



Cwrw Ceredigion



Pub news ♦ Brewery bulletin ♦ Beer festivals



Find pubs selling local real ale
Slaters Arms is pub of the year
Real ale ramble heads north

The free magazine of Bae Ceredigion CAMRA

Spring/Summer 2019



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Welcome to *Cwrw Ceredigion*, which is produced by the Bae Ceredigion branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and is funded by advertising from local pubs and breweries. Our aim is to promote local breweries, cider makers and the best places to drink real ale and cider in the area.

If you are a visitor reading this, welcome to our beautiful part of West Wales. If you are keen to try local products during your stay, then turn to page 13 and discover how CAMRA's LocAle scheme can help you find pubs that are committed to selling locally brewed real ale.



Look out for the LocAle clip to find a locally brewed pint

Congratulations to the Slaters Arms in Corris which has won our pub of the year award. Slaters is the most northerly pub in our branch area which extends from Corris all the way down to Aberporth, just north of Cardigan. Many thanks to all members who voted for the pub of the year and to the judges who travelled the length and breadth of our branch area to evaluate the shortlisted pubs against set criteria.

Cwrw Ceredigion is produced by a small band of volunteers who contribute articles, help sell advertising and distribute magazines to local pubs. If you'd like to get involved or suggest an idea for a future feature, please do get in touch.

Our next issue will be published in October but you can follow us on Twitter or Facebook to keep up to date with the local real ale scene.

Mary Galliers, Editor

P.S. All members are warmly invited to our AGM in June. See our website for details.

Contact us

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We rely on income from advertising to fund production costs. Space is limited and is sold on a first come, first served basis. We can design your advert, free of charge. Contact: membership@baeceredigion.camra.org.uk

Bae Ceredigion CAMRA branch

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

Chairman: Tristan Robinson
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Front cover: Sunset in Aberystwyth (Ian Medcalf)



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 are not necessarily those of CAMRA either locally or nationally, and publication of an advertisement is not an endorsement of quality by CAMRA. If you feel you have been treated unfairly in a pub, contact Trading Standards. See www.tradingstandardswales.org.uk.

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Tel: 01654 761324 Corris, near Machynlleth



Slaters Arms is our pub of the year



Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Chairman Tristan Robinson presents the pub of the year award to Mike Jones, landlord of the Slaters Arms

The Slaters Arms in Corris has been selected as Bae Ceredigion CAMRA pub of the year 2019. The pub was one of the four finalists last year but this is the first time that it has won the top title.

Pubs are nominated for the award by local CAMRA members and then a group of judges visit each one anonymously to evaluate them against set criteria over a couple of months. The quality of the real ale is the most important single factor for a CAMRA award. Other criteria are the role a pub plays in its local community, atmosphere, décor, overall offer and welcome.

Listed in CAMRA's *Real Heritage Pubs of Wales*, Slaters has a characterful and attractive bar with massive inglenook style fireplace and a slate floor. The handpumps always offer three real ales of differing types and strength which are served in excellent condition, and there is a selection of real ciders. Tasters are offered and beers can be ordered in third pint measures. The range is regularly promoted on Facebook and a list of beers that are coming soon is displayed by the bar.

Visitors and locals alike receive a warm welcome at Slaters and there are regular music nights and other forms of entertainment throughout the year.

"This award recognises the amount of effort landlord Mike Jones puts into running the Slaters Arms which has become the hub of village life," said Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Chairman Tristan Robinson.

"Mike also has a real knowledge about and interest in real ales and his enthusiasm for good beer is evident by the superb range that is always on offer here."

Ship and Castle is runner-up

Judges praised the excellent beer quality and choice offered in runner-up, the Ship and Castle in Aberystwyth.

"The Ship and Castle has a long-standing and well-deserved reputation for selling top quality real ale from a huge range of different breweries," said Tristan. "It is a well-run, comfortable town centre pub with a good atmosphere, and is a pleasant place to enjoy a top-notch pint or two."

Praise for finalists

The other two finalists were the Three Horseshoe in Llangeitho, which was runner-up last year, and 2016 winner the Glengower in Aberystwyth.

Judges noted the friendly welcome in the family-run Three Horseshoe and the support it gives to the local community, calling it "a joyful pub and a great example of a much loved proper village local." Welsh cider is sold as well as good quality real ale, and events are held throughout the year.

The Glengower's efficient, friendly staff impressed the judges who also enjoyed the excellent standard of the real ale and food in this bright and comfortable seafront pub. An annual beer festival and other activities are organised here to raise money for the RNLI.

Y Ffarmers set to reopen

Y Ffarmers in the rural village of Llanfihangel y Creuddyn near Aberystwyth was gutted by fire in early 2018 and the pub has been closed since then. It is due to reopen in April after an extensive rebuilding operation.

"We had a slow start to the rebuild but changed the work team at Christmas which helped to speed things up no end," landlady Caitlin Morse told us in March. "I am now running the rebuild and things are going really well.

"We have kept the same layout as before but things will look a little different. It's still very much Y Ffarmers though and nearly all of the team will be returning including the head chef.



Caitlin Morse (centre) with Team Rebuild

"We have received so much support from customers, friends of Y Ffarmers, our loyal staff and villagers which has kept us going through this hard time. We feel so proud of everyone involved and we are looking forward to getting our beautiful new pub back on the map!"

