



Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

Cofnod Henebion Cenedlaethol Cymru - National Monuments Record of Wales

PLAS CRUG, ABERYSTWYTH, CEREDIGION, SY23 1NJ.

Ffôn / Telephone: +44 (0)1970 621200

Ffacs/Fax+44(0)1970 621246

www.rcahmmw.gov.uk

National Assembly for Wales
Petitions Committee
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff, CF99 1NA

Eich Cyfeirnod / Your Reference:

Ein Cyfeirnod / Our Reference: RCCG1-5-3

Dyddiad / Date: 30 June 2014

Dear Chairman,

RE: Petition P-04-632 Mynyddoedd Pawb

I am very grateful for the opportunity to comment on this petition and I congratulate Mynyddoedd Pawb for having brought to public attention a matter of great importance. I believe that this is a matter of fundamental historical principle which is relevant to the whole of the United Kingdom, but of course it applies directly when there is a danger of a 'new' name being created by incomers or visitors from outside a local culture in ignorance or in defiance of an existing name in the historical language, as is now happening in Wales. There are very few parts of the Welsh landscape that do not have a Welsh name, known to local people and used over many centuries, even if these names have not been recorded officially, and those names are either geographic indicators or have historical significance. I have in mind an example that I pass every time I travel from Cardiff to Aberystwyth, where there is a farm which has been known for centuries by the geographically-descriptive name 'Gwarallt', meaning 'brow of the hill'. I have observed a riding business set up and putting its 'trade name', 'The Bitless Bridle Riding Centre' next to the farm name. Over the years the farm nameplate has slipped until it has now been taken away – and a traditional and meaningful name has disappeared from sight. We now know that there is a real danger that newly created names, particularly for geographic features in the most attractive parts of the countryside, are being accepted by the Ordnance Survey and therefore are supplanting the traditional names with official support.

The Royal Commission would support all the measures that are mapped out in the petition, and in particular the simple and no-cost solution of bringing traditional and long-standing place names under planning control; that is to say, that all planning applications should use the traditional names and permission should not be given to a change of name in which a new coinage replaces an existing name.



This is consistent with the position that the Royal Commission adopts in all its record keeping; more than that, we are partners in a very successful and well-supported project called Cynefin: Mapping Wales' Sense of Place in which volunteers are helping us to add traditional names to a series of modern and historic maps. It would be a tragedy if the use of these names was limited to an archive – traditional Welsh names are usually descriptive of the topography, and as the petition makes clear, are often the catalyst by which non-Welsh speakers begin to acquire a knowledge of the language, through their growing familiarity with the place-name elements they encounter on road signs and maps.

I think that the requests that are being made by this petition are important and reasonable and do not depend upon large sums of new money being made available. They are also entirely consistent with the Welsh Government's National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Eurwyn Wiliam MA., PhD., FSA
Chairman, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales