



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Cwrw Ceredigion



Local pubs ♦ Real ales ♦ Beer festivals



**Paws for a pint:
top pubs for top dogs**

The free magazine of Bae Ceredigion CAMRA

Spring/Summer 2016



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Welcome to *Cwrw Ceredigion*, the newsletter produced by the Bae Ceredigion branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).



Our aim is to promote local breweries, cider makers and the best places to drink real ale and cider in the area.

I'm pleased to say that the local real ale scene is going from strength to strength. I keep

spotting new beers on the bar at many Ceredigion pubs and a new brewer has recently set up locally – find out more about Oast House Brewery on page 13. Earlier this year, we had the toughest competition ever for the award of Bae Ceredigion CAMRA pub of the year – see page 5 for the full story (and congratulations to the Glengower Hotel!).

It seems 2016 is set to be a record year for beer festivals, too. So far, we've enjoyed the Lampeter Beer and Cider Festival and the Spring Beer Festival at Yr Hen Orsaf. We can now look forward to festivals at the Ship and Castle in April, the Glengower in May and a new event at the Pentre Arms in Llangrannog in July (see page 4 for information about these and other local festivals).

As the days get longer, and hopefully warmer, it's a great time to venture out to a pub you don't know or haven't visited for a while. If, like me, you enjoy taking your four-legged friend along, check out our feature about dog friendly pubs on page 8.

Many thanks to the advertisers who make it possible for us to produce *Cwrw Ceredigion*. The next issue will be published at the end of October so, until then, please continue to support our local pubs and breweries.

lechydd da!

Mary Galliers, Editor

Cwrw Ceredigion – issue 4

© Published by the Bae Ceredigion branch of CAMRA, April 2016

Front cover: The Monachty, Aberaeron

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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This issue is dedicated to Bae Ceredigion CAMRA member Ian Scott who died in December. Ian worked for our publisher Sprint and helped establish *Cwrw Ceredigion*.



Revamp for local pubs

The Glengower Hotel was closed earlier this year for renovation. The Aberystwyth pub reopened in early February with refurbished bar and dining areas (pictured) and the first dedicated cider bar in Ceredigion. Down the coast in Llangrannog, the bar at the Pentre Arms has been refurbished and there are plans for a covered outdoor seating area. The new owners at the Rhos yr Hafod in Cross Inn (Llanon) have been busy smartening up this traditional pub. As well as new flooring and seating, there are some cosy touches like cushions, candles and a stack of retro vinyl from which customers can pick tunes to listen to.



Small beer

The **Fronfelen Arms** in Temple Bar has started to sell an additional barrel on gravity dispense.

A third hand pump has been added at the **Cadwgan** in Aberaeron to increase the interesting range of guest ales.

The **Red Lion** in Machynlleth was recently taken on by new tenants and sells two regular ales (Banks's Bitter and Wychwood Hobgoblin).

There is now an extensive menu of bottled beer and cider as well as four real ales and a real cider on draught at the **Druid Inn** in Goginan.

The **Wynnstay Arms** in Machynlleth is currently closed.

Brewery round-up

Two local breweries are growing their operations. Cader Ales will soon be opening the Unicorn in Dolgellau while Cardigan-based Mantle Brewery has installed an additional fermenting vessel and recruited a new brewer to increase production. The bar at Penlon Cottage Brewery just outside New Quay will open at 4pm every Friday evening from 29 April until the autumn. Two cask ales plus the full bottled beer range will be on offer (please ring to check opening hours if making a special journey).

Cheap beer!

There's no such thing as a free pint, but if you join CAMRA you benefit from some handy discounts. Every year, CAMRA members receive £20 of discount coupons to redeem in any Wetherspoons (most local members use their coupons to try the great range of beers at Yr Hen Orsaf in Aberystwyth). Card-carrying CAMRA members also now get a 5% discount on all draught real ale and cider at the Glengower Hotel. See page 15 for how to join CAMRA.

