PLACE-NAMES
OF
FLINTSHIRE

Hywel Wyn Owen
Ken Lloyd Gruffydd
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UNIVERSITY OF WALES PRESS
2017
i Rhiain ac i Eirlys
am eu cefnogaeth a'u hamynedd
Am fod treflan, llan a llain i ni’n fwy
na rhyw fannau bychain,
yr ym, wrth roi enw i’r rhain,
yn ein henwi ni’n hunain.
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THREE SCHOLARS WHO HAVE provided me with advice and support over very many years have been Professor Gwynedd Pierce, Richard Morgan and Tomos Roberts. Others whose views and knowledge I have sought have been Gareth Bevan, Professor Kenneth Cameron, Professor J. McNeal Dodgson, Dr Angharad Fychan, Dr Margaret Gelling, Professor R. Geraint Gruffydd, Dr Andrew Hawke, Mike Headon, Professor Bedwyr Lewis Jones, Professor Peredur Lynch, Professor Prys Morgan, Dr Oliver Padel, Dr Rhian Parry, Dr David Parsons and Professor David Thorne.

Flintshire is very fortunate in having a number of learned local historians who, directly or indirectly, have added to our understanding of names, such as Paul Davies, Bryn Ellis, D. G. Evans, David Jones, Kevin Matthias, J. E. Mesham, W. Pritchard, Derrick Pratt, Mary Reed, David Rowe, Geoff Veasey, Chris Williams and Dr Goronwy Wynne.

Gwynedd Pierce, Richard Morgan and Kevin Matthias kindly read the final draft. I am grateful to them for their suggestions.

I must acknowledge generous financial assistance for publishing costs from the following: the Buckley Society, Cymdeithas Ddinesig Yr Wyddgrug/Mold Civic Society, Cymdeithas Enwau Lloedd Cymru/Welsh Place-Name Society, Cymdeithas Hanes Sir y Fflint/Flintshire Historical Society, Sir William Gladstone, Eirlys Gruffydd-Evans, Peter Meurig Jones, Rhiain Wyn Owen and the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland.

The staff of the University of Wales Press have been particularly helpful and patient.

Ir Prifardd Ceri Wyn Jones y maer diolch am yr englyn, cofnod o gyfraniad enwau lloedd i’n hunaniaeth a’n treftadaeth.
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IN 1994, I PUBLISHED The Place-Names of East Flintshire (University of Wales Press), an exhaustive detailed survey incorporating the names of every town, village, hamlet, field, hill, brook and hollow. It comprised historical forms and dates, an interpretation of each name together with a glossary of all the toponymic elements in those names. This was the format that had been adopted by just one previous place-name survey in Wales (Gwynedd Pierce’s The Place-Names of Dinas Powys Hundred, University of Wales Press, 1968). We were both following the methodology of detailed scholarly county surveys established by the English Place-Name Society many years ago. My original intention had been to follow East Flintshire with two companion Flintshire volumes, one on ‘West Flintshire’, the other on ‘Maelor’. However, professional and institutional priorities, as well as the demands of research publication, frustrated such long-term plans for three detailed Flintshire volumes.

During the latter years, with Richard Morgan as co-author, we published the Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales (Gomer, 2007, 2008), the first dictionary of its kind in Wales. The material was based on scholarly research, but in terms of readability was accessible to the general reader. Scholars writing for scholars is the backbone of research, but scholars writing for the general reader allows a wider dissemination in interpreting the landscape, history and language of a region. It was this conviction that led me in 2009 to decide that there was a need for an inclusive volume for Flintshire, incorporating material taken from East Flintshire and the Dictionary, innumerable articles and notes in county and local history transactions, Ellis Davies’s Flintshire Place-Names, scholarly journals, and so on.
Place-name studies necessitate two stages: the gathering of data and the interpretation of data. The first stage is a laborious process, documenting the historical forms for each name. It requires a detailed knowledge of local (and national) sources, a keen eye and disciplined recording. In some respects, as I know from *East Flintshire*, it can be the most time-consuming stage.

This is now the opportunity to pay tribute to my co-author in the present volume, Ken Lloyd Gruffydd. Over many years, I had been able to turn to Ken for elucidation and interpretation of innumerable names. His unstinting and generous desire to further place-name study in Flintshire prompted him to provide me with data from his own research projects into various aspects of local and regional history. Consequently, I persuaded Ken to be responsible for collecting as many historical forms as possible for each name, particularly those names for which my own material was sparse and where recent deposits (in Bangor, Hawarden, Aberystwyth and London) provided new material. This he accomplished, producing a database that is unparalleled. Indeed, the database has material on far more places than appear in this volume. Sadly, Ken Lloyd Gruffydd died on 1 January 2015. I trust *Place-Names of Flintshire* will be a fitting tribute to a dedicated local historian and generous scholar.

