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Arfordir Môn - disgrifiad cryno

Mae'r ardal yn cynnwys holl lannau môr Ynys Môn, gan gynnwys Ynys Gybi gerllaw. Mae cyfeiriad gogledd-ddwyreiniol i dde-orllewinol ffawtiau daearegol, a'r amryw fathau o greigiau, yn dylanwadu ar lun a ffurf y glannau. Er bod llawer o Fôn yn dir isel, ceir bryniau uwch yn hanner gogleddol y glannau: a'r uchaf yw Mynydd y Twr, sydd â'i lethrau grugog, agored yn disgyn yn syth i'r môr. Mae'r gwynt fynychaf o'r de-orllewin, a glannau'r gongl honno yn llawer mwy agored i'r tywydd, gyda phyllau a thwyni tywod yn ymestyn i mewn i'r tir. Mae llawer o'r hyn fu'n aber Cefni wedi'i adennill o'r môr, ond cynhwysir y tir gwastad, isel hwnnw o fewn yr ardal neilltuol hon.

Er yn dir amaeth, gan fwyaf, mae yn yr ardal weundiroedd glan môr, twyni, a phrysgoed eithin. Gyda dwy blanhigfa goed fwyaf yr ynys, mae'r tiroedd hyn o gymorth i nodweddu hunaniaeth yr ardal, rhagor gweddill yr ynys. Mae'r Lasinwen, culfor llanwol, troellog, yn gwahanu Môn rhag Ynys Gybi. Yn y gogledd, crëwyd tirwedd drawiadol Mynydd Parys pan ganfuwyd mwyn copr o safon isel yn union o dan wyneb y tir yn y 18fed ganrif.

Ar Ynys Gybi ceir tref a phorthladd mwyaf Môn, Caergybi. Dyma gyrchfan teithwyr ffordd a rheilffordd i Ddulyn. Cyrhaeddir Môn o dir mawr Cymru ar draws y ddwy bont drawiadol ym Mhorthaethwy a Llanfair Pwllgwyngyll, sy'n croesi Afon Menai yn ei man culaf.

Y tir hwn, hefyd, yn fras, yw Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol Arfordir Môn, a sawl hyd o Arfordir Treftadaeth. Dynodir yr Ynys yn Barc Daearegol. Mae Castell Biwmares, yn y dwyrain, yn Safle Treftadaeth y Byd, gan ddarparu (ynghyd â phentrefi eraill fel Rhosneigr a Threarddur) canolbwynt a delwedd ar gyfer twristiaeth gyfoes wedi'i seilio ar adloniant glan môr a threftadaeth.

Summary Description

The area encompasses all of the coastal areas of the Isle of Anglesey, including the adjacent Holy Island. The north-east to south-west trending geological faults and varying rock types influence the shape and geometry of the coast. Although much of Anglesey is low lying, the higher hills lie in the northern half of the coastal area, culminating in Holyhead Mountain, whose exposed heathery slopes plunge directly into the sea. The prevailing winds also create a distinctly more exposed south-westerly coast, where well developed dune systems and lagoons run inland. Much of the former estuary of the Afon Cefni has been reclaimed but the resulting coastal levels remain within this character area.

Though mainly farmed, the area contains numerous coastal heaths, dunes, and areas of gorse scrub. Together with the island's two largest woodland plantations, these areas help to distinguish the character from that further inland. A meandering inter-tidal strait separates mainland Anglesey from Holy Island. In the north, the spectacular landscape at Parys Mountain was called into being by the discovery of low-grade copper ore just below the surface of the mountain in the 18th century.

Holy Island includes the largest port and town of Holyhead. The port is the destination for main road and rail travellers heading to Dublin. Arrival on Anglesey from mainland Wales is across either of two spectacular bridges at Menai Bridge, which cross the estuary-like Menai Strait around the narrowest point.

The area coincides with Anglesey Coast AONB, along with a number of stretches of Heritage Coast. The island is designated as a Geopark. Beaumaris Castle in the east is a World Heritage Site, which together with other settlements such as Rhosneigr and Trearddur Bay, provide a focus and image for today's coastal recreation and heritage based tourism.

Key Characteristics

The coastal zone - of by far the largest island in Wales (720 km²), containing the largest outcrop of Precambrian rocks in southern Britain, but with areas of other rock types too.

Much of the highest land - on the island falls within the coastal area, including Parys Mountain (147m) and Holyhead Mountain (220m).

