



Cwrw Ceredigion



THE MAGAZINE OF BAE CEREDIGION CAMRA



**Druid Inn:
40 years in
Good Beer Guide**

IN MEMORY OF RHYS JONES 1951 - 2015

Autumn/Winter 2015

FREE

THE GLENGOWER

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Welcome to the Autumn/Winter edition of *Cwrw Ceredigion*, the newsletter produced by the Bae Ceredigion branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Our aim is to promote the best places to drink real ale and cider locally and breweries and cider makers in West Wales. This is our third issue and, thanks to advertising support from local pubs and breweries, we have been able to produce a publication that's bigger than our first two issues.

However, this edition is tinged with sadness as I started planning it when our Chairman, Rhys Jones, was still alive. I enjoyed a pint with him in the Ship and Castle in Aberystwyth discussing ideas for articles and our ambition to increase the amount of content. There is an obituary to Rhys, written by one of his long-standing friends, on page 10.

On a happier note, autumn is eagerly anticipated by CAMRA members as it is when the annual *Good Beer Guide* is published. Fourteen pubs in our area are

featured in the 2016 edition – see page 6 for a taster of some of them.

If you are not a CAMRA member, we hope *Cwrw Ceredigion* encourages you to join – find out how on page 11. If you are, why not come to one of our branch meetings or socials? You're welcome to contribute as much or as little as you wish to branch business, and meetings are also a great chance to socialise and enjoy a beer in a local pub. See our website for forthcoming dates.

Our next issue will be published at the end of April but, until then, please keep supporting local pubs.

lechyd da!

Mary Galliers,
Editor



Cwrw Ceredigion – issue 3

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We try to ensure that information is correct when we go to press. If we get something wrong, let us know and we'll print a correction. Please note that opinions expressed in *Cwrw Ceredigion* are not necessarily those of CAMRA either locally or nationally.

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If you feel you have been treated unfairly in a pub, contact your local trading standards department.

See www.tradingstandardswales.org.uk.



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TIPPLE TATTLE

Cider choice keeps on growing

The range of real cider available in Ceredigion's pubs continues to grow.

Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year, Y Talbot in Tregaron now offers a regularly changing cider from small-scale producers based in Wales and the borders as well as ciders from well-known producer Gwynt y Ddraig. Up to five draught ciders are available at any one time, and the pub has experienced a boost in cider sales since the range was extended.

The Glengower Hotel in Aberystwyth has also increased its cider offer. It now has up to five Gwynt y Ddraig ciders and perries on draft and there are plans for a guest cider soon.

Pub changes and closures



After being closed for ten years, the Brynog Arms (above) in Ystrad Aeron, on the A482 between Lampeter and Aberaeron, reopened this summer under the helm of Sara Howdle. This historic pub has been renovated and now offers cask ales (which have been of good quality on our visits) and value-for-money food in the bar and adjoining cafe.

Several pubs have welcomed new landlords recently including the Black Lion in Llanbadarn Fawr and the Red Lion and the Wynnstay in Machynlleth.

The Nags Head in Aberystwyth reopened during 2015 but remains on the market. The Queens in New Quay was due to be sold by auction in September.

Sadly, a number of local pubs have closed this year. These include the Pier Hotel in Aberystwyth, the Llew Coch in Tregaron and the Royal Oak in Llanfarian.

Small beer

Alongside the regular Banks Bitter, the ales on the five guest handpumps at the **White Lion Hotel** in Machynlleth change constantly. Beers from the North Wales breweries Cwrw Llyn; Conwy; Cwrw Cader; Purple Moose; and Big Bog have all been seen on the bar recently.

Harry's Bar in Aberystwyth is now offering a house beer, Harry's Pale Ale.

Dismantle, a new bottled beer produced by Cardigan-based **Mantle Brewery**, won two Gold Stars in the Great Taste 2015 awards.

To mark the tenth anniversary of Llanbedr Beer Festival, **Cader Ales** brewed two casks of a special bitter on their new mini micro brewery kit. This kit will eventually be housed in the Unicorn pub in Dolgellau which the brewery plans to renovate.

