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Cwrw Ceredigion



Local pubs ♦ Real ales ♦ Beer festivals

Pub gardens: four of the best



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The free magazine of Bae Ceredigion CAMRA

Spring/Summer 2017



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Welcome to *Cwrw Ceredigion*, which is 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.

We are lucky to have so many great local pubs offering a warm welcome along with excellently kept, good quality real ales. Many congratulations to one of them in particular - the Druid Inn, which has won both our pub of the year and cider pub of the year competitions. As a judge, I know how tough the competition was this year, and I urge you to visit all the finalists – you will be in for a treat!



Llanfair Clydogau beer festival

As the days get warmer, it's a lovely time to enjoy a pint outside. Our Four of the Best feature looks at local pubs with great beer gardens. If you fancy a longer day out, take *Cwrw Ceredigion* with you and follow our real ale ramble around the seaside town of New Quay. Or, if you fancy trying out a new beer or two, head for one of the many festivals taking place over the next few months.

Many thanks to our advertisers and the handful of CAMRA members who help produce and distribute *Cwrw Ceredigion* – it would not be possible without your support. Our next issue will be published in October, but you can keep up to date with the local real ale scene by following us on Twitter or Facebook.

Mary Galliers, Editor

P.S. Our branch AGM is on Saturday 24 June in Aberystwyth. All members are welcome to attend – please come along to say hello if you have not been to a meeting before. See www.baeceredigion.camra.org.uk for more details and our calendar of social events.

Contact us

Email: publicity@baeceredigion.camra.org.uk
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Bae Ceredigion CAMRA branch area

The Bae Ceredigion CAMRA branch covers the mid and north of Ceredigion and a small part of Powys. The main towns and villages in the branch area are New Quay, Aberaeron, Tregaron, Aberystwyth, Talybont and Machynlleth.

Cwrw Ceredigion: issue 6, April 2017

© Published by the Bae Ceredigion branch of CAMRA

Front cover: Garden at the Three Horseshoe in Llangeitho and beer festival at the Ship and Castle in Aberystwyth.



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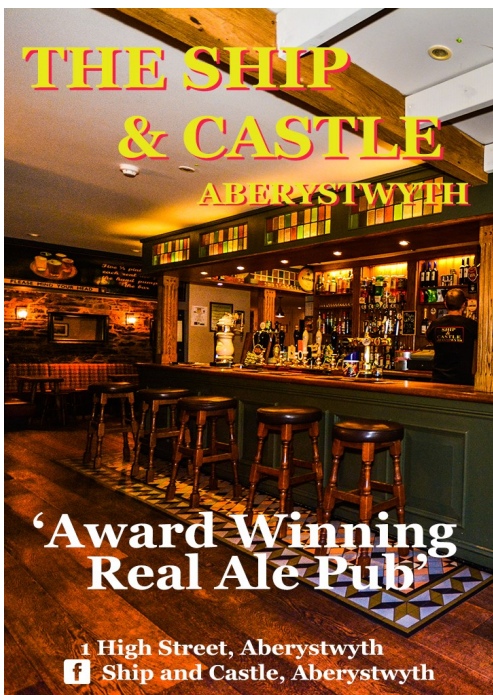


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Druid does the double!

The Druid Inn in Goginan has scooped not one, but two top CAMRA awards. The pub has been selected as Bae Ceredigion CAMRA pub of the year 2017, as well as the branch cider pub of the year.

Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Chairman Tristan Robinson said, "Visitors to the Druid Inn get a warm welcome from friendly staff who are passionate and knowledgeable about real ale and cider. The pub serves a huge choice of both draught and bottled beer and cider, with unusual options often on offer. The staff are happy to offer advice and tasters to customers, and the bottled beer and cider range is promoted on a blackboard and in a special menu."

Pubs are nominated for the pub of the year awards by CAMRA members who then visit and judge each one anonymously 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 the role a pub plays in its local community, value for money, atmosphere, décor and customer service.

Judges praised the excellent value and quality of the home-cooked food in the Druid and noted the role that the pub plays in the community, particularly by organising and hosting numerous events.

Rhos yr Hafod is runner-up

The runner-up in the pub of the year competition is the Rhos yr Hafod Inn in Cross Inn (Llanon) which changed hands just over two years ago. Landlady Elin Hywel offers a friendly welcome to locals and visitors, and serves a choice of two real ales, often from Welsh breweries, which are of consistently excellent quality.

