

## The Philog

“History on our doorstep and archaeology written in the landscape.”

If you have ever wondered about the origin and meaning of the name ‘Philog’? Here are some alternative views, researched and written in the hope of finding out, once and for all, exactly what is/was the original meaning of the word/name. To do this it was essential to investigate a deeper local history and also the word itself in as many of its ‘forms’ and derivatives as could be found, a lot of it from way, way back in time. The current and popular thinking has it associated with ‘a wing’ or ‘a filly’, so whether or not this gets us any closer to the truth, in the absence of all other evidence, you can decide for yourself.

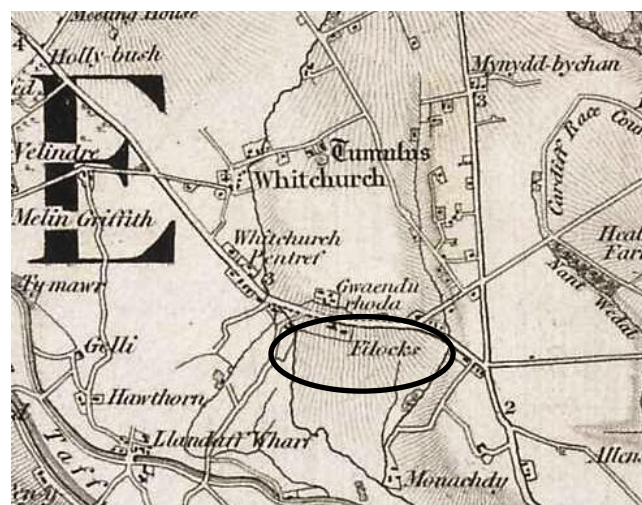
It has to be said right from the start that, in writing this, the logic and thought processes were constantly challenged and regularly readjusted, as you would no doubt hope and expect. In many cases we are not helped by the written records.

The 1840 map of the area (ref below) shows the name ‘Filock’ or is it ‘Filocks’? it’s a little confusing since the name is either close to a building / dwelling, shown in black, or, the black part that might represent a building is a smudged ‘s’ at the end of the name Filock giving us Filocks, perhaps referring to a larger area rather than a fixed location.



1840 map

Just to clear things up a little, the 1833 map below does show it as *Filocks*, not just that but



Ref: A Vision of  
Britain Through  
Time

<https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps>

it’s shown as an area of land south of the main road running across ‘Whitchurch Common’ to Whitchurch village (y Pentref) and it seems to be a named place in exactly the same way as

other parts and places are around and about on the map, in other words, it is not a particular spot on a map, but a wider 'area'. Unfortunately the map doesn't inspire too much confidence when you notice that the 'tumulus' (Treoda Castle) is not shown in the correct location.

In the tithe map of the period, this land shown as 'Filock' was arable and pasture land, owned by Robert Shiddon Esq. and it was occupied by William Vatchell.

The real issue though is trying to establish an explanation or a 'meaning' for the name or word 'Philog' (as we know it today) and so far it hasn't been done. British History Online tells us that it was... "[Ffilog]. A brook and a hamlet in the chapelry of Whitchurch, near Gwaun-tre-Oda (1811.) The name is applied particularly to an old thatched house on the north side of the highroad to Whitchurch, where a lane branches off eastwards to the Heath" and this source and description has often been quoted by many people. Another reference gives us this sketch:

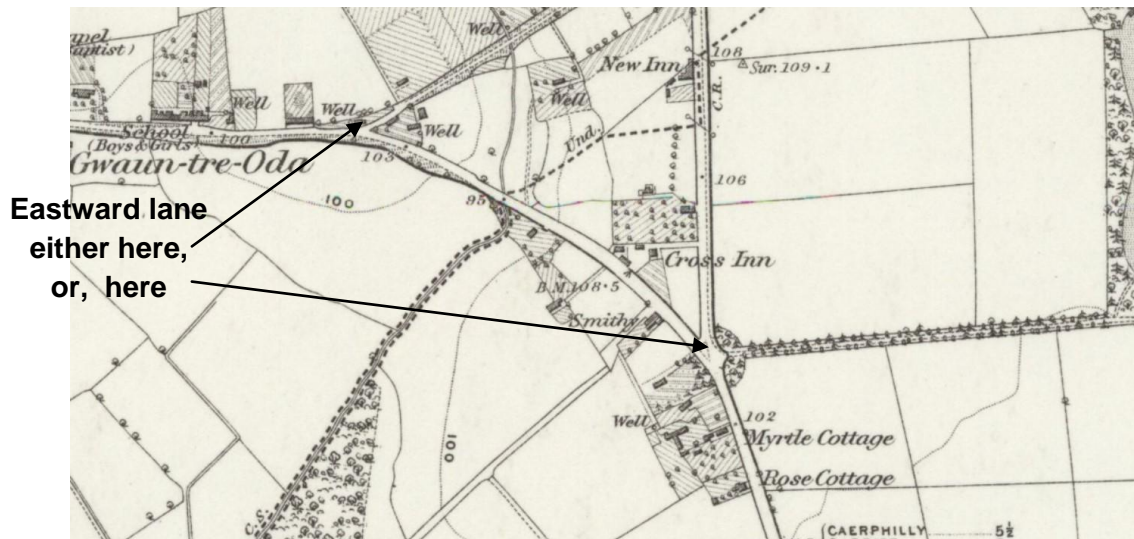


Old Cottage at Philog

Ref: British History Online

So this then tells us that in 1811 it was considered to be a place (a hamlet), you'll notice that this sketch tells us that the 'Old Cottage' was 'at Philog' and we also know that in some references it has given its name to a thatched house. Some believe that house to be near, or close to where The Three Horse Shoes pub is now, 'the lane that branches eastwards to the Heath' being the old track leading off from the Cross Inn towards the old racecourse an area now developed with housing but on the line of what is now Heath Park Lane. Alternatively, others believe that 'eastward lane' is the Birchgrove Road that leads on to Heathwood Road. (Ref. map, next page).

