymology may also shed its own specialized light on the origin of the names for these features and one can not disregard the influence of folklore and local traditions on the web of ideas which surrounds the wells of the island.

An attempt will therefore be made in this chapter to offer a few comments on the island's wells, and to venture (albeit in a cursory manner) into a number of the above fields, as an introduction to an inventory of wells on Anglesey. It would be presumptuous to claim that this list is exhaustive, but it may, hopefully, at least provide a starting point for further research.

Until the end of the nineteenth century wells and springs of various types were crucial to both man and animals. Some of them represent the earliest attempts of man not only to take advantage of the resources available in his habitat but also to improve and ease his life. From the early beginnings a well seems to provide a focus, fulfilling (as in Biblical Palestine) economic, social and spiritual roles. And if this may be presumed, it is possible that the names of wells, together with the names of rivers and lakes, are amongst the oldest surviving names in any language. It would therefore follow that there are sound conservationist reasons for listing and preserving well names before they are completely lost.

Wells were fairly common features on the island of Anglesey, partly because of the varied structure of the island's geology. They are usually found on pervious rocks, those rocks that give up their water easily, and very often the strongest wells are located where a pervious rock meets or overlies impervious rocks. In such a situation a spring line forms where water emanates strongly in a series of wells and springs which may in some areas stretch across country for quite some distance. Some rocks are also more plentiful in their water supply than others. Edward Greenly, the first geologist to map the rocks of Anglesey in detail, suggested that the best strata to sink wells into were those of Llugwy Sandstone, which surfaces in the north-east of the island.

Because of its varied geology the island's wells are in no way evenly distributed. As the following list shows there are localities where they are fairly common features and others where they are comparatively rare.

The existence of wells had great influence on the development of settlements. There are very few farms on the island where some kind of well was not a key factor in its location and in the past the well formed the focal point of the farmyard on many a farm. Early churches were established in the proximity of wells and we find many instances of this practice on Anglesey. Since the church itself would often function as a nucleus (something which happened often in England) other settlements would cluster around it.

As Francis Jones shows in his book *The Holy Wells of Wales* (1954), the role and significance of wells changed over the ages and as this happened people's attitude towards wells also changed over a period of time.

There is evidence that waters such as rivers, pools and wells had a religious significance to the early Celts. Wells were considered to be holy places and appropriate locations to hold pagan ceremonies during the pre-Christian period.

Although the early church condemned these practices, it quickly assimilated some of the old traditions concerning wells to its own creeds. Often the early Christian missionaries, or Celtic saints as they are commonly called, would build their cells near wells, as it were adopting them. The saint's name would be given to the well and his virtues as well as his power to mediate between mortals and the Almighty would be transferred to its waters. Such a well would therefore become either a holy well or a miraculous one in the new religious order and an attraction to the sick, or sometimes a reliquary for pilgrims. It is also possible that the most important wells developed into significant boundary markers during this period.

Following the Protestant Reformation holy wells lost their significance. They were associated in the minds of some with the superstitions of the old Catholicism. Pilgrimage became less popular in the wake of the Reformation and this also lessened their importance.

People's awareness of wells was rekindled during the eighteenth century. As interest in antiquarian matters increased, local historians and contemporary authors, especially some topographical writers such as Thomas Pennant, acknowledged their appreciation of the fact that wells had contributed widely to the cultural development of many localities. There was also a new interest in the scientific analysis of the waters in some wells. Their character and chemical composition were examined and carefully analysed and, with the encouragement of the contemporary medical establishment, it became popular and fashionable for patients to drink these waters, and also at times, to bathe in them. This helped the early development of tourism in places such as Llandrindod, Llanwrtyd and Llangamarch which became popular tourist centres. Some of Anglesey's old wells regained a little of their old medicinal fame during this period and a widespread effort was made to try and discover wells and springs which could be of medicinal value. Even the polluted and acidic springs which flow from the rocks on the slopes of Mynydd Parys were examined, and we find Dr John Rutty praising their virtues in the following manner in 1760:

> The notable cures ... that the vitriolic waters have affected, not only by external use in inveterate ulcers, the itch, mange, scab, tetterous eruptions, dysentries, internal heemorrages, gleets, the fluor albus and diorhea, in the worms, agues, dropsies and jaundice. *[sic]*

With the current provision of water distribution from large reservoirs the island's wells appear once again to have become rather unnecessary. By now many have been lost through neglect and lack of regular cleansing and others have been covered by housing and road developments. Certainly ancient and interesting names have been lost and one of the main purposes of this chapter is to record some of the surviving names before they are lost forever.

The names of Anglesey's wells

The names of most of the wells in the following list fall into one of five categories:

- Names which relate to early Christianity by linking the well with a specific saint (*Cybi Eilian, Gwenfaen, Seiriol*).
- Names which may be associated with Christianity but which are more general in their character (*Bryn Bendigaid, Mwstre*).
- Names which stem from lay personal names (*Gwenllïan, Robin, Trinculo*). These names may reflect ownership or some kind of rights in the past.
- Names of a secondary nature in the sense that they indicate a relationship between the well and some neighbouring feature (*Clorach, Gib, Gweirgloddiau, Rofft*).
- Names which describe either the well itself or one specific aspect of it (*Fawr, Halog, Oer*).

Alarch
Location: on Sgubor Fawr's land to the north of Llanidan.
Alarch is the Welsh for 'swan' but its significance in this instance is unclear.

Allgo
Location: some quarter of a mile to the south of Llanallgo Church.
It seems that this is an exceptionally ancient well. A sculpture of a human head carved in sandstone was found fairly near to it in 1983, and it is known that there was a link between wells and heads of this type in the culture of the Celts. Its waters, which are rich in sulphate of lime, were considered in the past to be of medicinal value.

[The initial consonant in this instance and in several of the following names have changed because of a soft mutation. This is explained more fully in Chapter 2–1.]

Annon
Location: the environs of Llanbeulan.
There is a reference (1628) to 'kae gweyn ffynnon Annon in the parish of Llanbeulan'. Annwn or Anhun are listed amongst the early Celtic saints.

Badell (Y Badell)
Location: near Benllech/Tyn-y-gongl.
There is a reference to a well of this name at Mathafarn Eithaf as early as 1483. Its name in Welsh means a pan or a wide dish.

Badrig
Location: Llanbadrig/Cemais.
It seems that there are two wells commemorating Saint Patrick, one near Llanbadrig Church and the other nearer Borthwen on the eastern side of the parish.
A great deal of faith was shown in the medicinal value of Ffynnon Badrig in the past, especially in the treatment of children's ailments. Water would be carried from Llanbadrig in vials to be sold as medicine in the markets and fairs of Anglesey and a folk song was composed to extol its virtues. The song claimed that not only was it pleasant to drink but was also effective in the treatment of ailments such as rheumatism, as well as gout, worms, stomach and eye complaints and also toothache. The chorus summarizes all these attributes:

Mae'r dwfr yn ffynnon Badrig
heb ei fath, heb ei fath
Am wella pob anhwylder
Heb ei fath, heb ei fath.

