



Cwrw Ceredigion



Pub news ♦ Brewery bulletin ♦ Beer festivals

Enjoy a beer flight

Rhos yr Hafod is
pub of the year

Find real ale pubs
near Eisteddfod



The free magazine of Bae Ceredigion CAMRA

Spring/Summer 2020



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Bae Ceredigion CAMRA

Bae Ceredigion Campaign for Real Ale (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. The chairman is Kathy Giles.

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About Cwrw Ceredigion

Cwrw Ceredigion is a not-for-profit publication produced by members of the Bae Ceredigion branch of the consumer organisation CAMRA. Our aim is to promote local breweries, cider makers and the best places to drink real ale and cider in the area.

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Cyfrwng Saesneg fydd hwn ond mae croeso i chi gyfathrebu gyda ni yn y Gymraeg.

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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.

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Front cover: Landlord Ian Blair with a beer flight in the Ship and Castle, Aberystwyth



Members at Lampeter Beer Festival

Welcome to *Cwrw Ceredigion* and, if you are a visitor reading this, welcome to our beautiful part of West Wales. I hope the news and advertisements in this magazine inspire you to visit some of our great local pubs.

Congratulations to the Rhos yr Hafod in Cross Inn (Llanon) which has won our pub of the year award. Many thanks to all local CAMRA members who voted for the award and to the judges who evaluated the four finalists against CAMRA's criteria. These four pubs really do offer something for everyone and you are certain to get an excellent pint of beer along with a warm welcome at each one.

The beer festival season started in style in Lampeter where local CAMRA members were amongst the many happy drinkers enjoying a range of interesting beers and ciders. See our Festival Focus feature on page 21 for details of more local beer festivals.

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.

lechyd da!

Mary Galliers, Editor

P.S. 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.

PUB OF THE YEAR

The Rhos yr Hafod in Cross Inn (Llanon) has been selected as the Bae Ceredigion CAMRA pub of the year 2020.

Pubs are nominated for the award by local CAMRA members. Judges then visit each one anonymously to evaluate them against set criteria over a few weeks. The quality of the real ale is the most important single factor for a CAMRA award. Pubs are also assessed for the role they play in their local community, atmosphere, décor, overall offer and welcome.



Kathy Giles (centre) presents the award to Elin (left) and Angharad

“Having come runner-up in the Bae Ceredigion pub of the year competition in 2017, the Rhos yr Hafod first took the top honours in 2018,” said Bae Ceredigion CAMRA Chairman Kathy Giles. “This is an outstanding achievement for a small pub in a rural location, and the award recognises the commitment that sisters Angharad Hywel and Elin Gapper put into running the pub and the support it receives from the local community.”

Customers at the Rhos yr Hafod receive a friendly bi-lingual welcome and can choose from two regularly changing real ales. These usually come from Welsh breweries and are always served in excellent condition. Elin and Angharad are knowledgeable about the beers on offer and a jaunty display of pump clips adorns the bar to promote the barrels waiting

in the cellar. The pub has several rooms including quiet areas to relax in, function room, large garden and sunny front terrace.

Judges particularly praised the role that the pub plays in its local community. It hosts board games nights, quizzes, open mic nights and it has an active darts team. It has also recently become the base of a day-time community café serving coffee and cake.

Slaters Arms is runner-up

The Slaters Arms in Corris was runner-up having won the top award in 2019.

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

Judges enjoyed the warm welcome they received in this cosy and traditional pub and noted the thriving “early-doors scene” and how well the pub is supported by locals and visitors to the area. The pub has become the hub of village life, holding open mic nights and various other events, and it sponsors the local football team.



Slaters Arms, Corris

"The Slaters Arms has been one of the finalists in our pub of the year competition for the last three years which shows just what a great pub it is," said Kathy. "Landlord Mike Jones 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 the bar here."

Praise for finalists

The other two finalists were the Bottle & Barrel and the Ship and Castle, both in Aberystwyth town centre.

Opened in May 2019 as Aberystwyth's first micropub, the Bottle & Barrel is a popular and busy establishment with an eclectic mix of customers. Its décor is contemporary and it has a range of seating from armchairs to high stools and a small rear courtyard.



Bottle & Barrel, Aberystwyth

"The Bottle & Barrel has quickly become a highlight of the local beer scene," said Kathy. "Owner Zac Marsden has a passion for seeking out new beer and we hear regular reports about his enthusiastic efforts to help visitors find something they enjoy drinking."

Judges were impressed by the huge choice of quality cask, keg and bottled beers which are all produced in Wales. Zac and his team are knowledgeable about the beer range and happily offer a taster of the draught beers whilst chatting through the different styles.

A beer flight lets you order smaller measures of four of the draught beers which is particularly useful at one of the pub's



Ship and Castle, Aberystwyth

frequent "meet the brewer" or "tap takeover" events.

Just up the road from the Bottle & Barrel is Aberystwyth's well-known real ale flagship, the Ship and Castle. The judges appreciated the excellent quality of the cask beer on offer here and the range of different beer styles. They also noted the beer flight, which allows drinkers to sample a third pint measure of each of the five real ales, and the clean and attractive pub interior.

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

The pub holds an annual beer festival, quiz nights and occasional live music. It is a popular spot in which to watch Wales's rugby matches and it is also a centre for local cyclists who organise an annual fund-raising ride.

West Wales pub of the year

The Rhos yr Hafod will now go up against the winning pubs from Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire in the competition for CAMRA West Wales pub of the year. It won this award when it was our pub of the year in 2018 and so we are crossing our fingers for a repeat performance!