But, it still doesn't give us a meaning for 'Philog', only a location, or a reference to a dwelling having the name, where did that dwelling get the name from? ... and let's be fair, The Philog, as we now know it, covers a fairly large area.



1875 map - The National Library of Scotland

There is another photograph that exists (below), this one identified as being on Merthyr Road and generally believed to be just behind The Three Horse Shoes pub, whether, or not, it is the same dwelling as the previous sketch is difficult to determine, but it gives us a better idea of the type of dwelling and if it is the same, all well and good.



Unfortunately for us the whole thing is confused even more by the spelling of 'Philog'. This complicates things a lot. Back in the day the early maps were compiled, in the main, by educated English speaking cartographers who, most likely, didn't have much of a grasp of



Welsh, aided by local people who were almost all Welsh speaking having little grasp of English. Not only that but it's highly unlikely that local people had the literacy skills to be capable of reading and writing anyhow and so the recording of factual place names relied on anglicised phonetic interpretation depending entirely on the accurate listening skills of the person recording the information and the precise pronunciation of the speaker, worse still if the name, or word, had been handed down, by word of mouth, over a number of generations. It is local people after all that would be the most familiar with local landmarks, the naming of them and the way in which they are identified, although it's accepted that the role of the local clergy, landowners and better educated people would have played a big part in this, particularly when it came down to more formal Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping. In word terms it would rest on the best fit and the closest sounding 'English' written form. The first OS map was published in 1801 however earlier maps were quite accurately drawn up and the OS tell us that: 'Various kinds of 'name books' were created and used by the staff of the Ordnance Survey to establish the names of places and features on maps, whether buildings or villages, hills or rivers, roads, railways or canals and numerous other 'objects' shown on maps, both natural and man-made. To decide on the spelling of names the surveyor would ask a local authority, such as a vicar or landowner, for their version and this would be recorded in the name books'.

Wales has a wonderful and inspiring heritage of place names with meaningful historic association. You don't have to travel too far out of Cardiff to come across history related Welsh place names e.g. Ty Mawr; Llandaff; Llanishen to name just a few locally. Unfortunately some of this 'history' has also been distorted and in some cases destroyed by illiteracy and anglicisation, people being unable to read and write and those recording place names being unable to comprehend the Welsh language.

In terms of the Philog / Filocks, or whatever spelling you choose, the Welsh '**f**' is pronounced as a '**v**' and there is no '**k**' in the Welsh alphabet (or an '**x**' for *that matter*). In Welsh '**ff**' (**Ff**) would sound as the English '**f**'. Also, a '**ph**' (as if to give an '**f**' sound) has no basis in Welsh and we all know how '**ll**' sounds. Who is to say however that the origin of the word, back in time, was in fact **Filog** rather than **Ffilog**? (Pronounced **Vi~log** rather than **Phil~og**). Taking this a stage further we can then perhaps derive some words that might come close to describing the intended Welsh place name and some of these have been well covered by Edgar Chappell in his book 'Old Whitchurch' and also well covered more recently by local people, many of whom were born and bred there (local etymology at its best). We also have to consider that it might even be a 'slang' term with no known dictionary reference. There has been some interesting message exchanges on social media, Facebook in particular, but let's not forget, it's the past we are pursuing here and not the present. The further we can go back in time the closer we get to the origin (the truth).

The choices are many, ranging from a place, as with **Ffilog**, identifying with a 'wing' (perhaps the shape of the local land boundary/shape), or a 'filly' (maybe identifying with a location perhaps for young horses / fillies). The *Ceffyl Dwr* (Water Horse) is a local folk story although many other places have the same *Ceffyl* (*horse, but, whatever you do on your way back from Whitchurch Village on a Saturday night, don't accept a ride home on the Ceffyl Dwr near Whitchurch brook.*

The best way around this is to first assess our options, so let's look at what wordings best associate themselves with the name / word '**Philog**'.

In Edgar Chappell's book he does some dated work for us and provides the following possibilities from local sources:

### Philog

Ffilocks	(1752, 1753)	Fylog	(1862)
Fillog	(1798, 1828)	Filog	(1865 – 1883)
Ffillog Brook	(1809)	Fullog	(1867)
Philog	(1822, 1885)	Fillawg	(1874)
Fillock	(1819, 1827, 1829, 1831)	Tulog	(1877)
Phillocks	(1835)	Ffulog	(1884)
The Phillock	(1858)	Philog Bridge	(1888)
Filocks	(1850)		

With further research (Ref: Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru) some additional findings can be added:

Fillock – 'Young mare or filly; a wanton young girl  
Or .. a wanton wench, slut, harlot [*sic*']

#### Earliest references

1547 *Filoc* Fylocke

1632 *Ffilog*, Est Eboles.