New bar in Borth

Libanus 1877, a boutique cinema and restaurant, opened last year in Borth. The Vestry Lounge Bar is located at the rear of the restaurant and serves both cinema and restaurant customers.

As well as a drink with a meal, cinema goers can enjoy their favourite tippie while watching the film.

Anyone wanting to pop in for a quick drink in the comfortable bar is also welcome.

The bar sells a full range of drinks including various bottled beers and, depending on footfall, a guest real ale. This was Sharp's Atlantic when we visited.

Libanus 1877 is located in a former chapel in the High Street, Borth and the bar is open from 11am–2pm and 6pm–9pm.



Libanus 1877, Borth

Real ale coming soon?

In early 2018, the Rhyd y Pennau in Bow Street was boarded up by the then landlord Punch Taverns, having been abandoned by the previous operator. Fortunately for local pub goers, it was acquired by Star Pubs and Bars (Heineken's Pub Co) who decided to re-open it rather than dispose of the site.

Lauren Murphy took on the lease last July and, since then, support for the pub has been strong. In particular, it has established a reputation for showing sporting fixtures on multi-screens with multi-zone sound. Real ale made a brief appearance last year but, unfortunately, sales volumes proved too low and the beer offer was restricted to bottles when we went to press. However, Lauren hopes that a boost to food sales will enable her to sell real ale once again.

"We took on a new chef in early 2019 and we know that, with the right food offer and a busy restaurant, we will be able to maintain hand-pull sales," said Lauren.



Rhyd y Pennau, Bow Street

"Eventually we hope to use our free-of-tie hand-pull for a rotation of guest ales from Welsh breweries. We would like to thank the local community for their support. We are looking forward to our first full summer season and to welcoming holiday makers to the pub."

In the meantime, Star Pubs and Bars say they are pleased with how well sales have developed at the Rhyd y Pennau and are planning a major refurbishment of the pub this autumn. Fingers crossed that we will soon have another real ale pub on our patch!

Pubs perk up in Lampeter

Strictly speaking, Lampeter is outside the Bae Ceredigion CAMRA branch area but many of our members live nearby and have found pubs serving a good pint are rather thin on the ground.

Lampeter's real ale scene has improved recently, though. Firstly the former Kings Head reopened as the Nags Head and has been selling draught beer from Sharp's.

Then, late last year, both the Black Lion Hotel (which was closed and then sold by Brains Brewery) and the Cwmanne Tavern reopened. Since then, both pubs have sold an interesting range of real ales from mainly Welsh breweries including Gower, Tenby Harbour and Grey Trees.

Good reports have reached us about the food at the Cwmanne Tavern, too, and their Thursday night curry and a pint special offer sounds particularly tempting.

Lampeter is easily reached by bus from Aberystwyth and it is an ideal future candidate for our Real Ale Ramble feature.



Cwmanne Tavern, Lampeter

Rhos yr Hafod

Cross Inn (Llanon)

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All change in Borth at the Victoria Inn

After a short period of uncertainty about its future, the Victoria Inn, Borth changed hands last autumn and the new owners have recruited Rob Bailey as manager. Rob's former pub in Staffordshire was highly regarded by the local CAMRA branch and won a number of CAMRA awards in quick succession.

"Rob and his business partner Mark reopened the Earl Grey in Leek in mid 2014," said Steve Barton chairman of Staffordshire Moorlands CAMRA. "They are both passionate and knowledgeable about beer and customer service so the place was an immediate hit with the local drinking fraternity and CAMRA members.

"The pub was voted our branch pub of the year in 2015. It went on to be voted the Staffordshire county pub of the year before becoming the West Midlands regional pub of the year in 2016. Rob's track record of running a decent pub and his passion for decent beer will almost certainly see big changes for the better at the Victoria."

Encouraged by this glowing report, Bae Ceredigion CAMRA chairman Tristan Robinson visited the Victoria to meet Rob and ask about his plans.

Cider crown goes to Kane's Bar

As *Cwrw Ceredigion* went to press, the results of our 2019 cider pub of the year were announced.

Kane's Bar, Aberystwyth took the top award and runner-up was the Druid Inn, Goginan.

The other two finalists were Y Talbot, Tregaron and the Three Horseshoe, Llangeitho.



Rob Bailey (left) hopes to point the Victoria in the right direction

"We have three ales on handpump currently but our plan is to expand this in the future," said Rob. "Whim Ales from Hartington in Derbyshire used to brew Earl Grey Bitter for us, so it's possible we could bring something of theirs over here. We're also looking to have some craft ales on tap and real ciders. I'm keen to give our visitors something they may not have seen around here before."

It sounds like local real ale fans and visitors to Borth are in for a treat and *Cwrw Ceredigion* wishes Rob all the best in his new venture.

Produced from fermented apple juice, real cider is a drink for all seasons but it's sometimes easier to find in pubs during the summer months. Visit our top four cider pubs to enjoy real cider throughout the year or you can use CAMRA's online pub directory www.whatpub.com to find other pubs serving the real stuff.

If you are keen to try locally produced cider, look out for Brecon Beacons Cider; Gethin's; Welsh Mountain Cider; Apple County Cider Company; Halletts; Old Monty; and Dee Cider.

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Swift halves

Y Llew Coch, Machynlleth is fast turning into the premier local pub for live music. Its packed programme includes a good dose of heavy metal but also features a Ska and Punk Festival in May, a Proms night in June and a Reggae weekend in July.

