



Cwrw Ceredigion



NEWSLETTER OF THE BAE CEREDIGION BRANCH OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

Welcome to Cwrw Ceredigion!

This is the first newsletter produced by the Bae Ceredigion branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Our aim is simple – we want to promote the best places where you can drink real ale in the local area.

We will do this by including articles about pubs that serve real ale (and, in some cases, real cider) in and around the area covered by our branch of CAMRA – this runs from Aberporth up the coast through Aberaeron and Aberystwyth to Machynlleth and inland as far as Tregaron.

We will also publicise beer festivals and other local events where you can enjoy real ale and cider and we will promote the growing number of breweries and cider makers in West Wales.

Producing a newsletter costs money, so we will be seeking advertising support from local pubs and breweries in order to help fund subsequent issues – space will be limited so, if you are a landlord or brewer reading this and want to book your space, please get in touch!

CAMRA is an independent voluntary consumer organisation whose main aims are promoting real ale, real cider and the traditional British pub. It has over 165,000 members and most of its activities from running beer festivals to producing newsletters like this one are undertaken by members on a voluntary basis.

If you are not a member, we would be delighted if reading *Cwrw Ceredigion* encourages you to join CAMRA – find out how overleaf. If you are already a member, do consider getting involved with your local branch.

CAMRA in Ceredigion - the story so far

Founded in 1971, CAMRA is now a nationally recognised consumer organisation with over 165,000 members throughout the United Kingdom and branches covering every corner of the country. Naturally, it took some time to become established, especially in more rural areas, and the first edition of CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide*, published in 1974, lists not a single pub in what was then called Cardiganshire. Montgomeryshire fared better back then with listings for the Skinners Arms and the White Lion in Machynlleth. Assuredly there was good beer around, but CAMRA did not yet have the members or resources to seek it out and make it known.

The first Aberystwyth branch was set up in the 1980s but sadly no records nor the branch itself survived – so if anybody reading this was active in the organisation locally back then, please do get in touch!

Twenty or so years later, a small group of local

Here in Bae Ceredigion, we hold our committee meetings in a local pub to plan our campaigning activities and our social events which range from brewery visits to pub crawls. Coming along to a branch meeting is a great way to discover a pub you didn't previously know and we normally have a beer together afterwards. All members are warmly invited to our meetings (the next one is on Thursday 20th November at 7.30pm in the Nags Head, Aberystwyth).

As well as launching this newsletter, we have recently set up Facebook and Twitter accounts. Please use any of these different communication methods as best suits you to stay in touch, find out more and share your news about the local real ale scene.

Cheers

Mary Galliers, Editor

Croeso i Gwrw Ceredigion!

Croeso i rifyn cyntaf Cwrw Ceredigion, cylchgrawn cangen Bae Ceredigion o CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale). Fel gwelwch chi yn yr erthygl uchod, ein bwriad yw hyrwyddo'r llefydd gorau i yfed cwrw da yn ein hardal, sy'n ymestyn o Aberporth trwy Aberystwyth i Fachynlleth ac hyd at Tregaron yn y ddwyrain. Am nad oes llawer o le gennym, cyhoeddiad cyfrwng-Saesneg bydd hwn, ond mae yna croeso i chi gyfathrebu hefo ni yn y Gymraeg. Edrychaf ymlaen at glywed oddiwrthyh chi!

Good Beer Guide - hot off the press!



CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide* 2015 features 4500 of the best pubs in the UK, all of them chosen by CAMRA members.

Licensees often ask how to get into the *Good Beer Guide* and the simple answer is to sell consistently excellent beer. For while the Guide does give a full description of every pub, its key driving force is beer quality. This leads to an eclectic mix of entries with several railway station buffets, a music venue and a seagoing clipper appearing alongside traditional pubs and clubs.

Locally, the pubs featured include long-standing entries such as real-ale flagship the Ship and Castle in Aberystwyth along with welcome newcomers like the wonderfully unaltered Dovey Valley Hotel at Cemmaes Road, now selling real ale for the first time in some three decades, and the Dyfi Forester, a traditional watering hole in Machynlleth.

The Guide's unrivalled brewery section includes Mantle Brewery in Cardigan amongst the 170 new breweries since the last edition was published. There are also three newcomers in Pembrokeshire – Bluestone, Caffle and Seren.

Buy the *Good Beer Guide* online at www.camra.org.uk or from Bae Ceredigion CAMRA – contact rhy.gwynedd@btopenworld.com. The cover price is £15.99, with a reduction for CAMRA members.



Bae Ceredigion branch members

CAMRA members used to survey Ceredigion pubs for inclusion in the *Good Beer Guide* and select an annual Pub of the Year. During the Pub of the Year presentation in 2007 at the Ship and Castle in Aberystwyth a few of these members decided to set up a properly constituted Ceredigion branch of CAMRA.

So, what does a branch of CAMRA actually do? I've already mentioned the *Good Beer Guide*, CAMRA's annual guide to the best beer pubs in Britain, for which we select, survey, and describe our local pub entries. We also select a Pub of the Year, which forms part of CAMRA's overall judging process

leading to the announcement of a National Pub of the Year. Our meetings are invariably held in pubs (or occasionally clubs) with good beer, and we make sure there's time to socialise and enjoy ourselves, too.

We also organise purely social events – these can include pub crawls, visits to breweries, quiz nights, or weekends away in some of Britain's great beer destinations.