1604 -07 *Hyn a wnaeth y ffiloc yma*

Ffullio - ffullog -	'Busy, bustling'	Ref	1795
Filog -	'Having the nature of a beast'	Ref	1772

Used in context however, the word '**filog**' appears in many scripts and seems to translate as '**villain**' or '**vile**'. The notable connection here is that of the area being at the edge of the Great Heath (Mynydd Bychan) described as "*Until the 18th century, Heath was a large parcel of common land to the north of Cardiff, which was pitted with swamps, and covered by an extensive forest*" (ref: 'History of Cardiff Suburbs – Heath'), perhaps a fitting description of the land being considered as degraded, valueless, or, worthless [*vile*]. It's also worth noting here that the Great Heath was for a time noted for its reputation as a region for the unsuspecting traveller being relieved of their valuables by highway robbers, who were able to make their getaway across the heath lands. Here then perhaps another reference to the 'villainous' activities of the local rogues with none of them having the same romantic appeal as being Cardiff's own Dick Turpin.

Apart from the references provided by Chappell there are other similar spellings:

**Filwg** (bilwg) - Billhook

There is another word that comes close phonetically and that is the word 'Fflyg'. Not close in terms of spelling, but, in the spoken word it has some merit, after all it's likely that the spoken word and the English spelling of it is the main issue here:

**Fflyg** alternatively, means 'flush', perhaps associated with the cleansing action of water, a flowing stream perhaps.

Anyway, you get the idea, the wording, the spelling and the meanings can create all sorts of confusion and misdirection. Maelog Road is close by and while we are on the subject, Maelog was a 6th-century pre-congregational saint of Wales and a child of King Caw of Strathclyde. He was the patron Saint of Llanfaelog, where he built his church. **Llanfaelog** is a village and community in western Anglesey.

Quite what connection there might be to this location is a little 'woolly' to say the least, however, Birchgrove Road (previously known as Philog Rd) was part of an ancient trackway from the east, now the line of Heathwood Road, so whether he (Maelog) passed through the area as a missionary or pilgrim en route to Llandaff will require a lot more research and to make the connection with our Philog will be even more of a challenge, a case of all ifs, buts and maybe's. We'll come back to the 'Maelog' name a little later, but first let's continue with the theme:

The '**log**' part of the word in itself is not uncommon in Welsh terms but there is not much available to help us when it comes to 'Philog or Filog'. Even with the aid of an etymology dictionary there is not much to go by and even this has issues with its English origin.... one source giving us "...unshaped large piece of tree, early 14C., of unknown origin. Old Norse had '*lag*' ~ 'felled tree' (from stem of *liggja* "to lie", hence "a tree that lies prostrate"), but many etymologists deny on phonological grounds that this can be the root of English '*log*'.

In Welsh there are also many words that end with '**og**' such as **heulog** – *sunny*; **wintog** – *windy*; **corsiog** – *marshy* ...and so I suppose it is reasonable to believe that '*filog*' might have been used as an adjective to describe some kind of local condition or state of nature in the area.

It has to be said at this point that there seems to be no value in suggesting that the location was associated with a 'wanton young girl' (previously mentioned), or an interpretation along that line. Just to put things into context, the name would seem to have originated many centuries ago and even just 200 years ago the area was an entirely rural setting, sparsely populated and the region scattered with cottages and farm dwellings and nothing more. Something tells us that the religious conviction of local people especially the land owners would be enough to prevent the use of an undesirable link and how likely is it that a 'wanton girl' in a short episode of life would warrant the naming of a place for ever after anyhow? In 1840 the landowner for the land around what we now know as The Three Horse Shoes was The Marquis of Bute and the land on the east side of Caerphilly Road by the Rev William Price Lewis. Place names seem to be based on more substantial characteristics than that, in order to act as a point of reference in a location, for providing bearings and direction with places having features that define them from other parts.

A similar argument might equally apply to an association with a filly or a young mare. A filly is a horse under 4 years old, and a young mare a little older, just a brief passage of time for them, or the length of time such a farm existed for. How likely is it that one particular place in the whole of Wales would be assigned this name associated with a horse, or, horses (mares or fillies), it surely cannot be such a reputed location that it could be assigned such a unique name. You would surely expect there to be a few more Philogs around, since it's unlikely that it was the only place of its type. If it was then it must have been either a very special horse, or a highly recognized equestrian centre with such a deserving reputation that we would still know about it, or its fame and history would be recorded somewhere, but it isn't. It would be a surprise if either of these reasons were proven to be true. There are many reasons places acquire names, locally such as Treoda and Melingruffydd, these being just a few. Naturally, you'll have your own opinion on this.

Way back though, on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1840 there was an interesting horse race, locally, and it was reported in the Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette. The report was titled "Steeplechase and Dinner", on Monday March 16<sup>th</sup> and it went on to state: "*This morning our race course (commonly known as the Cardiff Great Heath) presented a most animated and very*

*interesting scene.....” it went on to describe what seems to be, locally, a very well anticipated but discrete arrangement, “It has been understood for some time that a steeplechase would come off (expressly got up by the members of the Park Hunt Club and may be said to be the first public one of the sort in this county) but it was not generally understood upon what day it would take place; however, this day, as it will appear, was at length fixed upon and although the notice was short, many were on the lookout...”. This, then, was the day. The report goes on to describe what seemed to be a festival or carnival atmosphere ‘a bustling spectacle of pedestrians, equestrians and those more fortunate to have their gigs and similar vehicles’. Even the start time wasn’t known but it was believed to be 3pm and “as the mass of spectators increased the anxiety became more and more intense”.*

Here you have to picture the scene, there was no A470 (Manor Way), the area was almost entirely farmed meadow, heath and moorland. What roads were around were tracks with a natural surface of mud and rocks, hard, rutted and dusty in the summer, wet and muddy in the winter and frozen solid in harsher times. The race started at Green Meadow in Tongwynlais running southwards (Whitchurch) through the local meadows and fields with the dividing hedgerows acting as natural fences with the finishing line at The Stand of the Heath race course. This was our local version of the Grand National.

