

Puffin Pints



Pembrokeshire CAMRA Branch Magazine

2025 Edition

The Ship Trefin
One of many fine pubs in
lovely places in Pembrokeshire



*The
Angel*

N A R B E R T H

BAR



LOUNGE



RESTAURANT



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EDITORIAL

PUFFINGS FROM THE PUFFIN



Welcome to our new Branch magazine. It exists, as does the Campaign for Real Ale as a whole, to promote and defend pubs, pints, and the people who enjoy both. All of which are under threat.

Pubs are closing at a record rate, hit by rising costs. Energy and employees both cost more. The latter because of increases in employer National Insurance contributions and the National Minimum Wage. Increasing the latter was doubtless well intentioned, but will inevitably force pubs to employ fewer young people, often working in their first job – or employ nobody if they go out of business and shut altogether. Meaning many of our least-well-off will receive no wage at all. Meanwhile business rates relief for pubs in Wales has been cut from 75% to 50%, further squeezing our struggling pubs.

Locally we have lost no few pubs, including much-loved locals serving fine ale and cider, over the last year. As I write, the Pembroke Yeoman in Haverfordwest – which although our County Town is not the best endowed with good pubs anyway – and the Trewern Arms, Nevern have closed their doors and may never re-open. Other local pubs are struggling – they may seem thriving on a warm summer's day, but outside the tourist season in many cases matters are very different.

But all is not lost. As we report elsewhere in this issue, local communities across our County have rallied to save their local pubs, actively supported by our CAMRA Branch. Enterprising pub-owners have pitched in – the Farmer's Arms in Fishguard, the Core of the Poodle in Haverfordwest and the Royal George in Solva are being refurbished and may be open again as you read this.

Nevertheless, fundamentally pubs will only stay open if people use them. The unfair tax system promotes takeaway supermarket sales – associated as they are with problem drinking at home and on the street – over beer and cider sold over the bar in an atmosphere where responsible

drinking is the norm. So if you can, when you want a pint – go to a pub!

Pints too are still under threat. When CAMRA was founded in 1971 six big breweries, all British owned, dominated the market. Now over 80% of pints sold in Britain are brewed by four gigantic foreign-owned global corporations: A-B Inbev has plants in Magor and Samlesbury; Carlsberg is at Northampton. Molson Coors is at Burton on Trent and Tadcaster while Heineken brews at the Royal in Manchester and John Smiths in Tadcaster. All pumping out mostly tasteless fizzy chemical pap because, unlike real cask ale, they require much less skill to keep in good condition in pubs, last longer and so are more profitable for the producer.

The fact that churning out mass-produced keg lagers and the like is more profitable and so in the interest of the producer, if not the consumer, means that cask ale and real cider will always be under threat and CAMRA will always be needed. There is no room for complacency.

But there is room for local independent brewers making, and good publicans keeping and serving, the ales and ciders we love. If we keep supporting them and if we have CAMRA to help promote them.

Finally, we need to support people drinking real ale and cider. In the last 45 years, beer sales in Britain have dropped by a third, and younger people are drinking less real ale and cider. But, as we have found locally, when they try the real stuff, they find they like it. Under our dynamic National Chairman, Ash Corbett-Collins, CAMRA nationally is reaching out to younger drinkers, a move we are glad to support. Nevertheless, whatever your age, you are welcome in CAMRA.

Which is needed as much as ever. The fight to save our pubs, our pints and our people goes on. If you haven't already, help protect what you love and have a good time – join CAMRA!

Steve Brady
Editor, Puffin Pints

THE CRESSELLY ARMS



CAMRA Wales Pub of the Year 2024 Pembrokeshire CAMRA Pub of the Year 2024

250-year-old traditional pub
Four real ales on tap, including LocAles
Pembrokeshire local cider available
Open 11 to 11 7 days a week in summer
Friendly community local with a big welcome for all
10% discount on real ales and ciders for CAMRA members
CAMRA Two Star National Historic Interior “of very special interest”
Real fire in cosy unspoilt farmhouse kitchen ambience
Large outside drinking area overlooking the lovely Cresswell River
Accessible by boat from Milford Haven at high tide
Ample parking
Beer Festivals and Barbecues held regularly
Quiet rural location in a beautiful part of Pembrokeshire off A4075
Campsites nearby

*CAMRA chose the Cresselly Arms as the best pub in Wales in 2024
one not to be missed!*

WELCOME TO PUFFIN PINTS

PEMBROKESHIRE CAMRA'S NEW BEER AND CIDER MAGAZINE

Welcome again to the first edition of Puffin Pints, the magazine of Pembrokeshire Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. If you are a visitor, welcome to our county – croeso i'n Sir!

Ours is only the second CAMRA Branch magazine in Wales at present. We want to highlight and so support the fine real ale and cider pubs and breweries in which, as well as scenery and nature, our County is so rich. Our aim, and that of CAMRA, is to promote pints, pubs and people.

Pints: Pembrokeshire boasts several small independent breweries noted for their ales, which are available across the County. Our county also has no less than five small independent cider makers. We shall be featuring our breweries and brewers, and our cider makers, in this and future issues.

Pubs: Twenty-four Pembrokeshire pubs appear in the current edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, which is also available via a free web-based app at <https://goodbeerguide.org.uk/>. There are many more pubs in the County well worth visiting – the web app will show you those too. Some of our best local pubs were saved by their locals – see inside. Why not cap a walk along our magnificent coast path or in the Preseli Hills with a well-earned pint at one of our many splendid pubs? Or, if you live here, why not support your local real ale pub? Don't take it for granted – pubs everywhere are struggling to survive – it's use them or lose them!