Tristan said, "Real ale is promoted enthusiastically in the Rhos yr Hafod and



Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Chairman Tristan Robinson (left) presents the awards to landlord of the Druid Inn Lewis Johnston with Jane Walton, one of the cider judges.

there is a tempting "Ales coming soon" blackboard in the bar. The pub is an excellent example of a small village local in a rural location which has flourished thanks to good management and great beer."

The other three pub of the year finalists were Y Talbot in Tregaron, the Cadwgan in Aberaeron and the Dovey Valley Hotel in Cemmaes Road.

Fronfelen comes second in cider

The runner-up in the cider pub of the year competition is the Fronfelen Arms in Temple Bar which has undergone refurbishment recently. Judges were impressed by landlord Geoff Thompson's commitment to real cider and praised the large choice of excellent value ciders, both bag in box and on draught.

The other two cider pub of the year finalists were the Glengower Hotel in Aberystwyth and last year's winner, Y Talbot in Tregaron.

The Druid Inn will go on to compete against the regional winners from Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire for the award of West Wales CAMRA Pub of the Year. This competition was won by the Bae Ceredigion pub of the year in both 2015 and 2016.

Llanon gets its local back

Drinkers in Llanon had a great early Christmas present when the White Swan reopened in November, a year after its closure had left the village without a pub. Former barman, Dylan Jones, is the new owner and he has refurbished the pub in a contemporary style. This deceptively large pub has a modern public bar, a cosy lounge, a small dining room, a pool room and a function room with separate bar. Doom Bar is the regular real ale, but this is joined by a guest ale at busier times. The White Swan offers evening meals, Sunday lunches and bingo nights, and there are plans for live music in the function room.



White Swan, Llanon

New real ale outlets

The Port of Call in New Quay was taken on by new owners last year. Even though the focus is on food, customers are welcome to just have a drink, and a different local cask ale will be on offer every week.

Three of the pubs on the student circuit in Aberystwyth now serve real ale. Bar 46, which opened last November in the old RAFA club in Bridge Street, sells Doom Bar. Butty Bach is the regular offer in Kanes Bar along with cider on draught – you can order a tasting platter to try all the ciders. The Bynamlwg Bar on Aberystwyth University's main campus has been refurbished and this cosy bar is now open to all, serving one real ale directly from the barrel.

Pub openings and closures

Irie's (formerly the Weston Vaults) in Aberystwyth has reopened and offers one cask ale.

The Black Lion in Llanbadarn Fawr has reopened with new landladies and offers up to three beers from the Marston's range.

The Falcon in Llanilar has reopened and sells two Felinfoel beers.

Brains Brewery has closed the Dolau in New Quay and plans to convert it into a hotel.

The former Royal Oak in Llanfarian has been turned into a licensed fish and chip restaurant.

Swift halves

Some interesting beers have been on the many pumps at the White Lion Hotel in Machynlleth, including a vegan friendly pale ale from Burning Soul Brewing.

A real ale from Mantle Brewery is on offer in the Red Lion in Pontrhydfendigaid.

Bottled cider is now on offer in the Rhos yr Hafod Inn in Cross Inn (Gwynt y Ddraig's Black Dragon), and the Three Horseshoe in Llangeitho (one or two from different Welsh or West Country producers).

A new bar has been installed in a former storehouse upstairs at Rummers Bar in Aberystwyth and is normally open on Tuesday to Saturday evenings.

The bar in the Harbourmaster, Aberaeron has been refurbished.

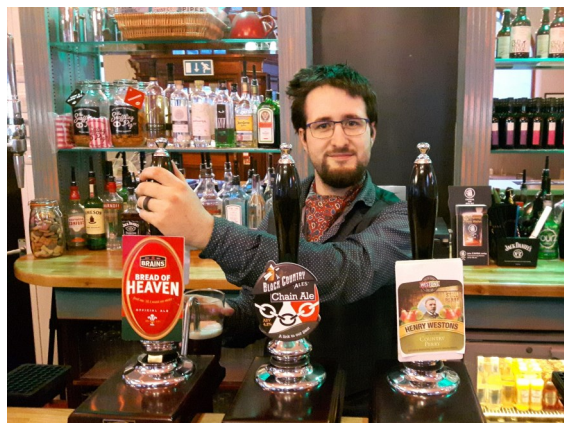
A planning application for renovation work at Yr Hen Orsaf in Aberystwyth has been submitted to Ceredigion Council. The pub will be closed during this work.