Dates for your diary

Friday 15 to Sunday 17 April: beer festival, Ship and Castle, Aberystwyth

Friday 27 to Monday 30 May: beer festival, Glengower Hotel, Aberystwyth

Thursday 2 to Saturday 4 June: Llanfair Clydogau Beer Festival

Saturday 23 July: Lampeter Food Festival

Saturday 23 to Sunday 24 July: beer festival, Pentre Arms, Llangrannog

Saturday 6 August: Cardigan River and Food Festival

Saturday 13 August: Aberaeron Beer Festival (featuring Bae Ceredigion tombola stall with beer-related prizes)

See www.baeceredigion.camra.org.uk for dates of Bae Ceredigion CAMRA meetings and social activities.

Glengower wins top pub award

The Glengower Hotel in Aberystwyth has been selected as Bae Ceredigion pub of the year for the first time.



Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Chairman Tristan Robinson (left) presents the award to Glengower landlord Ian Richards

Presenting the 2016 award to landlord Ian Richards, Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Chairman Tristan Robinson said, "This award recognises the effort and enthusiasm demonstrated by Ian and his team to champion real ale over the

last few years which has resulted in an improvement in beer variety and quality." The Glengower always offers beers from Welsh breweries and the beer pole behind the bar promotes beers that are coming soon. Following a major refurbishment in January, a separate cider bar has been opened to offer a better choice of real cider and perry.

Pubs are nominated for the pub of the year award by CAMRA members who then visit and judge each one 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.

The runner-up was Y Talbot in Tregaron which won the award last year. The other two finalists were the Druid Inn in Goginan and the Ship and Castle in Aberystwyth.

First Oakademy of Excellence in Ceredigion



Drinkers at the Ship and Castle have a good chance of enjoying one-off brews from Oakham Ales now that the Aberystwyth pub has become an Oakademy of Excellence.

"This award means that, as well as always having one standard Oakham beer on the bar, we can now offer some of the brewery's unusual one-off ales, too," said landlord Ian Blair (pictured), who had to pass an independent quality test to receive this accreditation.

Ian received his certificate at an Oakham Ales tap takeover at the pub. The evening was hosted by a brewery representative who gave customers free tastings and other Oakham's goodies.

Time to discover real cider and perry

May and October are the months when CAMRA promotes real cider and perry.

May is when the orchards bloom and begin producing the fruit which will be harvested in October. It is also when cider and perry produced in the previous year reaches maturity and can start being enjoyed.

So, what is real cider?

Put simply, it is produced from apples, not apple juice concentrate like many well-known ciders in the UK. The natural fruit yeasts start the fermentation and, several months later, you have cider. Perry is the equivalent drink made from perry pears. Both can be served direct from a plastic cask, from a "bag in box" (similar to wine), in a bottle or from a handpump like real ale.

The range of real cider in pubs is growing.

Y Talbot has been voted Bae Ceredigion CAMRA's Cider Pub of the Year for the second year running. The Tregaron pub has expanded its range with new names appearing on the board (pictured left). In Aberystwyth, the recently refurbished Glengower Hotel has a dedicated cider bar offering five ciders and perries. Many other pubs offer real cider on draught - you can search for them on www.whatpub.com. There's also an increasing range of cider and perry at local beer festivals. The Aberaeron event has a particularly good choice.

Now that it is easier to find the real stuff, why not try some real cider or perry and discover the variety of flavours these traditional drinks offer?



In 2007, well-known real ale campaigner Rhys Jones established the Bae Ceredigion branch of CAMRA. Rhys was the branch's Chairman until his death last summer, following which Tristan Robinson was elected as his successor. Cwrw Ceredigion has been finding out a bit more about the new Chairman, (pictured on left below).



Born in Pembrokeshire, Tristan Robinson lived in the county until he went to university in Wolverhampton. He sheepishly admits to being a cider drinker in his early student years due to "a few bad experiences with home brew in the Young Farmers!".

However, whilst in the West Midlands he started to drink Banks's Mild and his interest in real ale was sparked. "I got a taste for different real ales by going to beer festivals," he said. "I was so impressed by the variety of beer styles at the Lichfield Winter Beer Festival that I joined CAMRA on the spot."