THE KEN LLOYD GRUFFYDD DATABASE OF FLINTSHIRE PLACE-NEWES (KLGF)

An electronic copy of Ken’s digital place-name data will be deposited in Flintshire Record Office, in the archives of Bangor University and in the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies at Aberystwyth. Ken has thus contributed significantly to present and future place-name research in Flintshire.

However, in the final stages of preparing the volume for the press, it became apparent to me that it would be possible to utilise his database in an innovative way. The local historian in Flintshire would be eager to see (and possibly follow up) references to original documentation relevant to the county, such as parish registers, tithe maps and schedules, Ordnance Survey maps, evidence published in easily accessible local history journals such as *Clwyd Historian*, *Buckley*, *Ystrad Alun*, the *Flintshire Historical Society Journal*, Edward Lhuyd’s *Parochialia*, Thomas Pennant’s *Tours of Wales*, Ellis Davies’s *Flintshire Place-Names*, and my *Place-Names of East Flintshire*. These sources are fully referenced. Other sources, more obscure perhaps, are listed simply as K. This is a cryptic space-saving abbreviation within the text directing the curious reader to Ken Lloyd Gruffydd’s Flintshire database (KLGF) available online as a companion research tool (on the website of Cymdeithas Enwau Lleoedd Cymru/Welsh Place-Name Society). The reader logs on to the database to enter the place-name to see every single citation available to me in writing the volume. One of the outcomes of this approach is to streamline
the citations in the treatment of each name and reduce the ‘clutter’ of cumbersome abbreviations. Another outcome is to draw attention to the whole range of documentary forms provided by Ken for each name, since I selected (judiciously I hope) those forms that best illustrate the narrative of the derivation, phonology and orthography. Other forms that I did not use may have significance at some later date and for other purposes. A further potential is the additional names, perhaps twice the number included in this volume (which is broadly those names on the Landranger Ordnance Survey maps). This supplementary material is more patchy and less detailed for these additional names simply because Ken recorded all that is currently available for those names, and if that proves to be slightly thin, so be it. The potential is self-evident for future researchers in place-names and local history.

I have to absolve Ken of any conclusions based on his raw material. The linguistic analysis, the identification of elements and proposed etymology, the phonological explication, the interpretation of the landscape, history and language, the glossary of elements, are all my responsibility.

Hywel Wyn Owen
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FLINTSHIRE
We decided to treat Flintshire as it was before local government reorganization transferred places like Prestatyn, Rhyl and Rhuddlan to Denbighshire. Record offices and cartographic gazetteers have had to grapple with this problem, and historians have tended to respect the integrity of the older counties. This volume deals with the names of Flintshire more or less when they were given and not its current administrative status.

When Flintshire was created in 1284 it comprised three separate entities, Tegeingl/Englefield, Hope and Maelor. The various 16th century Acts of Union added the Lordships of Mold and Hawarden as well as Marford and Hosely. In 1974 it became part of the new county of Clwyd, itself abolished in 1996, leaving an administratively reduced Flintshire.

Maelor was historically a cantref and a hundred, with two commotes (of Powys Fadog), Maelor Gymraeg and Maelor Saesneg. Maelor Gymraeg, comprising the Lordship of Bromfield and Yale, became the easterly part of Denbighshire in 1553. Maelor Saesneg had been regarded as part of Mercia (and as such features in the Domesday Book) until it became part of Powys Fadog in the 13th century. In 1284 it was incorporated into the new Flintshire, and maps now designate Maelor Saesneg as 'Flintshire Detached'.

PLACE-NAME STUDY
The study of place-names is a philological discipline, requiring the application of linguistic analysis to historical material. This raw material must be assiduously
collected from as early as possible for each name, from manuscripts in record offices, and documents in archives held nationally and in collections in private and county record offices, indeed any source that records place-names. The assembled evidence is then analysed, a derivation proposed and then verified against topography. Other phonological factors may need to be accommodated, such as dialectal variation, the influence of other languages and the fluctuation in the strength of the dominant community language. The interpretation of a name may also depend on factors such as landscape change, industrial development, migration, suburban expansion and transport.