At the anticipated hour “a general sprinkle of the elite of the neighbourhood accompanied by the officers of Her Majesty’s 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars and Royal Artillery” arrived together with “some influential gentlemen of the neighbouring towns”. Then at 3 15pm a carriage from Green Meadow drew up at The Stand (Heath) bringing Mrs and the Misses Lewis (of Green Meadow) with other vehicles bringing friends and visitors.

The course was 3 and half miles long and it was ‘lined with crimson flags spaced at equidistant, over heavy and rough land, well fenced, with a brook and here and there a ditch. The line crosses the main road leading from Cardiff to Caerphilly and it is intersected by several rough roads’.

So, it seems that this route came out of Tongwynlais through the local farmland and followed a line that is more or less now defined by the A470, it must have gone over Pantmawr Road (a track back then) then over Whitchurch Brook (Nant Waedlyd) and Ty’n y Parc Rd (track) and Birchgrove Rd/ Philog Rd until it crossed Caerphilly Road at The Philog end and then around The Cross Inn (The Aneurin Bevan now – Why do they change pub names? They are a landmark, always have been) on to the old racecourse and the eventual finish line.

The race started at 3 30pm from the front lawn at Green Meadow. The horses were:

Tartar; Sam Slick; Premier and Frolic

The owners and riders were also listed. (Place your bets, the result will follow shortly).

The report goes on to describe the race in some exciting detail, describing the leaders at different stages and refusals at fences before they recovered and caught up. The fences were the hedges of the established field boundaries. The runners made good time and were at the half way stage after 6 minutes. Apparently a local doctor had positioned himself discretely along the track in anticipation of an injured faller but he was left “astonished” and “motionless at the sight” as horses and riders expertly tackled the course without incident.

*“On they flew at tip top speed, cutting as it were the wind (which by-the-bye was full in their teeth), till the stand appeared the goal of their anxiety”.*

By now Frolic was falling away and it became a 3 horse race, *“The last trying fence which bounded the course, was no joke, with a ditch hedged with thick goss (~ our Beecher’s Brook no doubt) – Tartar was first over clearing his leap beautifully with Sam and Premier, who claim equal merit, close upon him. A general push was now made, **Tartar winning** by two or three lengths”.*

Pleasingly *“No accident, whatever occurred, and although the leaps in some instances appeared desperate, not one of the riders was thrown or a horse fell. The number of fences cleared exceeded thirty”.*

After the race a dinner was held at the Angel Hotel chaired by Henry Lewis Esq (Green Meadow, Tongwynlais).

Now here is the reason this is included at some length (apart from it being an exciting episode of our past), part of the report describes events as follows as they approached the southern edge of Whitchurch:.....*“When nearing Whitchurch, Tartar, Sam and Frolic bore off to the right of the flags, while Premier kept close on the line and stuck to his colours, clearing the brook in gallant style which the others avoided. They next made the **Fillog** lands, where the fences became much stronger....”*

This seems to indicate that the name was a particular characteristic or feature of the land. It does however become difficult to ignore the clear and obvious connection with horses. That said we cannot escape the fact that this area was on the edge of Whitchurch close to the Great Heath and also close to the racecourse lying within it. The area was however mostly heath and moorland (Gwaun in Welsh).

Not only that but the tithe map of 1840 shows Tir y Filog (The Philog Land), described as meadowland, owned by The Marquis of Bute with it being occupied by a John Price. This ‘apportionment was next to Tir y Hilog, described as ‘pasture’ and it had a stream or brook running through it (i.e. the Philog Brook), this was also owned by The Marquis of Bute and occupied by John Price and these ‘named apportionments were surrounded by pasture and arable land, all unnamed with other lands around under the farm name of ‘*Waun Troda*’ (Gwaun Treoda).

One of the landscape features that exists to this day is the drop in levels that forms the path of this natural water course. The brook is now ‘culverted’ so that it passes under the A470 trunk road and in this location there is a tell tale dip or ‘hollow’ in and around the area adjacent to the wine merchants that stands close by.