People: Many Pembrokeshire pubs are at the heart of their local communities. Communities which in some cases have saved their local from closure. Pembrokeshire Branch of CAMRA itself is a thriving local community of friendly ale and cider lovers, which makes

newcomers very welcome. We meet and socialise at least once a month, usually more often, in the best pubs in the county. If you live here, join us. If you don't, everywhere across this country has a local CAMRA Branch which will make you welcome. Apart from meeting kindred spirits in a fine local hostelry, you will have the satisfaction of helping protect our beer, cider, pub and community heritage.

Our County, like all of Wales, enjoys not only some of the best pubs and the loveliest landscapes in our islands. We also have our ancient and proud Welsh heritage and language, which we warmly invite visitors to share.

We hope you enjoy this new window we have opened on the Pembrokeshire pub and brewery scene. To start with, Puffin Pints will be appearing once a year. Let us know what you think at editor@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk.

Finally – lechyd da i bawb!

Did you know?

An analysis of 34 scientific studies found that moderate drinkers lived longer than other groups



Source: Castelnuovo, S. et al. "Alcohol dosing and total mortality in men and women" (2006)



NEXT ISSUE:

Puffin Pints is published annually. The next issue will be published on or around May 1st 2026. We must have your stories, news and advertisements by: April 1st. Late copy cannot be guaranteed entry.

Committee Branch Contacts:

Chair:

Mrs Alwen Thomas

Chair@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Vice-Chair:

Nigel Skipper

ViceChair@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Branch Secretary:

Steve Brady

Secretary@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Branch Contact:

Mrs Alwen Thomas

BranchContact@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Treasurer:

Jeremy Bowen

Treasurer@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Membership Secretary:

John Padget

MembershipSecretary@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Branch Cider Representative:

Jimmy Whitworth

Cider@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Social Secretary:

Vacant

social@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Puffin Pints Editor:

Steve Brady

editor@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Ladies' Officer:

Mrs Ann Hillier

c/o Secretary

Secretary@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Publicity Officer:

Jon O'Brien

PublicityOfficer@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Social Media Co-ordinator:

Jon O'Brien

SocialMediaCoordinator@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Pubs Officer:

Nigel Skipper

PubsOfficer@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Pubs Preservation Officer:

Alan Kilbey

PubsPreservationOfficer@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Pubs Database Co-ordinator:

Paul Padget

PubDatabaseCo-ordinator@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk
WhatPub@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Good Beer Guide Co-ordinator:

Steve Brady

GBGCo-ordinator@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Branch Website Co-ordinator:

Jon O'Brien

WebsiteCo-ordinator@pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

Branch Dog

Biggles

Branch Website:

www.pembrokeshire.camra.org.uk

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Local Bus information & timetables are available at <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/bus-routes-and-timetables>

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MEET OUR BRANCH CHAIR

Longstanding active member of Pembrokeshire CAMRA Mrs Alwen Thomas was elected as our Branch Chair in 2023. Here Alwen tells her story.



Starting at the beginning, I was born in Liverpool and my parents were from North Wales. They moved to Nefyn when I was 18 months old. At 4 years old we moved to Narberth. 18 months later we moved to Pembroke Dock, once again moving to Pennar after another 18 months.

At 9 years old we moved again this time to Letterston where we spent 5 years, until moving to Fishguard. I then spent another 5 years there until my marriage to my husband Arwel in 1972.

We then lived in Llanychaer bringing up 4 boys until 1997 when we moved to Goodwick. Our next move was in 2015, when we then moved into our present house in Fishguard.

I am a fluent Welsh speaker as are my husband and boys. We have 15 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. My mother is still alive but my father who had been a policeman died 30 years ago, I also have 3 sisters who all live in Pembrokeshire.

In the early years whilst my children were at school I worked as a school cleaner and also as a hotel cleaner.

After that I spent about 5 years in various local care homes before starting work as a carer on various wards at Witybush Hospital. I was then employed as a night carer on a one to one basis for the next 18 years with the same family. This was also under the NHS.

I am now enjoying retirement along with Arwel. We love taking short breaks in this country as well as holidays abroad as often as we can.

We both became CAMRA members over 20 years ago, and love nothing more than attending various beer festivals where we meet up with members from other groups around the country. When we travel we enjoy visiting breweries and as many real ale pubs as we can find in the area.

As for my favourite beer, it is a difficult choice, as I like to support the smaller breweries whenever possible. But if the Titanic Plum Porter is on tap then I would always choose that one, failing that it would be an IPA as I like both ends of the spectrum.

One thing I have noticed is the number of younger drinkers who now favour a lighter ale instead of the lagers that have been around for a long time. This is great to see and with luck they will join us oldies at CAMRA events in the future.

I hope this has given you a chance to know a little more about me.

Alwen



PICKING OUR WINNER

CAMRA'S 2025 PUB OF THE YEAR

Every year CAMRA Branches pick their best Pub of the Year. The winners and runners up must, of course, serve good ale and/or cider, but whilst necessary that is not sufficient to win. The winners must also be knowledgeable about and actively promote real ale or cider, the pub must be clean and welcoming, likewise the staff, support CAMRA's aims and serve as a focus and hub for its local community.

Additionally, to give our best pubs a fair chance, Pembrokeshire, like many other Branches, has decided that the same establishment cannot win or be runner up two years in a row, so every pub has a fair chance of winning our top awards.



