



Place Names in Caerphilly County Borough 2016



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Place Names in Caerphilly County Borough

Many place names across the county borough, across Wales and the UK have existed for many centuries and often the reasons why the names exist have been forgotten or become muddled. Welsh place names are usually made up of a geographical description of their location, or relate to a church or some other significant building in the area.

Settlement names can be roughly split into six "classes" or "types" of names in terms of their English and/or Welsh names. The first four types are relatively straightforward, the final two are a little more complicated:-

- Welsh name only - in cases such as Ynys-ddu, Llanbradach or Ystrad Mynach there are no English versions of the place name in existence or in common usage;
- English name only - the opposite is true for Oakdale, Nelson or Crosskeys for example where there are no Welsh versions of the place name in existence, or a Welsh name is no longer in common usage;
- Different Welsh and English names on a place, from a totally different origin e.g. Newbridge/Trecelyn;
- Standard Welsh and English names on a place, from the same origin, but having evolved in both languages, with both forms having established themselves, e.g. Blackwood/Coed Duon;
- Standard Welsh and English names on a place, which are very similar, with the main difference being in the spelling e.g. Caerphilly/Caerffili, Crumlin/Crymlyn and Abertyswg/Abertyswg;
- Where someone has looked for a translation of a name that does not actually exist in that language, and so has 'translated' the name, despite there being no linguistic or historic basis for this new translation.

Examples of the first 5 types exist in Caerphilly county borough but in no case however, does the County Borough Council translate a settlement name, either way, where none existed previously - this would only be done after some form of consultation exercise was held with the residents of an area to allow them to decide for themselves.

To date, no such formal exercise has ever taken place in this area, though examples do exist where some local residents have done so of their own accord (such as Phillipstown, Elliot's Town and Trethomas).

Some areas of Wales have undertaken much more detailed work on place names - one example is Llanelli where for many years it was Llanelly/Llanelli until a council decision was made to get rid of the incorrect version on all signage in the area. The same trend can be seen in the Rhondda with many new signs showing only Treorci not Treorchy/Treorci.

Until 2001 the Place-names Advisory Committee (PNAC) was responsible for advising on the standard form of Welsh place-names. In 2001 this responsibility was given to the Welsh Language Board. The Board had no statutory powers in this field however, or no legal power to enforce its advice or recommendations, rather, the Board aimed to work in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government, the Ordnance Survey, local authorities and others who are interested in the field to advise them on the standard forms. From 2012 this responsibility now lies with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office.

During recent years the Welsh Language Board had worked in partnership with Local Authorities throughout Wales to standardize their lists of place-names. A list of Caerphilly place names was submitted to the Welsh Language Board on 1 April 2009 and was discussed by the Board's Standardization of Place-Names Team in its meeting on 28 May 2009 and a number of amendments and additions were made to the list. This 2016 version is the third edition.

A number of recommendations however are not simply a matter of correcting mistakes or providing additional and useful background information. The Team recommend to local authorities that where there is only a slight variation, the correct Welsh version is adopted as the only option.

All spelling, hyphenation, capitalisation, accents and translations have been thoroughly researched to produce this list and it has been created from a variety of historical records and maps, expert academic opinion from the Welsh Language Board and others, and local usage and preferences, which is vital to the process.

The entries are listed here as "English name or version" and "Welsh name" in the order of the English alphabet. Where there is a Welsh name, the elements forming that name are shown in brackets after the place name, together with a basic phonetic spelling of that Welsh place name in order to help with pronunciation.

An OS grid reference for each town or village is also included to allow anyone to locate the area using that system. All are shown in the format of 2 Grid letters (either SO or ST as the entire county borough falls within these two grids) followed by 3 figures (easting) and 3 figures (northing). The Council's Planning Division provided and verified the grid reference information.

There is a huge amount of information on the internet, such as a number of old maps of Wales and the UK and ecclesiastical and parish records. Where there is any ambiguity or difference of opinion on the derivation of the place name, the various options are also shown for information.

If we have omitted a settlement, if you think we have made a mistake, if you have any further information regarding any of these place names or any bits of curious historical information or local stories, please get in touch with us at cymraeg@caerffili.gov.uk and we will update the information on our electronic copies as soon as possible and include the new information in any future reprint of the booklet.

List of Place Names in Caerphilly County Borough

Aberbargoed / Aberbargod (*aber+bargod*)

(phonetic: *abb-airr-bar-god*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 155 005

This means "mouth of the boundary river" as the stream Nant Bargod Rhymni (*Bargau Remni c1170*) formed the boundary between two areas of land many years ago. The word "bargod" can mean "eaves" but in this context literally means "boundary" - though it can be argued that the eaves of a house are the boundary between the wall and the roof! The "e" has been mistakenly inserted into the name since at least 1629, as if the word derives from "coed" meaning wood as in other local names that refer to wood such as **Hengoed** and **Argoed**. For example, the village is shown as *Aber Bargoed* on a Monmouthshire map by George Phillips and Sons of London in 1892.

Aberbeeg / Aberbîg (*aber+pig*)

(phonetic: *abb-airr-beeg*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 210 020

Though most of the village is in the county borough of Blaenau Gwent, part of the village is over the border in Caerphilly county borough. The village name comes from the fact that a small stream called Nant Bîg (*Nant Bige* 1577) flows into the Ebbw Fawr river approximately half a mile above where the Ebbw Fawr and Ebbw Fach meet. The word "pig" in Welsh means a beak or spout and the name may derive from a description of the spot where the small stream emerged from the ground. Earlier spellings of the place names include *Aberbyg* 1659, *Aber-Beeg* 1779 and *Aberbeeg* from 1790.

Abercarn (*aber+carn*)

(phonetic: *abb-airr-khan*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 216 948

This means "mouth of the river from the cairn" - referring to Nant Carn, the stream that flows from the top of the cairn-shaped hill into the Ebbw River. The industrial village developed around the Abercarn Ironworks (*Abercarne Works* 1756).

Abertridwr (*aber+tri+dwr*)

(phonetic: *abb-airr-tree-doo-rr*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 122 894

The name means "mouth of the three brooks", these being Nant Cwmceffyl, Nant Cwm Parc and a stream running down from Eglwysilan church. The village is situated in a valley where the three streams merge into one, Nant yr Aber, which flows out of the valley and joins the River **Rhymney**. Shown as *Aber-tridwr* in 1885.

Abertysswg / Abertyswg (*aber+tyswg as in the personal name Tyswg*)

(phonetic: *abb-airr-tuss-oog*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 135 055

This means "mouth of the river Tyswg" - the name of the stream that comes down from the hill above and joins the **Rhymney** River near the village. The local pit was in operation from 1897 - 1969, opening in 1897 and originally called Pwll Llaca Pit. The McLaren Colliery later re-used the shaft before it was eventually renamed Abertysswg and until it closed in 1969, the pit produced steam coal for the steel industry.

Argoed (*ar+coed*)

(phonetic: *argo-eed*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 176 002

Named originally after a local farm, the name, though literally translating as "on wood", actually means in or on the edge of a wood or forest. Originally, the full name was *Argoed Sirhywi* with records showing *Argoyd Serowy* 1455, *Argoed Vawr* 1756, *Argoed* 1778. It was the location of a well-known Nonconformist chapel called *Craig Hargode* 1781 and *Argoed Meeting House* 1817.

Bargoed / Bargod (*bargod*)

(phonetic: *bar-god*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 148 991

The name means "boundary" - the river formed the boundary between two "hundreds", or areas of land many years ago. The word "bargod" can mean "eaves" but in this context literally means "boundary" - though it can be argued that the eaves of a house are the boundary between the wall and the roof. The "e" has been inserted into the name by mapmakers over the years, since at least 1629, as if the word derives from "coed" meaning wood - as in other local names that refer to wood such as **Hengoed** and **Argoed**. A map of Glamorganshire in 1796 shows only *Capel Glatis* (St Gwladys Chapel) in the area and a later map for "England and Wales Delineated" in 1843 shows the place name as *Gilfach-fargawd-fawr* - or "Greater Gilfach Bargoed" and the tradition of naming Bargoed together with neighbouring Gilfach remains commonplace today.

Bedwas (*originally "bedwos"*)

(phonetic: *bed-wass*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 169 889

Often mistakenly attributed to a corruption of "bedd y gwas" or servant's grave, the name actually comes from the word "bedw" which means birch trees. "Bedwos" is an old word that means "grove of birch trees". Many historic spellings have the ending *-was* or *-wes* rather than the original *-wos*. The place name goes back over 900 years with variations such as *Bedewas* c. 1100, *Bedeways* 1263, *Bedves* 1476, *Bedwesse* 1535, *Bedwes* 1536-9 and *Bedwast* c.1700. The current form of **Bedwas** appears from at least the 18th century, for example on a map of Glamorganshire in 1796.