Tithe map (1840) showing Tir y Filog and Tir y Hilog locations

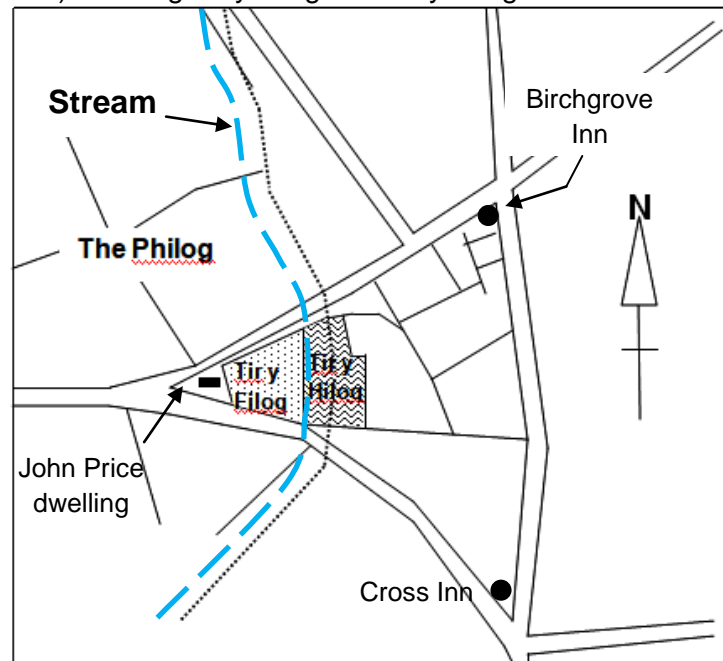


Ref: National Library of Scotland

This part of the tithe map of 1840 shows the road going left towards Whitchurch Common and the 'fork' in the road, diagonally upwards to the right to Heathwood Road and horizontally to the right towards the Cross Inn and on to Cardiff along the North Road. The Birchgrove pub is in the top right hand corner. At the 'fork' in the road is field number 328, a tithe apportionment which is described as having 'Houses and Gardens'; Land use – 'Arable'; Occupied by – 'John Price' and the Landowner as 'The Marquis of Bute'. Field number 329, next to it, is described as Field Name – 'Tir y Filog'; Land use; 'Meadow'; Occupied by – 'John Price' and the Landowner - 'The Marquis of Bute'. The Welsh word 'Tir' means 'land of'. Field number 330, next to it again, is described as Field Name – 'Tir y Hilog'; Land use; 'Pasture'; Occupied by – 'John Price' and the Landowner, again, 'The Marquis of Bute'. There is a 'brook' (stream) shown in blue, running through fields bordering 326 and 363; 331 and 332; and through 330 southwards, crossing the road to Cardiff as it does so. On the road towards the Birchgrove the brook is shown going under a small bridge, on the road to Cardiff the brook is shown flowing across the road, although this might simply be a map anomaly. However, because of the problems this brook caused it was eventually culverted in the 1960's/70's.

As an ancient brook/stream it is not difficult to imagine the issues travellers would have faced attempting to use the old turnpike route north to the Taff valley, whether on foot, horseback, trailer, or carriage, whether swamped by heavy rain, frozen or baked by the sun in summer. Let's not forget it was part of marshy heath land centuries ago.

Tithe map sketch (1840) showing Tir y Filog and Tir y Hilog locations



The brook (stream) shown is most likely the one described by British History On-line mentioned earlier. John Price was occupier of 'Houses and Gardens' at the west corner, again, owned by The Marquis of Bute. This however introduces another problem. For '*Hilog*' is it intended to be '*Halog*', '*Helog*', '*Hulog*' or '*Heulog*'? (There doesn't seem to be an interpretation for *Hilog*). However, having mentioned the stream/brook it shouldn't go unnoticed that the map of 1833 (pg.1) also shows another one that seems to rise on the 'Filocks' area, emerging, seemingly like a spring, within a field and runs into the other brook a little further south.

The Parish of Llandaff from the Ordnance Survey map of 1831 shows the area defining a boundary between Whitchurch and 'Gabalva' and this boundary runs along the 'Philog' Brook and although the boundary line is shown the brook is not named. An interesting feature of this map is the sparse scattering of dwellings and that there is no reference to Philog or Filog area and that Birchgrove Road (aka Philog Road, between the Birchgrove pub and the area we know as Philog) is not there either. We need to tread with caution here though, in so far that the map seems less 'surveyor accurate', with less attention to scale and so some details may be excluded purely for convenience. (Copyright for this map seems to lie with Alamy ref. <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-cardiff-west-llandaff-borough-town-plan-reform-act-wales-dawson-1832-93053842.html>)

At this point, apart from what we have already discussed as a possible definition for 'Filog', nothing could be found for 'Hilog'.

So, it seems that perhaps Filog and Hilog are mutations of one and other and this in itself is the origin of the name Philog, it being an anglicised form of Filog. The apportionment shown as Tir y Filog is now bisected by the A470 (Manor Way) and Tir y Hilog is now on the west side of Richs Road (Birchgrove). Having no direct definition leads us to investigate other nearest word form possibilities:

Tir y *Halog* ~ "land of the contaminated" (contaminated land)

Tir y *Helog* ~ "land of the hell"

*Tir y Hulog* ~ “land of the hulk”