The Halfway Inn, Pysgah is gaining a reputation for serving good food from a varied menu with excellent vegetarian choices. The three course menu is great value and you can wash it down with beer from Monty's Brewery – there are normally two to choose from.

Caitlin Morse, landlady of **Y Ffarmers, Llanfihangel y Creuddyn** has joined Lewis Johnston as a business partner in the **Druid Inn, Goginan**. They also jointly run the Crafty Mare, a travelling bar in a horsebox specialising in craft beer, gin and cider.

As we went to press, **Yr Hen Orsaf, Aberystwyth** was closed for refurbishment. Plans for this JD Wetherspoon pub included redecoration, new carpets, booth seating and an extension to the rear conservatory.



The **Rhos yr Hafod, Cross Inn (Llanon)** has recently opened its function room which is ideal for family events or small meetings. Work is also underway to improve the seating areas in the large garden.

Both the **Pentre Arms** and the **Ship Inn, Llangrannog** have been refurbished during the winter months. Mantle Brewery's MOHO is often on the bar at the Ship.

The sunny rear courtyard at the **Cadwgan, Aberaeron** has had a makeover ready for the summer and for the party to celebrate landlord Martin Holland's 15th year at the pub in October.

Over our border but well worth a visit is the **Dolaucothi Arms Hotel, Pumsaint**. This 16th century pub has won the BBC Countryfile magazine award 2019 for the Best British Country Pub. Over 30,000 readers and online voters registered and voted for the finalists.

Beer in brief

Y Talbot, Tregaron has launched Cwrw Cymreig, a 4% pale ale brewed by Evan Evans, to raise funds for the National Eisteddfod. This major Welsh cultural festival will be held in Tregaron in August 2020 and there will be a mini beer festival at the pub during the event.



Real ale has returned to the **Castle Hotel, Aberystwyth** with MOHO spotted on a recent visit.

The **Vale of Aeron, Temple Bar** is selling real ale from pins (smaller barrels than those usually used in pubs). Beer from Welsh breweries such as Gower, Purple Moose, Coles and Tenby Harbour has proved popular.

The new landlord at the **Sea Horse, New Quay** has continued his predecessor's tradition of selling Evan Evans beers.

Sharp's Doom Bar is now offered by the new leaseholders at the **Teifi Inn, Ffair Rhos**. Bar meals are served from Thursday to Sunday.

World first for brewery visitor centre

The brewery visitor centre at Bluestone Brewing Company has become the first in the world to be awarded Green Key status. This global eco-label represents a commitment by businesses that their tourism establishments adhere to the strict environmental criteria.

Bluestone's brewing process uses their own water supply which filters down through the Preseli Mountains and collects in a home built well. It is regularly tested and has been found to be perfect for use in brewing without any filtration or purification. All waste water from the brewery is gravity piped to a reed bed filtration system before it is returned to a local trout stream. After brewing, any spent

hops, yeast, beer slops and the brewer's grain are fed to the cattle and sheep on the farm. An old stone building was recently converted into a bottling plant, enabling them to bottle on site rather than transport their beer many miles away.

Their visitor centre uses energy from solar panels on top of the brewery building and there is a compost toilet block with urinals made from old beer barrels.

"Being green has always been a huge part of Bluestone Brewing Company, so the Green Key accreditation seemed like the perfect thing for us to apply for," said Emily Hutchinson. "The award is a fantastic achievement and something that will hopefully inspire other local businesses."

Breweries in brief

Penlon Cottage Brewery's café bar, which first opened last year on the promenade at New Quay is due to reopen this year. See www.penlonbrewery.co.uk or Facebook for more details of Penlon at the Beach and for opening times of the Granary bar and tasting room which is located at the brewery.

Red Berry Porter, a tasty new beer from **Cader Ales**, was offered by several local pubs over the winter. The brewery has recently collaborated with Bragdy Pwll to produce Caban IPA, a 5.4% single hop Citra brew. This was seen for the first time locally in February on the bar at the Ship and Castle, Aberystwyth.

Black by **Boss Brewing** won gold at the Champion Beer of Wales awards announced in late 2018 at the Great Welsh Beer and Cider Festival in Cardiff. The runner-up was Digger's Gold by Grey Trees and Tiny Rebel's Cwtch took third place.

If you ever fancy a beer on a train journey, then you are in luck. Transport for Wales are

now serving canned beer from **Boss Brewing** on their refreshment trolleys.

Local **Tiny Rebel** fans were in their element in October at the Ship and Castle, Aberystwyth. Landlord Ian Blair hosted a meet the brewer evening and tap takeover with Tiny Rebel beer on every handpump and keg tap.



Ian Blair at the tap takeover

HOW TO DRINK LIKE A LOCAL

Are you looking for a local pint?
CAMRA's LocAle scheme can help
you find pubs that are committed to
selling locally brewed real ale.

LocAle is a national CAMRA scheme to promote pubs which agree to set aside one hand pump to permanently serve a local real ale. The Bae Ceredigion CAMRA branch recently decided to roll out the scheme to help both residents and visitors find a locally brewed pint.

LocAle was created by the Nottingham CAMRA branch when the balance of beer offered in regional pubs changed after the closure of Hardys and Hansons brewery. Local members were concerned that publicans would overlook smaller local breweries and turn to nationally available products. The scheme has since been adopted by CAMRA branches across Britain.