Very many place-name elements will appear elsewhere outside Flintshire, and the meaning of an element in different contexts can have a bearing on the local and national interpretation. In England especially, the understanding of place-names can draw on the structured research of the English Place-Name Society since 1924. In Wales, methodical place-name studies has progressed at a more leisurely pace, but we are nonetheless gradually creating an authoritative lexicon of elements. The Place-Name Research Centre at Bangor, the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies at Aberystwyth and the recently established Cymdeithas Enwau Lleoedd Cymru/Welsh Place-Names Society have all proved to be valuable catalysts for place-name research in Wales.
OVER MANY YEARS, Ken Lloyd Gruffydd and I, independently and collaboratively, gathered vast amounts of material pertaining to place-names in Flintshire. Many are names we have written about in the past, with varying degrees of detail, and with different readers in mind. Some are responses in radio programmes or in local papers; many result from private correspondence. Cymdeithas Enwau Lleoedd Cymru/Welsh Place-name Society has prompted a new wave of interest throughout Wales, revealing untapped local knowledge about less familiar names such as those of farms and fields.

This volume brings together much of what we have published or said in the past in individual notes on particular names, together with the publications of other scholars. However, the vast majority of Flintshire names have not been discussed anywhere by anyone. In any case, even for place-names already dealt with elsewhere, this volume represents fresh material, building, inevitably, on newly deposited documents, recent developments in toponomy and in particular our current knowledge of the significance of certain elements.

We must also draw attention to the contribution of Ellis Davies in his Flintshire Place-Names (University of Wales Press, 1959), a volume that is particularly valuable because of his knowledge of the county and his comments on buildings and people that illuminated what might otherwise have been lost by the time we came to write. Derrick Pratt, too, wrote at length and in great detail about Maelor and shared his knowledge of local and documentary history. Flintshire has a number of lively local history societies whose transactions regularly feature articles on place-names, particularly the Flintshire Historical Society Journal, Clwyd Historian, Ystrad Alun and Buckley.
SELECTION OF NAMES
This volume deals with 753 places. There are 48 places with dual names making a total of 801 actual names. We have based the selection on the names appearing on the OS Landranger maps (revised 2000) with frequent reference to the OS Explorer maps. We also added an occasional traditional or literary name that is part of Flintshire’s heritage but does not appear on the Landranger maps. On the other hand, where we discovered the name seemed to be very recent and we could not provide documentary evidence of earlier usage, we tended to omit that name. Inevitably, there will be readers who will search in vain for a particular name. We encourage them to visit Ken Lloyd Gruffydd’s digital database which may well provide at least historical evidence for those additional names.

PRESENTATION
Each paragraph comprises the place-name as a headword (or headwords where there are dual names), the national grid reference (NGR), the meaning of the place-name, the elements that make up the component parts of the name (assumed to be Welsh unless otherwise indicated), the historical evidence (with dates and sources), and a discussion of the significance of the name (including phonological, historical, orthographic or topographic interpretation). The length of each paragraph varies in accordance with the amount of documentary evidence necessary and on the detail and complexity of the discussion. The style of discussion is scholarly, readable narrative. The volume is aimed at both specialist and general reader.

Standardization of the orthography of Welsh place-names is a work in progress. Standard forms are by and large based on Elwyn Davies’s A Gazetteer of Welsh Place-Names (University of Wales Press, 1957, 1967). Some maps, and occasional local usage, have preserved forms that have since been standardized in accordance with guidelines of a panel of experts under the aegis of the (former) Welsh Language Board and now the Welsh Language Commissioner. The model followed here is that settlement names (villages etc.) and landscape features have been standardized in accordance with those guidelines but non-standard spellings have been respected for house and farm names.

THE EVIDENCE OF PLACE-_NAMES IN FLINTSHIRE
The purpose of this section is to see what Flintshire’s place-names tell us about its landscape, history and language by highlighting significant features and themes, citing a few examples of place-names that illustrate each feature. Reference to the text proper will provide the evidence. What we do not do is present a detailed survey of linguistic, historical, geological or industrial profile of Flintshire. Such a task would have been appropriate after completion of an exhaustive three-volume
survey of Flintshire's place-names as originally envisaged when *The Place-Names of East Flintshire* was written. Since the other two detailed volumes were never attempted this selective volume will, for the foreseeable future, provide the best overview of the characteristics of Flintshire place-names.