Brewer takes on Aberystwyth bar

The Castle Hotel in Aberystwyth reopened in February after a major refurbishment. The bar has been decorated in fresh colours and boasts new furniture, including cosy sofas by the woodburner.

John Dyer, known to many as one of the two brewers behind Oast House Brewery, has leased the hotel bar and has some exciting plans for it. The number of handpumps has increased to six, and up to three Welsh ales along with beers from regional breweries and a real cider will be on sale.

John said, "My intention is to offer beer that is well-kept and served well, so I will adjust the number of ales on sale according to trade. I want to get feedback from customers as to what they would like to drink – we will use the blackboard behind the bar to record their wish-list of beers.



John Dyer at the Castle Hotel

"We are promoting our ales directly to users of the Untapped app and via our own social media accounts to let beer fans know what is on sale and what is in the cellar."

John will continue to cuckoo brew Oast House beers at Brecon Brewing's premises and a beer from his range will appear regularly on the bar.

Breweries in brief

Local CAMRA member, Alex Vokes, is setting up a brewery this year. **Hopforge** will be based in the old school in Lledrod, near Aberystwyth and the school hall will house the brewery.

Alex is undertaking much of the work himself, from converting the building to developing his own fermentation control system.

There will be a core range of three beers, one of which will be seasonal, and he plans to produce a maximum of two brewer's barrels (576 pints) per week at first.

Read Alex's blog about setting up the brewery on www.hopforge.com.

Regular open days with beer tastings are due to start again from Easter at **Penlon Cottage Brewery** in New Quay. These events were very popular last year, and food included homemade sausage rolls and a barbeque. A new tasting room is due to open in late Spring. Dates will be advertised on the brewery's website and Facebook page.

Plans are underway at **Mantle Brewery** for their first seasonal beer. The Cardigan based brewery will be producing Cwrw Fforest, a craft keg beer, again this year for Fforest, the music and events venue situated on the town's riverside.

Bluestone Brewery has launched a Preseli Pils Lager. Events take place every month this summer at the Pembrokeshire brewery including a beer festival on 18-19 August.

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A pint of the usual?



Have you ever walked into a pub and wondered why the landlord decided to stock a certain beer? Mick Taylor, owner of Y Talbot in Tregaron, a former West Wales CAMRA Pub of the Year, gives the lowdown on his beer and cider buying strategy.

"One of the most enjoyable things about running a pub is choosing the beer," says Mick. "With the explosion in small breweries in recent years, there has never been more choice - in fact, the choice is almost bewildering and so we tend to focus on some core themes when buying.

"Firstly, we offer almost exclusively ales from Wales and the Marches and only buy

beers that have been brewed within 75 miles of Tregaron. We like to offer a range of beer styles and flavours but ones that have broad appeal. This means we maintain a balance between having regular favourites on the bar, like Mantle's Cwrw Teifi and Purple Moose's Glaslyn, and keeping an element of surprise by stocking one-off seasonal ales or beers from new breweries. We also go for ales that offer consistent quality so that we don't end up wasting too much.

"Looking ahead, the small brewery space seems quite crowded and I would not be surprised if some of them fell by the wayside. It may even already be at saturation point, so we are interested in backing long-term winners who have the quality and the brand to survive.

"On the cider front, there has always been a plethora of small producers but we focus on Wales and the Marches. Although that offers plenty of choice, their small production runs mean that actually getting a delivery can be quite challenging. I keep meaning to go on tour to pick up cider from individual farms but I never quite seem to have the time.

"However, we have steadily expanded our range of real ciders and, as we plan to offer even more during 2017, perhaps I will manage that cider tour after all!"

Membership of CAMRA soars

After 45 years of being one of the largest single-issue consumer groups in the world, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) is still seeing its membership grow by 10,000 each year.

It has recently signed up its 185,000th member, reinforcing its place among some of the top membership organisations in the UK. In fact, its

membership is greater than that of all the political parties apart from the Labour Party.

Issues facing the beer and pubs industry still top the agenda for many members, and CAMRA's key campaigns include the protection of pubs from closure, keeping beer affordable and promoting the wellbeing benefits of visiting your local.

See page 19 for information about how to join CAMRA.

