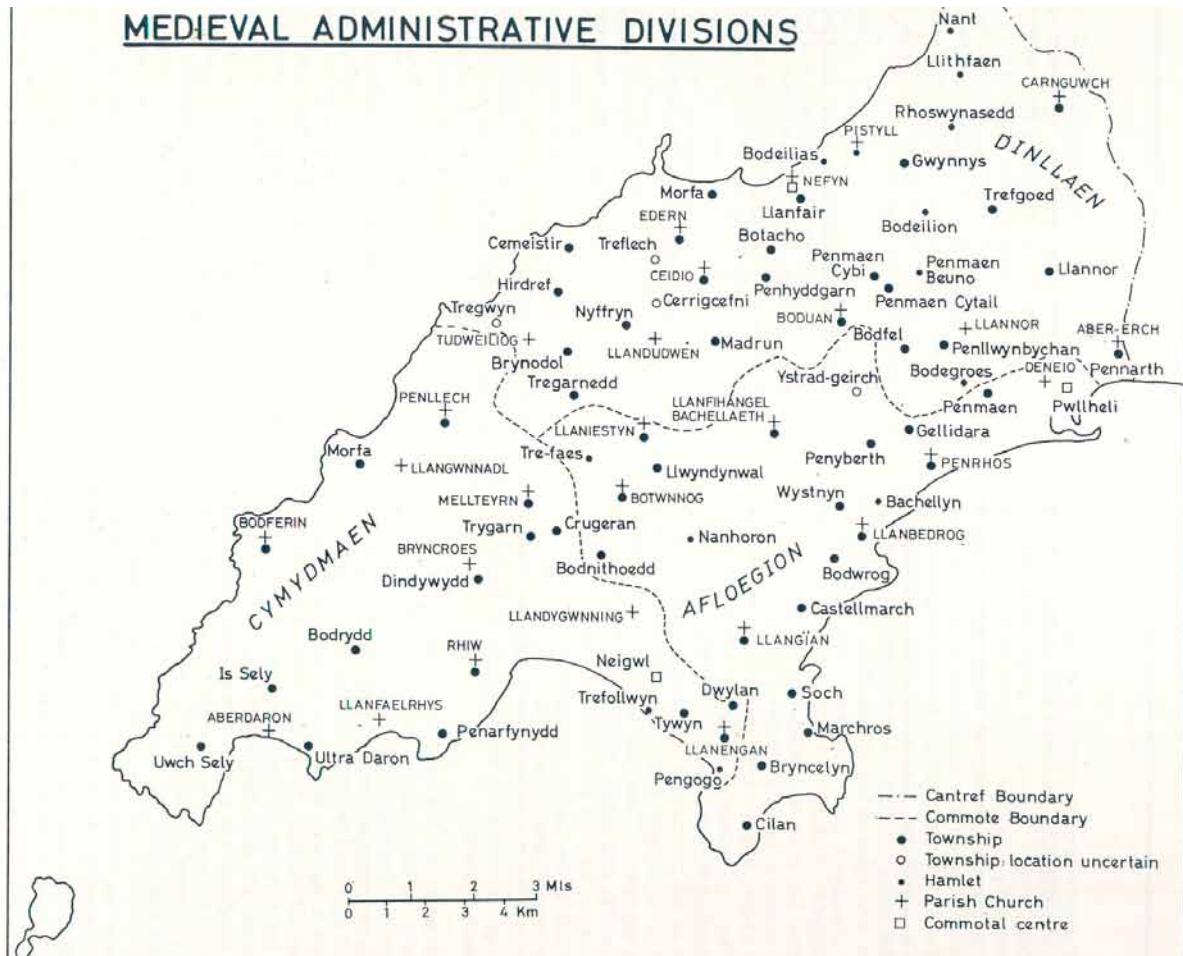




MEDIEVAL ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS



The Commotes of Llŷn - Medieval Administration

During the Middle Ages, Gwynedd was divided for administration purposes into four cantrefi ('hundreds') and Llŷn was one of them.

In the C12th / 13th during the reign of Gruffudd ap Cynan and Owain Gwynedd the cantref was divided into three commotes:

Cymydmaen commote had its administrative centre, the maerdref, at Neigwl on the flat land below Plas yn Rhiw. The prince would come to his court in the maerdref at times, where rents and tolls would be paid in money or by doing work – transporting or repairing. This commote is named after the yellow rock of Llŷn, *Maen Melyn Llŷn* (rock + yellow + Llŷn) which is on the sea

cliff in Uwchmynydd (SH139252) *cwmwd* (commote) + *maen*. It's at the far end of the peninsula and includes the parishes of Penllech, Llangwnnadr, Bryncroes, Llandygwning, Llanengan, Rhiw, Llanfaelrhys and Aberdaron.

Another one was **Dinllaen**, and that's where the name Porthdinllaen comes from. The name in the early C13th was 'Dy nthlayn', namely a fort (caer) + 'Llaen' (an Irish personal name) which referred to the coastal fort on Porthdinllaen headland (SH 275416).

The name Porthdinllaen suggests this was the main harbour for the commote, but the maerdref for the commote and the prince's court were in Nefyn. Dinllaen includes the parishes of Pistyll, Nefyn, Edern, Ceidio, Tudweiliog, Llaniestyn, Llandudwen, Boduan and Llannor.



In Deneio, Pwllheli these days, there was the maerdref of Cafflogion **Afloegion** (Cafflogion) and names like Henllys and Gadlys suggest a link (llys = court). The commote was on the eastern side of Llŷn and included the parishes of Carnguwch, Deneio, Llanfihangel Bachllaeth, Penrhos, Botwnnog, Mellteyrn, Llanbedrog and Llangian. This commote was established by Afloeg, who was one of the sons of Cunedda from the Hen Ogledd (Old North) and the father of Eternus, patron saint of Edern.

There were a hundred *tref* units (individual farms) in a *cantref* (hundred) and names like Hendrefor and Llawr y Dref were used. The Welsh nobleman lived in his own tref at one end of the estate, the *pentref*, which has given us the name Cefn Pentref, and Pentref in Botwnnog.

A holding of land which had been inherited was called a *gafael* and that gives us the name Gyfelan in Llangwennadl.

Although Wales was under the English crown's control following the conquest by Edward I, the Welsh administrative system continued for some time. But Llŷn came to be administered as part of Caernarfonshire and soon Nefyn and Pwllheli came into existence.



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