



OUT &

ABOUT

THIS MONTH WE VISIT...

WALES

RED DRAGONS & ROLLING GREEN FIELDS

Frances and Michael Howorth uncover all that is good in Carmarthenshire seeking out forest trails, forgotten tales and a larderfull of tasty nutriments.

Tucked into the southwest corner of Wales, Carmarthenshire is a rugged patchwork of coastal cliffs, windswept beaches, mountain trails, and deep green valleys. Here the pace slows down just enough to let you breathe, but the adventure for the motorcaravanner never stops. Whether you are driving across the wild Black Mountain range, kayaking the estuaries of Laugharne, or biking the legendary trails of Brechfa Forest, Carmarthenshire proves that the best kind of outdoors is not just scenic. It is also quite delicious! This lush corner of southwest Wales has become a haven for food lovers who value flavour, freshness, and a deep connection to the land. Farmers' markets hum with life, artisan producers push boundaries, and chefs are turning out plates that feel both rooted and exciting. Good food is not just a growing trend it is a way of life here passed down through generations and served with a generous side serving of Welsh hospitality.

With a busy touring itinerary planned, we were invited to base ourselves at Brynhyfryd Farm, a MCC Club CL run by Eynon and Wendy Price. The site is surrounded by rolling hills and miles of verdant fields. For us, it's great appeal, was its location and the fact that we had a huge field to park in and therefore were not overlooked by others or made to feel as if we were in a car park. Eynon and Wendy are the perfect hosts and take a hands-on approach to running and maintaining the site, which was, throughout our stay, spotless.

There are fewer towns in Wales more attractive than Llandeilo, sitting proudly on a hill above the river Tywi, the quiet, quaint town is rich in heritage and history. The campsite is only a stone's throw away from the 12th-century castle, Dinefwr and the Roman town centre, which is home to some great shops and suppliers. We very quickly fell in love with Pitchfork and Provision in the Castle Courtyard. As an independent artisan bakery and

café, the team that run it dedicated to using seasonal, locally sourced ingredients. You must try their wonderfully crunchy additive-free, sourdough bread. Each batch takes around 36 hours to craft. The café menu, along with market offerings, is made in-house by skilled chefs and bakers, and feature fresh bread, savouries, pastries, and cakes which you can take away for tasty lunches or breakfasts in the van.

Just across the road, is Heavenly Chocolates, a chocolate and ice cream emporium. Founder, Tracey Kindred, opened her shop in June 2005, after spending a year researching ice cream and chocolate houses all over Britain and Rome and has not looked back since. She sources only the highest quality chocolate, ensuring it is responsibly grown and part of the Cocoa Horizons Foundation. Hand-made on the premises, Heavenly Chocolates have their very own brand of chocolates alongside a selection of delicious desserts and cakes.

In nearby Llanddarog, the White >>

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Hart Inn is somewhat of an unusual pub, brewing its own beers and ciders and distilling its own whisky, gin, vodka and rum. Not many family-owned pubs can claim that distinction, but the Coles family do just that and have been doing so for the last 30 years.

Like all towns with a fascinating history, Carmarthen is best enjoyed in the company of local tour guide. Robert Lea of Lea Tours knows the history of the town like the back of his hand and his stories, told while you walk the streets, give a fascinating insight into the town and its dramatic past. He had us enthralled from the moment he uttered his first words of greeting, claiming that Carmarthen, as a settlement, was older than Rome. There is much to see and do in Carmarthen and we enjoyed wandering around the grounds of Old Bishops Palace and visiting the



Outside the Plume of Feathers on a walking tour with Rob Lea



Carmarthenshire Museum which is free to enter. The newly opened Tywi Valley cycle path starts from here too, so don't forget to load your bikes onto the back of your van.

Carmarthen boasts its own covered market. We enjoyed our visit there, meeting with Matthew Rees – a man with a mission. Matthew is reviving a centuries old

family tradition of locally made, air-dried ham. The age-old recipe of Carmarthen Ham has been handed down from generation to generation. The story being that when the Romans came to Wales and settled in Carmarthen, they stole the recipe and returned to Italy: renaming it Parma Ham. This idea has been hotly debated but it



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Aberglasney Gardens



Barrels aging at
Coles Brewery & Distillery

did attract Italian historians. They came and conducted research but their findings proved inconclusive leaving open the possibility that this family legend may have some truth in it!

We drove to Llansteffan and strolled along the beach and up to Llansteffan Castle with its views over to Ferryside. We knew we had to burn some calories because we had a lunch date in the centre of the village. The Inn at the Sticks on the High Street in Llansteffan has been, deservedly named the Best Local Restaurant in Wales by The Good Food Guide in 2024. It is run by Teej and Jenks, who truly believe that great food and fine wine are at the heart of unforgettable experiences. They are passionate about promoting Welsh produce and believe that deserves to be celebrated. Watching Chefs Debs, Melanie and Liam at work in their

open kitchen and having eaten the feast they prepared for us, we are glad to join in that celebration and commend that you do so too.