At first, like many new members, he only got involved in the social life of the local branch. "I enjoyed the trips to breweries and pub crawls," he recalls. "Then I started to attend meetings and saw at first-hand how members play a part in developing their local real ale scene."

Since those early days, Tristan has become a Life Member of CAMRA and, when he moved to Ceredigion in 2014, he soon got involved in the local branch.

People often ask what a CAMRA branch does and Tristan is keen to explain. "Our most high profile job is selecting pubs to appear in CAMRA's annual *Good Beer Guide*," he said. "We also choose a branch pub of the year and the winner goes forward to the next round of the national pub of the year competition. Behind the scenes, we lobby politicians on issues such as beer tax and planning law."

"Most CAMRA meetings are held in a pub and we make sure there's time to enjoy ourselves, plus a beer or two, as well as getting the business done," he added. "Like any club, a CAMRA branch organises social events - the Bae Ceredigion branch has an annual programme of pub crawls, brewery visits and weekends away in Britain's great beer destinations."

It's fair to say that real ale is enjoying its highest ever profile with more and more people joining CAMRA. There is often debate amongst members about how the organisation should move forward. Tristan is of the view that the focus should be on supporting the businesses that make up the real ale industry.

"I think we should support pubs, especially those at risk of closure or of falling into a developer's hands, as well as the producers of real ale and real cider," he said. "I have seen how CAMRA members can act as a vital link between brewers and drinkers, for example by providing feedback on which beer styles are popular."

These days, Tristan is a keen home brewer himself and our interview finished with a tough question - which beer would be on the bar at his dream pub?

"To be honest, my answer would vary from day to day," he grinned. "But today I'll go for Imperial Russian Stout produced by Dark Star Brewery in East Sussex."

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PAWS FOR A PINT

Dogs are regarded as man's best friend but their owners can find it tricky sometimes to take their pet to the pub. Cwrw Ceredigion has investigated which local real ale pubs extend a warm welcome to your four-legged friend.



How to find a dog friendly real ale pub

CAMRA produces two main directories of pubs, both of which can help you find a dog friendly pub. The online pub directory www.whatpub.com includes every real ale pub in our area (and most real ale pubs in Britain) and is free to use. It is updated regularly by local CAMRA members and the advanced search function allows you to look for dog friendly pubs. Every September, CAMRA publishes the *Good Beer Guide* which features the best pubs serving real ale. Last year, a new pawprint symbol was added to the guide to indicate which pubs welcome well behaved dogs.

Local dog friendly real ale pubs

Many of our local pubs welcome dogs with the reasonable proviso that they behave themselves. There isn't room to mention every one of these pubs here (go to www.whatpub.com for a comprehensive list) but we've highlighted a few of the best below. Some have resident pooches of their own and all have a bowl of dog water or will give you one on request. Before you head for the bar, make sure your dog is clean (and dry!) and keep him on a lead, off the furniture and away from other customers. Most pubs in **Machynlleth** welcome dogs and the White Horse has its own friendly

pub pooch as does the Tafarn Dwynant up the road in Ceinws (see opposite).

In **Aberystwyth**, the Glengower Hotel (see opposite) and the Ship and Castle are the best places for a great pint with your four-legged friend. A bit further afield, the Tynllidiart Arms in **Capel Bangor** and the Druid Inn in **Goginan** are well-known for great food which you can enjoy in the bar with your dog.

If you are heading for the hills around **Tregaron**, Y Talbot in the town square (see opposite) and the Black Lion Hotel in **Pontrhydfendigaid** both serve good food and welcome canine guests overnight, too.

There are miles of great dog walking on the Wales Coast Path and lots of pubs along the way welcome thirsty walkers with their four-legged friend. These include the Victoria Inn in **Borth** and the Cadwgan Inn and the Monachty in **Aberaeron**. Further down the coast, head for the Sea Horse in **New Quay** (see opposite) and the Pentre Arms and the Ship in **Llangrannog**.

Staying overnight with your dog

Why not make a night of it and enjoy the beer in a pub where your dog can stay overnight, too?