Each CAMRA branch decides which breweries it considers as local, reflecting local circumstances. To meet the criteria for LocAle accreditation by Bae Ceredigion, a pub must agree to permanently serve real ale from at least one brewery that is based within 56 miles of the pub (based on the shortest driving distance).

"The 56 mile radius was chosen based on our branch area's population density, physical geography and the number of breweries nearby," explained Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Pubs Officer Alex Vokes. "We wanted members of the scheme to be able to stock beer from a range of Welsh breweries including Mantle, Evan Evans, Bluestone, Purple Moose and Penlon, to name but a few."

Once a pub signs up to the scheme, they receive pump clip 'crownors' to help customers identify which hand pump is dispensing the local beer, posters and a LocAle window sticker. The pub is marked as being part of the LocAle scheme on WhatPub, CAMRA's online pub database,



Alex Vokes enjoying a local pint

and a symbol is added on its entry if it features in the *Good Beer Guide*.

"Drinking beer brewed nearby supports our pubs and breweries and it's also better for the environment as it has less far to travel to reach the consumer," added Alex.

"Several pubs have joined the Bae Ceredigion LocAle scheme already but we would like to encourage others to consider it. If you think being included in the scheme would benefit your local pub, please discuss it with the landlord and ask them to contact me."

LocAle pubs in Bae Ceredigion

These pubs have committed to permanently serve real ale from at least one brewery within 56 miles driving distance:

The Black Lion, New Quay
The Druid Inn, Goginan
The Glengower, Aberystwyth
Rhos yr Hafod, Cross Inn
Tafarn y Maes, Capel Bangor
Y Talbot, Tregaron
Three Horseshoe, Llangeitho
Wynnstay Arms, Machynlleth



If you are a publican interested in joining the Bae Ceredigion LocAle scheme, please email pubs_officer@baeceredigion.camra.org.uk and we'll arrange to visit and discuss the scheme with you.

REAL ALE RAMBLE

Every issue Tristan Robinson reports on a day trip around several local pubs. This time his ramble took the form of a two day break in Gwynedd. He visited three dog-friendly pubs located along the route of two walks near Machynlleth.

Arriving in the small village of Cemmaes Road to the east of Machynlleth, we parked in the car park of the Dovey Valley Hotel and caught a T12 Bus (also X89) from Cemmaes Road to the nearby village of Penegoes (OS grid reference SH 776 009).

From there we walked up the road signposted for Maesperthi Caravan Park and continued along it, past the entrance to the caravan park and uphill until we reached a footpath sign on the left. This indicated the direction for Glyndŵr's Way, a National Trail named after the 15th century Welsh prince and folk hero Owain Glyndŵr. The path led us around the hill of Bryn Wg and then dropped steeply down toward the village of Abercegir.

Turning left onto the main road we continued a short way then turned right at a T junction and walked uphill until we reached a footpath sign on the left pointing up a lane. We followed the footpath, which skirted around the base of Rhos y Silio and Cefn Coch hills with great views of the Dovey Valley below.

The footpath continued downhill to a farm track, where we turned left and followed the waymarker signs down the hill to join the A470. Turning left we walked to a roundabout and took the left turn to go back to the **Dovey Valley Hotel**. After our walk of about 6½ miles, we had earned some refreshment.

Listed by CAMRA as having a nationally important historic interior, the Dovey Valley Hotel is a delightful pub. It has a traditional slate floor and a single corner bar in the main room. This room and the snug situated through a corridor from the bar are decorated



throughout with local photos and the history of the nearby railway station, which was closed by the Beeching cuts in 1965. The bar is an interesting feature in itself, with wooden-framed sash windows above giving an impression of a railway station ticket office.

The single handpump served Monty's Sunshine, a 4.2% golden ale that was bright and floral and really hit the spot. We sat at a wooden table in the cosy main bar and chatted with some of the patrons, including locals and visitors, all of whom were filled with praise for this historic pub.

The following day we returned to Machynlleth and then headed north on the A487 towards Dolgellau. At the signpost for Corris we dropped down a steep lane and parked near the Corris Railway, a narrow gauge railway that runs along the Dulas valley.

Walking into the village we reached the Slaters Arms pub (OS grid reference SH 755 079), which was to be our stopping point in the early evening after that day's six mile walk.



Beside the pub is a crossroads with one lane sloping steeply downwards, which we took and continued to head out of the village until we reached a bridleway signposted up a sloping gravelled path to the left. This took us on a gradually rising route through woodland around Mynydd Fron-felen and Mynydd Ty-mawr before we reached the marked footpath down through fields and to Esgair Iwyd. We continued downhill along footpaths to a T junction onto a forestry track, where we turned right and followed the river along the Cwm Glesyrch valley to the village of Ceinws.

We arrived at 5 pm, just as the village pub, **Tafarn Dwynant**, was opening, so we popped in to rest our weary legs. The entrance leads into a games room and bar area, with the bar continuing into the rest of the pub, which also doubles as an art gallery and dining area.



Tafarn Dwynant, Ceinws

The two real ales, Wye Valley HPA (4% pale ale, sweet and citrusy with a bitter finish) and Purple Moose Glaslyn (4.2% bitter), were both in very fine condition. Behind the bar a display of beer pump clips showed past and future ales from breweries including Wye Valley, Salopian, Swan and Weetwood.