(The water in Patrick's well
Is beyond compare, beyond compare
For healing every ailment
Beyond compare, beyond compare.)

Briwas
Location: near the site of the Railway Station at Amlwch.
The name (*Briwas*: Brewery) may well indicate one of the well's functions in the old days.

Bryn Bendigaid
Location: about two miles east of Aberffraw, by the side of the road which crosses the sand dunes to Llangadwaladr.
Its name in Welsh means 'blessed hill'. Tradition maintained that the water in the well had medicinal value and that a fish inhabiting the well was able to prophesy and predict the future. The well's importance caused Sir Arthur Owen, Bodeon, to erect a wall around it to stop animals from fouling it.

Cae Syr Rhys
Location: to the west of Amlwch and on the land of a farm bearing an identical name.
The authors were baffled by an archival reference to Ffynnon Casyris, before realizing that this was a phonetic attempt by some nineteenth century scribe to spell the name *Ffynnon Cae Syr Rhys* (The Well of the Field of Sir Rhys).

Carreg-y-drosffordd
Location: Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy.

Carreg Diamond
Location: a little to the south-west of the parish church, Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy.
The location is marked on an early Ordnance Survey map as *Carreg-y-Diamwnt* (Stone of the Diamond).

Cefn Du Mawr
Location: on the eastern slopes of Mynydd y Garn, Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy.
It was the custom (even at the beginning of this century) every now and then to lift four large stones from the four corners of the well and scrub them clean. It is believed that this ritual, which may have come down from pagan times, was meant to keep evil spirits at bay.

Cerrig Ceinwen
Location: in the graveyard of Cerrig Ceinwen's Church.
The parishioners believed that these waters had healing powers.

Clorach/Ffynhonnau Clorach
Location: on the side of the road which runs from Maenaddwyn to Llannerch-y-medd.
At one time there used to be two wells at Clorach, those of Cybi and Seiriol, the main saints of Anglesey. Now only the remains of Ffynnon Seiriol are to be seen since Ffynnon Cybi was entirely covered by the road when the first bridge was built over the Clorach ford in 1840.

Sir John Morris Jones's poem clearly demonstrates the historical fame of the Clorach wells. Since they were located half way between Penmon and Holyhead, their location was eminently suitable for meetings between the two saints, which probably happened occasionally, rather than every day as suggested by the poem:

Seiriol Wyn a Chybi Felyn –
Cyfarfyddent, fel mae'r sôn,
Beunydd wrth ffynhonnau Clorach
Yng nghanolbarth Môn.

(Pale Seiriol and Bronzed Cybi –
Used to meet, so we're told,
Daily by the wells of Clorach
In the centre of Anglesey.)

Seiriol was described as 'pale' as he always had the sun on his back in the morning, travelling to his meeting place from the eastern side of the island. Cybi on the other hand, travelling from the west, would have the sun in his face both morning and evening, and therefore would have become bronzed in the process.

The ordinary folk of Anglesey believed in the healing properties of the two wells and this was affirmed by Angharad Llwyd in 1833: 'its waters ... are ... held in high estimation and were visited for healing'. The sick would try to visit Ffynnon Seiriol in the middle of the night usually and water would be taken in vials to those patients who could not come to the well. Couples who had quarrelled with each other would also visit Ffynhonnau Clorach in an attempt to achieve reconciliation.

Dafaden
Location: near Eglwys Dwynwen (Dwynwen's Church) on Ynys Llanddwyn.
It was believed that the water was beneficial to the skin and that it could cure warts. (*Dafaden* is the Welsh word for 'wart'.) Hugh Owen, the eminent local historian of the Newborough area gave a succinct account of the process (or rather the ritual) involved in the elimination of a wart:

> ... the wart would be pricked with pins, these would then be pushed into a cork and thrown into the well, then the hands would be washed in the well water and the wart would vanish.

Daniel
Location: the source lay in a rock outcrop on the land of Cae Mawr farm in Llanddaniel.
Its waters were also used to cure warts.

Dudur
Location: near Pentraeth.

Dyfiog
Location: near Pencaernisiog.
There is a reference (1530-1) to *Dryll* (a piece of land) *y Ffynnon Dyfiog in Conwysiog Lan.*

Ddiogi
Location: between Burwen and Amlwch.
The name means 'laziness' and may suggest that people would meet and relax near the well when they went there to fetch water.

Ddwyfan
Location: near Llanfair-yng-Nhgornwy.

Ddwynwen
Location: strangely there is a great deal of controversy concerning the location of this well, one of the most famous wells of Wales.
Some believe that the well connected to Dwynwen's name was the one already listed as Ffynnon Dafaden. Others, including Hugh Owen, believed that Ffynnon Dwynwen was not located on Ynys Llanddwyn at all. Local people agree with the latter view and maintain that its remains can be seen in the sand dunes about a mile to the north of Gwddw Llanddwyn rather than on the island itself. Contemporary Ordnance Survey maps show this location clearly and designate the well as **Crochan Llanddwyn** (Llanddwyn's Cauldron). Over the centuries lovers would come to the well from every part of Wales to beseech Dwynwen to intercede on their behalf with the Virgin Mary to consolidate the security of their relationship. They would first offer a prayer in Eglwys Dwynwen and before walking to the well they would leave a gift of money in Dwynwen's chest. Near the well they would watch for signs of the Saint's influence. If the well started to bubble, or if the behaviour of the sacred eel which dwelt in the well was appropriate, the portent was regarded as a favourable one.

Over the centuries, Dwynwen's cult proved to be an inspiration to the poets. In around 1350 we find Dafydd ap Gwilym, Wales' greatest love poet, pleading for Dwynwen's aid to facilitate and promote his relationship with his lover Morfudd:

Oni chaf, o byddaf byw,
Forfudd, llyna oerfyw.
Gwna fi'n iach, weddusach wawd,
O'm anwychder a'm nychdawd.

(If I do not get, if I live,
Morfudd, that is a cold life.
Heal me, worthier of praise,
Of my sickness and affliction.)

Sir Dafydd Trefor also sang a beautiful poem in praise of Dwynwen and it is worth noting that he refers to 'wells' in the plural rather that to a single well:

Santes ym mynwes Menai
A'i thir a'i heglwys a'i thai
Ffynhonnau gwyrthiau dan go
Oer yw'r dyn ni red yno.