Strong geological orientation - There is a south west to north east geological

orientation, resulting in corrugated topography, which is manifest along the coastline in places as rocky headlands and sandy bays. Igneous rock intrusions and outcrops of quartzite have created the dramatic landforms and skyline of Holyhead Mountain and South Stack, at Holy Island.
Great variety of coastal types - The coastline has great variety, from sheer coastal cliffs and dramatic rocky headlands, to small sandy coves and extensive low lying dunes and sandy estuaries. A legacy of coastal quarrying that has long since ceased, remains apparent in places, for example at Penmon.
Wind exposure but some shelter - The striking and windswept heathland landscapes of the wild coastline at Holyhead Mountain and North and South Stack, together with the barren, mined landscape of Parys Mountain, contrast markedly with the gentler, green, pastoral landscapes inland, away from the immediate coastal edge.
Pasture - Soils include deep loams supporting predominantly pastoral land cover with occasional hay meadows, away from the coastline.
Heather and heath - a feature of the thin soils in the more elevated areas such as Holyhead Mountain, Mynydd Bodafon and the coastline near Amlwch.
Cloddau – or earth bank field boundaries feature in the north and west with occasional stone walls, whereas hedges are more common in the south and east.
Reclaimed marsh - The large sandy Malltraeth estuary includes significant reclaimed areas and the straightened tidal river channel of the Afon Cefni, with wetland elements including rush pasture and marsh.
Lagoons - There are a series of distinctive freshwater lagoons on the coast facing Caernarfon Bay, sandwiched between rising inland landscapes and the very well developed coastal dune systems.
Prehistoric and funerary sites – including standing stones, chambered tombs, barrows and cairns, distinctive Iron Age hill and promontory forts, the largest and most prominent being Bwrdd Arthur, on the Penmon peninsula.
Coastal Settlements – often relating to former industry, such as the mining town of Amlwch at the foot of Parys Mountain, or to strategic transport routes, such as Thomas Telford's A5 and the port town of Holyhead (the only large settlement in the area) on Holy Island. Much C20th coastal development relates to tourism and retirement property.
A number of prominent man-made landmarks – including Beaumaris Castle (World heritage Site), the two bridges that cross the Menai Strait and connect with the mainland, Parys Mountain (distinctive industrial quarry landscape), Wylfa Nuclear Power Station, and the Aluminium works on Holy Island, with it's tall, widely visible chimney.

Visual and Sensory profile

The area's strongest identity comes from the varying expression of the relationship of the sea to the land, through cliffs, beaches, estuaries and coastal levels and dunes, lagoons and ports. Much of the area away from the sheltered Menai Strait is subject to strong wind exposure. The prevailing winds batter a largely treeless south westerly facing coast, giving it a remoter, elemental quality, where any settlement and woodland has to work against this adversity. Yet Anglesey only reveals its island disposition in a few places where the sea is visible in more than one direction, such as at Penmon, Carmel Head or Holy Island. Inland, the flatter and undulating topography of the interior appears to stretch away for a great distance, backed in places by low hills near the north east, north west and western coastlines. At close quarters, some of these hills have distinctly mountain-like qualities, with rocky, sharp profiles, thin soils and heath land cover. On Mynydd Parys, the long abandoned copper mine workings have created a highly distinctive, enclosed, orange-purple, lunar-like landscape, which is in striking contrast to its surroundings.

Views to the distant mountains of Eryri create a dramatic south eastern backdrop to much of Anglesey. Closer to, these mountains become more impressive and engaging, and

when viewed across a foreground setting of the Menai Strait around Beaumaris, they engender a sense of scale and drama more commonly associated with the sea lochs of the west of Scotland. At the other end of the Strait, the extent of the dunes, beaches and Caernarfon Bay provide a spectacular setting for views of the Llŷn peninsula, which from Ynys Llanddwyn, offer one of the most enduring and distinctive broad-scale vistas in Wales.

More generally, the landscape is gentle, farmed and fairly tranquil, but with a number of contrasting large-scale developments, most notably the Wylfa Nuclear Power Station, the RAF Valley air base and the Anglesey Aluminium smelting works and chimney, the radio transmission masts at Llanddona, and historically the Mynydd Parys copper mines and Amlwch. The settlements of Benllech, Rhosneigr and Trearddur Bay and their associated holiday developments, the busy town and port of Holyhead, and the commuter settlements of Llanfairpwll, Menai Bridge and Llandegfan that overlook the Menai Strait, are centres of activity in this otherwise peaceful and in parts, remote landscape, the best features of which can be enjoyed in abundance along the Anglesey Coast Path.