These pubs have dog friendly accommodation: White Lion, Machynlleth; Glengower Hotel, Aberystwyth; Pentre Arms, Llangrannog; Hafod Hotel, Devils Bridge; Black Lion, Pontrhydfendigaid; and Y Talbot, Tregaron.

If you're in your campervan, dogs are welcome at the Penrhiwgaled Arms near New Quay where the car park is a licensed stopover for motor homes.

The information in this article was correct at the time of going to press. Please advise us of any changes to information about local pubs via the "submit update" option on www.whatpub.com.

TOP PUBS FOR TOP DOGS

Here's our pick of the pubs with the warmest welcome for you and your pooch.

Tafarn Dwynant, Ceinws

Pub dogs Clive and Dylan offer a warm welcome to fellow canines at this cosy pub which is just off the A487 near Machynlleth. Dogs are allowed throughout the pub and there is always water available and sometimes homemade treats, too. Purple Moose's Snowdonia and another ale are usually on the bar.



Glengower Hotel, Aberystwyth

Dogs are welcome on the seafront terrace and in the bar with its huge woodburner and wooden floors. A jar of dog treats sits on the bar alongside a menu of doggie ice cream. Thirsty owners can choose from five real ales, often from Welsh breweries, and five real ciders plus good value homecooked food.



Sea Horse Inn, New Quay

Not many pubs in New Quay allow dogs inside but this friendly pub is doggie heaven. Dogs are allowed in both bar areas and they are greeted with a treat and a fuss. On the bar there's a Dogs Trust collection box alongside a choice of Evan Evans beers, Westons draught cider and a selection of filled crusty rolls.



Y Talbot, Tregaron

There's a warm welcome for man's best friend at this ancient inn. After a walk in the hills, enjoy a pint of Welsh ale or real cider by the fire in the flagstoned bar or on the sheltered rear patio. Dogs are not allowed in the upmarket restaurant but food from the same menu is served in the bar areas.



REAL ALE RAMBLE

Aberystwyth is the biggest town in Bae Ceredigion CAMRA's area and there are plenty of pubs to choose from. Tristan Robinson was joined by Alex Vokes on a tour of some of the best real ale outlets.

Our ramble around Aberystwyth started on the outskirts of town at the **Black Lion** in Llanbadarn Fawr. This pub has a main bar in its wide front room, a function room and



The Black Lion

a secluded beer garden at the rear which overlooks the village's historic church. On the bar for our visit were regular beers Banks's Bitter and Wychwood Hobgoblin, plus Jennings Red Rascal and Wychwood Dirty Tackle. The Red Rascal, a copper-coloured bitter with floral aroma and toffee malt flavour, was clear and served well, as was the Banks's Bitter, which took me back to my university days in Wolverhampton.

Suitably refreshed, we walked through the churchyard towards the town centre. We continued down Heol y Lan, past the roundabout onto Llanbadarn Road, followed by a left turn onto Plascrug Avenue. We followed this road until it became a footpath at the roundabout next to Plascrug School and continued through the park until we reached gates next to another roundabout. Turning left we used the pedestrian crossing and proceeded through the bus station to our next watering hole.

Yr Hen Orsaf (Welsh for "the old station") is a Wetherspoon's conversion of the original 1924 GWR railway station. Spacious inside, it also has outside seating which looks onto the platform. In addition to the regular offerings (Abbot Ale, Ruddles Best and Doom Bar) they serve up to six guest ales, often from local breweries such as Mantle or Bluestone. We opted for a couple of halves each; Ruddles Best Bitter (well kept, light in taste but thin mouthfeel), Upham's Punter (a light and lemony mid-range bitter), Abbot Ale (really well served and a very moreish combination of banana and malt notes) and, the best of the bunch, Orkney



Yr Hen Orsaf

Brewery's Dragonhead Stout (smoky with bitter chocolate, smooth coffee and a hint of spice).

Leaving the old station, we turned left and headed down Alexandra Road, crossed by the roundabout and continued straight past the petrol station until we reached Heol y Bont next to a stone bridge. We crossed the road, turned right then took the next left and continued along South Road towards the sea until we found the **Castle Hotel** on our right.