(A saint in Menai's bosom
With her land, her church, her houses,
Wells of miracles in memory,
Cold is the man who does not run there.)

Ddygfael
Location: a little to the north of Llyn Llygeirian, Llanfechell.

Eilian
Location: to the north west of Llaneilian Church and within a quarter of a mile of Porth Newydd.
A number of customs were connected with the waters of Ffynnon Eilian. Some believed that the water transferred the virtues of the saint to those who drank it, and the well was

also used by some as a means to cast maledictions. A chapel of ease used to stand near the well and in the old days the well's water used to be drunk there ritually on the Saint's Day, 13th January.

One of Eilian's virtues was his ability to cure blindness, and according to one tradition, he succeeded in restoring the sight of Cadwallon Lawhir. Since his miraculous abilities in this respect had been extended to the waters of the well, visitors with eye problems came from near and far to wash their eyes in its waters.

Its waters were also used to cure warts. The wart had to be pricked and bled with a pin and then cleaned well with a piece of wool. After bending the pin and throwing it to the bottom of the well, and placing the piece of wool on a nearby hawthorn bush, the person receiving the treatment had to remain silent and not look back at all when leaving the well.

The well has now completely dried up.

Elaeth

Location: lower end, Stryd-y-Ffynnon in Porth Amlwch.

This was considered to be a healing well and attracted people with illnesses for centuries. Also, an eel which lived at the bottom of the well was considered to be an oracle and by changing its shape and form could foretell the future for the visitor. Some locals claimed that they could interpret these transformations and it is said that money was paid for this unusual service.

It also seems that its waters gushed out strongly and were of a very high quality. The water used in the famous Brewery, established at the corner between Stryd-y-Ffynnon and Stryd-y-Capel in the eighteenth century, came from Ffynnon Elaeth.

Elaeth

Location: near Gwredog (Gwaredog) to the north of Rhosgoch.

It had strong links with sorcery in the past. An eel also lived in this well and if it failed to appear its waters were considered useless to the drinker.

Faelog

Location: Rhosneigr.

The area has many wells and, although three wells can be found in the vicinity of the church in Llanfaelog, it seems that Ffynnon Maelog was located somewhere between the site of the present-day primary school and Llyn Maelog. (The name given to the small hill where the school stands on the Ordnance Survey map of 1888 is Cnwc Ffynnon.)

It was said that the water of Ffynnon Maelog was especially effective in the treatment of joint pains. The water was also considered to taste very good and a sample of it was sent away for analysis by a man called Bishop in the nineteenth century. It was deemed to be 'the purest water in the whole of North Wales'.

Fair

This name (Mary's well) is a common designation in both Wales and Ireland. It was used to describe Dwynwen's wells in Llanddwyn and Seiriol's well in Penmon.

Fawr

Location: about a hundred yards from the parish church at Bodedern.

There are at least eight wells on the northern fringes of the village of Bodedern and this, as indicated by its name (The Large Well) is the largest of the eight. Conveniently located at Cae y Ffynnon a secure cover was built over the well and it was used to supply water to a large part of the village until the early 1950s. Despite its proximity to the church it seems that it never had any religious significance. The original site of Eglwys Edern was Pen Eglwys Edern, today called Pen-rallt, and it seems that the wells linked to early Christianity in Bodedern were the two wells located, in the old days, a little below the site (on the land of Treangharad and Tŷ Cristion).

Fechell

Location: Llanfechell.

William Bulkeley, the diarist from Brynddu, refers to it in August 1741 and places it on a piece of land named Waen Fawr. He also notes that it had dried up at the time.

Feuno

Location: Aberffraw, near a street that was once called Malt House Lane.

Like most of the island's wells this well also had religious ties as the church at Aberffraw was consecrated to Saint Beuno.

Another name of the well was **Yr Hen Ffynnon** (The Old Well). The well provided a clean and permanent water supply to the villagers over a long period.

Feurig

Location: on the western slopes of Mynydd Parys.

Ffraid

Location: Tywyn y Capel / Trearddur Bay.

Gaffo

Location: on the edge of Cors Malltraeth some half a mile to the north of Eglwys Llangaffo alongside the railway which crosses the marsh.

It was also called **Crochan Gaffo** (Gaffo's Cauldron), a name which suggests that the spring or well source would bubble up and flow with great force, and one which was later transferred to a nearby house. No visible traces of the well are now left and it may be that the remains were filled in and covered over when the railway from Chester to Holyhead was built.

Gib

Location: a little to the north of Dafarn Goch, Rhosfawr/Brynteg.

The name is pronounced 'Jib', as it derives from Gibraltar, the name of a nearby house which was demolished around 1830.

Ginarch

Location: A little to the north of Tywyn-y-Capel.

The name was transferred to a dwelling and is shown on the first Ordnance Survey map of the area, dated around 1830. It is not easy to suggest a feasible explanation of the name.

Goferydd

Location: on the slopes of Mynydd Tŵr, Ynys Cybi, immediately above South

Stack, where there exists a cluster of springs and wells, rather than one definitive well.

The name, which has transferred to a nearby farm, and translates as 'Overflow', suggests an outwelling of water from the earth, an overflow which at times may appear powerful. In this instance the Welsh form of the name is in the plural, but it is worth noting that the singular form is to be found in the name Rhos-y-gofer near Llangefni.

It appears that it was from the wells of Goferydd, which are the most westerly ones in Anglesey, that water was provided to the cluster of ancient dwellings found nearby, which are today described as *Cytiau'r Gwyddelod* (Irishmen's Huts)

Golochwyd/Lochwyd
Location: at the bottom of a steep cleft leading from the slopes of Mynydd Twr to the sea in Gogarth Bay.

This seems to be an extremely ancient well and it was probably from this well that water was drawn to sustain the Celtic fort on the summit of Mynydd Twr. With the advent of Christianity a hermit's cell was built near the well and this became a chapel of ease, known as Capel Golochwyd (*Golochwyd:* refuge or sanctuary). It was said that its waters, after receiving a suitable offering, provided a medium for granting personal wishes. It also seems that the well's rituals had a part in the amusement and entertainment of the residents of Ynys Cybi in the old days. On St Cybi's Day, the town's parish festival day, (July 24th according to the letters of William Morris, but November 5th according to the Church in Wales's current calendar) the youths of Holyhead would race from St Cybi's Church to the well and back. Reaching the well was quite a feat in itself, but climbing back up the slopes of the ravine with a mouthful of water and two fistfuls of gravel without dropping one or the other was an extraordinary achievement. It was believed that the winner of the race was sure to marry within the month.

A tradition survives, especially amongst the local fishermen, that lightning often tends to hit the rocks around the well, and as a result the site tends to be regarded with fear and trepidation.