Tristan Robinson headed to the picturesque coastal town of New Quay, with its array of multi-coloured houses, shops and pubs overlooking Cardigan Bay.

New Quay is reputed to be the setting for Dylan Thomas's town of Llareggub in *Under Milk Wood*. He described it as a "cliff-perched town at the far end of Wales", which sounded an ideal location for me to exercise my energetic dog, Branwen, as well as to satisfy one of the poet's (and my) favourite pastimes - visiting a pub!

Starting from the public car park next to the doctor's surgery and Coastguard office, we walked down Church Street to the first stop on our ramble. The appropriately named **Port Of Call** has recently undergone renovation and is now open as a restaurant, but also has a bar that serves one real ale from a changing range of Welsh breweries.

For our visit, I was treated to Gower Power (an amber 5.5% India Pale Ale from Gower Brewery), well-balanced and loaded with flavour. We sat out on the front terrace overlooking the Dolau Inn next door, a favourite haunt of Thomas's wife Caitlin, which sadly was recently closed as a licensed premises by its owners, Brains Brewery.

Buoyed by my first ale, we continued our trek down the hill and followed the road right around the corner to overlook the quay. Taking in the view across the bay and up the sweeping Ceredigion coast we briefly continued our walk uphill until we reached the **Hotel Penwig**.

This Brains-owned pub offered their usual range of Welsh beers, including Brains Bitter and Reverend James Original. I, however, opted for a pint of Rev James Gold (4.1%), which was a bright golden colour and refreshing with a caramel finish. The pub's interior was bright and spacious

and decorated with maritime pictures. Since dogs are not allowed inside, I again enjoyed my drink on the front terrace, enhanced by the fantastic view over the boats bobbing in the harbour.

Leaving the Penwig, we continued up the steep rise of Glanmor Terrace until we reached the **Black Lion**. Said to be Dylan Thomas's favourite pub in the town, this historic inn has since undergone some contemporary refurbishment, but still displays many photographs, poems and



Port Of Call

letters associated with the many times he enjoyed at the bar. It has a light and airy interior with main bar and dining areas, plus a large garden and decked area for outdoor eating and drinking, along with splendid views across the bay.



Black Lion

The pub usually serves Sharp's Doom Bar, plus a guest ale in the summer season. Dogs are not allowed inside so Branwen enjoyed a bowl of water beside an outside bench while I ordered a pint of Moho. This lovely 4.3% pale ale from Cardigan's Mantle Brewery was bursting with flavour and perfectly served.

We faced another short uphill walk to reach our next hostelry, the **Sea Horse Inn**, located at the top of Glanmor Terrace. This single-roomed pub welcomes visitors, locals and their four-legged friends, with dog treats offered to canine companions, much to Branwen's delight.

Regularly on the bar are beers from Evan Evans brewery, plus a real cider from Weston's. I opted for the Cwrw (Welsh for beer), a 4.2% fruity ale served bright with a slight head.

Despite Branwen's obvious desire to stay longer, we couldn't stop here as I had heard that the town's brewery was open to visitors.

Turning left at the top of Glanmor Terrace, we walked out of New Quay for about half a mile, using the pavement where we could. Shortly after passing a slip-road on the left to a large caravan park there was a narrow road on the right leading uphill from the main road. We took this and went up the steeply winding Penrhiw Pistyll Lane, bore left between a couple of houses and continued uphill until we reached a waypost for a public bridleway, pointing left. Taking this climb (Dylan Thomas wasn't wrong about New Quay being perched on a cliff!), we laboured on up the track between two hedges until the lane flattened and passed through a gate.

Here stood our final destination, the small farmstead of Panteg, home to **Penlon Cottage Brewery**. Branwen was happy for the opportunity to lie down and I for the chance of a pint just a few steps from the place it was brewed.



Hotel Penwig

My glass of bottle-conditioned Chocolate Stout was a delight, rich, dark and full-bodied with a bitter cocoa finish and a perfect end to our afternoon's adventure.

I was lucky to visit New Quay on a day that Penlon Brewery was open to visitors but, if you want to follow in my footsteps, check www.penlonbrewery.co.uk or social media for opening times before visiting.



Sea Horse Inn

For more information on the pubs in this feature, go to www.whatpub.com, CAMRA's online pub directory.