**Pre-history**

River names in particular can be Celtic, Brittonic (Brythonic) or Old Welsh. This is because major rivers have always been prominent features of the landscape, marking boundaries and providing transport links. Because of their permanence names of rivers can be ancient, frequently the oldest names in a region.

*Alun, Clwyd, Dee, Elwy*

**River settlements**

Rivers have long given their names to settlements established on their banks. Occasionally, the nature of the terrain is determined by flooding and marshland associated with brooks and rivers.

*Broughton, Bryn Carrog, Gronant, Hesb Alun, Nannerch, Nercwys, Llong, Roe, Stimmy*

**Tumuli, hill forts and lowland defences**

The landscape of Flintshire has several prominent sites that over the centuries have been fortified in some way or were the locations of tumuli.

*Basingwerk, Brynllystyn, Gorsedd, Gwesbyr, Hawarden, Penycloddiau, Mold, Worthenbury*

**Ecclesiastical and other religious associations**

Ecclesiastical establishments, churches, chapels and biblical references feature commonly in place-names.

*Babell, Babylon, Carmel, Dyserth, Llaneurgain, Prestatyn, Sodom, Spital, Tre-lan*

**Migration**

The north-east coast of Wales (as with the west coast and south Wales) has seen Viking travel from Ireland and the Isle of Man. The evidence is scarce since, as far as we can tell today, there were few permanent Scandinavian settlements. Romans, Mercians, Normans and English settled in varying degrees of density, but while their archaeological traces are scarce (with the exception of castles) place-names record their presence.

*Axtyn, Dee, Englefield, Hawarden, Hope, Mold, Point of Ayr, -ton/-tyn*
PEOPLE
Frequently, personal names occur in place-names, people who were associated with the location for a variety of reasons.

Alltami, Bretton, Brynhovah, Connah’s Quay, Croes Ati, Hanmer, Mancot, Padeswood, Penley

INDUSTRY
From Roman times mineral riches have been exploited in Flintshire, including lead, limestone and coal. The later periods saw heavy industry taking advantage of transport links by road and by river. Several industrial ventures had settlements associated with them.

Cadole, Catch, Connah’s Quay, Golch, Pant-y-mwyn, Pentre Ffwrndan, Pen y Ball, Moel-y-crio

AGRICULTURE
Agricultural practice frequently gave names to habitations that sometimes became the names of settlements.

Cyffredin, Ffrith, Gwernaffield, Hottia, Spon, Talacre, Trench

LANDSCAPE
Topographic features are probably the most common elements in place-names, such as on the Dee’s banks and the prominent range of hills and slopes and shallow river valleys.

Hesb Alun, Mertyn, Morfa, Rake, Rhuddlan, Rhyl, Sealand, Sychdyn

VEGETATION AND TREES
The feature of a location at a particular period was occasionally some distinctive tree or vegetation.

Axtyn, Bannel, Berthen-gam, Coed-y-cra, Fawnog, Ffynnon y Cyff, Pant-y-fluon, Trefraith

TRAVEL
Routes, major and minor, sometimes became the names of locations and villages.

Bwlch, Croes y Stryt, Holway, Lane End, Rhewl, Stamford, Tinkersdale

LANGUAGE
The majority (62%) of the place-names in this volume are Welsh. Interestingly, 15% of these names appeared in Domesday Book 1086, probably the highest proportion in Wales. Inevitably, migration of non-Welsh speakers
has influenced the phonological development of many names (anglicization) but conversely English names have been subject to transformation by Welsh speakers (cymricization). Place-name elements are the essence of a language's lexicon.

Bachymbyd, Bagillt, Caergwrle, Coed-llai, Coedtalon, Estyn, Glol, Llawndy, Milwr, Moel-y-crio, Sychdyn

GLOSSARY OF ELEMENTS
The glossary of 439 elements is based on the elements occurring in the 801 names featured in the volume. The glossary serves several purposes. It can act as an index that allows the reader to search out other names with the same element. It shows the languages that have contributed to the place-names of Flintshire. It demonstrates dialectal variants that are characteristic of north-east Wales. It allows us to incorporate recent developments in our understanding of landscape terms in Wales and in England. We believe this glossary is a valuable contribution to what must ultimately be a dictionary of place-name elements for Wales.