The remains of the well have by now vanished almost completely and we find this sad note in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Anglesey* (1937), 'the well at the bottom of the ... cleft is now obliterated'.

Gollas/Gorlas
Location: between the town of Holyhead and the Llaingoch area.
A chapel of ease was located alongside the well at one time. The well's name may have been derived from that of a person.

Gweirgloddiau
Location: near Tal-y-Braich, Newborough.
In common with the Rhosneigr and Ynys Cybi districts there exists a marked cluster of wells in the Newborough locality, and some of these are listed in Hugh Owen's history of the parish, *Hanes Plwyf Niwbwrch*. It should also be noted that *pydew*, a word which is normally used to denote a deep well, is often used in the area, and there is an example of the transference of the plural form of the name in the name Plas Pydewau, a dwelling in Stryd yr Eglwys.

Gwenllian
Location: near Llandegfan.
It is referred to in an archival record in a manuscript in the Plas Coch collection dated 1608.

Gybi
Location: about a quarter mile north of St Cybi's Church, Holyhead.
A map (dated 1873) shows a piece of land named **Cae Ffynnon Cybi** (The Field of Cybi's Well) situated a little behind where the town's post office is nowadays located.

Its waters were once used by patients suffering from illnesses such as scrofula and arthritis. A sacred eel lived in the well which according to tradition had the power to mediate with St Cybi himself. Tradition also has it that the water had great healing powers. The disabled were cured so effectively that a large collection of items such as wheelbarrows and crutches could be seen cast off near the well. The well was also considered a suitable one for supplicants to gain revenge and to bestow curses and one that could offer comfort to those thwarted by love. It also appears to have been a strong and dependable well, yielding a plentiful and consistent supply of clean water for the local inhabitants for many centuries.

A network of streets developed near the well during the nineteenth century. The well itself stood on a junction on Stryd Cybi. One street which led to it was called Stryd y Ffynnon (Well Street) and in 1908 a pump was placed over it – *Ystên Duw i estyn dŵr* (God's pitcher to draw up the water) according to one of the local residents, and the name Pump Street was given to one of the other streets that led to the well.

Gylched
Location: to the east of Llangefni.
Most of the water for the town of Llangefni came from Ffynnon Gylched and the wells at Pen-lan and Tŷ Coch at the beginning of the twentieth century. Since these wells were located on land which was a little higher than the town itself, their waters could be run fairly easily to a holding reservoir and hence to the homes of the residents. The name of this particular well was derived from that of a nearby farm.

Gyngar
Location: a few yards from the church of Saint Cyngar, Llangefni, and by the side of the path that leads to Nant y Pandy.
Although its remains and cover can easily be seen, the spring does not flow very effectively and the well trough is now dirty and foul smelling.

Halog
Location: in the parish of Llaneilian, near the bridge which carries the road from Amlwch to Llaneilian over the River Bryngwyn.
The name, if it is literally interpreted, means a dirty or polluted well.

Halog
Location: a little to the north of the village of Brynsiencyn.

The name was subsequently extended to a nearby farm.

Heliwr/Helwyr
Location: on the northern lower flanks of Mynydd Bodafon.
The name is sometimes encountered in plural form (Wells of the Hunter or Hunters) and gave its name to a nearby smallholding, Ffynhonnau'r Heliwr/Helwyr, whose remains have now completely disappeared. The place existed in the eighteenth century and William Morris refers to it in 1752.

Iestyn
Location: on the land of Tyddyn Uchaf a little to the north of Llaniestyn church.

Lydan
Location: near Cornelyn, Llangoed.
The English translation would be 'The Wide Well'. It is denoted in one of the deeds of the Baron Hill estate as **Ffynnon Lwydan**, which translates as 'The Grey Well'.

Lugwy
Location: near the parish church, Penrhosllugwy.
It was believed that its waters were particularly efficacious in curing those who suffered from fever.

Lywarch
Location: to the south of Gwaenydog, Llanbabo.

Llwyd
Location: on the land of Cleifiog Isaf near Valley.

Mab
Location: Llandrygarn, alongside the old Post Road near Treiorwerth.
The name was transferred at a very early date and we find a reference (dated *c.*1500) to *tre ffynnon y mab' yng nghwmwd Llifon* (farmstead of Mab's well in the commote of Llifon).

Menyn
Location: between Amlwch and the northern slopes of Mynydd Parys.
Since its location is fairly near to the farm of Llaethdy Mawr (the Large Dairy), it may be that water from this well, because of its coldness, was suitable to treat butter (*menyn*), thus giving the well its name.

Meirch/Y Meirch
Location: near Aberffraw.
There exists a reference to this well in the Charter of Aberconwy, a deed listing the lands in Anglesey given to Aberconwy Abbey by Llywelyn the Great around the year 1200.

Minffrwd
Location: to the east of Bryn Teg, and not far from the river Gwenffrwd.

Mwstre
Location: near Llaneilian.
The meaning of this name is unclear. It may be related to the English 'mystery' but it could also be derived from *mystwr* or *mwstwr*, meaning 'monasterium'.

Nur
Location: on the land of Sybylltir farm, Bodedern.
Lewis Morris recorded the existence of the well, referring ambiguously to a primitive ritual performed near the well: 'they used to offer white hens on account of a dream seen.' He also refers to a nearby chapel and describes it as Sefyllfa Noddfa Nur ('the site of the sanctuary of Nur'). It seems that 'Nur' is a personal, masculine name, which may have evolved from an old Welsh word for 'hero'.

Oer
Location: somewhere in Llanddona.
There are a number of wells in the Llanddona area and it is not easy nowadays to establish which one of them carried this name originally. It is nevertheless more than likely that the well in question is the one located at Grid Reference 578816 on the six inch to the mile map of the locality (Anglesey XIV N.E.) What is known however is that this was the well used by the witches of Llanddona to cast their curses during the eighteenth century. Many have suggested that the witches of Llanddona had their own place in the mythology of Anglesey and Edward Pugh included a sketch of one of them in his book *Cambria Depicta* at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The witches, it is said, would wander round the island, dressed in rags with their hair long and breasts bared. They inspired such fear in ordinary people that no one dared bid against them in fair or market. They used to come together occasionally by their well to impose their curse on any one who had been unfortunate enough to commit some offence against them and a tradition still exists that their dreadful ritual would be accompanied by the following refrain:

Crwydro y byddo am oesoedd lawer
Ac ym mhob cam, camfa,
Ym mhob camfa, codwm;
Ym mhob codwm, torri asgwrn
Nid yr asgwrn mwyaf na'r lleiaf
Ond asgwrn chwil corn ei wddw.

(May he wander for many an age
And in every step, a stile,
In every stile, a fall;
In every fall, break a bone
Not the biggest bone or the smallest
But the topsy bone on his windpipe.)