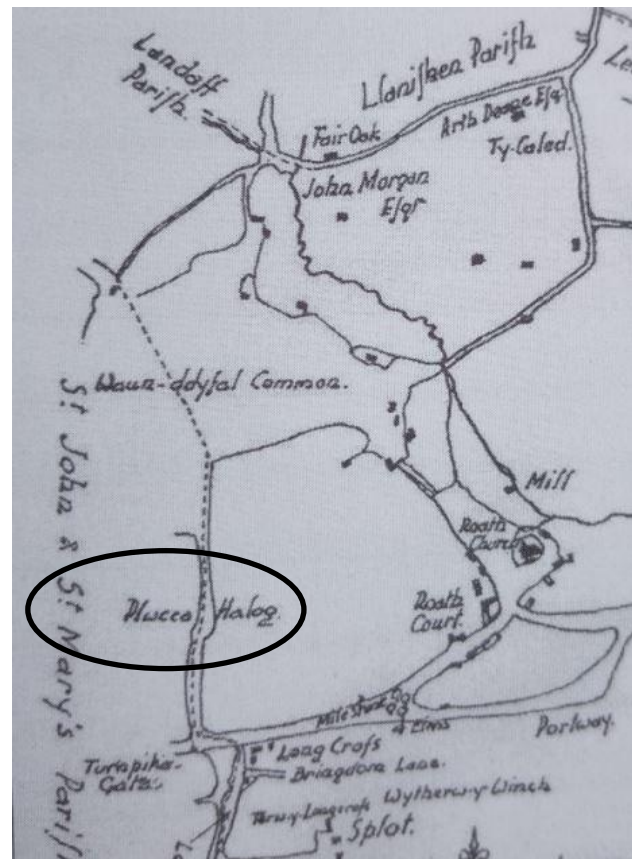
*Tir y Heulog* ~ “land of the sun”

However, it becomes difficult to ignore a passage in Edgar Chappell’s book *Album Monasterium*, in which he states that close to College Road, there was a reference (1605) to a lane called *Hewle Rywr Kirff* and to some adjacent land called *Plucke Halog* (Defiled Clay) “near the common land leading from *Llandaff to Treoda*”. Chappell goes on to say that ‘*Heol Rhiw’r Cyrff* (the road of the slope of the corpses), believed to be College Road, was the route followed by funerals from Whitchurch to the burial grounds at Llandaff’.

This again gives us a clear reference to ‘Halog’, with it being translated as ‘defiled’ (tainted; despoiled; degraded or even contaminated). There is reference to another *Plwca Halog* in Roath and this referred to a part of City Road (Cardiff), the Roath Local History Society state:

*‘The area we know today as City Road was once an insignificant strip of land created in medieval times when the ecclesiastical boundaries of Roath and Cardiff were drawn up by the Church. The area began as a narrow, uneven muddy dirt track, the western side of which lay in the small parish of Cardiff and the eastern side in the hamlet of Roath. The middle of the track was disowned by both parishes and consequently was severely neglected for hundreds of years, hence its name of *Plucca Lane*, (*Plucca* is Welsh for muddy). The alternative spelling of *‘Plwcca’* is also used sometimes.’*

Ref: Roath Local History Society



Notice again however the various ways in which the word ‘*plwca*’ has been spelt between the two references and clearly written in phonetic form. Other references interpret *Plwca Halog* as ‘a spreading road where cess pools abound’ and you probably won’t get a more imaginative definition for being ‘defiled or despoiled’ than that.

Another interesting feature of this is that it refers to a ‘neglected part’, between parishes (lacking in ownership) and refers to the nature of it.

As if to emphasise the point this letter was printed in the *Evening Express* on 27<sup>th</sup> Dec 1894 (Ref: National Library of Wales Newspaper Archives)



Sir,--Will you kindly allow me a small space in your widely circulated paper to call attention to the shameful condition of the main roads from Heath Gate to Ton-yr-wn Farm, and from Birch Grove Inn to Philog-terrace, Whitchurch? Who is responsible for their present condition, or what is the reason these roads are neglected in the way they are? Perhaps our worthy councillors will explain the matter, and why the Llandaff highway steam roller should be used at Green Hill and Llanishen, where there is not one-fiftieth of the traffic there is at Birch Grove and Caerphilly-road. We don't dare go out of doors after dark at night without being four inches deep in mud or clay.--I am, &c.,  
**RATEPAYER.**  
 Whitchurch.

Clearly the condition of the local environment was a cause of concern for residents in the area.

On this basis it made sense to investigate the meanings of *Hilog* or words of similar spelling in the same way that we looked at *Filog* earlier on page 4. In *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, the word *hilog* reverts to *hulog* for a meaning, there being no *Hilog*.

<i>Hilog</i> ~ <i>Hulog</i>	-	meaning 'Hillock' (mound or heap)
<i>Heulog</i>	-	referring to the sun (sunshine; sunny; cheerful)
<i>Halog</i>	-	dirty, soiled, defiled, unclean, profane, corrupt, contaminated

*Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, GPC, is described as 'the only standard historical dictionary of the Welsh language. It is broadly comparable in method and scope to the Oxford English Dictionary. It presents the vocabulary of the Welsh language from the earliest Old Welsh texts, through the abundant literature of the Medieval and Modern periods, to the huge expansion in vocabulary resulting from the wider use of Welsh in all aspects of life in the last century. Detailed attention is given to variant forms, collations and etymology.' Needless to say nothing could be found on the word 'Philog' there.

'The Cardiffian' (on-line) 'The History of Cardiff Suburbs' describe The Heath as follows: 'Until the 18th century, Heath was a large parcel of common land to the north of Cardiff, which was pitted with swamps, and covered by an extensive forest'.