Behind the scenes, we lobby politicians on issues such as beer tax and planning law, and have contributed in a small way to CAMRA's national campaigning successes of recent years.

We also produce the newsletter you are reading and, while we have no current plans to run our own beer festival, we do hope to run a beer tent at a food and drink event next year.

So, if you have even the slightest interest in good beer, good cider and good pubs, we'd be delighted to hear from you. This is a golden age for the beer drinker – come and help us celebrate it!

Rhys Jones, Chairman, Bae Ceredigion CAMRA

I love my local

Bae Ceredigion CAMRA member, Mike Walton, tells us about Y Talbot, his local pub in Tregaron.



Mike Walton in Y Talbot

What's the pub's history?

It dates back to the 17th century when Tregaron was the starting point for cattle droving over the Cambrian mountains to the Midlands and London.

Tell us about the landlord

Mick Taylor took the pub on in 2011. Since then, a lot of work has been done to restore the old stone walls and improve facilities like the toilets and kitchen. Luckily, they haven't spoilt the character in the bar areas and they have added a large terraced garden at the rear which is a lovely spot to enjoy a pint.

What real ales and ciders have been on the bar recently?

Mantle Brewery's Cwrw Teifi is normally always on plus another two beers often from Welsh breweries. They also have at least three ciders and a perry from Gwynt y Ddraig.

Where's your favourite place in the pub to enjoy a drink?

I love sitting in the lounge bar with its low beamed ceilings and open fire. When a crowd of us go, we always sit on the table in the corner by the window unless someone else has beaten us to "our table"!

Does the pub serve food? What's your favourite dish?

Yes, they do good food. My favourite is the pie of the day – the specials board tells you what the filling that day is.

Does the pub hold any regular events or activities?

They play their part in local events like the Tregaron Walking Weekend and the Ceredigion Art Trail and the bar is always busy after the Tregaron Trotting Club races. And lots of clubs use the large function room for their events and dinners.

Does the pub have any interesting stories?

Well, it's probably the only pub in Britain which claims to have an elephant buried in its garden! Apparently, one of the elephants from a travelling circus died in Tregaron in the 1800s and is said to be buried behind the pub.

Sum up in one sentence why our readers should visit your local.

You get a warm welcome and a good pint in a traditional pub with a great atmosphere.

Love ale? Join us!

Benefits include a monthly newspaper, quarterly magazine, free or discounted entry to beer festivals, money-off deals in pubs and much more.

Join online at www.camra.org.uk, telephone 01727 867201 or pick up a CAMRA leaflet in a local pub.

Whatever your reasons for joining, we hope you enjoy your membership and would love to see you at a Bae Ceredigion branch event.

Tipple tattle

One of Ceredigion's longest established breweries, Penlon Cottage near Llanarth, has changed hands. John and Lisa Howarth continue to brew the established range of bottle-conditioned beers but hope to move to new premises near New Quay and produce some cask beer, too.

In Cardigan, Mantle Brewery has taken on an assistant brewer and their beer is available at an increasing number of pubs (locally these include Y Talbot, Tregaron, Y Llong, Llangrannog, Rhos yr Hafod, Cross Inn and Yr Hen Orsaf, Aberystwyth).



Mantle Brewery

Your advert here?

This is the first issue of Cwrw Ceredigion and the Bae Ceredigion branch of CAMRA has paid for its production.

The newsletter's aim is to promote real ale and the best places to drink it. However, we cannot afford to publish future issues without the support of local pubs, breweries, cider makers and other businesses connected with real ale.

We will therefore sell advertising in future issues. Space will be limited and it will be sold on a first come, first served basis. To keep things simple, we will offer one size of advert for £30 per issue. We can design your advert for you, free of charge, or you may supply your own artwork.

Cwrw Ceredigion is distributed by CAMRA members to pubs in the branch area so that it is visible to both regulars and tourists who enjoy visiting a pub.

To reserve your space in the Spring issue, get in touch with Liz Cookson on cooksonliz@fsmail.net and help us spread the message about real ale in the local area.



www.baeceredigion.camra.org.uk

Contact us at secretary@baeceredigioncamra.org.uk

Regional award



Earlier this year, Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Chairman, Rhys Jones (pictured, above right), presented Lewis Johnston, landlord of the Druid Inn in Goginan, with the Ceredigion Pub of the Year award for the second year running.

The pub then went up against the winners from Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire and won the CAMRA West Wales Pub of the Year 2014 title.

Rhys said, "The Druid Inn has been in the Good Beer Guide for many years and is well-known for excellent beer quality. It is also at the heart of its community and people both sides of the bar make a difference."

The pub of the year is voted for by CAMRA members who evaluate the quality of real ale, value for money, atmosphere, interior decoration, customer service and welcome.

Just over the border, in Dolgellau, Cader Ales has purchased the Unicorn which is due to reopen by next Easter after extensive renovation.

A few snippets of news from our local pubs:

- Y Llong, Llangrannog reopened earlier this year under new ownership and is serving real ale.
- The Dovey Valley Hotel, Cemmaes Road, which is one of CAMRA's Pubs with Interiors of Historic Interest, has opened the snug room for customers to use.
- The beer range at the Ship and Castle has been extended, with only one Wye Valley beer and four other regularly changing guest ales.
- Yr Hen Orsaf, Aberystwyth is due to have a new rear conservatory.



Dovey Valley Hotel (© Michael Slaughter LRPS)

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If you feel you have been treated unfairly in a local pub, contact your local trading standards department via www.tradingstandards.wales.org.uk.