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Eisteddfod promises boom for pubs

The National Eisteddfod is taking place in Tregaron from 1-8 August. This major annual event celebrates the culture and language in Wales. It travels from place to place, alternating between north and south Wales, attracting around 150,000 visitors and over 250 trade stands. About 6,000 people take part in the huge range of competitions at the Eisteddfod and it is considered the largest music and poetry festival in Europe.

The influx of visitors to Ceredigion for the Eisteddfod promises to bring a boost to many local businesses including Tregaron's biggest pub, Y Talbot, where staff have been busy making preparations.

"Earlier this year, we did trial rotas to check we have enough staff," explained owner Mick Taylor. "As the Eisteddfod is a plastic-free event, we've also sourced recyclable plastic beer glasses which customers can buy for repeat use."

The Welsh Government makes a significant financial contribution to the Eisteddfod but the host county also has an income target. In 2019 Y Talbot launched Chwerw Cymreig, a



Y Talbot

4% pale ale brewed by Evan Evans, to raise funds for the event.

"Our Chwerw Cymreig has already raised over £1000 for the Eisteddfod fund and continues to sell very well," said Mick. "During the Eisteddfod itself our five hand pumps will be going flat out and we'll open an extra bar in our function room. It is an exciting time for us and proof that a well-kept inn can thrive by catering for a very broad range of customers at the heart of its local community."

See the Real Ale Ramble on page 14 for more information about Y Talbot and other pubs near Tregaron serving a good pint of real ale.

Real ale returns to the Rhydpennau

The Rhydpennau Inn in Bow Street has recently benefitted from a significant internal and external refurbishment thanks to its new owners Star Pubs and Bars.

Based over two levels the pub has a restaurant area with its own bar, accessible directly from the car park, and a dog friendly bar on the lower level where meals can also be served.

Both bars have two handpumps each serving real ale. Wye Valley's HPA is on offer regularly and the other beer is sourced from an extensive list.

The large car park has been improved and there is some extra outside seating.

The pub is being run by Barrie Jones, former landlord of the Welsh Black also in Bow Street which is owned by Felinfoel Brewery. As we went to press, the Welsh Black was awaiting new tenants.



The Rhydpennau Inn

Marston's sells two local pubs

In a recent round of pub disposals Marston's has sold the Black Lion in Llanbadarn Fawr near Aberystwyth to Admiral Taverns and Y Llew Coch in Machynlleth to Hawthorn Leisure Group.

Michelle and Tracy have agreed terms with Admiral Taverns to remain as tenants at the Black Lion for six months to allow them to try out the new business model.



Their beer range will change from Marston's and is likely to include some Wye Valley ales and Sharp's Doom Bar. They hope to keep beer prices as low as possible and they are also continuing to serve their popular and good value Sunday lunches.

Sam and Aga, who have been at Y Llew Coch for nearly two years, are staying on and will take on the tenancy. The pub will become free-of-tie, meaning it can offer a wide range of real ale. Thanks to Sam's background and contacts in the music industry Y Llew Coch has become a popular live music venue, attracting artists from all over the world.

Refurbishment of the garden is underway and the outside stage will host theatre and shows as well as live music. The bar will see a few changes and the front of the pub is due a full makeover. Aga's Kitchen @ Y Llew Coch has launched a new menu, offering classic and new dishes and a plant-based section.

See the pub's Facebook page for event details or subscribe to their new app for special offers on food, drink and entertainment.

Aberystwyth scientists save apple and pear varieties

Endangered apples and pears have been saved by a "living museum" created in an orchard at Aberystwyth University. The orchard was created as part of a National Lottery funded project managed by the Welsh Perry and Cider Society.

"The project identified trees from all over Wales that were found to be unique, using a DNA fingerprinting technique," said Dr Danny Thorogood from Aberystwyth University.



"These trees were then propagated and planted in the heritage orchard and replica orchards at other sites in Wales. Our aim is to conduct further scientific research around the ideal uses of each of our heritage varieties, such as eating, cider making or cooking based on their flavour profiles, texture, longevity and other factors."

Beer in brief

The Wynnstay, Machynlleth is a proudly Welsh inn with all their real ale, cider and lager coming from Wales. The real ale comes from Cwrw Cader which is based in nearby Dolgellau, the cider is from Gwynt y Ddraig and the lagers are from Geipel and Wrexham, one of Wales's most historic beers.

It's been a busy first year at the **Bottle & Barrel, Aberystwyth**. Two extra taps brought their total number of keg beers up to ten, along with two casks and bag-in-box cider. The pub has hosted several tap takeovers and meet the brewer events, featuring breweries like Rival, Tenby and Tiny Rebel.



The Castle Hotel

The beer range at the **Castle Hotel, Aberystwyth** makes the pub a good stop for real ale fans visiting the town. Their hand

pumps have offered beer from Conwy, Mantle, Grey Trees, Tudor, Tenby Harbour Brewery and Purple Moose, which are often promoted by barmaid Hazel's original artwork.

Rummers, Aberystwyth, a long-standing outlet for beer from national breweries, has started to offer some Welsh ales. We've spotted Cold Black Label's Pirate Bay and Snowdon's Driftwood there recently.

The handpumps in the **Victoria Inn, Borth** are being put to good use with up to five ales on offer often including Mantle, Wye Valley, Bluestone and Three Tuns. The pub also has happy hours with beer sold at a special price and regular "food and a pint" nights.

Two local pubs have recently started to sell real ale again. **The White Swan, Llanon** often offers Gower Brewery and the new landlord at the **Teifi Inn, Ffair Rhos** is selling Glamorgan Brewery beer.