The pub was quiet, with a few locals chatting around the bar, but quickly began to fill as customers arrived for evening meals. The food looked delicious and we were informed that ingredients are sourced locally wherever possible. After spending a pleasant hour we left the pub, heading over the bridge and along the road, taking the right hand fork down a country lane before the bridge to the

A487. We passed Corris Caravan Park and eventually arrived back at the **Slaters Arms** in the centre of Corris.



Slaters Arms, Corris

The pub is listed by CAMRA as having a regionally important historic interior, being a main room with traditional slate floor, plastered walls with stone reveals in various places and a large inglenook fireplace with wood burner. No additional heating was necessary on our visit since the pub was bustling with locals, holidaymakers and international artists who attend residencies at the nearby Stiwdio Maelor art gallery.

The three real ales on the bar came from Cader Ales (Cader Gold, 3.8% golden ale), Gloucester (Priory Pale, 3.7% pale citrusy ale) and Big Bog (Quagmire, 6% old ale). All were in top condition and available to try in one third pint tasters for the price of a pint. There were also draught ciders on offer, including Rich's Farmhouse (6% medium).

Our evening meals, eaten in the separate comfortable dining room, were generous and tasted great. After two afternoons of good walking it was a delight to be welcomed by staff and customers alike in a pub at the heart of the community. We raised a glass to a fantastic end to our short break in the north of our CAMRA branch area.

Both walking routes are on OS Explorer map 215. Check pubs' social media and websites for opening times as these can change during the year.

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The Bae Ceredigion branch of CAMRA does not organise a beer festival but there are lots of festivals in local pubs and further afield where you can enjoy good beer and real cider. Here are those we know about this year.

Beer and cider festivals in our area

The **Llanfair Clydogau Beer Festival** runs from Thursday 30 May - Saturday 1 June in the village hall. This small and friendly event near Lampeter offers a handful of real ales, cider and wine, plus basic refreshments and a BBQ on Saturday evening.

Running from 5pm on Friday 10 August and all day from 12 noon on Saturday 11 August, the **Aberaeron Beer and Cider Festival** is held in the Yacht Club on the seafront and has a lovely relaxed atmosphere. Real cider and perry lovers are in for a treat with as many on offer as there are cask ales. There is live music on Saturday and a range of food stalls.

Festivals in local pubs and breweries

Several pubs in **Aberystwyth** hold beer and cider festivals during the year. No dates had been finalised when we went to press but keep an eye out for posters in pubs or on Facebook for events at the Ship and Castle, the Glengower and Kane's Cider Bar. Various Wetherspoons beer festivals take place at Yr Hen Orsaf, next to the railway station, throughout the year.

In **Machynlleth**, the White Lion Hotel, holds a festival with cask ale and music in a marquee over the late May Bank Holiday.

The Pentre Arms, **Llangrannog** and the Three Horseshoe, **Llangeitho** are likely to hold a beer festival, too.

Bluestone Brewing is hosting a beer festival at the brewery in Cilgwyn, near Newport in Pembrokeshire on 16-17 August with live music, food and beers from across the country alongside their own ales.



Swansea Bay Beer Festival

CAMRA festivals in Wales

The nearest official CAMRA beer festival to our branch area is held in St Peter's Civic Hall, **Carmarthen** and runs from Thursday 3 to Saturday 5 October.

The **Swansea Bay Beer and Cider Festival** takes place in Brangwyn Hall from Thursday 22 to Saturday 24 August.

The CAMRA **Great Welsh Beer and Cider Festival** will take place in Cardiff in the autumn.

British beer festivals

As its name implies, the **Great British Beer Festival** is Britain's biggest such event with hundreds of beers and ciders served from 30 different bars. It runs from 6 to 10 August at Olympia in London.

Closer to home, CAMRA's **Great British Beer Festival Winter** will take place in Birmingham in 2020 after being held in Norwich for the last three years.

We share details of all local beer festivals on Facebook – follow our page to get the latest news. Please check the festival date and any other details mentioned in this feature before you plan a visit.

FOUR OF THE BEST IN THE WEST

Every year since 2012 a pub from the Bae Ceredigion area has won CAMRA's West Wales pub of the year award. Four pubs were part of this amazing achievement – read on to find out why they impressed the judges.

Choosing CAMRA's pub of the year

Every year CAMRA crowns a national pub of the year, with the winning pub gaining a great deal of media coverage and attracting lots of new customers. The process to find the national winner starts at local CAMRA branch level around March when branches select their pub of the year. These local pubs then compete against winners from neighbouring branches to find regional winners until, after several rounds of judging, the national winner is announced.

At every stage in the competition, pubs are visited and judged anonymously by CAMRA members who evaluate them against set criteria. The quality of the real ale 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, atmosphere, décor, overall offer and welcome.

West Wales pub of the year

Here in Bae Ceredigion, our local pub of the year goes up against the winning pubs from Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire in the competition for CAMRA West Wales pub of the year, a competition that has been won by Bae Ceredigion entrant for the last seven consecutive years.

The West Wales winner then competes against the winners from North and South Wales to find the CAMRA Wales pub of the year which then progresses to the next stage of the national competition.

Y Talbot, Tregaron (West Wales pub of the year in 2012 and 2015)

Presenting the pub of the year award to landlord Mick Taylor in 2012, former *Bae Ceredigion* CAMRA Chairman Rhys Jones



summed up Y Talbot's appeal as "a classic example of everything a good pub should be."

