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Canol Môn - Disgrifiad Cryno

Yr ardal hon yw craidd amaethyddol yr ynys, y rhan a enillodd iddi enw “Môn Mam Cymru”. Er ei bod yn dirwedd isel, gymedrol, y mae tuedd dde-orllewinol - gogledd-ddwyreiniol ei

ffawtiau daearegol yn dylanwadu ar y tirlun, gydag ychydig fryniau a brigiadau carreg. Yn ychwanegol, ceir sawl ffen ac ardaloedd helaeth o raeanfryniau, yn enwedig yn y gogledd a'r gorllewin. Heblaw am y cloddiau, ac ambell i wig a phrysgoed lle bo cysgod, mae'r dirwedd yn eang yn agored ac yn nannedd y gwynt. Dyma dirwedd llawr gwlad leiaf goediog Cymru.

Mae perfedd yr ynys yn llawn safleoedd archeolegol, yn ogystal â hanesion a thraddodiadau. Mae cryn dipyn o'r dirwedd ganoloesol wedi goroesi, ar lun eglwysi anghysbell ac enwau lleoedd: ond ôl y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg sydd amlycaf, fel lôn bost Thomas Telford o Lundain i Gaergybi, y rheilffordd o Gaer i Gaergybi, a'r ffermdai buarthog, sylweddol a adeiladwyd gan yr ystadau. Mae llawer o'r cyfadelidau hyn yn dadfeilio, bellach.

Er yn gyffredinol wledig, mae tref sirol Llangefni wedi ehangu yn ystod yr 20fed ganrif, gyda thai ac ystadau diwydiannol newydd, sydd i'w gweld o'r cefn gwlad o amgylch. Ni fu'r cefn gwlad yn destun cymaint o'r dwristiaeth a'r gweithgareddau hamdden sy'n effeithio ar yr arfordir cyfagos, ond adeiladwyd dwy gronfa fawr, ac yn fwy diweddar mae ffordd ddeuol hollol newydd wedi'i hagor ar draws yr ardal.

Summary description

The area forms the agricultural core of the island, the part that earned it the name of 'Môn mam Cymru', 'Anglesey mother of Wales'. Although it's a gentle lowland landscape, the south-west to north-east geological trend of fault lines influence changes in topography, with a few hills and rock outcrops. In addition there are a number of fens and extensive areas of drumlins, especially in the north and west. But for the hedgerows, 'cloddiau' hedge banks and occasional sheltered copses and areas of scrub, the area has an open, rolling and windswept character. It is the least wooded lowland landscape in Wales.

The interior is rich in archaeology, as well as in tales and traditions. Strong elements of the Medieval landscape survive, in the form of remote churches and place-names, though the clearest imprint on the area's landscape occurred in the 19th century, with the construction of Thomas Telford's London to Holyhead post road, the Chester to Holyhead railway and the substantial estate-sponsored courtyard farm settlements, many of which are now falling into disrepair.

Although generally rural, the county town of Llangefni has expanded with new housing and industrial estates during the C20th, which are visible from surrounding countryside. The rural area has not been subject to the level of tourism and recreation activities that affect the adjacent coastal area. However two large reservoirs have been built, and more recently a completely new dual carriageway route has opened across the area.

Key Characteristics
The land-locked central part of Anglesey - part of the largest island in Wales (720km ²). Rock outcrops and a distinct geological grain - the gentle topography, low lying and near flat in places, follows a north-east to south-west 'grain' imposed by major faults. Contrasting rock types include Ordovician sandstones and shale, bands of volcanic tuffs and Carboniferous Limestone. In various places there are many craggy rock outcrops.
Extensive drumlin fields - thick layers of glacial boulder clays, especially in north-west Anglesey, result in a classic 'basket of eggs' rolling drumlin landscape.
Lowland pastures and mixed field patterns - silty and peat soils underlie lowland pastoral grazing land bounded by a strongly geometric pattern of medium to large scale and, more occasionally, small scale fields.