From one of the many coastal heather heaths, looking to Holyhead Mountain. © John Briggs



Porth Padrig, on the north coast. (Wylfa Power Station seen in the distance). © John Briggs



The Caernarfon Bay coast, headlands, settlement and mix of heath and fields, seen from Holyhead Mountain. © John Briggs



The sylvan, settled landscape by the Menai Strait, and Telford's Bridge. © John Briggs



The Malltraeth Estuary and Newborough Forest backed by the mountains of Llyn. © John Briggs



From the rocky hills near Porth Wen (Llanbadrig) looking to Mynydd y Garn and the distant Holyhead Mountain. The village in the middle distance is Cemaes. © John Briggs



The interior of Mynydd Parys, a strange ex-industrial landscape of exposed brightly coloured rock, tips and ponds. © John Briggs

Geological Landscape influences

At 720 km² in area, Anglesey is Wales's largest island and its coastal geology can not be considered in isolation from that of the interior. It's rich geological coastal heritage now forms a Geopark, much of which is characterised by rocky cliffs, reflecting the erosion resistant bedrock geology. The island has the largest outcrop of Precambrian rocks in southern Britain, but also has areas of Cambrian, Ordovician, Silurian, Devonian and Carboniferous rocks. Though generally low-lying and undulating, the 'corrugated' topography follows the general north east to south west 'grain' imposed by major faults and variations in rock types. This is reflected in alignments of rivers and, not least, the Menai Strait. On the south west coast, the main valleys form shallow estuaries or marsh in places, with extensive sand dunes, some backed with lagoons. The main hills on the island are to the north east and north west on Holy Island. Although modest in height, many hills have distinctive, rocky landforms and thin soils, including Holyhead Mountain (220m), Parys Mountain (147m) and Mynydd Bodafon (168m).

Parys Mountain is the only area of Silurian rock found on Anglesey. Though relatively small, it has been of great importance for copper exploitation, leaving a landscape of pits, waste tips and settling ponds. Carboniferous Limestone, forming coastal cliffs around Penmon and Benllech, was exploited for building stone, leaving a legacy of disused coastal quarries.

Large areas are covered with boulder clay and the sands and gravels deposited by melt-water streams from the wasting ice sheet of the last glaciation. In the northern part of Anglesey, dozens of drumlins (ice-moulded landforms) give rise to a distinctive 'basket of eggs' topography. The characteristic ridge and basin topography has also been responsible for the formation of number of lakes and peat-filled hollows.

Landscape Habitats influences

Led by its geology, topography, and coastal context, the area forms an ecologically rich and varied series of habitats. The sheer coastal cliffs and dramatic rocky headlands along the northern coast and Holy Island Coast SSSI are notable for sea-bird colonies. They contrast with the low-lying dunes along the west coast at areas such as at Rhosneigr, Tywyn Aberffraw SSSI and Newborough Warren, a NNR supporting many rare and protected species. To the north west of Newborough Warren is Newborough Forest, the largest wooded area on Anglesey, formed by a coniferous plantation overlying the dune system.

Adjacent to Newborough Forest are expanses of coastal sand with Traeth Abermenai to the south and Malltraeth Sands to the north. The associated saltmarsh in the Cefni estuary extends inland to form Malltraeth Marshes along the flood-plain of the Cefni. Part of the Marshes also forms an RSPB reserve. The 'Inland Sea' that divides Holy Island from Central Anglesey, Beddmanarch Bay and Cwmyran Bay SSSI forms an extensive area of intertidal habitat of particular value for wading birds. The Menai Strait (SAC) forms a distinctive habitat, with its fast tidal currents running through the narrow channel (especially the Swellies SSSI) and extensive intertidal areas at each end, notably at Newborough Warren (SSSI, SAC, NNR).

A short distance inland from the coast around much of Anglesey are areas of less agriculturally improved land with coastal grassland and coastal heath habitats of particular note, together with areas of scrub. The thin soils on Holy Island support the largest and most ecologically valuable examples of these habitats. Penmon Point and Red Wharf Bay are notable for more calcareous habitat because of the underlying Carboniferous Limestone. Other notable ecological areas further inland are the coastal lagoons surrounding RAF Valley (Valley Lakes SSSI), and Parys Mountain (a cluster of SSSI sites), which has many unusual species owing to the metal rich substrate from the mines.

Historic Landscape influences

Parts of the Anglesey coastal area were settled in the Mesolithic period; radio-carbon dating has confirmed that a hunters' camp was established on what later became a coastal headland at Trwyn Du near Aberffraw, around 7000 BC, at a time when the climate was much warmer and sea-levels lower. These early settlers could take advantage of woodland environments and the chance to hunt game in the marshes. Some four thousand years later, the first Neolithic farming communities disposed of their dead in great communal burial chambers, of which the most famous is Barclodiad y Gawres at Llanfaelog, on the form of a 'passage grave' similar to the great tombs of the Boyne Valley in Ireland.