Bedwellty / Bedwellte (*originally bod+mellte*)

(phonetic: *bed-well-tare*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 165 005

"Bod" in this context means "abode, house or habitation" and "Mellte" is almost certainly a person's name, so the meaning would be "abode of Mellte". The name appeared on maps of both Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire as it was on the border between the two old counties. Shown as *Bydwelthy* on a map of Monmouthshire by Robert Mordern in 1701, *Bedwelthy* by 1724 and as **Bedwellty** in 1764 and 1820. It became *Bedwelty* in 1840, 1885 and 1892, before reverting to the modern spelling from the 20th century onwards.

Blackwood / Coed Duon (*coed+du in its plural form*)

(phonetic: *koy-dee-on*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 173 972

The town was established in the early 1820s by J.H. Moggridge to provide decent housing for workers. Though originally called *Tremoggridge* in his honour, the town subsequently took its name from woods in the area. Rather than literally meaning trees that were black, the name comes from the fact that the woods were very dense and dark. In 1996, when Caerphilly County Borough Council came into existence after local government re-organisation, seven variations in spelling were found to exist on road signage and official documents for this town. Some were clearly incorrect, such as *Y Coedion* but most of the others were capitalisation and hyphenation differences - such as *Coed-duon*, *Coed Duon*, *Y Coed-Duon*, *Coed-Duon* with seemingly little consistency even within individual documents or road signs within a small geographic area. *Coed dduon* was shown on Monmouthshire maps in the mid 19th century. One late 20th century sign (luckily prevented from being put in place) bore the far too literal translation of *Du Pren* (it is believed this was due to a well-meaning use of a dictionary to try and save translation time). Local research was undertaken and the two most commonly used options were offered - the majority of replies at the time noted **Coed Duon** as the one preferred and so this has been the one used by the local authority in documents and on road signs since then. *Y Coed Duon* is the alternate version in use and the use of one version over the other is a source of great debate. In fact it is that debate that originally began the process in 1998 that has led to the creation of this comprehensive place names list.

Blaencarno (*blaen+carn*)

(phonetic: *blah-eeen-kharr-noh*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 095 085

A settlement of only a few houses near the village of **Rhymney**. "Blaen" can mean the headwaters of a river or the head of a valley and this settlement is located near the source of the River Rhymney and the head of the valley that takes its name from it. "Carno" comes from the word "carn" meaning burial mounds as there are many Bronze Age burial mounds in the surrounding area and is also found in the local ward name Twyn Carno.

Britannia

OS Grid Reference - ST 160 989

A settlement that developed from the late 19th century onwards, between Cefn Fforest and Aberbargoed. The place name comes from *Britannia Cottage* and maps from 1886 show this as the only dwelling in the immediate area, other than a signal box nearby, that was on the Sirhowy line of the London and North Western Railway.

Brithdir (*brith+tir*)

(phonetic: *brr-ith-dee-rr*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 149 020

The name apparently refers to how the land appeared when the village was first settled - "brith" means speckled or mottled and "tir" is land. When used together it most probably means that the land or soil in the area was of medium quality or perhaps full of scattered stones, mixed soil or vegetation. A number of examples of the place name exist from the early 17th century onwards, often relating to the chapel location rather than a village. Shown as *Capelbruthetere* on Pieter van den Keere's map of Monmouthshire in 1605, then *Gwaylod y Bryth Tîr* 1693, *Tyr kefen y Brethdir* 1702, *the hamlet of Brithdecr* around 1750 and becoming *Capel-y-Brithdir* on maps of 1843 and 1885.

Brynawel (*bryn+awel*)

(phonetic: *bryn-ah-well*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 200 912

"Bryn" means hill and "awel" means breeze. This settlement is an estate of post World War One houses above **Wattsville** in the Sirhowy Valley.

Bute Town / Y Drenewydd (*y+tre+newydd*)

(phonetic: *uh-drr-air-new-ith*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 105 090

Famous for the museum housed in some of the original terraced houses, the English name comes from the Bute Iron Works and the Marquess of Bute, who owned the land in the area. A map of Glamorganshire for "England and Wales Delineated" in 1843 shows *Bute Town* but later, in a map that went with a report of the Boundary Commissioners for England and Wales in 1885, the place name was shown simply as *Bute Works*. As the area developed it took on the name *Newtown* in 1875 and though this carried on in the Welsh name of **Y Drenewydd**, the English soon reverted back to **Bute Town** as it is today. Both the English and Welsh names appear elsewhere in Wales, for example *Butetown* in *Cardiff* and *Newtown / Y Drenewydd* in *Powys* and near *Mountain Ash*.

Caerphilly / Caerffili (*caer+ffili as in the personal name Ffili*)

(phonetic: *kairr-phil-ee*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 156 873

Famous for its castle and its cheese, the town dates back to at least the 13th century. The castle was built between 1268 and 1271 by Gilbert de Clare to subdue the local Welsh lords. The identity of Ffili remains a topic of debate, despite the town being named Ffili's Fort, which may refer to the Roman auxiliary fort in the castle grounds. One possible explanation is that there was a bishop Ffili, who may have had a monastery at Caerphilly and whose existence is confirmed by an 8th century memorial stone found near Ogmores Castle. The discovery of the stone was noted in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* journal in the mid-1930s. Due to its long history, the town has appeared on most maps of the area for many centuries, such as *Caerffilly* in the *Chorographia Britanniae* by T. Badeslade & W H Toms in 1741 and as **Caerphilly** by John Ellis in *Ellis's English Atlas* in 1766.

Cefn-crib (*cefn+crib*)

(phonetic: *kev-n-kreeb*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 235 995

In geographical terms, "cefn" means ridge and "crib" is the crest of a hill. There is much debate whether the correct form is *Cefn-y-crib* as can be seen in the historical examples *Ceven-y-crib* 1741 and *the Keven y Krib* 1801, or whether it is *Cefn-crib*, which most locals use today, and is what the local authority uses also.

Cefn Fforest (*cefn+fforest*)

(phonetic: *kev-n-forest*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 165 975

The name refers to the fact that the hill was once covered in trees - the name means "wooded ridge". Shown as *Cefn-y-fforest* on maps of Glamorganshire in 1886, where only a few scattered houses were in this area between the larger settlements of **Pengam** and **Blackwood**.

Cefn Hengoed (*cefn+hen+coed*)

(phonetic: *kev-n-hen-goyd*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 151 959

"The ridge above Hengoed" is the meaning of this settlement name, due to its location above the former Hengoed Hall estate, now the village of **Hengoed**. Interestingly, maps from 1886 show that Hengoed Hall was to the north of the settlement of **Cefn Hengoed** whereas by today, **Cefn Hengoed** lies to the north and overlooking modern-day **Hengoed**. Shown in parish records as *Keven Hengode* in 1750.

Cefn Mably / Cefn Mabli (*cefn+the personal name Mabli*)

(phonetic: *kev-n-mab-lee*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 204 845

Though most of this area lies within the City and County of Cardiff, some houses in the Cefn Mably area are in Caerphilly county borough, in the rural area south of **Rudry** and **Draethen**. The woods there are renowned for some of the best springtime displays of bluebells in South Wales. The name commemorates Mabli, daughter of Robert Fitzhamon, known as the 'Norman Conqueror' of Glamorgan. She was the first person to build a house on the ridge circa 1100. Mabli is the Welsh version of the name Mabel.

Chapel of Ease

OS Grid Reference - ST 220 960

This area of **Abercarn** is named after the chapel built by Lady Llanofer. The spot where the chapel stood is now a bus stop but the name for the area has been passed on through generations of local people.

Coed-y-brain (*coed+y+brân in its plural form*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 155 005

(phonetic: *koyd-uh-bra-een*)

Originally the site of a only a few cottages north of **Aberbargoed**, the village name means "the wood of the crows".

Croespenmaen (*croes+pen+maen*)

(phonetic: *kroys-pen-mine*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 199 983

"Croes" is the Welsh word for a cross and is used here in the context of a crossroads near the village of **Penmaen**. The name dates back at least to the early 17th century when it was *Crosspenmay* 1611 and again by 1817, *le Crosse pen Maine* 1626-7, *Cross Pen Main* c1790 and 1820 and *Croes Penmaen* in 1833.

Crosskeys

OS Grid Reference - ST 224 918

The name probably comes from the first Inn to be opened in the area, the Cross Keys Inn, which is now the Cross Keys Hotel. There is no Welsh name in common usage today, though prior to the inn being built, the area was called *Pontycymer*.

Crumlin / Crymlyn (*from crymu+llyn*)

(phonetic: *crumb-lynnne*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 212 983

The name derives from the shape of a pool on the valley floor, possibly near the bridge. "Crwm" means curved or twisted and the verb form "crymu" means "to bend". The English name has evolved from a mis-spelling of the original Welsh name by mapmakers who wrote the name as it would sound in English. The place name was recorded as *Crymlin* 1630, *Crumlyn's bridge* 1631 and *Pont Grymlyn* 1710.

Cwmcarn (*cwm+carn*)

(phonetic: *comb-kharrn*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 221 937

This means "valley of the cairn" - referring to Nant Carn, the stream that flows from the top of the hill in to the Ebbw River. This village was originally called *Abergwyddon*, as shown on Monmouthshire maps up to 1817, but was then renamed **Cwmcarn**, and appears on maps of Monmouthshire as such by 1820. One tale that describes why this change of name took place is that an English station master could not pronounce *Abergwyddon* when referring to the railway halt, and so the place name changed to reflect the usage brought about by the necessity of railway travel.