Pembrokeshire Pub of the Year - The Ffynnone Arms

This year, our winner is The Ffynnone Arms, Newchapel. This lovely old pub has been at the heart of its largely Welsh-speaking community in rural North Pembrokeshire for a quarter of a millennium. It was originally linked to the Ffynnone Estate, whose 18th Century mansion house was designed by the architect John Nash, who also designed Buckingham Palace. The name "Ffynnone" (pronounced "Funohneh") is derived from the Welsh ffynnonau - "wells" - of which there are a number in the vicinity.

Now tastefully renovated and ably managed by landlady Hedydd Phillips, the pub has earned

a reputation across the County for its real ale and food. A fine selection of local and regional ales are on offer. Hedydd - "skylark" in Welsh - also justly prides herself on her food, much of it sourced locally. Gluten, dairy and sugar free menus are available.

Not only is this an excellent pub for ale and food, it offers a 50p a pint discount on real ale to CAMRA members (on production of a current membership card). The Ffynnone is deeply involved in the life of the community. In particular it holds regular Quiz Nights to raise funds for local charities, whose certificates of appreciation adorn a wall of the pub. Visitors from everywhere are made welcome.



Pembrokeshire Branch Chair Alwen Thomas presents Ffynnone Arms landlady Hedydd Phillips with her Pub of the Year Certificate

Our Branch Pub of the Year is well worth seeking out. It is on the B4332 which branches off the A40 eastward at Eglwysrwr toward Boncath and ultimately Cenarth. Just keep going along this road for a few miles through Boncath and the pub is on your left. There is ample car parking at the rear. The postcode is SA37 0EH and the pub's website is <https://www.ffynnonearms.co.uk>. The website offers information about local places to stay and how to get to the beautiful Ffynnone waterfall in woods nearby. Not to be missed!

OUR PICK OF THE BEST OF THE REST

Or at least the best of the rest who were eligible this year, since we do not give any pub the same award two years in a row, to give everyone a chance.

PUB OF THE YEAR RUNNER-UP

The Farmers' Arms, St David's.

Wales' westernmost pub is also the oldest one in Britain's smallest city, dating back to the



1830's. A traditional three-room city pub at the heart of the city's local community. The top bar is mainly for dining with a smaller room off it (the Coxswains) which serves the patio and is the social meeting place for the St David's lifeboat crew. The locals

tend to gather around the fire in the 'Glue Pot' bar. The outside patio offers views of St David's Cathedral and has a seasonal bar. Manager Tom Landers and his team are waiting to welcome you. Their Sunday Roasts are excellent!

CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR

The Cresselly Arms, Cresswell Quay.

This Grade II Listed 250-year-old historic pub in a beautiful riverside setting was our Branch – and then Wales – Pub of the Year 2024. As well as four ales in good condition it is one of the few pubs in the County normally to stock real cider, usually from Pembrokeshire.

RUNNER-UP

CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR

The Fishguard Arms, Fishguard.

Another Grade II listed historic pub. A very traditional alehouse hidden in an early 19th Century terrace near the centre of town. It still sells beer by gravity dispense from casks behind the bar.

The only other pub which normally sells real cider is the Wetherspoon's in Haverfordwest, the William Owen, whose manageress is an active CAMRA member, and which was Branch Cider Pub of the Year last year. However, our County is thinly peopled, and none of our pubs can therefore guarantee to offer real cider every day of the year.

An advertisement for Victoria Inn, Roch Pembrokeshire. It features a circular logo with a crown and a profile of a woman's head, surrounded by the text 'VICTORIA INN BREWHOUSE'. To the right of the logo, the text reads 'Victoria Inn, Roch Pembrokeshire SA62 6AW 01437 710426'. Below the logo and text is a photograph of several beer kegs stacked in front of a building. At the bottom of the image, the text 'BrewPub + B&B' is written in white.

MEET THE BREWER

NIGEL SMITH, GWAUN VALLEY BREWERY

In this first of a series spotlighting our local independent brewers, Nigel Smith of Gwaun Valley Brewery is interviewed by his CAMRA Brewery Liaison Officer, Jon O'Brien



Gwaun Valley Brewery, high in the Preseli Hills

When talking with brewers about their history with real ale, it's quite common to find that they started drinking beer at an early age, often under age, so I was surprised to discover that Nigel Smith, brewer at Bragdy Cwm Gwaun (the Gwaun Valley Brewery), wasn't even a pubgoer in his teens and, when he did start visiting pubs, his drink of choice was orange juice. The first beers he, eventually, drank were lagers and it wasn't until 1987, at the ripe old age of 22, that he encountered his first pint of real ale. What's more, his first venture into fermentation was making country wines using fruit foraged from hedgerows, not beer, until a hedgerow plant, although not a foraged one, was responsible for starting his love affair with ale.

He recalls: "I was a keen gardener and someone gave me a hop plant, which grew up the side of my house and onto the roof. That plant died, because I'd kept it in a pot over winter, but I did get some hops from it, so, of course, the next step had to be making some beer and, from a purist point of view, it had to be full mash", so he needed malted barley next. "I'd grown the hops. If only I'd grown the barley". Not having done so, he took a trip to his nearest brewery, Bragdy Cwm Gwaun, in search of barley. It took some doing, but he

eventually managed to persuade the brewer, Len Davies, to let him have some. "I'd read, years before, about the mash, so I knew how to make sugars in theory, but I'd never done it." I asked what the first brew of his had been. "Probably a bitter" was the best Nigel could do as an answer. Was it drinkable? "Well, I drank it!", he recalled.