The White Swan

Swift halves

The Pentre Arms, Llangrannog now regularly serves a beer from Bluestone Brewing and, just over the road in this coastal village, the **Ship Inn** often has Mantle Brewery's MOHO on the bar.

The Barn at Pengarreg Caravan Park, Llanrhystud is open to the public and offers evening meals and a Sunday carvery along with a guest ale, new local cider Hansh and Welsh wines from nearby Llaethliw Vineyard.

Y Talbot, Tregaron was featured in the "30 best places for a perfect pub lunch" in the Times in February. As a result the pub welcomed visitors from far and wide to enjoy their new spring menu, featuring dishes like wood pigeon, lemon sole and Mangalitz black pudding scotch egg.

The Cadwgan, Aberaeron has had an internal makeover and now sports a fresher look to herald the warmer months. The number of live music sessions are set to increase – look out for plans to "rock the Cadzbar" on Facebook.

Introducing Ceredigion's newest brewery



In July 2019 two new locally-brewed beers were unveiled at the Harbourmaster Hotel and the Seafood Festival in Aberaeron which meant that the Cwrw Camel Brewing Company was open for business. Cwrw Camel is based five miles from Aberaeron but the beers are currently being brewed at Bluestone Brewing Company, just over the border in Pembrokeshire, using the brewery's spare capacity.

"I first experimented with bread yeast in the kitchen as a child," said founder Alistair Vince. "After a degree in chemistry and various commercial and marketing roles, I am back experimenting with yeast but this time in the brewhouse. The Bluestone team have been fantastic. I am learning from their expertise

and they have helped me live the beer dream!"

Cwrw Camel's first two core beers are a pale ale and German style lager. The 4.4% Pale Ale is brewed with West Coast American hops which give it a hoppy and fruity combination while the 4.5% Helles Lager has a well-balanced malt and hop profile. The beers are cold-crashed so they drop clear and then packaged so that they don't need to be filtered. Both are suitable for vegans, and are available in kegs and bottles; the Pale Ale is also available in cask.

The Pale Ale and Helles Lager are on draught permanently in the Harbourmaster Hotel, Aberaeron where they are sold under the landlord's brand, Aeron Belle. They are also available on rotation in Aberaeron (the Cadwgan, the Hive and the Cellar), Aberystwyth (the Bottle & Barrel) and Carmarthen (Cwrw and the Warren). Bottles are on sale in several local delicatessens.

Cwrw Camel made its festival debut at the 2020 Lampeter Beer and Cider Festival where the Helles Lager was the fastest-selling beer at the event. As we went to press, Alistair was working on new beers (including a New England India Pale Ale collaboration beer with Bluestone Brewing as part of the Brewgooder Global Gathering charity). We wish Cwrw Camel well and are looking forward to seeing more beer from our newest local brewery.

Breweries in brief

Penlon Brewery will be reopening the Granary bar on their premises overlooking New Quay at Easter. Their new keg conditioned beers will be on the bar so that a broader range can be available on draught. Hidden Howler (4.3% pale) and RSA (6% IPA) will be two of their staples plus a coffee porter and an occasional "guinea pig" brew.

Bluestone Brewing are busy working on a new range. The first will be Cragfast, a 5%

West Wales IPA with big hoppy flavours (their take on a West Coast IPA). See Facebook for the latest news or register for email alerts about events held at the brewery's premises near Newport in Pembrokeshire.

We recently spotted Gold Rush (a new 3.8% golden ale from **Cwrw Cader**) on the bar at the Slater's Arms, Corris. It was part of a test batch of around eight casks and so it will be interesting to see if it becomes a regular part of the Dolgellau based brewery's range.

New cider made from local apples

You may have spotted colourful cans of Hansh cider recently at food fairs or in local pubs and restaurants. Hansh's creator Jac Evans, who works at his family's business Llaethliw Vineyard near Aberaeron, tells us how he got the idea to make cider and about the vital role that social media played in its creation.

"I was tending the vines at the vineyard one day with a friend who works with us, Barry. The grape harvest wasn't looking great, due to late frost and a hail storm, but we noticed that the apple trees had a huge crop. Barry mentioned how crazy it is that so many apples are left to rot in people's gardens, especially as there are apple trees everywhere in Ceredigion. This got us both thinking and during our lunch break we decided to put out a message on the vineyard's social media page to see if there were any apples available."

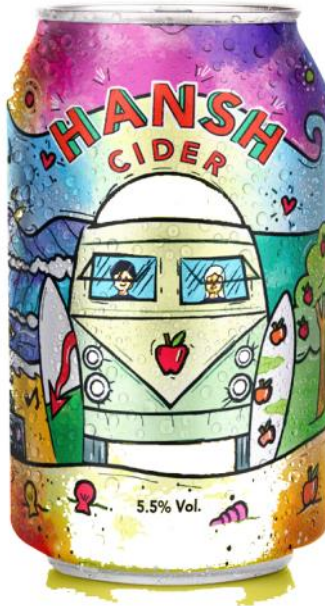
The message asked people with any spare eating apples to let Jac know and, in return, he promised to supply them with some of the cider he made. The response was astonishing.

"Within 36 hours we'd picked nearly three tonnes of apples from over 100 trees all over the county," said Jac. "We picked apples from single trees in someone's back garden to orchards with 30 trees. If any apples were made available to us, we picked them!"

The apples were taken to Haygrove Evolution, a contract producer of wine and cider in Hereford, and were used to create a

medium 5.5% cider with a fresh crisp apple taste and a slight fizz.

Jac decided to can the cider into 330ml aluminium "stubby" cans so that they can be recycled and he commissioned Rhiannon, an artist originally from the Aberaeron area, to design the label. "My partner Charley and I wanted the can to be fun and colourful," he said. "We decided to include everything we love - the beach, camping, music, surfing and our trusted VW van."