Minor rivers and fens - A number of minor rivers and streams cross the landscape, whose alignment is influenced by the north east to south west trend. There are many shallow hollows and fens with wetland features including rush pasture and valley mires, for example Cors Erddreiniog NNR.
Hedgerows and cloddiau - This is generally a rolling, open landscape with a well established pattern of field boundaries, predominantly of hedgerows but with cloddiau in some areas.
Few woodlands - Woodlands larger than a small copse are an exception, being notably around Llangefni Dingle and Llyn Cefni reservoir, together with estate woodlands at Presaddfed (Bodedern). Except in sheltered areas, individual trees are few.
Generally rural settlement patterns - The only urban settlement is the county town of Llangefni, in the centre of the island. It's nucleated historic core contrasts with modern peripheral housing and expanding light industrial and business park developments. There are only a few villages, but numerous scattered hamlets and farms throughout the area. Linear, ribbon villages concentrate along Telford's the A5 road across the island.
Prehistoric and funerary sites - ritual and funerary monuments including cairns and round barrows, Iron Age hill forts and Early Christian churches, burial grounds and inscribed stones.
Historic windmill towers - including some restored examples, form local features.
Modern wind farms - generally limited to an area north of Llandeusan, but are seen in longer distance views from a much wider area.
Llyn Alaw – a large reservoir, nearly 3 miles long and a notable visual feature, providing significant over wintering habitat for wildfowl. Llyn Cefni is a smaller example of the same.

Visual and Sensory Profile

The landscape is one of large skies, which often reinforce the exposed nature of the island as clouds scurry across. Yet without many views of the sea itself, much of Central Anglesey does not feel like an island.

On clear days there are uninterrupted views of the mainland against the dramatic backdrop of Eryri and the Rivals, however, when viewed from the nearby mountains of Eryri, central Anglesey can appear flat. In fact it has a gentle, rolling topography, occasionally broken by a few rocky outcrops and low ridges (associated with the north east to south west geological trend and the drumlin fields) and a number of flat fens. Each of these types has its own distinctive land cover and, apart from the fens, a well established field boundary pattern.

This is one of the least wooded lowland landscapes in Wales. Though there are few trees, the hedgerows and various small copses and areas of scrub act to counter the exposure and provide much shelter from the prevailing south westerly winds. In the north of the area a classic drumlin or 'basket of eggs' landscape prevails as well as number of early generation wind farm developments. There are a few solitary windmill towers, some of which have been restored or converted, which form local landmark features.

Though nowhere is remote, the largest and wettest fens do have a sense of wildness within them. More typically the area is seen as enclosed farmland, rural in character, tranquil in feel, with scattered farms throughout. The area has a few nucleated villages (e.g. Llanerchymedd) and linear villages (e.g. Gaerwen), the latter type characteristic along the A5 road. The main places of noise or movement and night lighting are the A5 and the more recent A55 Expressway, the expanding urban settlement of Llangefni with its visually conspicuous new industrial estates and, more intermittently, the nearby Mona airfield. Jet aircraft from nearby RAF Valley (on the Anglesey Coast) also cross this area, as do main

line trains to Holyhead. Though there are two quarries near Gwalchmai, these are not widely visible.



Looking across the island from nearby higher land at Mynydd Bodafon, over the open, rolling farmed landscape, to Llyn Alaw and Mynydd y Garn. Though there are many hedgerows, parts of the island, as here, have few trees or woodlands beyond localised areas. © John Briggs



A rural landscape, characteristic with gentle rolling drumlins and open fields, with wetter fen areas between, and a backdrop of higher hills, as here at Llanerchymedd. © John Briggs



The 'lumpy' outlines of Mynydd Bodafon, in the adjacent Anglesey Coast character area, as seen across Llyn Alaw reservoir, the largest fresh water body on the island. © John Briggs



North Anglesey – the pattern of Medieval or earlier farm buildings and field boundaries in this predominantly open and still rural landscape are punctuated by more recent features: modern housing, pylons, wind farms, and the nearby Wylfa Power Station. © John Briggs



The distant outlines of the mountains of Snowdonia, from Mynydd y Garn. © John Briggs



The A55 road crosses the area, here seen running over the low hill ridge SE of Malltraeth marsh, near Gaerwen. © John Briggs



The distinctive SW-NE geological trend results in a number of gentle ridges where the bedrock occasionally exposes in rocky knolls, adding localised interest and change to the patterns of habitats, field boundaries, farming and building. © John Briggs

Geological Landscape influences

The area has a gently undulating, lowland character and much of the area is less than 50m above sea level, with the highest points located along the ridge between Carmel and Llanerchymedd (around 100m).

The underlying geology is formed from an ancient and complex structure of contrasting rock types ranging in age from Precambrian to Carboniferous. There are Ordovician sandstones and shales, bands of volcanic tuffs and Carboniferous Limestones at Llangefni. With the exception of isolated rock outcrops, this structure has been largely masked and levelled by thick layers of glacial boulder clays deposited by melting ice sheets at the end of the last Ice Age, and occasional peats. This has created a gently undulating and in places near flat land form, which superficially has little variation except for the north east to south west 'grain' imposed by major faults, such as the Berw Fault, and variations in rock types. The drainage pattern is also controlled by the underlying geology with the rivers tending to flow to the north east or south west, for example, the Cefni, Gwna, Nodwydd and Goch Rivers.