YEAR OF BEER

Every year, thousands of CAMRA members have their say about which pubs feature in the *Good Beer Guide*. They do so by scoring beer drunk in pubs on CAMRA's What Pub website. Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Pubs Officer, Alex Vokes, tells us more.

How many different beers were scored by CAMRA members during 2016 in the Bae Ceredigion branch area, and in how many pubs?

We received a total of 2011 scores last year. These were for 558 different beers which had been available in 54 pubs. This makes an average of almost 11 different beers being scored every week.

Which pubs had the most different beers on offer during the year, according to the scores you received?

Yr Hen Orsaf in Aberystwyth holds the crown with over 150 beers from 90 breweries being scored. The Ship and Castle, also in Aberystwyth, is a close second with 100 beers from 50 breweries. However, it's not just the pubs with lots of hand pumps that offer such variety. The Rhos yr Hafod Inn in Cross Inn, the Fronfelen Arms in Temple Bar, and the Three Horseshoe in Llangeitho have all provided excellent choice throughout the year – in fact, these pubs would dominate a “range of beers served per pump” contest!

Which beer was scored the most often?

The beer that received the most scores in our branch area was Moho. This 4.3% pale ale is brewed by Mantle Brewery in Cardigan with two varieties of American hops.

Did beers from any particular brewery get consistently high scores?

Most of our members' favourites seem to be from Welsh breweries. For example, beers from Mantle, Purple Moose, Cwrw Cader,

Evan Evans and Celt Experience all got consistently high scores. We've also seen some very highly rated beers from other Welsh breweries including Glamorgan, Cwrw Llyn, Bluestone, Cwm Rhondda and Oast House.

Which beers were rated most highly?

The highest rated beers last year were Ludlow's Black Knight, Cwm Rhondda's Boyo and Celt Experience's La Tene. It's great to see people enjoying beers that are so different in style, colour and taste.

CAMRA gives awards for different types of beer every year, and selects an overall Champion Beer of Britain. Were any champion beers recorded in local pubs last year?

Yes, a number of 2016's winners were spotted in the White Horse in Machynlleth (Titanic Plum Porter and Adnams Ghost Ship), the Ship and Castle in Aberystwyth (Grey Trees Diggers Gold) and the Glengower in Aberystwyth (Salopian Shropshire Gold).

Last year's Champion Beer of Britain, (Cwtch by Tiny Rebel) popped up in Aberystwyth at the Pier Hotel and the Glengower, in Machynlleth at the White Horse, and in New Quay at the Black Lion.



Alex Vokes



As well as helping to select pubs for the *Good Beer Guide*, how else does the local CAMRA branch use the scores?

The data gives us an excellent picture of the beer styles that are being enjoyed in the area. We can see which beers score consistently highly and, if a landlord asks for our opinion about which new beers to stock, we can use this information to advise them. We can also see which pubs tend to stick to the same beer and, if it's appropriate, ask them to consider stocking something different that we know local members enjoy drinking.

It sounds like you get lots of information already – do you need more people to provide beer scores?

Yes, please! Scoring your pint is a quick and easy way to play an active part in CAMRA and we'd love to get beer scores from more members - the more scores we get, the better quality our information is for the *Good Beer Guide*. I would also like to say a big thank you to all the members who currently submit beer scores and provide us with such a wealth of data about the local real ale scene.

How does someone start scoring their beers?

You need to be a CAMRA member to log in to the scoring function on www.whatpub.com.

You don't need to be a beer expert but you should remember that it's not just about giving the highest score to your personal favourite beer or marking down one that isn't to your normal taste. Consider the quality of a beer, how true it is to its style and how well the pub has kept and served it. Then score it according to What Pub's simple "marks out of 5" system, either as you go along on your smart phone, or jot your scores down and log in at home on your computer. I also happily accept scores on paper!

Analysing scores for beers drunk by other people must be thirsty work! Which beer was your personal favourite last year?

I am lucky to live in an area with such a rich choice of beers and so many free houses. It's a tough call to pick a favourite but, if pushed, I'd opt for a hoppy, pale ale - perhaps Hop Twister by Salopian.



Cwrw Ceredigion met Charles Dark who owns the Wynnstay Arms in Machynlleth with his wife, Sheila.

How long have you run the Wynnstay?

We originally bought the Wynnstay in 1998. This was our first venture into the trade, after years in marketing and film-making. We had stayed and dined all over the world and had a clear idea of what we liked. After ten years, we sold up but then, last June, we bought it back, shortly after it had closed.