Dates for your diary

Friday 16 October to Sunday 1 November: beer festival, Yr Hen Orsaf, Aberystwyth

Friday 13 to Sunday 15 November: beer festival, Ship and Castle, Aberystwyth

Saturday 14 November, 3.15pm: Bae Ceredigion CAMRA branch meeting, Victoria, Borth

Thursday 10 December, 6pm: Bae Ceredigion branch Christmas social and pub crawl, Glengower, Aberystwyth.

And finally

Tiny Rebel Brewery from Newport, South Wales won Champion Beer of Britain at the Great British Beer Festival in London for their red ale named Cwtch.



Hat-trick of CAMRA awards for Tregaron pub



Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Publicity Officer, Mary Galliers, presents the award to Mick Taylor and Siôn Tansley

They will soon be running out of space to display their awards in Y Talbot!

Earlier this year, the Tregaron pub was chosen as both the Ceredigion Pub of the Year and the Ceredigion Cider Pub of the Year. It then went up against the regional winners from Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire and emerged as winner of the West Wales area competition. This is the first time that a pub has picked up all three CAMRA awards in one year.

Presenting the West Wales award to proprietor, Mick Taylor, and manager, Siôn Tansley, Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Publicity Officer, Mary Galliers, said,

“Y Talbot was up against some stiff competition for the West Wales CAMRA Pub of the Year award and its success demonstrates how fortunate we are to have such a good pub in Ceredigion.”

The pub of the year awards are voted for by CAMRA members who visit pubs to evaluate them against set criteria. The quality of the beer and real cider is the most important single factor in judging a pub for a CAMRA award.

Other criteria are value for money, atmosphere and décor, customer service and the role a pub plays in its local community.

Ceredigion pub features in forty editions of *Good Beer Guide*

The Druid Inn in Goginan first appeared in the *Good Beer Guide* in 1976. This meant that, when the 2015 edition was published, it became one of a handful of pubs in Britain to have appeared in 40 consecutive editions of this flagship CAMRA publication, and the first in Ceredigion to do so.

As one of his last duties as Chairman of the Bae Ceredigion branch of CAMRA, Rhys Jones presented current landlord

of the Druid Inn, Lewis Johnston, with a certificate and a wooden sculpture of a beer glass to celebrate this significant achievement (see the front cover for a photo of the presentation). The wooden sculpture was made by Bae Ceredigion CAMRA member, Mike Walton.

Since then, the 2016 edition of the *Good Beer Guide* has been published and, not surprisingly, the Druid has made its 41st appearance!



Local pubs feature strongly in the new *Good Beer Guide*

Fourteen local pubs feature in the 2016 edition of the CAMRA *Good Beer Guide* which was published in September.

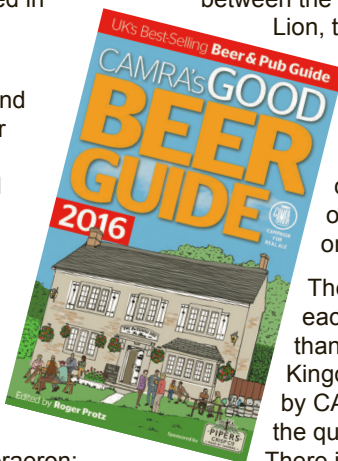
Ceredigion's four real ale flagship pubs - the Ship and Castle and the Glengower Hotel in Aberystwyth; the Druid Inn in Goginan; and Y Talbot in Tregaron – all retain their place in the *Guide*.

The county's coastal towns and villages are a good place to find good beer thanks to the Victoria Inn in Borth; the Harbourmaster in Aberaeron; the Sea Horse Inn in New Quay; and the Pentre Arms in Llangrannog all featuring in the *Guide*.

Further north, the discerning real ale drinker in Machynlleth can choose between the Dyfi Forester and the White Lion, two traditional pubs in the town centre.

For details about all these pubs and the other Ceredigion entries, you can buy a *Good Beer Guide* online at www.camra.org.uk or from local bookshops.

The *Guide* is fully revised each year and features more than 4,500 pubs in the United Kingdom, all of them selected by CAMRA members based on the quality of the real ale they sell. There is also a breweries section that lists every real ale brewery in the UK along with tasting notes for many of the beers that they make.