After that first brew, he tried several concoctions while struggling to control temperatures in the small batches he was working with. Initially he worked in the kitchen, until his partner, Bernie, fed up with her kitchen being turned into a steam room, threw him out. You'd think that might have dampened his enthusiasm somewhat but, no. Instead he started what he called his "outdoor brewing period". Those were the days of the craft brewing revolution and YouTube was full of beer brewing tutorials, many of them with a heavy American influence. Those craft ales have inspired some of Nigel's ales ever since.

The brewing may have been at home but the results, all bottled at that time, were shared far and wide, including being raffled at his children's school, resulting in his gaining a reputation locally as a very good home brewer. It was that reputation which brought Len Davies to his door one day, asking if he would be interested in doing some contract brewing for him. "That", he says, "was my introduction to big toys". It was also when he discovered that working with much greater volumes made temperature control much easier, although otherwise the process was pretty much the same as it was at home. The only real difference he found was having to rely on pumps.

Towards the end of his contract brewing season, Len announced that he was planning on retiring and closing the brewery. This news, discussed in Nigel's local, led to suggestions that he should take on the brewery, rather than letting it close, so he did. The first year he spent learning how to run a brewery, a very different prospect to just brewing in one. The second year, 2020, was the year of the first Covid lockdown, of course, and the year Nigel joined SIBA (the Society of

MEET THE BREWER: NIGEL SMITH, GWAUN VALLEY BREWERY

Independent Brewers and Associates) so as to be able to enter his ales in its competitions. This was part of his plans to publicise the brewery and to highlight the fact that, although the brewery name was the same, the beers now being brewed there were very much his own.



Brewer Nigel Smith takes a Break



The Brewer at Work

Because of lockdown, the first competition he entered entailed sending bottles of his ales off to be judged. The result was a gold prize for his white IPA (Cwrw Gwyn) and a bronze for his Pembrokeshire Best Bitter. The following year, he entered cask ales and his Traditional Porter, a style of ale he's brewed more than any other, won a silver in its class (dark session beers under 4.2% ABV). In 2024, that same porter won a gold in its class and, even more impressively, a silver in the overall cask category.

Future plans for what Nigel calls his expensive hobby include winning more prizes, a low ABV mild and to extend his lager repertoire. So far he's made two lagers, a Vienna and, most recently, a cask Pilsner which has been highly praised by those familiar with the style. Locals and visitors are very much looking forward to tasting his next concoctions.

Founded in 2009, the four barrel Gwaun Valley Brewery produces traditional and experimental ales using water from its own well. It has won many awards since being taken on by homebrewer Nigel Smith in 2019. Ales are available in cask, keg and bottle. Tourists can hire a holiday cottage, tent, or caravan pitches on the farm. The brewery hosts folk music sessions once a month.

Here are some of the Gwaun Valley ales you may be lucky enough to catch in local pubs or at the brewery:

Cascade: 4.3% ABV a blonde ale
Cwrw Gwyn: 5.3% ABV a white IPA
Cwrw Melyn: 4% ABV a blonde ale
Nutty: 4% ABV a strong mild
Pembrokeshire Best Bitter: 4.5%
Traditional Porter: 4.3% ABV

Bragdy Cwm Gwaun can be found at:
Kilriffeth Farm, Pontfaen, Fishguard SA65 9TP
Grid reference: SN 01205 33674
What Three Words: ooze.indoor.flasks

In future issues we shall cover each of our other local real ale breweries in turn. All of their beers are available locally and will give you a unique taste of Pembrokeshire. They are:

Bluestone, Cilgwyn
Core of the Poodle, Haverfordwest
Tenby Harbwr, Tenby
St David's Old Farmhouse, St. David's
Victoria Inn, Roch

CIDER IN PEMBROKESHIRE

Pembrokeshire CAMRA Cider Officer Jimmy Whitworth introduces his favourite tippie

Cider making and drinking has a long and proud history in the UK, and still today we are the largest producer and consumer of cider in the world. Sadly, most of the cider that is sold and drunk today is a pale shadow of the real stuff. Luckily there has been a resurgence of interest in producing proper cider in the past few years and the National Association of Cider Makers reckons there are at least 480 cider makers in the UK.



Bags of cider apples awaiting processing

The start of the history of making cider in these isles is lost in the mists of time, but Julius Caesar did remark on the Celts fermenting crab apples and drinking the juice. Cider has been a traditional agricultural activity in the autumn in many parts of the country, with apples being developed specifically for cider-making in places too far away from towns for there to be a market for eating apples. This is how the West Country style of cider grew up in Somerset, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and across the Welsh border into Monmouthshire. This is distinct from the Eastern Counties style of cider, which traditionally used left-over eating and cooking apples that did not make it to the London markets. This style of cider is lower in tannins and less sharp tasting than West Country cider, and is increasing in popularity.

The Welsh Perry and Cider Society has been very active in past years promoting interest in making and appreciating both drinks in Wales. Here we have a number of indigenous cider apple and perry pear tree varieties, so Welsh cider has its own particular style and flavours. In Pembrokeshire we have our own celebrated 'abbey apples' associated with the old French abbey at St Dogmael's: Pig Aderyn, Pen Caled and Pren Glas.

Cider from the West Country was highly prized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, commanding prices similar to wine. Various books on types of apple trees, with guidance on which apples to use for eating and drinking and how to make cider were published in this era, including John Worlidge's *Vineta Britannicum*, a treatise on the production and processing of apples, which shows that traditional cider making has changed very little over the centuries. In the Seventeenth Century cider makers from Somerset even developed strengthened glass bottles with cork stoppers to contain their bottle conditioned cider and stop it from exploding, an innovation that was copied by Champagne makers in France a century later.