The name has a local origin, too. "Hansh is a local Welsh word meaning a bite or a bite size," Jac explained. "Someone might ask for a hansh of your apple, for example, so it's a name that is short, easy to say and straight to the point."

Current stockists of Hansh include the Bottle & Barrel, Aberystwyth; Medina, Aberystwyth; Naturally Scrumptious, Aberaeron and Wally's Deli, Cardiff. It is also available to buy from Llaethliw Vineyard in Neuadd Lwyd just outside Aberaeron and at food and drink festivals around Wales.

Kanes keeps cider crown

As *Cwrw Ceredigion* went to press, the results of our 2020 cider pub of the year were announced. Last year's winner Kane's Bar, Aberystwyth retained the top award and the runner-up was the Bottle & Barrel, Aberystwyth. The other finalist was the Druid Inn, Goginan. Look out for more details on our Facebook page and we'll include a full report in our next issue.

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Have you ever walked into a pub, studied the array of hand pumps and wondered what to try? A beer flight could be the answer.

What is a beer flight?

Most good pubs will let you taste a beer or two before you order a pint. But what if you want to savour more of each beer without ordering as much as a pint or even a half? Before ordering, ask at the bar if the pub serves a beer flight.

A beer flight is a selection of small measures of different beers, normally served on a tray of some sort. There are various theories as to how it got its name, one of which is that it resembles a flight of stairs. You usually work your way up the colour spectrum by drinking it from the lightest colour beer to the darkest, and so it's easy to imagine each beer as a step and the whole offer as a flight of stairs.

The glasses used in a beer flight will vary from pub to pub but a flight of three one third pints is common. The glasses can be small conical ones, mini stemmed versions or even tiny tankards. They usually sit atop a wooden board, known as a paddle, the shape of which varies from long and thin to circular.

The price of a flight depends on the number of beers it contains. Some pubs charge a set price for a flight regardless of which beers it contains, but others adjust the price according to the strength or cost of each beer. Usually the cost of a beer flight made up of a pint's worth of beer will not vary hugely from the cost of a pint of a single beer.

How do I drink a flight?

Firstly, make sure you remember which beer is which! Some pubs will chalk the beer name or pump number on the paddle while others will present them in the order they appear on the bar. It's also a good idea to take a photo of the pumps or beer menu as a reminder of names, ABV and breweries.



The general rule is to sample the beers from lightest to darkest. This is because the lightest beers usually have a gentler character and lower ABV than the darker ones. If a dark beer is sampled before a light beer, it is likely to be harder to taste the lighter one properly.

If you opt for a flight made up of beers of the same style, it's best to try them in order of ABV from lowest to highest. But don't worry if there is little difference between your chosen beers, just dive in and enjoy!

Where to try a flight

Ship and Castle, Aberystwyth: sample all the real ales on hand pump in a circular platter of five one third pints.

Bottle & Barrel, Aberystwyth: choose from the ten keg and two cask pumps for your flight of four quarter pints.

Slaters Arms, Corris: enjoy a third of each of the draught beers.

Kanes Bar, Aberystwyth: select four draught ciders which are served in mini tankards.

Aberaeron Beer Festival: one of the few beer festivals that lets you order a tray of three third pints of beer or cider or a combination.



REAL ALE RAMBLE

Tristan Robinson's ramble focuses on four real ale pubs in and around Tregaron, the location of the 2020 National Eisteddfod in August.

Instead of my regular "ramble" around a town I decided to showcase pubs serving the best real ale near the Eisteddfod's location. I did my research in February with a designated driver but all pubs can be reached by bus.



We started at the **Teifi Inn** in Ffair Rhos, a small village north-east of Tregaron. The pub has been recently refurbished by its new tenants and is proving popular with locals and visitors. The stone and wood bar takes centre stage in a large open plan room with a beamed ceiling and local artwork on the walls. There is an eclectic collection of traditional furniture with plenty of seating. Food is good value traditional pub fare. Quiz nights, poker evenings and luncheon clubs are hosted here and the pub is dog friendly.

Two real ales include an ever-present Cwrw Gorslas from Glamorgan Brewing Co (4% amber bitter) and one other, usually also from Glamorgan. Our visit coincided with the Six Nations so it was Try Time, a rugby-themed 4% bitter with a subtle, sweet citrus flavour.

Our next stop was in Tregaron, at the centrally located **Y Talbot**. This 400 year old drover's inn has lots of traditional charm, including slate flagstone flooring and inglenook fireplaces and is listed by CAMRA as having a historic pub interior of regional importance. It has also been noted for the quality of its real ale, winning the West Wales CAMRA pub of

the year award in 2015. The pub (there are also adjoining hotel and function room facilities) is split between main bar area with seating, dartboard and TV for big sporting events, cosy front bar and dining room and an additional small dining area near the entrance.

There are usually three or four real ales

available, sourced from Wales and the Marches and may include Tenby Harbwr, Conwy, Wye Valley and Ludlow breweries. We enjoyed Conwy's Welsh Pride (4% bitter), which was bright and clear with a robust malt flavour finished with zesty hops; and Evan Evans' Chwerw Cymraeg/Eisteddfod Ale, a 4% pale ale raising money for the Eisteddfod. During the summer up to four real ciders are available from the likes of Marches Cyder Co, Celtic Marches and Gethin's.

Good quality food can be eaten in the restaurant or bar areas. A landscaped garden to the rear is reputed to be the final resting place of a visiting circus elephant; nowadays the pub is very welcoming to dogs.