Cwm-corrwg (from *cwm+corrog*)

(phonetic: *comb-corr-oog*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 179 997

A settlement just outside **Argoed**, the area gets its name from the location "in the valley of the little river". The word "corrog" is an adjective meaning "dwarf" or "little" and is found in other place names such as *Glyncorrwg* in the Afan Valley, north of Port Talbot and in its feminine form in *Corris* in Meirionydd. *Cwm Corrwg* was one of very few settlements in the area to be shown on maps of Glamorganshire, such as on one printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode of London in 1885. The bridge across the Sirhowy river is shown as *Pont-Cwm-corrwg* on more detailed maps dating back to 1879.

Cwmfelin-fach (*cwm+melin+bach*)

(phonetic: *comb-vell-in-va-ch*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 188 913

The village has been in existence since at least the 18th century but was expanded between 1900 and 1910 due to the mining industry in the valley - the name means "valley of the little mill", referring to the geographical location of the corn mill that existed there. The place name is recorded as *Cwmfelin-fach* from 1752.

Cwm Gelli (*cwm+gelli*)

(phonetic: *comb-gare-ll-ee*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 176 982

Meaning "valley of the groves", this is a small settlement between **Blackwood** and **The Rock**. It was the location of one of the coal mines in the area from the early to mid 19th century until it closed in the early 1940s. Some of the houses were built to house mine workers and their families but newer houses have been built there in recent years as the settlement is in an ideal location, being quite secluded and close to the countryside, yet only a few minutes from the amenities of **Blackwood**.

Cwmnantyrodyn (*cwm+nant+yr+odyn*)

(phonetic: *comb-nan-tuh-rod-in*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 185 955

Meaning "valley of the stream near the lime kiln", referring to kilns that were in operation in the area many years ago. The place name is recorded as *Cwm-nant yr Odyn* in 1752.

Cwmsyfiog (from "*cwm*" plus the adjective form of "*syfien*")

(phonetic: *comb-sir-vee-ogg*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 155 025

A "syfien" is a wild strawberry and the name literally translates as "the valley that has strawberries". Wild strawberries could often be found on land that contained pit waste as it has little or no nitrogen. "Syfiog" however, is also the name of the stream, dating back to at least 1588 where it is recorded as *Nant seveocke* so the place name actually means "valley of the Syfiog stream". The stream name may have come from the fact that the valley was fruitful and fertile. This is an interesting example of how the original name was still relevant during the coal mining industrial period of the area. Note that the correct way of spelling the name has an accent over the "i" called a diaeresis or umlaut (the double dot), but this is rarely used in documents or on signage, possibly as a result of printers many years ago not being able to generate the accent.

Deri (plural of "derwen")

(phonetic: *dare-ee*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 125 015

The "derwen" or oak tree was very common in the valleys and has lent its name to many places (trees in general are a common source of place names). "Deri" is a plural form of "derwen". (See also **Oakdale**). The area were originally named as *Ysgwydd-gwyn*, after the local farms also the name of the old colliery there in 1833 but was renamed after many incomers to the area, who had come for work in the colliery, could not pronounce it. **Deri** was chosen in its place. Church records show that in 1849, "*Ysgwydd-Wyn* was a hamlet, in the parish of *Gellygaer*, in the hundred of **Caerphilly**, county of Glamorgan, South Wales, 5 miles South-East of *Merthyr-Tydvil*; containing 123 inhabitants and situated on the right bank of the river *Romney*, near its source. The ground is bleak and mountainous, the inhabitants thinly scattered, and the right of common generally exercised. There is a place of worship for a congregation of dissenters". The sheltered housing complex in **Deri** is also named *Ysgwydd-gwyn* to reflect the old name. There are however, records of the name *Derie* from 1744 and the Rhymney Railway line called the station here *Darran and Deri*.

Draethen (from "traeth" or possibly "traethu")

(phonetic: *dry-then*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 223 187

Though the word "traeth" meaning a beach, is more commonly used for the seaside, this is possibly an example of the use of the word in the context of an area on the banks of a river such as a marsh or bog. Another theory could be that "traeth" here comes from "traethu" - "to speak out", possibly a description of the babbling noise of the river. There are records of the name dating back to 1465, where it was shown as *Trayth Maghon* and the current version of the name first appeared in the form *Melin-y-Draythen* in 1615.

Elliot's Town / Tref Eliot

(phonetic: *trev-elliott*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 154 028

The village near **New Tredegar** was built to house workers at the Elliot Colliery and is named after Sir George Elliot, co-founder of the Powell Duffryn Steam Coal Company Ltd. Both the company and Sir George himself invested in the construction of the houses. The Welsh name is a rare example of an original English-only name being translated, even to the extent of losing one "l" from Elliot for it to be grammatically and phonetically correct in Welsh. This happens frequently from Welsh-to-English in place names, but this is one of only a few examples in the county borough of English-to-Welsh.

Energlyn / Eneu'r-glyn (genau+y+glyn)

(phonetic: *en-eye-rr-glyn*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 146 881

The settlement gets its name from its location at the mouth of the Rhymney valley north of Caerphilly. "Genau" is a Welsh word for mouth or jaw, though very rarely used in place names - in fact it appears that only two places in Wales have this name, the other being *Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn* near *Aberystwyth*. The English equivalent is simply a local Welsh pronunciation of the original Welsh name, and both versions have been in use for many years, *Energlyn* appears in 1729 (coming from *Generglyn* 1525 for example) but *Eneu'r-glyn* was used on county maps in 1885 and appears on the new local railway station opened in late 2013.

Fernlea (*from the English fern+lea*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 238 913

An area in the northern end of **Risca**, there is no Welsh name in common usage for this settlement though *Dol-y-rhedyn* has been suggested. The name derives from the Welsh method of naming places, in this case a description of the plant-life that grew originally in the area. The bracken-covered meadows gave rise to the name "fern" and "lea" is originally a Middle English word for a piece of open land, meadow or pasture.

Fleur-de-lis / Trelyn (*tref+llyn*)

(phonetic: *treh-lynn*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 159 965

An example of the village name evolving separately in two languages, the Welsh name comes from "the settlement by the pool", after the few farms that were in the area near the river for many centuries. The other name is French rather than English and means "iris" or "lily flower" but its origins go back further than medieval France. The "Flower of Life" originates in Ancient Egypt and much later was adopted by the Royal Families in France and to a lesser extent other European Countries as a heraldic symbol. The name was given to the village in the 17th century by Huguenots from France who had fled the religious persecution in their country. The name was an important link for them to their lost homeland. The French name is often shown as *Fleur de Lys*, *Fleur-Des-Lis* and other variations, but **Fleur-de-lis** is now used as the standard spelling by the local authority. There was an inn at this location from 1831 named "Fleur-de-lis" and until it burned down, there was also a pub called the "Trelyn Arms" in the village. Early records show the name as *Flower-de-luce* 1833 and both *Fleur-de-lis* and *Trelyn* in 1869. Locals often call the village *Flower*.

Fochriw (*originally boch+rhiw+garn*)

(phonetic: *voch-riw*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 103 054

The more recent form of the name should correctly be *Y Fochriw* and the literal translation of this village name is often given as "slope of the pigs" as the assumption is that the word "moch" (pigs) has mutated to "foch". The original word however, was "boch" as the full name for the settlement is *Bochriw'r Garn*. This changes the meaning, as "boch", though usually meaning "a cheek" as on a face, can also mean a bulge in the ground or a hill, possibly referring to a rounded piece of rock on the slope ("rhiw") below the "carn", the Roman stone found above the village on **Gelligaer Common**. Examples of the name can be found as far back as c1170 with *Bohrukarn*, later *y voyghryw garn* c1700 and *Y Fochriw* in 1867.

Gelligaer (*gelli+caer*)

(phonetic: *gare-ll-ee-guy-rr*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 135 969

Literally meaning "grove by the fort", the village gets its name from its history as a Roman auxiliary fort and even further back in history from when there was an Iron Age fort on the adjoining hill, Buarth-y-gaer that is immediately to the east of the village. One of the greatest Welsh saints of the 6th century, Cadog, was born in Gelligaer (the local ward name is Saint Cattwg) and legend has it that he was a monk, had magical powers, was a kind and generous host and was a very successful dairy farmer - in fact the name carries on in *Llangadog* in West Wales, famous for the now closed creamery that produced fantastic custard and rice pudding, and you can still purchase the Welsh Cadog cheese in local supermarkets. The spelling of Gelligaer has altered over the years in reflection of the way the name has been pronounced e.g. *Gelligâr* from 1750. Gelligaer Church Hall, erected in 1911 has a plaque with the spelling *Neuadd Kell Y Gaer 1911* which is still there. Early map spellings also have the name beginning with the letter K, such as *Kil-gaer* 1281, *Kylthy-gaer* in 1307, *Kilthi-gaer* in 1349 and *Kethlygajer* on Pieter van den Keere's map of Monmouthshire in 1605.