This historic pub features in CAMRA's Real Heritage Pubs of Wales, and judges rated highly the atmosphere and décor in its cosy bars with their low beamed ceilings and open fires.

A beer from Cardigan-based Mantle Brewery is always on the handpumps, along with at least one other real ale from breweries based in Wales and the Marches. Several real ciders and often a perry are also on draught, and the range is promoted on blackboards in both bars.

In 2015 Y Talbot went on to win a hat trick of awards when it became Bae Ceredigion pub of the year, Bae Ceredigion cider pub of the year and West Wales pub of the year.



FOUR OF THE BEST IN THE WEST

Druid Inn, Goginan (West Wales pub of the year in 2013, 2014 and 2017)

The Druid Inn is the only Bae Ceredigion pub to have won the West Wales pub of the year award three times, and the only one to go on to win the Wales pub of the year competition (which it did in 2017).



The Druid Inn

In fact, the pub has been well-known to CAMRA members for some time, having been in the *Good Beer Guide* for over 40 consecutive years. A raft of CAMRA awards and certificates are proudly displayed above the huge fireplace in the cosy front bar.

Real ale and cider is promoted with enthusiasm by landlord Lewis Johnson and his friendly and knowledgeable team who are always happy to offer advice and tasters to customers. Other features such as the excellent value home-cooked food and the role that the pub plays in its community have also been scored highly by CAMRA judges over the years.

Glengower, Aberystwyth (West Wales pub of the year in 2016)

The Glengower always offers beers from Welsh breweries along with a range of cider and perry from its dedicated cider bar. The beer and cider range is extended during the pub's annual real ale and cider festival. Forthcoming beers are displayed behind the bar and service is prompt and efficient with tasters offered.

"We gave the Bae Ceredigion CAMRA award to the Glengower Hotel for the first time in 2016 and so it was a fantastic achievement for landlord Ian Richards when the pub went on to win the West Wales competition," said Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Chairman Tristan Robinson.

Rhos yr Hafod, Cross Inn (West Wales pub of the year in 2018)

Having come runner-up in the Bae Ceredigion pub of the year competition in 2017, the Rhos yr Hafod took the top honours in 2018.

This village pub sells a constantly changing choice of real ales from Welsh breweries in excellent condition, with a beer blackboard and Facebook page promoting what's coming soon. It has been gradually refurbished over the last few years and its atmosphere and choice of comfortable seating areas and the friendly welcome were scored highly by the judges.



Rhos yr Hafod

"The Rhos yr Hafod is an excellent example of a pub in a rural location which has flourished thanks to good management and great beer," said Tristan. "Winning these CAMRA awards only three years after buying the pub recognised the effort and enthusiasm demonstrated by landlady Elin Gapper and her family."

Check www.whatpub.com for the current opening times and facilities at these pubs.

BEER BRIEFING: INDIA PALE ALE

For those who love hops, there is no better beer than an India Pale Ale. Alex Vokes gives us the lowdown on this beer style which was created when the British Empire spanned much of the globe.

In the late 18th century English soldiers stationed in India longed for a taste of home. However, the only beer available was a dark and often undrinkable porter which had spent six months at sea on its way from England. Desperate to quench the soldiers' thirst, brewer George Hodgson sought inspiration from barley wines and Old Ales which are mellowed in the cask for several years. He created a strong, thick ale and added plenty of hops as they had been "found to keep the beer fresh". His first batch of experimental beer reached India in good condition where it received instant appreciation and the India Pale Ale was born.

The combination that saved Hodgson's revolutionary ale was high alcohol and a high volume of hops (around four times more than average). This created an anti-bacterial resistance in the beer and prolonged its life at sea. During the 19th century Worthingtons and Bass tried to re-create his recipe. They found that high amounts of sulphates helped enhance the hop flavours further and that the waters of Burton-on-Trent were uniquely suitable. Burton became the focus of IPA brewing and many brewers still 'Burtonise' their brewing water to achieve the same results.

Traditional English IPA is a strong (5-7.5%) pale to slightly amber beer with a light malt flavour which uses English ingredients and yeast along with hops such as Fuggles, Goldings or Challenger. The result is a floral hop profile with a subtle fruity and toasty biscuit backbone. American IPA is usually slightly higher in alcohol (5.5-7.5%) with a strong hop flavour, crispness and bitterness. American varieties of hops such as Citra,

Cascade, Simcoe and Amarillo are often used, contributing citrus, resinous, tropical and pine flavours. The Imperial or Double IPA is stronger still (7.5%-10%) and crams in more bitterness by adding even more hops. The Triple IPA has a staggering bitterness and requires an alcohol percentage of 10%-15% to balance out its hop additions.

The beer-drinker's love of hops has led to the creation of sub-styles. Red IPA blends the toasted-caramel maltiness of an Irish Red Ale with American hops, whilst Black IPA adds a small amount of dark roasted flavour. Nowadays many drinkers opt for IPA's little brother, an English or American Pale Ale, due to its lower alcohol content.

Just two English IPAs have been spotted recently in Aberystwyth, Marston's Old Empire and St Austell's Proper Job.

American IPAs and Red or Black IPAs seem to be available more often locally. Here's a selection of those that have been spotted on the bar of local pubs by CAMRA members.