Why do you think people enjoy a visit to your pub?

Well, the Wynnstay is a traditional inn rather than a pub. We host locals and visitors, drinkers and diners alike. Our “bar” remains a key part where locals get to meet new faces and travellers mix with locals. As well as local ales, we have a Welsh lager, Wrexham, a Welsh apple brandy and Welsh versions of Baileys and Cointreau. Our ciders are also Welsh. We adopt the same attitude to our food – it’s as local as possible and quality is essential. However, we import all our wines directly from vineyards in Italy, so that we can offer quality single estate wines by the glass at normal pub prices.

Has there been a growth in demand for real ale?

Yes, and I have also noticed ale drinkers trying to wean others from lager sometimes. Our real ales are very popular with diners, too - a fine ale with the best steak, chips and salad is a meal fit for a king.

What beers are the most popular on the bar?

Cader Gold and Cwrw Coch from Cader Brewery in Dolgellau. It’s interesting to note that some local CAMRA members are also keen on our house wines – on tap!



Charles and Sheila Dark

Do you have any plans for changes or new events?

We are developing the Cwtch, our new lounge bar area. We already have three fires and will probably install another for next winter.

As far as events are concerned, we are hosting our first beer festival from 16-18 June. It will be a small event with the focus on excellent quality real ale, cider and perry and there’ll be no lager! We are aiming to do something small but of high quality. We hope to include meet the brewer sessions and talks on cooking with beer and cider. We would like it to grow year by year, not to become massive but to always be a bit different and a little bit special which is our Wynnstay philosophy.

What do you enjoy most about being a publican?

We enjoy the balance of creating a true meeting place, where visitors and locals, gourmets and farmers can meet and talk.

Which famous person would you like to have as a regular?

Barack Obama. What a guy!

Find out more about the Wynnstay on www.wynnstay.wales and keep up to date with the plans for the beer and cider festival via their Facebook page.

FOUR OF THE BEST: PUB GARDENS

White Lion Hotel, Machynlleth



There are fantastic views of the surrounding hills from the large, rear garden of the White Lion Hotel. Inside you'll find a range of constantly changing six real ales in the beamed bar with inglenook fireplace. The menu offers homemade food at great value, and dogs are welcome. This historic coaching inn holds the Machynlleth Beer Festival every late May bank holiday weekend.

Victoria Inn, Borth



If you fancy a beer on the beach, head for the Victoria Inn in Borth, an easy train ride from Aberystwyth. Watch the sunset from the decking area or sea view terrace with blankets for chillier nights. Up to five real ales often include Wye Valley's HPA and Sharp's Atlantic. The food is hearty and there's a great range of specials. Dogs are welcome in the downstairs bar and decking area.

Black Lion, New Quay



Perched on one of New Quay's steep streets, this smartly refurbished pub was a favourite of Dylan Thomas. The garden has wide-reaching coastal views, children's play areas and a large covered seating area. Dogs are allowed in the garden via the side entrance. Sharp's Doom Bar is joined by a guest beer, often local, at busier times. The good quality food comes in generous portions.

Ship Inn, Tresaith



Set in a pretty village on the Wales Coast Path, this pub has stunning sea views from its terrace and conservatory. The open-plan bar is large and airy and offers two Brains beers; a third is added at busy times. Good quality food ranges from posh sandwiches to a three course meal. Parking is very limited – it's best to park at the top of the village and walk down.

Search for pubs with a garden on CAMRA's free online pub directory www.whatpub.com. Please advise us of any changes to information via the "submit update" option.

The White Lion

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Beer Festival Fri 26, Sat 27 & Sun 28 May

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The Slaters Arms

Traditional Welsh freehouse



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Although the Bae Ceredigion branch of CAMRA does not organise a beer festival, there are lots of festivals in local pubs and other events at which you can enjoy good beer and real cider throughout the year.

Pub beer festivals

26-29 May, Glengower Hotel, Aberystwyth. Up to 16 beers, many from Welsh breweries, and several ciders at the 2016 West Wales Pub of the Year. Traditional charity raft race on Sunday afternoon on the beach (proceeds go to the RNLI).

27 May, Three Horseshoe, Llangetho. Free entry to Geithofest held at this friendly village local with live music, mini beer festival and BBQ. Autumn beer festival in September.