Gelligaer Common / Comin Gelligaer (*gelli+caer*)

(phonetic: *com-in-gare-ll-ee-guy-rr*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 125 985

Not so much a settlement as a scattering of dwellings on this open upland, the main population being Welsh Mountain ponies and other horses. Running roughly northwards across the Common is the Roman road from *Cardiff* to *Y Gaer*, near *Brecon* and this is still clearly visible above **Fochriw**.

Gelli-groes (*gelli+croes*)

(phonetic: *gare-ll-ee-groy-ss*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 175 945

Named after a local farm and meaning "the grove at the crossroads", the village had a working corn mill which was, of course, world-famous for being the location where the radio distress call was received from the Titanic in 1912, before the ship sank after a collision with an iceberg.

Gelli-haf (*gelli+haf*)

(phonetic: *gare-ll-ee-haav*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 159 955

Shown as *Gelli-have* on an 1850 map of Monmouthshire, the word "gelli" means "grove" or "enclosure" and "haf" is Welsh for summer, so the name of the village, located between **Pontllanfraith** and **Fleur-de-lis** means "summer grove or enclosure". When the area was mainly farms, the area around **Gelli-haf** was used as summer grazing in the traditional Welsh way of farming, as it is on the hillside rather than in the valley below.

Gilfach (from "cilfach")

(phonetic: *gill-va-ch*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 151 982

"Cilfach" is a word that means a "nook", a sheltered corner or hiding place. "Cil" is a retreat, for example a location where a hermit or a monk would go for solitude and the word is found in many place names throughout Wales such as *Cilfynydd* and *Ciliau Aeron*. The name here has been listed as *Tyre Kilvache vargoed* in 1629, *Kilvach Bargoed* 1632 and as *Kilvach Bargoed* in 1729 for example. A map of Glamorganshire for "England and Wales Delineated" in 1843 shows the place name as *Gilfach-fargawd-fawr* - or "Greater Gilfach Bargoed" and the tradition of naming Gilfach together with neighbouring **Bargoed** remains commonplace today.

Glan-y-nant (glan+y+nant)

(phonetic: *glan-uh-nant*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 145 975

Literally translated, this means "banks of the stream". The name comes from the village's location along the banks of the stream flowing from **Pen-pedair-heol** down into the River **Rhymney**.

Glyn-gaer (glyn+caer)

(phonetic: *glyn-guy-rr*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 141 969

The village name comes from its location in the valley below the remains of the Roman fort at **Gelligaer**. Glyn means valley (the Scottish equivalent is "glen") and "caer" is the Welsh word for fort, seen in many place names throughout Wales.

Graig-y-rhacca / Graig-y-rhaca (craig+y+rhaca)

(phonetic: *grah-eeg-uh-rha-ka*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 189 889

On maps dating back to 1885, the village was Craig-y-Rhaca, the "C" mutating to "G" over time until it has become the commonly used version. Though "rhaca" is the Welsh word for a rake, as in a garden tool, the usage here is possible from a term used for a long, narrow area between cultivated land and a hill pasture or common. The word "racca" was common in Shropshire for such a piece of land. This strip of land was where livestock were be herded and sorted and comes from an Old English word "hracca" meaning "a rough path". Earlier spellings also show a variation of "rhacan" as opposed to "rhaca". Also *Creyge Rackawn* in 1570, *Craig y raccha* 1630 and *Craigracka* 1813.

Groes-faen (croes+maen)

(phonetic: *groys-vine*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 135 005

An area near **Deri** in the Darran Valley, it is also the name of a farm between this village and nearby **Aberbargoed** and was also the name of a colliery. Groesfaen Colliery was the deepest in the Darran valley (2160 feet) and was in full operation from around 1908 for sixty years and employed about 730 men. The colliery closed in 1968. The word "croes" means cross and "maen" means stone, but rather than literally meaning "stone cross", here it means "a stone crossing", referring to a stone bridge over the river dating back to the 17th century.

Groes-wen (*croes+gwen*)

(phonetic: *groys-when*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 130 870

The name means "white cross" and "gwen" is the feminine form of "gwyn" in Welsh. The village is best known as the location of the first Calvinistic Methodist chapel in Wales, which was established in 1742. Instances of the name since that period are *Groes Wenn* 1742, *Cross-wen* 1750, *Tir y Grose Wen* 1764, *White Cross* 1772 and *Croes Wen* 1786.

Gwrhay (*either cwr+hæg or gwrai*)

(phonetic: *goorr-hay*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 185 995

A settlement between **Oakdale** and **Argoed**, named after two farms in the area, Gwrhay-fawr and Gwrhay-fach. The Nant Gwrhay Colliery also took its name from these farms. Zephaniah Williams, a Chartist leader involved in the Newport Uprising on 4th November 1839 was born in the village in 1769. The origins of the name are not clear, one suggestion notes that "gwr" may come from the Welsh word "cwr" meaning edge or border and "hay" may come from the Old English word *hæg* (pronounced "hay") meaning either a fenced or enclosed forest. This would be the same as in the origins of the name of *Hay-on-Wye* in Powys. The other suggestion is that the name derives from "gwrai", which was a personal name recorded as far back as the 12th century and also means a saw-set or saw-wrest, meaning an instrument used to set the teeth of a saw by bending each alternate tooth slightly outward - though the significance of this in relation to the area is unclear, unless it refers to some topographical feature resembling such a saw blade. In the early 19th century, the Gwrhay Colliery was owned by J.H. Moggridge and a Royal Commission Report of 1842 showed the following regarding the employees of Gwrhay Colliery at the time - *GWRHAY and PEN-Y-VAN, parish of Mynyodduslwyn, county of Monmouth. Aaron Crossfield, Esq., part proprietor. Mr. James Harper, book-keeper to Mr. Roger Lewis, general storekeeper and contractor for working the Gwrhay Colliery. Mrs. Mary Lewis. Shadrach Williams, aged 11, collier. Moses Williams aged 7, air-door boy. Rosser Jenkins, aged 8, collier. Richard Hutton, aged 7, collier. John Evans, aged 8, collier. Daniel Jones, aged 16, collier. Charles Pascal, aged 14, collier. John Rosser, aged 14. haulier. Joseph Head, age, 14 haulier.* Later the colliery was owned by the Lewis family of Gwrhay-fawr Farm by 1869, and by the early 20th century by the Oakdale Navigation Colliery until the mine closed in 1924.

Hafodyrynys (*hafod+yr+ynys*)

(phonetic: *hav-odd-uh-run-niss*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 225 984

Welsh farms traditionally had two sets of dwellings, one for the summer months and one for winter. The summer dwelling or "hafod" was higher in the hills to get the best of the sunshine and the winter dwelling "hendre" was lower in the valley to shelter from the winter winds. Though "ynys" usually refers to an island in the sea, it can also refer to an area of land between two rivers or a simply a river meadow. The village name, therefore means "summer dwelling in the river meadow".

Hendredenny (*hendre+ the name Denni or Tenni*)

(phonetic: *hen-dread-any*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 135 187

Traditionally, Welsh farms had dwellings for the summer months for the winter, the latter were known as "hendre" and were lower in the valley to shelter from the winter winds. This settlement gets its name from nearby Hendre-denny Hall, a grade 2 listed building, built near or on a farm site dating back at least to the early 14th century, when "Hendredeni" was listed as part of the property belonging to Gilbert de Clare, who built Caerphilly Castle. The name is recorded in 1746 as *Tire finnon Denny* and the name also appears in the place name *Llandenny / Llandenni*, to north of *Usk* in Monmouthshire (earlier Mathenni). Another possibility is that "deni or denny" comes from the Welsh word "denu", which means "to attract" and could therefore mean that the farm was in an attractive location.

Hengoed (*hen+coed*)

(phonetic: *hen-goyd*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 150 951

The name literally means "old wood". The village is named after Hengoed Hall, a large house in the area though interestingly, maps from 1886 show that Hengoed Hall was to the north of the settlement of **Cefn Hengoed** whereas by today, **Cefn Hengoed** lies above and to the north of modern-day **Hengoed**.

Hollybush / Llwyncelyn (*llwyn+celyn*)

(phonetic: *llo-in-kell-inn*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 316 203

Named originally after the inn, the Hollybush colliery was first developed in 1820 but expanded rapidly after 1880 and the village grew up around the original farms and cottages. James James, who composed the tune 'Glan Rhondda' (the tune of the Welsh National Anthem) was born in the Ancient Druid Inn in Hollybush in 1832.

Llanbradach (*originally glan+nant+ the personal name Bradach*)

(phonetic: *ll-anne-brad-ah-ch*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 150 903

"Llan" means church or parish but in this case the origin of the name comes from Glan Nant Bradach, or "the banks of river Bradach". "Bradach" is an Irish word meaning "robbing, pilfering" but a suggested meaning for the name is that the Irish *-ach* ending with the Welsh word "brad" meaning "treachery" or "deceit" would mean the river's name becomes "a treacherous stream" possibly one that is prone to sudden, destructive floods - and the area does become quickly flooded after heavy rain even to this day. Another theory is that the "treachery" is that of the monk ("mynach", hence the "ach" ending here) who is mentioned in the folktale regarding **Ystrad Mynach** (see that entry for details) and that the name derives from *Llan Brad y Mynach* - or "parish of the monk's treachery". The place name has existed in some form since at least 1597.