REAL ALE RAMBLE

Other pubs in Tregaron include Llew Coch (Red Lion), which serves a changing guest ale and a real cider, and Tregaron Rugby Club, which has a Felinfoel ale from cask.

Leaving Tregaron by the B4343 we headed south to Llanddewi Brefi and the **New Inn**, another pub recognised by CAMRA as having a historic pub interior of regional importance. This stone-built pub has a large, open room with exposed beams and a curious “snug” area. This was the pub's original public room when it was a “no bar” premises and ales were brought through in jugs. The snug has a flagstone floor and range fireplace and is still used by customers at busy times. The main pub has bar stools around the central bar and seating near a large solid fuel

burner. Lunch and evening meals are served in the bar area and the large rear dining room.

There are up to three real ales served from polypins stored in a back room at cellar temperature – look for the pump clips behind the bar - normally from Cardigan's Mantle brewery. They are usually Rock Steady (3.8%

golden ale), MOHO (4.3% pale ale) and Cwrw Teifi (4.5% best bitter). I opted for the MOHO, which was deliciously malty with a slight hint of rose petal.



We then headed back North, turning left just outside Llanddewi Brefi towards Llangeitho and the **Three Horseshoe Inn**. This friendly pub is a recent runner-up in the Bae Ceredigion CAMRA pub of the year competition. The pub has a main bar with tables for drinking and dining and bar stools at the bar. It also has a smaller bar to the rear, with an interesting collection of old beer bottles. There is a games room off the bar, a separate dining room and a rear beer garden. Good value home-cooked meals are served in the evenings, including special offers on Wednesday, and traditional Sunday lunches.

The decor is traditional, with horse brasses, brewery advertising signs and an extensive collection of pump clips, showing what has been enjoyed here. The selection of ales is constantly changing and may feature Mantle, Monty's, Ludlow and Salopian breweries. On our visit we enjoyed Evan Evans WPA (4.1% pale ale) and Purple Moose Madog's Ale (3.7% bitter). Both were perfectly served and I happily raised a pint to the Eisteddfod, “Mwynhewch eich Eisteddfod a mwynhewch letygarwch ein tafarndai!”

All four pubs are within 10 miles of each other and each one is on a local bus route although services do not run past early evening. Go to www.travelinecymru.co.uk or search online for timetables for service numbers 522, 585, T21 and T29.



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Black Lion, New Quay



The coastal views make the Black Lion's garden one of the best in Ceredigion and, if you're lucky, you may even spot a dolphin. The garden has a children's play area, plenty of large tables and a covered seating area. Families are welcome in the contemporary restaurant which also has sea views. The food comes in hearty portions but there is a good choice for children or those wanting a lighter option. This *Good Beer Guide* listed pub serves up to three real ales, normally from Welsh breweries. Dogs are welcome in the garden only.

Halfway Inn, Pysgah



Renovated in 2018, the Halfway Inn has a large restaurant and adjacent children's play area with toys, books and a colouring table. The "little ones' menu" features pasta, fish fingers and nuggets, and older children can choose smaller portions of curry, gammon, steak and lasagne. Children's events for Hallowe'en, Bonfire Night and Christmas are popular, and arts and crafts activities and a movie afternoon are planned for summer. Real ales come from Monty's core range and their seasonal beers. Dogs are welcome in the slate-floored bar (booking recommended).

Victoria Inn, Borth



Easy to reach by train from Aberystwyth, Borth is a popular destination for families thanks to its sand and shingle beach. The Victoria Inn backs right onto the beach and its rear decking area is a perfect place to enjoy a pint and watch the children play. Mantle Brewery's MOHO is normally among the four or five real ales on draught. The menu has a range of pub favourites served in generous portions. Dogs are welcome (except in the upstairs bar and restaurant) but they are not allowed on the beach between 1 May and 30 September.

White Lion, Machynlleth



This large historic coaching inn is a good spot for families to spend an evening together as children are permitted on the premises until 11pm. The menu offers great value food and has a section for children. There are toys and books in the snug area and parents can enjoy a pint from a choice of up to six constantly changing real ales. The family-friendly grassy garden has plenty of tables and views of the hills. Machynlleth is an ideal holiday base and the hotel accommodation includes family rooms. Dogs are welcome throughout the pub.

Go to www.whatpub.com for more details about these pubs.

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***Cwrrw Ceredigion* met Ian Richards who manages the Glengower Hotel in Aberystwyth.**

How long have you managed the Glengower Hotel?

Fifteen years.

What did you do before taking on this pub?

I was an assistant manager for Beefeater in Northampton. I've been in the trade since I was 18 working for hotel chains and small pubs in Chester and the Midlands. A friend whose grandad owned the Glengower asked me to help out for six months. I came and had a look and, from that day on, I knew it wouldn't be just six months! I didn't anticipate 15 years either, but now I'm settled with a family and we love it here.

What do you enjoy most about being a publican?

I like how every day is different, meeting new people and interacting. There are also so many new products coming and going, and different trends to keep you on your toes.

Why do you think people enjoy a visit to the Glengower?

I think people like our great range of beer, cider, whisky and gin and the warm welcome we try to give. Plus we have a fantastic sea view out of our big windows.

Who comes to the pub and who are your locals?

We have a wide range of locals from 18 year old students right through to retired people.

Do you hold any regular events?

There is a lot of support for the RNLI at the pub. I volunteer as a helmsman on Aberystwyth's lifeboat and we have a dish on our specials board from which 50p goes to the RNLI. Also, as a company, we hold an



annual charity event where two people from each pub do a big challenge. This year it's the Welsh Three Peaks with all money raised going to Mind, the mental health charity. Last year we raised over £9,000 for Dementia UK.