Sadly today the major cider manufacturers take advantage of the loose official definition of cider in the UK, to use apple pulp concentrate from anywhere in the world, often China, bulked up with whatever fruits are cheap, as cider in the UK only needs to contain 35% apple juice to be called cider (unlike in France, where it must be made from 100% apple juice - even in the USA it requires a minimum of 50%). They then often use chaptalisation, the addition of sugar to the pressed juice before fermentation, in order to increase the alcohol content after fermentation, and then

CIDER IN PEMBROKESHIRE

water down the product to the required alcohol by volume. These efforts to reduce costs have had a devastating effect on traditional cider apple orchards, with the demand for British cider apples falling as large manufacturers seek the cheapest fruit juice and concentrate they can find anywhere in the world, and then make a watered-down product anyway.

Faced with these practices, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has produced a definition of real cider (and perry, which is similar but made with pears rather than apples): **fermented from the whole juice of freshly pressed apples or pears, without the use of concentrated or chaptalised juices.** The CAMRA website also includes a list of real cider and perry producers. In our county this includes Gethins cyder in Maenclochog, Ci Ddu in Solva, Pontymeddyg cider in Dinas Cross, Brookesgrove Farm in Haverfordwest, and the Pembrokeshire Cider Company in Pembroke. Most of these producers provide bottled ciders, sometimes bottle-conditioned, and also draught cider in bags-in-boxes. Many independent shops and restaurants in Pembrokeshire do stock cider from these producers, and some pubs, such as our cider pub of the year - the *Creselly Arms* at Creswell Quay - regularly stock draught cider in the summer months.

Do seek out some of these real ciders, you may well get a nice surprise. You never know what you have been missing!



Milling apples to make pomace (scratting)



Collecting apple juice



Pressing pomace to produce juice



Fermenting cider - Yeast turns sugar to alcohol, CO2 is released, airlock keeps oxygen out

Did you know?

Pubs inject an average of £80,000 a year into their local economies



Source: IPPR, "Pubs and places: The social value of community pubs" (2012)



HOW LOCALS SAVED THEIR LOCALS BY THE EDITOR

When a local pub closes – as all too many are doing these days – more than just a business and often livelihoods is often lost. For good pubs are not just places to have a pint and perhaps something to eat. They are the forum and focus of their village or neighbourhood. When they close, the heart often goes out of their local community. But not necessarily...

Because here in Pembrokeshire, as elsewhere around the country, local communities are fighting back, taking action to save their local pub by buying it out and running it themselves, often successfully. Inspiring by their example other communities to save their locals too.



The Tafarn Sinc

In a lovely setting high in our County's Preseli Hills, the *Preccelly Hotel* was built in 1876, clad in distinctive corrugated galvanised iron, beside the then newly opened railway line at Rosebush Station. This line ran from Mathry Road by Letterston to join the main line at Clunderwen, east of Haverfordwest, via Rosebush and Maenclochog, and brought numerous tourists and day trippers to the heart of the Preselis. The line, sadly, was closed to passengers in 1937, but the pub carried on. It became a focus not only of the village, but of local Welsh culture and music, as well as walkers exploring the surrounding hills. Landlady Peg Lewis reigned supreme there for 52 years until 1991, followed by the Llewellyn family who were there for a quarter of a century, during which time the pub

acquired its current name, the *Tafarn Sinc* ("Zinc Pub")

In 2017 they retired, and the pub faced possible closure after over a hundred years. However, the local community rallied round. At a public meeting in Maenclochog Hall on July 12th, 2017, organised by West Wales Community Support group PLANED and local community newspaper *Clebran*, by a unanimous vote the locals voted to fight to save their local. £7000 was raised that night and subsequently sales of shares in Cymdeithas Tafarn Sinc, the community benefit society set up to save the pub, raised £400,000. In November 2017 the locals bought their local and it was saved. A traditional Welsh local, with sawdust on the floor and fine local ales behind the bar (it's deservedly in the CAMRA *Good Beer Guide*), to say nothing of solid Welsh country food on the menu, and friendly, often Welsh-speaking, staff and locals it is well worth a visit. There is a caravan site close to the pub if you don't want to drive home! You can still buy shares in the pub if you like too!



The White Hart St Dogmael's

Since 1769, the *White Hart*, or *Hydd Gwyn* had been the community pub of the lovely seaside village of St Dogmael's, Llandudoch in Welsh, on the northern border of our county beside Cardigan Bay. Until it closed, seemingly for ever, in May 2019.

HOW LOCALS SAVED THEIR LOCALS – BY THE EDITOR

But again the community rose up and took action to save their local. It took two years of fundraising and campaigning to raise the funds to be able to purchase their village pub. Over 550 people bought shares in the community buyout vehicle, mostly locals, including local CAMRA members, but some from other



The White Hart's pub sign

parts of Wales, England, Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada. Helped by local community support groups, funding was also obtained from the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government, the Social Business Growth Fund of Social Investment Cymru at WCVA and Pembrokeshire County Council.

The purchase was finally agreed on 18th January 2021, and The White Hart became The White Hart Community Inn. Its vision, which CAMRA heartily endorses, is to provide *“a warm, welcoming, supportive community hub at the centre of our rural village, promoting the Welsh language and culture. A friendly meeting place for families, neighbours and visitors to enjoy good company, real ale and sensibly-priced, locally-sourced, wholesome food. A commercially viable, sustainable business with year-round employment for staff that helps the local economy and provides lasting value for the wider community”*. Again well worth a visit.