So, due to the lack of direct translation and the manner in which words are corrupted, mutated and are further 'modified' by Anglification it might well be that the answer to the origin of the place we know as The Philog lies with it being once an area of 'defiled' land, perhaps recognised as having little, or, low farming value, difficult to cultivate maybe, or even a place where 'waste' accumulated, at the southern edge of our 'parish'. The origin of what that waste might have been and where it came from is left for you to ponder. In the distant past could it have been a site associated with an event that identified as being 'tarnished' in some way? It is after all close to and on the edge of the Great Heath an area in itself that was substantially 'rearranged' with the Enclosure Laws and the land grabbing that went on at that time and none more active in this than the Marquis of Bute (1797). At the time the *Ty unnos*\*\* counted for nothing. Parcels of these lands were sold off shortly afterwards to the benefit of the Marquis of Bute and Cardiff Corporation. The Enclosure Acts were a series of Parliamentary Acts, the majority of which were passed between 1750 and 1860, through the Acts, open fields and



'wastes' were closed to use by the peasantry. These 'Acts', however, didn't pass by peacefully by those who had made the Heath their home however under the ancient law of *Ty unnos*.

*They hang the man and flog the woman,*

*That steals the goose from off the common;*

*But let the greater villain loose,*

*That steals the common from the goose.'*

English folk poem

To rub salt in the wounds, under the terms of a Survey of the Manor of Roath Keynsham. 1702, the appointed jurors delivered as.... ' *having had in charge to that intent and purpose several articles, in answer to which they do on their oaths say and present in form following:—.....*

*And we also present that all tenants of this Manor at all times of the year have, and always have had, free common of pasture for all sorts of cattle on the heaths and mountains there, called Mynydd Buchan, Wain-Dyval, and Wain-Treoda.*

*And we further present that the Lord of this Manor or Lordship hath by the custom thereof all waifs, estrays, felons goods found within the said Lordship or Manor, and all other royalties incident or belonging to the same, according to the custom thereof.*

*And moreover we present that there is a Pinfold or Pound overt belonging to this Manor; and by the custom thereof the Lord, as often as need shall require, is and ought at his own proper cost to repair and amend the same.'*

The reference here to Mynydd Buchan (Mynydd Bychan) is the Great Heath, that of Wain Dyval (Waun Ddyfal – also known as 'the waste mead') is the Little Heath further south closer to Cardiff and of course Wain Treoda (Waun Treoda) being 'The Common' and the area north covering most of present day Whitchurch.

Finally, as if to conclude the reasoning within this script and to shed some light on conditions at that time, the research for this came across two newspaper articles the first of which was in The Cardiff Times of 13<sup>th</sup> Jan 1883 on The Rural Sanitary Authority held at Queen's Chambers in which a case came up regarding "a number of houses at the Fylog, Whitchurch, in which no overflow was provided for in the cesspools, the sewage matter flowing into the road. It was decided to call upon the owners to remedy this state of things, as the board did not hold itself liable to carry out the works". The report went on to identify 'several cottages which were in an uninhabitable state in the Parish of Whitchurch', an epidemic of measles having prevailed in the district. The second newspaper report was dated 18<sup>th</sup> July 1907 in the Evening express titled 'Dangerous Roadside Well' and described it as a "startling discovery was made by a roadman at Whitchurch the other day. The Glamorgan County surveyor Mr G. A. Phillips reported to the roads committee today that an old well, about 25ft deep and 10ft in diameter, had been discovered in the road waste near Philog, Whitchurch. It was covered with timber and about a foot of soil which partly gave way and led to its discovery." Instructions were given to have it filled in. So, if you ever thought that this tiny village north of Cardiff had always been a comfortable, sleepy little place, with no history, where nothing ever happens, think again.

Let's revisit the Maelog connection, (ref. p 5), it seems to have captured the imagination of the city council's street name dept since they created a Maelog Road just off The Common and a

Maelog Place just off Mynachdy Road. Maelog, as a name, has a strong and meaningful connection to the area, Llys tal y bont being just a short distance away.

(Ref: [The manors of Cardiff district: British History Online \(british-history.ac.uk\)](http://www.british-history.ac.uk) )  
[www.british-history.ac.uk/cardiff-records/vol2/pp8-41#h2-0007](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cardiff-records/vol2/pp8-41#h2-0007)  
<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cardiff-records/vol2/pp8-41>

*“Manor of Llystalybont. On the eastern bank of the Glamorganshire canal, where the canal approaches within about a hundred yards of the Taf, stands a rambling thatched farmhouse popularly known as Lislabont or Islabont (Llystalybont.) Although it looks so insignificant to-day, this is one of the most ancient residences in Glamorgan and possessed great importance in early times. The lands of this manor were scattered, and though the mansion lies a mile to the north of Cardiff, houses in the suburb outside the south gate of that town, called Soudrey, were reputed to be parcel of the manor of Llystalybont; and part of the manor lay in the parish of Llanishen. A Survey of 1653, after giving the bounds of the main portions, says that the manor lay in the several parishes of Llandaff, Whitchurch, St. John's in Cardiff, Roath, Llanishen and Lisvane. The mediæval manor of Llystalybont consisted of only half a knight's fee.*

- *Early in the 13th century, Sir Ralph Maelog was lord of Lystalybont in Kibbor.*
- *Sir William Maelog was lord of Llystalybont, Wysam and Maelog's Fee, temp. Hen. III. (1216–72). This knight is said, in Mr. Clark's Genealogies of Glamorgan, to have married a daughter of Rhys ap Griffith ap Ifor Bach, Lord of Senghenydd. His daughter married Sir Gwrgi le Grant.*
- *1314. William Maylok (Maelog) held half a fee as Lord of Lestilbount by Cardiff. (I.P.M. of Gilbert de Clare.)*
- *He seems to have been succeeded by Ralph Maelog, and the latter by William Maelog who was Lord of Llystalybont, temp. Edw. III.*