If you are into speed on four wheels, then the flat expanse of hard packed beach at nearby Pendine will be well known to you. Here the Museum of Land Speed is far more than a celebration of vintage racing. It is a bold, forward-thinking visitor attraction with international appeal. Showcasing legendary land-speed record breakers that once thundered across Pendine Sands, the museum combines rich heritage with modern, interactive exhibits that resonate with global motorsport fans and families alike.

The beach at Pendine was the location for our final stop of the day. Here we were going to cook and eat supper on the beach. But first we had to forage for it! In the four years >>

ADVENTURE AWAITS THIS AUTUMN



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of writing for this magazine we have enjoyed some incredible experiences in our bid to bring life to the Out & About feature. But perhaps in foraging for supper, we have found our most thrilling adventure to date. Coastal Forager Craig Evans was our host for an evening of fun and edification. Craig and his faithful Golden Retriever Lleu (Welsh for Lion), brings coastal education and sustainability to the public in an ethical and accessible way. We joined him as he showed us how to find and pick; wild sea spinach, rock samphire and sea scurvy which tastes just like wasabi. Then, as the tide dropped away, leaving rock pools teeming with seafood, we collected brown shrimp, crabs, prawns, mussels, cockles along with both softshell and razor clams. Then, under the shelter of the towering rock cliffs, we got to cook our discoveries right there on the beach. Eating food that we had picked and collected just feet away from where it was cooked, was one of our most memorable experiences and it is one that we very much hope to repeat sometime soon.

Aberglasney Gardens in Llangathen offers visitors the chance to explore more than 10 acres of magnificent gardens including the venerable Yew Tree Arch, indoor sub-tropical garden and a unique Elizabethan Cloister Garden. Tearooms there use produce from the Kitchen Garden and visitors can sit overlooking the Pool Garden while they enjoy their meal. It is one of Wales' finest gardens, and is open 364 days a year, with no need to pre-book.

As cheese lovers we could never turn down an invitation to visit a creamery and Caws Cenarth, near Boncath run regular tours highlighting their cheese making process and they end with a tasting of some of the many different products they make. The creamery's owner, Carwyn Adams learned his art from his mother and has perfected her recipes to make some



Coastal foraging with Craig Evans on Pendine Sands Beach

tasty cheeses. Perl Las was probably our favourite of the cheeses we tasted; a superb blue cheese, golden in colour, with a creamy, salty taste.

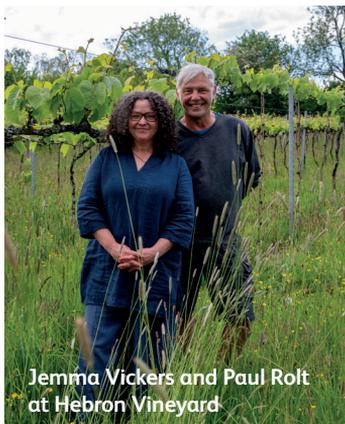
Carwyn sells his cheese to many different outlets and one of them, The Deli at Cenarth, is in the centre of Cenarth not far from Newcastle Emlyn. Mike and Jo Denn-Lord, the owners of the Deli, have made it their mission to stock a variety of spirits, wines, and beers, as well as home baked goods. They also offer amazing award-winning sauces, honeys, candles and skincare items, all alongside local artists' wares. Jo and Mike take great care in sourcing only the finest of local products, allowing you to discover the essence of Wales through their diverse range of treats.

We have always believed that cheese goes well with wine and with that in mind, we sought out a local vineyard. But as we found out, the Hebron Vineyard near Whitland, is far from being a traditional

winery. Owners Jemma Vickers and Paul Rolt planted this vineyard in 2010 with the goal of creating a Zero Zero wine, one with zero intervention in the vineyard and zero intervention in the winery. Since then, this organic, non-intervention, regenerative vineyard has produced three varieties of wine. All of them delicious. Establishing a vineyard using regenerative viticulture methods in West Wales presents various challenges. After many setbacks, including a rabbit attack and overzealous grass growth, the couple have, with determination and hard work, achieved their goal. The wines they have produced have a superb unadulterated taste reflecting the mineral rich terroir of the Preseli foothills and the cool climate.

The Hebron vineyards are maintained using regenerative viticulture and agroforestry practices. Although this is not the easy option, Jemma and Paul prefer not to use pesticide, herbicide, fungicide or fertilizer. They want their grapes to taste of their vines natural experience in the soils and the climate of West Wales and by golly they do!

Carmarthenshire offers motorcaravanners something very rare. A space in nature, that is free to roam, landscapes that challenge and inspire, and a deep-rooted connection with the natural world. And for those who seek real outdoor experiences without the crowds or the hype, that's exactly what makes Carmarthenshire unforgettable.



Jemma Vickers and Paul Rolt at Hebron Vineyard