27-29 May, White Lion Hotel, Machynlleth. Range of cask ale and cider in the marquee, and live music. Small admission charge, and normal food service from the hotel.

16-18 June, Wynnstey Arms Hotel, Machynlleth. First beer and cider festival at this pub which was recently bought by new owners. Hot and cold food including pizza from hotel's pizzeria.

14-16 July, Pentre Arms, Llangrannog. Second beer festival at this seafront pub. Welsh folk band on Saturday night.

The Ship and Castle in Aberystwyth holds a beer festival every spring (the 2017 event was at the end of March) and autumn. A corner of the bar in this real ale flagship is transformed into a mini beer festival with beers served from the barrel along with a handful of ciders.

Yr Hen Orsaf in Aberystwyth holds various Wetherspoons beer festivals throughout the year.

Local beer festivals

1-3 June, Llanfair Clydogau Beer Festival. Small and informal event in the village hall with a handful of real ales, cider and wine, plus basic refreshments and a BBQ on Saturday.

11-12 August, Aberaeron Beer and Cider Festival. Held in the Yacht Club right on the seafront, this festival has added a Friday evening session this year. Real cider and perry lovers are in for a treat with as many on offer as cask ales. Live music, good value food, and Bavarian theme on Friday.

17 February 2018 (TBC), Lampeter Beer Festival. Organised by the Lampeter Round Table, over £3000



was raised for charity at the 2017 event. Held at the University campus, it offers over twenty cask beers, lagers and ciders from across Wales plus some bottled beer. Music from local bands and hot and cold food.

CAMRA beer festivals in West Wales

24-26 August: Swansea Bay Beer & Cider Festival, Brangwyn Hall, Swansea

5-7 October: Carmarthen Beer Festival, St Peter's Civic Hall, Carmarthen

Food festivals

Breweries and cider producers usually have stalls at food festivals – two of the best local ones are held in Lampeter (29 July) and Cardigan (12 August).

For more information on the pubs in this feature, go to www.whatpub.com, CAMRA's online pub directory.

Bae Ceredigion CAMRA member, Mike Galliers from Penwch, tells us why he loves the Rhos yr Hafod Inn in Cross Inn (Llanon).



Mike Galliers in the Rhos yr Hafod Inn

What's the pub's history?

It dates from 1849 and was originally called the Cross Inn. The name changed to the Rhos yr Hafod about 40 years ago, but there is still a distinctive black and white Cross Inn sign on the side of the building.

Tell us about the landlady.

Elin Hywel took on the pub just over two years ago, and it is her first venture into running a pub. She has refurbished the interior, with the support of her family, and it is now a really cosy place to enjoy a pint. Along with her mother and sister who occasionally work behind the bar, Elin offers a warm and friendly welcome. In her spare time, she plays rugby for Whitland and Scarlets at Premiership level and the pub has become a popular place to watch rugby internationals on TV.

What real ales have been on the bar recently?

There are always two handpumps serving real ale and the choice changes constantly. Beers from Welsh breweries are regularly on offer and have included Mantle, Glamorgan and Evan Evans recently. They are well promoted on blackboards in both

the front and back bars, and there is also a very tempting "Ales coming soon" blackboard telling you what awaits in the cellar. On the cider front, Elin has just started to stock a bottled Welsh cider in response to demand from customers and she has had the occasional bag in box cider.

What are the regulars like?

The pub is a popular place for people from the nearby villages to enjoy a beer after work. Elin's father, John, a dairy farmer, is a regular fixture at the bar in the early evenings and he often initiates an interesting debate about a wide range of subjects. The conversations tend to chop and change between Welsh and English to allow everyone to join in.

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

I like sitting in one of the settles by the front window as you can chat to people sitting around the bar as well as those working behind it. In the warmer weather, I enjoy sitting on the patio in the evening sunshine, or in the large garden at the rear.

Does the pub hold any regular events or activities?

The pub has hosted more events recently, including quizzes, a paella night and live music. Some of these have raised money towards a defibrillator for the village. There's a large collection of vintage vinyl in a cubby hole near the bar and customers are welcome to browse through the records and make a request for what they want to listen to.

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

The Rhos yr Hafod was a well-deserved runner-up in the 2017 Bae Ceredigion CAMRA pub of the year competition and everyone is guaranteed an excellent pint of interesting real ale and a warm welcome in this friendly rural pub.

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