The over 150 years old **Crymych Arms**, the only pub in the nearby village of Crymych, also faced closure after the licensees, having struggled through the pandemic, called it a day and retired in September 2021. Yet again, the locals, helped by Pembrokeshire’s “Mr Community Buyout” and Welsh language stalwart Cris Tomos of PLANED, organised

to buy their own village pub at a meeting in December 2022. Again, a community buyout vehicle, Tafarn Cymunedol Crymych, was set up, shares were issued and funds to the tune of over £200,000 raised, together with a significant Community Ownership Fund grant from the UK Government (sadly this Fund is now closed). The pub was bought, and, as has been the case for all these community buyouts, locals volunteered to refurbish, redecorate and rewire the pub for free. The pub reopened in December 2023 and is now not only thriving but building an extension. It is the home of the village football team – the rugby club has a premises across the road. The pub’s real ale and good food is well worth a try.



Local community buyout campaigner Cris Tomos outside the Crymych Arms, one of the pubs he helped save

South of Fishguard, at Hayscastle Cross on the B4330, the Phillips family had owned and run **The Cross**, the pub at the heart of this quiet Welsh farming community, since 1861. But the latest generation, Angela and Wayne Phillips, no longer wanted to run the pub and so they put it on the market. There were no offers, and the pub seemed doomed to close. But, yet

HOW LOCALS SAVED THEIR LOCALS – BY THE EDITOR

again, the local community had other ideas. On 15th August 2022 the community met in the local Chapel Hall.



Y Cross, Hayscastle Coss

This time Pembrokeshire CAMRA was in a position to become actively involved. Our Branch Secretary addressed the campaign launch meeting in Welsh and English outlining CAMRA's vision of pubs not only as places to get a pint of good ale or cider but as hubs at the heart of their local community and pledging CAMRA's wholehearted support for the buyout.

Again, assisted by Cris Tomos of PLANED and with sage advice from those at the *Tafarn Sinc* who had already saved their own pub, the community went ahead. On 24th January 2023, another community meeting gave the final go-ahead for the launch, using the old Welsh name for the pub, of Y Cross Cas-lai Community Benefit Society Ltd and shares were issued. Their objective was *"to establish a financially and commercially sound community pub, providing a high-quality local dining and drinking experience as well as a central hub for community engagement, services, and benefits"*. The pub also stressed its commitment to the local Welsh language and culture. Pembrokeshire CAMRA actively supported this and CAMRA members as far away as Central England bought shares.

As with the other pubs, financial support was obtained from a number of grant-issuing bodies and from that and share sales enough

money was raised to buy and extensively refurbish the pub, with much unpaid volunteer help. Then local MP Stephen Crabb attended the pub's re-opening on 17th November 2023. Support was also forthcoming from current First Minister of Wales Eluned Morgan.

Since then, Pembrokeshire CAMRA has been actively involved in advice on the choice of ales and ciders and on the appointment of the bar manager. Due to changes in cellar staff the pub was not eligible to be selected for the 2025 Good Beer Guide, It is eligible for the 2026 GBG, and you will see if it got in in September when that is published! In any case certainly the ales on offer, in quality and range, are now well worth sampling. As indeed is the food. Apart from offering first-rate food and drink, the pub is a community hub, offering a home to numerous community craft, walking and other groups, Welsh language lessons and, it is hoped, one day hosting the return of the long-missed village shop and post office.

Local CAMRA members meet for a social pint there every Wednesday afternoon at 3pm. If you are in the area, drop in and meet us.

Y Cross is holding a Real Ale Festival over the 4th to 6th July. All Welcome!

So if your local looks like closing, take heart – and indeed feel free to ask for advice – from these communities in our County who have already saved their pubs. Turning them into what in this writer's view is the ideal for all pubs – **owned by the local community, run for the local community by the local community, at the heart of the local community.**



TUDALEN CYMRAEG

WELSH PAGE

Croeso i Peintiau Pâl!

Mae CAMRA Sir Benfro yn falch o dreftadaeth Gymreig ein Sir a'n hiaith a'n diwylliant hynafol. Mae ein Cangen yn cyfathrebu â'i haelodau trwy Gylchlythyr Aelodau misol a gyhoeddir yn Gymraeg yn ogystal ag yn Saesneg. Mae Cadeiryddes ein Cangen, Mrs Alwen Thomas, yn un o lawer o siaradwyr Cymraeg brodorol y Gangen ac mae sawl aelod arall, gan gynnwys eich Golygydd, yn gallu siarad yr iaith gyda graddau amrywiol o ruglder. Sicrheir siaradwyr Cymraeg o groeso cynnes yn ein Cangen!

Croesewir cyfraniadau i'n cylchgrawn yn Gymraeg yn fawr.

Welsh, as *Lord of the Rings* author Professor J.R.R. Tolkien put it, "is the senior language of the men" (and women!) "of Britain, and Welsh is beautiful". Our ancient language, which has changed little since the days of King Arthur

1600 years ago, is a source of great pride, especially in Welsh-speaking areas such as those in our County north of Haverfordwest. The written language may look a bit strange



to those not familiar with it, but – unlike English! – it follows its own spelling rules and is easy to read once those are learned.

Moreover, if you are a visitor to our county whose ancestry goes back more than a few generations in, or to, anywhere in Britain south of the Scottish Highlands, including all of England, some of your own ancestors would probably once have spoken a recognisable early form of what is now Welsh.

English speakers are welcome across our County's pubs, but in the Welsh speaking ones knowing a few simple words of the language will often make you even more welcome.