- Thornbridge Jaipur (Yr Hen Orsaf, Aberystwyth)
- Tudor IPA (Rhos yr Hafod, Cross Inn)
- North Riding US Session IPA (Ship and Castle, Aberystwyth)
- Salopian Hollow Point (Ship and Castle, Aberystwyth)
- Tiny Rebel Loki Black IPA (Glengower and Ship and Castle, Aberystwyth)
- Brewmonster Daemon Red IPA (Harbourmaster, Aberaeron)



Cwrw Ceredigion met Mike Young who owns the Black Lion Hotel in New Quay.

How long have you owned the pub?

I bought the Black Lion in late 2011 from Enterprise Inns. It was pretty run down so I immediately closed it for renovation. The work included adding a conservatory dining room, gutting the guest bedrooms, levelling the garden and relocating the toilets. We reopened in March 2013, just in time for Wales playing in the Six Nations.

What did you do before taking it on?

I was the sales director for a local software company for 25 years but I had experience of the hospitality sector as I own some holiday cottages just outside New Quay.

What do you enjoy most about being a publican?

I like meeting people and the fun and banter you can have. Everyone is different and you need to judge what every customer wants.

Why do you think people enjoy a visit to the Black Lion?

I have excellent staff, some of whom have been with me since I opened. They show great attention to detail and they know what our regulars and visitors like. Thanks to our location on one of New Quay's hilly streets, we have fantastic sea views from our garden and dining room and our food is very popular. The pub is also well known as one of Dylan Thomas's favourite watering holes.

Do you hold any regular events?

We are one of the venues for New Quay's music festival in August and we have ad hoc live music all year round plus themed food nights during the quieter months. We are hosting the Ceredigion Soapbox Derby on 5 May with music and an outside bar. I am



also considering holding a beer festival soon.

Which beers are the most popular?

At first I only sold Doom Bar but I wanted to sell local beer. Mantle began brewing in Cardigan shortly after we reopened so I started to sell their beer. MOHO proved the most popular and it is now our most popular beer, outselling Doom Bar.

Has there been a growth in demand for real ale?

Definitely. MOHO is on all year and it has tempted a few keg or lager drinkers to try cask ale. New Quay attracts a lot of visitors and they like to try local beers so at busier times of year I offer a third real ale from Welsh breweries like Gower, Tiny Rebel and Purple Moose. I recently signed up to CAMRA's LocAle scheme which promotes pubs that always offer locally brewed real ale.

What's your favourite tipples?

I enjoy a pint of MOHO but my favourite beer is Guinness.

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

Brian Clough as I'm a big Nottingham Forest fan. I bet he'd have a few interesting stories to tell over a pint.

WELSH PUBS AT A DISADVANTAGE

Pubs have less protection within the planning system in Wales than in any other part of the UK. CAMRA's Regional Director for Wales Chris Charters explains the system in England and how CAMRA is seeking to improve the planning protection for pubs in Wales.



Pubs and the community

We know that pubs are more than just businesses – they play a crucial role in community life. Pubs are the best place to enjoy alcohol responsibly in a supervised environment and they promote personal happiness and wellbeing.

The role of a pub as the community hub is particularly important in rural communities where it often takes on responsibility for other local services such as a post office or shop.

Increased protection for pubs in England

Planning protection for pubs varies in the different nations of the UK. In England, CAMRA's campaigning has led to greater planning protection for pubs nominated as Assets of Community Value (ACVs).

An ACV is a local listing for land and buildings that are important to a local community. Pubs listed as ACVs were given additional protection from development in 2015. Voluntary and community organisations can nominate an asset to be included on their local authority's register of ACVs.

There has been significant take-up of community rights in England, with currently

over 2,000 ACV designated pubs. CAMRA is committed to supporting community groups with their nominations.

Use Class changes benefit pubs

There have been further changes to planning legislation in England that have led to better pub protection. These have centred on the Use Class system, which is in many ways similar to that used in Wales. Planning Use Classes are the legal framework which determines what a particular property may be used for. For example, it used to be the case in England (and is currently the case in Wales) that a pub could be changed into shops or offices without the need for planning permission.

Campaigning by CAMRA secured legislative changes in England that resulted in pubs gaining their own Use Class (sui generis).

This means that planning permission is now required for any change of use and, importantly, for demolition and it gives the local community a chance to object to a potential loss of a pub.

Current system in Wales

In Wales there is no ACV scheme and CAMRA believes that the current Use Class system fails to provide sufficient protection to valued community pubs.

Under the current system, pubs can be demolished or converted to other uses without planning permission or community consultation. This is contributing to the loss of two pubs every week in Wales and is allowing large supermarkets and betting shops to proliferate our high streets.

However, partly as a result of significant lobbying undertaken by CAMRA, promising proposals were published for consultation by the Welsh Government in 2018.

WELSH PUBS AT A DISADVANTAGE

The draft proposals mean that pubs would have their own Use Class within the Welsh planning system rather than remaining grouped with restaurants and hot food takeaways. They would then require planning permission to change them to something else.

If implemented, this change would put pubs on a level footing with other businesses so that a developer, looking to convert a pub for whatever reason, would have to go through the normal planning application process.

Rates reform brings relief for Welsh pubs

The recent decision by the Welsh Government to further invest in and extend the high street rates relief scheme is another piece of welcome news. It means that some pubs will receive a cut to their rates in 2019-2020 and around 500 pubs will be taken out of business rates altogether.