Has there been a growth in demand for real ale?

When I started here, the only "bitter" we sold was John Smith's Smooth. This was removed during my first week and two hand pumps were installed. We started off with Theakston's and a changing guest ale. As we grew, so did our love for ales and we now have five hand pumps. We also have three or four ciders or perries on tap.

Which beers are the most popular?

Our most popular beer is Wye Valley's Butty Bach followed closely by Mantle's Rock Steady. Both are on permanently and we have three guest ales that rotate, with regular appearances from Timothy Taylor, Purple Moose and Tiny Rebel to name a few.

What's your favourite tipple?

Wye Valley's HPA or, on a hot day, an ice-cold Thatcher's.

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

We already have a famous regular – actor Taron Egerton. He visits the Glengower when he's back home and meets his family and friends here!

BEER BRIEFING

In his regular feature on different beer styles Alex Vokes looks at lager, one of the most popular and well-known brewing styles in the world.

Most countries have embraced lager and created their own national brands, but lager originated in Germany or Austria. The word "lager" comes from the German "lagern", meaning "to store". This is probably due to the habit of moving freshly brewed beer into caves over winter to mature.

The lager style has several differences from other beers, most significantly the way in which it is fermented. A bitter is typically fermented at around 18°C and is ready to drink in as little as two weeks. Lagers are usually fermented at around 10°C and stored at 1-3°C for four weeks. This results in a clean, crisp flavour which is heavily dependent on the yeast. The pure strain of lager yeast used most commonly today was classified at the Carlsberg Brewery in 1870. The lager family is diverse but can be divided into several sub-groups.

The first group are Light Lagers (2.8-4.2% ABV) which are generally very pale and don't have strong flavours. This group contains most of the American lagers but also some of the pale varieties from other countries. Corn or rice are sometimes used. Strong and premium American lager sub-styles are similar but can reach 5.3% and 6% ABV respectively. Munich Helles (or Light) German lagers (4.7-5.4% ABV) also fall into this category and have more bready, grainy sweetness than their American counterparts due to the use of grains such as Pilsner and Munich malts.

Germany is well known for the Pilsner style which originated in the small town of Pilsen. Pilsner (4.4-5.2% ABV) is much bolder and drier than Light Lagers and has more

bitterness and less sweetness. Bohemian Pilsners are brewed in the Czech Republic and have an increased malt sweetness, while American Pilsners use significant amounts of corn or rice.

The third group are the European Amber Lagers which focus more on malty flavours rather than hops. An example is Vienna Lager (4.5-5.5% ABV) which has a mix of Vienna and Munich malts resulting in a soft, dry malty finish.

Not all lagers are pale in colour, and the Dark Lagers group consists of American Dark Lager (4.2-6.0% ABV), Munich Dunkel (4.5-5.6% ABV) and German Schwarzbier (4.4-5.4% ABV). These contain darker malts giving a toasted bread flavour and, in the case of the Schwarzbier, subtle roasted or chocolate notes.

The final group is the strongest and maltiest lagers known as the Bocks. These include Maibock (6.3-7.4% ABV), Traditional Bock (6.3-7.2% ABV), Doppelbock (7.0-10.0% ABV) and Eisbock (9-14% ABV).

Lager brewed in Wales

Welsh lagers are most commonly available in bottles.

Listed below are a selection of Welsh lagers and pubs where they are often served on draught.

Bluestone Brewing: Preseli Pils (Pilsner).

Cwrw Camel: Helles Lager.

Geipel Brewery: Pilsner (American). Regularly on keg at the Bottle & Barrel, Aberystwyth and the Wynnstay, Machynlleth.

Great Orme: Snowdon Lager.

Mantle Brewery: Hoodwinked. Look out for this served from the cask in summer.

Penlon Brewery: Ewe's Frolic Lager.

Wrexham: Lager (Light). Try on keg at the Druid Inn, Goginan and the Wynnstay, Machynlleth.



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.

Beer and cider festivals in our area

The **Llanfair Clydogau Beer Festival** runs from Thursday 28 May to Saturday 30 May in the village hall. This small and friendly event near Lampeter offers an inviting range of real ales and a few real ciders, plus basic refreshments and a BBQ at 6.30pm on Saturday.

Running from 5pm on Friday 7 August and all day from 12 noon on Saturday 8 August, the **Aberaeron Beer and Cider Festival** is held in the Yacht Club on the seafront. Real cider and perry lovers are in for a treat with as many on offer as there are cask ales. Sample the range with a tray of three one third pints. There is live music on Saturday and a range of food stalls.

The **Machynlleth Beer Festival** takes place from Friday 22 May to Sunday 24 May in a heated marquee in the grounds of the White Lion. There will be up to 20 Welsh cask ales and up to 10 ciders and perries. Go to www.machbeerfest.com for tasting notes and details of live music.

Festivals in local pubs

The **Black Lion, New Quay** is holding its first beer festival with live music in its beer garden on 8 and 9 May.

The seafront **Pentre Arms, Llangrannog** is planning to repeat its popular weekend beer festival in July or August

Several **Aberystwyth** pubs are likely to hold a beer festival during the year. No dates had been finalised when we went to press but keep an eye out for events in the Ship and



Pentre Arms

Castle, the Glengower Hotel and Kane's Cider Bar. Yr Hen Orsaf holds various Wetherspoons beer festivals throughout the year.

CAMRA festivals in Wales

The **CAMRA Great Welsh Beer Festival - Cardiff 2020** runs from 22-25 April. It will be the largest beer festival ever seen in Wales with capacity for over 5,000 festival-goers in the marquee in Sophia Gardens. The festival will have three times as many local beers on tap as previous events held in the city and it will celebrate Welsh beer, food and music.