So here is a bit of basic pub Welsh for you to try:

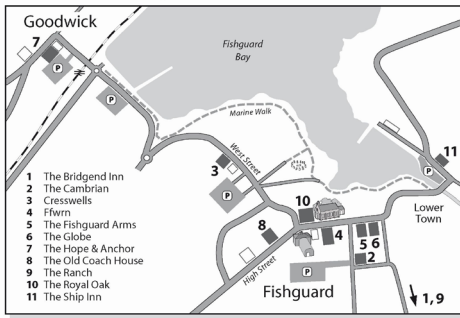
Word	Pronounced	Means
Sh'mae -	<i>shoomiye</i>	Hi, how are you?
Bore da	<i>boreh dah</i>	Good morning
P'nawn da	<i>pinawn dah</i>	Good afternoon
Noswaith dda	<i>noswiyth thah</i> (first "th" as in thin, 2nd th as in they)	Good evening
Hwyl fawr	<i>hoyle vawr</i>	Cheerio - "ta ra" is also fine!
Ga i beint o'r cwrw yna plis	<i>gah ee biynt oh-rr cooroo</i> <i>inna pliyis</i>	Can I have a pint of that beer please?
Diolch	<i>Diyolkh</i> (kh as in Scots "loch")	Thanks
Diolch yn fawr	<i>Diyolkh un vawr</i>	Thanks very much
Iechyd da	<i>EE-echid dah</i> (NOT "yecky dah!")	Cheers! – literally "good health"

Have fun trying a bit of Welsh!

FISHGUARD & GOODWICK

PERFECT FOR A SCENIC PUB CRAWL

Welcome to/Croeso i Fishguard and Goodwick Real Ale and Cider Trail



Between them, the twin towns of Fishguard and Goodwick have a number of really interesting pubs offering some fine ales and with the added advantage that you can visit them while enjoying a picturesque walk of not much more than a mile in total. You can also do the whole thing using public transport, arriving by train at the Goodwick end or by bus if you prefer to start at Fishguard.



Pembrokeshire CAMRA presenting the Royal Oak with the Pub of the Year Award for 2020

A good starting point is Fishguard Square, only 100 yards or so from the bus station. First stop is the historic *Royal Oak*, dating back to around the 1780s. You will see a sign above the door proclaiming Last Invasion Inn. This refers to the last-ever time a foreign army set foot on British soil, back in 1797. To find out more, be sure to step across the road and visit the Last

Invasion Tapestry (100ft long tapestry made entirely by the ladies of the town to mark the 1997 Bicentenary) on display in the town library, upstairs in the Town Hall. You will then know exactly why one of the regular beers at the *Royal Oak* is named Jemima's Pitchfork (Glamorgan Brewing Co.). This pub was the local CAMRA pub of the Year in 2020.

After making a mental note to return to the *Royal Oak* on Tuesday evening for a session of "Folk at the Oak" or, better still, on the late May Bank Holiday weekend for four whole days of the annual Folk Festival, you only need to walk another 100 yards or so along Main Street to visit two more pubs, each with its own distinctive character, the *Fishguard Arms* and the *Globe*. On your way there, you will pass by St Mary's church on your left. Directly opposite is what used to be St Mary's Church Hall but today houses a delightful bistro/music venue called simply "*Ffwrn*", the Welsh word for "oven". If the doors are open (generally only from Easter through to autumn), be sure to drop in, and you will instantly discover the reason for the rather unusual name of this establishment, namely a rather impressive clay pizza oven. No doubt you will also find a barrel of ale behind the bar being served on gravity, often from the excellent Gwaun Valley brewery.



The cosy interior of the Fishguard Arms

This brewery nestles at the foot of the Preseli Hills, only 3 miles out of Fishguard. The brewery has its own tap room attached, complete

FISHGUARD & GOODWICK – PERFECT FOR A SCENIC PUB CRAWL

with log burner. If you have time, do pay a visit, sample the ales and enjoy a fascinating conversation with Nigel, the brewer.

If you're feeling peckish by now, you will also find some tasty snacks at *Ffwrn* on most days. *The Fishguard Arms* and *The Globe* are only a couple of doors apart, and both date from the late 18th Century. Inside, the former looks like it's hardly changed in all that time, and is full of character, while the *Globe's* interior is a mixture of modern and ancient (e.g. the huge "simne fawr" fireplace). The landlady/-lord will tell you all about its interesting history!



The Ship in the Lower Town

Now proceed down the hill to Lower Town (Y Cwm, as locals call it), admiring the view out into Fishguard Bay as you go. Cross the stone bridge, and just round the bend is the *Ship Inn*. Opening hours are limited, usually Wed-Sun 4pm onwards, but do make the effort. This old seaman's pub is loaded with seafaring stuff plus Hollywood-style memorabilia

from the days when it performed the vital task of keeping actors and film crew well lubricated during the filming of two classic movies: *Moby Dick* (with Gregory Peck 1956) and *Under Milk Wood* (with Richard Burton 1971).

Now it's time for a scenic walk along the Marine Walk, which is the name given to the stretch of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path that joins Fishguard to Goodwick. The walk offers stunning views up the coast (on a clear day!) and, most importantly, you will be rewarded with another three pubs at the other end! If you're feeling peckish, drop into the *Hope & Anchor* first of all, ideally during the daily Happy

Hour, and order a good old-fashioned basket meal (chicken, scampi or sausage & chips) for only a fiver (at the time of writing). Attached to this pub is its neighbour the *Rose & Crown*, which is more of a dining establishment. Just across the road is the *Glendower*, an old-school sport TV pub where political correctness is a foreign word (you have been warned!)