Llancaeach (*originally glan+nant+caeach*)

(phonetic: *ll-anne-kai-ah-ch*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 112 962

Meaning "the banks of the Caeach brook", this is the name of the famous Llancaiach Fawr Manor House, a living history attraction in the county borough. The area has been called *Kayach* 1536-9, *Kaeach* in the late 16th century and *Lancayach* in 1630. The river name may contain "caer" as a form of "cau" in the sense of "enclosing" as the area around Llancaeach Fawr and areas to the west are almost enclosed by the rivers Caeach and Bargod Taf. It was referred to as *Lancaiach Vaur* in 1795 in Church papers regarding the endorsement of "dissenting" places of worship (i.e. non-conformist as opposed to Church of England or Roman Catholic establishments).and *Llancaiach* appears on a map of Glamorganshire printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode of London in 1885.

Llanfabon (*llan+ the name Mabon*)

(phonetic: *ll-anne-vab-onn*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 108 937

The village church ("llan") is dedicated to St Mabon, reputedly 6th century but sources are 500 years later than this and Mabon could well be a lay patron. The name also appear in the place names *Ruabon / Rhiwabon* (originally *Rhiwfabon*) and *Manorwen (Maenor Fabon)*. A Celtic god named Maponos is also recorded in Roman Gaul.

Llanfach (*llan+bach*)

(phonetic: *ll-anne-vah-ch*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 225 955

A settlement near **Abercarn**. Meaning "little church", the name refers to the Lady Llanover's chapel.

Llechryd (*llech+rhyd*)

(phonetic: *ll-air-ch-rid*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 107 092

The word "rhyd" means a ford in a river and "llechi" are slates. This settlement, north of **Rhymney** is named after two farms in the area, Llechryd Uchaf and Llechryd Isaf. The area was originally known as *Rumney bridge* 1814 and *Rumney Bridge* 1832. The name refers to grey slate slabs that were used as stepping stones in the river and the name means "the ford of the slate stones".

Machen (*deriving from ma+chen*)

(phonetic: *ma-ch-en*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 214 890

The word "ma" in Welsh is not often used in everyday speech but can be found in a number of place names as it means low lying ground, a plain or a wide, flat area. "Chen" may have originally come from the Welsh male name Cain or Cein. There are records of the place name in various forms dating back to 1101. The name Machen was originally used for what is now the settlement of Lower Machen but has moved up the valley as the area's housing slowly developed. A variation of the village name also appears in an early version of the name for **Draethen**, where that area was shown as *Trayth Maghon* in 1465. It also appears as *Maughen* in a map printed for a gentleman's periodical in London in 1765 - a series of articles were written and each showed a map for stages of a journey from London to St David's in Pembrokeshire.

Maesycwmmer / Maes-y-cwmwr (*maes+y+cwmwr*)

(phonetic: *mice-uh-coo-moor*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 155 945

The word "cwmwr" means "footbridge", possibly referring to a local story of a large tree that fell across the river forming a natural bridge over the river Rhymney. The name means "the meadow by the footbridge" and there are examples of the name existing in 1856 and 1903, with the spelling *cwmwr* noted in 1885. The double "m" has persisted in the anglicised version of the name, but is not present in the original spelling as the double-m combination does not occur in Welsh.

Man-moel (*man+moel*)

(phonetic: *man-moyle*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 175 035

The modern meaning of this is "bare place", referring to the location of the village high above the Ebbw and Sirhywi valleys and conforms to the methods used to name places in Wales. There is however, an original meaning for the area that has roots back to the 12th Century, where a church was founded in the area for a follower of St Cadog, named Macmoil. "Mac" is the Irish form of "son of" ("mab" in Welsh) and over the centuries, variations in the spelling have led to some confusion, with the modern **Man-moel** being an attempt to explain earlier meanings. The original meaning was more likely to have been "the place associated with St Macmoil". Various spellings over the centuries include *Ecclesia Mac moilo* c 1200, *Mapinoil* or *Mapmoil* 1330, developing into *Melyn Van Hoell* (meaning Melin Fan-moel), *Mamm Howell* 1630 and *Mamhole* in 1653. Shown as *Pentre Man Moel* in 1833 on a map of Monmouthshire by Thomas Moule.

Markham

OS Grid Reference - SO 166 012

Named after Sir Arthur Markham, a director of the Tredegar Iron and Steel Company, the village was developed in 1910 for workers after mining shafts were sunk in the area.

Mynyddislwyn (*originally from mynydd+is+llwyn*)

(phonetic: *mun-ith-is-loo-in*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 195 940

Meaning "the mountain below the grove", the hill has given its name to so much that is important in the area. The hilltop church formerly had a very large parish centuries ago and the current parliamentary constituency and the former borough council were named Islwyn after the church. The Reverend William Thomas (1832-1878), a Calvinistic Methodist minister from **Ynys-ddu** took his bardic name as Islwyn and is one of Wales' most famous poets. The village originally occupied the western slopes of the hill with the grove above it and the church and parish was originally dedicated to Tudur ap Hywel, as recorded in *tydyr ap howel* c1566, and also in Twyn Tudur, the mound that had been the location of a 12th century castle. The area was shown as *Monythuscland* in 1566 and as *Mynyddislwyn* on the 1885 map of Glamorganshire by Eyre and Spottiswoode of London.

Nelson

OS Grid Reference - ST 115 955

The name apparently comes from the *Lord Nelson* pub that was built after the opening of a number of pits in the area. The pub was named after Lord Nelson himself visited the area in 1803, two years before the famous Battle of Trafalgar. The Welsh name on the village *Ffos y Gerddinen* (*ffos+y+cerddinen*) is not in common usage by today; "ffos" can mean a ditch or a moat and the word "cerddinen" means a mountain ash tree, common to the area and giving its name in English to the nearby village of *Mountain Ash* in the Cynon Valley.

New Tredegar / Tredegar Newydd (from *tre+tegyr+newydd*)

(phonetic: *tread-egg-arr-new-ith*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 143 031

Although "tre" or "tref" is more commonly the Welsh word for "town", it can also be used for "farm" as in this case. Tegyr was the name of the farm from where the Tredegar family took their name ("tegyr" becoming "tegar" over time). The original *Tredegar* was near Newport (Tredegar House was the location of the 2004 National Eisteddfod). The Iron Works owned by the family in the Sirhowy valley gave rise to the town of *Tredegar* in Blaenau Gwent and the new houses built in the next valley became the village of **New Tredegar**, taking the name of the Colliery that opened there in 1858. The area was built on the site of two farms, *Aberysibwr* and *Cwmysibwr* and was originally called *White Rose*. That name was preserved in the railway station White Rose in 1885, in the road name White Rose Way and now in the name of the community school built in the area and opened in September 2004, White Rose Primary School.

Newbridge / Trecelyn (*tre+celyn*)

(phonetic: *treh-kelin*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 209 968

This is an example of where the English and Welsh names have evolved separately. The English name refers to a town developing around a "new bridge" built over the Ebbw river. There are English records of the place name dating back to *Newbridge in Monythuscland* in 1566 and *Newbridge mill* 1630. The Welsh name was originally a more literal translation of **new+bridge** in that there is a record of *tyr yn is y bont newyth* in 1630. In 1839 there is also *y Bontnewydd*. The name **Trecelyn** evolved separately since the development of houses for workers at the North Celynen and South Celynen pits (named after the Nant Celyn stream). Many recent OS maps incorrectly give the Welsh name as *Cefn Bychan*, which is actually the Welsh name of *Newbridge* near *Ruabon* in Denbeighshire and this error can still be seen in some internet maps and references.

Oakdale (*oak+dale*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 187 986

This is an example of naming a village in English, though using the traditional Welsh method of naming a village or town according to geographical features or landmarks. Oaks were common trees in the area and trees are a common part of many place names in Wales (as with **Deri**, also in Caerphilly county borough). The name was first used by the Oakdale Navigation Collieries Ltd, a subsidiary of the Tredegar Iron and Coal Co. The village was created specifically to house miners and their families as no settlement existed there previously and was actually designed through a competition in 1910-11 to build a village of 600 houses for such a purpose. Though it can be seen translated sometimes as *Cwmderi*, *Cwmderwen*, *Glyn-y-deri* or *Glyn-derwen*, no Welsh name officially exists for the village at the moment. The Welsh school in the area is named Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Derwen.

Ochrwyth / Ochwith (*ochr+chwith*)

(phonetic: *oh-ch-rr-wee-th*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 234 888

The word "ochr" means side and "chwith", though normally meaning "left" (i.e. the opposite of "right") can also mean "wrong" in certain contexts. One explanation for the name is that the village, though near **Risca**, was in the parish of **Machen**, in other words the village was "on the wrong side" of the mountain from its parish church. Signage over the years has corrupted the name into **Ochrwyth**, as the assumption was that the derivation came from the word "chwythu" (to blow) and that the meaning was "windy hillside", which is not correct but the spelling is in common usage on signage and other written material by today. On maps, the village is shown as split into Upper Ochrwyth and Lower Ochrwyth.