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Bae Ceredigion CAMRA member, Alex Vokes from Rhydyfelin, tells us why he loves the Glengower Hotel in Aberystwyth.

What's the pub's history?

The Glengower used to be two Victorian houses but it has been a pub for many years. In fact, it was the first pub I went into as a student in 1997 and it was totally different then – more of a student nightclub selling mostly lager and shots. Since it's been a hotel, it has been refurbished and attracts a broader range of people. I moved back to Aberystwyth in 2013 and it's great to call the Glengower my local again.

Tell us about the landlord

Ian Richards has run the pub for about eight years. He has championed real ale and ensured that the range and quality has improved.

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

There are normally three real ales and one is often from a Welsh brewery like Cader Ales, Monty's or Purple Moose. The range changes frequently and the "beer pole" is adorned with the pump clips of ales in the cellar waiting to be put on the pumps. There are also several ciders from Gwynt y Ddraig and it's likely that the range of real ciders will grow.

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

I love sitting on the terrace or in one of the big bay windows near the fire. Wherever I sit, I enjoy looking out to sea – it's a calming view while you drink and think.

Does the pub serve food?

Yes. You cannot beat the Glenburger which has a great range of toppings to



Alex Vokes outside the Glengower Hotel

choose from. The menu offers lots of specials and many of the ingredients are from local suppliers.

Does the pub hold any regular events or activities?

The annual highlight is the beer festival and raft race over the late May Bank Holiday weekend. This event offers a fantastic range of real ale and raises money for charity, too. There is also a quiz every Monday.

What are the regulars like?

Well, it's busy with tourists during the summer and then students during term time. The great thing about the Glengower is that it is a spacious pub which welcomes everyone from visitors to students, and from families to dog owners. In fact, dogs even have their own menu of iced doggie treats!

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

The Glengower has great food and local beer and there's always the chance you could see a dolphin out at sea whilst enjoying a pint.



REAL ALE RAMBLE

In its heyday, the coastal town of Aberaeron sported up to 35 pubs. Nowadays, just nine remain, a handful of which serve real ale. Tristan Robinson recently visited three of them.



The Cadwgan

“Our real ale ramble around Aberaeron started at the **Castle Hotel** on the corner of Market Street. Inside is a cafe bar that serves two regular beers, Sharp’s Doom Bar (4.0% amber ale) and Evan Evans’ Buckley’s Best (4.0% bitter). Locally brewed ales are occasionally available but we were out of luck today. Buckley’s Best tasted slightly fruity with a subtle bitter finish but was otherwise uninteresting. Doom Bar was better – it had a lasting head and sweet fruit/malt flavours finishing with a balance of dry bitterness.

“Further down Market Street, our next pub, **Tafarn y Cadwgan**, can’t be missed; it shouts its presence in a riot of lilac and pink, with award-winning blooms around its entrance. The pub has a cosy living-room feel that appeals to locals and holidaymakers alike; dogs are welcome, too. There’s an open fire and a TV in the corner that keeps sports fans entertained without being obtrusive. The regular Hancocks HB (3.6% bitter) is always well kept whenever I’ve sampled it but today I opted for the guest ales. Stancill’s Blonde (3.9% session beer) was very

pale and clear and served cool, which was perfect for the style. This refreshing beer tasted subtly zesty with a tangy bitter aftertaste. Next up, Titanic’s First Class (3.8% bitter) was served just below room temperature with a smooth creamy head. It had a rich, spicy fruit and malt taste with a floral hop aroma and was lovely stuff. We could have stayed all afternoon but the next pub called!

“Turning right at the Hive on the Quay, we headed down Quay Parade to the **Harbourmaster**. The bar in this boutique hotel has an eye-catching font rail of lagers and craft beers while the handpumps serving cask ale are tucked away to the right. HM Best (3.7% bitter) is brewed for the pub by Purple Moose but I chose another Purple Moose beer, Cwrw Glaslyn (Glaslyn Ale, 4.2% golden bitter). This was served cool, perfectly clear and had a lasting head. I then tried the third ale on offer, Cwrw Chwerw (Bitter Beer, 4.6%) from Bluestone in Pembrokeshire. This proved to be a fine beer to finish with – it had a clear, crystal malt toffee taste and a spicy hop aftertaste.