By now you will hopefully collapse contented into your comfy seat on board a Transport for Wales train at Fishguard & Goodwick Station (only 100 yards from the Hope & Anchor), or recharge your batteries at a local B&B establishment ready for further exploration of the twin towns next day.



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ALL THE FUN OF THE TRADE FAIR BY THE EDITOR

Every brewery in Pembrokeshire has a CAMRA Brewery Liaison Officer, whose job, as it says, is to liaise between the Branch and the brewer, making sure CAMRA centrally knows what they are brewing and offering them our support if need be. Ideally the BLO and the brewer are on good terms. This is certainly the case with Nigel Smith of Gwaun Valley Brewery and his CAMRA BLO Jon O'Brien. So when Nigel was away climbing in the Himalayas and could not attend the annual BeerX Trade Fair of the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA) in Liverpool in mid-March he sent Jon and three other lucky Branch members, Branch Chair Alwen and her husband Arwel and Branch Secretary, and your Editor, Steve, in his place.



The Real ale and craft beer bar at BeerX

Arriving in Liverpool on the Tuesday evening, after checking in to our accommodation near the famous Cavern Club, we set out to explore some of the city's famous pubs, something we continued throughout our stay when not at BeerX.

Our favourites were the superb Ship and Mitre, which apart from a huge selection of real ales also offers "scouse", the local delicacy, a bit like a very thick cawl or stew which came in generous portions. Also the historic White Star, an oasis of calm in the clamour of the Cavern Quarter. The Baltic Fleet, near the Exhibition Centre where BeerX took place, is also excellent, especially at lunchtime when not too crowded. Our Chair Alwen had a superb craft keg porter which could hold its own with any cask equivalent.



Waiting to hear the winners of this year's SIBA awards

The BeerX itself had a real ale bar divided into areas by region. Nigel's Gwaun Valley Traditional Porter was available. Having won in the Wales and West Regional SIBA competition our local ale was now up for a national award. Of course we had to weigh up the competition by trying the other beers available.

There were numerous trade stands displaying all manner of brewing machinery, some complex tangle of valves and pipes and others looking as if they could put a satellite into orbit. There were the usual plethora of free pens, bottle openers, mugs and even free beer -and on one stand lethally strong cocktails - of which we availed ourselves. It would have been rude not to. There were also interesting free beer tastings of historic beers and even a CAMRA stand, to whose staff we introduced ourselves.



Pembs Chair Alwen Thomas with CAMRA National Chair Ash Corbett-Collins

There were also interesting free beer tastings of historic beers and even a CAMRA stand, to whose staff we introduced ourselves.

On the Thursday afternoon CAMRA's new National Chairman, Ash Corbett-Collins, gave a speech to the assembled delegates. He argued forcefully that

ALL THE FUN OF THE TRADE FAIR – BY THE EDITOR

CAMRA and SIBA were natural allies, with the first campaigning to support the small independent breweries comprising the second. He also gave an inspiring portrayal of CAMRA's Revitalisation Project, which aims to reach out to younger ale lovers and drinkers generally.



Our party enjoy a pint in the Ship and Mitre

He made the point that CAMRA is not, in the main, going to recruit young people in their 20's and early 30's who are trying to establish themselves in a job or career, getting married, trying to find somewhere to live and possibly raise a family and so on. CAMRA does, however, want to recruit more people in their 40s and 50s without in any way excluding the older drinker.

Our Chairman's address clearly went down well with his target audience of small independent brewers and those who make the wherewithal for them to brew. Our Branch delegation had a most friendly and interesting chat with Ash afterwards. We were possibly the only CAMRA Branch represented, thanks to the kindness of our local brewer.

We set off for home on the Friday having tasted a lot of good ale in a lot of good pubs, as well as the BeerX bar, and having we hope further strengthened the alliance between Britain's leading beer consumer association and those who are at the core of brewing our best beers.

SIBA BEER FESTIVAL COMES TO PEMBROKESHIRE

The Society of Independent Brewers and Associates is holding its first ever Wales Beer Festival, here in Pembrokeshire. The festival

will run from Friday, September 19 to Saturday, September 20 at Haverhub, Haverfordwest's community hub. It will showcase almost 100 beers from SIBA's independent member breweries across the country. It will also feature local street food vendors, live music, entertainment, brewery Q&As, and meet-the-brewer sessions.

The day before, Thursday, September 18, SIBA will hold a taste competition to pick the best beers in Wales. We wish our Pembrokeshire breweries every success.

Sara Leigh Webber, regional director of SIBA Wales and head of marketing at Brains Brewery, said: "It's really exciting news that SIBA's first Wales Beer Festival is happening.

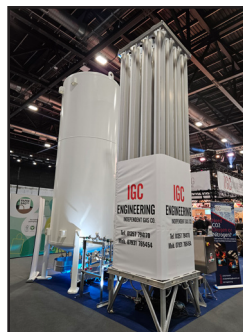
"This is a historic moment for Welsh brewing.

"For the first time, we're bringing together breweries large and small under the SIBA banner to celebrate Indie Beer in true Welsh style.

"The SIBA Wales Beer Festival offers a unique opportunity to celebrate independent Welsh brewers who continue to fuel the growth of the beer industry in the country.

"Notably, Wales is the only area in the UK where the number of breweries has increased, with 97 breweries operating at the start of 2025, up from 96 at the beginning of 2024.

"Haverfordwest is the perfect place to launch our first festival – a welcoming community, a beautiful setting, and a great thirst for quality, independent beer."



*On the stands
does this brew beer or
launch satellites?*

Watch out for further details in the local media and on the Pembrokeshire CAMRA website.

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