The Castle is an impressive terracotta brick building designed in the style of a traditional London gin palace with large liveried windows. The interior is a single open space with a long bar and plentiful seating. Three handpumps adorn the bar, usually serving two changing beers and a cider (this time Henry Weston's Family Reserve). However, the only ale option on

our visit was Purple Moose Calon Lân (a pleasant amber bitter with fruity hop finish) which was well kept and served.



The Castle Hotel

After our swift halves we were fortified enough to brave one of Aberystwyth's many hills. We turned right out of the entrance, then immediately right uphill, turning left at the junction and right at the next one. We continued along Vulcan Street until its junction with High Street, where we found the Ship and Castle.

The Ship and Castle is Aberystwyth's flagship real ale pub, serving a constantly changing range of ales from local and regional breweries, draught cider and



The Ship and Castle

REAL ALE RAMBLE

perry, plus a couple of craft beers on keg and a good selection of bottled and canned beers. The ale range can be sampled in the form of a "five pump platter" (five one third pint measures). We tried Bragdy Twt Lol's Cwrw'r Afr Serchog /Horny Goat Ale (a golden malty ale) which had an interesting musk and lemon flavour and very dry finish, and Spitting Feathers Special Ale (a very malty brown ale).

For our last pub, we headed to the seafront via nearby Pier Street and walked along the promenade towards the cliff railway until we reached the **Glengower Hotel**, Bae Ceredigion CAMRA's Pub of the Year 2016. The Glengower is popular with locals, holidaymakers and students alike and offers a range of ales including regulars (Mantle Rock Steady and Wye



The Glengower Hotel

Valley Butty Bach) and three guests from regional breweries. Our final beers were Salopian's Treasure Trove (a golden ale with aroma of tropical flowers and a citrus finish) and Bragdy Twt Lol's Glog (a malty session ale full of red fruit flavours). As we relaxed looking out across Cardigan Bay, we contemplated how these two excellent beers made a fitting end to our tour of this seaside town.

Please note: if you follow our tour during the week, we recommend a reversal of the route as the Black Lion does not open until 4pm on weekdays.

The Pentre Arms is set right on the Ceredigion Coast Path in the pretty village of Llangrannog. Cwrw Ceredigion enjoyed a day at the seaside finding out more about this cosy pub and the man who has owned it for the last seventeen years, Mike Rutherford.



Mike Rutherford

Why did you decide to run the Pentre Arms?

I'm originally from Liverpool and, as a child, I used to come to Llangrannog on holiday every year with my family. My parents liked to visit the Pentre Arms and I told them that one day I wanted to own the pub. I worked in the merchant navy for over twenty years but I missed Llangrannog. When the pub came on the market, I jumped at the chance to buy it.

Who tends to visit the pub?

We have a good local trade all year round from Llangrannog and nearby villages. Lots of our summer visitors are regulars, too, as they have been coming here on holiday for years.

Why do you think people enjoy coming to the pub?

There can't be many pubs with such a special location - the big window in the bar overlooks the beach just a few feet away. Also, many of our staff are local people who have known our customers for years, and our traditional menu remains popular.

Which beers are the most popular on the bar? And what's your favourite?

Real ale has always been popular with the locals but I've noticed more young people opt for beer recently. St Austell Tribute is our most popular ale (and my personal favourite!) and it's on all year along with Seafarers by Gales. We add an extra handpump during busier months and we often then sell a Welsh beer.

Do you hold any regular events?

There's live music on Saturdays in July and August, and we support local events like the Gŵyl Nol a Mlan festival and the village fireworks. We are also looking forward to holding our first beer festival on 23 and 24 July.

And finally, if you could run a pub anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?

In Llangrannog! I love it here - I missed the village when I was away at sea and I am lucky to work in a beautiful place with such a friendly community.



Aberystwyth graduates set up brewery

John Dyer and Steph Revely hatched their plan to set up Oast House Brewery when they were studying at Aberystwyth University. The brewery takes its name from the old maltings in the Trefechan area of Aberystwyth and, having settled on a name, they have been seeking premises where they can brew in the town.