The adjective *oer* (cold) is typical of many wells in Wales and it may be that the micro-climate of the site of such wells causes the temperature of their waters to fall substantially. Tradition states that dairymaids regarded the water of these cold wells to be ideal in the preparation of butter.

Parc Mawr
Location: in Penrhosllugwy, on the western side of the A5025, the road leading to Amlwch.

This was considered to be a healing well and its water was described as 'copper water' by the local residents. However, early Ordnance Survey maps describe the well as 'Chalybeate Spring', meaning a spring with a high level of iron in its water. Ffynnon Parc Mawr was also considered to be suitable for the laying of curses, and E Neil Baynes asserts, in an article in the *Transactions* of the Anglesey Antiquarians in 1928, that it was used for this purpose even at the beginning of the twentieth century. This is how Baynes relates the story:

> Not long ago a man found a frog stuck full of pins or needles in this well. The ceremonial was to stick pins in a frog, place it between two stones and deposit it in a well with a piece of slate on which the name of the person to be bewitched was scratched. Sometimes the heart of a black cat was added. If the spell worked the person whose name

was written on the slate would be burnt between two bundles of faggots.

Pechod
Location: near Llangaffo Church.
The name of this well (meaning 'sin') has been woven together (in a very fanciful way) with the old tradition that those considered sinful in the parish would be whipped all the way from the Church to a crossroads about a mile away which bears the name, Y Chwipin ('Whippin' on the first Ordnance Survey map). After the punishment they would receive remission from their sins by washing themselves clean in Ffynnon Pechod. This tale was further embroidered by noting that there was a field to the south of Dinam bearing the name Cae Penyd ('Field of Penance').

Pen lan
Location: on the land of Pen-lan, a farm to the west of Llangefni.
The well was sunk on a ridge of land above Nant-y-Pandy and, at one time, water was piped from it to the town of Llangefni. (*See* Ffynnon Gylched).

Pentre Eiriannell
Location: on the land of Pentre-Eiriannell, Penrhosllugwy.
Lewis Morris, who spent his early years in Pentre Eiriannell, refers to this well.

Plas-bach
Location: near Benllech.
There were a number of wells at Plas Bach and they were used to provide water for the Benllech area in the 1930s.

Redifael
Location: in a field (called Cae Gredifael), a little to the south of Gredifael Church at Penmynydd.
Its waters were used to cure warts.

Robin
Location: on the northern edge of the bay at Cemais.

Rofft
Location: on the northern edge of Newborough village.
It used to be situated at a location bearing the same name, which stems from the English word 'croft', meaning an enclosed piece of land. The first letter of the name was lost because of the soft mutation following the definite article.

Sais / Y Sais
Location: on the western edge of Ynys Llanddwyn.
One explanation of the name which appears to be more fanciful than correct, is that an English ship was once beached on the shore nearby, and that its crew managed to survive for a long period (before they managed to free their ship) by obtaining a plentiful supply of fresh, pure water from this well.

The name itself was extended to the nearby small headland, called Trwyn Ffynnon-y-Sais.

Seiriol
Location: Llaniestyn.
There is archival evidence for this well, but unfortunately it is not detailed enough for its location to be accurately established.

Seiriol
Location: about a hundred yards from Penmon Church.
The well stands in the midst of sixth century ruins. Some believe these to be the ruins of Seiriol's Cell and should that be the case – and who can argue otherwise – one may venture to suggest that they represent the earliest Christian ruins on the island. In the same way, perhaps, the well could be placed in its historical context, with its existence emphasising the symbolic importance of water for the early church in the rite of baptism. Of course, an alternative view is that this well already existed, long before Christianity reached Wales, and much earlier than Saint Seiriol's mission in Anglesey. Perhaps we have here at Penmon one of those wells that date back to the druidic, pagan period. After all, we have clear local evidence that natural waters such as lakes and pools (Llyn Cerrig Bach) and also rivers (the Llugwy and the Braint) had strong religious significance for our Celtic ancestors. By now we also know more about the beliefs and rituals connected with wells in other areas in Britain and Europe, and it seems that some of the more recent practices concerning wells are deeply rooted in our pagan past. A well could symbolize the natural deities of the earth as well as any lake or river could, and it is suggested that Ffynnon Seiriol and many of the other wells on the island link us as clearly as anything can to those days preceding the advent of Christianity in Anglesey. Today it is regarded as a wishing well and visitors still cast their offerings ritually to these waters as in previous times. These days money is thrown into it in the hope that its deities will continue to extend their favours to the wisher.

The cover, including the brickwork which guards the well are comparatively recent features. They were placed there by the Bulkeley family of Baron Hill, Beaumaris at the beginning of the eighteenth century, at a time when renewed interest was being shown in ancient monuments. The well continues to be clean and clear. The water which wells up there has been purified by filtering through the nearby limestone and its overflow permits an adequate flow of water to cleanse the well.

Trinculo
Location: Llanfechell.
We find a reference to the well in William Bulkeley's *Diary* (1736) and he placed it on the land of a farm named Coeden. The name is quite unique and corresponds exactly to the name of a character in William Shakespeare's famous play, *The Tempest*. In that play Trinculo is the friend of the drunken butler, Stephano, and F G Stokes (*Dictionary of the Characters and Proper Names in the Works of Shakespeare* 1924) states that the name has been adopted from the Italian word *trincare*, meaning to tipple. Perhaps some special taste or value pertained to the water of this well, and it is a great pity that the diarist did not provide us with more information !

Tros-yr-afon
Location: Penmon.
We find a description of the well by Angharad Llwyd (1833) who records

it as the source of a stream as well as a well. She observed that it was popular with tourists and that its waters contained not only 'sulphate of lime' but also 'a considerable amount of fixed air'.

Trueiniaid
Location: on the land of Tyddyn Truan in Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf.
It seems that the name (meaning 'Wretches') lacks any religious significance, and may have been transferred directly from the name of a farm (*truan/traean*, which means 'a third').

Tŷ-coch
Location: a little to the south of Cae-Mawr, Rhostrehwfa.
Part of Llangefni's water supply came from this well at the beginning of the twentieth century (*see* Ffynnon Gylched). The well's name was transferred to it from a nearby farm.

Ty'n Gamfa
Location: on the land of Ty'n Gamfa near Llangefni.
In the period before piped water in the town, the inhabitants of Llangefni had the choice of carrying water daily from a number of nearby wells such as this well, Ffynnon Gyngar, and a well (which had no specific designation) located near Ebenezer Chapel in Bridge Street.

Ulo
Location: near Capel Ulo in Kingsland, Holyhead.
It remained in use up to the end of the nineteenth century.