An analysis of the language of the elements has proved interesting. Despite the English profile of industrial and post-industrial modern Flintshire, the place-name elements reveal a robust Welsh character. Of the 439 elements, 62% (272) are Welsh. Certainly, counties such as Anglesey, Merioneth, Denbigh and Gwynedd probably have a higher proportion of Welsh elements. However, Flintshire is very different. We have a high number of Old English elements in Flintshire, representing 15% (66), pointing to early English encroachment and habitation. It was this Mercian colonization that gives Flintshire one of its distinctive characteristics, surviving in its place-names. Interestingly, although Flintshire's industrial development was one of the features that later attracted migration from England, it accounted for only 17% (74) of the elements. In other words, early Mercian colonization and later industrial development are roughly comparable in terms of the number of English place-names.

SOURCES
The documentary historical evidence is drawn from the usual range of estate papers and maps, Ordnance Survey maps, parish registers, tithe maps and schedules, calendars of printed documents and a multitude of deposits in the archives of Flintshire, Wales and Britain. The section on sources at the end of the volume provides details. For further information on the role of the Ken Lloyd Gruffydd online database of Flintshire sources (KLGf), please refer to earlier paragraphs in the Preface and to the note at the beginning of the Sources section.
PLACE-NAMES OF FLINTSHIRE

Abbey Farm

‘farm associated with the abbey’, E abbey, E farm

The farm is located next to the site of the medieval Rhuddlan Abbey (described as ‘remains of Friary’ on the 1999 map) adjacent to the river Elwy. The name Plas Newydd (‘new mansion’) does not appear to have survived. On the significance of a farm dedicated to the use of a religious establishment see Prestatyn. On abbey as a place-name element see VEPN i 1–2 s.v. abbaie.

Aberkinsey


The name of a house between Rhuddlan and Meliden. The personal name Kinsey is rare in the 14th century in the area, but a Jo. Kinsey is recorded in 1669 (FPN). If Kinsey is as it seems, the name of an Englishman, its coupling with a Welsh element buarth fits in to the pattern of cymricization observed after the Mercian settlement of Flintshire (such as Bagillt and Golftyn). The fact that some documents record the name as -cinsi is further proof of cymricization, as does as the lenition (associated with possession) in Perthgensy 1623 and Perthgensy 1660, 1670 and 1684–5. The meanings of buarth are wide-ranging, including ‘courtyard’, ‘enclosure’, ‘close’, ‘animal enclosure’, and extending to ‘place of assembly’. We can only conjecture the significance here. If we accept the ‘animal enclosure’ interpretation, Kinsey may have been responsible for the cattle on the low-lying pasture between Rhuddlan, Meliden and the sea. Perhaps he was employed by the castle, abbey or borough of Rhuddlan a mile and three-quarters to the south west, or by the priests of Prestatyn (q.v.) two and a half miles to the north east. If we assume the Englishman Kinsey was some kind of steward, it was the Welsh speakers under him who used buarth. Subsequently there is evidence of an interesting shift in the first element, from buarth to perth ‘hedge’ in its lenited form berth. We cannot tell whether the replacement was phonological or agricultural. Certainly berth/berth appear in a number of Flintshire names such as Perth y Bi (Mold), Berth (Coedtalon), Berth-ddu (Moel-y-croio) and Berthen (Licswm). A further phonological development was from berth to aber via an undocumented colloquial Y Berkinsey > Aber Kinsey, possibly seen as a correction, a restoration of what was perceived
as an original *aber*; certainly a form without the medial -th- is what survived as did the *aber* prefix. In this instance the element *aber* can be taken as ‘stream’ (cf. Aberlannerch Brook), which flows past the house in the direction of the river Clwyd near Cwybr. See also ELIPRh 4 and CH 31 v (1993) 14.

**Aberlannerch Brook**

‘brook of Llannerch stream’, *aber*, p.n. *Llannerch, E brook*


This was the upper part of the Alltami Brook that gave its name to Aberlannerch Farm (*Aberlannerch Farm* 1840 OS) with *lannerch* ‘clearing, glade’. We can probably assume that the name of the farm itself was originally *Llannerch*. *aber* more usually means ‘confluence’, which is difficult to identify here, but ‘stream’ is common in north Wales. If the stream was originally called *Aber Llannerch*, the later addition of *Brook* is tautologous, added by non-Welsh speakers. Cf. Nant Llantridddyd (Glamorganshire) also known as Llantriddydd Brook (PN Glam 109). See also PNEF 170. On *brook* as a place-name element see VEPN ii 36–9 s.v. *brōc* and LPN 6–9.