“As we left, I gave a cheery wave to the stuffed albatross in the corner cabinet – we’d had a good real ale ramble around Aberaeron.”

The Harbourmaster



Photo: Tristan Robinson



New owners at Ceredigion's oldest brewery



Some of Penlon Cottage Brewery's bottled beers

Penlon Cottage Brewery was established by Penny and Stefan Samociuk over ten years ago and is the oldest brewery in Ceredigion.

Last year, John and Lisa Howarth took over the reins. Both have considerable home-brewing experience but this is their first commercial brewing venture. At first, they brewed at the original premises but, earlier this year, they moved to their newly converted farmhouse brewery in a former milking parlour overlooking New Quay.

"It's a bigger premises which has allowed us to grow to a four barrel plant with a dedicated bottling room," said Lisa. "We have been able to respond to an increasing demand for our bottled beers and develop our venture into producing cask ale which we expect to be served in a small number of pubs around New Quay."

John and Lisa have continued to produce Penlon Cottage's original range of bottle-conditioned beers using the same traditional, all natural recipes and methods developed by Stefan. With names like Topsy Tup Pale Ale and Ewe's

Frolic Lager, the beer range reflects the brewery's farming heritage.

"Our production method is still very low tech and artisan – there are no computer-aided brews here!" said John. "This lets us brew and bottle ten different beers which range from a lager through to strong ales, and two traditional stouts.

"All our beers are bottle-conditioned which means that the secondary fermentation happens in the bottle – each one is therefore real ale in a bottle. They are all suitable for vegetarians and most are suitable for vegans, too."

See www.penlonbrewery.co.uk for a list of shops, restaurants and bars across Wales where the bottled beer is on sale and watch out for the cask ales if you are in a pub in New Quay soon!

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OBITUARY

Rhys Jones, Chairman of Bae Ceredigion CAMRA, died on 28 July 2015 after a short illness.

Rhys Jones was born 64 years ago in Hereford. Whilst technically English by birth (a source of occasional and good natured ribbing), he was a Welshman to the core. Fluent in the language, Rhys was immersed in the culture of Wales from his keen support of the national rugby team to an annual attendance at the national Eisteddfod, where the absence of decent beer or cider was a regular cause for complaint.

CAMRA was his primary interest and many members throughout the country will have been touched by Rhys's knowledge, enthusiasm and good humour. An activist for many years, he first attended the organisation's national AGM in 1975 and never missed one after that. In fact, anyone who has attended the AGM will have enjoyed Rhys's virtuoso performances speaking to various motions.

Over the years, he was active in CAMRA in the Potteries, Preston, Manchester and, latterly, west Wales where he was the founding chairman of the Bae Ceredigion branch. In Manchester, he was a long-serving chairman of the Stockport & South Manchester Branch until late 1998 when he moved back to Wales after inheriting the family home near Aberystwyth. Once settled in, he found that the local CAMRA presence was largely moribund and so he worked with a small nucleus of local volunteers to undertake pub surveying and to select an annual Pub of the Year. At the presentation of the 2007 award to the



Rhys Jones

Ship and Castle in Aberystwyth, Rhys and a few fellow volunteers decided to set up a properly constituted branch of CAMRA.

Bae Ceredigion members have paid tribute to the knowledge and humour with which Rhys chaired meetings and enabled the new branch to grow and flourish. Indeed, his last CAMRA event was in June when, already ill, he joined a branch trip to Penlon Cottage Brewery.

On the national scene, it was Rhys's passion for cider and perry that marked out his campaigning. He helped found the cider bar at Stockport Beer and Cider Festival in 1986 and took it to such prominence that it was an early host of the National Cider and Perry Awards. He was also very active as a member of APPLE, CAMRA's national cider and perry committee.

With the passing of Rhys Jones, CAMRA has lost one of its great characters, cider and perry has lost a great supporter, and many of us have lost a good friend.

John Clarke, Chairman of Stockport and South Manchester CAMRA



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