Wen
Location: Newborough.
There are archival references to it (eg in 1744) and the first Ordnance Survey map (*c.*1830) shows a nearby dwelling bearing the name Ffynnon Wen.

Wen
Location: on the slopes of Mynydd Eilian.
Its name was extended to a field and later the field's name, Cae Ffynnon Wen, was given to a dwelling that was built there.

Waenfaen
Location: Rhoscolyn. About half a mile from the church and overlooking the sea at Porth Gwalch.
In its day it was considered one of the most important holy wells on the island. Gwenfaen was the parish saint and Llanwenfaen was the old name for Rhosycolyn Church.

The well was considered to be a healing well and Lewis Morris bears powerful testimony to its virtues in his poem, *The Sacred Well of Gwenvaen, Rhoscolyn*. The poet was very familiar with the well and the virtues of its waters. When he was working as an Excise Officer at Holyhead he married Elin Griffith, Tŷ Wridin, Rhoscolyn in 1729. Tŷ Wridin stands some half a mile to the north east of the well and Lewis Morris was clearly aware of the customs and traditions connected with it and knew that it was visited by those in mental turmoil as well as those who suffered from depression. Lewis Morris admits in the poem that he himself would often visit Ffynnon Wenfaen:

> Full oft have I repaired to drink that spring, waters which cure diseases of the soul as well as body, and which always prove the only remedy for want of sense.

He also tells us in the poem that two pieces of white gravel were to be thrown into the well as an offering to Gwenfaen. It is likely that these were pieces of quartzite, a rock which is fairly common in the Rhoscolyn area, and, as it happens, a stone whose name corresponds exactly to the name of the saint (*Gwenfaen* means 'white stone'):

> Two white spar stones is all thou
> dost expect as a free offering both
> for sense and health.

Lewis Morris goes on to refer, mockingly, to the fact that the parish priest, the Reverend Simon Langford, himself had also drunk from this well and had been completely rejuvenated in so doing.

> What duller creature than thy
> present priest
> Before he'd tasted of the crystal
> fluid,
> which presently to s' blood and
> sleeping sense
> gave circulation, great and rare
> effects!
>
> And now he lords it o'er his duller
> brethren
> like a game cock who' master of
> the field
> strutting along and crowing as he
> struts,
> Wondering that other chickens are
> so dull.

At the end of the poem he goes on to suggest, or at least to express the hope, that the water, through Gwenfaen's influence, may awaken his muse and inspire him to become a better poet:

> 'Tis thou and thou alone that I invoke
> to lead my pen. Then grant me that
> small boon,
> that wit and gentle sense may flow
> in every line
> in such proportion as I've drunk
> thy waters.

Architecturally, the structure of the well remains in good repair. The stone steps leading down to it and the stone seats surrounding it are still solid and sound.

Wrach/Y Wrach
Location: on the slopes of Mynydd Tŵr, Holyhead.
George Borrow visited this well in 1845 and enjoyed a drink of its 'delicious water' but was wildly misled by his guide who called it the 'Fairies' Well'.

This was one of the wells used by the Holyhead Water Company to provide water for that town during the later half of the nineteenth century and was also the source of a small river called Nant-y-Wrach.

The element *gwrach* (witch), suggestive of a link with the distant past, occurs often in place-names in Anglesey. Other examples in which it occurs include:

- **Maes y Wrach** and **Bogail y Wrach** (Bodedern)
- **Pwll y Wrach** (Llanbadrig)
- **Tafarn-y-Wrach** (Llaneugrad)
- **Bedd-y-Wrach** (Llanddyfnan).

The 'well' element was often used to describe the location of other places such as roads, fields and houses. Amongst the numerous examples we found of such extensions, are names such as **Lôn y Ffynnon** (Bodedern) and **Well Street** (in Holyhead, Amlwch and Llangefni). Names such as **Cae Ffynnon, Gwaen Ffynnon, Llain Ffynnon** and **Parc y Ffynnon** have also survived and there have been some examples of name changes in the twentieth century from Cae Ffynnon to **Cae Pwmp**. Sometimes we find a name with a more specific form such as **Cae Ffynnon Wen** (Llaneilian). **Rhos y Gofer** near Llangefni (the moor of the overflow) may also be placed in this category of names.The relationship between wells and the names of dwellings are clearly exemplified in names such **Ty'n Ffynnon, Tan Ffynnon, Bryn Ffynnon** and **Glan Ffynnon**, all of them quite common Anglesey names.

CHAPTER 7

A Land of Strange Names

Place-names are a part of everyone's life – the names of houses, farms and fields surround all of us and are to be heard every day. Yet amidst the familiar lurks the unfamiliar – that one name which is strange, obscure and odd. An obscure name often arouses the greatest interest and, frequently, a name of this nature is the most difficult to explain. There are, however, patterns even to these most wondrous names. More often than not, an interpretation can be suggested.

One obvious group of names, although scarce in Anglesey, are those which are sarcastic or derogatory. In the lower part of Llangristiolus there was a cottage called **Jericho**. It can be assumed that this cottage fell down at some point and was then re-erected. The comment 'fell down' can often be seen in some Anglesey estate rentals.

In a neighbouring parish, Cerrigceinwen, there was a house called **Rhyfeldy**. Normally the Welsh word *rhyfel* means 'war', but it can also sometimes mean 'quarrel'. The family who at one time lived in this house must have been very quarrelsome. It is probable that **Nythcacwn** (hornets' nest) in Llangaffo and **Twllcacwn** (hornets' hole) in Newborough and Llandegfan are parallel names.

Some derogatory names refer to the unpleasant nature of the house. The place-name element *nyth* (nest) is often used in Anglesey to describe a tiny, cosy cottage, as in the names **Nyth-y-dryw** 'the wren's nest' or **Nyth-clyd** 'the cosy nest'. However, in Bodedern there was a cottage called **Nyth-y-ffwlbart**, 'the polecat's nest'. This must have been a very smelly house. In Gwalchmai there was a house called **Llygoty** 'the house full of mice' and in Cerrigceinwen another house called **Tŷ bawgwyddau** 'the house of goose droppings'. A farmstead in the parish of Trefdraeth was nicknamed **Twll-y-mwg**, 'the smoke hole', because it stood in a hollow and smoke never arose from the chimney. Its original name was **Tyddyn Roger Valentine**. On the outskirts of the village of Aberffraw there stood a lowly cottage called **Dychryndy** 'the house of fright'. Someone at some time must have seen a ghost in this house.