The **Welsh Perry and Cider Society's annual festival** takes place from 22-25 May at Caldicot Castle. The festival showcases the best Welsh perry and cider. A variety of real ale will also be available as it is organised in partnership with CAMRA this year. There will be live music, local food and craft stalls plus camping. Tickets from www.ticketsource.co.uk/welshcider.

The **Swansea Bay Beer and Cider Festival** takes place in Brangwyn Hall from 27-29 August.

The **Carmarthen Beer Festival** is the nearest CAMRA festival. It is held in St Peter's Civic Hall from 1-3 October.

We share details of local beer festivals on Facebook – follow our page for the latest news and share your festival photos. Please check the festival date and other details in this feature before you visit.

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VISIT TO MANTLE BREWERY

In January, fifteen Bae Ceredigion CAMRA branch members travelled to Cardigan to visit Mantle Brewery.

Head Brewer Ian Kimber welcomed us to the brewery while his wife Domi poured us a generous taster of Rock Steady. We gathered in the informal bar area to enjoy this 3.8% traditional golden bitter while Ian gave us a potted history of the brewery. Established in 2013, Mantle's target market is West Wales and so Ian and his team brew beers that suit the local palate. Most of their beer is sold directly to pubs and is mainly delivered by Domi who has become a familiar face to local publicans.

Cwrw Teifi was the next beer we sampled, a 4.5% best bitter with dark malt, Challenger hops from Britain and Savinjski Goldings hops from Slovenia. Ian explained that he came up with the brewery's name whilst stirring his home brew and imagining that the pot was the earth's crust and the simmering liquid inside was the mantle. This explanation neatly led onto our sample of MOHO which is named after the boundary between the earth's mantle and its crust. This 4.3% golden ale is the brewery's best-seller and features two American hops (Cascade and Willamette).

Mantle brewed their first seasonal beer Hwyl Haf in summer 2017. This was soon followed by Seiclôn, an autumn seasonal ale brewed to a similar recipe but with a darker malt edge and a gentler hop profile. We enjoyed a taster of this 4% bitter which uses Minstrel hops, a fairly new British variety.

Ian pays careful attention to the hops he buys; he inspects them at the wholesaler every season to select the best and then adjusts the amount he uses according to each crop's characteristics. Mantle uses mains water, which is analysed regularly, and has its own yeast strain which is looked after very carefully at the brewery. It is also stored safely offsite at a yeast bank and Ian calls on a new culture every couple of years because yeast



Ian explains the brewing process

characteristics can drift over time and not deliver the same results.

Ian then poured us a half of Continental Drifter, one of his stronger and less common beers. This 6.5% beer brings together a variety of influences from different European countries. It uses crystal wheat, Munich malt, bitter orange peel and coriander seeds, and it was certainly one to savour as we set off on the brewery tour.

Our first stop was the storage area where we smelt some of the malts used at Mantle and compared the aroma of different hops that had been kiln-dried and foil-packed. We then visited the main brew plant where Ian talked us through a typical brewing day. Next stop was the fermenting room, home to four fermenters of various sizes, where Ian happily answered lots of questions from the home brewers in our group. Our final call was the cold room where the casks are stored for a week or so before being delivered to pubs.

Back in the bar area Chairman Kathy Giles thanked Ian and Domi for the informative tour. Members were then able to buy more beer to enjoy in the bar or whilst browsing in the brewery shop. Several went home with boxes of bottled beer, others bought clothing bearing the brewery's distinctive logo and everyone agreed it had been a thoroughly enjoyable visit.

Visitors are welcome at Mantle Brewery any time during opening times. Staff cannot always stop work for a chat but the shop is always open. Brewery tours are available by prior arrangement.

CAMRA CAMPAIGNS

CAMRA calls for more help with business rates for pubs

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has welcomed the announcement by the Welsh Government that they will be continuing to help pubs with the cost of business rates.

Business properties with a rateable value up to £50,000 can receive up to £2,500 towards the cost of business rates via the extension to the Welsh Government's High Street and Retail Rate Relief Scheme for 2020-21.

However, CAMRA has called on the Welsh Government to go further and set up a support

scheme specifically to help pubs burdened by business rates like the scheme that already operates in England.

"Whilst any reduction in costs for businesses under the extended High Street and Retail Relief scheme is welcome, moves like this are only a sticking plaster," said CAMRA Director for Wales Chris Charters.

"We need a complete review of the business rates system in Wales to help give pubs a fair deal and save them from closure. In the meantime, CAMRA would like to see a permanent scheme put in place by the Welsh Government to cut business rates bills for pubs to help keep them open, alive and thriving."

Make 2020 the Summer of Pub

CAMRA's Summer of Pub campaign is back this year and it aims to get as many people as possible enjoying the season of good – well, better – weather by heading down to their local for a pint.

The campaign will be celebrating how pubs offer numerous benefits to people's mental and social well-being and play an instrumental role in the communities they serve.

Drinking cheap supermarket booze at home does little to improve your life but change

that setting to the social environment of a pub and you can increase your happiness, make friends and connect with others in your local community, while still enjoying the tipples of your choice.

"Campaigning to support Britain's pubs is something anyone can get involved in," said Ben Wilkinson, CAMRA's National Director.

"It can be as simple as stepping out the door and taking a stroll to a local and if you can encourage some friends or family to join you then all the better."

There are lots of extra reasons to head to the pub this summer, starting with the bank holiday to mark the 75th anniversary of VE day when the Government has extended licensing hours for pubs (8 May).

Other events best celebrated in the pub include Beer Day Britain (15 June), the UEFA Euro Championships (12 June – 12 July), and the bank holiday weekend (29 – 31 August).