Pantside / Cefn-y-pant (*cefn+y+pant though originally only "pant"*)

(phonetic: *kev-n-uh-pant*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 215 975

Situated above **Newbridge**, "cefn" in this context is a word meaning the ridge or crest of a mountain and "pant" is a hollow or valley. The village is situated on a ridge overlooking **Newbridge** and the Ebbw River valley below. The English version is a rare mix of the two languages in a place name and both modern versions used locally have seemingly developed from the original name of Pant, shown on OS maps as recently as their 1 inch map in 1953 and the 6 inch map in 1966.

Penallta (*originally from pen+yr+alltau*)

(phonetic: *pen-ah-ll-tah*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 139 953

The name means "head or top of the incline", referring to the geographical location of the original farms in the area - Penalltau Fawr and Penalltau Isaf. The "u" has disappeared in common usage as frequently in South and South East Wales, the word-ending "au" (pronounced "ah-ee") becomes "ah" or "eh" in the local Welsh dialect. A former colliery site, the area now has an attractive country park and the new Cwm Calon housing estate, and a new Welsh school Ysgol Gymraeg Penalltau open in the area in 2009.

Pengam (*pen+cam*)

(phonetic: *pen-gah-m*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 157 971

The village name refers to a "crooked hill". Originally named *Aberpengam*, the village name comes from the farm and stream of the same name in the area. The word "aber" can mean the confluence of two or more rivers, possibly referring to the fact that the Union Brook, Nant Cascade and a small un-named stream all join the Rhymney river in the area. The spellings for the village name have been varied over the centuries, with it being recorded as *Pont y manpenagm* 1704, *Pontar Pengam* c1790, *Tir Pont Pengam* and *Pont Aber Pengam* 1813, *Pontabar Pengam* 1831, *Pontmaenpengam* 1851. The present day name seems to have first appeared in 1860 with both *Pengam* and *Pontaberpengam* being recorded in that year.

Penllwyn (*pen+llwyn*)

(phonetic: *pen-ll-oo-in*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 175 955

Meaning "grove hill", the settlement gets its name from a geographical description of its original appearance as a hill covered with bushes.

Penmaen (*pen+maen*)

(phonetic: *pen-mine*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 183 978

The name refers to "the rocky hill" - a reference to rocky outcroppings in the area where only part of a much larger rock formation is visible above ground. The settlement is located on a hill overlooking the river Ebbw and near the town of *Blackwood*. Recorded only as a mill *Melyne Penne Mayne* in 1487, later names were *Tir Penmayne* 1653 and *Penmaine* in 1707.

Penpedairheol (*pen+pedair+heol*)

(phonetic: *pen-ped-ayre-hay-all*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 140 975

The word "pen" here means "the end point of" and originally refers to the end of four roads that came together here as a cross-roads.

Penrhiw (*pen+rhiw*)

(phonetic: *pen-rhee-oo*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 245 191

The village name means "top of the hill", referring to its location in **Risca**.

Pentrapeod / Pentrapiod (*from "pentref" and "pioden" in its plural form*)

(phonetic: *pen-trap-ee-odd*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 200 010

This is a village to the north of **Oakdale** near Pen-y-fan Pond and the name means "village of the magpies". Though the word "magpies" is actually "piod" in Welsh, regional variations in spelling often led to vowels being changed and in this case "piod" has become "peod". It was shown as *Pentref-piod* in 1833 and a 1956 map shows the farm in the area as *Pentrepiod Farm*.

Pen-twyn (*pen+twyn*)

(phonetic: *pen-two-in*)

OS Grid References (1) SO 105 045 and (2) SO 205 005

Meaning the "top of the hillock", there are two settlements of this name in the county borough, **Pen-twyn (1)** above **Fochriw** in the Darran Valley and **Pen-twyn (2)** near **Trinant**. There are many other examples of this name in the old Monmouthshire area alone, possibly indicating that the name has some special significance.

Pentwyn-mawr (*pen+twyn+mawr*)

(phonetic: *pen-two-in-mah-oor*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 195 965

The name appropriately means "top of the large hill"; the village is located above **Newbridge** on top of a steep hill. It could also refer to the fact that as a larger village than nearby **Pen-twyn** (near **Trinant**); the word "mawr" can also mean "greater" or "major" as in *Llantwit Major* / *Llanilltud Fawr* in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Pen-y-bryn (*pen+y+bryn*)

(phonetic: *pen-uh-bryn*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 135 961

Located between **Ystrad Mynach** and **Gelligaer**, the name means "top of the hill", another literal example of the geographical location of a settlement giving it its name.

Pen-y-fan (*pen+y+ban*)

(phonetic: *pen-uh-van*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 195 005

A common name across Wales, meaning literally "the summit" - "ban" being a Welsh word for peak or summit of a hill or mountain - the Brecon Beacons in Welsh are Bannau Brycheiniog for example. In Caerphilly county borough it is the location of a few scattered houses, between the villages of **Pentrapeod**, **Croespenmaen** and **Man-moel**, an industrial estate and Pen-y-fan Pond, a small leisure facility that is one of the last remaining canal feeder reservoirs in Wales.

Pen-yr-heol (*pen+yr+heol*)

(phonetic: *pen-err-hay-all*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 145 885

Literally meaning "the end of the road", the name derives from the location of the settlement at the top end of the road coming up from **Pwll-y-pant** in the valley below through **Energlyn**.

Phillipstown / Treffilip (*tref + the name Philip*)

(phonetic: *trev-phillip*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 148 031

Named after Nehemiah Phillips (1845-1929), a major stakeholder in the Powell Duffryn Steam Coal Company Ltd and a colliery manager, county councillor and an active Baptist preacher. The Welsh name is one of only a few examples in the county borough where an original English-only name has been translated, in this case to the extent of having accommodated the name Phillip into Welsh. This happens frequently from Welsh-to-English in place names, but is rarely seen in reverse.

Pontllan-fraith (*originally pont+llyn+fraith*)

(phonetic: *pont-ll-anne-vra-eeth*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 183 956

The name shows how two similar words can become interchanged over time as "llan" meaning church or enclosure has replaced the original "llyn" meaning lake in this place name. The original meaning was "a bridge of the speckled lake", possibly referring to stones that were visible above the waters of the river Sirhowy. "Fraith" (from braith) is the feminine form of "brith") and means speckled or mottled as in the village name **Brithdir**.

Pontlottyn / Pontlotyn (*originally from pont+llydan*)

(phonetic: *pont-lott-inn*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 114 057

Situated near the village of **Rhymney**, the settlement name was recorded as *Pont Lydan* in 1754, which means "wide bridge". The alternative explanation is that it comes from *pont-y-tlotyn* which means "poor man's bridge" though there is no definite explanation as to the origin of this name and it was not recorded as such on any maps. The pronunciation of the name has evolved over the years until now the village name is written down as it is said, rather than as it was originally named.

Pontymister / Pont-y-meistr (*pont+y+meistr or pont+y+mystwyr*)

(phonetic: *pont-uh-may-stir*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 240 900

The settlement gets its name from the local bridge, recorded in 1624 as *Pont y Maister* and as *Maister Bridge* the following year. The name itself dates back even further as the farm in the area was recorded as *Maestyr* in 1600, *Maes Tire* in 1668 and as *Maister* c1700. A possible meaning is "the (iron) master's bridge", but another origin of the name goes back to a time when the former grange of Llantarnam Abbey was located there, near a water mill. This name even pre-dates the farm as records show the mill name *Mayster Kynfawr* from 1204 (*Kynfawr* is possibly the Welsh personal name Cynfor), *Mayst* (an abbreviated form of *Mayster*) in 1254 and *master myll* in 1581. The Welsh word "mystwyr" comes from the Latin "monasterium" and could be a reference to the Abbey.

Pont-y-waun (*pont+y+gwaun*)

(phonetic: *pont-uh-wine*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 225 925

Between **Cwmcarn** and **Crosskeys** on the banks of the Ebbw river, the village gains its name from a stone tramway "pont" or bridge that crossed the river at this point from one "gwaun" or pasture to another. Shown as *Pant-a-wyn* on maps in 1850.

Princetown

OS Grid Reference - SO 112 099

The most northerly settlement of Caerphilly county borough, it has existed since at least 1880 where it was shown on maps of the local coal mining areas, often appearing on more than one area map due to its location such as the maps of Monmouthshire, Glamorganshire and Brecknockshire of the 1890s.

Pwll-y-pant (*pwll+y+gant*)

(phonetic: *pu-ll-uh-pant*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 155 885

The name means "pool near the hollow", recorded in 1738 as *Pwllypant* and *pwll y pant* in 1784. By 1833, the name *Pwll-y-pant* specifically referred to the crossroads and toll-gate and by 1852 was shown as *Pwllypant Gate*. The "pwll" or pool was probably a river-pool in the river Rhymney and the "gant" or hollow was the location of the crossroads where the **Caerphilly-Llanbradach** road dipped into the hollow and was crossed by the road that lead up to **Energlyn** and **Pen-yr-heol** from **Bedwas**.