To us today the Welsh word *cwt* means 'hut; outhouse'. It is probable that *cwt* is a borrowing from the English word *cot* 'cottage' and it occurs many times in Anglesey in the names of houses and cottages either as a simplex or

in combination with other elements. In northern Anglesey in the eighteenth century there stood two houses called **Cwt y ffwl** 'the fool's hut' and **Cwtydwndwr** 'the hut of clamour'. Both were the homes of well known lawyers. By the church in Malltraeth there stood a tiny cottage called **Cwtmwrdwr** 'the murder hut'. Late in the last century a young man who had murdered his brother was imprisoned in this cottage overnight after the murder as there was no lock-up in the village.

An occasional derogative name in Anglesey can be quite old. On the borders of the parishes of Bodedern and Llechgynfarwy lies a little farmstead called **Hangwen**. The original form of this name was almost certainly **Ehangwen**, 'broad and white' or 'broad and blessed', the name of King Arthur's hall. So the name of King Arthur's hall was given to a nondescript little farmhouse in the wilds of Anglesey! The farm called **Esgobaeth Brân** stands in the parish of Llanddyfnan. *Esgobaeth* 'diocese' sounds respectable enough and *Brân* is immediately reminiscent of Llywarch ap Brân, a powerful mediaeval clan founder in Anglesey. This name has however suffered a sea change. It is first recorded in 1490 in the form **tyddyn gobaith bran** 'crow's hope farmstead'. This is obviously the original form and it means 'the farm which not even a crow could live upon' – such was the poor quality of the land. The name was made 'respectable' in the eighteenth century and the form **Esgobaeth Brân** occurs for the first time in 1786.

It was not only houses, farmsteads and farms which received derogatory names. Some Nonconformist chapels in Anglesey were given such names too. About the year 1787 the Methodists built a small chapel of clay and earth in Llanrhuddlad which was called **Capel Mwd** 'the mud chapel' by the local inhabitants. The villagers of Aberffraw called the Methodist chapel in their village **Capel Huddygl** 'the soot chapel' about the same time because its walls, in all probability, were covered in soot.

In Anglesey a few English derogatory names do occur. Near Biwla Chapel in the parish of Llangadwaladr there once stood a farmstead called **Lazy Hill**. The name is recorded from the eighteenth century but the farmhouse has long since disappeared. The word *'lazy'* is often used in field names in England to describe poor, unproductive land, so the fields of 'Lazy Hill' must have been barren and sterile.

Turkey Shore is the name given to the eastern side of Holyhead harbour. The name derives from a farmstead called **Tyddyn Starkey** – which once belonged to a man called Edward Starkey. Marshy land near the edge of the harbour was part of this farmstead and was originally called **Cors Starkey** 'Starkey's Marsh'. By the eighteenth century this name had taken the form

Cors y Tyrci. Then from the beginning of the last century this spot became known as Turkey Shore. Turkey Shore was originally a nickname given to a wild and barbaric stretch of land on the bank of the Thames between Southwark and Rotherhithe in London – a name well known to sailors. They believed that this area was as barbaric as Turkey itself. The name became a popular nickname for any barbaric stretch of coastline. Sailors from Holyhead knew about this name, and noticing the similarity between it and Cors y Tyrci, called the eastern edge of Holyhead harbour 'Turkey Shore' out of fun or spite.

The custom of explaining place-names by devising a tale about them stretches back for centuries in Wales as in other countries. Sometimes the tale refers to a group of names linked together and sometimes to just a single name. One such complex tale, used to explain a number of names in the parishes of Llandrygarn, Llanbeulan and Llechgynfarwy, namely **Bodychen**, **Gwyndy**, **Cefnithgroen** and **Hangwen**, can still be heard. According to the storytellers Bodychen was a prison. Prisoners were led from this building to Gwyndy to stand trial. Then after being convicted they were forced to walk to Cefnithgroen, now called Bodfeillion, in Llanbeulan where their clothes were removed and they were soundly whipped. The storytellers insist that the original form of this name was **Cefn-noethgroen** – literally 'back of bare skin'. Then they were dragged to Hangwen (pronounced 'Hangwan') where they were hanged one by one. So, according to the storytellers the meaning of Hangwen was 'hang one'. The old mansion of Bodychen did resemble a prison before it became a ruin and Anglesey magistrates did meet at Gwyndy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Apart from this there is no basis of truth to the tale. The meaning of Cefnithgroen remains obscure and the name Hangwen has already been explained.

It has been believed of old and it is still believed in some parts of Anglesey that **Porth Swtan** in Llanrhuddlad takes its name from the Roman general Suetonius Paulinus because he and his troops landed there in order to attack Druids and Britons in northern Anglesey. Many tales have been told about the battles that ensued and about the killing and bloodshed. One such tale has been recorded by Hugh Owen (Huwco Môn) in his book *Yr Henafiaethydd* ('The Antiquary') published in 1890. This is what he says:

> The thousands of Roman soldiers spread out on the level ground reaching from that place to Nant Farm, Lon Hyd y Corpha and Pen-y-Garn. The Druids placed themselves on the slope of the hill of Morawydd; the bloody

battle between them went on, but, as the Druids had the advantage of height on the hill of Morawydd, victory was theirs on this occasion.

The chief captain of the Romans, called by the Welsh Sywidins Paulin (his form for Suetonius Paulinus), seeing the corpses of his men lying in the meadows, and filling up the road, called after the occasion *Lon Hyd a Corpha* ('the road of the length of corpses'), gave up the struggle and fled back with his remaining men.

None of these tales has a basis in truth. **Swtan** is actually a Welsh word for the fish 'whiting'.

A similar tale can be heard about a group of names near Bronalar in the parish of Llanddyfnan. Again mention is made of bloody battles and it is said that **Bronalar** (literally 'hill or breast of mourning') was so called because the wives of the Welsh soldiers stood on the breast of the hill after their husbands were killed. However, Bronalar is a very late form of this name. It is probable that the original form of the name was **Bronyrala**, 'hill (or breast) of the alley', and that the final element *–ala* means 'alley' or even 'bowling alley'.

On the boundary between the parishes of Aberffraw and Llangwyfan stands a ruin called **Corsymryson** ('marsh of contention'). The original form of the name was **Tirymryson** and it is recorded from the eighteenth century. I have heard a number of people state that a spot near the ruin was also once the site of a bloody battle long ago. The place-name element *ymryson* 'contention; battle' occurs in a number of place-names throughout Wales but always, without exception, in names which are near a boundary between two parishes or two land holdings. It is obvious that the element refers to an argument about boundaries and not to a battle.