**Abermor-ddu**

‘brook by the dark bare hill’, *aber, moel, du*


The usual meaning of *aber* is ‘confluence’ but the confluence of the rivers Alun and Cegidog is over a mile away. Here, the secondary meaning of *aber*; ‘brook, stream’ is more likely, referring to one of several streams running into the river Alun, one of which actually flows from Cae Pistyll (*Kae yr pistyll* 1623 PNEF, *Cae Pistyll* 1852 TAS, ‘spring field’) through Erw Ddu (*Yr Erow Thu* 1568 PNEF, *Erw Ddu* 1668 ib., ‘the black acre’). It would seem that this stream took its name from its proximity to an unidentified *Y Moel Du* although there is no record of one of the nearby bare hilltops (*moel*) bearing that name. In modern Welsh *moel* is feminine (hence *moel Dywyll*), but most of the early documentary forms show -*du* with no lenition suggesting that *moel* was here treated as masculine. To complicate matters further, modern pronunciation stresses -*ddu*. Since *aber* is recorded as being both masculine and feminine it may lead to the (rather unsatisfactory) explanation that *du* referred to the *aber* and not the *moel*. Whichever noun was originally qualified by *du* the resultant *Aber-moel-du* led to an unstressed medial -*moel*-. Since alternation of -*l*- and -*r*- is common in Welsh, here perhaps reinforced by assimilation with the -*r*- of preceding *Aber-*, there arose the perception that the medial syllable was the adverb *mor* ‘so, such’, which would regularly be followed by lenition of...
du. Hence, Abermor-ddu was understood, rather quirkily, to mean 'such a black stream'. One recent suggestion that eliminates the need for linguistic contortions is that *Y Moel Du* is a nickname, 'the swarthy bald man'; certainly similar examples are found in Merionethshire. See also PNEF 208–9 and CH 31 (1993) 15.

**Acstyn, Axton**

'Sash farm', ON *askr*, ON *tún*


One of a group of Scandinavian coastal names in north-east Wales, with Point of Ayr (q.v.) under four miles away. The common view has been that it was a maritime name, indicating a Scandinavian point of navigation as was Point of Ayr. However, Axton is well inland of Point of Ayr and two-and-a-half miles from the nearest coastline (at Ffynnongroyw). Having an ash tree as a navigational landmark in this location is an untenable interpretation. It must surely be an inland Scandinavian settlement that featured a distinctive ash tree. It has also been customary to regard this as a hybrid name with Axton having the Old Norse *askr* followed by Old English *tún* fitting the pattern of Mercian settlement in Flintshire. However, with an Old Norse first element, it is reasonable to argue that the second element is also Scandinavian, the Old Norse *tún*, with the entire p.n. given to a Scandinavian settlement distinguished by the ash tree. The cymricized form Acstyn has the typical -tyn ending (as in Prestatyn and Mostyn, both a few miles away). On *askr* as a place-name element see VEPN i 21.

**Adrafelin**

'Mill at the ?home', ?*adref, melin*


There are several mills in the area (such as Halghton Mill and Cross Mill). This mill appears to be associated with the medieval Halghton Hall a short distance away. However, in this name phrase, *adref*, colloquially *adre, adra*, does not sit comfortably with regular usage. *adref* has the connotation of 'at home, homewards'. The idea of the home farm with a mill is more usually conveyed by a name like Felindre. Some (slightly) later forms cast further doubt on the first element with the omission of the -r- (1680, 1693). Other interpretations in the PR are *Adwy'r Felin* 1715 PR, which reinterprets the name as 'gap at the mill' (*adwy* 'opening'). Similarly -felin is interpreted as -felen (*melyn* 'yellow') in *Adavelen* 1702 PR and as the river Alun in *Andravalyn* 1840 OS) with some forms reminiscent of Allington/ Trefalun (*Adravelling* 1779 PR, *Addrevelling* 1792 PR).
Aelwyd Uchaf

'Supper home', aelwyd, uchaf
Aelwyd Ucha 1632 PR, Aelwyd-Ucha 1729 K, Ailwyd uchaf 1840 OS

North east of Tremeirchion, adjacent today to several belts of plantation. The many forms are consistently ucha with regular colloquial omission of -f (restored in modern forms).

Afon Conway see Afon Gonwy

Afon y Garth

'river at the Garth', afon, y, p.n. Garth
Afon y Garth 1840 OS

Flows from the lakes near Gyrn Castle, past Glanrafon to join Nant y Felin-blwm, to flow through the narrow wooded valley at Garth (garth 'wooded slope) near Fynnongroyw and into the river Dee.