Other coastal locations also bear witness to the closeness of Anglesey to Ireland in later periods, such as Llangwyfan church, built on an island reached by a narrow causeway, which may have been dedicated to St Kevin of Glendalough in Co. Wicklow. Tywyn y Capel is dedicated to St Brigid of Kildare – in Welsh, San Ffraid. Holyhead evolved from a Roman naval base which guarded the area from raiders in the Irish Sea, and evolved in modern times into the principal British port for Dublin. A Viking presence has been

identified at several locations in the Red Wharf Bay area. Irish, Viking and Northern English influences are evident in the carving of the high crosses from the coastal monastery at Penmon.

This area of Anglesey differs little from the interior in terms of settlement type or vernacular character. There are some Medieval settlements on or near the coast - notably Beaumaris, Aberffraw, Llanfaes and Newborough and some of the smaller villages probably have early origins, such as Llanfaethlu and Llanfechell. The Anglo-Norman borough of Beaumaris preserves some fine Medieval and later buildings, most notably the castle (a World Heritage Site), but overall settlement character everywhere is 19th century and later. New settlements of the later periods are roadside villages (Penysarn, Llanfachraeth, Brynsiencyn), encroachment settlements (Porth Swtan, Pengorffwysfa), and from the beginning of the 20th century, resorts such as Benllech and Trearddur Bay. As well as these nucleated settlements around the coast, there is also a mesh of much smaller hamlets, scattered cottages and small farms. Traditional building styles are dominated by stone, mostly whitewashed or rendered, and a few thatched cottages survive.

The houses and parks of Anglesey's once-powerful landowners are mostly located in this coastal area – Carreglwyd, Bodorgan, Plas Newydd, Plas Coch, Baron Hill and Plas Llandegfan. The strip from Menai Bridge to Beaumaris is dominated by large 19th century houses built to exploit the view across the Menai Strait towards Arfon and Eryri beyond.

The spectacular growth of the Parys copper mines from the late 18th century brought about the development of the port and town of Amlwch. Holyhead developed as a major port as a consequence of growing economic and political union with Ireland, and the need to improve harbour facilities and overland transport such as Thomas Telford's post road (A5) and later, Robert Stephenson's Chester to Holyhead railway.

Cultural Landscape influences

The coastal strip of Anglesey and the adjoining Holy Island – the sea coast of Wales' largest island, is known in Welsh as Môn and in English as Anglesey, from the Norse Onguls-ey, the island of the Norseman Ongul, a name which reflects its position on the ancient sea-routes of northern Europe. The area has traditionally looked to the sea and guarded the approach to what was once the world's busiest port, at Liverpool.

At Holyhead, a coastal station was established by the Romans, which later became the site of a church. The town which eventually grew up around it became more important as it displaced Chester as the main port link to Ireland. Holyhead is one of the great 'gateway' ports not only of Wales but of Britain – it was the first sight of the country that was to be their new home for thousands of Irish people in the years of famine and emigration. Access to the sea continues to influence today's cultural character, with a focus on tourism and recreation.

The coastal settlement of Aberffraw evolved from a Roman fortlet into a royal site, associated perhaps with the royal church at Llangadwaladr, where Cadfan, famed as the most renowned king of Gwynedd, is reputedly buried. As the site of one of the princes' principal llysoedd, Aberffraw was hailed as one of the three tribal thrones of the Island of Britain in the Trioedd Ynys Prydein. It was the seat of Anarawd ap Rhodri Fawr; in the 12th century, the princes of Gwynedd began to use the title 'Prince of Aberffraw' to emphasise their connection to Rhodri.

The excavated llys complex at Newborough nearby, adjacent to the planted Edwardian borough, also articulates the loss of Gwynedd's independence and its incorporation into

the Anglo-Norman state. By the same token, the planted castle and town of Beaumaris demonstrate the resources that Edward I was prepared to lavish on his newly-conquered territory.

In the north, the spectacular landscape at Parys Mountain was called into being by the discovery of low-grade copper ore just below the surface of the mountain in the 18th century. The industrial communities of Amlwch and Porth Amlwch attracted miners from Cornwall, Derbyshire and elsewhere to work in the smelters by the harbour or in the mines on Parys Mountain. The 'sublime' aspect of the mines attracted travellers and landscape painters. Though copper-production largely ceased in the mid-19th century, Porth Amlwch remained a centre of wooden sailing shipping construction into the 20th century. For mariners sailing in and out of Liverpool, Point Lynas was a well-known landmark for years, and many ship-paintings show it in the background.

Cemaes, Benllech and Red Wharf Bay were developed for tourism from the late 19th century, and many of the coastal settlements have become the homes of retirees from England. These resorts together with Trearddur Bay and Rhosneigr in the west, sustain a vibrant tourist economy and the island's image as a popular tourist destination, related to coastal recreation, for which it is most widely known today.



The general spread of Holyhead town and port, seen from Holyhead Mountain. © John Briggs



'The Inland Sea': a Strait that separates Holy Island from the rest of Anglesey. © John Briggs.