"So head down to the pub, make friends and memories, and most importantly shout about how much you love your local this summer," added Ben.



Head for the pub this summer

Are you missing out?

The Bae Ceredigion CAMRA branch keeps in touch with local members via email on a regular basis. We send out details of local beer festivals (both CAMRA and non-CAMRA events), special news such as pub awards and reminders about branch socials and meetings.

If you have not heard from us recently, make sure that your email address is correct on CAMRA's membership system and that you have given us permission to email you.

To check your details go to www.camra.org.uk and login with your membership number and password. Then click on the "my membership" tab and, from the dropdown list, select "edit membership details". You can then make changes to your contact details. You also need to go to the "preferences" tab and make sure that you have agreed to the option to be contacted by your local CAMRA branch about local events and activities.

Make sure you get the most out of your membership by making sure we can keep in touch with you!

Branch in brief

Fifteen festively attired Bae Ceredigion CAMRA branch members enjoyed our **Christmas pub crawl** around Aberystwyth. It was good to welcome several new members along to their first social event with the branch.

The branch's first social event of 2020 took place in January when 15 members enjoyed a **tour of Mantle Brewery** in Cardigan.

In February, we took our tombola stall to the **Lampeter Beer Festival** to raise funds to support CAMRA's campaigns. Many thanks to everyone who bought a ticket and to the pubs and breweries who donated prizes. Our tombola stall will be at the **Aberaeron Beer Festival** on 8 August so get ready to try your luck once again!

Thank you to the Cadwgan, Aberaeron for hosting our January **branch meeting**. See the members' section of our website for the minutes.

The **number of members** in the Bae Ceredigion CAMRA branch continues to rise steadily and stands at 138. Don't forget that, as an introduction to the branch, we offer all members a free pint when they attend their first social event. Show us your CAMRA membership card before you go to the bar and then your first drink will be on us!



Branch members at Mantle Brewery

Dates for your diary

TBC: trip by minibus to Wilderness Brewery in Newtown followed by a tour of a few Shropshire pubs. Advance booking and payment essential – details will be emailed to branch members and added to Facebook.

TBC: Bae Ceredigion CAMRA quiz at Ship and Castle, Aberystwyth. Raffle and prize for winning team. Proceeds to CAMRA funds.

27 June, 11am: Bae Ceredigion CAMRA AGM, Bottle & Barrel, Aberystwyth. The pub will open early for exclusive use by the branch. We will also welcome Welsh Regional Director Chris Charters as our guest speaker.

As Cwrw Ceredigion is only published twice a year, we don't always know the dates of our branch meetings and socials early enough to publish them. Please see our Facebook page and website for the most up-to-date information.

I LOVE MY LOCAL

**Bae Ceredigion CAMRA member
Hugh Jones from Cnwch Coch tells us
why he loves Y Ffarmers in
Llanfihangel y Creuddyn.**

What's the pub's history?

Y Ffarmers was originally called the Farmers Arms and it is believed it was established in the 18th century. Some original cob walls still exist as well as original oak timbers, some of which can be seen in the bar area, and the bar top is made from a whole tree grown in Esgair Forest near Corris. On the wall hangs the intriguing story of an incident in 1899 when the then publican Evan Evans fired three warning shots at a noisy crowd gathering outside the pub. One hit a student, resulting in a serious arm injury. Evans went to trial but was acquitted as "technically the prisoner had committed an assault, but there was no evidence to prove malice, which was necessary to convict on a charge of unlawful wounding." Things have certainly changed since then!

Tell us about the landlady.

The pub has been owned and run by Caitlin Morse since July 2017. Caitlin was born nearby and she is proud that the pub is the heart and soul of the local community. All the staff live close by and so the pub is an important part of the local economy as well as retaining a strong sense of community.

What real ales have been on the bar recently?

There are always two real ales on. Wye Valley, Grey Trees, Gower and Purple Moose have all appeared recently, along with Tenby Harbour which is a favourite of mine. There are always three draught ciders available, too.

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

Y Ffarmers has managed to achieve the status of a gastro pub but, in doing so, hasn't forgotten about the locals. It still has a traditional bar area which is my favourite place



Hugh Jones and Caitlin Morse

to sit. The bar is also used by diners before eating and it recently gained extra cosiness with the addition of a wood burner.

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

It is renowned for its locally sourced, quality food. The menu changes every six weeks and always has great vegetarian options as well as pub classics. My favourite on the current menu is the pan seared duck breast.

Does the pub hold any regular events or activities?

Yes, it's a busy pub but it's also a community hub and so local groups are always welcome. The beekeepers meet here and the Merched y Wawr hold whist drives. The local Cymdeithas organise treasure hunts and the annual carnival which are all based around the pub. The pub is also a viewing point for the Rali Bae Ceredigion.

Do any characters or local celebrities drink there?

There are a few local characters and the pub's reputation for great food attracts celebrities from time to time - Robert Peston, Keira Knightley and Sienna Miller, to name just a few.

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

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or building society. Written confirmation
may be required. Please also notify us.

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

*Price of single membership when paying by Direct Debit. *Calls from landlines charged at standard national rates, cost may vary from
mobile phones. New Direct Debit members will receive a 12 month supply of vouchers in their first 15 months of membership.
The data you provide will be processed in accordance with our privacy policy in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.



Cracking traditional pub serving great local cask ales along with a few kegs from further afield. Seafront spot with bedrooms offering fantastic views over Ceredigion Bay. Serving a delicious menu of homemade hearty dishes including the 'Daily Specials Board' ...not to be missed including fresh seafood caught locally.