Afon Gonwy

'river associated with the Conwy family', pers.n. Conwy
Avon Gonwy c.1700 Paroch i 88, Avongonwy 1820 K, Afon Gonwy 1827 K, Afon Conway 1838 TAS

The brook flows into the Swinchiard Brook, and the name did not survive. The brook flowed through the land of the Conwy family of Plas Sychdyn (Sychdyn Hall) from the 16th century and it was that section that was called Afon Gonwy. Lluyd (Paroch i 87) has Y Plâs yn Sychdyn Edw. Conwy Esq. The lenition (to Gonwy) is common in river names. The river name is consistently Conwy as with the larger and better known river Conwy in north-west Wales. The name of both rivers was later anglicized to the now non-standard Conway, the form later preferred as the family name. The family originally came to Bodrhyddan (and subsequently to other locations in Flintshire) from England, probably in 1277, under the surname Conias (or Coniers). It was Sir Hugh Conias in the 14th century who changed his name to Conwy, for reasons that are obscure. See the introduction to the catalogue of Bodrhyddan estate papers.

Afon-wen

'white river', afon, gwyn fem. gwen
Avonwen 1768 PR, Avon Wen 1796 PR, Yr Afon-wen 1840 OS

The river Afon Wen, from which the hamlet of Afon-wen took its name, flows into Afon Chwiler/Wheeler near Caerwys. It appears that a much older name
for the river was Afon Galchog (Kalchawk 1297 K, Calchok 1309 K, Afon y Galchoc 1318 K, Galchog 1605–6 K), with calchog ‘containing lime’ referring to the nearby limestone quarries. It flowed from Ffynnon Deg (Avongalchog or Ffynnon deg tan y dre ag i chwiler c.1700 Paroch i 67 ‘Avon Galchog from Ffynnon Deg under the town and into Chwiler’). When those quarries ceased to function, the description of the river changed, for some unexplained reason, from defining its limestone source (galchog) to describing its colour (wen) or the turbulent foamy route. It was at this period that the hamlet developed, taking the new name of the river. For a possibly earlier name than Afon Galchog see Caerwys.

**Alltami** S[J]2565

‘hill of Ami’, *allt*, pers.n. *Ami*

Galltamy, Allt Amy 1750 PNEF, Galltamy 1787–8 K, Alltamy 1790 PNEF, Alltami 1808 PNEF, Altamy 1834 OS, Allt Amy 1840 TAS, Altami 1876 K

There are hills on either side of the bridge (Galltamy Bridge c.1781 K, Allt amy Bridge 1803 K) over the Alltami Brook and the crossroads (of the Ewloe–Mold road with the Sychdyn–Buckley road). Ami may well have been the owner of the tavern here. Several forms have the variant gallt for *allt*. Altamy, Altami reflect a pronunciation commonly heard today without the Welsh -ll-. See also PNEF 171.

**Alltmelyd, Meliden** S[J]0680

‘hill of Melydn’, *allt*, pers.n. *Melydn*


The parish name has long had the variants Alltmelyd and Meliden (Gallt Melyd Angl. meliden c.1700 Paroch ii 55), both accented on Mel-. A unidentified Melydn was associated with the hill to the north of Graig Fawr. The two medieval townships of Alltmelyd were given as Meliden and Prestatyn (c.1700). The English version Meliden reflects the original Melydn, while the modern Welsh form Alltmelyd shows fairly recent loss of the unaccented final syllable, which gave rise to the church dedication to an unknown Melid (Melid ydyw i Sant, c.1700) as was the well (Ffynnon Velid in Galht Melid township c.1700). A later development of *allt* was gallt (cf. Alltami) and this appears in some of the historical forms and in the commonly used Gallt Melyd. In the 1241 form, the reference is to the lower land (*ystad*) to the north.
Althrey

‘alder island’, OE *alor, OE *ēg


The name is also recorded in the early 16th century Althrey Hall (now a farmhouse on the edge of Bangor racecourse), and the modern Althrey Farm, Althrey Lodge and Althrey Woodhouse. The location is within a broad oxbow of the river Dee. The island characterized by the alder-tree might have been a small island adjacent to that bend or within a section that was prone to flooding. Cymricization explains the subsequent development, whereby the second syllable seems to have become aspirated, represented by spellings with -Irhey and perhaps even by the -rr-; cf. English rent > Welsh rhent. That in turn led to anglicized spellings and pronunciation of Welsh -rh- as -threy-, which is common in the 17th century (such as Montgomeryshire’s Penrhyn as Penthyrn 1774, Cilrhiw as Kilthrew 1774, and Gwenrhiw as Gwenthrew 1759, Mont PN 147, 57 and 97). On *alor as a place-name element see VEPN i 11–12.