Rhymney / Rhymni (*from the word "rhwmp"*)

(phonetic: *r-hum-knee*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 114 078

An industrial village that grew up around the Rhymney Ironworks - the Union Ironworks Co. in 1803, with the village and Ironworks taking their name from the river. The name was chosen as the parish name in 1843 and also gave its name to the former district council that served the area from 1974 to 1996. The name of the river appears in 1101 as *Remni* and goes through a number of changes over the years - *Rumeya* 1274, *Rompney* 1314, *Rempny* 1340. In 1479 the bridge was recorded as *pontem Remeebrygge* and as *Pont Remny / Remney Bridge* in 1536-39. The river rises from a point above a former farm called Blaenrhymni and flows through the valley, leaving Caerphilly county borough after **Machen** and eventually reaching the sea at *Rempney haven or creke* as it was shown in 1565, what is today known as *Rumney / Tredelerch* in Cardiff. Given the many spellings of the name that includes the letter "p", in all likelihood the name derives from an old Welsh word "rhwmp" meaning "auger" or "gimlet", thus meaning "a river which bores like an auger" to describe how the river has bored or carved its way through the valley.

Risca / Rhisga (*originally from either yr+is+cae or from the word "rhisgl"*)

(phonetic: *r-hisk-car*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 245 905

There are two conflicting explanations for this place name, which dates back to at least 1146 (sourced from '*Cartae et alia Munimenta de Glamorgan*', G.T.Clark 1910). One derivation is from "yr is cae" meaning "the lower enclosure", referring to its location at the lower end of upland areas. The other suggested meaning is that the name comes from "rhisgl" meaning "tree bark", which may have been used in leathermaking and refers to the use of bark on the outside of log-built houses; there is no evidence of such structures ever being in the area however. Shown variously as *Risca* 1330, *Ryscha* 1535, *Riskey* 1559, *Risgaf* 1566, *Riseley* 1577, *Risga* 1623, *Rishka* 1695 and *Rhisga* in 1778.

Rudry / Rhydri (possibly from "rhydd", or "rhudd"/"rhwd" or from yr+yw+tref)

(phonetic: *r-hudd-ree*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 195 865

Another place name that has many conflicting explanations and many spellings over the years. It appears as *Rutheri* in 1254, *Rudri* and *Rudry* in 1307, *Rothered* in 1314, *Reddery* in 1476, *Rudre* in 1550, *y Rydri* c1566, *Riddrie* in 1583, *Ruddrisse parish* in 1670, *Ruddry* in 1707 *Mynidd Ruddry* in 1747 and *Ruddry* again in 1833. One suggestion is that it comes from the Welsh word "rhydd" meaning free, here referring to the river Rhymney flowing through the area. Another possible meaning is "rhudd" meaning red (as is "rhuddem" meaning red gem - a ruby) or "rhwd" meaning rust, possibly referring to the colour of sediment in the river and surrounding land. In a book published in 1833 by Samuel Lewis called "*A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*", the name was shown as *Ruddry / Yr-Yw-Dre* and the explanation given was that it meant "the farmsteads in the yew trees" as "yw" is the plural form of "ywen", the yew tree. It was also noted by Samuel Lewis that there was a mineral spring located in the area "*which is said to be highly efficacious in curing diseases of the eye and is much resorted to for that purpose.*"

Ruperra / Rhiw'r-perrai (rhiw+y+perrai)

(phonetic: *r-hew-uhr-pear-aye*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 225 865

The site of one of the county borough's castles, the name means "slope of the pear tree". Though "gellyg" is the more usual translation of "pears", in South East Wales "perrai" was often used instead, deriving from Old English "peyrige" or "pirige" meaning pear tree. Recorded as *rriw r perre* in 1550, *Rhiw r perrai* in 1560, *Rrywrperrey* in 1572, *Ruperrey* in 1578, *Rewperrie* in 1596, *Rhyw r Perre* early in the 17th century, *Rewperrey* 1626, *Rhiw-r-Perrey* 1650, *Rhyu=perry Castle* 1695, *Ruperra* 1717, *Ruperra Demesne* 1795 and *Rhiwperra* in 1833.

Senghenydd (originally from the name Sangan + the suffix "ydd")

(phonetic: *seng-hen-ith*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 115 905

A settlement in the Aber Valley, the place name comes, in all likelihood from "land or territory associated with Sangan" and the suffix "ydd" is often used following a personal name in Welsh to indicate that the land belongs to this person e.g. *Meirionydd* or *Eifionydd*. The name refers to the "cantref" or hundred that stretched from *Whitchurch* to *Merthyr Tydfil*. A hundred was an area of land supposedly containing one hundred commots, or settlements. One of the newer Welsh medium schools in the county borough is named Ysgol Bro Sannan. The name appears in many different forms over the centuries, including *Seinhenit* c1179, *Seighenith* c1194, *Seynghenyth* 1271, *Senghenyth* 1314, *Seynthenneth* 1476, *Seighenith Suptus et Supra Cayach* 1578-84. It is possibly the spelling of *Seint Genith* in 1326 that has led to many believing that the name comes from Saint Cenydd and the local church and comprehensive school have taken this name, as has the nearby 20th century settlement of **Trecenydd**. **Senghenydd** is well known in terms of coal-mining history as the location of two tragic mining disasters. On Friday, 24th May 1901, 78 men lost their lives in the Universal Mine, the first coal mine in the Aber Valley, which had only been in operation for 18 months. The disaster occurred at 5.30am as the night shift were leaving the pit and the three explosions were heard 3.5 miles away, with gas and huge rockfalls at the bottom of the shaft preventing rescuers from reaching the trapped men. Twelve years later, on 14th October 1913, there was another far worse disaster when over 400 men were trapped underground by an explosion and fire just after 8am, just 2 hours into the morning shift. The explosion was so loud that it was heard in *Cardiff*, which is 11 miles away.

Springfield / Maes-y-ffynnon (*maes+y+ffynnon*)

(phonetic: *mice-uh-fun-onn*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 185 955

The place name is literal in both languages as a spring is located in the area. It is also a very popular place name as there are at least 50 places in the UK called Springfield, with variations such as Springfields or farms, hotels and houses of that name also in existence, not to mention its fame as the US home of a famous cartoon family. The name appears from the Orkney Islands to Devon, and **Springfield** near **Pontllan-fraith** is one of only 3 examples in Wales, a settlement in Monmouthshire, one in Flintshire and this one.

The Bryn / Y Bryn (*y+bryn*)

(phonetic: *uh-bryn*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 165 955

The name means "the hill" due to the location of the settlement near **Pontllan-fraith**.

The Rock / Y Graig (*y+craig*)

(phonetic: *uh-grah-eej*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 178 987

Described in 1901 as "a hamlet 1 mile north of **Blackwood**", maps from 1886 show that on the road from **Blackwood** to **Argoed**, the area originally simply called **Rock** included a *Rock Foundry*, *Rock Cottage*, *Rock House* and the Calvinistic Methodist *Rock Chapel* in the area. Oddly the *Rock and Foundry* Public House was not in the immediate area, being further away in **Woodfieldside**, this is due to it being the place where workers from the Rock Foundry stopped on their way home. In 1901, aside from the collieries and foundry, the only commercial premises listed for the area were a grocer, a wheelwright, a blacksmith and The Rock Inn, which is still there today.

Tirphil (*possibly tir + the name Philip*)

(phonetic: *tea-rr-phil*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 135 035

Because the name means "Phillip's land", the settlement is often thought to be named after Nehemiah Phillips, of the Powell Duffryn Steam Coal Company Ltd, as was nearby **Phillipstown**. The settlement was actually recorded as *Tir Phil* in 1841 however, four years before Nehemiah Phillips was born and so could possibly refer to an earlier family member. Also shown as *Tyr Phil* on a map of Glamorganshire printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode of London in 1885.

Tir-y-berth (*tir+y+perth*)

(phonetic: *tea-rr-uh-bear-th*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 155 965

The word "perth" means bush or hedge and refers back to a time when the area was sparsely populated and uncultivated. The name means "land of the bushes or hedges".

Trecenydd (*supposedly tref+the saint's name Cenydd*)

(phonetic: *treh-kenn-ith*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 145 875

This post-war housing estate settlement takes its name from the church dedicated to Saint Cenydd. The local church and comprehensive school have also taken the saint's name, however the name **Senghenydd** derives from the personal name *Sangan* and the suffix "-ydd" in Welsh. It is possible that the spelling of **Senghenydd** as *Seint Genith* in 1326 has led to many believing that the name comes from a person called Saint Cenydd.