"We liked the idea of resurrecting a bit of Aberystwyth's ale past," said John.

"That's why we named the brewery after the harbour building where they used to dry and roast barley to create malt for brewing."

John and Steph have not let their current lack of premises hold them back - they recently brewed their first beer, Aber Dabba Doo, using the kit at Brecon Brewery (an activity known in the trade as cuckoo brewing).

"We looked into basing our brewery in the old oast house but unfortunately, it was not for sale," explained John. "The process of cuckoo brewing means we can develop our beers while we continue the hunt for premises."

Aber Dabba Doo was launched at the Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Christmas social in the Glengower Hotel. Made with British hops, this 4.2% amber ale has soft hoppy aromas and a caramel flavour.

Since then, Aber Dabba Doo has been on sale in several other local pubs including Y Talbot in Tregaron, Rhos yr Hafod in Cross Inn (Llanon) and Fronfelen Arms in Temple Bar. It is also available in bottles.

The brewery's second beer, a ruby ale named Roses are Red, was launched just after Valentine's Day, at a "meet the brewer" event in Rummings. This triple hopped beer has a touch of fruit to balance the bitterness and create a red glow.



John Dyer and Steph Revely at the launch of Aber Dabba Doo

John told us he is planning "something light and refreshing" next so, if you spot the distinctive Oast House Brewery pump clip, take the chance to try a beer from the latest in the wave of new Welsh breweries.



I LOVE MY LOCAL

Bae Ceredigion CAMRA member, Lindsey Male from Aberystwyth, tells us why she loves The Victoria Inn in Borth.



Lindsey Male in the Victoria Inn

What's the pub's history?

The pub was built in the 1870s and there is a rumour that it got its name as Queen Victoria owned Ynys-hir Hall nearby. It was recently refurbished and there are two bars downstairs with a decking area leading onto the beach. Upstairs there is a restaurant and a maritime themed bar with a sea view terrace.

Tell us about the landlady.

Judith has run the pub since 2012. She can often be seen interacting with the locals and she works hard to maintain the pub's friendly atmosphere.

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

There are normally five real ales on offer and recently these have included Wye Valley's HPA, Sharp's Doom Bar and Atlantic, and Hobson's Old Prickly. There is a guest ale, too. Judith always seems keen to change the selection and recently she had Happy Daze cider from Gwynt y Ddraig on cask as a trial.

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

When the Welsh weather holds back, I

like to enjoy a beer on the decking after a walk on the beach and watch the beautiful Borth sunset. If it gets a bit nippy, there are blankets on the sea view terrace upstairs that you can wrap up in and still enjoy a beer watching the sunset or the stars.

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

Yes, it serves good, hearty homemade food made with locally sourced ingredients. I like to order something from the specials board as the choice changes often. There's also an outside grill from Easter to October.

Does the pub hold any regular events or activities?

There are live music events and quiz nights and they even hold a ladies' Ascot day. Judith encourages local people to organise events like art exhibitions and she supports some of these by donating a room for them to take place in.

What are the regulars like?

The pub attracts a mix of locals, visitors and holidaymakers. It's the type of place that brings everyone together as it accommodates everyone's needs.

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

The Victoria is a friendly pub for all weather and moods, whether you want to lounge by the fire, sit on the terrace or watch the sport with a good beer in hand.

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THE GLENGOWER

“Bae Ceredigion CAMRA
Pub of the Year 2016.”

Traditional pub on Aberystwyth seafront
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The Glengower is a charming and relaxing pub that sits on Aberystwyth promenade. The pub attracts locals and visitors alike to enjoy our friendly atmosphere along with the stunning views over Cardigan Bay. We serve a great menu of homemade food along with a cracking pint!

Our bar offers 5 hand pull cask ales along with 5 real ciders/perry at any one time. Our menu is served all day every day offering a choice of pub classics and seasonal specials.

 DOGS WELCOME | SKY SPORTS | OPEN LOG FIRE | POOL TABLE | FREE WIFI

THE
GLENGOWER
 BEER
FESTIVAL
27th -30th May 2016