Landscape Habitats influences

Central Anglesey is dominated by low-lying, rolling farmland, much of it agriculturally improved livestock grassland on silty soils and bounded by hedgerows. These, and the limited numbers of small woodland copses, and areas of less agriculturally improved grassland, provide ecological interest. Larger woodlands are untypical and are limited to those in Llangefni Dingle, the plantations around the Llyn Cefni reservoir, and a few estate woodlands, for example around Presaddfed (Bodedern) and Plas Llanddyfnan (Talwrn). There are a number of fens where peat is the dominant soil and it is here that the ecologically valuable habitats occur. Cors Erddreiniog and Cors Bodeilio NNR (also SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site) are particularly important examples, along with and the Cors Bodwrog SSSI. All of these areas support a large diversity of species including rare flora and insects such as calcareous fen with great fen sedge, black bog rush, bog myrtle, southern damselfly, wintering hen harriers and marsh gentian. The low-lying, flat landscape has been conducive to the formation of a number of water bodies. Llyn Alaw (reservoir) SSSI is the largest and most ecologically notable for its

wintering wildfowl. Other notable water bodies include Llyn Cefni (reservoir), Llyn Llywenan SSSI and Llyn Padrig SSSI.

Historic Landscape influences

Central Anglesey is rich in ancient sites – prehistoric ritual and funerary monuments such as the round cairns at Bedd Branwen, and round barrows such as Cors y Bol, and the Early Christian inscribed stones at Bodfeddan. Later settlement in the few more elevated parts within the area is represented by Iron Age hillforts such as y Werthyr and Dinas Cadnant. This central part of the island is also noted for its Early Christian churches and burial grounds, and for the inscribed stones often found associated with these sites (e.g. Arfryn near Bodedern and Capel Eithin near Gaerwen). This early pattern of human habitation was expanded in the Medieval and later periods, with permanent settlements in areas of seasonal pasture as extensions to established coastal settlements.

The post-Conquest reorganisation of Welsh society was followed by the dissolution of hamlets and their absorption into landed estates, which continued into the 17th century. Many Medieval settlements are now marked only in the names of succeeding mansions and large farmsteads with a plas element in their name. The development of the sea route to Ireland from Holyhead from the early 19th century had further significant landscape effects, with the construction of Thomas Telford's London to Holyhead post road (latterly the A5), which straddles the area. This provided a strong axis for settlement across the island with a string of linear roadside villages – Pentre Berw, Gwalchmai, Bryngwran and Caergeiliog. Another such axis lies along the inland road from Menai Bridge to Amlwch, in the ribbon villages of Rhosybol, Llynfaes and Penmynydd, and in the town of Llangefni and the village of Llanerchymedd, once famous for its horse fair. The central route corridor was further developed with the completion of the Chester to Holyhead railway line in 1850 and the A55 Expressway in the early 21st century.

South west of Telford's road, a pattern of small lanes connects scattered settlements, which vary from substantial gentry farms to small-holdings. Hidden amongst them are earlier farms and houses, and some important estate centres. The density of settlement is less in the north of the island. Vernacular building traditions are dominated by stone, mostly lime-washed or rendered, but with local variations.

Cultural Landscape influences

This landscape, of small villages, the expanding county town of Llangefni and scattered farms, remains a core area of Welsh speech and tradition. Among its associations are the death of Branwen on the banks of the River Alaw after the murderous fighting between the men of the Island of the Mighty and the men of Ireland in the Mabinogion tales, and with the Theodore, or Tudor, dynasty of Penmynydd, descendants of Ednyfed Fychan, who was a steward at the household of the Prince of Gwynedd c. 1215-1246. His great-great grandson Maredudd ap Tudur was father of Owain Tudur and hence great-grandfather of Henry VII. Edmund Spenser's epic poem *The Faerie Queene* traces Elizabeth I's pedigree back to Anglesey. One of Anglesey's most renowned 18th century figures, the scholar, poet, man of letters and surveyor, Lewis Morris (1701-65), was born and raised within the area at Llangfihangel Tre'r Beirdd.

More modern cultural stories are the changes of the 19th century, with the work of the engineers Thomas Telford and Robert Stephenson on the island. The inland settlement of Llangefni, which grew up in the 19th century, demonstrates the island's Victorian prosperity. Llangefni quickly became a great centre of dissenting preaching through its association with John Elias for the Methodists and Christmas Evans for the Baptists.



The industrial outskirts of Llangefni, in the centre of the island. © John Briggs



From Penmynydd looking towards the distant Parys Mountain. © John Briggs



One of the larger fens, this is Cors Nant Isaf, seen from nearby Mynydd Bodafon © John Briggs