While this extension to the business rate relief will help ease the growing tax burden

on pubs, better rules are still needed to regulate planning laws.

CAMRA will continue to urge the Welsh Government and others in the Welsh Assembly to refine the scope of the changes to Use Classes by taking action to promote and protect well-run community pubs.

The easiest and simplest method of achieving this is to remove public houses from their current Use Class and place them where they deserve to be, namely in a class of their own.

With over 188,000 members around the world, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) is considered one of the most successful consumer campaigns ever.

Go to www.camra.org.uk/joinup to find out how to join and help us to campaign for a better future for Welsh pubs!

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(GBH, Vice Squad & more)

28-29 June

Balls to Cancer Festival

(Klavium, Ramage Inc & more)

23-25 August

Rock & Metal Circus Festival

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Join the Cwrw team

Cwrw Ceredigion is produced by a small team of CAMRA volunteers. From its humble beginnings as a single sheet newsletter just over four years ago, it has grown into the glossy magazine you are reading today and it even won the national CAMRA award for Most Improved Magazine in 2016.

"We get some great feedback locally about *Cwrw Ceredigion* but every issue can only reflect the information we receive or find out about," said editor Mary Galliers.

"The Bae Ceredigion CAMRA branch area stretches from Aberporth in the south right up to Corris in the north. Sometimes we lack news from the most northerly and southerly

parts of our branch area and I would love to receive updates and ideas for features from more people."

There are lots of ways you could help ensure the future success of the magazine:

- Write an article
- Suggest stories for the news pages
- Take photos
- Proof read articles
- Distribute magazines to your local pubs
- Support advertising sales

If you'd like to find out more or volunteer to help, please contact Mary on publicity@baeceredigion.camra.org.uk

Branch in brief

Many thanks to everyone who supported our **quiz** which took place at the Rhos yr Hafod for the first time in the autumn. We raised over £80 towards CAMRA's campaigns to support local pubs, breweries and cider producers. Well done to the winning team The Four Stooges and thanks to Angharad Hywel for hosting us and to Kathy Giles for being a great quiz mistress. We'll be back doing another quiz at the pub on Thursday 2 May.

Ten festively attired members enjoyed an afternoon of food, ale and fun on our **Christmas social** in Aberaeron in December. We enjoyed an informal lunch at the Monachty, a Brains pub, followed by a pub crawl. We visited the *Good Beer Guide* listed Cadwgan where we enjoyed Castle Rock's Snow White and then went onto the Harbourmaster and chose from cask ale and craft keg beer.

In February, we took our popular **tombola** stall to the Lampeter Beer Festival for the first time. Many thanks to everyone who



Christmas drinks in the Cadwgan

bought a ticket and to the pubs who kindly donated prizes. We are all set to return to Aberaeron Beer Festival on Saturday 10 August so get ready to roll up and try your luck!

Thank you to Y Talbot, Tregaron and the Black Lion, Llanbadarn Fawr for hosting recent **branch meetings**.

See our website for dates and venues of meetings and socials - all members are most welcome to come along.

I LOVE MY LOCAL

Bae Ceredigion member Gail Robinson from Cilcennin tells us why she loves Kane's Bar in Aberystwyth.



What's the pub's history?

The building has always been a pub and it has continuously held a liquor licence since it first opened in 1837. It started life as the Sportsman in 1837 and it was known as the Unicorn from 1876 to 1989. Since then it's been Kane's Bar. This year Kane's Bar celebrates its 30th anniversary.

Tell us about the landlady

A warm and friendly welcome awaits from landlady Ffion Roberts, who is very knowledgeable and passionate about real cider. Her staff, many of whom are students, are also very friendly and helpful. Ffion is an Aberystwyth local and has been running the bar for 18 years; she has owned it for five years. Ffion works very hard to get good quality ciders from small producers, which you rarely see locally, as well as some of the regular favourites that are popular with students. It's not unknown for Ffion or her dad Donald to go on collecting trips to pick up ciders directly from producers.

What real ciders have been on the bar recently?

There have been lots! For example, Norfolk Hawker from East Norfolk Trading Company, Harry's Scrummage, Happy Medium from Old

Monty and Olivers. There is a cider menu giving information on the style of each cider on offer and details of the producer, and all ciders are listed on Untappd. Real ales are also available seasonally when students are around, but cans of craft ales are always on sale, including BrewDog and Tiny Rebel.

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

Sitting on one of the comfy leather chairs looking down towards the bar is a good spot.

Does the pub hold any regular events or activities?

There is a pool and darts team and quizzes and cider festivals regularly take place. The darts team has been the same for the last 30 years. The Salford Lads Club, who provide opportunities for local young people in sports and arts and who camp in Aberystwyth each year, have visited regularly for the last 30 years. The pub is also a sports fan's paradise with Sky Sports on offer.

Looking ahead, Ffion is thinking about how to celebrate the bar's 30th anniversary and provisional plans include a cider festival in October or November. There will also be a monthly prize giveaway and a guest cider or ale at £3 a pint each month. Keep an eye on social media for more details.

Do any characters or local celebrities drink there?

There are plenty of characters and many are local celebrities in their own right! Footballers are often seen there and Robert Plant once paid a visit.

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

Kane's Bar always has a good selection of real ciders, often from small producers that are not seen locally, to suit all tastes, and a warm and friendly welcome.

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agree to abide by the Memorandum and
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on our website.

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