On *ēg as a place-name element see LPN 37–44.

Alun, Afon, River

‘meandering (river)’, afon, E river, Br r.n. Alauna

Alani (fluvius) c.1191 AMR, Alun 1337 AMR, Alyn 1478–9 AMR, Alen 1489 AMR, Allen 1659 AMR, Allyn 1662 AMR, Alin 1672 AMR, Alen, Alyn c.1700 Paroch i 92, 97

The river Alun rises on Cyrn-y-brain near Llangollen, and then follows a winding course, past Cilcain where, in dry weather, it disappears into the limestone river bed at Hesb Alun (Hespalen 1536–9, hysp alyn, hesp Alyn c.1700 Paroch i 92, hysb fem. hesb ‘dry’). Thereafter, it flows past Ystrad Alun (q.v.) and into the Dee near Holt. The Celtic river name Alauna occurs, as Alun, several times in Wales (Glamorgan and twice in Pembrokeshire) and is related to the rivers Aln and Allen (Northumberland), Aline (North Yorkshire) and Ellen (Cumberland). Alauna as a river name is believed to be related to the Celtic personal name Alaunos, the name of a god corresponding to the Roman Mercury, but the exact significance of the river name Alauna is uncertain. Perhaps it meant something like ‘flowing’, but in Wales the rivers seem to have meandering, wandering courses. Some have argued that this sense gave rise to the element *al ‘wandering’ as in the two Denbighshire rivers Aled and Alwen. The form Alyn probably developed by analogy with other Flintshire place-names such as Mostyn, Prestatyn and Sychnant and has appeared on maps; the former unitary authority Delyn (a blend of ‘Dee’ and ‘Alyn’) gave it further currency, as does the Alyn and
Deeside constituency. However, by now, the standard form of the river name (and the pers.n.) is regularly Alun. See also PNEF 245 and YA 1 (2000) 8–9.

**America Farm**

‘America’, p.n. *America*

*America* 1840 OS, *America Fm* 1933 K

The farm is on the south-east slopes of Moel Findeg. Names of distant or exotic places (such as Greenland, Jericho and Abyssinia) were frequently used to denote a location that was a considerable distance from a village or hamlet. Not far away is a farm called Freezland. Sometimes such names referred to fields that were near a parish boundary (which is the case here). Cf. *America piece* 1842 TAS (PNEF 79–80), a field in Higher Kinnerton.

**Arddunwent**

‘Arddun’s field’, pers. n. *Arddun, gwent*


This is the name of one of the medieval townships of Mold that does not appear to have survived as a name unless it can be shown to be associated with Aberduna which is in the area. The feminine personal name *Arddun* is well documented elsewhere, such as Bryn Arddun (Caernarfonshire) and Dôl Arddun (Montgomeryshire). The reversed word order here is a little unexpected, but can tentatively be ascribed to the antiquity of *gwent*. That element, which probably had a range of meanings including ‘open field’, ‘meeting place’, ‘market’, is attested in the names of the Roman settlements *Venta Silurum* (Cas-gwent/Chepstow) and *Venta Belgarum* (Winchester), in the regional name Gwent and in *cadwent* ‘battle’, and possibly *Llinwent* (Llanbadarn Fynydd, Radnorshire ‘field for growing flax’). Arddunwent, then, is further evidence of the survival of *gwent* ‘field’. See also YA 2 (2001) 3.

**Arffedogaed y Wrach**

‘the witch’s apronful’, *arffedogaid, y, gwracch*

*Arfedogaed y Wrâch* c.1700 Paroch i 97, ii 7, *Ffledog y Diawl* ?19th cent. PNEF, Burial Chamber 1871 OS

The undated *Ffledog y Diawl* is *arffed* or *ffedog* ‘apron’ and *diafol* or *diawl* ‘devil’. According to Lhuyd the tumulus was the grave of the mythological giant Gwrle Gawr, a name contrived from the place-name Caergwrle: *Mae karnedh lhe claddwyd Gwrle gawr ar Gommins a elwir Kevn y Bêdh, a’r Garnedh ymma a elwir arfedogaed y Wrâch* (*On the commons called Cefn y Bedd there is a cairn where Gwrle the Giant was buried, and the cairn is called the witch's apronful*, c.1700...