Also that:

- *Llystalybont. The prefix "llys" (court); the widely extended lands of this manor; its situation with regard to the ancient boundary of Cardiff burgh and Llandaff parish (the mansion stands within both); its including the very ancient Welsh monastery of Mynachdy; its being held in the 13th century by a native Welsh lord who married a descendant of Ifor Bach; the claim, made by the Maelogs in 1332, to a prescriptive right to have Mass celebrated in the mansion of Llystalybont, in consideration of a grant made to the See of Llandaff by their ancestors—all these circumstances seem to point to an original superiority in this manor, and even cause us to wonder whether Llystalybont may not have been the court and capital of the Princes of Glamorgan between the Roman period and the feudal.*

It's clear then that Llys tal y bont [*The Court at the Head of the Bridge*], sometimes written as Llystalybont, has an ancient and important part to play in the history of the area and that within this legacy there lies the ancient family of Maelog who, it is believed, had family links to Ifor Bach. With that in mind then, it doesn't take too much of the imagination to link the Maelog name to the word 'Faelog', perhaps a mutation as 'of belonging to Maelog', a language corruption later changing 'Faelog' to 'Falog' and 'Filog', eventually, over time, becoming the Philog we know today.

Yet another possibility though is that it is connected in some way to the 'Ffili' suffix of 'Caerffili'. The problem here starts with the name Senghenydd, which was the name of the local Welsh Lordship. When the Normans/English wrote the name down it was spelt Seynhenith 1307, Seint Cenydd early 14th century, so antiquarians assumed the name was derived from Saint Cenydd, an early British Saint. However the custom of the early Welsh Church was just to use the personal name of the saint, with no Saint prefix. The name Senghenydd is one of the Welsh place names where a suffix, in this case Ydd is added to a personal name to show territorial ownership, but no-one knows who Senghen was. However, once the idea of Senghenydd was Saint Cenydd, we have the story that Ffili was Cenydd's son, which, to most people is basically nonsense, even though Filius is the Latin for son. Similarly since there was an Auxiliary Roman fort near the Castle, hence the Caer element, attempts were made to make Ffili the name of a Roman Auxiliary officer who built the fort. However there was a saint of this name, recorded in Cornwall, the patron saint of Philleigh, in a 10th century list of Cornish saints. But the link with Caerphilly is non-existent. The closest we get is a stone that was in Ogmores castle, referring to an 8th century Bishop Ffili, so we have some evidence a Ffili existed, but, no firm link with Caerphilly. The name Caerphilly is first found in 1271, when it was recorded that Gilbert de Clare built a castle castrum Kaerfili, and in another document the castle is said to be juxta Kaefili, so the name existed pre 13th century. It's been suggested that the castle was built near the centre of administration of the Welsh commote of Sengenydd, Is Caeach. This may have been at the site of the Van Mansion, since we have Maerdy place name alongside it. So it is possible, only possible, that Ffili may refer to an otherwise unknown Welsh Lord, who doesn't appear in any accepted Genealogical tables, such as those produced by Petri Bartrum.

[ [Ref: Place-names in Glamorgan by Gwynedd O. Pierce, Merton Priory Press 2002, and Place-Names of Glamorgan` by Richard Morgan, Welsh Academic Press 2018.]

So there we have it, these are alternative views, it is not to say that they are any more valid, or that anyone else's interpretation is any the less valid, it's a local man's summary, as someone born and raised on the council estate behind the Three Elms.

On a personal note, this is my view..... the name Philog either lies with some reputed characteristic of the land centuries ago, quite possibly well before this part of the 'parish' had any value for farming of any type, when it was part of the open moorland and heath (Y Waun) and part of an area lying between the old town of Cardiff and the hamlet of Whitchurch (Treoda), quite simply the name Philog possibly comes from a corrupted mutation of Filog/Halog – an area of land 'defiled, tainted' or even 'contaminated' in some translations, that's my preferred choice.....Or, that it is based on the Maelog dynasty once holding the seat of power at Llys tal y bont.

Your own view might well be different and respected..... "You pays your money, you takes your choice".

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The Ty Unnos (Un Nos) was mentioned in the script...

**\*\* Ty unnos** It's bad enough now trying to get on the property ladder but back then it was worse. In Wales there is a tradition of *ty unnos* (one-night house) which dates back several hundred years and suggests that if you were able to build a house overnight on common land, with a fire in the hearth and smoke coming out of the chimney by dawn, the land was then rightfully yours. In some areas the builder could also claim all the land within the distance they could hurl an axe from each of the four corners of the house.

To achieve this, the buildings were simply knocked up out of branches, wattle and daub with a thatched type roof as fast as possible with people being helped by family and friends. It had to last 1 year and so once the early structure was built it could be strengthened and built more substantially in stone and developed and reinforced over time.

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#### 'OG' words

Hillock	<b><i>Twmpathog</i></b>	Bearded	<b><i>Barfog</i></b>
Misty	<b><i>Niwlog</i></b>	Slippery	<b><i>Llithrig</i></b>
Cloudy	<b><i>Cymylog</i></b>	Marshy	<b><i>Corsiog</i></b>
Hairy	<b><i>Blewog</i></b>	Rocky	<b><i>Creigiog</i></b>
Hilly	<b><i>Bryniog</i></b>		