Tredomen (*tre+tomen*)

(phonetic: *tread-ohm-enn*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 135 945

The word "tre" can mean town or farm/homestead and here it is the latter meaning as farms called *tredomanvach* and *Tredoman Vaur* were recorded in 1783. The name had become *Tre-tommen* by 1813. The word "tomen" has many meanings depending on the context. One meaning is a "mound" and it is possible that it is a reference to a "mound of rocks", namely the Tredomen Rocks that can be seen from the A472 **Ystrad Mynach** to **Nelson** road. The name therefore probably means "farm near the mound of rocks".

Treowen (*tre+owen*)

(phonetic: *treh-oww-enn*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 205 980

Meaning "homestead of the Owen family", the settlement is named after an old Monmouthshire family and shares its name with a village in Monmouthshire County Borough, where Treowen Hall is located near *Monmouth*.

Trethomas / Tretomos (*tref+the name Thomas*)

(phonetic: *treh-tom-moss*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 185 890

A village that developed after the opening of the Bedwas Navigation Colliery just before World War I on the land of the local colliery owner, Sir William James Thomas (1867-1945) and later Baron Ynyshtir, who was a native of **Caerphilly** and benefactor to the Royal Infirmary in *Cardiff*.

Trinant (*tri+nant*)

(phonetic: *tree-nant*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 205 999

The village developed around the Trenant Colliery (in operation from 1832 until it was abandoned in 1897). There was also a *Tre-nant Hall* and woods, the latter shown as *Coed Tri-nant* in 1886. The name appears to derive from the fact that there are three streams in the area, "tri" is Welsh for "three" and a stream or brook is a "nant". (See also **Glan-y-nant** for another use of "nant" in a place name).

Troedrhiw'r-fuwch (troed+rhiw+buwch)

(phonetic: *troy-drew-uhr-view-ch*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 135 045

Meaning "the foot of the slope of cows", this is a small settlement directly north of **Tirphil**, named after the farm in the area. The combination of "troed" and "rhiw" can be found in many place names throughout Wales, such as Troedrhiwgwair near *Tredegar* and the hill Moel-troed-y-rhiw in *Maesteg*.

Tŷ Sign (originally from tir+y+sygn or sugn)

(phonetic: *tea-sign*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 247 907

A curious example of what appears to be very literally a bilingual name with the first word in Welsh and the second in English. Recorded as *The Signe* in 1654, *Kaye nessa yr Signe* (field next to the sign) in 1685, *Tyr y Signe* 1760 and the current spelling appears in 1832 as *Ty-Sign*. The name may come from "tir" and an old Welsh word "sygn" (originally the Latin *signum* and then Old English *segn* or Old French *signe*) meaning a sign of the Zodiac or possibly it comes from the Welsh word "sugn", which means "suction" as there may have been very marshy or boggy land in the area.

Waterloo / Tŷ'n-y-coed-cae (tŷ+yn+y+coed+cae)

(phonetic: *teen-uh-coy-d-kah-ee*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 195 881

Waterloo is a small hamlet near **Bedwas** and **Machen**, on the opposite side of the River Rhymney. Gelli Wastad Farm was originally the only dwelling in the immediate area and the farmhouse remains in the village, on the main road. The English name has developed from the two streets in the village, named after the Waterloo Forge and Tin Plate works which, amongst other items, made equipment for the aviation industry as there was an aircraft works at nearby **Machen**. The tinplate works closed in 1943.

The Welsh name comes from another local farm and means "the house in the wooded field". In a cottage at that farm, Dr William Price (1800-1893) was born, recognised as one of the most significant figures in 19th century Wales and was regarded as eccentric, radical and colourful in his beliefs and behaviour.

He was a physician, having studied in London and returning to Wales as a general practitioner, a Chartist and a supporter of Welsh nationalism. His views on marriage, religion, cremation, vegetarianism and the wearing of clothes were very controversial in Victorian Britain.

Wattsville

OS Grid Reference - ST 205 915

Built in the 1880s to house miners working at the United Collieries, **Risca**, the village takes its name from E.H. Watts, Chairman of Watts, Ward and Company.

Wern-ddu (gwern+du)

(phonetic: *where-n-thee*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 170 862

An area on the southern outskirts of **Caerphilly**, "gwern" means marsh or alders (alder trees grow well near rivers or in the stagnant water of marshland) and "du" is the Welsh word for black; the name for the area derives from Gwern-ddu Woods, the forested area that covers the mountain over the railway tunnel from **Caerphilly** to Cardiff.

West End

OS Grid Reference - ST 216 947

A settlement that developed around tin works in the area, it is located in the west end of **Abercarn**, hence the name.

Woodfieldside / Maes-y-coed (*maes+y+coed*)

(phonetic: *mice-uh-koyd*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 182 971

Here is an example of an area where the name in both English and Welsh follows the pattern of deriving a name from a description of the area. The English refers to the side of the hill being covered in fields of trees, the Welsh version is very slightly different, literally meaning "field of trees".

Wyllie

(phonetic: *why-lee*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 179 940

Built around 1928/1929 to house miners after the Wyllie Colliery was developed, the village takes its name from Lt Co Alexander Keith Wyllie (1853-1926), who was one of the company directors of the Tredegar Iron and Steel Company.

Ynys-ddu (*ynys+du*)

(phonetic: *uh-niss-thee*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 179 920

Developed as a small model settlement in the 1820s by J.H. Moggridge and best known as the birthplace and home of the poet Islwyn (the Reverend William Thomas (1832-1878), a Calvinistic Methodist minister). As with **Hafodyrynys**, though "ynys" usually refers to an island in the sea, it can also refer to an area of land between two rivers or a meadow near a river. Literally meaning "black river meadow", the name derives from the fact that the area was surrounded by coal mines and slag heaps and that the river often would run black with coal dust.

Ystrad Mynach (*ystrad+mynach or possibly ystrad+min+ach*)

(phonetic: *us-trahd mun-ah-ch*)

OS Grid Reference - ST 144 940

There are many Welsh words for a valley, depending on the nature and shape of the valley being discussed. "Ystrad" is a wide, flat-bottomed valley and "mynach" is the Welsh word for "monk". The reason for the name is not actually known, though this may be the now-unused name of a river that flowed into the Rhymney as currently there is no evidence of a monastery existing in the area. One possible derivation is that rather than "mynach", the name comes from "min" and "ach" - "min" meaning edge or border and "ach" being an old word for a fen or bog therefore the name here would mean "valley at the edge of the fen".

One charming folktale about the place name relating to monks does exist however (and relates to **Llanbradach** also). According to the story, a monk was forced to flee from Caerphilly Castle after it became known that he was having an "unsavoury" relationship with the young daughter of the French family in residence at the Castle at the time. He was captured, sentenced to death and hung from a tree in the area, so it became known as Monk's Valley or in Welsh - **Ystrad Mynach**.

The Lost Village of Caerphilly County Borough

Across Britain there are more than 3,000 "lost" villages, removed from the land by natural disaster, or forced into abandonment because of man-made development. The most famous in Wales must be Capel Celyn in the Tryweryn valley, flooded to provide water for *Liverpool* and *the Wirral*. But there are some lost places closer to home...

Pant-y-waun (*pant+y+gwaun*)

(phonetic: *pant-uh-wine*)

OS Grid Reference - SO 088 076

A former village between **Fochriw** and *Dowlais* in *Merthyr Tydfil*, roughly situated halfway between *Dowlais* and Rhaslas Pond. It was a small settlement of about 50 houses, 3 pubs, 3 churches, a school and a community hall. The village completely disappeared when Taylor Woodrow extended their opencast site in the mid-1960s. At one point only one building remained, the Royal Arms public house which gave its name to the coal site.

References used to compile this information

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<i>Hywel Wyn Owen</i>	<u>The Place Names of Wales</u> University Of Wales Press (1998)
<i>Gareth Pierce</i>	<u>Cyfes Broydd Cymru: Gwent</u> Gwasg Carreg Gwalch (1997)
<i>Graham Osborne and Graham Hobbs</i>	<u>The Place Names of Eastern Gwent</u> Old Bakehouse Publications (1998)
<i>Graham Osborne and Graham Hobbs</i>	<u>The Place Names of Western Gwent</u> Old Bakehouse Publications (2002)

In addition to the above, as noted in many entries in the list, a number of old reference maps, photos and historical articles have been used to determine the evolution of these place names.

The list was originally begun in 1998 and has been the subject of an article in Caerphilly County Borough Council's newspaper "Newline" to which over 60 members of the public responded with comments and information, specific discussions in certain areas over the usage and spelling of place names (such as Nelson, Phillipstown, Pontlottyn, Blackwood and Oakdale) and the list has been sent at various times to the Welsh Language Board, the University of Bangor and locally to experts such as Richard Morgan and Graham Osborne (one of the authors noted above, who visited the council to discuss the issues).

Since 1998, the list has grown from a simple alphabetical register for use by the Council's translators, highways and planning staff, into a far more detailed resource that can be used by anyone who wishes to find out more about the history of the towns and villages in the local area.

It has been used as the basis for presentations to local groups such as the Menter Iaith's annual meeting and for Merched y Wawr, as part of the ongoing consultation to expand and develop the list.

The list will be published and placed on the Council's intranet and website as an accessible resource for all and produced in booklet form for schools and groups or individuals who are interested in place names or the history of the area.