Some Anglesey place-names were deliberately distorted and changed during the last century and the beginning of this century in order to attract tourists – names such as **Cemaes Bay** (Cemais is the correct form), **Benllech Bay**, **Malltraeth Bay** and **Trearddur Bay**. Perhaps the oddest and strangest name in this group is **Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwll-llantysiliogogogoch**, the artificial name of the village of Llanfair Pwllgwyngyll. As far as is known the fake form of the name first appears in print in 1869 in a little pamphlet entitled *The Welsh Jawbreaker*. It is thought that this awesome name was conjured up by a literary tailor from Menai Bridge in order to attract tourists to Llanfair Pwllgwyngyll and to keep the railway station open. The name was formed by linking up a number of local place-names from the Llanfair Pwllgwyngyll – Menai Bridge area. The

name **Llandysiliogogo**, designating a parish in Cardiganshire, was also obviously an influence on the literary tailor as he formed the name. His efforts were described by Sir John Morris Jones as 'the blasphemy of a clown'.

A number of interpreters of Anglesey place-names have attempted to explain names by distorting their forms in order to make them conform with their own explanations. It is probable that the antiquary Henry Rowlands, who died in 1723, was one of the first to do this. He explained the name **Porthaethwy** (Menai Bridge) in this fashion. The earliest inhabitants of Anglesey came to the island in two groups. Some time after the first group had landed on the island the second group arrived on the shores of the Menai Strait and asked the inhabitants of Arfon where the first group had crossed the Strait and they received the reply *Dyna'r fan lle'r aethont hwy* (literally: 'There is the place to which they went'). In time this reply became the name of the landing place – Porthaethwy. The second element of the name is actually the tribal name *Daethwy*.

R T Williams (Trebor Môn), author of *Enwau Lleoedd ym Môn a'u Tarddiad* ('Anglesey Place-Names and their Derivations'), published in 1908 was another man who delighted in distorting names in order to provide plausible interpretations. He insisted that **Cerrig y Bloeddiau** 'the rocks of the shouts' was the original form of **Cerrig y Bleiddiau** 'wolves' rocks' on Parys Mountain near Amlwch because the spot had experienced 'all the horrors of war in bygone Wales'. He adds that the name 'demonstrated the efforts of the hand and mouth in the face of the worst efforts of enemies'. Old forms of the name show plainly that the final element is *bleiddiau* 'wolves'. The last wolf in Britain was killed in the eighteenth century.

Trebor Môn also insisted that **Rhos y Gad**, 'battle moor', was the correct form of the name of the common in Llanfair Pwllgwyngyll, as he thought that the moor had been the site of a battle. He reviled those – especially Professor John Morris Jones – who suggested that the original form of the name was **Rhos y Gath**, 'moor of the wild cat'. The form Rhos y Gath is recorded from the sixteenth century onwards. Wild cats were to be found in Anglesey. One was shot in Rhoscolyn in 1899.

Some unfamiliar place-names in Anglesey are notoriously difficult to interpret. In Llangadwaladr there stands a farmstead called **Penrhyndrutaf**, 'the most expensive Penrhyn', and on the opposite side of the road leading to Aberffraw stands another farm called **Penrhynhalen**, 'salt Penrhyn'. At the beginning of the eighteenth century these tenements were called **Penrhynucha**, 'the upper promontory', and **Penrhynisa**, 'the lower

promontory', but then the names were changed. The rent books of the Bodorgan Estate show that the rent of Penrhyndrutaf in 1830 was £35 p.a. and that the rent of Penrhynhalen was £28:15:0 p.a. The estate account books for 1762 also show that Owen Jones, the tenant of Penrhynhalen, sold salt by the hundredweight. These names could only be explained by examining the rentals and account books of the Bodorgan Estate in great detail.

In Talwrn there stands a house, formerly a farmhouse called **Panty-morfil**, 'hollow of the whale'. As one would expect many tales have been devised to explain this name. One inhabitant tried to convince one of the authors that the farm had been so named because a farmer called Jonah had lived there for many years. Another suggested that a whale had been buried in a hollow on the farm. How could anyone manage to drag or cart a whale all the way to Talwrn and bury it there? However, a brief survey of old forms of the name shows, at a glance, that *morfil* (whale) is not the original final element of the name. The form Pantmorfil can be found on early Ordnance Survey maps but the form to be seen in the Baron Hill Estate rental for 1617 is **kae pant morfydd verch Iollo**. It is obvious, therefore, that **Pant-morfydd** was the original form of the name and that the feminine personal name *Morfydd* is the second element of the name. At some point between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the final *–dd* became a final *–l*.

If some Anglesey place-names are difficult to explain then others are almost impossible. Near Llannerch-y-medd stands a house called **Wilpol**. This was formerly the name of a house some hundred yards away. The earliest form of the name – recorded in 1643 – is **Tyddyn Willpolle**. It is possible that the elements to be found in the name are the Middle English *whyll* (wheel) and *pol* (pool) and that the name refers to the pool beneath or near a mill wheel. There was a water mill near the original house. If all this is correct then Wilpol is a very rare example of an early English place-name in Anglesey which has been fossilized in Welsh.

Afon Pwll y Sachau is the name of a small stream near Cemais. Huwco Môn believed that **Pwll y Sachau** was a name which had been coined by the fairies. In common with Sir Thomas Parry-Williams we do not believe in fairies – but they do exist! It is possible that *sachau* (sacks) refers to the shape of some of the pools in the river. Huwco Môn states that there was a noteable whirlpool in this river. It is also possible that *Sachau* is a totally unknown river name. Clearly, however, it must have been a Welshman and not a fairy who gave the river its name.

From the middle of the last century there occurred a change in naming

patterns in Anglesey. The previous descriptive names were gradually replaced by names which express the ideas or wishes of the owner or occupiers and subsequently the names become more personal – the property of the name giver as it were and, therefore, they become much more difficult to explain. If one looks at the post code handbook then one can see very many of them ... in English, Welsh and even in Chinese. Some of them belong to that group which Sir Thomas Parry-Williams has called 'strange and awesome'. Here is a selection: **O'r Diwedd** (at last); **Tŷ Deryn** (bird house); **Swn y Gloch** (the sound of the bell); **Banshi Bach**; **Amser Braf** (a fine time); **Y Cam Nesaf** (the next step); **Y Fagddu** (the darkness); **Man Dela** ('the prettiest place', but also a play on the surname of the President of South Africa); **Bilidowcar** (cormorant); **Pedwar Gwynt** (four winds); **Raven Wing**; **Owl's Roost**; **Up Yonder**; **The Wren**; **Red Sails**; **The Igloo** (this was an exceptionally cold house); **Sigh Cottage**; **Rivendell**; **Pooh Corner**; **The Tardis**; **High Chaparal**; **Graceland** (the name of Elvis Presley's home); **Man Friday**; **Bali Hai**; **Tung Hai**; **Ngong**.

As the century and the millennium draw to a close, new Anglesey place-names, especially the names of new houses become odder and odder. What strange patterns, we wonder, will emerge during the next century?

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